

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

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

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

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

VOL. XXXIII.

LONDON :
THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPÔT
12 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1916

CONTENTS.

	Page
“The Valley of the Shadow” and “The House of the Lord”	1
The Conscience Cleared	4
Abraham the Pilgrim: His Refuge, Resource, and Reward	10, 46, 137
God’s Intervention in Human Affairs	15
God the Home of the Soul	22
The Person of Christ	23
Self-examination: When is it Useful?	23
Answers to Correspondents 27, 54, 81, 111, 151, 162, 211, 250	
The Result of having Christ as our Shepherd	29
The Morning after Conversion	32
Answered Prayer	37
Are you “Eligible,” or “Indispensable at Home”?	42
Grace and its Outcome	50
The Lord’s Coming Explained	57
Further Details as to the Coming of the Lord	63
Is there more than one Resurrection?	73
Questions	78
Unforgotten Labour	85
Your Body	87
The Time of Trouble	90
Are You a Bible Student?	95
Ready!	102
An Icelandic Fisherman	103
Soul Longings (Poetry)	110
The Harmfulness of Post-millennialism	111
Approved	113
The Oil of Gladness	11

	Page
The Coffin and the Bees	117
How do You Read the Bible?	124
How the Mighty Fall	133
Exploring the Bible	143
Quartus, a Brother	153
Bright Gleams Amid Present Darkness	159
Unbinding the Bible	165
Christ Coming into our Lives	173
"Ye Ask Amiss"	176
Dispensational Distinctions	179
A Call to Repentance	188
God's Judgments: Past and Future	193
God's Object Lessons: Types and Symbols of Scripture	203
What it Means to be Saved	213
Fellowship	221
God's Great Symbol: The Tabernacle and its Services	224
The Day when God Acts	233
The Prayer of Jabez	238
Hints on Bible Marking: An Aid to the Memory	245
The Last Stand	253
Keep Looking Up	260
Does Tract Distribution Pay?	265
Whose?	271
"Launch Out" (Poetry)	272

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



“THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW” AND “THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.”

IN the twenty-third Psalm, these two expressions stand in very evident contrast. The one instantly presents to the mind the idea of coldness and gloom ; the other that of warmth and light. Taken together they summarize for us the whole path of the believer.

Human life is very aptly symbolized by a valley. We live, as it were, between two mountain ranges. We have no expanse of view. Behind us lies the unrecorded past ; before us the impenetrable future. Upwards, however, our view is unrestricted. The blue heavens we may unreservedly scan.

Man is a creature of many limitations. He was this even in innocence. But since sin came into the world, he is the victim of yet other limitations which he has brought upon himself. A shadow has descended upon his little valley—the shadow of death. The trail of this shadow may be easily discerned stretching across the ages of history ; and never was it more painfully manifest than as

2 "THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW" AND

this year of grace, 1916, opens. Bereaved hearts and shadowed lives are everywhere.

For us Christians, however, this world has become "the valley of the shadow of death" in a deeper sense. The shadow of His death—the death of Christ, the best-beloved of our souls—is pre-eminently that which lies across it. He has been rejected and slain. His rights have been refused, and in refusing them, and Him, the world has extinguished the true light that once shone in the valley. Small wonder, therefore, that gloom and shadow have been its portion ever since.

As we walk through this valley we are not, thank God, without resource. Psalm XXIII. shows that in our risen Shepherd we have all we need. His rod and His staff, they comfort us.

His rod speaks of authority, whether used for blessing or chastisement. Is there no comfort in this? Indeed there is. Does it not cheer us to know that we step forth into the 1916 section of "the valley" under His authority, used, as it is, for our protection and blessing? We are no longer under the authority of darkness, but translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (see Col. 1. 13).

The day is coming when that same rod shall be lifted up in chastisement, so that all the earth may become subject to His blessed sway. At the present moment it is far other-

“ THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.”

3

wise. The rod of authority in the earth has left the hand of the true Moses and has become a serpent. The day is coming soon when He will grasp it by its tail, and that which has been for so long harmful and destructive shall become again in His hand the strong instrument by which He will shepherd the nations. What comfort enters our hearts as by faith we anticipate this !

Then as to the staff : it speaks to us of support and guidance ; both so necessary. The shadow in the valley is so deep that we must be directed lest we go astray. The path is often so toilsome that we need to be uplifted continually. There is all this for us in Christ.

Best of all, the valley is not interminable. Full it may be, as Bunyan dreamed, of many horrors and all kinds of noisome creatures, yet at its longest it is but short, and at the end there stands the house of the Lord.

This, for the Christian, is what the Lord speaks of as “ My Father’s house ” in John XIV. 2. It is a house characterized by relationships divinely formed and by the love, placid and eternal, which is proper to those relationships. An attractive prospect indeed !

We *walk* through the valley, but in the house we shall *dwell*. The trying and the transitory will have given place to the perfect and the permanent. We shall dwell in the house of the Lord *for ever*.

F. B. H.

THE CONSCIENCE CLEARED.

*Outline of an Address to Young Men at Queen
Victoria Street, London.*

Read Hebrews x. 1 to 4, 11 to 18.

IT is of the greatest moment that we should distinguish clearly between the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, and the work and various operations of the Holy Spirit. Neither the new birth, nor the indwelling Spirit, nor any of the experiences through which the Holy Spirit may lead us, can form the basis of *peace*. I speak now, not of the peace of communion, but of the peace of salvation. There is a difference between the two. The true basis of peace with God is the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews ix. and x. (two chapters which form one section of the epistle), the Holy Spirit brings before us with remarkable clearness and fullness the finished work of the Lord Jesus. The epistle was, of course, addressed to Hebrew Christians, but though the truth contained therein be cast in a mould eminently suited to meet the difficulties of Hebrew minds, it is a mould and form very useful to us.

THE CONSCIENCE CLEARED.

5

Notice first of all those five words, “ *no more conscience of sins.* ” The worshippers, once purged, should have no more conscience of sins. Suppose one were to ask you to explain those five words, would you have any explanation to offer? It would be useful if, in our private reading of the Scriptures, when we come across a passage like this, we were to say to ourselves: “ Can I explain these words in a way that would at least be satisfactory to myself, even if it were not helpful to another? ” How then would you explain, “ No more conscience of sins ”? Let me tell you how I should explain those five words.

Suppose there is a man here in London who finds himself in financial difficulties, and has to call his creditors together and lay before them a statement of his affairs. As a result it is seen that instead of being able to pay twenty shillings in the pound he is only able to pay five. He is an honest and upright man, and feels keenly the position in which he finds himself. The creditors can do nothing else but accept his five shillings in the pound; but though they accept it, and he is free from all legal obligations as regards the remainder, he is at times very much troubled about it. His conscience is very uneasy as to the whole matter.

In process of time that man finds himself in easy circumstances. The sun of prosperity

has once more broken through the clouds and shone upon him, and he is in a position to call his former creditors together, and to say to them, "Gentlemen, you will recollect the last time we met, when I had to lay before you a statement of my affairs, and could only pay five shillings in the pound. I am glad now to be able to tell you that I am in a position to pay you the remaining fifteen shillings, with interest from that date to this," and he hands each creditor a cheque for the amount. Of course their confidence in that man is very much established. But what about the man himself? He has no more conscience as to those debts. His conscience is now perfectly at rest. He can sleep soundly upon his bed without one disturbing thought, for all his obligations have been fully and completely met.

And has a similar thing been done in respect of our sins? Who, if I may use a figure of speech, has paid our debt? Could we ever have paid it ourselves? Could we have offered any composition at all in reference to that terrible debt? No indeed, our condition is exactly described in the parable of the creditor and the two debtors, the one owing fifty pence, and the other five hundred (see Luke VII.). They had nothing wherewith to pay. They were in a state of hopeless insolvency, without one penny to pay towards the liquidation of those debts.

THE CONSCIENCE CLEARED.

7

Who is it that has come and taken our debts upon Himself? Who is it that has paid them to the uttermost farthing? Who is it that has made an atonement for our sins, so that all the claims of divine justice are fully satisfied in respect of them? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. When I understand that, then it is that I understand the meaning of these words, "No more conscience of sins." No more an uneasy conscience in reference to the great burden of my sins. Christ has paid it all. Blessed be His dear and holy name!

Do not let us bring into this subject the question of our communion with God. That is another matter. Communion with God is a very tender and fragile thing, and easily broken. But, remember, the very failure, or the very sin, if we call it by its true name, that breaks the fragile link of communion with God, was among the sins for which the Saviour suffered on the cross, and which by His atoning work have been cast into the depths of the sea. Do you now understand those five words, "No more conscience of sins"? Do you understand that what the many sacrifices under the law could never do for those on whose behalf they were offered, the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ has done? That gives to us, if we understand the import of it, the peace of a perfected conscience.

We read further, "By one offering He hath

perfected for ever them that are sanctified " (v. 14). For how long has He perfected the conscience? Mark the next two words: "For ever." He has given to us a perfect conscience, a conscience perfected for all the days, and weeks, and months, and years of our earthly life. Nothing can ever invalidate the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It abides in all its infinite value before the eyes of God, and the conscience of the believer who understands that is perfected for ever.

But there is something further. If you examine the eleventh verse you will see three things. First there is the priest, one of the sons of Aaron. Then observe the word, "standeth." Thirdly, notice the work in which the priest was engaged. He daily ministers, and offers oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

Now look at verse 12, and you will find three things stated which are in striking contrast with these three. In contrast with "every priest" in verse 11, it is **THIS MAN**, the Lord Jesus Christ. The eleventh verse speaks of sacrifices continually offered. He has offered **ONE SACRIFICE** for sins. Then what follows? In verse 11 the priest is standing; his work is never completed. In verse 12 we read this Man for ever **SAT DOWN**. Mark well these three contrasts. There is the priest in his sacrificial robes, and here is the

THE CONSCIENCE CLEARED.

9

Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour. There is the priest offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, and here is Christ who has offered one sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. There is the priest, always standing ; here is Christ who has sat down on high, His work on that line being for ever finished.

Now I ask you to notice another thing. After saying in verse 14, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," verse 15 adds, "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us." What does this mean? A witness is one who bears testimony, who speaks of something within his knowledge. The Holy Ghost takes the place of a witness. You might be a witness in a court of law, in order to give evidence in connection with some case. You pass into the witness-box, and are sworn, and answer the questions that are put to you. Now it is none other than the Holy Ghost Himself who takes the place of a witness. To what fact does this divine and heavenly witness testify? It is this: "*Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*" Whose witness is that? The witness of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews? Nay, it is the witness of the Holy Ghost. In Jeremiah xxxi. the words are found in their original setting. They refer to the time when God will make a new covenant with

the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The terms of that covenant are there, and in this passage He gives those Hebrew Christians to understand that before the new covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (for it has not yet been made), all the blessings of the new covenant, and more, belong to them. Their sins and their iniquities God will remember no more.

Have any of us received this witness of the Holy Ghost? What is it to receive it? It is to believe it. What would it be to receive your witness in a court of law? If the presiding judge received your testimony, it would mean that he believed what you said. In the same way I believe the witness of the Holy Spirit, and in believing it I have the comfort and the joy of it.

W. B.

ABRAHAM THE PILGRIM:

HIS REFUGE, RESOURCE, AND REWARD.

IT is deeply interesting to read in the New Testament the divine appreciation of the saints of God who occupy a more or less prominent place in the earlier portion of the sacred canon.

In Romans xv. 4 we read that, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through

HIS REFUGE, RESOURCE, AND REWARD. II

patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

This we can readily understand. We read of men "subject to like passions as we are," living in the same world, and confronted by temptations similar to those that we have to encounter. We learn of God's call, and the revelation of His mind to them; we watch their triumphs and their failures; we follow God's ways with them; we listen to His summing up of their entire history, and thus from this unique lesson book, illumined by the Holy Spirit, we ascertain God's will and desire for ourselves.

Keeping this in mind, we propose to consider the outstanding events in the life of Abraham, and to inquire as to their teaching for us now. In the present paper we shall content ourselves by calling attention to the New Testament record of his

CALL, CONFESSION, AND CONDUCT.

Let us open our Bibles and read the opening words of the magnificent address delivered by Stephen and recorded in Acts VII. While in a far-off land, and steeped in idolatry, there came to Abraham the irresistible call of "the God of glory." Why, amid the myriads of men, the call came to *him* we cannot tell, and why amid the teeming millions that people this planet the sovereign call of God

has come to us we never shall be able to explain, but for the fact that it has reached us we shall never cease to thank God. The nature of Abraham's call altered the whole course of his life, and moulded all his after career. It transferred his affections, hopes, and aspirations from earth to heaven. "The God of glory" became everything to him, the city of God became the goal of his soul, and to walk worthy of his high and holy calling became the supreme desire of his heart.

Turning now to Hebrews XI. 8-19, we find that *faith* was in operation. Just as God called him, so God gave him the faith to respond to the call, with the result that "he went out, not knowing whither he went" (v. 8).

It may be he was considered very foolish. At the call of an unseen God to break with old associations, to say farewell to lifelong friendships, to turn his back upon a place hallowed it may be by tender memories, and to embark on a trackless path, "not knowing whither he went," seemed, and indeed was, contrary to nature, to reason, and to all the standards by which men of the world shape their course.

It was sufficient for Abraham, however, that "the God of glory" had called him. He believed God, he was "strong in faith giving glory to God" (Rom. IV. 3-20), and resting on His immutable promise he set out,

HIS REFUGE, RESOURCE, AND REWARD. 13

his whole vision changed, his objective entirely altered, to live the life of a heavenly man in an idolatrous and apostate world. Henceforth he confessed himself to be a stranger and pilgrim. A stranger, inasmuch as the things of the world from which he had been called had no longer any interest for him, he craved not its honours, he sought not its applause, and he desired not anything that it could offer. A pilgrim, because having come out from country and kindred, he no longer had a home on earth. Satisfied now with a tent and an altar he was but a pilgrim of the night passing on to the better, the heavenly country, the city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. His call was heavenly, so was his goal, and that being so he found himself in an unnatural element here. His desire now was not to get *on*, but to get *through*, and while sojourning in a strange land to be drawing everything from God, and to be living in spirit in that new world the vision of which had burst upon his soul.

This affected his conduct in a marked way, as we shall see in our further consideration of his history ; let it suffice here to remark that he did not require to proclaim his pilgrim character from the house-top ; his conduct bore splendid witness thereto. That he failed more than once we are clearly told ; that the weakest part of his armour was

where it was supposed to be strongest is true. But while we do not put a premium upon failure, we are, on the one hand, grateful to God for the honesty of the Scriptures in not glossing over the errors of so great a man, and on the other hand, we are encouraged as we see how one who was liable to failure and did fail, just as we do ourselves, could so walk as to have the approval of God.

In that brilliant roll of honour presented in Hebrews xi., Abraham is given the premier place; his failures are omitted, the Holy Spirit seems to linger over the record of his victories, and to find pleasure in telling us that God was not ashamed to be called his God. To have divine approbation was all that he desired, and is the one thing that we, too, should covet.

We feel that we cannot do better than invite the attention of our Christian readers everywhere to the life story of this devoted pilgrim. We are entering upon a new year under circumstances hitherto unparalleled, and in which our stranger and pilgrim character is likely to be tested as it never has been before. May we remember *our* call, may we be true to *our* confession, and may *our* conduct be consistent with both, as well as worthy of those who in dark days, and amid untoward circumstances, believe God.

W. B. D.

GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

IN view of the awful war that is raging in three continents, men are asking : “ DOES GOD INTERVENE IN HUMAN AFFAIRS ? ” Many are assured of His wonderful power every moment in carrying on all the providences of nature, but hesitate as to whether He intervenes in human affairs. Does He show His hand in connection with our lives, individually or nationally ?

The answer to this question cannot be obtained by studying the book of nature. We must come to revelation, the Scriptures of truth, the Word of God. If people studied their Bibles and prayed, they need never ask, Does God intervene in human affairs ?

GOD'S INTERVENTION IN THE PAST.

The difficulty is to make choice of a few instances of God's intervention in human affairs ; such is the wealth of material at our disposal in the Scriptures.

First, individually. The translation of Enoch was clearly an intervention on his behalf. Noah and his family's salvation by the ark presents another case in point.

The miraculous birth of Isaac ; the promise of the birth of Samson and of Samuel ; the preservation of the infant Moses ; the miracu-

16 GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

lous passage of the three Hebrew youths through the fiery furnace, which burnt their bands, but did not singe their hair; the shutting of the lions' mouths, hungry as they were, when Daniel was consigned to their den; the raising to life of dead persons; the angel bringing Peter out of prison; and standing by Paul on the storm-tossed vessel, cheering, sustaining, promising deliverance, though outward circumstances seemed all against it—these and a hundred other instances of God's intervention in the lives of individuals crowd to one's memory.

Then as to nations, the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt; the angel of the Lord smiting 185,000 Assyrians with His asphyxiating breath; the bringing in of the "times of the Gentiles" as seen in the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, are notable instances in point.

GOD'S GREATEST INTERVENTION.

But God's greatest intervention in human affairs was in the gift of His well-beloved Son. His beautiful life, His wonderful death, His glorious resurrection and ascension, the proclamation of the gospel world-wide, all bear witness to this.

The effect on the lives of countless individuals, and on nations, of the reception or rejection of the gospel, is too patent to be denied.

GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS. 17

Has this great intervention affected you, reader? If it has not, then you are in a perilous condition indeed. A planet that could cease to be affected by the attraction of the sun, and wander from its orbit, would certainly meet with destruction. Shall man, puny as he is, but more precious than any planet—man with a soul capable of communion with God—shall *man* get out of relation with God and escape destruction?

Even in this life the man who sets God's laws at defiance does so to his own hurt. The doctor's consulting-room, the law courts, the prisons, the asylums, all bear terrible witness to this.

It is well to be sensible of this, and to seek, if one has never benefited by God's great intervention in human affairs, to do so without further delay.

For the believer at the present moment, how comforting are the Scriptures. How these illustrations as to God's care in the past ages can be echoed in our hearts when we say, "We trust in the LIVING God, who is the Saviour [i.e. Preserver, in temporal matters] of all men, *SPECIALLY of them that believe*" (I Tim. IV. 10). How those two words stand out in this text, "*living*" and "*specially.*" God lives; God cares; He marks each falling sparrow, and counts the very hairs of our heads. How full and deep are His knowledge and care of His own.

18 GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

We have, then, the care of God, and the benefit of the priesthood of Christ, and the comfort of the Scriptures to sustain us in spite of every kind of pressure. We are rich indeed !

GOD'S INTERVENTION IN THE FUTURE.

To get an understanding of God's intervention in the past we have to go to Bible *history* ; to get an understanding of God's intervention in the future we must go to the *prophecy* of Scripture.

The great intervention for the believer is to be caught up out of this world at the second coming of Christ. And this coming, surely, draws very nigh. We are, without doubt, on the very eve of its fulfilment.

The terrible happenings in the world are giving men cause to think. Is this Armageddon ? Are these happenings the fulfilment of Bible prophecy ? These are the questions of multitudes.

There is one verse that distinctly answers these questions in the negative. The Lord says to His own, " Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth " (Rev. III. 10).

The word of the Lord's patience is the communication of the hope of His coming

GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS. 19

for His people and the instructions to be patient till He comes. Because we suffer with Christ in rejection and wait for Him patiently, we are assured that we are not to go through the great tribulation that is coming on the earth. What is happening just now is terrible indeed, but it is nothing in comparison with what will happen when God's judgments sweep the earth.

And mark how careful is the wording of this promise. We are to be kept "from [literally, *out of*] THE HOUR of temptation." And seeing the tribulation comes upon all the earth, there can be no escape from it for any on the earth. And to be kept from *the hour* of it literally means, to be taken *out of time*. "The hour" is connected with time, and to be kept "out of the hour" is to be *in eternity*.

So the next verse simply and naturally puts before us the speedy and imminent return of our Lord. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown" (Rev. III. 11).

Then, generally and broadly speaking, we see God's intervention in the future adumbrated by the happenings of to-day. In connection with the Lord coming to reign we are given signs that portend its approach, such as the apostasy of Christendom, the revival of the Roman Empire, the Jews going back to their own land, and the manifestation of the Anti-

20 GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

christ. They have not yet fully come, nor can they come till the church is caught up to glory, but things are most evidently working towards that end.

(1) *The apostasy of Christendom.* The progress of "Higher Criticism" and the New Theology, the spread of blasphemous and anti-christian cults, the frightful worldliness of the Church, all show that after the Rapture there will be nothing to hinder full-blown apostasy.

(2) *The revival of the Roman Empire.* The combination of nations, the suggestion repeatedly made of the wisdom of a federation of Latin kingdoms [one writer, and he an infidel, going so far as to enumerate a possible union, mentioned exactly ten countries, and the revived Roman Empire is to consist of ten kingdoms]—all this is a very ominous sign.

(3) *The Jews going back to their own land, though in unbelief.* The Zionist movement, the readiness of the Jews to furnish vast sums of money for the possession of the Holy Land, the secret preparation of material for the temple they intend to rebuild, the high probability of the expulsion of the Turk, all point in this direction.

(4) *The manifestation of the Antichrist.* All the antichrists and antichristian teachings coming more and more to the fore are paving the way for the man of sin. When the church is caught up and the present active restraining

GOD'S INTERVENTION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS. 21

influence of the Holy Spirit is removed, there will be no barrier to the arrival of such a person.

When I was a young man, the attention of politicians was focussed on the near east. Then it shifted to the far east and America, and little was heard of the near east. The recent happenings in the world have plainly centred interests in the near east. Palestine has seen strange sights of late. The Mount of Olives, Nazareth, the vale of Megiddo (giving a topical name to the future Armageddon), and such places have witnessed guns and convoys in transit marked with the name of Krupp. All round the Holy Land there has been fighting. Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Balkans, massacres in Armenia, etc., witness to this. And what is it all leading up to? God's great future intervention in human affairs. The Christian, enlightened by Scripture, sees gloomier days ahead for the world than the gloomiest pessimist has foretold. But he also sees a brighter moment coming than the airiest optimist has ever dreamed of. From behind the blackest clouds of Armageddon, in a day yet to come, there will burst forth the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (Isa. LIX. 19, 20).

Then peace, long looked for, will soothe the anguished heart of this world ; joy and glory will come when the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

A. J. P.

GOD THE HOME OF THE SOUL.

WHEN we came to Jesus we found it was like getting back home. We were "outsiders" before, having self instead of God as our centre, belonging to the world instead of to the Saviour, strangers, outcasts, enemies, with nothing to look forward to but eternal banishment in the outer darkness. Now we have found the soul's true centre—God ; we have been born into the Father's family ; we are in the school of the Saviour, and an eternal home in the presence of Him whom we love is our prospect. The needle of our soul points to the true pole, the Lord Jesus. We instinctively turn to Him as the sunflower turns to the sun. It should not be difficult for us to say, like Paul, "To me to live is Christ." What is there else to live for but His service ?

Said one, "My life hangs by a thread, but that thread is in the hand of my Father." Whatever our earthly home may be like, we join with the Psalmist in singing, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire but Thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but *God* is the strength of my heart and *my portion for ever.*"

E. A.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

REGARD attentively the Lord Jesus, and you will see in Him at once God and Man, without relinquishing any part of His deity, without alienating any part of His humanity. At His birth you see Him persecuted by Herod and adored by Magi. At His baptism fulfilling righteousness in Jordan, yet proclaimed the beloved Son of the Father on coming out of it. In the vessel we behold a Man who sleeps, and God who calms the storm. At the grave of Lázarus a Man who weeps, and God who raises the dead. At the well of Sychar a Man weary and thirsty, yet God who gives a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. On the cross it is a Man who dies, but the earth trembles at its centre, and the sun itself loses its light, for that Man is "God, over all, blessed for ever."

(From an old writer : A.D. 1600.)

SELF-EXAMINATION:

WHEN IS IT USEFUL?

A GREAT deal has been said to warn the believer against the evils of self-occupation. There is sometimes, however, a tendency, on the part of those who rightly desire to guard against these, to neglect the very necessary exercise of *self-examination*.

Self-occupation is a state of soul that leads to disappointment and despondency, for it generally implies an expectation of good from

that which can only produce evil, from the flesh which God has exposed and judged at the cross. But *self-examination*, with the right object in view, would result in a closer communion with the Lord, a more godly walk, and a tender conscience.

Perhaps some will say, in answer to this, "But am I not always to keep my mind fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ?" No doubt if we actually did this we should never require any examination of self, for "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John III. 6). Often, however, the Christian gets his mind occupied with the things of earth, the necessities or the cares of life claim his attention, or he may even become attracted by the pleasures of the world. The mind, too, may get unduly cumbered with much service, even with service for the Lord, or the wrongdoing of fellow-Christians may divert the mind from Him. We have the old nature still with us, ever ready to assert its unchanging tendency to evil. We are, moreover, very easily deceived, and while we imagine that we are pursuing a right course, we may really be following a very wrong one.

Self-examination may be exercised for the following objects :

I. DETECTION OF EVIL IN MOTIVES OR ACTIONS (1 Cor. XI. 28, 31).

In the proportion that evil exists in our

mind or ways unjudged by us, will be the loss of communion with the Lord. If therefore there is a lack of joy and the conscience has not already been blunted (which is, alas, too often the case), the practice of self-examination in the presence of God will generally make manifest the cause. Before the Christians at Corinth partook of the Lord's Supper (which is a practical expression of communion), each one was exhorted to *examine himself*. They were also told in the same chapter that because they were not judging themselves the Lord had to chasten them.

2. THE MAINTENANCE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE (Acts XXIV. 16).

Said the apostle: "Herein do I *exercise myself* to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and man." This was in no wise inconsistent with the knowledge of the grand truth of the Christian's high calling that had been revealed to him. This desire might well possess the oldest Christian as much as the one just recently converted. It should be carefully noted that the word "always" does not apply to the exercise, but to the result of it. The exercise is only a means to an end (because of the possibility of failure), and must not be an absorbing object.

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us

run with patience the race that is set before us, *looking unto Jesus . . .*" (Heb. XII. 1, 2). Not only must the Lord Jesus be our Object, but also His life in this world is the pattern for ours. Every lovely trait was exemplified in that wonderful pathway, and we are exhorted to let His mind be in us, and also to walk as He walked. I say this because we are prone to derive our standard of Christianity from the ways of one from whom we have learned helpful lessons. Unconsciously the spirit of the teacher is imbibed with his ministry.

Our introspection must be in the sight of God, in the light of His Word, and with the sole and whole-hearted desire to please Him. Nothing pleases Him but the Lord Jesus Christ and what bears His stamp.

Familiarity with the truth, unless coupled with soul-exercise, tends to deaden the conscience. If a Christian becomes familiar with Scriptures which condemn certain things in his life, without its resulting in self-judgment, his conscience is thereby blunted, and he becomes unable to realize his lack of Christian grace and his proneness to failure.

3. SHOWING US IF OUR LOVE IS WANING (John XXI. 16 ; Rev. II. 5).

The Lord knew of Peter's affection for Him, yet He desired him to search his own heart in reference to his love.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 27

We find that the church at Ephesus left its first love, though retaining its outward activities in the defence and propagation of the truth. As our tendency is so much in the same direction, should we not test ourselves at times as to whether our love is waning? How often do we speak of the Lord's unchanging love to us by way of excuse for our own lack of love in return! *His* love has, indeed, to occupy our hearts and not our own, but that cannot be the case if ours is growing less instead of more. Search should be made to remove the hindrance so that He may be alone the Object of our affection. He alone can produce love, but we may hinder its effect in our own hearts.

WM. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

U. S. A.—The question of salvation does not enter into the parable of the Vine and its branches. The lesson conveyed is that of the necessity of *dependence*. The disciple cannot bear fruit—indeed, he can do nothing, apart from Him from whom all help and strength must come. Judas, as you suggest, may be taken as an example of a branch that did not abide in Christ. Better for him if he had never companied with the Saviour, never heard of Him, than to be cast forth *as a branch*. Anyone passing through a vineyard in pruning time sees hundreds of branches cut off from the vines. Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. And such is the

28 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

fate of those who, by not abiding in Christ, show that they have no vital link with Him.

As to addressing the Lord in prayer as " You," we should be strongly opposed to such a practice, as savouring of irreverence. If any brother, perhaps possessing only a limited acquaintance with the English language, or ignorant of what is suitable when praying, were to use this style of address, we should seek him privately, and point out to him in a kindly way wherein we thought he was mistaken.

H. N., LLOYDMINSTER.—We have carefully considered the pamphlet, *The Times of the Gentiles*, which you were kind enough to send us. We cannot commend it as a safe guide to the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures. The writer confuses the Antichrist (the pseudo-Messiah of the Jews) with the great western monarch of the last days, and confounds Babylon with the Assyrian power, though, in the time of the end, these two will be hostile to one another. The view that the vision and incidents of Daniel IV. are to be prophetically interpreted is by no means new, nor the application of the " seven times," during which Nebuchadnezzar was like a beast of the field, to the whole period of the times of the Gentiles. We have not space to go further into the matter. You should obtain from Loizeaux Bros., 1 East 13th Street, New York, a copy of *Lectures on Daniel*, by H. A. Ironside. It is a concise exposition, clearly written, and deals with " the year-day theory " of which your author has so much to say.

THE RESULT OF HAVING CHRIST AS OUR SHEPHERD.

“I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

PSALM XXIII. 6.

“COME, come, David,” we may almost hear some of our friends say, “is it not very presumptuous on your part to speak with such certainty about the future? Would it not be evidence of a more lowly state of mind if you said, ‘Well, I hope, in spite of all my shortcomings, that the Lord will be merciful to me at the last and give me a place just inside His door forever’?”

But whatever may be thought of the statement, there it stands, without qualification and without recall. And there it must stand, for the words were not the expression of a pious opinion but were inspired in David’s heart and mouth by the Holy Spirit. And if we consider them in their setting we shall see that to change them would be to spoil the beauty of this best loved portion of Old Testament Scripture. “The Lord is my Shepherd” is the opening sentence of the Psalm; and that opening admits of no other conclusion but this: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” It must be so, for can the Lord who is my Shepherd leave His sheep to perish on the way? Must He not for the love He bears

30 THE RESULT OF HAVING CHRIST

them, and for the honour of His Name, and the integrity of His Word, lead them safely, even through the valley of the shadow of death, to this glorious goal? He must, or we can trust His work no more. Yes, if the Lord is my Shepherd, I will for a certainty dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. These are twin statements. A Psalm beginning with the one would be incomplete if it did not close with the other, and every soul that can truly use the first may use the last with the same glorious certainty as David did.

A shepherd is a *keeper* of sheep, not a loser of them. And if we may say "The Lord is *my* Shepherd, *my* Keeper," He is also the *good* Shepherd, and we may draw from that word every meaning which it is capable of yielding, yet not exhaust all that can be said of Him. He is no hireling who flees when the wolf comes, but the Good Shepherd who stakes His all, yea, gives His life, in the defence of and for the salvation of His sheep. So good is He; so loved are they! He is good in the sense of being capable also. If He were constantly losing His sheep, He would not be a good keeper of sheep. He could not in this case be said to be a keeper of sheep at all, but a loser of them, and then where would His glory be?

He has declared His intention to hold securely and for ever every sheep of His. He

AS OUR SHEPHERD.

31

has said, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Can His intention fail? Nay; His word cannot be broken, for He is the eternal God. He has met the foes that threatened the sheep, He has broken their power for ever.

He Satan's power laid low ;
 Made sin, sin's reign o'erthrew ;
 Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
 And death by dying slew.

And it is the hand that conquered these mighty powers, the hand of omnipotence, that holds the sheep secure forever.

But further, He said: "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." *This is the hand of everlasting love.* Then He added, "I and My Father are one." Almighty power and everlasting love are one, and they must be divorced before a sheep of Christ's can perish. The Father and the Son are one, and that eternal unity must be dissolved before the feeblest lamb of Christ's flock can be lost. How secure in this double grip are all those who can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd!" They may add with glad certainty, as David did, the assured result of this blessed fact: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

J. T. M.

THE MORNING AFTER CONVERSION.

“**T**HANK God, that was settled last night !” So the miner could with his last breath triumphantly assert, as he lay crushed beneath the fallen roof of the mine, concerning the great question of his soul’s salvation.

Happy the morning for every soul who can look back to this definite transaction between it and God, and say, “Thank God, it was *settled* yesterday !”

But the day after conversion is not always a bright time of realized salvation. Many are the questions, doubts, fears, and difficulties that at times present themselves to the new-born soul ; leading, in some cases, to no confession at all, and in others to alternate hope and fear ; occupation with *self* instead of with *Christ* ; sighing instead of singing ; little testimony and a small measure of separation from the world.

It is important then to

GET A GOOD START

in the Christian race—a good send-off on the journey heavenward.

You came to the Lord last night, did you ? and rested on Him and His finished work for

THE MORNING AFTER CONVERSION. 33

salvation? Then you are safe, for never can His precious blood and finished work lose their efficacy before God. As Rutherford puts it :

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

Believing on Jesus your faith is settled on the Rock of Ages. You may tremble on the Rock, but the Rock will never tremble under you, and you may sing aloud with glad and restful heart :

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

Again, our blessed Saviour well knew what unbelieving hearts we have, so He has been beforehand with us, and given us perfect assurance in another way. Listen to what He has said—“ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and *they shall never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all ; and none can pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one ” (John x. 27-30). It is the Shepherd's hand that holds. Who can pluck you out of the hand of the Good Shepherd? out of the Father's hand? Let your heart rejoice then, young believer, in the blessedness of your security. The Good Shepherd who gave His

34 THE MORNING AFTER CONVERSION.

life for you has found you, and will carry you *home* rejoicing, blessed be His name !

Another thing—

YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR NAME.

Yesterday your name was *Sinner*, to-day it is *Saint*. Saint means one that God sets apart for Himself (see Num. VIII. 17), and 1 Corinthians I. 2 shows us it means all true believers.

This, then, is your position. You have been set apart for God by the call of grace ; apart from the world ; apart from sinners over whose heads God's judgment hangs (John III. 18). You are not of the world, even as Jesus is not of the world. This He Himself tells you (John XVII. 16). Also we are told that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. III. 20). We have, as the hymn expresses it,

"Lost our stand in this death-doomed land"

What a precious calling ! Apart *to* God, and *for* God. Yesterday a sinner in your sins, among the doomed ; to-day a heavenly saint, nothing less. Oh, the unspeakable value of the precious blood of Christ !

You need food—spiritual food—however. Let the Word of God be your delight (1 Peter II. 2). Not only will you get comfort therein, direction, correction, and instruction, so that you may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. III. 16, 17), but you will find the food of your soul. You will find

THE MORNING AFTER CONVERSION. 35

Jesus, the Bread of Life, portrayed there in His beauty and grace, His truth and His love ; and you will grow as you meditate upon Him, as thus made known to your heart, and as His glories fill the vision of your soul.

AFTER THE CONFESSION OF YOUR LIPS, LET YOUR LIFE BE THE CONTINUAL WITNESS THAT YOU ARE CHRIST'S.

Maintain your true character as one who belongs to God. "Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." *Be what you are.* You cannot serve God and Mammon—Christ and the world. Do not try. Be out and out for the Lord.

Your power and your happiness lie in simple obedience to the Word of God. When the Lord said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand," He gave him the power to do so. Act, then, as if all depended on you ; trust God as if all depended on Him. Keep a single eye for the will of God : then all His power is for you.

Then you need prayer. Prayer is the spirit and language of childlike dependence : we cannot do without prayer. The Lord Jesus was pre-eminently a Man of prayer, Paul was a man of prayer, and indeed everyone who figures on the page of Scripture as doing God's

36 THE MORNING AFTER CONVERSION.

work. Prayer is the life's breath of the godly. Be much, then, in prayer for yourself and for others : speak freely to God, desiring that He may be glorified in all you ask for.

“ Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

CHOOSE YOUR COMPANY CAREFULLY.

If you are simple and do not *hide* your light (this is the danger !), the thoughtless and careless will not care to be near you. On your part you need the help of those like-minded with yourself. Shun the friendship of worldlings. Yearn over them, and seek their salvation, but never forget that separation from evil is the only way to have power over it in any form. Scripture says : “ Evil communications corrupt good manners ” ; and how many young Christians have been caused a lifetime of sorrow by not breaking with worldly companions at conversion, while they have, at the same time, lost all power for good over others.

Soon you will be in eternity. Measure all here in the light of that, and endeavour so to live and serve here that you may then hear the Master say, “ Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

But there is yet a more blessed motive for your life here. Jesus has saved you for *His*

ANSWERED PRAYER.

37

own delight. Nothing will satisfy Him but your heart's undivided affection. Is it not wonderful that He should value our poor affection for Him? But He does, blessed be His name! Oh, let us give Him what He desires! for if we love Him, it is because He first loved us, and gave Himself for us. Then, "till He come," let the language of our hearts be (in the words of Miss Havergal) :

"Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

"Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee."

F. H.

(Printed as separate booklet. May be had from our publishers.)

ANSWERED PRAYER.

THE following hints may prove of help in connection with the most interesting and ofttimes perplexing subject of answers to prayer. Many minds are assisted by a knowledge of what may be termed the "machinery" of things; and the brief suggestions here given aim at pointing out some of the "workings" in connection with this subject.

The prime reason why some prayers are not answered is that they are not in keeping with the will of God. One of the best examples is Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Three times did the Apostle pray to be delivered from his trouble, but the request was not granted. He received an answer, however, for God assured him that His grace was sufficient for him in his trouble. How often have prayers besieged the throne of grace for the recovery of some sick servant of the Lord, but the request has not been granted, and the sufferer has passed away in the midst of his fruitful, God-honouring labours. We may or may not think that we know the reason for God's refusing to hear the importunate pleadings of His children. God is sovereign, and His providences often inscrutable. "The things that are revealed belong to us, but the things that are not revealed belong to God," and "He giveth not account of His matters."

When we pray for things concerning which we have no definite information in the Word of God, providential circumstances and inward leadings may indicate the Lord's will. And here the question suggests itself, "Is it possible for us to dwell in such close communion with our Head in heaven as that our prayers shall either be answered OR STOPPED?" This experience seems to be contemplated in the words, "If ye abide in Me and My words

ANSWERED PRAYER.

39

abide in you, ye shall ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done to you." We need patience, however, for the Lord desires to draw us out in perseverance and watchfulness. Much prayer went up for Peter's deliverance from the prison before the request was granted.

Whether we pray for what is revealed as in harmony with God's will, or not, God uses means, and we often lose sight of the fact that our petition has received an answer for the simple reason that means have been used. God acts according to laws whether in nature or in grace. If we pray for an increase of faith (and who would say that this is wrong?), we must not expect God to throw us down a lump of it from heaven. He will answer our desire by exercising our hearts and causing our minds to be occupied with the object of faith, that is, the divine truths revealed in the Bible. In the vast majority of cases where prayer for the recovery of a sick one is answered, God blesses the means used. To refuse to use the means, and to expect God to work miracles, is presumption.

Another reason why we fail to see that God has granted our prayer is that we confuse our petition with our real need. I may feel my need for a certain thing, but my *interpretation of that need into petition may be incorrect*. Our need is one thing: our translation of that need into expression is another. Hence

although God has answered our real need, we cannot see that He has answered our petition, and we may imagine that He has forgotten our cry.

Again, we sometimes fail to see that God has answered because His answer has taken the form of His working in us. Whenever I pray aright, God answers. How does He answer? By working. Where does He work? Especially *in* me: by quickening the new nature, stirring up godly desires, reviving past impressions, calling to mind scriptures, creating a sense of inward leading, suggesting lines of service, and so forth. If the answer had taken the shape of something that we could see as having taken place outside ourselves, then we should have no doubt that God had heard. But God has changed things *within*, and thus has answered, although we may not have realized the blessed fact. ASK, AND GOD WILL DO. He is always answering prayer.

And now a brief reminder of the conditions of answered prayer. A holy walk is essential. If we are tolerating known sin, God will not hear us. (See the fourteen marginal references opposite John ix. 31.) Our petitions must be sincere. Some one has said that more lies were told in a prayer meeting than anywhere else. This should not be. We must ask for God's glory (James i. 3). Spiritual selfishness may lead us to view every blessing from the stand-

ANSWERED PRAYER.

41

point of our own gain. We must expect the answer. (See James I. 5.) How often our prayers resemble the runaway knocks given by mischievous boys at people's street doors. Lastly, God answers by making us feel we ought to do something ; if we refuse to do it, we prevent Him answering our prayer.

When we pray in the name of Christ, it is as if we make Him responsible to get that prayer answered. *We ask* in the name of Christ ; *God gives* for the sake of Christ ; Christ being the Mediator in each case. We dare not attach the all-prevailing name of our Representative to any petition that we are not sure is in accordance with the divine will. If we abide in Christ we shall ask in keeping with God's will, for it will be Christ asking in us. We need to enjoy an experimental communion of life and interests with our Head in heaven, and then count upon His bringing His own power to bear upon our difficulties, our problems and our service.

The above suggestions should be worked out into our praying life. They contain wonderful encouragement to persistent, believing prayer—a mighty weapon which we are often too slack and unskilful in wielding against our foes, and for our walk and service. *Prayer changes things.*

E. A.

ARE YOU “ELIGIBLE,” OR “INDISPENSABLE AT HOME”?

THE pages of this magazine are read by many who have “left all” and followed Christ. Others of us, who have not been called to labour in the foreign field, very thankfully recognize the grace in those who have ventured into the lands where Romanism or heathenism (or possibly a ghastly mingling of the two) make work for Christ so difficult. We have a responsibility with regard to them, and it is our bounden duty, and our happy privilege, to help them in every way that is in our power.

There must be many, however, who cannot delegate responsibility, or by prayer or gifts evade the call to the “regions beyond.” We have lately had an illustration in the pressure being brought to bear upon all eligible men to enlist in His Majesty’s forces. A powerful foe, a pernicious system, an urgent need, a clarion call, made it imperative, we were assured, that no one should hold back unless he be *ineligible*, or *indispensable at home*.

Granted that the service of the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely more serious and on a far higher level than fighting in the King’s army, yet the illustration serves in some respects.

There is a call, a command, to service abroad as well as at home : “Go ye *into all the world*”

ARE YOU "ELIGIBLE" ?

43

—"repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name *among all nations.*"

There is need—appalling need—for there are *hundreds of millions* in the dark parts of the earth who have never heard of Christ.

There is a powerful foe, who, with his wiles, his cunning, his cruelties, is cajoling or driving millions of his victims into the lake of fire.

There is a pernicious system of intrigue, corruption, imitation, diabolical cruelty, that might daunt any man who had not God with him.

It is clearly no light matter to enter the lists against such a mighty foe, and woe be to him who ventures forth uncalled and unprepared. Better far have the support of Christ in the kitchen or the workshop than be without it in Africa or China.

"Do not go," says a veteran missionary, "to any foreign field until you know beyond a doubt that God has Himself sent you to that particular field at that particular time. There is a romance or halo about being a missionary which disappears when you get on the field, I can assure you. And believe me, from the first moment you step upon ship-board on your way to the field, the devil and all his agents will attack and entice and ensnare you, or try to do all these, in order to defeat the purpose for which you cut loose and launched out.

"Believe me, the foreign field is already full enough of prophets that have run, and He did not send them. If you know beyond a doubt—and you may—that God is empowering and sending you there, and now, go and fear not ; and when, through the days, months, and years of suffering that are sure to be in this cross-bearing life, the question arises again and again, 'Why is this? Am I in God's plan and path?'—the rock to which you will hold in this sea of questionings and distresses is—'God sent me here, I know beyond a doubt: therefore I may go on fearing nothing, for He is responsible and He alone.'

"But if you have to admit, 'I do not know whether He sent me or not,' you will be thrown into awful distress of mind by the attacks of the great adversary, not knowing what will be the outcome. . . .

"We will be able to trudge on, though bowed under the weight of that cross of suffering, and even of shame, if our hearts are full of Him, and our eyes are ever looking upon the One who is invisible, the One who sent us forth, and therefore will carry us through. . . . I pray that this message may shake in you all that can be shaken, that that which cannot be shaken may remain firm as the Rock of Ages."

The writer of these weighty words has won

“ INDISPENSABLE AT HOME ” ? 45

the martyr's crown and his message cannot be disregarded.

At the same time we would very heartily encourage all who really desire to serve the Lord. Let such not be daunted by misunderstandings, nor deterred by opposition. Once a satisfactory answer is received to the all-important question, “ Lord, what wilt THOU have ME to do ? ” all is clear. Follow in faith where He leads, count upon Him for grace, for means, for all that you will need.

The question of guidance is admittedly a difficult one, and yet He has said, “ I will guide thee with Mine eye.” Failing this, it may be needful to guide by circumstances, so that you can go no way but His way.

Probably most of those who read this message are more or less interested in the Lord's work abroad. Let such ask themselves honestly whether they are really in the place where the Lord would have them, and doing the work for which He saved them.

The time is short, the need is urgent, the Power is sufficient, the compensations are abundant.

Loudly and clearly rings the call : “ Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us ? ”

God grant that some, for the love of souls, for the glory of Christ, may cry under the pressure of God's Holy Spirit : “ Here am I ; send ME.”

W. B. W.

ABRAHAM THE PILGRIM.

HIS REFUGE, HIS RESOURCE, HIS REWARD.

READ GENESIS XI. 27-32 ; XII.-XIII. 1-4.

IT would seem that Abraham did not immediately respond whole-heartedly to the divine call. In Genesis XI. 31 we read :

“And Terah took Abram his son . . . to go into the land of Canaan ; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.”

as if this were merely an ordinary event in his everyday life. In verse 32, we learn of Terah's death, and up to this point it is he who is prominent. In chapter XII., verses 1-3, however, we get an interesting sidelight (also referred to in Acts VII. 2), for we find that the call of God, accompanied by the promise, had come not to Terah but to Abraham. He was invited to quit the old country for the new ; to break with natural links in order that he might form fresh associations ; to renounce a home on earth in favour of a home in heaven. It may be that the call came suddenly ; the claims were great, and Abraham appears to have hesitated. We do not think we are running riot with our imagination if we suggest that a family council was held,

and it was decided that Terah also should go.

They started for Canaan, but as human expediency, rather than faith, was at work, it is not surprising that they stopped half-way, and there remained, until death came in and became the servant of God's purpose and of Abraham's blessing.

God did not repeat the call; with that inimitable patience which ever characterizes Him—as we have such good cause to know—He waited. Abraham, aroused by the death of his father to a sense of his own shortcoming, at length stepped out in the path of faith. He came into the land of Canaan (xii. 5), and there he found the Canaanite. Reason might have said, "Take possession, exterminate or subdue the inhabitants," but the path of faith is trodden only one step at a time, and the man of faith takes his directions not from his own heart, nor yet from his fellow-men, but from God and God alone. He built an altar, thereby showing that he had a link outside of the place in which he sojourned; that the living God, "the God of Glory," was the Object of his faith, as He became later the Object of his affection, and of his worship.

Removing again, *he pitched his tent*, thus proclaiming his stranger and pilgrim character. In the land to which he had been called and

48 ABRAHAM THE PILGRIM ; HIS REFUGE,

which he had been assured " he should after receive for an inheritance " (Heb. XI. 8), he claimed no place, and sought no position, but with tent and altar, near to Bethel (which means " the house of God "), and with his face set " toward the south," he presents a lovely picture of one who having had a vision of another world, desired nothing here ; having been brought in contact with the invisible he was not attracted by that which was visible ; having got the promise of the heavenly he was well content to part with the earthly.

Faith is always tested, however, and the measure of our profession becomes the measure of our testing. So we read in XII. 10 :

" There was a famine in the land : and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there ; for the famine was grievous in the land."

It is the great happenings in the world, as well as the minor events, that try us. The things that come to our own doors serve to show the extent of our faith in God ; and how far we are able to comport ourselves as a heavenly people, while men on every hand instinctively turn to human resources because they know not God. Abraham was not told to go to Egypt ; the " God of Glory " could, and would, have met his need, but, for the moment, he left God out of account. One wrong step led to another. Having forgotten

that God was his resource, he was unable to count upon Him as his refuge from the tempter's assaults, and therefore we have the melancholy tale narrated in XII. 14-20. How human was Abraham's act ! We can understand it, for have we not ourselves failed in a similar way some time or other, bringing trouble upon our own heads, and dishonour upon God's name ? How divine was God's patience ! We can appreciate that—can we not ?—because we have so frequently experienced it.

Abraham returned to the place that he had left, he got back to the secret of God's presence, and the warmth of His favour ; the time spent in Egypt was lost time, it counted for nothing in the path of faith, but now there was a fresh start. The tent was again pitched, the altar was re-erected, and once again we see this pilgrim pursuing his journey, finding his object, his refuge, his resource, his reward, his all in God. We need not detain our readers, nor occupy space, by pointing out the very obvious application of that which we have been considering, but we pray God to use our review of this part of the history of His honoured servant for our encouragement and blessing, and to His Name shall be all the glory.

W. B. D.

GRACE AND ITS OUTCOME.

OUTLINE OF AN ADDRESS BY SHEIKH ABDUL AZIZ.

[The writer of this article was born in India, and was brought up a Mohammedan. At the age of nineteen he was converted, and after his baptism was cast out by his father. On several occasions he had had to flee for his life. After some years of missionary work in India, he came to England about three years ago, since which time he has been preaching and teaching the Word of God, chiefly in and around London.—ED.].

READ TITUS II. 11-14 ; III. 4-6 ; PHILIPPIANS III. 3.

IN the first of these passages we have the *way* in which we are saved ; in the second, the *Author* of this great salvation ; and in the third, its *outcome*, namely, spiritual worship, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

The Apostle distinctly says that the grace of God which has appeared teaches us. We are therefore in the school of grace, to learn what the Holy Spirit has to teach each one. The object of this epistle was that Titus, and the assembly, might be so instructed that there might be the reproduction of a godly character and a holy life, to the end that God might be glorified.

Now in coming to that point the Apostle begins by saying that the grace of God which has appeared unto all men brings salvation, or, as the New Translation puts it, “ The grace of God, which carries with it salvation for all men.” Grace is the source, faith is the channel,

GRACE AND ITS OUTCOME.

51

and the object of our worship is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the vessel of grace from beginning to end. The first thing that grace brings to us is salvation. How is this salvation brought about? How does grace bring salvation to us? We are told in the first place that "He gave Himself." The Lord Jesus Christ, the personification of grace, in whom grace was illustrated, who was the proclaimer of grace—*gave Himself*. It was in the eternal purpose of God that His Son should convey grace, becoming Himself full of it. He was full of grace, as John tells us, that He might bring this great grace to us, and so we are told here that He gave Himself. Christ gave Himself on Calvary so that grace might be manifested to us.

What else? We are told that He came to redeem us from all iniquity. That is emancipation, taking us out from the environment and the circumstances of sin. If you read the epistle further on, you will find a description of the character of sin is given there, the character of a man in the flesh. We are told he is a slave to sin. That is perfectly true. Do not I know it? I was a Mohammedan, a slave of sin, and not knowing the grace of God wanted to break away from the fetters of sin. But I never succeeded. The more I wanted to get rid of these chains the worse was the entanglement into which I got, for

“in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.” I did nothing else but gratify the desires of this world. I was a slave to all these appetites, all these fetters of sin. But the grace of God brought salvation. God in His sovereign grace and goodness has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy. When I think of these things, I feel that I wish I had a hundred lives to live for my Master. Nobody could have done what Jesus did for me. He gave Himself for me as my Substitute. He gave Himself for us to redeem us from the curse of the law, but that is not all.

After the grace of God has brought us salvation, it teaches us. What does it teach us? To renounce all ungodliness. It teaches us to deny all the desires and appetites to which we were subject. The purpose of the grace of God is that we might be separated from this evil age, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The satisfaction of God is the object in all this, and so we see here very clearly that the purpose of grace in bringing salvation is in order that ungodliness and the power of Satan might go, and that we might be here to the glory of God and honour. It is for His own glory that He accomplishes this great work of grace in our hearts and in our lives.

Then, further, we find this purpose, that we may be able to give to Him spiritual

GRACE AND ITS OUTCOME.

53

worship, the worship and adoration of my heart as the result of the work of grace done in my soul. In Old Testament times circumcision marked the people as separated to Jehovah, but in New Testament times what marks us off as a separated people is spiritual worship. Do I worship in the current of the spirit? I do not mean sermonizing and preachifying: is there music in my heart? Is my heart ascending in worship and praise to Him? It is the giving of my heart's homage and adoration to Him who gave Himself for me. Is that the attitude of my soul towards my God?

The next thing is, if we worship God in the spirit, we are found waiting for "that blessed hope." The purpose of grace is that we may wait for the coming of the Lord. Grace covers the past absolutely, and holds out to us the prospect of eternal glory in the future. Grace makes us expectant, looking for the time when He shall come to take us home, leaving the world behind.

There are hindrances. I will tell you the great hindrance in our Christian life: the flesh, religious flesh. Our religiousness stands in our way. That was so in my own case. When I was a Mohammedan I was very religious. I sought to do good in my own strength, as far as lay in me, and I did everything I could in order to please God, and have

54 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

His smile resting on me. I sought to win my own salvation. It was religious flesh. But it is not by works at all. The source is in the mercy and kindness of God. God will show His great grace and glory in our salvation. The whole work and plan of redemption, from its inception to its culmination in the cross of Calvary, is the wonder of all wonders, and it must ever retain its greatness.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. K. B.—You want to know if people are anxious to give Testaments and gospel books to *soldiers*, because they deem them greater sinners than others. We venture to say that no such thought enters the minds of the distributors. They consider that these brave men will soon find themselves face to face with death, and that numbers of them, realizing this, are anxious to have copies of the Word of God, and to know His way of salvation through faith in Christ. The idea that to die for one's country is to make sure of heaven seems, as you say, to be spreading, and we fear that the fault lies largely at the door of ministers and others who teach this doctrine from their pulpits. We have ourselves written a short paper, stating what we believe to be the truth as to this matter, and explaining the way of salvation in simple language. It is issued under the title, *The Death that Saves*. Write to our publishers for a parcel of them.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 55

S. L. B.—So you think the Roman Catholic Church is doing true missionary work, “although mixed up with a good deal of error.” And you wonder why, in view of the number of heathen who have never heard the gospel, men and women who devote their lives to the Lord’s service should “waste their time” labouring in lands where Rome is already in possession! And you think the testimony of missionaries in South America is to be rejected because they are “naturally biassed against the Roman Church.”

Now we should have thought that those who are labouring in lands where Rome shows herself in her true colours would be the best witnesses as to the real nature of that apostate church. But do you not think that the Lord has ways of making His guidance clear to His servants? And if He says to one, “Go to Peru,” and to another, “Go to Brazil,” who are you to affirm that He ought to have said, “Go to Central Africa”?

We believe you are wholly mistaken in thinking that the agents of the Pope are spreading the gospel. The following incident quoted from a Romanist periodical by Mr. Paget Wilkes in *Missionary Joys in Japan*, serves to illustrate the methods pursued by Catholic priests in the mission field. It is a story that might well make angels weep. The writer, himself a priest, says :

“I used to go out every month several times to the town of Gosen. On one occasion I happened to meet a most interesting idiot. He was a man of fine physical appearance, very gentle, and extremely fond of dogs. He usually had a string of ownerless dogs in train, and spent his days going about begging food for these protégés. If he were born an idiot I would baptize him; and what a happy thing that would be for him! I had waited for

half a year, getting the catechist at Gosen to make the necessary inquiries; and ascertaining that he was certainly a born idiot, I determined to baptize him. But how to carry out this resolve was the question. In the first place, since he was a fool, I could not talk with him; and who could tell what he might do when the water of baptism was poured on his head? In general he was peaceable and quiet, but he might become violently angry when the water was applied. There was nothing to do but wait an opportunity.

"About $1\frac{1}{2}$ ri (nearly four miles) on the Niigata side of Gosen there is a river-ferry, and on each side there is a tea-house for people waiting for the ferry. The place is called Manganji. On one of my trips I reached this ferry, and while waiting for the boat to come back across the river, I went into the tea-house to rest. There were a number of others waiting, and who should be among them but the above-mentioned idiot! Thinking it an opportunity not to be missed, I filled a teacup with water, and going up in front of him as he stood there singing a fool-song, I said, 'If you will drink this cup of water I will give you this twenty sen as a reward,' and let it glitter before his eyes. Showing intense eagerness to get the coin, he reached for the cup, when, dashing the water in his face, I recited rapidly, 'I wash you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost!' Finding himself dripping with water, he glared on me with angry eyes, and seemed about to leap on me, but handing him the twenty-sen piece, I said, 'Good fellow, wise man,' and getting out another twenty-sen piece I gave him that too. His anger melted into a laugh, and without knowing even to say Arigato (thank you), he passed along, again singing his idiot-song. The people in the tea-house said, 'This foreigner plays funny jokee,' and laughed immoderately. I laughed too, but my laugh had a different meaning from that of the unbelievers. The poor imbecile had entered the spiritual world by means of the rite that looked irreverent and like a bit of joking. He had received the blessings of the Saviour's blood and the gift of eternal life and fellowship in heaven with all angels and saints. I often think, when I have died and passed the pains of purgatory and entered the heavenly home, the first to greet me will be that poor idiot."

Mr. A. J. Pimm, 13 Church Street, Aldershot, again asks for parcels of gospel books. He has a wide open door for their distribution among the thousands of soldiers in that district.

THE LORD'S COMING EXPLAINED.

HAVE you ever given serious thought to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ ?

Sometimes it has been spoken of as a subject of no practical use, and only fit for idle minds to speculate about. But that way of looking at the matter is, to say the least, exceedingly irreverent. Surely no truth, much less one holding so conspicuous a place as this in the pages of Holy Scripture, should be treated in such a fashion. It is a great mistake, involving serious spiritual loss ; for the expectation of the Lord's return stirs up the holiest affections of the soul, powerfully influences the Christian's life, and ever urges him forward in the path of earnest and laborious service for Christ.

In speaking of the Lord's coming, let it be understood that I am not referring to the end of the world, nor even to His coming in judgment, though the hour shall yet dawn when He will take in hand that very solemn work. For it is written, that God " hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men,

XXXIII.

D

58 THE LORD'S COMING EXPLAINED.

in that He hath raised Him from the dead " (Acts xvii. 31). The very day for that momentous event is thus seen to be fixed, and the Judge appointed, who, when He comes to begin that dread assize, shall be attended by His mighty angels, and be clothed in flaming fire. The issue of that judgment is also declared in awe-inspiring terms—vengeance and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord—in view of which men might well quake, and their hearts fail them for fear (2 Thess. i. 7, 9).

But assuredly the appearing of Christ in these connections is not the Church's hope. It is included in the testimony we have to bear ; for He commanded us, says Peter, " to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead " (Acts x. 42). That side, then, of God's message must not be held back if we would be faithful witnesses. Judgment, however, strictly speaking, has nothing to say to the Church. She is the Bride of the Lamb, the object of Christ's profoundest love, and for her He gave Himself. How, then, should she ever be called into judgment ? Moreover, He Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and exhausted the wrath due to them. Surely that great and glorious atonement shelters the individual believer, and answers every charge that could be laid at his door. And if it be said

THE LORD'S COMING EXPLAINED. 59

that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, still it is both clear and certain that when the saint stands there, washed from his sins in the Saviour's precious blood, it will not be to answer for the sins for which Jesus Himself has answered. He will stand there to hear the Lord's unerring judgment on his pathway here, and to receive from His hand some gracious token of His approbation in reference to anything, however small, that he might have done or suffered for His name's sake while on earth. It will repay the reader to refer, if possible, before proceeding further, to Mark ix. 41, 2 Timothy iv. 8, Revelation ii. 17.

The coming of the Lord of which we speak is distinct from and precedes all this. It is set before us, in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16-18, in these words: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Consider for a moment the passage we have just quoted. Here the personal descent of the Lord is declared. He comes from heaven, but *not* to earth. With archangel's voice and trump of God He comes, and the dead in Christ rise first. That almighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself is

60 THE LORD'S COMING EXPLAINED.

displayed in calling out of their graves *the dead in Christ*. Then the living ones—all believers—shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and shall be for ever with Him.

What an astonishing statement! Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the far-off islands of the sea, bereft, in a moment of time, of every living person who has faith in Christ! There shall not be found at that hour, among earth's teeming population, one solitary individual who has come under the shelter of the precious blood. All will be gone—all of them shall have been caught up to meet the Lord.

"Impossible," do you say? Nay, for with God nothing is impossible. "Enoch was translated that he should not see death," and Elijah passed up in a chariot of fire, and the same power that caught them away will catch the Church away when the hour comes.

When the Church is thus translated to heaven, the Spirit of God will begin to act on others according to the counsels of God. Let men talk as they may about the Eastern question, the Jew must go back to his ancient land, and the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be fulfilled. Then, too, shall those who have deliberately refused the gospel and the truth of God be given over to believe a lie (2 Thess. II. 11, 12). But I confine myself now to that which awaits the Christian—the Church's hope—even the coming of the Lord

THE LORD'S COMING EXPLAINED. 61

to receive us unto Himself, that we may be for ever with Him.

It has been often remarked that the coming of the Lord is spoken of in every chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. In alluding to their conversion, the Apostle Paul tells us how they turned to God from idols *to serve* the living and true God ; and *to wait* for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, our Deliverer from coming wrath (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). Had you lived in those days in the city of Thessalonica, and had asked any of Paul's converts what they were looking for, you would have been told that they were expecting the Son of God from heaven. They may not have been able to tell you much about it, but for that one great event they looked. Details, about which they needed light, are found in chapter iv., and are recorded there for our instruction as well as for theirs. And these details are prefaced in the most solemn way by the words, " This we say unto you by the word of the Lord."

Does the same hope animate us to-day ? Are we really living in the expectation of the Lord's return ? Probably many of our readers, perhaps most of them, hold fast to the Lord's coming as a truth of Scripture. It is quite possible to do this without the heart being in an expectant state. The mind may be greatly enlightened, and the affections remain all the while perfectly

62 THE LORD'S COMING EXPLAINED.

dormant. But do you long to see the Saviour's face? Do you mourn His absence? If we were more with Him in spirit—eating Him and living by Him, as it is put in John vi. 57—we certainly should more earnestly desire to be with Him above. Any lack on this side is indicative of the low state of our spiritual affections, enfeebled and benumbed as, alas! they often are by the want of communion with Christ.

And if we believe the Lord may come at any moment to call "His own" away, how earnestly shall we labour for the salvation of others, knowing that the same event that shall consummate our happiness will seal the doom of the Christ-rejecter. They shall be given over to believe a lie. Little do the unsaved, who live in lands where the Bible is circulated, and the gospel freely preached, reflect on the fearful goal towards which they are hurrying by leaps and bounds. But *we* know it, and *we* believe that the Master of the house ere long will rise and shut to the door (Luke xiii. 25). Oh, that our hearts may be rightly balanced in view of these approaching events! On the one hand may we be able to say, out of the fullness of our hearts, "Come, Lord Jesus"; and, on the other, in earnest, beseeching accents, call on men to come and take the water of life freely (Rev. xxii. 17).

W. B.

FURTHER DETAILS AS TO THE COMING OF THE LORD.

IT must be evident to all thoughtful minds that during recent years the truth as to the second coming of the Lord has widely spread. But even yet there seems to be a great lack of understanding on the part of many as to what His coming really involves. It is for these that we write, and as an aid to the memory we will arrange our remarks under six heads, commencing with letters which spell the word "coming."

We shall speak of—

the **C**ompany for which the Lord is coming ;
 the **O**bject for which He is coming ;
 the **M**anner of His coming ;
 the **I**ssues which depend on His coming ;
 the **N**earness of His coming ; and
 the **G**race that will characterize His coming.

I. THE COMPANY FOR WHICH THE LORD IS COMING.

It is clear that the Lord Jesus does not come every time a believer dies. An aged saint, not long ago, lay dying. Her devoted daughter stood by her, wiping the death sweat from her brow, when presently she was heard quoting the words of the mother

of Sisera, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" Dear soul! She was desiring to be "with Christ, which is far better"; and she was going to Him. *He was not coming to her!* As the stones were battering the "earthen vessel" of Stephen to pieces, he exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and was soon "absent from the body, present with the Lord." This, again, was a saint departing to be with Christ, not Christ coming for the dying saint.

But when He comes, *the whole company* of His redeemed will, at one and the same moment, wherever they may be found, hear His quickening shout and be caught up together to meet Him in the air. Not one will be left behind who has trusted in the Saviour, and who has been made fit for the realms of glory by His precious blood. Mere professors, oil-less lampholders, will certainly be left behind; the same door which shuts the whole company of the Lord's beloved people into eternal felicity, shuts out, to unspeakable woe, those who have been content with a foolish, hollow profession.

II. THE OBJECT FOR WHICH HE IS COMING.

How many there are who look and long for the coming of the Lord as that which will set them free from all their troubles. That we shall then have done with earth's perplexities

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

65

there can be no question ; but to long for the Lord's coming merely for this, is to have a very low thought of it indeed. How unlike the early disciples who "counted it joy to be allowed to suffer shame for His name." To suffer for Christ's Name's sake was regarded by the Apostle Paul as an unspeakable privilege (Phil. III. 10). No, this cannot be the object of His coming, since we should lose much if we knew nothing of suffering here. "If we suffer we shall reign with Him." It is in suffering that His priestly grace is experienced. Moreover, do we not go to glory as He went ? "Ought not Christ to have *suffered* these things to enter into His glory ?" His *atoning* sufferings were borne alone, but, in other respects, we are privileged to know "the fellowship of His sufferings" before reaching our heavenly goal.

The object of His coming is to claim His bride, His own peculiar treasure, and to present her to Himself, that He may rejoice over her ! "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church," to be His companion and delight through eternal days. His satisfaction will not be full until He thus sees of the travail of His soul.

There amid the songs of heaven,
Sweeter to His ear
Is the footfall through the desert
Ever drawing near.

There made ready are the mansions,
 Glorious, bright and fair,
 But the bride the Father gave Him
 Is still wanting there.

Whatever the longings of the bride may be, finding expression in the words, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," we may be certain that greater intensity of desire beats in the heart of the Bridegroom, as He longs for the day when He will rise from the throne on which He now sits and utter that word which will thrill our hearts, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." He longs that we may enter into all that goes to make up His joy, without a single thing to hinder.

III. THE MANNER OF HIS COMING.

This is closely linked with the foregoing. There is a manifestation to follow, when His mien will be majestic, His manner terrible ; but that will be after the Church has been made sweetly at home in His presence. In that day *His eyes will be as a flame of fire*, and on His head many crowns. He will be clothed with a vesture dipped in blood ; His mighty name, The Word of God (Rev. XIX. 12).

In the Song of Solomon the bride is asked, "What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?" Immediately she begins to describe Him: "*His eyes are as the eyes of doves . . . washed with milk and fitly set.*" Language

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

67

soon becomes inadequate to depict His beauty, and she is obliged to finish with, "Yea, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend" (Song of Solomon v. 9-16). How great the contrast between this description and that of Revelation XIX. !

Beaming upon His bride with eyes of love, the heavenly Isaac will receive us to Himself, and our hearts will be filled with joy at the sight of His face, now radiant with glory, while we wait for the glad nuptial day which will follow the destruction of "Babylon the Great," the false bride (compare Rev. XVIII. 21 with Rev. XIX. 7). This, then, will be the *manner* of His coming, not as the mighty King of kings, but as the Bridegroom.

IV. THE ISSUES OF HIS COMING.

How shall we speak of these? Who can compass them? In a brief paper like this we can only touch upon a few. It is clear from Scripture that the grave is the arena where He begins to display His mighty power: for "the dead in Christ shall rise first." From every cemetery and from the soundless deep He will gather the dust of His sleeping saints, changing and fashioning them anew, leaving "the rest of the dead" undisturbed for a thousand years. At the same moment we who are alive and remain shall be changed and caught away together to meet Him in the air.

But who can conceive the state of consternation which must ensue when all the Christians shall have left the world ?

With beaming face an old sea captain was listening to the story of the Lord's coming. Some one remarked, " You seem to be anticipating that moment with great joy, Captain." " I am indeed," said he, " and I can tell you what will happen if He comes soon. My first mate is a Christian, the second also, and God has given me, for Christ, every man who sails with me, down to the cabin boy ; so that when He comes there will be one derelict ship, anyhow ! "

Alas ! we fear there will not be many derelict vessels of that kind. Not many ships' crews are composed wholly of believers. But who can compute the number of other derelicts ? We once saw a derelict ship in a fearful storm in the Bay of Biscay. Everything that could be washed from her deck had gone : spars were broken, ropes were entangled, and her canvas was in ribbons. Swept fore and aft by seas which broke constantly over her, we had not long to wait to see her end : a huge wave caused her to take one last terrible plunge, and she was gone ! More terrible still are the fearful storms which must break over the world after Christ's coming for His bride, the worst of them falling upon these highly favoured lands, where the gospel has been

preached. How many will be swept into a lost eternity by those waves of judgment. Hard upon the heels of the Church's rapture will follow the terrible events detailed in Revelation VI. to XIX.

Approaching a driver, who was oiling his engine, a passenger asked, "Should I be right if I got into this train for A——?"

"It is bound for A——," replied the driver, "but I cannot say whether it will reach there, sir."

"Why do you say that? Isn't the engine all right?"

"Quite all right, but the fact is, I am a Christian, and my fireman, there on the foot-plate, is also converted, and, singularly enough, the guard told off for this train is also saved; so that if the Lord were to come while we are running, we shall all three be gone 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' and what will become of the train then?"

The Gretna Green disaster shrinks into insignificance when compared with what may happen when converted signalmen and other officials are taken. Motor-men on the trams, chauffeurs of automobiles, and others will go. Disorganization of society must be the immediate result. Parliaments will be affected, and contending armies must be depleted of men more swiftly than shot and shell could do it.

But we must look at

V. THE NEARNESS OF HIS COMING.

We are quite aware that in every great cataclysm of history, such as the Napoleonic wars, men have turned to prophecy and sought to show that the end was near. But it would have been difficult for them to point to marks of the last days of the Church's history on earth, as we can to-day. We have not indeed to look for signs, but Scripture gives many indications of the approaching end. We will name a few :

Wars unparalleled are now raging (Matt. xxiv.).

Christendom's apostasy is certainly coming about (2 Thess. II. 3).

False Christs are already on the scene (Matt. xxiv.).

False prophets are "bringing in damnable heresies" (2 Peter II. 1).

Spiritism is alarmingly on the increase, and so-called Christian ministers openly teach it (1 Tim. IV.).

"Wanted a man, a super-man," is echoed on all hands (2 Thess. II. 7-12).

Never was 2 Timothy III. 1-5 so clearly fulfilled, the mad rush after pleasure especially being unprecedented.

"But are not many of these the indications

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

71

of Christ's appearing rather than of His coming for His Church ? " the reader may ask.

Certainly it is in that connection that they are foretold. But this being so, may not we reasonably conclude from the evident development of these things that the Church may be caught away at any moment, while the " evil men and seducers, waxing worse and worse," will go on until Jude 14, 15 are fulfilled ?

The most cheering indication that " the coming of the Lord draweth nigh " is surely in learning that during the last few years multitudes of the Lord's people in every land where the gospel has been preached are now praying the Lord to come. Those who have long been in the dark as to " the blessed hope " are saying in response to His " Surely, I come quickly," " Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The Spirit and the bride now unitedly invite Him, and we may expect Him at any moment.

VI. THE GRACE THAT WILL CHARACTERIZE HIS COMING

seems little apprehended ; for not a few are teaching that many who are truly converted will be left behind. Wherever this thought is held we may be quite sure that the truth of the Church as the body of Christ has never been understood, nor is the heart thoroughly established in grace. " Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular " (1 Cor.

xii. 27), is said of all Christians. Who could think of the Lord having a mutilated body—some members missing from it—in heaven? His bride is composed of all those His Father gave Him out of this world, from Pentecost until He comes; they are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and formed by Him into one body. To suppose that His coming is a reward for their faithfulness is to miss the mark altogether. That rewards for faithfulness will be given after the Rapture, when we stand before His judgment seat, is abundantly plain. But absolute grace, unmerited favour, is what will take us out of the world, and set us down in everlasting glory.

In stating this, we do not, of course, mean that the believer is free to walk carelessly. On the contrary, we would earnestly entreat him to fill every moment that remains with whole-hearted devotedness to Christ. Our place in the kingdom is being determined by our actions now, as well as our capacity for the enjoyment of God throughout the eternal state. But let no believer in Christ think for a moment that Christ will suffer such a loss as would be His if *one* of those who compose His Church, His Bride, His Father's love gift to Himself, were to be missing in that day.

Let us therefore continue, with all confidence, to look for "the *mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). E. E. C.

IS THERE MORE THAN ONE RESURRECTION?

Read JOHN v. 24-29.

THE prevalent idea is that there is to be a general resurrection preceding a universal judgment ; that it will embrace mankind of all ages, and will take place at the last day. Let us see what the Word of God has to say as to this. May I ask your attention to the verse which we have read ? Notice the expression, “ *The hour is coming, and now is.* ” In verse 28 these words, “ *The hour is coming,* ” again occur, but “ *and now is* ” are left out. “ The hour ” of which the 25th verse speaks is a period of time that has already embraced nearly 1900 years, the time for the quickening of SOULS spiritually dead.

But in the 28th verse, when it says, “ The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice,” it is a question of dead BODIES. This second “ hour,” which will commence when the first is closed, will also embrace a long period of over 1000 years. It is the resurrection period, and it will include the two resurrections, the first of which will be at the commencement of the millennial reign of Christ, and the other at the close of it.

Read now the following verse :

“ And shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment). ”

Evidently, then, there are two resurrections. One, a "resurrection of life"; the other, a "resurrection of judgment." Christians, the children of God, will have a resurrection all to themselves. The unconverted will likewise have one all to themselves, with a whole millennium between the two.

The first is called the resurrection of life, because it will be the application of Christ's risen life to the dead bodies of those to whose souls it had already been communicated. Every Christian shares in Christ's risen life. It only remains for the same life that has been applied to and quickened our souls to be applied to our bodies. We are taught this in Romans VIII. II :

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

And again in verse 25 of our chapter :

"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."

Those who hear the voice of the Son of God live, for He Himself has said, "He that believeth on Me, hath everlasting life." When the Lord comes every saint will have the power of that same life brought to bear upon his body, and it will, in the twinkling of an eye, be changed into an incorruptible one. Christians still living on the earth will have their mortal

bodies changed into bodies that are immortal, as it says in 2 Corinthians v., " Mortality shall be swallowed up of life."

Now turn to Luke XIV. 14 : " And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." That tallies with the " resurrection of life " in John v., and agrees with what we read in Revelation xx., " Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first resurrection*." You will observe there are no unconverted people at the first resurrection, only " blessed and holy " people, and " the just," for it is the " resurrection of life."

Now turn back once more to 1 Corinthians xv. and notice verse 23.

" But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they *that are Christ's* at His coming."

What a striking expression ! Christ's resurrection and ours are of the same character. His was a resurrection *from among* the dead. You will remember that the disciples wondered what this could mean. But as the Lord was raised out from among the dead, so shall they be who are His : " Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

A word now about the second resurrection, that of judgment, as it is called in John v., or, as in Acts xxiv., " the resurrection of the unjust," when " the rest of the dead " will be raised. In Revelation xx. we read : " And I

IS THERE MORE THAN

saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more till the 1000 years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed for a little season." Notice three classes in verse 4:

1st. "And I saw thrones and *they sat upon them*, and judgment was given unto them."

2nd. "And I saw the souls of *them that were beheaded* for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God."

3rd. "And *those also who had not worshipped the beast*, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they (these three groups) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

All that are Christ's at His coming will be there, also the martyrs of whom we read in Revelation VI., and, thirdly, those spoken of in chapter XIII., who would not acknowledge the beast. All these three classes live and reign with Christ 1000 years. We are not told in detail about the resurrection of the last two classes. But they are raised, of course, as the passage says "they lived." Thus the period of resurrection begins with those that are Christ's at His coming. Then there are the

two groups of those persecuted during the interval between the Lord's coming for His saints and His subsequent coming to reign. "*But the rest of the dead* lived not again until the 1000 years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Why are people so blind, who talk about a general resurrection, when God carefully distinguishes between these two resurrections? Lest we should be in any doubt about it, He adds, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

But "the rest of the dead"; who are they? Those who are not Christ's. Those who never came to Him. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years were finished." What happens to the unconverted dead *then*?

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them."

This planet will disappear. God who made the heaven and the earth can and will extinguish them. When the great white throne appears, with the Lord Jesus Christ sitting upon it, they will flee away and eternity begins!

If there is a second resurrection, there is a second death, and the one leads to the other. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death has no power." But all that are raised at the second resurrection are cast into the lake of fire.

J. C. T.

QUESTIONS.

For what do we wait?

IT is not for "the end of the world," nor for the beginning of "the Millennium"; certain though these shall be in their time.

It is not for a "Confederacy of the Churches," nor "the conversion of the world."

It is not for "Universal Peace," or "World-wide Brotherhood," nor that time when there shall be "war no more."

It is not for "the King," who will "rule His enemies with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. II. 9).

It is not for the fierce wrath of an offended Judge, nor that awful gathering at "the Great White Throne" (Rev. XX. 11).

It is not for "plagues," and poured out "vials," nor the sounding of "trumpets," with their attendant woes (Rev. VIII., XV., XVI., XVII.).

It is not for "signs" on earth, in the air, or in the sea.

It is not for the appearance of "the MAN of SIN" (2 Thess. II.), nor the day of "Armageddon" (Rev. XVI. 16).

It is not for "the Valley of the Shadow," nor the dark messenger of "Death."

Again we say, let there be no mistake. One—only One—is the object of our longing and our look; of our waiting and our watch, We are

QUESTIONS.

79

“ waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ”
(1 Cor. I. 7).

“ We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ” (Phil. III. 20).

“ We wait for HIS SON from Heaven ” (1 Thess. I. 10).

.

What is the goal of our hopes?

The “ Blessed Hope ” of the believer is not the attainment of some earthly ambition. It is not the possession of some coveted prize of this poor passing world. It is not the promotion to some higher position in this world’s affairs. It is the coming of “ HIS SON ”—He who is not simply the “ Only Begotten ” and the “ Well Beloved ” of the Father, but “ The King of Israel,” and “ the Bridegroom ” of “ the Bride ” (the Church). There are “ *things* to come ” in plenty, on ahead, but better than the best of them, and all of them together, is “ THE LORD HIMSELF.” To look out for “ things ” or “ signs ” may divert our vision and disappoint our hopes. To look for “ Him ” will keep us properly adjusted to “ things ” present and “ to come.” He is the sum and substance, the centre and circumference of the Hope. Without “ Him ” all else is empty and in vain. Many will be the blessed events that will happen at His coming for His own. But all of them sink into insignificance at the prospect of our meeting, face to face, our Lord Himself. It is for “ Him ”—just “ Him ”—the heart of the beloved Bride longs most of all.

What do we miss by indifference ?

To be *ignorant* of His coming, to *doubt* it, *deny* it, to be *indifferent* to, or *disinterested* in it, is to miss the divine equipment for the distress and pressure of these ever-darkening days. It is to give the adversary an advantage in our lives and to grieve the heart of God. To harbour any lesser hope or cherish any different desire than the "Coming of HIS SON" is a sure delusion of the enemy to ensnare our souls, to destroy our service for Christ now, and to render us "ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John II. 28).

"Visionary" and "idealistic" the believer in His coming may be deemed. But we are not insensible to our surroundings and our circumstances. His coming makes them more intensely real. To be looking for His Son from heaven illuminates the circumstances we are passing through, and strengthens, invigorates, and inspires us in the facing of them. Circumstances may affect us keenly and cruelly, but we need not be overcome by them. We endure "as seeing Him who is invisible." It is that vision of "*Him*" that makes us victors over *them*. The Blessed Hope of, at any moment, being with Him and like Him, bears us up and brings us through triumphantly.

"HE IS COMING." To know Him as our Saviour and our Lord, and wait in the glorious expectation of His coming, is the only hope of rest and peace for our hearts, as we pass through the turmoil and upheavals of these perilous times.

B. M. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. P. (CARLISLE).—There is no one text of Scripture which says in so many words that the Church of God will not go through the great tribulation. We can, however, turn you to several scriptures, all of which, read in connection with their context, speak with no uncertain voice as to the matter.

2 Thessalonians II. is one of these. Read it carefully. False teachers had disturbed and shaken the minds of these young believers by insinuating that the persecutions they were enduring were the final throes of the great tribulation, and that the day of Christ was upon them. In his argument to disprove these false ideas the Apostle does not mention the great tribulation, but he speaks of its chief instigator, “the man of sin,” and of the “falling away”—the apostasy that renders it possible, of the “strong delusion” which accompanies it, and of the “damnation” which is its terrible end. And does he cheer their fainting hearts by the assurance that though all this is inevitable for the Church, yet it was so far distant that they would assuredly go to their graves in peace? No. He beseeches them to be of good cheer, “by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him”—referring clearly by this to the truth concerning which he had instructed them in chapter IV., verses 13–18, of his first epistle. And at the close of his argument he speaks of them as those “*sanctified*,” i.e. set apart from the world going on to the fearful condition of things described, and “*called*,”

82 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

not to tribulation, but to "the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 13, 14).

Further, bear in mind that the "falling away" or apostasy of verse 3 is not a backsliding such as has, alas! often prevailed in the Church's history, but a total abandonment of Christian profession. In itself it implies the absence of the true Church of God. As long as the Church is here, the apostasy is impossible.

Then, again, compare scripture with scripture. Notice, for instance—

1. The great tribulation is the time of *Jacob's* trouble (Jer. xxx. 7).

2. It will result, through divine intervention acting by angelic agency, in the deliverance of Daniel's people, i.e. Israel (Dan. xii. 1).

3. Deliverance will be "in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem" (Joel ii. 32).

4. Though all the civilized earth will be affected, the centre of the tribulation, the hottest part of the furnace, will be in Judea and Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv. 15-25).

This is a very cursory sketch, but it leaves us without any doubt that the great tribulation is specially for Israel, a special retribution for the murder of their Messiah, while the Church is removed previously, as the whole structure of Revelation indicates. (F. B. H.).

NORWOOD.—With reference to the suggestion that the Anglo-Saxon race may be the lost tribes of Israel, one's first impulse is to exclaim: What does it matter? What would be the gain, even if the theory were proved to be true? For when a man puts his faith in Christ, he ceases to be what

he previously was. He is now neither of the Jews nor of the Gentiles, but of the third company named in 1 Corinthians x. 32 : the Church of God, whose calling and outlook are heavenly ; whose future blessing is not that of a favoured nation on earth, but that of the most privileged company of heaven.

We will not, however, dismiss the subject thus. We cannot, of course, discuss it in much detail in these columns. Others have dealt with it in an able way. But we will call attention to a fact which the advocates of Anglo-Israelism seem to have strangely overlooked. Throughout the whole of the English-speaking world the gospel has been preached, by lip and by pen. Englishmen are therefore divided into two classes : those who have obeyed, and those who have not obeyed the glad tidings. Those who have obeyed it belong to Christ, and will be caught up from the earth at His coming, according to 1 Thessalonians iv. Those who have not obeyed it will be visited with a terrible vengeance, and punished, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels," with everlasting destruction (see 2 Thess. i. 7-9). Where will the British nation be then ? All true believers in the Saviour gone to heaven ; all unbelievers swept away in judgment.

But this visitation clears the ground for God to resume His dealings with His ancient people, to recall many of them to their own land, and after passing them through the great tribulation, to reunite them with the remainder of Judah, and with the ten tribes of Israel (which will be found again in God's good time), so that "the children

84 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together and appoint themselves ONE Head " (Hosea I. 11). From Assyria and the surrounding nations (the very locality to which the ten tribes were carried!) the Lord will "assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. XI. 11, 12). "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them ONE nation (not in the British Isles, but) in the land upon the mountains of Israel: and ONE king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezek. XXXVII. 21, 22).

How entirely different is all this from what Anglo-Israelism teaches!

One further word. The writer of the pamphlet which you send us finds strong support for his theory in the *supposed* identification of the Anglo-Saxons with the Scythians, who in their turn are *supposed* to be the lost tribes. How wonderfully the Word of God provides the antidote to every wandering of the human mind! The Scythian is particularly named in Colossians III. 11 as being excluded, with every other class and distinction, national or social, from the "new man" in which we, as Christians, have part. If, then, the Scythian, or the Saxon, or the Englishman, has any special place of national privilege, that place ceases to be his when he becomes a child of God and an heir to the heavenly inheritance.

UNFORGOTTEN LABOUR.

“Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.”

ROM. XVI. 6.

WHO was this Mary? What was the character of her service? On what occasion did she labour on behalf of the apostle?

For the present, questions like these concerning this dear child and servant of God must remain unanswered. If the loving act of her who poured precious ointment on the Saviour's head was to be told for a memorial of her wherever the gospel should be preached throughout the world, it was not so with the service of this unknown Mary in the great city of the Cæsars.

She stands as a type of a large class. We say a *large* class advisedly and we thank God that it is so. There are many (how many God only knows) who seek in their humble way to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Great things are not within their power to perform; but they gladly, devotedly serve their blessed Master in the little things that lie within their reach.

It may be that some modern Mary finds her sphere of service in the Sunday-school, or in reading and praying with the sick, or in helping some tired mother with the children, or in bringing people to hear the gospel. Such

humble service often passes unnoticed ; she who renders it pursues her way unrecognized and unknown.

Unrecognized did I say ? Yes, among men ; but not by God ! Unknown ? Yes, on earth ; but not in heaven !

For the Spirit of God has caused to be recorded on the pages of Holy Scripture words which illuminate with heavenly light such lowly service as that to which we have referred. In the tenth verse of Hebrews VI. we read :

“ For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name.”

Wonderful, gracious words ! Lay them to heart, ye lowly toilers in the Master's vineyard.

Did Mary, when she bestowed her much labour on the apostle, think that her service was connected with a name far greater than that of Paul ? Did she imagine that in the eyes of God her work and labour of love was toward *His Name* ? This is the interpretation that He graciously puts upon it, and it indicates what value He attaches to it.

With regard to the questions with which this article begins, we remarked that *for the present* they must remain unanswered.

But not forever. In the great day of review and reward, when the servants of Christ shall be gathered at His tribunal to learn His esti-

YOUR BODY.

87

mate of their service, not the smallest thing that has ever been done for His dear Name's sake will be forgotten. And the heart of many an unknown Mary will be made glad with a joy too deep for words when her Lord and Master calls her by name, and smiles upon her, and says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Lord, may it be ours so to walk, and so to labour, that we may reap the rich reward of Thy approval in that day !

H. P. B.

YOUR BODY.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body."

I COR. VI. 19, 20.

IT is an arresting thought that we are not our own ; that we do not belong to ourselves but to God. We never did belong to ourselves, for in the days when we knew not God we were servants, or slaves, of sin (Rom. vi. 17). It is possible that we thought that we were pleasing ourselves, but that was merely one of the devil's delusions ; in reality we had yielded ourselves to a power that held us in an all-controlling bondage. " Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin " (John VIII. 34).

As the slaves of sin we needed redemption, and God has redeemed us. His great love made

Him desire to have us as His own, and that same great love moved Him to pay a great price for us, for we “*ARE bought with a price.*” That price was the precious blood of Christ. Nothing less than this would do. The gold for which men crave and labour and the gems that fascinate the eyes of women could avail nothing in this matter, nor could any other price be found in heaven above or in earth beneath but this—*the precious blood of Christ.*

“Yes, for me, the base, the guilty,
 Flowed that living flood;
 I, an enemy, am ransomed
 By that precious blood.
 Silent at Thy feet I lie
 Lost in love’s immensity.”

If God has paid this price for us we belong to Him by a righteous and inalienable title, and to Him it is right that we should yield ourselves. How could we even think of holding back from Him that which is His at so great a cost?

But that is not the end of the story; there is more to tell. God has not only bought us with a great price, but *He has taken possession of that which He has purchased*; and He has done this in an altogether inconceivable way. He has sent down the Holy Spirit to make our bodies His abode.

Let us illustrate. Here are two men, and they are both on the look out for property. The first purchases a house and immediately

advertises, "This house to let." Not so the other; he has set his heart upon a desirable dwelling and he pays the needful price in order that he might take possession of it and dwell in it himself. Now, if we were to judge by the conduct of some who profess to belong to the Lord we should conclude that, like the first man of our illustration, God had purchased them in order to let them out to other tenants, for the world and the flesh seem to occupy the best apartments in their lives and God and His will have little place, and their conduct is a denial of the truth. God has chosen, purchased, and possesses us in order to dwell in us Himself. Intensely solemn and yet blessed thought, God dwells in us; for the Holy Ghost is God!

This great fact was urged upon the saints of God at Corinth in order to show them that not their souls only, but their bodies also were God's, and being His they were to be held sacred for His use. They were not to be devoted to the gratification of the carnal appetites, but were to be at God's disposal and to be used for His glory. And this truth is needed to-day even as it was then.

May we realize more deeply the importance and dignity of our bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Ghost, so that we may seek grace to use them aright for Him to whom they belong.

J. T. M.

THE TIME OF TROUBLE.

TWO-THIRDS of the world are at war. Whole countries have been turned into battlefields, nations lie bleeding and bruised, writhing in the throes of agony produced by the conflict raging about them and within their borders, while with others the enemy is in complete possession ; and the end is not yet. Danger and death threaten from above, beneath, behind, before, and on every side. And above the din and confusion of bomb and battle rise the wail of the fatherless and the widow, the moan of the maimed and the wounded, and the cry of the homeless and the hungry who have lost their all. And neutral nations watch with trembling, not knowing what day they may be drawn into the raging vortex of this almost universal strife.

Amongst those that mourn are many dear to God ; for in His governmental dealings with nations His children have to suffer with the rest. How specially suited to the present condition of these suffering saints are the first six verses of Psalm xxvii., where we find the words : “ fear,” “ afraid,” “ enemies,” “ foes,” “ an host,” “ encamp,” “ war,” “ trouble,” etc.

We read elsewhere of the “ comfort of the scriptures.” What comfort may be drawn by the perplexed and distressed children of God in this present “ time of trouble ” from the

war-time verses of this section of the Psalm ?
Let us see.

Notice that the passage begins and ends with the name of the LORD, Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God of Israel. He is "my light and my salvation," the psalmist says. Clouds and darkness may enshroud the nations in gloom, and the future may look darker still. But with our whole hope centred in, and all our expectation from, Him, we may say like Israel's spokesman : " In Thy light shall we see light " (Ps. xxxvi. 9). For Israel's God is ours. And though blackest night settle around God's people here in the scene of their pilgrimage, it can be said of them, as in the language of another Psalm : " They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance " (Ps. lxxxix. 15). This is predicated of " the people that know the shout of joy," as the New Translation reads.

He is also their " salvation," or deliverance. Deliverance is not found for faith in well-organized armies or powerful navies, but in the Lord Himself. Whatever the outcome of the present conflict, all is for the Christian well. God alone is our salvation, whether it be from fear, foes, enemies, an host, war, or trouble of any kind.

He is " the strength of my life " : of whom then, or what, shall I be afraid ? If the foe should invade the land to devour and destroy

they shall, so far as we are personally concerned, "stumble and fall." And though an host lay siege to the place of my dwelling, my heart shall not fear. War may be carried even to my gate, but confidence shall not fail me.

One thing, and one thing only, he asks of the Lord. Nor does he stop with the mere asking, but sets himself to "seek after" the desired blessing, privilege, opportunity, or whatever else this "one thing" may be called. It was to dwell in God's house all the days of his life, to behold His beauty and to inquire of Him in His holy temple. What an occupation in the midst of the tumult and confusion of war, encamping hosts, advancing enemies, devouring foes : earnest prayer, worship, and adoration of God, his Deliverer, in the peace of His dwelling-place ! Can any foe or fear of evil enter there ? No ; and instead of anxiously scanning Exchange quotations, and war bulletins, or even the more dreaded mortality lists, he inquires of the Lord. He waits on Him in whom is all His expectation and all his desire. There, in "the time of trouble" (elsewhere translated adversity, affliction, distress, calamity, grief, misery, sorrow, etc.), Jehovah hides him in His pavilion, yea, in the secret of His tabernacle shall His confiding child be hid.

The pavilion is the pilgrim's tent, Jehovah's

here, for He is "a stranger with His people" in their wilderness journey through this world's dreary wastes. The word "tabernacle" denotes a more settled place of abode; it is in the covert, or "secret place" (the very same word used in Psalm xci. 1) of Jehovah's house, His very home, that he shall find protection.

The two words "hide" in this verse are also different in the Hebrew. The first may mean to hoard, or reserve as a treasure, while the other is to hide by covering. God's saints are His "peculiar treasure" and He guards them as no miser ever did his golden hoard. And not only is His servant safely hidden in Jehovah's tabernacle, but covered and perfectly protected in the secret place or covert within that shelter. It is proof against the enemy's attacks; Satan's efforts must fail utterly to dislodge him from his safe retreat.

And He sets him on a rock; so he is not only protected from the fiery darts above, but from all danger from beneath. His feet are fixed upon "the sure foundation," and he shall never be moved. Well may he sing:

"How can I sink with such a prop?"

Then mark the final note of triumph; victory over every foe is his and he offers to the God of his deliverance the sacrifices of joy. He declares his intention to sing, and intensifies it with an emphatic "yea!" It is his

determined purpose to sing praises unto his God. Here again are two words alike in English, but differing in the original. The one is to sing as a minstrel ; the other “ to celebrate with song or music,” or on an instrument. Both words are used in Judges v. 3, and in the order followed here. He would not only sing *songs* of deliverance, but *hymns* of praise to God.

Reader, troubled and tried and anxious because of the “ present distress,” why art thou fearful of to-day and cast down on thinking of the morrow? He “ who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all ” is the God of our lives, and has not only promised to see us safely through this fearful “ fight of afflictions,” but to enable us to pass through in confidence, and to come out of it with thanksgiving and joy and song. “ Rejoicing in tribulation ” is the special word for many a tried and weary soul to-day. And “ the joy of the Lord is their strength.” We do not deceive ourselves with thoughts of any lasting peace on earth during this “ present evil age.” Ours is no false optimism based on cries of “ Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” “ In the world ye shall have tribulation,” is the word of the Lord to His own : and He adds the one golden word—“ but in ME peace.” May this peace be ours in fullest measure now and to the end.

C. K.

ARE YOU A BIBLE STUDENT?

TO the young believer starting out on the Christian life in all the freshness of new-found joy and peace, the Bible presents a perfect mine of hidden treasure.

When soul anxiety has given place to settled peace with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a sweet sense of His favour fills the soul, displacing the old dread of condemnation, the Word of God naturally claims our diligent attention. It commands the conscience, and a longing springs up in the heart to know more of its hidden depths, which others, more spiritually advanced, speak of with apparent familiarity.

It is for such that these papers are intended. Their object is not to expound any particular portion of Scripture, nor to open up the treasures of God's Book in a general way. Neither is it proposed to deal with questions which have been raised at all times, either by avowed infidels or modern critics, as to supposed inaccuracies in the Bible. These have been ably answered and present no real difficulty to the young soul, when once confidence in the Bible as the inspired Word of God is established. It is then with the study of the divinely inspired Scriptures that we have to do, and our object is to pass on to the younger students a few practical suggestions for the regular systematic reading of the Word. The reader may be assured that in this there lies before him one of the most delightful and engrossing of spiritual exercises; for the Bible contains "things which

96 ARE YOU A BIBLE STUDENT ?

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him " (1 Cor. II. 9).

1. The equipment for Bible Study.

First of all it is assumed that the reader possesses a useful, strongly bound Bible, printed in clear type and with marginal references. If the book has a liberal white margin down the sides of the pages, so much the better, as this will enable him to make notes which will form a permanent record of the results of his studies.

It is a good plan to have also a handy pocket Bible to carry about constantly for reading at odd times, thus saving the larger book from wear and tear. A good concordance and a notebook will complete the outfit, for preliminary study at any rate, though many expository books and works of reference might be enumerated. With the possible exception of a Bible Dictionary, which is a most useful volume, the reader will be well advised to leave these alone until he has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the Word itself.

2. The object of Bible Study.

FOOD. It is essential to spiritual growth that the Christian should go to the Bible, preferably in the early morning, for spiritual food. A certain amount of time should be set apart each day for reading and prayer over the Word. At such times it has been found helpful to read passages which bring our Lord Jesus Christ prominently before

ARE YOU A BIBLE STUDENT? 97

us because He Himself is the food of His people, the Bread of life. The children of Israel, travelling through the barren wilderness, were provided with the manna, which they were told to "gather daily," "every day" and "in the morning" (Exod. xvi.) In the same way we are to gather up some precious thoughts of Christ, which will feed and sustain our souls during the day, for it is only as we do this that we can be His disciples indeed and follow in the pathway of lowliness, dependence, and obedience to God's will which He trod so perfectly.

We need, however, not only food but exercise, and when we remember that a new life has been implanted within us, the importance of *both* these things is obvious if there is to be development and growth in the knowledge of God.

EXERCISE. *Bible Study*, with which we are more particularly concerned, comes properly under this second heading, for it covers a much wider field. It exercises the spiritual faculties, sharpens moral sensibilities, and in a general way acts as exercise does to our bodies, producing spiritual vigour and a healthy appetite for the things of God. Of course much spiritual food will result from it, but its general effect is to bring into play our "spiritual muscles."

The Bible is a book by which to shape our lives and the study of it always has this practical end in view, for Scripture is said to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," with this practical object, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

DOCTRINE may seem a dry and uninviting subject, but we shall be great losers if we disregard the exhortation to "give attendance to . . . doctrine."

The importance of it is plainly seen in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." May not our distaste for doctrine, in many instances, be due to the fact that we are not seeking to know God's mind for us in our individual lives? In God's Book there are principles of doctrine to guide us in every perplexing question that may arise as to our ways or our association with others, and willingness to know and do His will is the key to many a difficulty.

REPROOF and CORRECTION reach us in the same way through the Scriptures. They are not only a lamp to lighten our feet, but a sharp sword which very often cuts at the root of some cherished habit. The effect of this is to produce in us self-judgment, and it is as we allow God's Word to search out what is not of Himself in us, that our ways are cleansed, our consciences kept tender and we are "prepared unto every good work."

INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS is found in God's Word. Only there can we learn practical righteousness according to the divine standard. A deplorable standard prevails in the world to-day, whether we take the social, commercial, or political branches of it. But God would have His children beyond reproach, not only justified before Himself, but yielding our members servants of righteousness and bearing this character before the world.

It is clear that the Bible is no mere text-book of religious knowledge, and while our minds will become stored with knowledge of the very best kind, the mere accumulation of this is never the object to be aimed at. It is well to guard against this danger at the start, for it is unfortunately possible to be most accurate in Scripture interpretation and yet to be sadly lacking in the good works of which the Bible speaks ; to be able to discourse fluently to others upon various passages, yet to be found wanting in those Christlike graces which only heart acquaintance with the truths of Scripture can produce.

3. The amount of time for Bible Study.

This is a matter about which no definite rule can be laid down. The amount of spare time varies according to our duties in the home, the workshop, or the office ; but whether this be much or little it may startle the reader to know that *the whole* of it is claimed for the Lord—for His Word, His service, or other things relating thereto, such as prayer and meditation.

In saying this nothing is further from our intention than the idea of any legal claim, but the reader is urged to let the following verses have due weight with him, and it will be seen that the standard has not been placed too high or beyond the warrants of Scripture :

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (ROM. XII. 1).

"For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 COR. V. 14, 15).

"Give attendance to reading, . . . meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them " (1 TIM. IV. 13-15).

100 ARE YOU A BIBLE STUDENT ?

These verses contain no legal command, and are based upon such blessed realities as the mercies of God and the love of Christ. A moment's consideration, however, will show us that our greatest good and truest happiness lie in this direction. To be rich towards God is the Christian's life rather than abundant possessions. Is it not often the case with young Christians, that little headway is made with Bible reading because their minds are confused by many less important matters? Many of these may be necessary things, or harmless in themselves, such as our earthly vocation, secular literature, or the pursuit of some recreation or hobby, but if they crowd out the things of God and prevent us from making these the real business of our lives they become positive hindrances.

Let the reader make the wise choice of laying aside every other pursuit to go in wholly for the things which are eternal, and with a little perseverance at the start he will find that no earthly pursuit gives such deep satisfaction as searching, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, the deep things of God.

It is necessary that the choice should be definitely and prayerfully made, for so many are content with the mere smattering of Christian knowledge which can be obtained by attending meetings. These are an excellent stimulus to personal exercise, but can never be substitutes for it. Bible reading with this class of Christians, if undertaken at all, is irregular, spasmodic, and usually without method, hence the poverty of many who have never set themselves to possess by their

ARE YOU A BIBLE STUDENT? 101

own industry and exercise the treasures of the Bible.

Practical ways and means will suggest themselves to the diligent seeker—a journey in the train, or on the street car, and scores of odd moments can be utilized if the pocket Bible is kept handy—but no directions are really necessary once the soul is possessed by a desire after these things, and seeks prayerfully to put spare time to this profitable use.

4. The attitude of mind for Bible Study.

In conclusion, the writer would urge the absolute necessity of earnest, believing prayer in connection with our study. The Bible must be approached with reverence, for it is God's Holy Word, and in entire dependence on the Holy Spirit, who indited it, realizing that our natural minds have neither the taste for these things nor the power to take them in.

An able American writer has said :

“Mark, it is not that we are to *master* the contents of Scripture. God forbid that there should be such a thought in our minds. The more we go on to know the wondrous depths, the perfect purity, the infinite holiness revealed in that Word and the utter helplessness and worthlessness of the flesh, the more we realise that it is not *we* who are to grasp the Scriptures, but rather *the Scriptures which must grasp us* as the living hand of the living God. We do not master it. Our blessing is to let it master us, and to set and keep us, by His grace in communion with Him who is the Source, the Author, and the Object of all Scripture.”

J. A. S.

[Next month (D.V.): “How do you read the Bible? Hints for Consecutive and Chronological Reading.”]

READY!

A TRAVELLER in Italy, writing to a paper, describes a visit paid to a certain spot as follows :

I arrived at the Villa Areconati, on the banks of Lake Como, the " beauty-spot " of the Italian Alps. A gardener opened the heavy gate, and conducted me through the exquisite garden.

" How long have you been here ? " I asked him.

" Twenty-five years."

" And how often has the owner been to see the estate ? "

" Four times."

" When did he come last ? "

" Twelve years ago."

" He writes to you, I suppose ? "

" Never."

" From whom, then, do you get your orders ? "

" From the steward, in Milan."

" Does he come here often ? "

" Never."

" *Who* comes, then, to look after matters ? "

" I am left pretty much alone ; very seldom do I see any stranger."

" Yet you keep the garden so spick and span, and in such apple-pie order, that one would think you were expecting the owner to-morrow."

" *To-day*, sir, TO-DAY," was the old man's reply.

This is how we should be, each day of our lives ; our conduct, our manner of life, our affairs, all arranged as if we were expecting the Saviour *to-day*. " Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

(From a Spanish Magazine.)

**AN ICELANDIC FISHERMAN;
OR, ANSWERED PRAYER AND EFFECTUAL
TESTIMONY.**

HIS name was Eirik, and he lived in the last of a row of fishermen's huts on the rugged cliff outside the village of Hofsos, facing the rough, swelling waters of the mighty Skagafjord, one of the broadest fjords on the north coast of Iceland.

Poverty had always been one of his nearest acquaintances. She had come to live with him soon after he was married, and he had never since been able to turn her out of the home. Once, faint and hungry through lack of food, Eirik attempted to put an end to his existence, as many other Icelanders have done. He took down his shot-gun, loaded it, kicked off his shoe and put the barrel of the gun into his mouth. While fumbling for the trigger with his toe, he swooned and fell. On coming to, he called on God, if there really was a merciful God in the heavens, to give him some food, and prayed that He would send a bird that way for him to shoot. He went down to the beach and looked around. A large bird, of an edible type, came flying past, and with an effort the emaciated man raised his gun and

fired. The bird fell, and Eirik thus had his first intimation that God answered prayer.

Years passed, and Eirik's long struggle with poverty continued. Motor-boats were multiplying and getting the pick of the fishing harvest, and it became increasingly difficult for the owners of small rowing-boats, such as Eirik was, to pay their way. The long, weary toil on the icy waters of the fjord took a heavy toll of Eirik's health and strength, badly clothed and fed as he was. One day, after great exertion, hæmorrhage from the lungs commenced. He grew worse and worse, until he had to go to the nearest doctor. It was not consumption, as Eirik feared, but the doctor could not cure him. He tried another doctor a long way off, with the same result. At last he borrowed money and journeyed to Akureyri, where there were, at the time, three native doctors. He went from one to the other—his purse getting lighter and lighter and his heart heavier and heavier in the process—and finally was brought to the conclusion that he was incurable. Utter ruin stared him in the face. While in this state of mind, the suggestion was made to him : “ Why don't you try the English missionary ? At all events it won't cost you anything ! ”

So he came. I remember the day he walked into my dispensary and told me that his “ back ” *would* bleed. He located the trouble in his back, because that was where he felt the

AN ICELANDIC FISHERMAN.

105

pain. I gave him some medicine, I confess with little hope of success, but with a prayer that it might be helpful to him. He left with some tracts in his pocket, promising to write and let me know how he progressed.

A month later I received a long and enthusiastic letter from him, giving good news of his health and asking for a fresh supply of medicine. Thus our correspondence began, and before many months had passed, Eirik was able to row his boat with any man, without fearing the distressing recurrence of hæmorrhage. Best of all, he had found the Saviour of whom I had written to him.

His zeal was extraordinary for an Icelfander, and he wrote me saying that he longed to use the health God had given him to help to spread the gospel that had blessed his soul, and he offered to travel round his county and sell Testaments and gospel literature. It seemed fitting to him that the "back" that God had healed should bear a pack of books for God over the hills and valleys of Skagafjord county. He plodded on, week after week, sometimes in deep snow, until practically every house in the county had been visited with the printed message of the gospel. He is now the most successful colporteur I am in touch with, albeit he is only able to give spare time to this work.

At first the neighbours could not understand

Eirik. "Swear-words" began to be excluded from his vocabulary—and when I add that the average Icелander can with difficulty conduct a simple conversation without continually calling on the prince of darkness, the significance of this will be understood. Other things showed that Eirik was not as they were, and this caused a sullen, disagreeable opposition to arise.

One day, after a long spell without any success in fishing, the welcome news flew round the village that the fjord was teeming with cod-fish. There was, however, one important drawback: they had no bait to catch them with. Small pieces of herring are generally used on the Skagafjord fisherman's many hooks, but they had caught no herrings for several weeks and therefore had no bait. The situation was most tantalizing, especially as the need was great in some of the cottages. At last, however, news by telephone that a trawler had put in at Siglufjord, the next large port along the coast, with a haul of herrings. Hastily the men clubbed together and hired a motor-boat to send to Siglufjord, and each gave his order for herrings according to the limitations of his purse. Eirik did not happen to put in an appearance, and the fishermen took the opportunity to play him a mean trick. "We won't let him know anything about the herrings until it is too late," said they, "and then we shall

see how he fares." As the little harbour could not be seen from Eirik's cottage, it was an easy matter to keep him in the dark.

When the motor-boat came back, all the men were busy with their hooks and lines, except Eirik, and none would lend or sell him a single herring. Thinking of his wife and four children at home, and their dire need, he made his way up the steep cliff-path with a heart as heavy as lead ; it seemed as if God had forgotten him. Before he arrived home, however, the Lord reminded him of one of His promises, and his faith revived. He went into his little hut and " cast his burden on the Lord."

Now these hardy toilers of the deep can tell what kind of fish is under the surface of the sea, where a landsman can perceive no indication of any fish at all. I remember one of them pointing out to me a certain part of the fjord and assuring me that herrings were there, while in another part were cod ; there might have been whales in both places for aught I distinguished ! These men of Skagafjord had every reason to believe, according to their knowledge and experience, that herrings had not been in the fjord for weeks, and they did not even think it worth while to examine their nets. But it occurred to Eirik that possibly there might be a few odd herrings in his old patched-up net ; in any case it was worth while looking, as he had nothing else to do. There were many

first-class nets laid, and Eirik's was not in the best position by any means.

I suppose that the men who accompanied Eirik went to see fair play, as they themselves would have been quite equal to annexing the contents of a neighbour's net, and they judged Eirik by their own standard. It was good that they accompanied him. One net after another was drawn up empty, only to be thrown back in disgust, until they came to Eirik's. There seemed to be a hitch somewhere, but at last it came up, *full of herrings!* Hurriedly drawing up those remaining, they found that *there was not a single herring in any of the other nets!*

The men were astounded, and Eirik praised his faithful God. No one knew what to say. Eirik had got his herrings for nothing, while the others had paid the full price for them at Siglufjord, together with their share of the hire of a motor-boat.

I know Hofsos, I know Eirik, and I know many of those men. I have sat in their homes and talked to them. Moreover, an account of this event was printed in the Icelandic monthly gospel periodical, *Nordurljosid*, which, thanks to Eirik's efforts, circulates widely among these fishermen; but I have never heard a word of doubt or criticism of the account of the above event.

The only explanation I can offer is that God caused the herrings to go in and out around the

other nets into Eirik's, to supply the need that he had made known to God, just as the apostle Peter experienced, as recorded in Luke v. 4-7.

The last part of this incident is, however, the best. Few would, I suppose, have judged Eirik harshly if he had sold some of his herrings for the price paid at Siglufjord. But God gave him an opportunity, and he rose to it. Going to those who, by reason of poverty, had not been able to order sufficient herrings from Siglufjord, he gave them freely of his store, in spite of their shabby treatment of him but a short time before.

Needless to say, a splendid catch of cod-fish gladdened the homes of Hofsos that day, but in none was there such joy as in Eirik's little hut.

Is it to be wondered at that Eirik is a successful salesman of gospel literature? Is it to be wondered at that, when Eirik's friend, the missionary, came to Hofsos, the largest building would not hold the crowds that came to hear the gospel preached? Wherever Christ-like acts such as this are observed, there will be a desire on the part of worldlings to hear the gospel.

A. G.

SOUL LONGINGS.

O H, make me, Jesus, Saviour,
More apt in pleasing Thee ;
Guard Thou my whole behaviour,
That walking in Thy favour,
Thy will my way may be.

Thou seest, LORD, how slowly,
E'en of Thyself I learn ;
Oh ! Saviour, meek and lowly,
When shall I know Thee wholly,
And cease aside to turn ?

Oh ! for a closer cleaving,
LORD Jesus, to Thy side !
All other counsels leaving,
Self-will and its deceiving,
Vain thoughts and subtle pride.

LORD Jesus, be Thou ever
Alone before my sight :
Ties nature weaves may sever ;
The bands of love—no, never !
Wrought, as they are, in light.

Oh, give me grace to ponder
Thy perfect, patient ways !
It wearies me to wander—
Direct my footsteps yonder,
Where all is love and praise !

H. K. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. III

THE HARMFULNESS OF POST-
MILLENNIALISM.

Post-millennialism is the "doctrine that the Lord will
not come till the millennium is past."

A MAN named Whitby, who lived in the time of King James, if we recall the date aright, and who inclined to Unitarianism, invented the theory of post-millennialism, and of the conversion of the world in this age ; and, sadly enough, it has blinded modern theology and the modern pulpit to the real purpose of God in this dispensation in which we live, so that the Church as a whole has failed to grasp the fact that this is an age of separation and selection rather than wholesale conversion. It has had the effect of getting the Church to work along wrong lines and with a false expectation of results. It has gradually filled the churches with unconverted "members," and multiplied apostasy. It has caused the Church to miss God's plan for the age. *Hearing and Doing.*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. L., Loughboro'.—We think you have misunderstood the words in John xvi. 23. When the Lord said, "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing," He was not referring to prayer. This word "ask" is a different one from the "ask" of the latter clause in the verse. It has rather the meaning of "enquire." The disciples had been accustomed to come to the Lord Jesus with their perplexing questions. He was going from them, but the other Comforter whom He promised to send, would guide them into all truth. The hard questions would all be answered, the difficulties removed,

112 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

everything made clear. In that day they would not need to ask Why? What? How? as they had so often done while the Lord was with them.

Prayer and thanksgiving are addressed, as you rightly observe, to God the Father. But the instances you cite, that of Stephen in Acts vii. 60, and that of Paul in 2 Corinthians xii. 8 and 1 Timothy i. 12, show that the Lord Jesus also may be addressed both in prayer and thanksgiving.

Even if there were no other scriptures, these are sufficient to settle the point. A single verse from the Word of God possesses an authority that does not belong to the utterances of the wisest of men.

But why should any Christian imagine that he may not address himself to his Lord and Saviour? Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God (Ps. l. 23), and it is His good pleasure that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 23).

T. N.—We do not think that it is exactly the Scriptures that are referred to in the verse that says: "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name" (Psalm cxxxviii. 2). The force of the passage seems to be that when God makes a promise He regards the fulfilment of it as His chief interest; when He pledges His word, He places the keeping of the pledge above every other consideration. If God indeed dwells in us, shall we not be characterized by a similar regard for our pledged word? We shall not allow a cold, a visitor, a casual meeting, an unexpected letter, or a personal inconvenience to hinder us from fulfilling the promise we have made.

APPROVED.

“ Salute Apelles, approved in Christ.”—ROM. XVI. 10.

A DESCRIPTION this, which every Christian might well covet. It is worth while being unpopular and despised among men, and even persecuted and abused, in order to be *approved in Christ*.

A gentleman, addressing the boys of a certain school, said that he could wish for no better epitaph upon his tombstone than the four words : “ He played the game.” By this he evidently meant that integrity and courtesy, such as command the respect of our fellows, should be our constant aim in life. We should be sorry to find a Christian who fails in either of these qualities, but is he to have no loftier aim than so to conduct himself that he may win the approval of those among whom he moves ? Surely his motive should be a higher one ; his desire should be to be *approved in Christ*.

He may be misunderstood among men ; his motives may be misinterpreted and his words misconstrued. This, however, will weigh little with the one whose constant aim is, not to be approved as a citizen of the world, but to be approved in Christ.

Now this does not come to the Christian as a matter of course. It calls for exercise

and diligence on his part. Thus we find Paul saying to his son in the faith: “*Study* to shew thyself approved unto God” (2 Tim. III. 15). It will involve a constant watch upon one’s motives and ways; and an oft-repeated cry to God to search us, to try us, to see if there be any wicked way in us, and to grant us grace to put far from us all that would grieve His Holy Spirit.

We shall need, not only to lay aside every weight, and to disentangle ourselves from the sin that so easily encumbers us and thwarts our progress, but to run, with patient endurance, the race set before us.

To dwell upon all this will make us feel our own weakness and insufficiency. Instead of saying, like Peter, “Lord, I am ready to follow Thee,” we shall cast ourselves upon His mercy, and lean altogether upon His power to uphold and help us.

Nor will such confidence be in vain. For when we give ourselves to the Lord, as those dear Macedonian believers did, of whom we read in 2 Corinthians VIII. 5, with the one desire to please Him; when with God-given purpose of heart we cleave to Him, and acknowledge Him in all our ways, His help will be abundantly given. He will hold us, guide us, cheer us, strengthen us, teach us, and be to us all that we need in order that we may be, by His grace, *approved in Christ*. H. P. B.

THE OIL OF GLADNESS.

“ I SEEM to be different to other Christians. I don't seem to rejoice as they do. I would like to be always overflowing with gladness.”

But that is exactly what you are always going to be ! You have received Christ as your Saviour. You rightly call upon God as your Father ; that cry of relationship has been brought into your heart by the Spirit. You belong to the Lord, and with unspeakable gladness you are going to rejoice in Him for ever.

That is one reason why He died to put away our sins : that our happy lot might be in Him and with Him, amidst the song and splendour of God's eternal glory. Nothing can alter that. Neither sorrow, nor suffering, nor tears can come there.

“ Yes, I know that, thank God. But I would like to be always overflowing with joy and gladness NOW.”

You cannot mean that you wish for nothing but joy in this world, where our blessed Lord endured so much sorrow and suffering. It is written, “ Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake ” (Phil. 1. 29). It is true that in chapter IV. those same saints are exhorted to “ rejoice in the Lord alway.”

There is, however, nothing contradictory in these two scriptures. We may indeed rejoice in the Lord always ; but we live in a world which would rob us of this joy. Therefore it is essential for the preservation of our joy in Him, that we be ready for emergencies like the soldier serving his king on the field.

We must not forget that Christ is still rejected, and that we are left in a world where sin abounds, and where Satan's snares are set to trip us up. We are therefore exhorted to be "sober" and "grave." That joyful servant of Christ, the Apostle Paul, tells us that he was "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

"Well, that is what I would like : to be always rejoicing in the Lord, and yet not to shirk any suffering that comes upon me for His sake."

Very good. Seek, and ye shall find. Only see to it that you seek in the right way.

We are all apt to think so much about our own joy, that we give little thought to the joy of others and to the joy of the Lord. To the Corinthians Paul said, We are "helpers of *your* joy." As we promote the gladness of others our own is increased ; as we water we are watered ; as we share with others the oil of gladness it flows richly upon ourselves. It freely flows down from our blessed Lord in His heavenly glory, for the cheer of those He is "not ashamed to call brethren" ; for the encouragement and blessing of those who

THE COFFIN AND THE BEES.

117

are His "companions." How good to be able to pass a little of this along to another !

But think of *His own* joy in the glory of God. He is "anointed with the oil of gladness" above His companions (Heb. i. 9). Nor would we have it otherwise. No heart that knows Him would be so engrossed with its own gladness as not to rejoice that He who is so worthy has the greater measure thereof. His gladness must necessarily be above ours. He is pre-eminent in this, as He is also in glory. Our hearts say, He is worthy ! Nevertheless, though the measure is greater, the *character* of the gladness is the same. It is the same excellent oil which anoints Him in glory that flows down to us here. The same Spirit that rests on Him has come to all those who belong to Him. We share in the same gladness with Him.

"In Him and with Him ever
Is found by grace our lot."

H. J. V.

THE COFFIN AND THE BEES.

A FELLOW missionary and the writer were sitting on the verandah of a banana planter in Spanish Honduras, when happening to look up we saw on a shelf high up near the roof a small oblong wooden box painted white. The stingless native honey bee was crawling over and flying all about it. Examining the

118 THE COFFIN AND THE BEES.

box a little more closely we noticed with surprise that it was coffin-shaped, and asked our host for an explanation of this seeming incongruity of taste, a coffin-shaped beehive. He laughed a kind of amused yet mirthless laugh and gave the reason. One of his children, Carolina, was thought to be dying when a baby, and a coffin was prepared in advance for the little body. But, contrary to all expectation, she got well, and the coffin intended to receive the corpse of the child was utilized as a home for a colony of bees. And there it was, full in view, a gruesome emblem of death, yet full of life and activity within, where the tiny workers were busy storing honey for man's benefit and pleasure.

We were at once reminded of Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." And what lessons for Christians in this old-time riddle as illustrated in the Honduras planter's beehive; and how pertinent are these lessons to the present time when the devourer is stalking through the land and the *strong* one (fierce, greedy, mighty, the word is variously translated) is raging among the nations. The days are surely "cloudy and dark," and it is little wonder that men's hearts are failing them for fear, for those things that are already come and may yet come upon the earth.

THE COFFIN AND THE BEES. 119

And what has the future for the trembling saint? Is there any comfort for his soul in the blind optimism of men who tell us the present European conflict will be, in its final result, like the thunderstorm which purifies the atmosphere and leaves, when it is passed, a healthful freshness and calm? They promise us that when this frightful war is over we shall enjoy a universal and lasting peace with world-wide good-fellowship and brotherhood. "Peace and safety" is the forecast of these prophets of "smooth things," and "a good time coming" for their Christless world; and a Christless millennium is the prospect held out for the encouragement of the nations by their religious guides and political leaders.

But "miserable comforters" all are these "men of the earth," whose prophesyings of peace are flatly contradicted by the predicted "wars and rumours of wars" of holy Scripture.

Peace, and even universal peace, *may* follow the close of the present world conflict, but it cannot be permanent; good times, as reckoned by men ("fulness of bread and abundance of idleness," Ezek. xvi. 49), may indeed succeed these present times of scarcity and stress. But they shall not continue, for, says the Son of God, who is "the truth," "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the

beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. xxiv. 22, 23). This is what awaits the earth and shall come to pass, Scripture leads us to believe, in the no-distant future.

What then? Are we to become morose pessimists, always viewing the future gloomily, ever complaining that the "former days were better than these," and asking the question of the embittered misanthrope, "Who will show us any good?" Surely not! The Christian, instructed by the Word and in communion with his God, is the happiest and most hopeful of men. He does not close his eyes to present conditions nor is he comforting himself with the vain expectation of seeing the nations beating their swords into ploughshares and their spears[;] into pruning-hooks before the coming of the Lord.

But he has grasped the fundamental idea of Samson's riddle, the underlying principle of all that occurs either here on earth or elsewhere in God's universe, namely, that "He makes the wrath of man (and demons or any other fallen creature) to praise Him," and that He can and does bring good out of evil. And viewing all happenings, whether sudden or long expected, in connection with himself, the believer knows that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to

THE COFFIN AND THE BEES.

121

them who are the called according to His purpose."

It may be that some who read these lines have lost loved ones who have been killed in battle, or died a lingering death in hospital, or who have been taken prisoner, or reported "missing." Or you may have seen the result of years of honest toil and economy swept away at a stroke, leaving you all but penniless. Or you may have been yourself a soldier, left now without sight ; or a helpless cripple for life.

And if a child of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, what has the ancient riddle of Samson to say to *you* in all this tribulation? Just this : Be not dismayed nor discouraged. God can make the "eater" of your earthly prospects yield "meat," He is able to make these seeming calamities be as "bread" to your spiritual life ; and this "strong" one may be made, under the ruling of a loving and omnipotent Father, to yield to the spirit "sweetness." We may say to these seeming misfortunes, as Joseph said to his brethren, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me : but God meant it unto good" (Gen. L. 20). The evil one may seek to cast us down utterly and destroy our confidence in God, but having learned well the lesson of the coffin and the bees we can take all calmly, in nothing terrified but giving thanks for all. These calamities are

122 THE COFFIN AND THE BEES.

indeed death to the flesh, blighting and blasting forever all earthly prospects oftentimes ; but "the bitterness of death" shall, under God, turn to the ineffable sweetness of a life lived henceforth only for Christ ; and in the hallowed "fellowship of His sufferings" we may indeed rejoice in having Him, our only and enduring gain. He, the great "Captain of our salvation," was Himself "made perfect through sufferings" ; and for the perfecting, the rounding out, of the spiritual life of His saints it is necessary that they also have "part of the same."

We may not always see just how our own particular sorrow is to be turned to our salvation and joy ; nor is it necessary for us to see or understand ; it is ours to trust, to believe the divine declaration which states in terms the most unequivocal, and without the slightest hint of qualification of any kind, that "ALL things work together for GOOD to them that love God !"

Be of good cheer, then, child of sorrow and of God. It is His purpose to take all these afflictions, sufferings, losses, and other misfortunes, that might otherwise completely crush you, and cause them to bring into your life a joy and delight that are "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb."

Let us all learn well for our own soul's profit and blessing the lessons God would teach us

THE COFFIN AND THE BEES. 123

from the incident of these tiny creatures of His, the bees of Honduras, hoarding honey for the man who for a time saw only sorrow and death portrayed in the place of their ceaseless activity. "A coffin in Egypt" closes the first book of Scripture, called aptly "the seedplot of the Bible"; and in this Egypt-world the Christian finds for his portion not life but death. But he triumphs even in this, as illustrated in the life of that great typical Christian, Paul, who when writing of his sufferings ("pressed out of measure," as he expresses it, "troubled on every side," "perplexed," "persecuted," "cast down") says, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. iv. 12). It is the old riddle again: the eater yielding meat and the strong sweetness.

The Lord give us to learn in our personal experience the meaning of the "mystery of suffering," that it may become in our lives a "*ministry* of suffering," a *coffin* transformed into a *coffer*, filled with sweetness and with life which is really life, a honey that according to old-time tradition "enlightens the eyes" (1 Sam. xiv. 29), giving the saint to perceive and understand through the school of suffering that which in easier circumstances he might never in this world apprehend, God's infinite fullness and the limitless love of Christ which passes knowledge.

C. K.

HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE?

HINTS ON CONSECUTIVE AND CHRONOLOGICAL READING.

“ I HARDLY know where to begin,” said a young Christian to the writer recently. “ I just open the Bible anywhere and read where it opens.”

To say the least, this is a haphazard method, and it was not surprising to learn that “ he didn’t seem to get much out of it.”

Now the usual way to read a book is to commence at the beginning and read straight through to the end, for most books have a plan, a sequence of narrative or argument, leading to a definite conclusion. The Bible, as we should expect, has a definite scheme of revelation, with a beginning, a development of that scheme throughout, and an ending. Though composed of many books, it is not a collection of writings thrown together anyhow and bound together in one cover : neither is it a history of the human race, of Israel or of the Church, for only so much of the history of each is selected and recorded as fits in with the general plan of divine revelation. It is essentially a revelation from God of His nature and ways, but it is also an account of His dealings with man, first of all as he was created, innocent, and then as fallen.

This and the history of God’s dealing with the

HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE? 125

children of Israel who were taken up as a sample nation: the mighty acts of power wrought for their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt: their chequered career in Canaan, their banishment and captivity, together with the prophecies of their future sorrows and restoration to their own land under Messiah, occupy most of the Old Testament. All, however, pointed to the fact that man was to be, and only could be, saved and blessed by the work of Another, and this was fulfilled in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the result that many are now being brought back to God by faith, as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The New Testament, besides unfolding this, reveals the truth as to the Church, thus introducing an entirely new subject, with the heavenly calling and the purpose of God in Christ proper to it (Eph. 1.). A considerable part of the epistles is taken up with instruction, both doctrinal and practical, for those who are called to partake of the high and holy privileges of the Church of God.

The Bible also gives us an exposure of Satan, the arch-enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ and men's souls. From the very beginning we find his evil genius at work behind the scenes, and the last book of all, the Revelation, reveals his doom. This book also describes God's final judgments and brings us to the eternal state when a new heaven and a new earth come into view. Such appears to be the plan of Scripture very briefly sketched, and if we are to get a clear view of the structure of divine revelation, in proper perspective, it will be necessary for us to read right through the Bible from the beginning.

126 HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE ?

CONSECUTIVE READING.

To some this may appear to be a big undertaking. In reality it is a most delightful and profitable task. For if we arouse ourselves to seriously undertake the study of it, putting other things on one side, the Bible can become to us, with God's help, far more interesting than any other book.

In pursuing this, the reader should not feel bound to read a chapter or a set number of chapters each day. It is better to read straight ahead, for pure enjoyment, as much at one sitting as time permits, just as we would read any other book. Do not skip anything or read too quickly to retain the thread of the narrative. On the other hand, do not linger over difficulties, for the object of this preliminary reading is rather to gain some idea of the trend of Scripture, the oneness of the Book, and the plan of God's revelation already referred to. While there will be much that is not at first clear to the understanding, the general knowledge of the Word thus gained will be of immense value later on when individual portions are studied more closely. Scripture will then interpret scripture, and one passage can be compared with another.

Anyone with the average amount of spare time can read through the Bible in eight to twelve months. Try it, dear young reader : put down the date on the fly-leaf of your Bible and start to-day. It will surprise you how interesting Bible reading with a definite object can become.

CHRONOLOGICAL READING.

Some students of experience have advocated reading right through the Bible twice before

HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE ? 127

undertaking closer study of the Word : others advise reading through periodically, at intervals of a few years. Be that as it may, we feel sure that everyone who has systematically read through the Bible will wish to do so again. For such we would suggest chronological reading as a variation, which is at once interesting and highly instructive. As the term suggests, it consists of reading the books in the order of time—the time to which each refers—instead of in the order in which they are found in the Bible.

We have no wish to criticize the order of the books in the Canon of Scripture. The books of the Old Testament are arranged, broadly speaking, in three groups : —

1. Historical : comprising Genesis to Esther.
2. Poetical ,, Job to S. of Solomon.
3. Prophetical : ,, Isaiah to Malachi.

This is a very convenient arrangement for most purposes, and was no doubt designed by the One who inspired the Bible. Parts of each of these three sections, however, are what we might call contemporary, that is, they were written about the same time or refer to the same periods, and if these portions are picked out and read together they throw a good deal of light upon each other.

A few simple directions will suffice to indicate how this method is to be pursued.

We will suppose that the reader has commenced to read through the Bible and has read through the Book of Genesis as far as the death of Abraham. Pausing here, the historical book may be laid aside, and a poetical book—the Book of Job—

128 HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE ?

may be read through, for it undoubtedly refers to patriarchal times. No dates, of course, are given in the book, but more than one reference to the flood, and the omission of any kind of reference to the law, seem to fix the book as belonging to this period. The name given to God, the Almighty, a name revealed to Abraham and used by Job and his three friends, further confirms this view. The value of reading Job at this point will be at once apparent, for it gives us a great deal of light as to the knowledge of God, of His ways in mercy, justice, and government, possessed in these very early times. It also shows us that a question which has exercised the hearts of men at all times, and could only be perfectly answered in the Gospel, was being asked even then, for the question : " How can a man be just with God ? " is raised in one form or another frequently in the book.

Taking up the historical narrative where we left off, it will be straightforward work until the life and times of David are reached. Here another opportunity presents itself for applying the chronological method by reading the many psalms, which, as their headings indicate, were called forth by the varied experience of the warrior King of Israel. These give us an insight into David's inner life with God in these stirring days, and as such add greatly to the interest of the records in 1 and 2 Samuel. We do not lose sight of the fact that the Psalms have a prophetic character, and in many cases point directly to Christ ; but for the purposes of our present line of study it will be found helpful to fit the Psalms into the historical account. The following list of Psalms with the

HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE? 129

chapters in 1 and 2 Samuel to which they relate is far from complete, but will serve the purpose of illustrating the method suggested.

Psalm 59 corresponds with 1 Sam. 19. 11

„ 56	„	„	„ 21.
„ 34	„	„	„ 21. 10-15
„ 18	„	„	„ 22.
„ 142	„	„	„ 22.
„ 63	„	„	„ 22. 5
„ 52	„	„	„ 22. 9
„ 57	„	„	„ 24. 3
„ 54	„	„	„ 26. 1
„ 30	„	„	2 Sam. 5. 11
„ 132	„	„	„ 7.
„ 60	„	„	„ 8. 3
„ 51	„	„	„ 12.
„ 3	„	„	„ 15. [Shimei]
„ 7	„	„	„ 16 (Cush =
„ 72	„	„	1 Kings 2. 12

Following this, the history of Solomon reminds us that three of the poetical books are attributed to him. These are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. How deeply interesting it is then to read the proverbs of the wisest of men. How instructive to read, as we do in Ecclesiastes, that all man's resources, everything under the sun in which he may find pleasure, only ends in vanity and vexation of spirit, when we remember that the writer possessed riches and everything the human heart could desire. How profitable to meditate upon the beautiful Song of Solomon while the impression of the historical account of

130 HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE ?

this great king, his glory, riches, and wisdom is fresh in our minds.

Passing on, we come to a double line of kings, for the kingdom was divided under Solomon's successor, and contemporary with these kings is a line of prophets, no doubt sent by God to recall His people to Himself, alas, without avail. These prophesied at various times down to the captivity and afterwards, some of them verbally, while others wrote their prophecies. These may be read with greatly added interest in connection with the reign of the king or kings in whose reign they prophesied. The written prophecies seem to proceed along three lines: (1) they had their application to the people to whom they were addressed, (2) they foretold God's judgments upon the nation (and in some cases adjacent countries and nations), and (3) they pointed on to the future blessing of Israel and Judah when they should be restored and brought to acknowledge their Messiah.

The chronological table will enable the reader to follow this out. It is intended to indicate just where the various prophets fit in, and also the periods covered by their prophecies. It will be noticed that Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of four kings, Micah during three reigns, and Hosea six. Jeremiah covers the period of the final break-up of the kingdom: Ezekiel and Daniel during the captivity.

Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah are historical books relating to the partial restoration of the people to their land, and Haggai and Zechariah, who prophesied at this time, should be read in

132 HOW DO YOU READ THE BIBLE ?

this connection. Malachi is the last glimpse we get of Old Testament life before the Lord came.

In the New Testament the application of the chronological method is more limited and less obvious. The missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul furnish the only suitable opportunity, for we have first of all, in the Acts of the Apostles, the historical account of those journeys, and then there are the epistles written to the Christians in the various towns he visited. These can be read together with great profit.

In concluding the writer would urge the absolute necessity of making a regular daily practice of Bible reading. Nothing is more calculated to destroy interest than spasmodic study. No student, applying himself to any branch of study, can afford to lay aside his text-books for a few days or a week at a time and hope to master his subject. Hence we must keep the sequence of our reading fresh in the mind, and surprising progress will be made where there is diligent application at the start.

If the question of time arises in the mind, let us remember that if many worldly people can find time to get through one or two novels a week, and probably a couple of newspapers a day, surely it ought not to be difficult for the child of God to devote a similar amount of time to the books which God has given us as the Christian's library.

J. A. S.

(Next month another paper of this series will appear entitled : "Exploring the Bible : Topical Studies in the Old and New Testaments.")

HOW THE MIGHTY FALL.

THE writer passed more than five years of his life in the republic of Spanish Honduras, and much of this time was spent in the saddle, following its trails (they could not be called roads) through jungles and open valleys, across broad savannahs and over steep mountain ranges.

It was a common sight on these journeys to see great tropical trees with their immense trunks wound round and round and almost completely covered with huge lianas, which, like monster serpents, entangled these giants of the forest in a network of powerful cables. Any tree, however vigorous when first fastened upon, was sure to be smothered and overcome in the end, and doomed to stand at last a dead and decaying skeleton of its former mighty self.

Over and over again did we think, as we rode beneath their spreading shadow, of man and the sin that fastens itself upon him and overcomes him. "Many strong men have been slain by her," it may be said of sin, as it is said in Scripture of one of its particular forms.

The liana begins by a little seed or spore falling and fastening itself somewhere about the trunk of the tree, near to its heart. Here

it germinates, putting out tiny tendrils which increase rapidly in size and in the end become the mighty meshes, strong as iron chains, in which the tree is held as in a vice, while little by little its life is strangled out.

So sin ("which doth so easily beset us"), fastening itself in the heart of man, begins its deadly work. "And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James I. 15). At first it may be wholly unperceived, and scarcely suspected. But if unchecked it takes root and spreads and strengthens its hold upon the soul until it has its victim powerless in its toils, as the serpents held the fabled Laocoon.

In the beginning of its growth a child could easily pluck out by the roots the thread-like liana ; but when it has grown and encircled in its coils the tree-trunk, a Samson could make no impression on it.

Sin is a fearful foe. Its beginnings are usually small and easily eradicated ; but if left to grow unconfessed and unforsaken, it increases its hold upon the heart and its power over the life, and its victim must in the end succumb to its horrible embrace.

And it is in the lives of professing Christians that sin is often manifested in its most dangerous and deadly character. How many, once reckoned giants among their fellows, have "become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," and, overcome by it, have fallen away

completely from their profession. Held powerless in the grip of certain habits, they stand out like dead or dying forest trees, completely enclosed and suffocated with the relentless liana.

Of course, no true child of God can ever lapse back into a condition of unregeneracy, nor can one even of the feeblest of Christ's sheep ever perish. The Word is unmistakably plain and emphatic as to this. See John x. 27-30; Romans VIII. 38, 39; Hebrews v. 9.

But as we cannot read men's hearts we must take them as they appear and profess to be. And we have instances and examples of such constantly being overcome by sin and making shipwreck of profession. The life that once seemed in them is, so far as outward appearance goes, entirely stifled, and they stand holden hopelessly in "the cords of their sins." Only God knows if they ever possessed the eternal life which Christ gives all His own—a life that can never be either forfeited or destroyed. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." But whichever their case, they stand out as fearful examples of sin in its insinuating spread and growth and its awful power over the lives of men once apparently "strong in faith," or seemingly invincible in the power of an iron will.

Behold the proud, majestic giant of the jungle, a king among the trees of the valley, its trunk straight as an arrow, and, at the least,

two yards across, shooting up two hundred feet without a branch, beyond which its leafy canopy spreads itself like a monster parasol of green over the dense and tangled undergrowth below : an outstanding landmark seen for many a mile around. But see, there is a slender line lying snugly against the smooth, white bosom of this arboreal Samson ; it is no thicker than a year-old grape vine, quite harmless, seemingly, and the tree seems immune from any likelihood of danger and destruction, unless a bolt from heaven strike it, or the axe of man from beneath.

But a few years pass, and we once more look upon the tree. It still stands, but what is this? We cannot any more see its massive trunk ; the once pencil-thick liana and its shoots have grown to the size of boa-constrictors ; they have flattened and spread themselves and completely surrounded the tree-trunk. We look up ; a huge canopy of foliage still hangs there, but it is the foliage of the liana ; it has taken complete possession of the space once occupied by its victim. The tree itself is dead—lifeless as the masts of the ships that sail on the bosom of the blue Caribbean to the northward.

And when the hurricane of the tropics comes rushing and roaring up the valley from the sea there will be a sudden crash, a dull, heavy thud, and the once majestic lord of the forest will lie

prostrate along the earth—"How are the mighty fallen!"

Reader, and especially *Christian* reader, BEWARE OF SIN. Resist it, by the grace of God, in its very beginnings. A single questionable habit may possess an amazing potentiality of sin and death. Give it no place. Pluck it out of your heart immediately in the strength of Christ, made perfect in our weakness. Tear its tendrils from your bosom by the Holy Spirit's power, who dwells within you for this very purpose. Trifle with or neglect it, and it will sap your life; your spiritual force will become enfeebled, and when the testing storm strikes you, down you will go, as many have done before you.

C. K.

ABRAHAM THE PILGRIM;

HIS REFUGE, HIS RESOURCE, HIS REWARD.

Read GENESIS XIII. 5-18; XIV., XV. 1.

IT is not without significance that in the Scripture biography of Abraham, considerable attention is devoted to the movements of Lot. Bereft of his father at an early age he was under the tutelage of his grandfather till death again came in, when he passed under the care of Abraham, and started with him on his pilgrimage. What motive actuated him in taking this serious step we cannot

say : it may be that, in his solicitude for his welfare, Abraham invited him, or that Lot's affection for his uncle influenced him ; or perhaps that the alluring nature of Abraham's call induced him to take the step without first counting the cost and considering what might lie between the start and the finish. Be that as it may, we fail to detect in Lot that faith and steadfastness which characterized Abraham, and probably this accounts for the absence of his name from that grand list of Old Testament worthies found in Hebrews XI.

That he had a link with God is evident, for in 2 Peter II. 8 he is spoken of as a " righteous man," but that he failed to apprehend the meaning of the call of God is very manifest. He had not been attracted by the God of glory, the city of God was too remote, the pilgrim path with its vicissitudes too exacting, visible and temporal things appealed to him far more powerfully than the things which were unseen and eternal.

The crisis arose over a dispute between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's, and Abraham, with that desire for peace which we should expect to find in such a man, and perhaps also with that perception which revealed to him the bent of his nephew's inclinations, reasoned with him in the beautiful language of chapter XIII. 8, 9.

It may be asked : Why did Abraham say,

“Separate thyself from me”? Why did he not rather separate himself from Lot? The answer is simple. Abraham was treading the path of faith and he intended to go straight forward and pursue it to the end. So long as Lot remained in that path they could walk together. On the other hand, if Lot preferred that which was seen and tangible, he must leave the path of faith, and in so doing he must part company with the man of faith.

We get the counterpart of this story in one short, pregnant and pathetic sentence in 2 Timothy iv. 10: “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

Demas is the New Testament prototype of Lot. He companied, served, and possibly suffered with Paul up to a certain point, but he found the path too narrow, the conditions too severe. He wanted to make the best of both worlds, and in order to do this he had to separate from the saint who was in the path of God’s will. Of Demas we hear no more, while Paul went straight on to a glorious finish.

The principle ever holds good. It is not our business to inquire with whom we shall or shall not walk, it is our individual responsibility, if we have answered to the call of God, to follow in the path to which He has called us, to let nothing and no one turn us aside, but with our eyes looking right on,

and our eyelids looking straight before us (Prov. iv. 25), to go on wherever He may lead, in the happy certainty that the end is sure.

Lot had lifted up his eyes, had seen the well-watered plain, and notwithstanding the fact that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (XIII. 13) he gravitated thither, ultimately made it his home, accepted its honours, and so far accommodated himself to its conditions that when one night he made mention of God's name in his own family, he seemed to them as one that mocked (XIX. 14). Was he happy? 2 Peter II. 8 tells us that he "vexed his righteous soul from day to day." Poor Lot! He got that on which he set his mind—and lost it. He missed that which might have been his had he kept to the straight path, and so far as the sacred record states he never regained it.

But what of Abraham? Lot's departure was a fresh testing for him, but he emerged victorious, and God—let us say it reverently—hastened to express His appreciation of His servant's loyalty. Read chapter XIII. 14: "And the Lord said unto Abram, *after that Lot was separated from him*, Lift up now thine eyes." Abraham looked not to the well-watered plain merely, but north, south, east, west, and he received the promise, "To thee will I give it,

and to thy seed for ever " (*v.* 15). Moreover the command was given him : " Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it ; for I will give it unto thee " (*v.* 17). Who was best off ? Lot went in for that which was temporal and which was ultimately burned up ; Abraham went in for that which was abiding, was assured of God's approval, received possessions such as only God could give, and even then could enjoy that which had been bestowed upon him.

In chapter XIV. we find that Lot got into a terrible mess. War broke out, and he found himself taken prisoner and his goods confiscated. Abraham heard of it and went, not to fight for one side or the other, for it formed no part of his heavenly calling to engage in the warfare of the world, but to deliver Lot. The captors were put to flight, the captives were rescued, the goods were recovered, and Abraham returned triumphant.

But the moment of victory was the moment of danger ; he who had vanquished armies might have fallen before the temptation of a man. " The king of Sodom went out to meet him " (*XIV.* 17). But Melchizedek was there first. He, the priest of the Most High God, blessed Abraham, reminding him of his link with the " Possessor of Heaven and earth." He directed his eye to God as the One who had secured the victory, and in the sense of the

wealth that had been given him by God, Abraham gave tithes of all. Thus the victorious leader became a humble and devoted worshipper. Then came the king of Sodom to offer his reward. That he was sincere, who dare question? that men of the world would have said that Abraham had well earned it, who can doubt? But this pilgrim-warrior who had learned the lesson of dependence upon God had also discovered the secret of independence of man, however great he may be. With a dignity befitting his position, in language about which there was no ambiguity, he refused the proffered prize (XIV. 22-24), and as a result he heard the most wonderful words to which human ear could listen: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (XV. 1). The pilgrim had indeed found God to be his refuge, his resource, and his reward.

We wonder if the Holy Spirit of God had this noteworthy incident in mind when He directed His servant to pen the words "God is not ashamed to be called their God" (Heb. XI. 16).

We would ask our readers to compare all this with 2 Corinthians VI. 14-18 and VII. 1. Here we have the same call that was addressed to Abraham; we tread the same path; we refuse to be mixed up with worldly associations for monetary gain, personal advancement or

otherwise, we decline the world's honours, and the magnificent compensation is the divine promise :—" I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In face of such words who can speak of loss or sacrifice ? May we seek to be found in that path in which it gives God pleasure to own us as His sons and daughters, and in which we are assured of having Himself as our refuge, our resource, and our reward.

W. B. D.

EXPLORING THE BIBLE :

TOPICAL STUDIES IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

THE immense gulf which separates the Bible from every other book is as great as the difference between God's works in creation and man's imperfect inventions.

As all God's handiwork is perfect, and even a blade of grass or a tiny insect possesses beauties which all the inventive genius of man cannot equal, so His Book, whether examined in broad outline or in the most minute detail, proclaims itself to be of divine origin, God breathed.

It presents to our vision all the possibilities which a newly discovered continent would open up to an explorer. The whole land lies before him, first to be broadly surveyed as to its extent, outline, inhabitants, and general features. When

this has been done there will remain mountain peaks to be scaled, mighty rivers to be traced to their sources, and minerals beneath the surface to be discovered.

Such is the Bible to the interested student. Having obtained a bird's-eye view of the whole by consecutive or chronological reading, the delightful pursuit of scaling the heights of Scripture and following the streams of truth which thread their way through its inspired pages naturally suggests itself. We may call this the topical method because, in practical language, it consists of taking a subject or topic and tracing it in all its connections through the Bible.

TRACING THE RIVERS.

An endless range of subjects is available for treatment in this way. As an example we will select one which runs through the entire Bible, being involved, if not actually referred to in terms, in the early chapters of Genesis, and which has innumerable connections throughout the Word to its closing book.

This subject is *The Blood*. Though it is looked upon as old-fashioned doctrine and finds no place in "New Theology," it is nevertheless one of the vital truths of the Word of God, for by the blood is meant the atoning, sacrificial death of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As this tremendous fact is the foundation upon which everything for God's glory and man's blessing is based, it is not surprising that it occupies such a large place in the Scriptures.

We may divide the references to this subject into three sections, namely :—

1. God's definite statements about the blood.
2. Old Testament types of the blood.
3. New Testament blessings resulting from the blood.

It is obviously impossible within the limits of this paper to review all the references that the reader will find under these three headings, but the following are indicative of many others.

(1) "The life . . . is in the blood . . . for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. XVII. 11).

"Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. IX. 22).

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John I. 7).

Thus in bringing together a verse in the Old Testament and two in the New we get a definite declaration regarding atonement by blood, not only as regards the divine necessity of it, but God's provision in the sacrifice of His own Son.

(2) To follow this up with the passages where the blood is typically referred to, or where it is not referred to in words, but typified in action, further confirms this grand truth to our souls, for types of it abound in the Old Testament.

We might notice that it is involved in the action of clothing Adam and Eve with coats of skin (Gen. III.), for blood must necessarily have been shed to procure this covering for the guilty pair. A significant foreshadowing of the righteousness Christ's death has procured for us, covering us perfectly before God's holy eye.

Abel's sacrifice also speaks of the same thing, for he was accepted, not in virtue of his own merits, which were no greater than his brother's, but because a life was given for his : blood was shed.

Next, Abraham's suggestive words to Isaac : " My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering " (Gen. XXII. 8), and that beautiful chapter, Exodus XII., which is particularly rich in typical teaching, continues to tell the same story. Here we find Israel sheltered from judgment by the blood of the paschal lamb. Secured by the blood, they were assured by Jehovah's word : " When I see the blood I will pass over you."

Is it not very plain that God was setting forth in these various types the atoning sacrifice of His own Son, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world ?

(3) In the New Testament several lines of topical study could be traced out. The following verses are only a few out of very many references.

By His blood we are Purchased (Acts XX. 28).

„ „ „ Justified (Rom. V. 9).

„ „ „ Redeemed (I Peter I. 18-20).

„ „ „ Brought nigh (Eph. II. 13).

„ „ „ Sanctified (Heb. XIII. 12).

These verses will well repay careful consideration, and if the wonderful blessings they speak of are known, it will not be difficult to anticipate in measure the song we shall unitedly sing in glory : " Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen " (Rev. I. 5, 6).

EXPLORING THE BIBLE.

147

SCALING THE MOUNTAINS.

Having followed from its first appearance this most refreshing stream which flows through the whole Bible, some of the heights of Scripture can now be considered.

The person, work, and glories of our Lord Jesus Christ will at once appeal to us as presenting the loftiest pinnacles in the inspired Word, opening up vistas which fill our souls with wonder and adoration.

We can hardly classify this with subjects or topics. It is rather the theme of the whole Bible. Neither can we approach it as we would the study of a doctrine or some aspect of our blessing, for here we are touching what must ever remain an inscrutable mystery, known only to God Himself. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." The hidden mystery of His person, His incarnation, how He could combine in His person essential Deity and perfect manhood is not revealed to creature minds. We can only behold His glory, while we stand with unshod feet to worship Him who is "the image of the invisible God" and "the brightness of His glory."

As we have already said, this is the theme of the whole Bible, but three chapters stand out like mountain peaks glistening in the sun. They are the first of Hebrews, the first of Colossians, and the first of John, and each is concerned with the personal glories of the Son of God.

Hebrews 1. deals with His unchangeable deity as creator and sustainer of all things ; Colossians 1. gives us¹ in addition to this His personal glories as

Head of creation and the Church ; while John 1. is remarkable in that it gives us, in the short compass of its fifty-one verses, nearly all our Lord's essential titles.

The reader will be greatly uplifted by looking up these numerous titles.

The following notes may be helpful :—

TITLES OF OUR LORD IN JOHN 1.

- | | | |
|-------|-----|--|
| Verse | 1. | THE WORD—the expression of God. |
| „ | 1. | GOD—essentially God Himself. |
| „ | 3. | CREATOR—“all things were made by Him.” |
| „ | 7. | THE LIGHT—“shining in darkness.” |
| „ | 14. | THE INCARNATE—who <i>became</i> flesh. |
| „ | 17. | JESUS CHRIST—His personal name. |
| „ | 18. | THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON—the Father's object. |
| „ | 23. | THE LORD—every knee to bow to Him. |
| „ | 29. | THE LAMB OF GOD—in His suffering character. |
| „ | 34. | SON OF GOD—distinct personality in the Godhead. |
| „ | 38. | MASTER—teacher—“learn of Me.” |
| „ | 41. | MESSIAH, { —the Anointed, His official |
| | | CHRIST } title. |
| „ | 45. | JESUS OF NAZARETH—the lowly despised One. |
| „ | 49. | KING OF ISRAEL—future glory in connection with Israel. |
| „ | 51. | SON OF MAN—universal dominion. |

Meditation upon each and the reading of other passages they suggest will take the mind into the highest realms of spiritual thought, for they present an object “to fill and satisfy the heart.”

DIGGING BENEATH THE SURFACE.

“ Superficial reading of the Bible,” says an old writer, “ is like a person plucking flowers in his garden in Cornwall, and not knowing that beneath the soil may be hidden treasures of tin and silver, or some precious metal ” : and just as the earth’s crust is intersected by strata of various kinds, limestone, quartz, coal, copper, silver, and so on, so the Bible is full of seams of truth, sometimes cropping up to the surface in a direct reference, and at other times hidden in some incident or Bible character.

There is the black seam of Sin which can be traced as to its origin, character, hatefulness to God, present results, and certain punishment.

Then there is the gold seam of Divine Righteousness, fully brought to light in the Epistle to the Romans, but nevertheless running through the entire Bible, being witnessed to by the law and the prophets, showing God’s righteous provision for clearing the Sinner from the condemnation of sin.

Sufficient has been said to indicate this method of study, and it is not the writer’s intention to supply a long list of subjects for further consideration. It is much better that each student should follow his own exercise under the guidance of God the Holy Ghost. It may be that if newly converted such subjects as salvation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation may claim attention, and nothing is more establishing than a knowledge of these truths.

Many have been greatly helped by following

out such subjects as, the love of God ; the Holy Spirit, His presence and mission upon earth ; and the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, words or expressions which occur frequently in Scripture may be looked up in their various connections with great profit, such as " We know " in John's Epistles and the " one accord " in the Acts and the Epistles of Paul.

For this the Bible dictionary and the concordance will be invaluable helps ; the one giving information and the other providing, as it does, the means for referring to all the passages containing a direct reference to any given subject.

THE CONCORDANCE, however, has not only its uses, but its abuses, for many are content to read only the brief extract of the verse given there, which is necessarily clipped short, instead of turning to the passage and reading the whole verse in its connection.

This latter course is greatly to be commended, and an indirect benefit will be gained by the very act of finding the references, for the reader will thereby become familiar with the Scriptures, and in time will be able to find most passages quickly without relying too much on the concordance.

The verses will make a still more permanent impression if they are written down consecutively in a large notebook. The advantage of this is twofold, for it enables the student to compare all the verses on any given subject at a glance, and it provides a record of the study for future reference.

No more soul-establishing exercise could be imagined, and many a perplexing problem and spiritual difficulty can be cleared up by isolating

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT. 151

the subject and prayerfully comparing all that the Scriptures say about it.

J. A. S.

(Next month : "Unbinding the Bible : Some Features of a Wonderful Library.")

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

E. W. C.—No, we do not believe that the evangelist's work is merely to "state the truth of the Gospel and leave all appeal and application to the Holy Spirit." Neither did Paul believe it. For impressed with "the terror of the Lord"—all that the future means for the unconverted—he *persuaded* men (2 Cor. v. 11).

Neither did Peter believe it. For after his testimony to the Person of Christ and the fact of His resurrection, in Acts III., he turned upon his hearers with a direct and pointed appeal : "Repent, therefore, and be converted."

Mr. Spurgeon used to exhort his students, after earnest prayer, and careful preparation of themselves rather than of their sermons, to put their very souls into their words, and fire them at the hearers by means of loving and fervent appeals. How can a preacher do otherwise if he realizes what the acceptance or rejection of his message will mean to those whom he addresses, *and if he really cares?*

We will quote in this connection the words of one who has had a wide experience. Speaking of the change that comes over some preachers, as they profess to get "fresh light," he says : "Most have commenced their ministries with evangelism.

That which first led them to preach was a passion for souls. Let the old man look back far enough and he will see a youth full of warm enthusiasm pleading with men and women for their redemption—a youth who was once himself. What has changed him? . . . *He has come to regard himself rather as the calm expositor of truth than its impassioned advocate.* The note of appeal has disappeared or been wilfully suppressed. And although he may not know it, that is the real cause of the weariness he feels in his task as the years advance. He grieves over the lack of result . . . without perceiving that he himself has made such results impossible.”

What is still sadder than the condition referred to in this quotation is the fact that some positively find a merit in the absence of appeal and the consequent dearth of conversions. We trust you are not of the number. Of such it may truly be said: “Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not” (Hos. vii. 9).

Suffer one more quotation, this time a brief one, from the writings of one who was reckoned a most spiritual and devoted preacher of the Word: “It has been the sin of my life that I have not always taken aim. I have been a lover of *subjects*. If I had loved men more, and loved subjects only as God’s instruments of good for men, it would have been better, and I should have more to show for all my labour.”

May these words of regret for a lifelong mistake serve as a warning to those of us who seek, by God’s grace, to preach the glad tidings.

QUARTUS, A BROTHER.

THE epistles of Paul teem with personal allusions to his friends and fellow-labourers. He was evidently a man of large and tender heart, and many were they who had a place in his thoughts, his affections, and his prayers.

It was his habit, when saluting, or otherwise referring to his friends in his letters, to couple with their names the mention of some characteristic, or something that he could speak of with approval in connection with them. If he greets Priscilla and Aquila, he calls them "my helpers in Christ Jesus." If he sends a message to Epænetus, he speaks of him as "my well-beloved." Amplias is saluted as "my beloved in the Lord"; Urbane, as "our helper in Christ"; Stachys, as "my beloved"; Apelles, as "approved in Christ"; Tryphena and Tryphosa, as those who "labour in the Lord." So too "the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord."

The loving heart of the Apostle seems to dwell with delight upon any trait that is the outcome of the work of grace in those he names.

But he was no flatterer, and did not go beyond the truth in what he remarked. This fact makes of greater significance the absence of such commendation in connection with

others of whom the Apostle makes mention. True, there were some at Rome who were probably unknown to him, except by name, for he had never been to that city. The faith of the saints there was, however, spoken of throughout the whole world (Rom. i. 8). In this way their names might well be familiar, and Paul could salute such as Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas and Hermes (whom possibly he had never seen) without adding a commendatory word.

But with the Apostle, as he wrote the epistle to the Roman believers, were certain brethren who joined with him in sending salutations to the saints in the metropolitan city. Among these, and placed last in the list, is one who is simply named as "Quartus, a brother" (Rom. xvi. 23).

That he was "a brother" was due to the grace of God that had saved him, and introduced him into that family circle where God is known as Father, and where all are brethren. This is true of every believer, and is not more true of one than of another. Paul himself, with all his devotedness and zeal, all his ripe knowledge of the deep things of God and all his rich experience, was no more "a brother," no more a child of God, than Quartus or any other Christian.

But of Paul other things could be said than merely that he was "a brother." He was a

faithful servant of Christ, who counted all things but loss, and who indeed had suffered the loss of all things, for His dear Name's sake.

It is to be feared, however, that there are not a few of the children of God to-day of whom nothing more can be said than was said of Quartus. They are brethren in Christ, because they have believed in Him for the remission of sins. We do not say there has been *no* fruit for God in their lives. In the parable of the sower, wherever the seed had fallen on good ground there was *some* fruit, even though in some cases it was but thirty-fold instead of an hundred-fold. We should not care to think that there is a single Christian whose life has been at all times absolutely barren, whose ways have never borne the slightest testimony to the grace that has blessed him so richly.

But we speak of that which is visible, and again we say that we fear there are many of whom we must be content merely to say that they are brethren.

Will such have any place in the *kingdom* of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes to reign over the earth with His saints? Their place in *heaven* is secured; their title thereto is nothing less than the precious blood of Christ. But heaven and the kingdom are two very different spheres, and our question concerns the latter. In the kingdom, where the places assigned to the servants of Christ will be according to their

faithfulness while on earth (see Luke XIX. 15-19), will there be any place for one who, like Quartus, is merely "a brother" ?

We venture to say that *there will*. For it is not strict justice, unmixed with any other quality, which will bestow rewards and assign places in the kingdom. If it were so, who among us would receive a reward ? At best we are but unprofitable servants, and our most earnest endeavours are marked by many an imperfection. Strict justice could only manifest itself by withholding rewards altogether.

We read, however, of the *grace* that is to be brought to us, not when the Lord comes to translate His church to heaven, but at the revelation (or appearing) of Jesus Christ (1 Peter I. 13). Grace indeed it will be that will reward any of us in that day. God Himself, in His infinite grace, not only works in us the doing, but even the willing of His good pleasure (Phil. II. 13). It is all of Him ; everything in us upon which His eye can rest with approval is the fruit of His own work ; every little bit of service we may render to our Lord and Master is by His enabling. And yet, in "that day," He will turn round and reward us for it as if we had done it all ourselves ! What is this but matchless, infinite grace ?

It is true that righteousness will make itself heard. "God is not unrighteous," we are told, to forget the work and labour of love of His

saints (Heb. vi. 10). It would be unrighteous not to recognize what grace has produced. All that God has Himself wrought in the lives of His people will be rewarded by "the righteous Judge" in the day of Christ's appearing. And no doubt much will come in for recognition then that has remained invisible, till that moment, to every eye but His. How surprised shall we be at the gracious interpretation which the Lord will put upon some of our clumsy and mis-directed attempts to serve Him ! Will it not be somewhat like the wonder that must have filled the hearts of the poor failing disciples, who had just been quarrelling among themselves when their gracious Master said : " Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations " ? (Luke XXII. 28).

Have we not an illustration that bears upon the case in the Old Testament story of Jonathan and David ? Jonathan was well aware that David was destined to wear the crown of Israel, and on account of his friendship with him he expected a place of honour when David was at length upon the throne. " Thou shalt be king over Israel," he said, " and *I shall be next unto thee* " (1 Sam. XXIII. 17).

But Jonathan's affection for David was not of the sort that led him to make any very real sacrifice for his sake. David was abiding in a wood, hunted and persecuted by Saul, while Jonathan went off to his palace. He never

shared David's afflictions, never identified himself with him in his rejection and reproach. The consequence was that he fell, with his father, in the fateful battle of Gilboa, and when David ascended the throne, there was no Jonathan to fill any place whatever. He was represented in the kingdom by his son Mephibosheth, a cripple, who owed his position there to pure mercy. That same mercy, "the kindness of God" as it is called, will give us a place with Christ in the day of His power even as it has already given us a place in the favour of God.

But this is not to have an *abundant* entrance into the kingdom. For this we need to have not only faith, but those further things which are mentioned with it in 2 Peter i. 5-7. If these things be in us and abound we shall not be found barren or unfruitful. So verse 8 tells us. It is not enough to know what our Saviour has done for us on the cross. There are things for *us* to do, and verse 10 says: "*If ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

May this grace be given both to the reader and the writer, that we may not be among those "saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15), but that we may be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. i. 11).

H. P. B.

BRIGHT GLEAMS AMID PRESENT DARKNESS.

WE could hardly have a more dismal picture than that which is depicted by the Spirit of God in the early part of the Epistle of Jude. We have a solemn warning with reference to ungodly men who had crept in unawares, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. From the 4th verse on to the 16th we have the frightful departure from the truth (much of which we can see to-day) graphically described, but in the 20th the inspired writer turns, as if with relief, to speak of those who are truly the Lord's. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God ; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Much might be said about these exhortations, and the following verses, but I pass on to call attention to the triumphant close that the epistle has. Here is comfort indeed for the troubled child of God. Let us look at this beautiful doxology in detail.

"Now unto Him WHO IS ABLE." We have no ability in the face of the tide of evil around us. We feel how powerless we are ; how unable we are to stay the rapidly advancing tide of

iniquity. How unable indeed we are to accomplish anything, but "He is able." Circumstances do not change Him. His power and might are still supreme. God moves on His way unswervingly. No opposition of the enemy can frustrate His purpose.

He is "able TO KEEP YOU." Do you say you cannot keep yourself? If we think we are able to keep ourselves in our own strength, how sadly we shall fail! Have you doubts and fears as to whether you will hold on? HE is able to keep. The One who saved us, who stooped down from the heights of glory to rescue such undeserving sinners as we, is not only able to save, but He is able to keep those whom He has saved. And if He is ABLE to do it, who is to say that He WILL not do it? Whatever He is able to do, we may rest assured He will accomplish, that as of old Israel could say, "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise," so the Christian of to-day can look up, in the face of all the confusion in the world, and all the ruin and departure that has come into the professing church, and say, "I know in whom I have believed. He is able to keep."

Next He is "able to keep you FROM FALLING." Do you say, "I often stumble and fall"? Do you feel your inability to face the foe, and fear that you will fall? He is able to keep you from falling. I believe the word should be stronger still, and that it is really "able to keep you

AMID PRESENT DARKNESS.

161

without stumbling.” Perhaps you say, “I stumble often. I have many a fall.” But He is “able to keep you without stumbling.” Let the eye of faith always be directed to Him. If you feel you are likely to stumble, say, “Lord, keep me.” Keep looking up. He is able to keep you without stumbling, and to make you tread a straight course. You will be sustained in the path, and not only so, but borne along in triumph.

So much for the present. What a joy it is to know that we are in the hands of a Saviour who will never fail us ! He is the great all-the-way-home Saviour, as has been well said. From the moment you put your trust in Him, and staked your all for time and eternity upon Him and His finished work, the hand of Omnipotence has been with you to keep you, to bring you through all the trials of this present evil world, “to keep you without stumbling,” to go straight on, “running with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.” That mighty, sustaining hand will not let any of His loved ones go until He sets them down in the glory of God. What a wonderful Saviour we have, a Saviour who not only saves but keeps !

Then what about the future ? Do you say, “I am very conscious of my faults and failings” ? He is going to present you “FAULTLESS.” You will be absolutely blameless and faultless

in His sight. All the preciousness of Christ is seen on His people before God, and in that coming day of glory He will present you there faultless. To Him there will be glory in the church—that wonderful company, called out between the day of Pentecost and His coming again—throughout all ages. I know my faults, and you know yours. But

“What though th’ accuser roar
Of ills that I have done ;
I know them well, and thousands more,
Jehovah findeth none.”

And in that bright day of glory you will be there “faultless,” as spotless as the precious blood of Christ (which cleanseth from all sin) can make you.

Where are we going to be presented faultless? Many people say they would be content just to get within heaven’s door. As the hymn puts it,

“Trembling I had hoped for mercy,
Some lone place within His door.”

That is not enough for the blessed God, and so we learn :

“But the crown, the throne, the mansion,
He made ready long before.”

You will be presented faultless “BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY,” before a God of infinite holiness, who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity.” How comes it that guilty sinners such as we can be found faultless in the presence of the

glory of God ? It is because our Saviour was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Every claim of divine justice was so fully met that the righteous power of God was put forth to raise Christ from the dead, and place Him “ far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.” Every believer is seen now in all the preciousness of Christ, as spotless and stainless as He Himself is, and soon that same righteous power will be put forth to change these bodies of humiliation, and “ fashion them like unto His body of glory.” Then the glorious work of salvation will be completed, the topstone of the wonderful edifice laid, and every ransomed soul presented faultless before the glory of God.

How is He going to do it ? “ WITH EXCEEDING JOY.” Think of it ! The Lord is going to find His exceeding joy in having you and me with Himself, and presenting us faultless before the presence of His glory in that bright coming day. How glad shall we be then ! But what will our joy be in comparison with His in having us there ! No doubt the lost sheep in Luke xv. was pleased to be taken home, but what was the joy of the sheep compared with the joy of the Shepherd when He had found the sheep that was lost ? Dear fellow-Christian, has the thought ever entered your soul that it is going to be the great delight of the Lord who died for you to present you faultless before the presence

164 BRIGHT GLEAMS AMID DARKNESS.

of His glory? What a glorious prospect is yours!

Well may the Apostle break out into a song of praise, "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and for ever, Amen!" As our hearts dwell upon this grand future that awaits us, and consider what we were and what by His grace He has made us, how can we refrain from paying our tribute of worship and praise to the One who alone is worthy?

In the light of such a scripture as this, what manner of persons ought we to be! How it should lift us up above all the turmoil of the world, and the discouragement caused by the evil that everywhere we see around us. We are on the winning side. He who saved us can keep us from stumbling. He is our refuge and resource throughout our earthly path. He will bear us along, again I say, in triumph. And then the future, what a day of glory awaits us! We who in ourselves are full of faults and failings will be faultless in that day before the presence of the glory of God, that glory of which we had come short, but for which we are now perfectly fitted through the precious all-atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. May His grace lead us to a fuller understanding of the vastness and glory of that great salvation which is ours through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

W. MCD.

UNBINDING THE BIBLE:

SOME FEATURES OF A WONDERFUL LIBRARY.

THE Bible is a God-inspired book—a continuous book with a beginning, a development of truth all through, and an ending—but it is more than this; it is an inspired library. Compressed into this volume are sixty-six books, which, if bound in separate covers and printed as other books are, would fill a fair-sized bookshelf.

The convenience of having all bound in one volume is obvious, but it is a highly profitable task to unbind the book, in imagination of course, and to consider each of the separate sections in its own setting as to time, place, penman, and purpose.

To this interesting work the student is now invited with the assurance that deeper acquaintance with the Bible in detail will only increase the admiration for its perfection which has been produced by the simpler studies of skimming the surface or taking pleasant excursions through the inspired pages suggested in previous papers.

It will be quite impossible within the compass of this paper to summarize even briefly the contents of the individual books of the Bible. Nor is it necessary to do so, for there are books without number written to expound the Bible and its various sections.

THE USE OF EXPOSITORY BOOKS.

Literature of a spiritual sort is being produced abundantly, as a visit to any good Bible and

book depot will testify. There one can buy books giving in simple, lucid terms expositions of Scripture, outlines of truth, or unfoldings of prophecy ; books that are the product of much labour and exercise on the part of those who have given their time to the work of placing a written ministry of the truth in acceptable form within the reach of all God's people.

The question is often asked, however : How far is it right to use the writings of men when studying the Bible ? Is it consistent with dependence upon the Spirit of God ?

Let it be said at once that we think it would be folly to fail to take advantage of the written ministry of the Word which has been so richly supplied to us. Nor do we see any reason why this should take us off the line of dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Rather with these advantages, and under His teaching, should we increase yet more and more in the knowledge of divine things.

At the same time it is to be feared that there is grave danger that truth which reaches us so easily, and without the deep exercise of those who sought it out by their own industry, may be received in a mental way and become mere knowledge, of the sort that " puffeth up."

A humble spirit and much waiting upon God is our safeguard. Nothing is really learnt unless received direct from Him, even though it may be through a human vessel. That which is formed in our hearts in His presence will stand the inevitable tests of life in this world, which always expose mere head knowledge.

Men's writings must also be read with reserve.

remembering the immense gulf between them and the inspired Scriptures. No matter how well known the writer may be, or how imposing his credentials, we shall do well to imitate the Bereans, who "searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so," receiving only what the Word confirms.

WHICH BOOK FIRST?

Each student must seek guidance from the Lord for himself as to this, and He who knows us better than we know ourselves will direct us to the portion convenient for us at all times. Subject to the foregoing remarks, however, the writer may point out the immense importance of the Epistle to the Romans for all young believers, and would urge the following reasons for inviting their earnest attention to it :—

1. In it the gospel is unfolded in a wonderful panorama of grace, as nowhere else in God's Word.

2. It speaks of settled peace with God, and deliverance from the penalty and power of sin, without which no one can enjoy the things of God.

3. It makes known the secret of a holy, happy, useful Christian life without the heart-sickening disappointment which so many experience.

How shall we commence to read this wonderful book? First of all we must get thoroughly familiar with the text of it.

Read it through ; read it through again ; read it through at a sitting.

A friend of the writer's, when studying this epistle, read through chapters one to eight,

without stopping, every day for a month. As the time proceeded, his meditation on the epistle grew richer, his conception of it increased, and there was formed in his mind an impression of the truth which he has never lost.

When reading in this way it is well to remember that the books of the Bible are divided into chapters and verses for convenience only. This has been a great aid in locating, memorizing, or quoting portions of the Word ; but the Bible is something more than a collection of texts, and these divisions sometimes interfere with the connected reasoning which all these epistles contain. Sometimes a verse which looks very perplexing becomes quite simple when the preceding and succeeding verses are read with it.

Again, the opening verses of a chapter very often belong to the end of the previous one, or vice versa. A distinct instance of this is to be found at the end of chapter iv. in the epistle under review, for it is obvious that the first word of chapter v., "Therefore," implies that a conclusion is being drawn from some argument which has gone before. How differently it reads thus :—

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it (righteousness) was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Next try to get a rough summary in your mind of the drift of the teaching. Above all make good use of the notebook. Put down anything that strikes you, for it often happens that some thought

you expected to remember easily has quite escaped you, only a short time afterwards.

The following outline with a key to the contents of each chapter is an example of summarizing an epistle. Almost any book can be treated in the same way, and besides being an interesting task it is a considerable aid to the memory.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Chap.	1.	No excuse	.	.	The heathen	} Sin
„	2.	No escape	.	.	The Gentile	
„	3.	No exception	.	.	The Jew	
„	4.	No works	.	.	Abraham	
„	5.	No distance	.	.	Grace	
„	6.	No slavery	.	.	{ Know Reckon Yield	} Sanctification
„	7.	No bondage	.	.	Two natures	
„	8.	{ No condemnation No separation	}	.	The Spirit	
„	9.	No human will	.	.	Election	} Specially Israel
„	10.	No difference	.	.	Whosoever	
„	11.	No boasting	.	.	Restoration	
„	12.	No reserve	.	.	Ministry	} Service
„	13.	No ill	.	.	Conduct	
„	14.	{ No boastings No disputings	}	.	Peace	
„	15.	No self-seeking	.	.	Edification	
„	16.	No secret	.	.	The Mystery	

THE PENTATEUCH.

A knowledge of the gospel as revealed in Romans will throw light on almost every part of Scripture. The first five books of the Bible, for instance, are brim full of illustrations of the truth which is there taught doctrinally.

They are, of course, historical, giving us the history of God's early dealings, first of all with man, and then with His chosen people Israel.

There are also weighty principles to be learned from these early scenes: we see God's abhorrence of sin, the fear of God bringing its own reward, and the truth of those words spoken much later, "Them that honour Me I will honour." But this is not all, for the Bible, designed by a divine Author, teaches in these earlier books typically.

It is as if God selected, arranged, and recorded the historical events in order to illustrate for us the blessed realities we now know in the light of the New Testament.

Only He who knows the end from the beginning could design such a book, and with the knowledge we have of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus we can go over these Old Testament books, not as mere history, but finding in them a rich mine of treasure.

In presenting us with pictures of Christ, in these books, God has displayed the same variety which characterizes all His works, for the methods used in these five books to present the truth typically are all different and each equally interesting.

They have been described thus :—

In Genesis truth is taught by *Persons*.

„ Exodus „ „ *Actions*.

„ Leviticus „ „ *Things*.

„ Numbers „ „ *Figures*.

„ Deuteronomy „ „ *Words*.

GENESIS. The reader will readily recall the number of persons who appear prominently in Genesis. To mention a few, Adam and Eve, Isaac and Rebekah, Joseph and Asenath, provide lovely pictures of Christ and the church (compare

Gen. II. 20-24 and Eph. v. 22-33), while weighty lessons come out in the contrasts seen in Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael—all referred to in the New Testament. If the reader will read attentively the end of Galatians IV. he will there see the use the Spirit of God makes of the types He implanted in the Old Testament, and the value of studying the Scriptures in this way will be more apparent.

EXODUS. This book is a graphic account of sweeping actions, recording the deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh's power and the wonders wrought by God in their behalf. It furnishes in this way a wonderful picture of *redemption by blood and deliverance by power*, for it points us to the One in whom we have redemption, and reminds us that we have been translated from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

We can highly recommend the Notes on Genesis, Exodus, etc., by C. H. Macintosh,* a series of volumes which explain very beautifully the typical teaching of the books of Moses, and the reader will find it well worth while to procure them if they are not already on his bookshelf.

The variety of method already noticed in the Pentateuch extends to every part of Scripture. This is not surprising when we consider that the earth's Maker is the Bible's Author, and He who has adorned the material creation with such endless variety has enriched in the same way the book He has given to man.

* Can be had of our publishers.

This is demonstrated also in the choice of the writers, for kings, princes, peasants, scholars, fishermen, and many others are found among the forty odd penmen : but more remarkable still is the immense variety in what we might call their literary style. That this exists is evident to even a casual student, so much so that some have found it difficult to reconcile with the fact of full inspiration. If the writers say they merely held the pen and wrote as they were directed, would not their own personality and style be excluded ? To this we might reply, Why employ penmen at all ? Could not God have delivered His own Word to His people apart altogether from human instrumentality ? Assuredly He could, but as His Word is for men, and in the language of men, He who inspired the words prepared as vessels those who should pen His message, using each for the peculiar portion for which he was most suited.

An eminent writer has summarized it thus :—

“ As a skilful musician, called to execute alone some masterpiece, puts to his lips by turns the mournful flute, the shepherd’s reed, the mirthful pipe, and the war trumpet, so the almighty God, to sound in our ears His Eternal Word, has selected from of old the instruments best suited to receive successively the breath of life. Thus we have in God’s great anthem of revelation the sublime simplicity of John : the argumentative, elliptical, soul-stirring energy of Paul : the fervour and solemnity of Peter : the poetic grandeur of Isaiah : the lyric moods of David : the ingenuous and majestic narratives of Moses : the sententious and royal wisdom of Solomon. Yes, it was all this—it was Peter, Isaiah, Matthew, John, or Moses ; but it was God.”

J. A. S.

(Next month : “ Dispensational Distinctions : a key to difficult passages.”)

CHRIST COMING INTO OUR LIVES.

“**T**HE Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” No words, possibly, are more familiar to us than these. How often we repeat them to ourselves and to one another. And how important it is that we should be constantly reminded of the love of Christ. Apart from Christ all is darkness. Near to Him all is light and warmth and gladness. When the soul has reached Christ, it has reached the spring, shall I say, of everlasting joy and blessing.

Of course we begin by knowing the Lord Jesus as Saviour. There is no start in the soul until that point is reached, but what I am speaking about now is a great deal more than this. We may know Christ as our Saviour, and be so sure about it that not a shadow of doubt shall ever cross our minds, but while we have this knowledge, how easy it is for the heart to drift away from Him. Oh, let us keep near to Christ ! Let nothing becloud our vision of Him. If there be one word I would like to say with all the power that God can give me, it is this : *keep near to Christ*. Look up ; do not be satisfied with knowing that He died for your sins upon the cross, and that He put those sins away for ever. Seek to know Christ Himself

174 CHRIST COMING INTO OUR LIVES.

in the glory of God, a living Christ, a Christ for to-day, a Christ for every hour.

It is a blessed thing when Christ comes into the life of the believer. I wonder whether the reader knows what I mean by this. You see an illustration of it in everyday life, when two young people become attached to one another in sweet and proper affection. A powerful factor has entered into their lives. And when Christ, the living Saviour in glory, who loves us, who gave Himself for us, who gives Himself to be the object of our hearts' affections, comes into the life, moulds it, colours it, gives tone and character to it, and the heart, knowing Him more and more, becomes devoted to Him, then Christ becomes everything to that one. I think it was much like that with the beloved Apostle Paul. Thus he says: "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Let me put it to you: has Christ come into your life like that? We talk of separation. What is the worth of any sort of separation, I should like to know, that is not brought about by that vision of Christ in the glory of God? I believe it was that which long years ago brought out many beloved brethren whom we know by name, from the world, religious or otherwise, into a path of true separation. It was the transcendent vision of Christ in the glory of God.

CHRIST COMING INTO OUR LIVES. 175

Let us ask Him, if we have never done it before, to reveal Himself to our souls in all His beauty and glory, so that He shall come into our lives, and be to us every day a living great reality. Christianity, in its true power, is seen exemplified in the life of a man of like passions with ourselves, in the beloved Apostle Paul. Read Philippians III., and you will see it there.

But I must not travel over too much ground, or divert the mind from the point I am seeking to emphasize, the transcendent importance of Christ coming into our lives, so that He controls and colours them, and gives tone and character to them. That enables us to turn away from the brightest and the best that the world has to offer, because we have found something superlatively better in Christ Himself. He loves us with a love that no tongue can tell, and no thought can compass ; a love deep, and true, and tender ; a love that knows neither ebb nor flow. He seems to say to us, " Let Me come into your life. I have died for you, washed your sins away in My precious blood. I am going to have you up there with Me in glory presently ; but all through your pilgrim days let Me come into your life." Let us say, " Lord, come in," and if we do not know how to throw open the door of our heart to let Christ in, ask Him to open the door Himself. *He that seeks shall find.*

W. B.

“YE ASK AMISS.”

IT is to be feared that the solemn words :
 “ *Ye ask amiss* ” (James IV. 3), give us the reason why we have to deplore many unanswered prayers. That we should “ receive not because we ask not ” is easily understood, and should lead us to “ ask.” For “ he that asketh receiveth ” ; nor can we complain of our prayers not being answered if we do not pray. Let us therefore see to it that we “ ask.”

But it is possible to ask and yet not receive. How can this be explained ?

Arc we not conscious that we have asked for many things which have (for some wise reason) not been granted ? Have we not prayed, and that earnestly, many a time, and yet that prayer has apparently never been answered ? Why is this ?

On the other hand we can enumerate precious answers to our feeble and oft faithless prayers, so that our hearts are not discouraged, nor weary, in the blessed labour of prayer when the answer is not forthcoming. God hears prayer, every prayer. His ear is open to the cry of His children. Heavy it never is. Rest assured that there is a divine and blessed meaning in the exercise of unanswered prayer. What power is it that sustains, in an unbroken

“ YE ASK AMISS.”

177

continuity of prayer, for months and years—that supports the suppliant in the face of apparent neglect and refusal, as in the case of the “ Syrophœnician woman,” that keeps an Elijah prostrate as he pleads for rain from a sky of brass, or a Jacob wrestling throughout the night ? What hidden power is that ?

Pray I must, and cannot but pray, even though I am treated with a silence I cannot understand ! Repelled I seem to be, but I am also compelled ; my hopes are dashed, and yet, like Abram, I believe, not against improbabilities, but, strange to say, against hope itself ! He “ hoped against hope ” ! Oh ! this is one of the mysteries in the life of faith, one of the enigmas in the history of the child of God, one of those secrets of the soul which has personal and intimate dealings with Him who seeth in secret and who will, in His own good time, reward openly. The power that rebukes is also the power that sustains. The God of holiness is the “ God of all encouragement.”

“ Ye receive not because ye ask amiss.”

“ Amiss ” : does that mean something in the manner ? No, because “ we know not what things we should pray for as we ought.” No special manner or posture is necessary ; no particular words, no gift or eloquence of expression ; nothing unnatural or acquired is needed. We know not the words or the

manner. The breathings are simply those of a child, artless, confiding, humble, submissive. No, the word “ amiss ” is explained in the passage : “ That ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

You do not qualify your prayer by the will of God ; you fail to subordinate your petition to the glory of the Lord. Your motive is not purely His good pleasure. You seek your own gratification or comfort. You would consume the answer, did you get it, on your pleasures. Therein lies the secret. You ask “ evilly ” !

How many crave the cessation of adversities, wars, and such like, in order that they may have their own way in self-indulgence and money-making and pleasure !

They ask “ amiss.”

No wonder they receive not ! But mark, “ This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will He heareth us ; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him ” (1 John v. 14, 15).

What encouragement !

“ According to His will,” and the patient discovery of that will, as the childlike suppliant bends his knee, daily, yearly, in confidence and faith and hope, is the most valuable lesson of his whole life here below,

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS. 179

“ We know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.”

How unspeakably happy, even though that knowledge is one of expectancy all the way through ; and we need not be surprised if the answer given at last is found to be exceedingly abundant above all that we have asked or thought.

Hence, “ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Grace sits enthroned to-day. Let us make full use of it.

J. W. S.

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS.

A KEY TO DIFFICULT PASSAGES.

BIBLE difficulties are usually treated by different readers in one of three ways.

First there are those who utterly reject anything their own reason cannot comprehend. Certain portions of the Old Testament are to them the crude ideas of a bygone age, passages in the Psalms containing prayers for vengeance upon enemies are refused because inconsistent with Christianity: these critics discriminating between what they consider to be human and divine in the Bible. They are to be heartily pitied, for if the Bible could be mastered by the human intellect it would, after all, be only a human production.

Then there are those who, while confident of the

180 DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS.

divine origin of the whole Bible, find little more in some parts of it than an isolated text here and there which they spiritualise in order "to get something out of it for themselves."

Again, others skip them over and confine their reading to simpler portions.

These two latter classes are also great losers, for though much profit can be derived from a spiritual application of any scripture, it is a decided loss if its true bearing and interpretation is not understood.

The primary mistake arises from approaching any part of the Bible, as many do, with the firm conviction that it must be all about "*us*." As a matter of fact, God has blessed in the past many others besides those who believe in the present day of grace, and when this period has come to a close He will again bless others and fulfil that large volume of promise and prophecy which is really in abeyance at the present time.

It is consequently of the greatest importance that we should understand the character of God's dealings in the different periods of time, the order of events unfolded in prophetic scriptures, and the application of every scripture to its own particular place in the ways of God.

Even a brief explanation of the matters suggested above would provide material for a whole book. Such a book can be obtained from the publishers* of this magazine, and it is confidently recommended to the readers, who will find much in it to interest and exercise them.

For the purposes of this paper, however, the

* *The Scroll of Time*, by J. A. Savage.

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS. 181

writer would merely suggest sufficient to put young students on the track of these things for themselves, and with this object in view a simple diagram has been prepared, to which the reader's attention is now directed.

THE DIAGRAM.

This is intended to indicate :—

1st. The sequence of God's dealings with Israel and the earth, with which prophecy is connected.

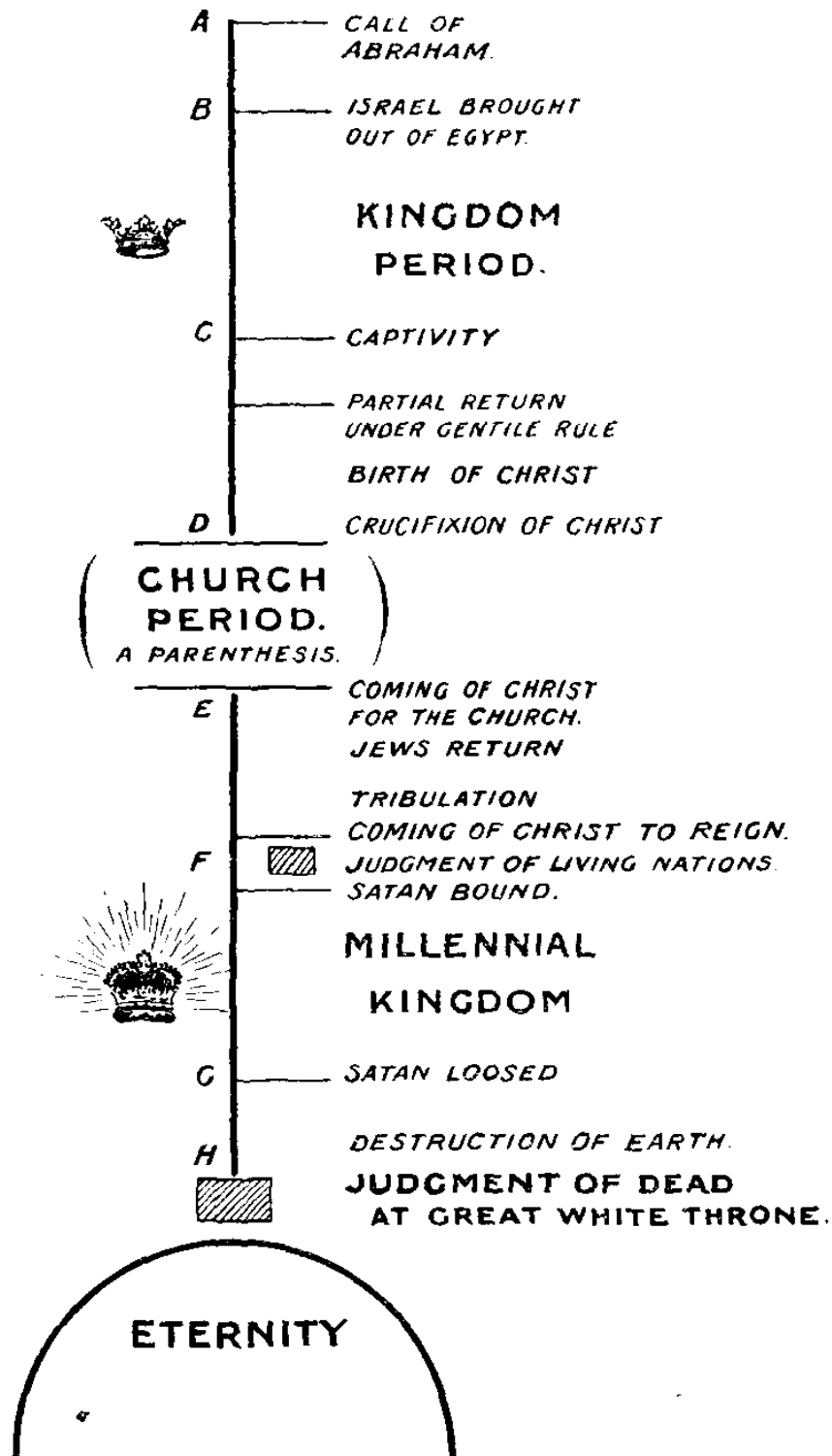
2nd. The place the Church occupies in the ways of God as distinct from anything which preceded or succeeds it.

The line A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H stands for the former of these, and if the eye travels down this line, skipping the break between D and E, the order of the leading events in the history of God's earthly people can be traced.

The greater part of Scripture prophecy contained mainly in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Book of Revelation, has to do with this line of *earthly* events. Broadly speaking, the scope of such prophecy covers the period of Israel's scattering among the nations, their return, and future sorrows in their own land under the antichrist, their deliverance, and the Lord's judgment on their enemies at His appearing, and finally their blessing under Messiah in His millennial kingdom.

If this is kept in view, prophetic passages, as well as many sayings of the Lord, will be readily understood, for they can be fitted into their proper place in the scheme of prophecy. Instead of spiritualising passages Israel will be taken to

*Diagram of events connected with
Israel and the Church.*



DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS. 183

mean *Israel* and the history of their restoration and future *earthly* glory can be intelligently followed. Though our blessing may not be the immediate subject, surely the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the One we know and love, is there spoken of in His sufferings and glory, will command our deepest interest.

THE CHURCH.

The present or Church period occurs on our diagram between the letters D and E. It is represented by a parenthesis, because it is not a continuation of God's previous dealings, but an interval in the sequence of them, a separate period with entirely distinct characteristics.

Now it is of the first importance, both for the understanding of the Scriptures and in order to appreciate what Christianity really is, to see that the Church and all the wonderful truth connected with it *are not mentioned at all in the Old Testament*.

This may be news to some who are familiar with the misleading—and, of course, uninspired—headings of the chapters and pages of our Bibles, many of which erroneously introduce the Church: but in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which unfolds the truth proper to Christianity most fully, the Apostle speaks of it as “the mystery,” or secret, “which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. III. 1–6).

This wonderful mystery reveals a completely new order of blessings, privileges, and hopes for those whom God blesses to-day, for they are all

184 DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS.

heavenly ; the great outstanding features of this period being the exaltation of Christ to God's right hand in heaven and the descent and abiding presence upon earth of God the Holy Ghost.

He it is who seals and indwells every believer and forms that wonderful body, united to Christ, the Head in glory, of which each one forms part.

He is also the controlling power in their prayers and worship, preparing them for a *heavenly* position as the Bride of the Lamb, and producing in our hearts the invitation, "Come," to our absent Saviour. When that cry is answered and we meet Him in the air, the Church period will be over and God's earthly plans will resume their course.

It will be seen then that the Scriptures contain both heavenly and earthly lines of truth which have been greatly confused ever since the early days of the apostles.

"Things hard to be understood," contained in Paul's epistles, were even in his day wrested by the unlearned and the unstable (2 Peter III. 16), while the great Apostle of the heavenly revelation was in constant conflict with Judaizing teachers who sought to impose the law on the partakers of the heavenly calling (Gal., Col.).

The student who "rightly divides the word of truth" will be able, in the light of the New Testament, to appreciate the proper application of the law, and as one who is dead and risen with Christ, possessing a new life in Him, will neither put himself under it, as a rule of life, nor borrow the instructions for worship distinctly given to God's earthly people. He will find, too, that this part of God's Word is rich in typical teaching, fore-

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS. 185

shadowing the "good things to come," the substance of which is the Christian's portion.

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

Here again our diagram will help us, and a glance at it just below the Church period will show that there are really two parts to this great event :—

1st. He will come for His own to the air.
(See E on diagram.)

2nd. He will come with His own to reign.
(See F on diagram.)

Whenever Scripture speaks of the Second Coming of Christ it refers to one or the other of these two parts of it. Some little time elapses between them, during which the gathering and tribulation of the Jews takes place as well as that terrible series of providential judgments described in Revelation VI. to XVIII.

The Lord's coming for the Church is not often mentioned, but is fully described in 1 Thessalonians IV. 13-18, while it is doubtless referred to in 1 Corinthians XV. 51-52 and John XIV. 3: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself."

The second part of His coming, for the kingdom, is clearly what is referred to in Matthew XXIV., Mark XIII., and Luke XXI., for they describe the terrible state of things just before He appears to reign.

One verse, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. XXIV. 13), has been much misunderstood and even quoted to prove that a Christian can be lost. When it is seen, however, that it applies to God's earthly people,

186 DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS.

at that time passing through dreadful persecution, the difficulty disappears.

During this terrible time the constant hope and prayer of the faithful will be for the appearance of the Lord with power to overthrow their enemies, hence their prayers given to us prophetically in the Psalms: "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered," etc.

The Christian's hope to-day entails being taken out of the world when Christ comes for him, and his prayers are in keeping with the present grace of God towards the world: the prayers of the Jews, however, will be quite as much in harmony with the ways of God then, and the Psalms will present no difficulty if it is seen that they have this prophetic character, breathing out very often the exercises of the godly amongst His people in that very different day.

JUDGMENT.

One more reference to the diagram will show that two scenes of judgment are indicated, at F and H, contrary to the pretty general thought that there is to be one great assize.

In this connection the following facts should be kept in mind:—

1st. The Church is with Christ long before any judgment takes place and does not come into judgment at all (John v. 24), though rewards will be received at the judgment seat of Christ according to faithfulness here (2 Cor. v. 10).

2nd. At the appearing of Christ the living nations will be judged according to their treatment of the Lord's servants, the Jews, in the previous

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIONS 187

period. This is fully described in Matt. xxv. 31-46.

3rd. The unforgiven dead are judged more than a thousand years later, after the millennium (Rev. xx. 11-15).

These instances will demonstrate the value of having a clear outline in the mind of God's varied dealings with man in order to distinguish that which Scripture keeps distinct.

On the other hand, the writer would be careful to dispel any suspicion of setting aside any part of Scripture as having no application to us.

Underlying even the prophets, which, as we have seen, refer rather to Israel than to us, there are weighty moral principles, examples of the faithfulness of God, warnings for us in the failures of those who in another day held a place of special privilege and therefore responsibility, and countless other matters, without doubt, "written aforetime . . . for our learning."

Apart from this, the fact that our blessed Lord is the central figure and theme of the whole Bible forbids the thought of dispensing with any portion of it.

Of the Old Testament scriptures He Himself said: "They are they which testify of Me," and whether on the line of earthly promise or in the realms of heavenly counsel it has pleased God "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." May we never divorce our Bible-study from the happy, adoring contemplation of His wonderful person.

J. A. S.

[Next month (p.v.) "God's Object Lessons: Types and Symbols of Scripture."]

A CALL TO REPENTANCE.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore and **REPENT**” (REV. III. 19).

THIS message, from the lips of the Lord Himself, through the Apostle John, is not addressed to unconverted sinners, but to backsliding saints—those who had received Christ, were born of God, and whose names were written in heaven. According to the plain teaching of Scripture, this is true of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever name he may be known by amongst men.

It is therefore to all such that the writer makes this appeal. As God looks down from heaven, His eye rests upon one great family, composed of individuals who have believed His Record concerning His Son : and that vast company He calls His children (1 John III. 1, 2). But as in the ordinary relationships of life children are not always obedient, and must necessarily, in a well-regulated household, come under discipline, that peace and order may be maintained—and that the erring one may be happily recovered, and restored to communion—so, in God’s Household, every provision has been made, on His part, that His children, who are the objects of His infinite love, might be found walking together in unity, and in the full enjoyment of their family privileges.

A CALL TO REPENTANCE.

189

There are two ways in which, in every period of this world's history, God has been pleased to instruct those whom His grace has befriended. One is the normal and happy way of simple dependence upon God, and obedience to His Word: with the consciousness of His Holy eye being upon us. The other, the "bit and bridle" way, through the schooling of chastisement, in which a gracious Father turns to account our trials, our afflictions, and even our mistakes for the blessing of our souls (Ps. xxxii. 8, 9).

If we review God's dealings with His saints, we shall be constrained to gratefully acknowledge His bountiful hand in the way He has opened His treasures. Vital doctrines of Scripture, long buried in the mists and superstitions of bygone ages, have been recovered to us. The search-light of God's Holy Spirit has illuminated the sacred page, and the cardinal truths of the Christian revelation, in all their purity and simplicity, have been set forth for the appropriation of faith—those things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man: the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," but which God has been pleased to *reveal unto us, by His Spirit*.

What has been our response to all this activity of divine love? Long years of peace, privilege, and prosperity have been granted

to us. Have we utilized these golden years in gathering up our precious possessions, fortifying our souls, and strengthening our forces for the day of battle? There was a time when it was said of the early Christians "Then had the churches rest . . . and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix. 31). God gave them a time of tranquillity, a season of respite from the fiery persecution to which they had been subjected. The prince of persecutors had become a devoted follower of the despised Nazarene, and now preached the faith which once he laboured to destroy. The assemblies had a period of rest : how did they employ it? By cleaving together in unity and love, building themselves up in their most holy faith, walking before God in lowliness and humility, and allowing the Holy Spirit to carry on His normal work of forming Christ in the souls of those who were gathered to His name. What was the natural outcome of all this? The attractiveness of Christ was reflected in the saints, and the Lord added to the assembly such as should be saved.

Can this be truthfully said of the saints generally, as we look back over the past years of unparalleled privilege? Have we not rather settled down on our lees : sheltering at ease behind our many blessings and mercies :

A CALL TO REPENTANCE.

191

making our boast, perhaps, in the wonderful truths which have been brought to light for us ; and not stopping to ask ourselves how far those God-given truths had any real power over our souls ? This was what characterized the assembly at Laodicea, whose condition the Lord describes as “neither hot nor cold.” They were easy-going, self-satisfied, drifting smoothly along with the tide, “having a form of godliness but denying the power” : Satan’s counterfeit under the outward garb of Christianity. No wonder the Lord, who loves His saints, makes His solemn appeal to those who had “ears to hear,” when the mass had signally failed. Mark, it is not a call to prayer, but to REPENTANCE. There is to be the full recognition of their fallen state, an honest getting back to the point of departure, and owning everything up in His presence.

“As many as I love,” says the Lord. It is a signal proof of His love that His saints come under His chastening hand. If we find that the spirit of Laodicea has ensnared us, and that our affection for Christ has waned, let us humbly accept the Lord’s rebuke. If we own the justness of His chastening hand upon us, in all that is blighting and desolating the earth to-day, and feel that His call to repentance is timely and opportune, the question may be asked : “In what way can

we rightly give expression to our desires? " Let Scripture tell us. If the Lord calls upon us to repent in verse 19, in verse 20 He is knocking at our heart's door for admittance. He will not intrude where He is not wanted, but His attitude, as here presented, is that of a patient, persistent knocker at the heart's door of those for whom He bled and died.

Let us pause here, and amid the holy solitudes of Calvary ask our souls what the response is to be. Shall we not give Him His rightful place in our affections? Then we shall know, in the intimacy of happy communion, something of the depth and extent of that almighty love, that could not rest satisfied with anything short of a full response from those who are the objects of it. In the happy seclusion of His presence, we shall not only learn how poor and feeble the answer of our lives has been, but the Holy Spirit will disclose to our worshipping hearts the vast wealth of spiritual blessing stored up for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Another milestone or two perhaps, and the desert journey will be ended, and He for whom we wait will call us hence, for we are **HOMeward BOUND**. Let the little interval be spent in loving, diligent, and devoted service for Him whose measureless love shall be our theme through the ages of eternity.

G. F. E.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS: PAST AND FUTURE.

HOW are scriptures which speak of *all* being brought before the judgment seat of Christ to be reconciled with such a verse as : "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent ME, hath everlasting life, and SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION (JUDGMENT, R.V.)" ?

Can the common interpretation of the parable of the sheep and goats be maintained in the face of such passages as : "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," "Herein is love with us (margin) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as He is, so are we in this world" (John v. 24 ; Rom. VIII. 1 ; 1 John IV. 17) ? Questions like these often arise and make it important that we should be clear on the whole subject of God's judgments, not merely as a matter of interest, but that our peace of soul should not be disturbed.

We read of no less than FOUR different judgments in the Bible.

Let me begin by pointing them out.

The first is the judgment of sin. It took

place centuries ago at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The other three are future, viz :—

The judgment seat of Christ for the believer.
 The judgment of the living nations.
 The judgment of the unconverted dead.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF SIN.

“ For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh* ” (ROM. VIII. 3).

The believer's sin (his nature) and sins (his actions) came up for judgment when the Lord Jesus died on the cross. There God condemned sin in the flesh, in the person of His Son. He came in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and He on the cross was *made sin for us*. God treated Him *as sin*, so that it is not only that He bore our sins on the cross, but He bore the judgment due to self and sin. “ He who knew no sin was made sin for us.” All that we did and all that we are was judged.

But one may say, “ I have got the old nature in me still.” True, God has left the flesh of sin in us, but we are not “ *in the flesh*.” Our standing as “ in the flesh ” has ended for the believer in the cross. Our judgment, therefore, is past by over 1800 years. Is not that wonderful? In Hebrews ix. 26 we

read that the blessed Lord has put away sin for the believer. It has gone from the eye of God for ever, and now what we are looking forward to is *full salvation*. When the Lord comes, instead of bringing you to judgment, He will complete your salvation by giving you a glorified body, like His own, and taking you out of the world altogether, to be done with the flesh in every sense, and to be for ever with the Lord.

II. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST FOR THE BELIEVER.

“ For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men ” (2 COR. V. 10).

We are aware that the Lord Jesus Christ may come at any moment to take His people home. Those who have died in Christ will be raised in the twinkling of an eye in incorruptible bodies, and all the living Christians will be caught up without dying, also in incorruptible bodies, together with those raised from the dead, to meet the Lord in the air. Now Christians are not going to be judged at all. The Scripture does not say we must all be judged, but “ we must all appear [i.e. be manifested] before the judgment seat of

Christ." We must appear there after we have been changed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All saints from the earliest ages will be brought before the judgment seat of Christ. For what purpose? To see whether they are fit to go to heaven or hell? No! for they are already in heaven, and some of them will have been there for centuries. We shall be brought before the judgment seat of Christ "that we may receive the things done in our body according to that we have done whether it be good or bad." It will be shown there what place every Christian is to have in the coming kingdom of the Lord, as a reward for the way we have lived here during our earthly history. Will everything come out there? Yes, all our lives, every thought and deed.

All will be manifested to us by the Lord. We shall have a moment for going into every incident of our lives with the Lord personally, hearing His estimate of it all, before the great day of His revelation when He will bring us with Him to the earth, and every eye shall see Him.

Will this not fill us with shame? One might think so, but shame will not be consistent with the joy of heaven. We shall be so like Christ that we shall delight in His view of everything and rejoice in the setting aside of all that was not of Christ in our whole

history. It will be a great privilege to have all our lives gone into by the Lord, though a solemn thing, no doubt. Things we thought well of in our service will be cast aside as worthless. Things done out of love for Him, forgotten perhaps by us, will receive the Lord's approval. You remember how Mary poured the box of ointment upon His head. People said it was waste. But the Lord answered, "Let her alone, she has wrought a good work on Me." He set great value on that act. He values what we do out of real love to Him. It will not be those who were the most prominent here who will come in for the greatest praise there, but those whose service was prompted by love to Him.

It is clear then that the saints are not brought up before the judgment seat of Christ to decide where they are to spend eternity, but to receive reward, or suffer loss, in the kingdom (during Christ's millennial reign) according to how they have lived and served the Lord.

Take an illustration from an international exhibition. The object is to exhibit the goods of the various manufacturers. But before the exhibition takes place there is a question to be settled, namely, who is to get space to exhibit his goods. In like manner, the first question for us is, How shall we be sure

of getting to heaven? If we trust in the Saviour and are cleansed from our sins by His precious blood, we shall *get there*. But now comes another thing. The judges go round the exhibition and critically examine the various goods displayed, and give their awards to the exhibitors, according to their judgment of the value of each one's work. To one a gold medal is given, to another a silver medal, and to a third, one of bronze. What corresponds to this will take place before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven. He will give reward or not, according to what we have done.

There are three kinds of people referred to in I Corinthians III. 14-17.

First, "If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward."

Second, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." This man is, of course, a Christian. He trusted in the Lord for his salvation; his life work is burned up, but he himself is saved. He gets no reward because he built wood, hay and stubble. He did unsound work. • There is a lot of work that passes muster in Christendom that will receive no recognition from the Lord!

The third kind of man is neither saved

himself nor are his works rewarded. Both man and works are destroyed, not that this last case takes place at the same time as when the saints are manifested and rewarded, but at the final judgment, of which we shall speak further on.

III. THE JUDGMENT OF THE LIVING NATIONS.

Read MATT. XXV. 31-46.

In this parable of the sheep and goats there is no allusion to people raised out of their graves. It is the living nations that are in question. First of all, as we have seen, the Lord will come for His saints into the air, and will catch us all up. Then we all appear before His judgment seat. After this the Lord will come to the earth to commence His reign and He will deal with the nations that are then on the earth, separating them one from the other, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He will say to some, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Observe that there are three classes here. Not only the sheep and the goats, but another class called by the King, His "brethren." I must ask you to remember that the Church, including every true Christian, will have been previously caught up. Who then are the King's brethren?

To answer this question, let us consider what the state of the world will be after the Church has been removed to heaven. Satan will be present in the world in greater power than he has ever been before, for he will be turned out of heaven (Rev. XII) and confined to the earth. Satan has had access to heaven at all events as far back as the days of Job, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came among them. He will be cast out into the earth, and the saints in heaven are called to rejoice, and the earth to lament. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the devil has come down to you having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." When the Church goes up, the devil is cast down to the earth. He will be here in redoubled energy, and will fill the earth with diabolical deeds during the period between the rapture of the Church and the Lord's coming to reign. That will be the day when the kingdoms of Europe will combine under the head of the restored Roman Empire, the first "Beast" of Revelation XIII., and when Antichrist, the second "Beast," working through the apostate Jews will play into the hands of the first. During that period God will convert many of the Jews, and they will become the evangelists of that day. During these awful years, when the devil, with the Antichrist and the Roman Emperor

will be in undisputed control on earth, their whole power will be used against these Jews, who will not be preaching the gospel which is now preached (the gospel of the grace of God), but the gospel of the kingdom that must be preached unto all nations. These Jews in preaching the gospel of the kingdom will meet with the greatest opposition, and the nations will have to range themselves for or against Christ. When He appears, the nations will be brought before Him for judgment and dealt with according to their treatment of these godly Jews. It is they then whom the Lord speaks of as "My brethren." ("Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.") They had befriended the godly Jews and received their gospel. He pronounces blessing upon them, and then turns to the goats on His left with these solemn words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." They had rejected Christ's brethren and their testimony.

This is, I believe, the interpretation of the parable of the sheep and the goats. It has nothing to do with the Church, but with nations on the earth, and their treatment of the Jewish servants of God.

202 GOD'S JUDGMENTS: PAST AND FUTURE.

IV. THE JUDGMENT OF THE UNCONVERTED DEAD.

Read REVELATION XX. 11-15.

This fourth judgment is held after time is over, and the earth and heavens have fled away. We read that the saints live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. "But the rest of the dead" (i.e. the unconverted dead) "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Here we come to the last judgment.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it from whose face the heaven and earth fled away, and there was found no place for them."

Eternity has come ! and now the unconverted dead of all time are raised in their sins to appear before the Great White Throne, and are judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works. The book of life is there also, to make manifest that their names are not in it, and all are cast into the lake of fire,—necessary result for anyone judged according to his works. Thank God for those who know Christ as their Saviour and trust in His precious blood. Such will have *boldness* in that awful day. But for all others it will mean the blackness of darkness for ever. God be praised that grace still reigns, and that there is a free pardon for "whosoever will."

J. C. T.

GOD'S OBJECT LESSONS:

TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE.

APART from infidels who discredit the historical parts of the Bible, and modern critics who dismiss the Old Testament as a collection of Eastern parables, there are some sincere people who regard typical explanations of these portions as somewhat fanciful.

That the Old Testament gives us a record of actual historical facts and that they are recorded not so much for their historical as for their moral and typical value, is clearly stated in the New Testament.

In reference to Israel's history we are told: "Now these things *happened* unto them for *ensamples* (types, compare margin), and they are written for our admonition" (I Corinthians X. 11). Furthermore, the law with its earthly sanctuary, ritual and sacrifices is said to be "a shadow (or type) of good things to come" (Hebrews X. 1), the substance of which the shadow spoke being now the Christian's portion.

Viewed in this way, many parts of the Bible are invested with an entirely new interest, and instead of a collection of Sunday school stories—the estimate of some concerning the portions referred to—the student will find "a treasury of untold wealth in which each jewel has its own special lustre and setting."

Nothing gives greater confirmation of the fact of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, for no one but God could thus illustrate *beforehand* the

great principles of truth, which were to come to light when Christ, to whom all the types pointed, and in whom every promise of God would be "Yea and Amen," should come.

It must be borne in mind, however, that nothing can be built upon mere types, unless the doctrine is clearly unfolded in other parts of Scripture; once this is established types will illustrate and confirm it.

We must also seek to know the mind of the Spirit of God in presenting any one of these inspired pictures, instead of trying to make them fit "at all four corners." Usually one special thought is prominent with perhaps one or two others relating to it, but the picture cannot answer to everything connected with that thought, and many little details in the type which are not essential must not be pressed too far.

The ramblings of mere human fancy will lead to either hopeless confusion or absolute absurdity.

We need not stretch a type as one who, commenting on the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, when the people were commanded to sit down, "there being much grass in the place," said that the meaning of this was that "grass" signified "nature," and therefore nature had to be "sat on" before we could receive from the Lord!

Nor need we emulate the man who inquired in reference to an incident in the record of Peter's denial of the Lord: "What is the meaning of the crowing of the cock three times *dispensationally considered*?"

Such instances savour of ingenuity rather than spirituality and zeal. To ferret out a hidden

TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE. 205

meaning from any Scripture should never be allowed to take the place of sober meditation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.

A few of the types will now be briefly pointed out, from which will be seen the varied use God has made of persons, places, events, and even material things to typify and symbolize His truth for us.

PERSONS.

ADAM. Type of Christ, the last Adam, who is to be head over all things.

EVE. Foreshadows the church as Christ's bride (Eph. v. 22-33).

CAIN AND ABEL. Approach to God, acceptance only on the ground of sacrifice.

ISAAC. Type of Christ offered up and raised from the dead, afterwards united to Rebekah—type of the Church.

JOSEPH. Type of Christ, rejected by His own, descending to the lowest place (death), exalted to the right hand of power and finally reconciled to His brethren (Israel).

(See also Melchisedec, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Boaz, David, Solomon, etc.)

PLACES.

EYGPT. Type of the world where men are held in bondage by Satan its God and prince.

JERUSALEM. The place of blessing where God's name and His house were.

JERICHO. The place of the curse (Jos. vi. 26).

BABYLON. Idolatrous corruption and worldliness combined (see Rev. xvii.-xviii.).

(See also Bethel, Gilgal, Sodom and Gomorrah Assyria, etc.)

EVENTS.

THE FLOOD used by the Lord Jesus to prefigure sudden judgment (Matt. xxiv. 36-41).

THE PASSOVER. Exodus xii. Redemption by blood.

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA. Christ's death for us.

THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN. Our death and resurrection with Christ.

DAVID'S VICTORY OVER GOLIATH. Type of Christ's victory over Satan (Heb. ii. 14-15).

THINGS.

MANNA. Compare carefully John vi; the SMITTEN ROCK (Exod. xvii. 6), see John vii. 37-39; the BRAZEN SERPENT, read John iii. 14-15. Compare also the offerings in Leviticus, etc.

SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE.

Symbols, with which Scripture abounds, differ somewhat from types, and are used—especially in prophetic books such as Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation—to convey some abstract quality or fact to the mind.

LEAVEN, for instance, is always used to symbolize evil. It was forbidden both in the pass-over feast and in any of the Levitical offerings made by fire, though leavened bread to be *eaten* formed part of the Peace offering (Lev. vii. 12-13). This exception occurring in the offering which typifies worship is probably the acknowledgment of the fact that the worshipper still has the flesh within him, and it rather confirms than otherwise the general use of leaven as symbolizing evil.

TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE. 207

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” was one of our Lord’s warnings which greatly puzzled His disciples; but He made it clear to them that what was meant was the evil doctrine of these perverted teachers.

To make “leaven” mean anything but evil in the parable of the leaven in the meal (Matt. XIII), is a violation of the foregoing. In addition it is surely apparent that this parable foreshadows the corruption by the hidden working of evil, of that which professes God’s name. This was to work until the whole was leavened, and it is surely being fulfilled before our eyes. The New Testament also furnishes two other convincing instances of the consistent use of this symbol. The words: “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” are used first of all in connection with gross moral evil at Corinth (1 Cor. v.), and then in regard to the false doctrine subversive to the faith which had been imbibed by the Galatian Christians (Gal. v. 9). The weight of evidence, then, is that leaven is consistently used to symbolize evil, and the meaning of any other symbol can be ascertained in the same way by comparing various passages in which it occurs.

It must be noted also that while there is consistency in the force of any symbol, its application to spheres or persons may vary. Thus THE SUN, set supreme in the heavens, is frequently used as a symbol of supreme authority (the moon being derived, and the stars subordinate authority). This symbol is applied to the Lord Jesus, who will yet appear as the “Sun of Righteousness” (Mal. iv. 2), also as descriptive of the Jewish

people (Rev. XII. 1), but it is also used in connection with the power—in this case for oppression and persecution—of the Beast (Rev. XVI. 8). It is obvious that the actual sun and moon cannot be meant in such passages as Acts II. 20 : “ The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before that great and terrible day of the Lord shall come.” This and similar passages, as Luke XXI. 25, Revelation VI. 12, evidently refer to the eclipse of the supreme authority upon earth, and the sanguinary upheavals which will take place in the ordered government of the earth in the last days.

Without further comment we will take a brief notice of some of the leading symbols found in Scripture.

THE SEA AND GREAT WATERS. Masses of people without ordered or stable government. See Revelation XVII. 15 and Luke XXI. 25.

WATER. The word of God in the power of the Spirit (Eph. v. 26 and John III. 5).

A MOUNTAIN. A seat of authority.

A GREAT TREE. Exalted power and greatness. Compare Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. IV.).

CHERUBIM. Judicial power (Gen. III. 24, Rev. IV. 6).

COLOURS. White, blue, purple and scarlet—pure, heavenly, imperial and glorious.

A HORSE. Power and conquest usually conferred by God, sometimes in judgment (Rev. VI.).

HORN. Symbol of power.

AN EARTHQUAKE. Disturbance in the social or governmental systems of earth.

GOLD. That which is suitable to God's presence.

TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF SCRIPTURE. 209

BRASS. Righteousness according to God's just claims upon man.

SILVER. Redemption (Exodus xxx. 12-13).

VINE OR VINEYARD. God's husbandry, divinely planted. First Israel—unfruitful (Isa. v. 1-10, Matt. xxi. 33), then Christ, the true vine (John xv.).

FIG TREE. Man under divine culture—Israel the sample nation. See Matthew xxi. 19, 20.

CEDAR. Strength and stability. The righteous shall grow up as a cedar of Lebanon (Ps. xcii. 12).

HYSSOP. A contrast to the stately cedar; sets forth man's littleness. In the cleansing of the leper, cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop were used, symbolizing the judgment of death upon all that man is, high or low (Lev. xiv. 6).

NUMBERS*—ONE. *Supremacy*. One God, one Father, one Spirit, one Mediator, etc.

TWO. *Adequate testimony*.

THREE. *Divine fulness or completeness and hence perfection in testimony*. Father, Son, and Spirit. Spirit, water, and blood (1 John v.).

FOUR. *Completeness in that which is created or ordained of God*.

FIVE. *Human weakness*.

SIX. *Incompleteness, imperfection* (one short of the perfect number seven). The number of the imperial beast (Rev. xiii. 18) will be 666: he being imperfect in every particular.

SEVEN. *Completeness, generally in good, but occasionally in evil*. Seven days in a week. Seven lamps in the golden candlestick (Num. vii. 3). Note also the frequent use of this numeral in the

* From the Bible Dictionary.

Revelation. Forgiveness is to be "until seventy times seven."

EIGHT. *A new departure outside of but connected with creation order, hence in resurrection.* Circumcision was to be on the eighth day. Eight souls were saved in the ark, to commence a new world. The Lord's day may also be called the eighth—the day after the seventh, the Jewish sabbath.

TEN. *Complete ground of human responsibility.* Pharaoh was visited by ten plagues. Ten commandments. Ten virgins (Matt. xxv.). Ten servants (Luke XIX. 13).

TWELVE. *Completeness in administration manward.* Twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve foundations in the New Jerusalem (Rev. XXI.).

FORTY. *Complete probation to bring to light good or evil.* Moses was forty years in the desert and twice was forty days on the mount. Israel were forty years in the wilderness. The Lord Jesus was tempted forty days (Mark I. 13).

The student will find a knowledge of these symbols a great help in the study of those parts of Scripture in which they frequently occur. They are not pointed out, however, to enable the reader to become a walking encyclopædia of Biblical knowledge, but only that they may enable him to admire the wonders of the Bible, to understand it more fully as the Word of the living God wherein is hid His will for us in every detail of life.

J. A. S.

Next month (D.V.): "God's Great Symbol: The Tabernacle and its Services."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. H. T., Ystradgynlais.—You are not alone in your experience! Many are they who have discovered to their cost that it is one thing to be a student of Scripture, and to acquire considerable knowledge as to its teachings, but quite another thing to have the heart and life brought under its power. For this the gracious work of the Holy Spirit is necessary. It is His aim to keep the heart engaged with Christ, and to form and mould us according to Him. It is always the case that a man becomes, in measure, like the object he is attracted to. As he thinks in his *heart*, so is he. So that to have *Christ* in our affections, to make a study, not merely of His Word, but of Himself, is the way to become like Him in life and practice. May God grant us grace that we may earnestly seek thus to “walk in the Spirit.”

“A STUDENT OF THE WORD.” We regret that owing to our being on a visit to America, the reply to your question has been so long delayed. To take up the study of Greek with a view of the elucidation of the New Testament text is very desirable for any who feel called of God to devote practically their whole lives to this branch of the Lord’s service. Thank God, He has His servants, well equipped to labour in this way, and to them we owe a great debt of gratitude. The beloved servant of God to whom you refer, in addition to

212 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

his almost apostolic labours in many countries, turned his University education to good account in this way, and has been enabled thereby, and by the very evident help of the Holy Spirit, to place the treasures which he discovered within reach of the ordinary English reader. To one who has but a limited amount of time at his disposal, and has not had the advantage of a classical education at one of the Universities, we would recommend a life-long study of the Scriptures in his native tongue (with all the helps that the labours of the learned have made available) rather than that he should spend his time in acquiring some Greek which he could only use in an amateurish way.

M. E. B., China.—We thank you for your kind letter acknowledging the Calendar. And we much appreciate the various items of poetry you send. It is not often we say this to those who send us specimens of their efforts in this direction. So many imagine they are poets ; so few really are. We like the eight lines which you include in your letter :

“God never moves too late
 Behind the scenes for me ;
 His finger never moves too soon,
 Lest I should fail to see.
 I'll trust the living God,
 No matter how things seem,
 And sing His praise in darkest days,
 For 'tis all right with Him.”

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED.

“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the SALVATION of the Lord, which He will show you to-day.”

EXODUS XIV. 13.

“Thus the Lord SAVED Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians.”—EXODUS XIV. 30.

ONLY a few days ago you might have seen these descendants of Israel in their houses in Egypt with the blood of the slain lamb sprinkled outside. They were then a *sheltered* people, but now we see them *saved*.

The sprinkled blood had reference to God's holiness and the people's sin. Everything connected with the soul's blessing is based upon the blood. However much God might yearn in compassionate love over those who have sinned, it is impossible that He should bless other than righteously. God must be *just* in justifying men if they are to be justified at all. The blood of Christ, infinite in value, has made this gloriously possible. The Passover is a picture of it. Every believer is now sheltered by the blood. Do we think of the demands of divine justice in respect of our sins? The blood has met them all. Justice lays down her uplifted sword and declares that she is satisfied. Blessed news for a conscience-burdened sinner!

Still the sheltered people of Exodus XII. had

214 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED.

yet to be saved. Saved from what ? from judgment ? from the just wrath of a sin-hating God ? Nay, *the blood had settled that question*, settled it for ever. Saved from what then ? we once more ask. Saved from the foe, saved from hard and cruel bondage, saved out of the iron furnace, saved from slavery, saved by the intervention of divine power which, in effecting their deliverance, should overthrow the enemy, and bury his battalions at the bottom of the sea.

But between the hour of leaving their old homes and their crossing the Red Sea the children of Israel had to pass through a night of terrible anguish. Little did they suspect that when Pharaoh and his servants, and all the Egyptians, urged them to depart, and gave them jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, that they would ere long pursue them with chariots and horsemen to bring them back again. But so it was. Encamped at Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, all unconscious of what was coming, they "lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them ; and they were sore afraid." Disheartened and cowed by long years of servitude no one dreamt of resistance. Nor would it have succeeded ; for what could they do against the flower of Egypt's soldiery ? Deep indeed was their distress. " And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED. 215

in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" (Exod. XIV. 11, 12). Thus bitterly did they cry in their dejection and despair.

The counterpart of all this is found in the experience of many a soul, especially among the newly converted. With gladness of heart they quitted their former haunts. They rejoiced in the shelter they had found in the sprinkled blood, and thought not of the restless foe. Not many days pass ere sin and Satan threaten them on every side. Evil thoughts afflict them sore. Horrible temptations assail them. They are incited to things that never entered the mind before. Hell seems to have opened her mouth and belched out fire and brimstone. They wonder if they have ever been really converted, and they wish that they had never said a word about it to anybody. They feel their powerlessness, and are ready to give all up, and own themselves vanquished. They know not that God is for them. "I knew I could never be a Christian. I was sure I could never stand." It is thus they speak. If the eye of such a

216 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED.

one rests on this page let him ponder well the scene set before us in Exodus XIV.

“ Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day : for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Such were the words—bold, brave words of faith—that Moses spake in answer to their piteous, despairing cry.

Whose shall these people be ? is the question that now ripens for decision. Two masters claim them. Shall Pharaoh capture and drive them back to toil afresh in his brickfields ? Shall they be ground down again beneath his iron heel, or shall Jehovah save them out of his hand that they may serve Him ? Ask the people whose they are, and whose they will be, and the answer shall come, as with the voice of one man, “ We are the Lord’s, and Him would we serve.” But the contest lies between Pharaoh and the living God.

It was the hour of Israel’s extremity. Cope with the advancing foe they could not. He was more than a match for them. But now was God’s opportunity. They should “ stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” The battle was not theirs, but God’s. He should fight for them, and they should hold their peace. Was God for Israel ? Then the proud banners of Egypt should assuredly be humbled

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED. 217

to the dust. If Israel was feeble, Israel's God was not. Victory and deliverance were assured.

Beautiful and full of meaning was the first step Jehovah took. "The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light to these." Jehovah was their light and shield. As a hen covers her chickens with her wing, so the Lord covered them. He would comfort and encourage their timid hearts by telling them that He stood between them and their adversaries, and that before a spear could touch them God Himself must be overcome.

And, dear believer, is it less true in our day that God is for His people—for *you*? Certainly not. Oh, let your heart receive this blessed fact in all its strengthening power! Be not afraid. Were there ten thousand devils instead of one they should not be able to lead you captive again. God is for you. Your salvation is His work. Stand still and see it and rejoice.

Returning for a moment to the Passover, God is seen there in the character of a holy and righteous Judge, who finds in the blood that which meets every claim of divine justice. But on the shores of the Red Sea He is to be known by Israel as a Saviour-God. They shall see

218 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED.

His power displayed for their redemption. The raging waters shall be a wall on their right hand and on their left, but their foes shall find in them a grave. And so it came to pass. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore." No wonder that the people sang, the timbrels sounded, and the women danced for very joy and gladness. They were out of Egypt now—saved—and their eyes should see no more the land where they had wept and groaned, where they had sighed and suffered. Jehovah had borne them on eagles' wings, and brought them unto Himself (Exod. xix. 4).

And in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus there is more than shelter—there is *salvation*. For at the cross the power of darkness was overthrown. Death, and he that had the power of it, are conquered. Christ has triumphed, and in His triumph all His people share. Every possible thing that could have furnished a weapon for Satan to scare and terrify is gone. Not only have our sins been put away, but we are brought to God; and this of necessity involves the annulling of Satan's power, and our deliverance from his hand. Stand forth then, dear believer, as Christ's free man. He has broken your chains. The enemy may rage, but you are out of his reach. Delivered from the power of darkness,

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED. 219

God has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love ; in whom we have redemption (Col. 1. 13). It is yours to know this. Can you think that Jesus died for you and rose again to leave you in Egypt ? Never ! He gave Himself for us that He might deliver us from this present evil world (Gal. 1. 3) ; and if Christ has suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God, then we should know that unto God we have been brought.

So when standing on the wilderness side of the Red Sea Moses and the children of Israel could sing in exalted strains of Jehovah's triumph, and of what He had done for them. " Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed : Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation " (Exod. xv. 13). They were out of Egypt and brought to God.

Surely our salvation is greater than theirs. That was earthly and temporal ; ours is spiritual and eternal. And if they could celebrate God's victory, and the sinking of their enemy like lead in the mighty waters, we too, as standing where Christ's death and resurrection place us, can chant in joyous strains the song of our redemption.

And not only did they sing of what the Lord had done, but they could sing in simple confidence of what He would yet do. " Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain

220 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED.

of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established " (Exod. xv. 17). As surely as He had led them *out*, so would He bring them *in*. The hand that had delivered them from Egypt should carry them into Canaan. So with us. We may have the wilderness to go through, with its trials and difficulties ; but God is for us, and Christ is risen, and is at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Sustained by His all-prevailing intercession, hourly supplied with needed grace, and receiving seasonable help, the redeemed of the Lord shall safely reach the heavenly land. Under the leadership of the great Captain of their salvation they shall be more than conquerors, and in glory they shall be the everlasting witnesses that He Who had led them out was able to bring them into His own eternal rest.

Reader, are you in the enjoyment of this great salvation ? Sheltered by the blood, do you know that God is for you ? Are you consciously out of Egypt and brought to God ? Do you see that by the death and resurrection of Christ the last link that bound you to Egypt has been broken ? It is your privilege to know this and more besides. You will know it in power if you receive in faith the testimony of Scripture as to these things.

FELLOWSHIP.

221

Thus delivered, and called with a heavenly calling, may your affections be set on Christ in glory. Press forward to the Canaan above, and when you stand among its hills and valleys you shall remember all the way the Lord your God has led you, and shall see how wise and strong was His hand.

W. B.

FELLOWSHIP.

THE Christian is the only one who can enter into the full meaning of this sweet word, for it lies quite beyond the understanding of the man of the world. The innate selfishness of the human heart, through sin, has ever spoiled even the natural relations in which the sweetness of real fellowship might be enjoyed in the measure possible to the creature.

We find fellowship first of all expressed when it is said, "Let *Us* make man in Our Image, after Our likeness." How evident that fellowship existed between the Divine Persons, and that it was Their thought to have a creature with whom They could be in fellowship also. Sin spoiled this, but now through redemption we find not simply the accomplishment of the original purpose but its fulfilment in a far higher and more glorious way. It is presented to us in a twofold way in 1 John 1.: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and "We have

fellowship one with another." We are called to enjoy this intimacy with Divine Persons, and as walking in such light we are brought into sweet communion with one another, in which the love and grace of Christ rule in the heart. There is nothing like this to be found in the world. It was only the manifestation of that eternal life which was with the Father that could possibly effect it. This manifestation, with the message that came with it, is the light in which we walk, and which indeed alone makes such fellowship possible.

How rich the grace which has given so great a portion, and how little of its fullness have we entered into. As a consequence how poor is that fellowship we enjoy with one another compared with what it might be if we more fully held that intercourse we are privileged to have with the Father and the Son. We may trace the full character of that intercourse from the life of our blessed Lord—a life of perfect dependence, in perfect fellowship with and perfect obedience to the Father. His every word and act was in perfect consonance with the Father's thought. Indeed, it was only those things that the Father showed Him that He did; not otherwise would He speak or act. But the marvel is that it was His evident desire and purpose that we should enter into this place of His as the perfect man in fellowship with the Father,

FELLOWSHIP.

223

and know the same blessing that He did here below. This we may clearly discern from His wonderful prayer (John xvii.). The word the Father gave He has given to us. The joy He had He prays may be fulfilled in us. As He was sent into the world so He sends His loved ones. The glory the Father gave Him He gives to us. He desires us to know that we are loved by the Father even as the Father loves Him, and further that that love where-with the Father loves Him might be in us. The Spirit of truth can alone make good these great and precious things to us, and He who prayed that they might be ours has sent, as He promised to do (John xvi. 26), that Holy Spirit to lead us into all of them, into these things which present to us what that fellowship is which we are privileged to know and enjoy. How sweet heaven will be, for there we shall enter into all without interruption or clouding of vision, or the intrusion of any foreign element, for then we shall be with Him in the Father's house, the Son's prepared place for us, received into it by Himself to be with Him forever (John xiv. 1-3).

If our hearts are full of these precious things the world and all that is of it must be crowded out. They cannot dwell together. It had no place with Him ; it will have none with us if we are brought into occupation of that place for which He prayed.

JNO. B.

GOD'S GREAT SYMBOL : THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICES.

EXOD. XXV.—XXX. ; LEV. I.—VIII.

THE intelligent Bible student has at all times found in these sections of Scripture a rich treasury of typical teaching, though to the ignorant they contain nothing more than the crude ideas of worship obtaining in these early times—full of meaningless repetition.

It is a grand mistake to suppose that Christianity is a development or improvement upon the Jewish form of worship, though it does, and was intended to, displace it : further, it is folly to go back to this early instruction as a pattern for Christian worship or to in any way combine the two.

Designed entirely by God and carried out strictly according to His instructions by Moses, without any scope for human ingenuity, the Tabernacle, its offerings and priesthood were clearly intended to foreshadow what was to come fully to light when Christ died and rose again. From this point the shadow gives place to the substance and, as the Book of Hebrews—based almost entirely upon these types—shows, is rather a contrast than a comparison.

Thus one part at least of the New Testament cannot be rightly understood apart from a knowledge of the Tabernacle, and we are not over-estimating the importance of its typical teaching when we say that no Bible student can afford to neglect it if he aspires to a comprehensive grasp of the scope of Scripture.

The Tabernacle was God's dwelling-place in the

midst of His redeemed people while passing through the wilderness. He had said to Moses on Sinai: "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Thus any Israelite, seeking after God, could approach Him there in the midst of the camp.

**The Court and
the Door.**

(EXOD. XXVII. 9-18.)

Anyone drawing near to the Tabernacle would see first its outer court formed by curtains of fine linen, suggestive of purity and holiness, supported on fifty-six pillars in sockets of brass and capped with silver. Four pillars also supported a beautiful curtain which formed the only entrance to the court. This "gate" or "door" typifies our Lord Jesus Christ, who said: "I am the door," "I am the way . . . no man cometh to the Father but by Me." The material used for the door curtain further confirms this, for it was made of "blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen," each of which suggests a different aspect of His personal or official glory. Blue speaks of His heavenly character, fine linen of His spotless humanity, while purple and scarlet speak of the kingly glory of the One who is to be both King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

**The Brazen
Altar.**

(EXOD. XXVIII. 1-8.)

Passing through the entrance the first thing which met the gaze was a large square altar of brass, reminding the seeker that God can only be approached through sacrifice, the brass setting forth His righteous claims upon man which must be met before man can come into His holy presence.

Sacrifices made by fire, typical of judgment, were made upon this altar by which the returning sinner gained acceptance. Projecting from its four corners were four horns, speaking of power and saving might. Pointing to the four corners of the earth, they remind us that through the one offering of Christ the fire of God's judgment has been exhausted for believers, and His salvation goes out world-wide to whosoever will.

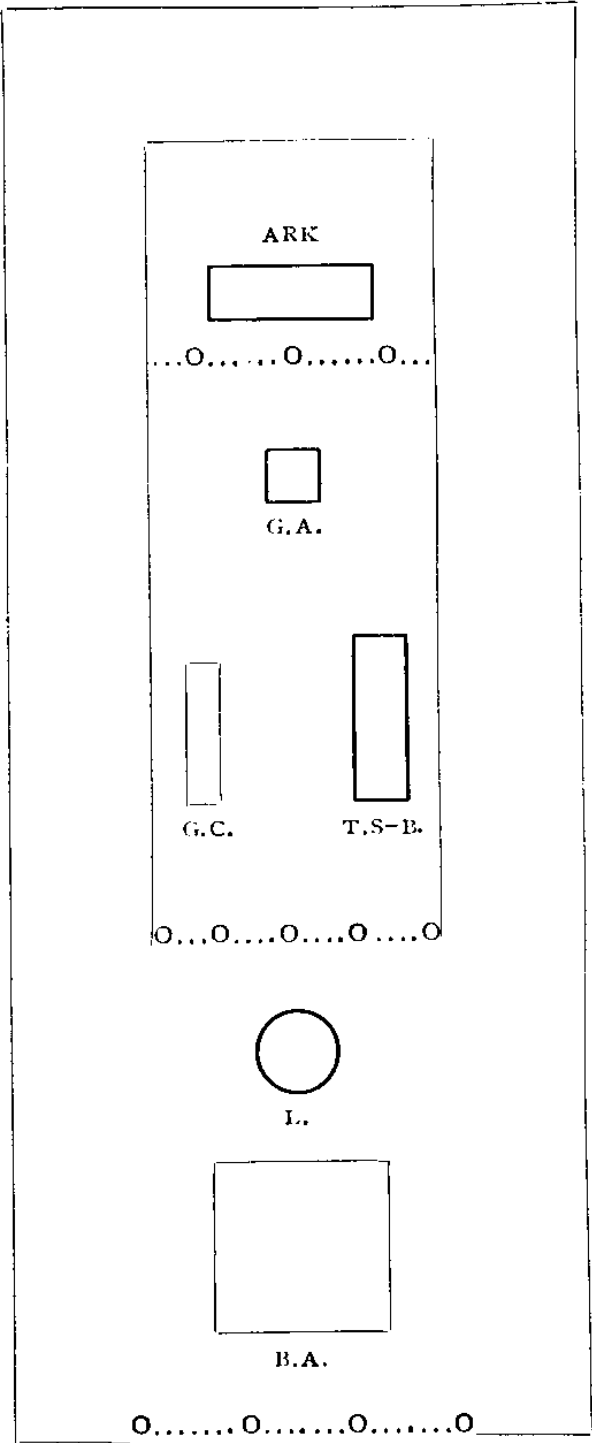
The Laver.

(Exod. xxx. 18-24.)

Further down the court we come to this, the only vessel connected with the Tabernacle whose size and shape are not given in Scripture. It was evidently a receptacle for water for the use of the priests before entering on their priestly functions. It thus speaks of the Word of God which gives cleansing—not the cleansing from guilt which the sinner needs, but—cleansing from daily defilement and all that would hinder believers to-day from enjoying communion and worship. The word is also described as a “mirror” (James I. 22-27), and it is interesting to notice that the laver was made from the brazen mirrors of the Israelitish women, fitting material to typify that which enables us to see ourselves aright and even discerns “the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Tabernacle and its Coverings.

This structure, every particular of which is full of meaning, was formed by forty-eight wooden boards, overlaid with gold, forming three sides of an oblong. The fourth was formed by a curtain similar to the gate of the court. This oblong space was divided into two by another



GROUND PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE
(Not drawn to scale.)

curtain hanging on pillars. The first portion, which was twice as large as the second, being known as the holy place, and the second as the holy of holies, for behind that curtain or veil was God's dwelling-place, unapproachable to all save the high priest.

The foundation upon which all was set consisted of a hundred sockets of silver received as atonement or ransom money for each numbered Israelite. Thus the basis of God's dwelling with man is redemption's mighty price—the precious blood of Christ. Standing erect, side by side, on this foundation, the boards all joined together may speak of believers who to-day form God's dwelling-place (Eph. II. 19–22), and are clothed with divine righteousness, of which gold is the symbol.

The coverings which were drawn over the top of the walls thus formed consisted first of all of a wonderfully wrought curtain of the same material as the two curtains we have already referred to, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, with the addition of cherubim, wrought, no doubt, into the pattern—all speaking of Christ, and the cherubim emblematic of the fact that as Son of Man all judgment is committed to Him.

Over the top of this were three other coverings, the first, made of goat's hair, spoke of His holy separation from evil; the second of ram's skins, dyed red, typifying His devotedness even to death; and the outer covering of all, of badger skins—a covering which would keep out everything unsuitable—sets forth His holy vigilance against evil, seen in such incidents as His faithful

THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICES. 229

testimony against the hypocritical Pharisees, the cleansing of the temple and in rebuking even His own disciple Peter when he sought to divert Him from the cross (Matt. xvi. 23).

**The Golden
Candlestick.**

(EXOD. xxv. 31-39.)

On the left side of the holy place stood this light-bearer, the only light which illuminated the holy place.

It was a seven-branched lamp-stand made of pure gold, and suggests to us our Lord Jesus Christ, "the true light," shining in sevenfold perfection, filled with the Holy Ghost, of whom oil is a figure in many parts of Scripture.

**The Shewbread
Table.**

(EXOD. xxv. 23-30.)

Standing opposite to the candlestick this piece of furniture was made of wood overlaid with gold. Twelve

loaves made of fine flour, one for each tribe, were placed upon it every seventh day, with wine and frankincense, typical of God's blessing for the earth which will be administered through His earthly people in the coming glorious kingdom.

**The Altar of
Incense.**

(EXOD. xxx. 1-10.)

Immediately in front of the veil and made of the same material as the Shewbread table, this altar stood.

It was two cubits high and one cubit square, having a crown on raised moulding around the top, and on the top a golden pan in which sweet incense burned. It suggests our Lord Jesus Christ and His own associated with Him in worship and intercession. All the fragrance and acceptability before God, of His person and work, accompanies their spiritual sacrifices, and it is only by Him

that suitable praise, worship, or prayer can be offered to-day (Heb. XIII. 15).

The Ark and the Mercy Seat.

(Exod. XXV. 10-22.)

This was the only vessel in the most holy place, and was the first thing in connection with the Tabernacle which Moses was instructed to make. God always commences with Christ, and this vessel pre-eminently sets Him forth, though every part of the Tabernacle speaks of Him in one form or another. Made of wood overlaid with pure gold, types of the humanity and Deity of Christ, it was an oblong chest, the lid of which constituted the mercy seat. Inside the ark were placed the tables of the law—the law which Israel never kept, but which our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled in every particular—reminding us of those prophetic words spoken of Him much later, “ I delight to do Thy will, O God: yea Thy law is within my heart ” (Ps. XL.). In addition to these a golden pot containing manna and Aaron's rod that budded were all that the ark contained: the former speaking of His lowly life as the bread of God sent down from heaven and the latter that He is the anti-type of Aaron, God's chosen priest who, in the power of resurrection, exercises His priestly grace on our behalf to-day.

The mercy seat, resting on the ark, was a solid slab of pure gold. It was God's throne and yet it was there that He could meet the sinner in perfect righteousness. Two cherubims, their wings touching and their faces looking inwards and down on to the mercy seat, speak of the fact that the claims of justice have been satisfied, God's

THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICES. 231

righteousness declared, for it was there that the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on the day of atonement.

The executors of God's judgment who once drove guilty man from the Garden of Eden are now seen gazing on the blood of atonement (compare margin Rom. vi. 25).

**The High Priest
and his Sons.**

(EXOD. XXVIII.)

The description of the clothing and consecration of the priests is a further fruitful subject for study. Aaron typifies Christ, and his sons, believers who are now called a " holy priesthood " (1 Peter II. 5).

Aaron's garments all speak of the various glories of our Great High Priest, and notable amongst them was a breastplate containing twelve precious stones, upon which were inscribed the names of the tribes of Israel. There were also inscribed upon two stones—six on each—which were fixed on his shoulder straps: a wonderful picture of Him Who ever bears His people on His heart of love and on His shoulders of power in the presence of God.

The Offerings.

(EXOD. I.—VIII.)

The service of the Tabernacle included a system of offerings and sacrifices described in great detail in this part of Scripture. It is hardly necessary to say that these offerings had no saving virtue in themselves, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Heb. x. 4): they only foreshadowed Christ who fulfilled them all. In the burnt offering (Lev. I.) we see a lovely picture of His devotedness even unto death

for the Will of God, that sacrifice ascending as a sweet savour. The meat or meal offering (Lev. II.) reminds us of his perfect, spotless manhood, that perfection being displayed in suffering here. On the other hand, the sin and trespass offerings (Lev. IV., V.) differ entirely from the first two, for the prominent thought in each is the removal of sin.

The peace offering (Lev. III.) which comes in the centre of the series seems to suggest communion, the response of our hearts to God in appreciation of Christ, resulting in worship. Part of this offering was burnt, that is, it was for God, part of it was for the high priest and his sons, and the offerer himself also partook of it, suggesting communion such as is the leading characteristic of Christian worship—say, at the Lord's Supper.

Primarily it is an offering "unto the Lord," but wonderful grace has given us to share and enjoy His thoughts about His beloved Son.

These brief notes are only intended to indicate a very few of the hidden beauties of these much-neglected parts of Scripture. It is hoped that they will suffice to encourage some of our younger Bible readers to explore them more fully themselves.

If David in his day could pray, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. CXIX. 18), surely we to-day, who have the Spirit of God to illuminate these passages for us and live in the light of their complete fulfilment in Christ, can re-echo his prayer most fervently.

J. A. S.

Next month (D.V.): "Hints on Bible Marking: An Aid to the Memory."

THE DAY WHEN GOD ACTS.

"The Lord thy God . . . will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will BE SILENT IN HIS LOVE."—ZEPHANIAH III. 17 (marginal reading).

"And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, My jewels, in THAT DAY WHEN I ACT."—MALACHI III. 17 (alternative reading, probably more correct).

THE present time, in one sense of the word, is the day when God is acting. Are not the activities of divine love manifest on every hand ? When lost in the mazes of the world, that love sought us and saved us. In a thousand ways it has shown itself mighty on our behalf. It has borne with us, disciplined us, taught us, guided us, comforted us, and has been our sheet-anchor against the driving tides of evil.

The day is fast approaching, however, when these activities will cease, for the simple reason that they will be no longer needed. Satan will be bruised under our feet ; "all taint of sin shall be removed, all evil done away." There will be no failure on our part for God's long-suffering love to bear with ; no crooked paths to be made straight ; no lessons of our own weakness and foolishness to be learned ; no sadness and depression to be chased away ; no bitter tears remaining to be wiped from our

234 THE DAY WHEN GOD ACTS.

eyes. The activities of divine love will have reached their climax and achieved their object. God, in deep and infinite joy, will be SILENT. He will rest in the full possession of the objects upon which He had set His love.

.

In another sense of the word, God is silent *now*. He does not intervene to stay the violence of men. He does not curb their hatred even when directed against those for whom He cares as the apple of His eye. Tens of thousands of men and women dear to the heart of God have, for Christ's sake, been flung to the lions in the Roman arena, tortured in the dungeons of the Inquisition, butchered by papal armies amid the snows of Alpine winters, burned on piles of flaming faggots in many a city of this land of ours, thrust headlong over precipices in far-off Madagascar, and slain by the sword of infuriated Chinese "Boxers."

And God, the God of these martyrs, the Father of these persecuted children of His, has sat silent in heaven. He has not quenched the fires of persecution, nor broken the arm of the adversary.

Will this go on for ever? No, no; a thousand times No! The day is coming when God will ACT. He will intervene in power to put down *sin*, the root-cause of all the evil things

in the world. And *then*, they who have feared the Lord and cared for the honour of His Name shall be owned as His, His jewels, or, as the margin reads, His special treasure. No more shall the wrath of men prevail against His saints ; no more shall His Word be defied by the creatures of His hand ; no more shall stout rebellion against His authority stalk unchecked through the earth. It will be the day of God's *power*, the day when He ACTS.

Should not the thought of this incite us to seek to be numbered amongst those described in the sixteenth verse of Malachi III. ? Of course, they were Jews and we are Christians. But they were saints who followed not that which was evil, but that which is good, and who built themselves up in their most holy faith, which things *we* are exhorted to do in the two last epistles of the New Testament.

The priestly leaders in Malachi's day had given up *the fear of the Lord* (see I. 6 and III. 5). They are reminded how this had marked their ancestor Levi, who was commended "for the fear wherewith he feared Me and was afraid before My name" (II. 5). Amid this prevalent departure from wisdom's way there were a few faithful ones who "feared the Lord." Often did they speak to one another, and the Lord not only heard (as He

hears everything) but *hearkened*. He listened with an attentive ear and kept their words on record. Happy people! Perhaps unknown on earth, or if known, despised and persecuted, and with nothing to show that God was pleased with them. But *in the day when God acts*, faithful, devoted ones like these will be His jewels, His special treasure.

Who would not covet to be among such?

.

It may be helpful, as affording another instance of the perfection of Scripture, to point out that according to the different view of things presented in the two passages standing at the head of this article, different titles of God are used.

In Zephaniah, where the present activity and the future silence of divine love are in view, He is called, "the Lord thy God."

Do you catch the significance of this title? *Your* God, the God Whom you have learned to know and trust, Whose love has been your cheer and support in many an hour of trial; the God Who has followed you with His thoughtful care every step of life's highway, and to Whom you have looked up with eyes of grateful love as you called Him "Father": *this* God, the Lord THY God, will then be silent in His love. Love's tale will all have been

told ; there remains only the joy in what love has achieved. Dwell upon those three words : “ the Lord THY God.”

But in Malachi, where the day of God’s activity is viewed as still future, He is called “ the Lord of Hosts.” This title means, I suppose, the Lord of infinite resources.

Does it *seem* as if God’s resources were limited ? Do thoughts of wonder sometimes arise in the Christian’s heart as to whether God is able to work His will and secure His way in the face of the terrific power of evil in the world ? Hush ! Let every such thought of unbelief die unspoken ! He is the Lord of Hosts, omnipotent. In His own good time He will act. His resources are none the less for His waiting to use them. Meanwhile, it is for *us* to draw upon those resources, for our present cheer and support, while speaking oft to one another, and thinking upon His Name.

H. P. B.

How They View Things from the Mission Field.—

“ Face to face as we are with a condition of absolute ignorance on every hand of all the fundamental principles of the Gospel, the situation is so terrible and the need so appalling, that it would require a heart of stone to stop and discuss little marginal differences, while millions are perishing for lack of the simple, big, saving truths that we all hold in common. These conditions bring out so clearly the efficiency of the Gospel as a remedy for sin, and indirectly for all evils, that *the need of the great fundamentals overwhelm our differences as the blazing glories of the sun annihilate its spots, and we forget all about them.*”—(*Guatemala News.*)

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ.

“And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren : and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me ! And God granted him that which he requested ” (I CHRON. IV. 9, 16).

THE abrupt introduction of the name of Jabez into a catalogue of genealogies, with no apparent connection with the context, is very remarkable. His name is found nowhere else in Scripture, nor have we anywhere the slightest clue as to his dwelling, occupation, station in life, family connection or any information whatsoever besides that which is given us in this couple of verses. This need not, indeed, surprise us, for the Bible was written as no other book ever has been written. Human compositions, to be understood and make themselves acceptable to readers, must observe a prescribed order of sequence, an observable connection, without which they would be classed as fit only to be relegated to a museum of literary curiosities.

But not so the Bible. Like its divine Author, it is not in all things comprehensible ; it is infinitely beyond and above the judgment of puny-minded man. He is wholly incompetent to criticize it ; its very glories and hallmarks of genuineness are, according to the

natural man's criterion, "foolishness." Like Him from whose hand and mind it came, it is, by any earthly plummet, unsearchable and its ways (as concerning method and arrangement) past finding out (Rom. xi. 33).

The very position of the passage, in the midst of comparatively uninteresting surroundings, is calculated to attract our attention at the outset. The present writer when a boy would spend hours hunting for—and finding—old colonial coins and Indian relics in barren sand hollows; it would have been useless to look for them in the adjoining fruitful fields where, though present, they would be undiscernible. So here, set round about with a list of apparently meaningless names and pedigrees, we see this gem glittering with richest instruction and encouragement to holiness and to intensive, intelligent prayer.

"Jabez was more honourable (more honoured, N.T.) than his brethren." Who his brethren were is not revealed to us. They are possibly those mentioned in the immediately preceding verses. But "comparisons are odious"; and the great compassionate love of God here, as frequently elsewhere, covers with the veil of silence "the multitude of sins." The less honourable brethren are hid from our inquisitive eye; we only know Jabez was honoured of His God, who ever delights to honour "them that honour Him" (1 Sam. ii. 30).

Jabez was honoured because he was characterized by a spirit of prayer. Cradled in sorrow, his lot was cast in the very circumstances in which the habit of prayer is most often begotten. None ever prayed like Him who was here on earth "a Man of sorrows."

But Jabez, though a very child of sorrow, did not give way to grief or become a morose misanthrope. He "called upon the God of Israel"; like his ancestor Jacob, he wrestled with God, and as a prince he prevailed. Familiar as he was, no doubt, with the story of that memorable struggle at Peniel, he set himself to seek the face of God as Jacob in his distress had sought it at the ford Jabbok. So he prayed to the God of his princely ancestor Israel. Jehovah was the supreme Deity of the nation, but Jabez addresses himself to Elohim, the God of the individual. He is intent on obtaining personal blessing. This secured, he could ask for enlargement of his border, collective blessing for the nation; it would naturally follow as a consequence of his own soul's particular blessing.

"Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed!" he prays. Observe how he begins—with the intensifying, vehement exclamatory, "Oh." It is the wrestler preparing himself for the coming struggle, assuming the proper posture, the first move toward victory.

"Bless me indeed," he says. "Richly

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ.

241

“bless me,” the New Testament renders it. “Heap up,” or “fill to the brim,” the excellent Spanish version of Pratt gives it. He would not be satisfied with any ordinary blessing ; it was blessing in a special, augmentative sense he craves. And as God loves “a cheerful giver,” so He also loves a largely expectant petitioner, one who seeks of Him great things and abundant. He “giveth not by measure,” either of His Spirit, or any other of His blessings : and He “is able (and willing !) to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

Jabez is not selfish in his request, he thinks of others and asks that his borders might be enlarged, that the blessing he asks for himself might run over the wall and extend itself to others. This is ever the way of heaven and of faith. God said to Abram, “I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing.” To be a blessing to a needy world around us we must first ourselves be blessed, with the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich and to which He adds no sorrow (Prov. x. 22). Did Jabez know of this “proverb” when he so earnestly prayed for the enriching sorrowless blessing ? One might almost think so.

And “that Thine hand might be with me.” This is important. What was omitted in the dotted line in the quotation above of God’s promise to Abram ? “And make thy name

great.” God would be with him making great his name to the surrounding inhabitants of the land, for it is ever the less that is blessed of the greater. Jabez knew the connecting link between himself and the blessing of men about him ; it was God, His hand with him, for without this what are we but powerless motors, the current off, and everything at a dead standstill. Alas, how many a saint of God is in just such a condition to-day !

And then his concluding request : “ And that Thou wouldest keep me from evil that it may not grieve me.” How like the final petition of the disciple’s prayer, “ And deliver us from evil.” And it is to be noted that Jabez uses a very unusual word for “ keep ” here. It is not the ordinary word at all, in fact not once is it used by the translators for “ keep,” excepting in phrases like “ keep the passover,” “ keep the sabbath,” “ keep the feasts.” This is the only instance in the Scriptures where the Hebrew word *asah* is used for “ keep ” in the sense of guard, protect, restraint. It is as if Jabez in his utterance could think of, or would use, no other word than that used in connection with the “ set times ” or feasts of Jehovah, preferring a religious word to the ordinary secular one, as men would say.

Yes, he would be “ kept ” from the evil

everywhere about, and, alas, within him, too. And our divine Lord, Who prayed as never man prayed, in John xvii., that holy of holies of intercession, says, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Surely it was the Spirit of Christ in this Israelite of sorrow that enabled him to pray after such a heavenly fashion and with almost the intelligence of a saint of New Testament times.

"That it may not grieve me," he adds, pathetically. Sin is always a reproach to any people, but in a very aggravated sense when found in a believer. It can only cause him grief and shame, like poor backslidden Peter who wept and wept bitterly.

And more, sin yielded to grieves the Holy Spirit within the Christian, robbing him of his power—preventing him from making his "calling and election sure," raising a question often in his mind as to his acceptance with God. What "grief" is this! a sorrow grievous to be borne.

And his prayer was answered, as such prayer always is. "God," we read, "granted him that which he requested." Yes, blessed be His glorious name forever, "He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "God brought about what he had requested," the New Translation gives it. "If we ask any-

thing according to His will He heareth us." Sometimes we ask and receive not because we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts ; self is before us, fleshly gratification. But with Jabez it was different ; the blessings he asked are spiritual, and for this God heard and "brought about" his request. He has ten thousand ways of bringing to pass that which He wills on our behalf. "All things work together for good to them that love God." His resources are infinite and He often brings to pass the answer to our prayers in a way of which we should never have dreamed.

May we learn of this child of sorrow how to pray even as John taught his disciples to pray ; and, above all, learn of Him Who was greater than both John and Jabez, "how men ought always to pray and not to faint." Jabez, *sorrow*, is a name that fits us all (for "we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God"), and we should not add to our sorrows by allowing sin in our lives ; so we might all well pray with him that we might be kept from evil that it may not grieve us ; and, above all, that it may not grieve Him Who redeemed us with His blood, and "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness ; by whose stripes ye were healed." Amen and amen !

C. K.

HINTS ON BIBLE MARKING: AN AID TO THE MEMORY.

“**H**OW am I to remember all these wonderful things?” is a question which often arises in the mind of the student of Scripture, who becomes increasingly conscious of the fact that many things he notices in passing slip from the memory and are not readily picked up again when wanted.

Though it will be always impossible for a human vessel to contain all the “wondrous things” to be found in God’s book, there are ways and means of assisting the memory, and of giving the fruits of Bible study a more permanent form.

A diligent use of the notebook is one of these, and in conjunction with it a simple system of Bible marking is very helpful, for by means of this the cream of these notes, in concise form, can be neatly transferred to the margin of the reader’s Bible.

This latter should be as wide as possible, and in case the reader is contemplating the purchase of a new Bible it may be mentioned that more than one edition of the Scriptures has been published with a view to providing room for annotation. There is the interleaved Bible, in which every other page is a sheet of white paper providing room for the most copious notes. This of course increases the size of the book, which becomes too large to be conveniently portable. Then there is the wide-margin Bible, with quite an inch of white space surrounding each page, which, though larger than most Bibles, is a very useful size.

246 HINTS ON BIBLE MARKING :

Ordinary editions of the Bible can of course be marked, though some have less room than others for notes.

MATERIALS.—A ruler, preferably of the flexible variety, a supply of fine mapping pens and a bottle of Indian ink will need to be purchased in order to do the work neatly.

Ordinary writing ink is quite useless for the purpose of Bible marking. It easily blots and the marks invariably go through to the other side of the page. Indian ink dries quickly, leaves a dead-black impression, and with care will not penetrate even the very thin paper on which good editions of the Bible are printed.

Coloured inks, each meant to bear some particular significance, have sometimes been recommended, but they are generally found to be more cumbersome than useful, and the markings resulting from their use more artistic than instructive.

METHODS.—It is not the writer's intention to suggest any elaborate scheme of Bible marking, for after all this is only a subsidiary matter, and any system which imposed a tax on the little time which some have at their disposal for reading the Word itself would negative its usefulness. We are, however, convinced of the benefit to be derived from a reasonable use of the pen and ruler, and will endeavour to point out what has been personally of assistance in the study of the Bible.

To begin with, if the Bible is being read right through, many striking verses will be noticed which the reader will take note of for future reference, either for the purpose of further study,

or it may be for use in the Lord's service, such as gospel preaching, Sunday-school teaching and the like. These verses should be carefully underlined, for it often happens that a pointed passage in the Old Testament is not readily found again after a short lapse of time, and though the reader may have a rough idea of its location the finding of it may involve searching several chapters.

For instance, how many of our readers can turn quickly to that well-known passage: "Be sure your sin will find you out"?

Again, where is that companion verse: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"?

"About the middle of Proverbs," would be the usual answer to the question, and "somewhere in Job" would be all that most could say as to the location of that beautiful statement, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

There is quite a good gospel subject in these three passages, and it would save time if these and similar verses were underscored, for they would then stand out prominently. Such markings will only occur here and there, so that it is an easy matter to glance over the marked passages in any particular book and find the one wanted.

This is only a commencement, and as the study of the Bible is something very much more than the noting of isolated texts, the value of Bible marking increases as the student passes from general reading to study in closer detail. Here it will assist him to retain impressions of the scope of Scripture, the meaning of difficult passages and the main features of the individual books.

The margin of the Bible can be used for making explanatory notes. If by comparing translations a better rendering of a passage is discovered and verified, this can with advantage be noted, the verse or part of a verse being underlined and connected with the marginal note by a thin line.

The results of the study of a topic or subject can also be recorded in the margin.

Take, for instance, the subject of Joy—true Christian joy—of which the Epistle to the Philippians is so full. I find the following in my Bible at the foot of the page of chapter IV. and connected with verse 19 : “ Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice ” :

JOY, normal Christian experience—	{ IN THE LORD, the main river of Joy.
	TRIBUTARIES.
Joy at the beginning. Luke XV. 17.	Joy in the Word. Jer. xv. 16.
Joy all along. 1 Peter I. 8.	Joy of abiding in Christ. John XV. 11.
Joy at the end. Jude 24.	Joy of the servant—being nothing. John III. 29.
	Joy of answered prayer. John XVI. 24.
	Joy of hearing Christ preached. Phil. I. 18.
	Joy of sowing seed yourself. Ps. CXXVI. 5.
BEWARE OF CHOKED CHANNELS	Joy of giving to God's work. 1 Chron. XXIX. 9-13.
	Joy of heavenly calling. Luke X. 20.
	Joy of suffering for Christ. 1 Pet. IV. 13.
	Joy of Christ's coming. John XVI. 32.

There may seem very little in all this, hunted up many years ago, but the writer can testify to the benefit derived from turning up these passages

as well as from the train of thought they suggested.

When studying a particular book, in addition to underlining special verses, two or more containing the same thought can be connected together if they occur on the same page by means of thin lines ruled from one to the other.

It is also a good plan to go over certain words with the pen, thickening the letters and picking out in this way what appear to be the keywords in a verse or chapter. They stand out very conspicuously when treated in this way, somewhat similar to the following :

ROMANS I.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be **an apostle**, **separated unto the gospel of God** (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be **the Son of God**, with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. **Because that which may be known of God is manifest**, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, **being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.**

A difficulty that will at once arise is that Bible reading may be undertaken at times and places when the use of marking materials would be impossible. A journey in the train or a seat in the park may provide an opportunity for reading, while Bible marking demands the use of a writing table. This can easily be overcome by keeping the marked Bible for "best" and carrying a cheaper edition for general reading.

250 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Carried in the pocket for general reading, these can be freely marked in pencil, notes can be made in the margin or notebook, then when a spare hour comes along these notes and pencil markings can be looked over and transferred to the better Bible in ink.

The act of going over them again will prove an advantage by bringing back fresh to the mind what was suggested by the study.

If this is systematically carried out, it is possible when coming back to the same passage or book at a later date to gather up the results of this previous reading and push the study still further. The depths of Scripture are infinite, and each survey, if under the guidance of God the Holy Ghost, should bring to light some fresh treasures.

J. A. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

INQUIRER, Essex.—Ritualism, whether of the Roman or the Anglican variety, can only exist where there is ignorance as to the finished work of Christ, and the full revelation of God in Christianity. The work of Christ, accomplished once for all upon the cross, has removed for the believer every atom of the distance which his sins had placed between himself and God. There is no longer any need for sacrifice, for priest, for altar, for symbolic ritual, or for anything that implies distance between God and those who are now His beloved children.

Moreover, what does the ritualist know of the *heart* of God, that heart that finds its pleasure in

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 251

having us, the objects of its love, so near that we can sing :

“So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be,
For in the person of His Son
I am as near as He.”

You ask our help in pointing out clearly the errors of ritualism. But we would rather call the attention of those in danger of being entrapped thereby to the great truths of the gospel: the abiding efficacy of the atoning work of Christ; and the far-reaching effects of that work, enabling God, in perfect harmony with the strictest claims of righteousness and without the slightest offence to His infinite holiness, to bring us to Himself as His sons, purged from every spot of guilt, that we might rejoice in Him. These great truths, if apprehended in any measure, would for ever free the soul from any such yoke of bondage as modern or medieval ritualism. Ask your friends to read thoughtfully and prayerfully the ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews, and the whole of Galatians. If, as you say, they are really Christians, they should be willing to do this.

FUNERALS.—In our judgment there is no force in your objection to using the funeral of a Christian as an occasion for the preaching of the gospel to the unconverted if it be done with tact, and consideration for the feelings of the mourners. In some cases many are present who rarely, if ever, have the way of salvation clearly set before them. We are persuaded that we should fail in our duty were we to abstain from seizing such opportunities for pointing men to Christ.

252 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

You think that this is likely to "wound the stricken hearts of the mourners," and that speakers at funerals should confine their remarks to "words of comfort for the bereaved." Our experience would lead us to a very different conclusion. Would not those who love the Lord greatly rejoice to know that He had been pleased to use a word spoken at the graveside of some dear relative, to the conversion of a sinner?

But our appeal must be to Scripture rather than to experience. In John XI., the familiar chapter so often read at funerals, we are distinctly told that what the Lord Jesus said was *because of the people which stood by* (v. 42). He sought their good. His object was "that they may believe." Does not this fact bear very directly on the subject of your inquiry?

We may also point out that in the following chapter, where the Lord Jesus is speaking of His own decease, where His soul is troubled, and where He cries to His Father to save Him from the hour whose terrors He alone could fathom, the reply given, by means of an audible voice from heaven, was *on account of the people that stood by* (v. 29). The Lord Himself says: "This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes."

At the graveside of Lazarus the Saviour thought of and spoke for the benefit of the bystanders. And amid all the pressure of the approaching "hour," in answer to the cry of His beloved Son, God the Father likewise spoke in view of the bystanders. We think your question is sufficiently answered by these facts.

THE LAST STAND.

THE Scriptures abound with military figures ; similes and comparisons borrowed from camp and battlefield are found everywhere throughout its one thousand or more divinely inspired pages. The sacred Word is itself called " the sword of the Spirit." We read of " the armour of God," of " the good fight of faith," of fortresses, of towers and battlements, of arrows and darts, of shields, helmets, breastplates. Indeed, the Christian's passage through the wilderness of this world is itself a warfare : his calling is that of a soldier. War is, for him, ever " in the gate," and, alas, often " in the camp." His Chief, called " the Captain of their salvation," is the only really great " war lord " this world has ever known. The " peace on earth " proclaimed by angels at His birth has not yet been established. The dispensation of conflict continues : and it is to be " unto the end, war " (Dan. IX. 26, N.T.).

As has been said of the nations of the earth, their history is largely a history of their wars, so with the " holy nation " of faith : its story is one long record of incessant struggle with an unseen though none the less formidable enemy, an unbroken series of alternate victory and defeat, to conclude ultimately in the com-

plete triumph of righteousness and the utter overthrow of evil and its tireless champion, the devil.

The "Church militant" shall emerge from the smoke and heat of battle as the "Church triumphant" in the everlasting rest and peace of God in glory.

There is a remarkable passage in Isaiah xxxiii. 16, based on the similitude of a siege : "He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of the rocks : bread shall be given him : his waters shall be sure."

The righteous is here referred to, as may be seen from the connection. In verse 14 the "sinners in Zion" and "hypocrites" are mentioned ; the first "are afraid," and "fearfulness" surprises the latter ; then comes the thunderous question : "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ; who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ?" Verse 15 is not the answer—it is a description of a class the direct opposite of the hypocritical sinners of Zion ; and the passage under consideration, verse 16, is the contrasted condition of this class, so different from the "consuming fire" and "everlasting flames" awaiting ungodly professors of religion. And the glorious climax of all is to "see the King in His beauty," to "behold the land that is very far off," or "land of great distances," as it has been significantly translated. And then

to the end of the chapter we have given us a most beautiful description of the peace of Jerusalem in the last days, her rest glorious and the days of her warfare for ever ended.

This, of course, is Israel, not the Church. But to apply for the moment the symbolism of verse 16 to ourselves of the present dispensation, what lessons may be gathered from its ringing words !

Notice first of all that the warfare depicted here is of the character called in military terms "defensive." There is an "offensive" warfare to which the Christian is called ; it is to carry the gospel to the very gates and even into the camp itself of the enemy. The devoted missionary and the earnest evangelist push on with the colours to the very uttermost front, counting not their lives dear unto themselves if by their sacrifice and efforts the captive may be delivered and additional territory taken from the foe.

But in the great struggle between the "children of light" and the unseen powers of darkness the operations are in large part conducted on the defensive by the Christian. He has a charge to keep ; he is set for "the defence of the gospel" as well as for its dissemination. The company of the faithful to-day is like a beleaguered garrison, hopefully holding the fort while all about seems giving way and everything wellnigh lost.

One by one the great once-evangelical denominations are letting go the truth. Colleges and seminaries which were founded for the very purpose of furthering the faith in the world are now hotbeds of the destructive Higher Criticism ; the enemy disguised in the livery of the Lord has seemingly taken complete possession. And one by one the old champions of the truth like Spurgeon and Ryle are passing from the field of action ; and in place of these men of iron a fallen Church has a fallen ministry, exponents of an unscientific evolution, and, with a few honourable exceptions, disloyal to the Word of God.

Outposts all about have fallen to the enemy, position after position has been taken, traitorously yielded by men sworn to defend the faith with a solemn "So help me, God !" Comparatively few remain, they stand together in the last citadel, waiting for but one thing, the coming of the Lord.

And their position is impregnable. "He shall dwell on high," is the assuring word from headquarters concerning each individual. "God is able to make him stand," say his comrades in the siege. "Having done all, to stand," is the order of the officer in charge (Eph. vi. 13).

But will the battlements withstand the shock of the enemy's fire ? The defenders may stand bravely by their guns and resist

heroically the repeated charges of the foe ; but may not the defences prove insecure ? We know how at Liége and Antwerp the mighty fortifications that were deemed impregnable crumbled to dust before the enemy's fearful fire and the brave defenders were forced to surrender behind the ruins of their supposedly indestructible defences. But not so shall it befall the true defenders of the faith. " For their rock is not as our Rock " ; " His place of defence shall be the munitions of the rocks." They stand behind the " impregnable rock of Holy Scripture," as one of earth's greatest minds has fittingly designated it. " The word of our God shall stand for ever," is the device emblazoned on the believer's " shield of faith." He can never be moved while he takes his stand behind the bulwarks of our holy faith as revealed in that book commonly called the Bible.

" How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word."

Says his great Commander in glory, Victor over death and hell, " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away " (Matt. XXIV. 35). Yes, heaven with its great host of cunning and malignant spirits, and earth, full of proud boasters and rebels against God, these shall pass and perish and be forgotten, but His words, His pronouncements

concerning His own proper deity, the absolute authority and inspiration of Scripture, the immortality of the soul, eternal punishment, all these truths embodied in His recorded teachings shall never, never pass away !

But there is another danger to which a beleaguered garrison may be exposed—the exhaustion of its stores. The defences may be impregnable, but provisions may fail ; and what then ? Ah, the flag is then sorrowfully lowered and the citadel, so manfully defended for months or years, is surrendered. Poor fellows ! We understand their tears and know the feelings of their broken, humiliated hearts.

Shall it so happen to the noble guard who have stood unflinchingly in the breach through weary months and years, enduring insult, reproach and daily death against all the “ fiery darts of the wicked one ” that the truth of God might remain unsullied and intact on earth ? Will they give up at last for lack of sustenance, the failure of their food supply ? No, for it is here written, “ His bread shall be sure.” More than one great battle has been lost because of a broken-down commissariat. But this band of spiritual warriors shall know no want ; their food supply is inexhaustible. Bread shall be given them daily. They have served to them “ the hidden manna ” regularly or just as often as they

may apply. They have only to make requisition and all heaven stands ready to serve them. Christ Himself is "that bread of life," the food of their souls; and because He lives they shall live also! The defenders can never then be starved into submission to the foe.

Then "his waters shall be sure." How that word "sure" rings like steel, coming as it does from the lips of Him that cannot lie. Refreshment, cheer (for this is the significance of water here) shall be his portion to the end, who would stand for God and His truth in a world living in the wicked one. Water is even a more prime necessity than bread, and history records the case of many a citadel forced to surrender just for the lack of this freest of all elements, water.

And may not the plural form of the word here, "waters," indicate that the translators had reason to believe that the word in the original implied a spring, a fountain, which, until heaven refused to yield its moisture, could never become dry or be even diminished? Be that as it may, we have both the Word and the Spirit, the bread and the water; and both shall abide with us for ever. Let our only care be to search diligently and feed freely upon the one, and obey unfalteringly and not grieve the other. Victory then shall certainly be ours.

And, thank God, the end is near and our

warfare shall soon be accomplished. There is "discharge in that war," and the sword shall not "devour for ever." There shall first be "war in heaven" and the enemy and his hosts cast out; and then "a short work shall the Lord make in the earth"; and then, the hosts of hell defeated and crushed, our Lord shall take unto Himself His great power and reign.

What an honour it will be to be found in the end amongst the number of those who have fought the good fight and kept the faith, having held fast His Word and not denied His name! This honour is attainable by all His saints, it is a privilege held out to every true believer, yet, alas, coveted by few, and perseveringly followed by an even smaller and ever diminishing number.

May it be both reader's and writer's to hear Him say in "that day," "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!"

C. K.

KEEP LOOKING UP.

A GENTLEMAN was spending the night in a northern town, and took the opportunity to address a meeting of Christians. Just two words made a deep impression upon one listener, and those words were, "Look up."

He narrated an incident of a captain of a

KEEP LOOKING UP.

261

vessel coming on deck to find that his little son had climbed to the top of the mast. He stood watching, fearing that every moment the boy would turn dizzy and let go his hold. If he looked down at the deck he would surely do so, around at the waves would be just as bad. So he shouted, "Look *up*! My boy, *keep* looking up!" The little fellow obeyed, and, fixing his gaze on the sky, was able to gradually let himself down the mast, till he safely reached his father.

Is there anything God's people need to-day so much as to look up? Looking around, what do we see? All the horrors of war, strife, turmoil, and the sufferings which follow in their train.

Our Lord's words aptly describe it, "On earth distress of nations, with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after the things which are coming on the earth."

This may apply to a later period than the present, but the following words are very striking: "When these things *begin* to come to pass, then look up, for your redemption draweth nigh."

If He said to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled," He says the same to us to-day. How many depressed and troubled ones are amongst God's dear children? Am I writing to one of such?

Depression is something like the experience of Doubting Castle, only those who have been there can understand it. The key of promise set Christian at liberty from that dismal prison ; and out of all the precious promises in God's Word, dear discouraged soul, there's one to suit *your* case.

However low down or far off you may feel, you are not in such a condition as Jonah was—
 “ All Thy billows and waves passed over me, *yet* will I *look* again toward Thy holy temple.”
 He closes his prayer with the words of faith, “ Salvation is of the Lord ” ; and directly afterwards he experienced it.

Are you troubled because of past failure and mistakes ? How often we lash ourselves because of these things, which can never be undone.

I should like to pass on a sweet word of comfort given to me some years ago. “ Take everything to God, and accept everything from Him ; tell Him all about your blunders, and ask Him to turn them into blessings.” If He says, “ Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” why should I be calling them up and dwelling upon them ? All my sins were remembered once, and laid upon Jesus, the Lamb of God. He has made a perfect atonement, so now we are invited to draw *near* with a *pure* heart, that is, a heart in which there are no reserves. All is out

before God, and you feel that His light has searched you through and through.

“Looking unto Jesus,” was the motto taken by two or three friends at the beginning of the present year, and it meant a real deliverance from the morbid habit of looking behind, with many regrets and self-reproaches. If we look unto Him we are lightened, or illuminated, and our faces not ashamed. He will put gladness into our hearts more than in the time when the corn and wine increased.

“How are you this morning?” said a Christian visitor to a weary-looking pilgrim. “Oh, I feel so depressed, my heart’s down at the bottom; I can’t look up at all.”—“Well, never mind,” was the cheery reply, “isn’t it a comfort that the Lord can *look down*?”

Let us lay hold of this blessed fact, that His eye is upon those who fear Him, who hope (or trust) in His mercy. We can turn to Him and say, “Look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy name” (Ps. CXIX. 132).

The Lord Jesus looked upon Peter when he had denied Him: that look broke Peter’s heart, and was the beginning of his restoration. Don’t shrink from that look, dear friend, even if you are a backslider. He is still looking on you with longing compassion, saying, “Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee.”

You will get a wonderful reception : all the past blotted out, a new song put in your mouth ; and the joy will not be all on *your* side, for He will joy over thee with singing.

Let us look unto Him every day, until we are changed into His image when we see Him face to face.

“Then, then shall I know the full beauty and grace
Of Jesus my Lord, when I stand face to face ;
I shall know how His love went before me each day,
And wonder that ever my eyes turned away.”

B. B.

A YOUNG cavalry officer, shortly after his conversion, was going through his ordinary drill in the Riding School, where he was known as No. 2. His mind engaged with the wonderful things into possession of which he had so recently come, through faith in the Saviour, he was not attending very carefully to the thing just before him.

As he was trotting round the School, the voice of the riding-master rang out in sharp reproof :

“Now, No. 2 ! Look up, Sir ! Hold up your head ! ”

The young officer pulled himself together, and as he looked up, he thought : “ Here is the riding-master, an unconverted man, telling me, the son of a King, to look up ! I will indeed look up, and praise my Lord.”

And so indeed he did, during all the rest of his short life.

Extracted.

DOES TRACT DISTRIBUTION PAY?

“Cast thy bread upon the waters : for thou shalt find it after many days” (ECC. XI. 1).

REALLY it looks as if this verse were specially designed to encourage tract distributors. The “*bread*” of the gospel is a good description of a tract ; whilst “*waters*” constitutes a well-known Biblical simile for the dispersal of mankind over the face of the globe. This verse may well encourage tract distributors to scatter the good seed in many languages and among many nationalities.

Only a few hours ago did I receive an answer to the question, “ Does Tract Distribution Pay ? ” A lady came into a tract depot in the west of England and expended a shilling. She made her choice of a few little things, and it only required another article to be chosen to make up the sum. Her eye lit upon a copy of “ Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment ” in French. This she sent to a British soldier in the war zone, and he handed it on to a French soldier. It was used to the French soldier’s blessing, and now in the joy of the blessing he is begging for supplies of gospel literature, so that he may distribute to others what has been so blessed to him. This only occurred a few days ago.

Take another case. A colporteur, some years ago, entered a boot factory, which was working at top pressure on a war contract. He en-

266 DOES TRACT DISTRIBUTION PAY ?

deavoured to sell his Bibles and Testaments, but alas! only met with scorn and ridicule. He then gave out a few tracts, and departed sad and cast down.

Nor would the scene that subsequently occurred have tended to cheer him, had he seen it. The tracts were despised and scoffed at. One workman went so far as to hold a tract up in derision, and say, "I'll show you what to do with a tract," whereupon he promptly fastened it between two pieces of leather and nailed it on to the sole of the boot he was making.

Let your mind travel far from the boot factory to distant China. Troops had been employed against the Boxer rioters. A skirmish had taken place, and a young soldier had fallen with a wound in his foot. The Chinese bullet had ripped open the sole of his boot, and a little piece of paper was protruding, stained with blood, and the words, "Shall not return unto Me void," clearly distinguishable. Curiosity was aroused, the paper—the very tract fastened within the sole by the impious workman—was carefully extracted and perused, and was used to the young soldier's conversion; and the text that first aroused his curiosity proved, indeed, to be the Word of God, quick and powerful: "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. LVII.). Surely this piece of His word had prospered in the thing whereto it was sent.

Within a week ago, I was told a very interesting

DOES TRACT DISTRIBUTION PAY? 267

fact. The late Bishop J. C. Ryle, the well-known tract writer, deliberately abandoned a highly ornate and oratorical manner of speaking and writing, and chose a plain, simple style. A tract of his fell into the hands of a Spanish nobleman, who was converted by its agency. He had it translated and published in Spanish, the results being so marked that out of the giving of that simple tract a movement began in Spain that is bearing fruit to this hour.

Another instance of the way for the gospel being prepared by a tract is interesting.

Find yourself in thought in tropical Brazil. It is dusk. A voice is heard at the door, asking for shelter, which is readily granted. It turns out that the unexpected guest is a missionary, who had wandered fifteen miles out of his track. But that wandering was ordained by God! Listen to the joyous exclamation of the host to his wife, "Come and see the missionary that we've been praying for for these twenty years."

It seems that all those years before he had received a tract, written by an ex-priest, entitled, "Three Reasons Why I Left the Roman Catholic Church." He became interested in the gospel, and prayed to God that some one would come to bring him more light.

I am afraid that tract distribution has largely gone out of practice, but, thank God, the European war is waking up many of us to see how neglected this precious branch of service has been.

In many cases *years of service have been lost.*

It was so in the case of a gentleman who received a tract with the remark, "I am not

268 DOES TRACT DISTRIBUTION PAY ?

opposed to such work. In my younger days I did a good deal of it myself, but I cannot say that I ever saw any fruit from it."

The tract distributor was rather "damped," but ventured to tell the gentleman that he himself owed his conversion to a tract. The gentleman was interested enough to ask the place and time, where and when this had occurred.

The effect of the answer was electrical. The gentleman's eyes filled with tears; he grasped the distributor's hand, and told him with great emotion that he was the individual who had handed him the tract, but not seeing results he had lost heart, and had given up the work of tract distribution as nearly useless.

After twenty years God graciously gave him this cheer. He immediately returned to the service again, confessing his faithlessness in ever having left it.

But the twenty intervening years were lost. Golden opportunities, beyond recall, he had missed.

Alas! is it not so more or less with each one of us? Shall we not acknowledge our sin and shame in the matter? The Lord is coming quickly. Our days of serving will soon be over.

We could multiply instances of blessing through tracts till our short paper would lengthen into a library of books.

One gospel book of the writer's was sent from Barbados to a young man in Brooklyn, U.S.A. The *first* page was used to his conversion. Another book of the writer's was given to a young man in the Western States of America. Aroused to a

DOES TRACT DISTRIBUTION PAY? 269

sense of need and danger, he read, anxiously seeking salvation. Page after page was read till the *last* page was reached. In despair he read it, but it was used to his conversion. Yet a third book of the writer's was used to two girls and one boy in a home in a distant part of Tasmania. To God be all the praise. We record these cases for your encouragement. They could be multiplied many times over.

One happy thing about a tract is that it does not need special gift or ability to give it away. An earnest heart, a prayerful spirit, a little pocket money, a pair of willing hands and feet, and a tactful manner are the requisites for this service. To preach acceptably needs some gift at least. To give away a tract needs not gift, but devotedness.

One plan the writer has carried out for years, and that is only to give out tracts that are known to have been blessed, or written by those who are used in soul-winning.

A tract may be interesting, it may be true, but it may lack that grip, that fervency, that indescribable something that marks gift. It may take no gift to give away a tract ; it requires gift to write one.

A conference was held by the clergy of a certain diocese lately, and the inquiry was instituted as to what was most needed in preaching to-day, if it were to be effective. The result of inquiry elicited this remarkable answer, that what was needed in these indifferent and degenerate days was the emphasis of

GOD and SIN.

270 DOES TRACT DISTRIBUTION PAY ?

I commend this thought to the tract distributor. Tracts bringing before the reader GOD and His claims on the one hand, and SIN and its effects and punishment on the other, are suitable for this careless day, as calculated to arouse exercise, concern, conviction in the reader, and preparing him for the presentation of the grace of God in the gospel through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God use this short paper to the stirring up of writer and readers as to this blessed, but much neglected, service. Never was there a day of greater need and opportunity !

A. J. P.

An Experiment.—“ For these two days I had made an experiment which I had been so often and earnestly pressed to do : ‘ Speaking ’ to none concerning the things of God unless my heart was free to do it.’ And what was the result ?

(1) That I spoke to none at all for fourscore miles together, no, not even to him that travelled with me, unless a few words at first starting out.

(2) That I had no cross to bear or take up, and commonly in an hour or two fell fast asleep.

(3) That I had much respect shown to me wherever I came, everyone behaving to me as a civil good-natured gentleman.

Oh, how pleasing is all this to flesh and blood ! ”

John Wesley’s Journal.

WHOSE ?

TO whom does it belong, this money I have inherited, this salary I am earning, this house I am building, these savings I have in the bank ? I say *my* house, *my* bank account, *my* property, *my* salary, *my* clothes, *my* books, *my* education ; but is it really mine ? Who owns it, this wealth, this power, this influence ?

“ You do, of course,” laughs the world.

“ God does,” asserts the Bible.

It is queer, isn't it, that after all the centuries of reading the Bible the Church has made so little of property as a religious question ? For the Bible is full of it.

Story and proverb and poem, legislation and parable and exhortation—all unite to emphasize God's sole ownership of earth and heaven. Through long centuries of painful training the children of Israel were taught to take the first fruit from the garden, the choicest lamb of the flock, the tenth of all the increase, as a token that they and all theirs belonged alike to God, the Giver and Owner of all. The tithe, the free-will offering, the gift at feast day and fast day were only so many reminders of funds held in trust.

The New Testament is not less startling in its emphasis of man's stewardship and God's ownership. Jesus' parable of the talents and His picture of the judgment agree in this, that they weigh the questions of acquisition and expenditure with the issues of life and death.

Whose is it ? If it is mine, I may use it to please myself, and it is nobody's business but my own ; but if it is God's, I must give an account to the owner for every penny. *South America.*

“LAUNCH OUT.”

“*GO, work for Me,*” the Master says ;
But, Lord, the cause seems lost ;
I have not anything to show
For all the pain and cost ;
My zeal no harvest wealth has gained,
Hearts ache, and have no rest.
Why should my work and I remain ?
We cannot bear the test.

I can do nothing in the world,
No cause have I to win,
Though once I saw through prayer and hope
Its sorrow and its sin.
I spread my empty nets around,
Although I toiled all night ;
I will lie down and take my rest,
Defeated in the fight.

And yet I cannot sleep ! A voice
Comes o’er the silent sea,
“Launch out ; let down the nets again !”
Can the call be to me ?
Chilled and faint-hearted, have I hope,
A failure, left behind ?
Nevertheless I hear Thy word,
O Master great and kind.

I will launch out into the deep
And cast the nets again,
For I can see Thee on the shore,
And hope and faith remain.
Master, forgive my lack of trust,
My indolence of will !
Joy floods my heart with light and love
Since I may serve Thee still. *Adapted.*