

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

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

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

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

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CONTENTS.

	Page
A New Year Message	1
Dare to be a Shammah !	4
" We Believe and are Sure "	8
A Prayer	14
The Other War	15
Answers to Correspondents 20, 39, 57, 79, 120, 138, 179,	218
Does God Care ?	21
Shepherd-Care	25
Doctrine and Practice	29
The Writing on the Ground	34
Nearer	41
" I Don't Care What Becomes of Me "	43
" Marked ' Urgent ' "	51
Eternal Security	55
The World : Our Position and Attitude with Regard to It	61
A Prayer for our Soldier Boys	70
The Stolen Watch	72
Light on the Lord's Coming	81
The War and Prophecy	92
A Little While	100
Does Christianity Make Optimists ?	101
Light on the Present Crisis	104
Is God First, or Third ?	114
A Practical Hope	115
Divine Philanthropy	121
Harvests	128
The Believer's El Dorado	136
The Holy Spirit in Old Testament Times . .	141
" Neglect Not "	147
The Altar Foursquare	150
The Joy of Christ	154

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Last Moments of a Jewish Physician . . .	157
“An Example of the Believers” . . .	161
The Worker More than the Work . . .	168
The Use and Abuse of the World . . .	174
Golden Bells and Pomegranates . . .	181
What do we Think About? . . .	195
“Oor Daddy’s Comin’ Hame the Nicht” . . .	199
Not “We,” but Christ . . .	200
Do You Get Your Prayers Answered? . . .	201
Three Excepts . . .	209
A Reminiscence of the Late Col. S. L. Jacob . . .	212
Sowing and Reaping . . .	213
Jerusalem on Earth . . .	215
God’s Great Love . . .	221
Depression and its Causes . . .	230
The Three Motor-cars . . .	234
Spiritual Vivisection . . .	237

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



A NEW YEAR MESSAGE.

THE coming of another New Year brings us once again to the threshold of an unknown land, and forces the question upon us : What does this year hold in store for us ? What will happen in 1917 ?

Nobody can tell for certain ; we do not know whether joys or sorrows will come with the swiftly passing days ; we cannot affirm that any of us will see the year's end. Nevertheless, on one condition we may be sure that whatever happens, all will be well. The condition is that we commit all our affairs, and ourselves too, to God, that He may guide us.

Some years ago a fine, strongly-built young Englishman was travelling in Switzerland, and one day he determined to make a short expedition up the Alps.

" Of course you will take a guide with you ; you will not venture to go alone," remarked an elderly gentleman, an officer in the army, who was staying at the same hotel.

" Oh," replied the young man with a shrug of the shoulders, " these legs of mine are well able to carry me anywhere, and the road up

these mountains does not strike me as anything very formidable."

"Don't be rash," said the officer. "I have a thirty years' acquaintance with this part of the country, and I know that yonder peak is by no means as near as you imagine. Take my advice and procure a guide. There is one who lives just across the street, a thoroughly trustworthy man. I assure you that there are concealed crevices and deceptive *snow bridges* as they call them, and that they constitute dangers of which you have no idea."

"Many thanks for your kind advice," replied the youth; "I appreciate your kindness, but I intend to carry out the plan I have formed. Good-bye; I shall hope to be back by six or seven o'clock."

The old gentleman shook his head sorrowfully as the Englishman set out, and several times during the day he found himself wondering how he would fare.

Seven o'clock came, but the young man had not returned. Half an hour later steps were heard approaching the hotel, and in a few moments three sturdy mountaineers appeared, carrying a stretcher, on which lay an apparently lifeless body.

"Ah! poor fellow! poor fellow!" exclaimed the officer, as he bent over the stretcher. "He is hardly recognizable! How

A NEW YEAR MESSAGE.

3

can we find out where his friends live ? and his poor mother, how she will weep for him ! ”

The young man still breathed, and they gave him a stimulant which revived him for a few minutes. Opening his eyes he whispered feebly :

“ I am done for, General.”

The words came with difficulty from his bruised and bleeding mouth.

“ Will you write to my people ? My address is on a card in my pocket ; please do this for me. If only I had heeded your counsel and taken a guide, I should never . . . have . . . ” He could not finish the sentence ; his eyes closed ; his spirit had fled.

Full of youthful vigour and energy, this young *Englishman* had imagined that he could safely go alone, with the sad result here recorded.

Do not make a similar mistake, Christian reader ; do not attempt to traverse the unknown land of 1917 alone. Ask your Lord and Master to go with you every step. Put your hand in His and commit yourself wholly to His care and guidance. He will then say to you as to Gideon of old, “ SURELY I WILL BE WITH THEE.” And who can tell the joy of having not only His protection against every danger, His guidance in every difficulty, His support in every sorrow, but *His company* all along the way ?

E. F.

DARE TO BE A SHAMMAH !

DANIEL stood alone, prayed alone and suffered alone. Great is the company of those who have been emboldened by his example and encouraged by his faithfulness. How often, like a fresh, ozone-laden breeze from the ocean, the stirring words have come as a heaven-born tonic to a flagging and discouraged soul :

“ Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.”

But God has given us more examples of devoted zeal and unflinching fortitude than that of Daniel. Have we not in the brief story of Shammah a fine incentive to courage and faithfulness ? It cost Daniel much to pray and suffer : did it cost Shammah less to stand and fight ?

The circumstances were these. The Philistines seemed to be having it very much their own way in the land of Israel. The position was similar to that which exists to-day in Belgium under German occupation. The inhabitants of the country toiled, and the invaders reaped the fruit of their labours. They were on this occasion gathered in force to seize a crop of lentiles—mere food for cattle in normal times, but now, no doubt, grown

DARE TO BE A SHAMMAH !

5

by the downtrodden Israelites for their own sustenance.

This was the opportunity for Shammah to stand forth as *a man who had had enough of defeat!* (Read the narrative in 2 Samuel XXIII. 11, 12.) Others fled ; he fought. Others took for granted that the yoke of Philistine oppression could not be thrown off ; he determined to make a stand. A patch of lentiles may not have been much to fight for, but it was part of the heritage of the sons of Israel, and the Philistines had no right to it. Shammah, trusting in the help of Israel's God, "stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines ; and the Lord wrought a great victory."

Are there any among my readers whose life has been one long story of repeated defeat ?

You remember the earnest desires with which you started on your Christian course. How faithful and devoted you intended to be ! How constant you were going to be in prayer ; how watchful against temptation ! What progress you were going to make ! What victories you meant to win !

And the reality ? Oh, how different from the bright anticipation ! Failure seems to have dogged your footsteps almost from the start. Of your fine intentions nothing remains but a heap of ruins ; your lofty plans have been dashed into a thousand fragments. The

Philistines have found you an easy prey. Instead of singing the song of victory, the dirge of defeat has been your constant wail, until at last you have almost come to acquiesce in it, and to accept defeat as if nothing else were to be hoped for this side of heaven.

What is left of your life is but "a patch of lentiles," a sorry remnant of days which seem doomed to drag themselves out under the shadow of disaster and defeat.

But, my brother, have you forgotten GOD ? Does HE acquiesce in your discomfiture ? Is there nothing better for you than this ? Cannot *He* bring brighter and better days ?

With a strong cry for help to Him, leap to your feet ! Dare to be a Shammah ! Stand in the midst of the patch of lentiles, sword in hand. Defend the remnant of your days from the defiling foot of the Philistine. Let the Lord of hosts work a great victory for you !

After the great fire which destroyed the larger part of Chicago, a man whose store had been burned down went to the place where the foundations still stood, marked now only by a heap of smoking ruins. Among these he cleared a space ; on this he placed a table. He then fixed up a board on which he had painted these words : " Everything lost except wife, children, and hope. Business resumed as usual to-morrow morning."

Am I addressing any reader who feels as he

DARE TO BE A SHAMMAH !

7

contemplates his life, since he became a Christian, that he is standing amid a pile of ruins ? His testimony wrecked ; his home life, regarded from the standpoint of Christianity, a failure ; his heart filled with bitter disillusionment : I have no doubt that many who read these lines may be thus described.

Brother ! sister ! All is not lost. Something may yet be saved from the wreckage, if only "a patch of lentiles." Christ stands ready to come to your aid, and the poor remnant of your days may yet become the occasion for one of His *great victories* !

One of Napoleon's greatest victories was won on a field where the battle had been well-nigh lost. His troops had again and again been driven back, and it was late in the afternoon when Napoleon himself arrived upon the scene. Looking at the sun, already sinking towards the western horizon, he said : " There is just time to recover the day." And giving his orders with characteristic energy, he turned defeat into victory.

Dear aged brother or sister ! you feel perhaps that *your* sun is near to setting ; life's little day will soon be ended, leaving behind it a record of failure. Stay ! there is time to recover the field ! Be a Shammah ! Stand in the midst of the lentile-patch of life that remains. Cry mightily to the Lord for aid, and let Him win one of His great victories in you.

8 "WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE."

He will do it. The God of Shammah still lives. He who at Cana kept the best wine to the last can fill the closing days of His tried and way-worn saints with the brightest of cheer. The joy of the Lord shall be their strength. Satan, discomfited, will flee from them. And having proved the power of their Saviour, enabling them to triumph over the Philistine even in the midst of a mere patch of lentiles, they shall pass into the serene calm of His presence, to go no more out. From the lentile-patch to the Father's house! Lord, grant that it may be so with everyone of us that has tasted the bitterness of defeat!

H. P. B.

"WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE."

"SEEING is believing" is a saying as trite as it is untrue.

The following occurrence proves how utterly deceived one may be while trusting to what he believes to be the sight of his eyes.

In one of the departments of the University of Kansas some time ago the lecturer stood on a platform addressing a body of some hundred students. Suddenly the front door opened and the janitor of the building came rushing to the front, shouting angrily at the professor, who leaped from the rostrum and met his opponent in the middle of the room. There was a quick inter-

“ WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE.” 9

change of hot words, a struggle ensued which ended with the janitor drawing a revolver. A shot rang out and the two men were with difficulty separated.

When the case was tried all the witnesses swore that it was the janitor who fired the shot, some even testifying that they saw the smoke issuing from the weapon after its discharge.

Will it surprise the reader to be told that it was *not* the janitor who fired the shot but a man stationed outside the building at an open window? The whole affair was prearranged, an experiment in psychology to test the value of direct evidence before the law students of the University.

And there are many who, in the realm of the spiritual, demand visible demonstration before believing. They ask for what they call tangible proofs; they will receive nothing “on trust,” and refuse to believe anything that cannot be discerned by the senses—sight, hearing or touch—their deified trinity, the only god in whom they trust. And in doing this they consider themselves exceedingly astute, and look down with affected pity, and even scorn, on those who have not seen, yet have believed. “Yes,” they answer, when it is demanded of them that they have faith in God, “when we *see* we will believe”; and wise in their own conceits they maintain the ground that they will believe nothing except that which can be demonstrated to the senses.

This they think is rational and safe ground. But is it? Is their attitude toward revealed truth really rational? In view of the above-cited incident, No. Our senses may deceive us, our

IO " WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE."

reasonings are oftentimes faulty ; and our deductions are frequently false as our premises are erroneous.

Law students are not, as a rule, easily gulled, nor are they more prone than others to jump at conclusions. Yet in the demonstration arranged for them by their professor they were every one of them deceived ; and trusting to the sight of their eyes were ready to declare under oath to be fact that which they afterwards learned to be false.

Yet in view of this (and such mistakes are being made constantly) men, and especially young men, say when spoken to of the verities of Scripture, " Give us proofs, produce for us some direct evidence ; we are perfectly willing to believe, but we want to see, hear, touch, taste or handle something to which we may attach our faith." Stupendous folly, when it is every day being demonstrated to us that our natural senses are the very things that we cannot trust. Some are colour-blind, and to the sight of such red appears white, and green looks blue. Some have an impaired taste and to them every bitter thing is sweet, and the sweet bitter. To some the finest music is but discordant noise, while to others (as the heathen chief who heard a famous band play in London some years ago) the big drum is the acme of pleasurable sound. I have known of persons to whom the odour of kerosene oil seemed most delightful perfume ! So much for the impaired and perverted senses of fallen man and any real dependence that may be placed upon them.

" Except ye see . . . ye will not believe," was the scathing denunciation of the divine Master,

“ WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE.” II

“ the Author and Finisher of faith,” to the unbelieving generation of His day.

Those hundred or more University students saw, or thought they saw, and were deceived and put to shame like gullible children at the trial of the case staged so cleverly for their undoing, as credible witnesses who were sure because they saw.

How then can you know the certainty of those things in which from a child, perhaps, you have been instructed : the great doctrines of the Bible, such as God’s existence, the creation, man’s fall, the personality of Satan, redemption from sin by Jesus Christ, eternal life for man, the soul’s immortality, heaven, hell and other equally important truths ? Yes, that is the question. How can you know ? by what means may you be sure ?

That you cannot implicitly trust your senses is evident. You may have insisted that to believe a thing it must be demonstrated ; and it has been demonstrated, by a test as fair and full as could be desired, that not one but one hundred clear-headed young men, who were themselves preparing to sift, examine and weigh testimony, could be ludicrously deceived by appearances.

How, then, we repeat, can we know the things of the Bible to be true ? *Can* we know ? or shall we take the banal ground of the agnostic and say, We cannot know, no one can tell, it is impossible to be sure ? We Christians know ; we “ know we have passed from death unto life ” ; “ we know we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ” ; “ I know that my Redeemer liveth,” the believer can say (1 John

12 " WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE."

III. 14 ; 2 Cor. v. 1 ; Job XIX. 25). All this and much more we know ; and we know it beyond the shadow of a doubt. But how ? Well, how was it known by the students finally that it was not the janitor who fired the shot but a man posted for the purpose at a near-by window ? It was *by credible verbal testimony*, the statement of trustworthy men, the word, the assurances of men who they knew would not, in this matter at least, deceive them.

And we believe, not because of visions, revelations, or feelings, nor because by a process of reasoning we have arrived at the conclusion that we may rationally believe, but because GOD, who cannot lie, has spoken ! He has declared these things to be so, and not to believe them would be to make Him a liar,—the extremity of human guilt.

Our faith rests on adequate testimony, the Word of the living God, unchangeable and eternal. And to this the doubter must come if ever he is to arrive at a satisfactory state of mind and heart in reference to the stupendous realities of eternity.

There *are* evidences, on every hand, many and varied and of the very best ; evidences both direct and indirect. The world is full of them, and they may be seen every day ; museums of antiquity contain them ; evidences of the Bible's veracity are writ large on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments and temples ; the ruins of buried cities and the tombs of forgotten kings abound with them, even mummies bearing mute testimony to what the " scripture of truth " declares ; and the spade of the excavator brings to light fresh witnesses every

“ WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE.” 13

year. The natural sciences, astronomy, geology, physiology, anatomy, including even that most exact of all sciences, mathematics, all bear united and harmonious witness to the truth of Scripture, written with “ the finger of God.”

And in the realm of the moral we have evidence multiplied ; at home thousands of men and women reclaimed by the Gospel from lives of degradation, crime and shame ; we see saints suffering from incurable diseases, lying helpless year after year on beds of pain, yet rejoicing in hope and patient in tribulation ; martyrs die triumphant, firm in their confession, preferring torture to deliverance purchased by a denial of their faith ; while in the mission-field not only do we see the power and truth of the Gospel manifested in the regeneration of individual savages, but whole districts, islands and archipelagoes transformed as if by magic through the influences of the circulation and reception of that book called the Bible.

But all this, though wholly adequate as direct testimony to the truth of Christianity, is not presented for your faith. We have a more sure basis for our belief : God, His word, His testimony, as revealed in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. HE speaks, and therefore we believe. It is impossible to be deceived here. It is not necessary to laboriously gather, sift and weigh testimony, or examine witnesses. By the Word of God we *know*.

“ I know whom I have believed and am persuaded,” wrote one who ranked with the foremost thinkers of his day : Paul of “ much learning ” and deepest intellect, yet not faithless, but be-

believing because he had the testimony of Him whose Word is " forever settled in heaven," where shams, deceits and illusions cannot abide, for all there is light and truth and verity.

Yes, " we know." " We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding " (1 John v. 20). He is " the truth," as well as " the way " and " the life," and believing in Him we shall never be confounded or put to shame (Rom. x. 11).

C. K.

A PRAYER.

HOLY Father, in Thy mercy
Hear our anxious prayer,
Keep our loved ones, now far absent,
'Neath Thy care.

Jesus, Saviour, let Thy presence
Be their light and guide ;
Keep, oh, keep them, in their weakness,
At Thy side.

When in sorrow, when in danger,
When in loneliness,
In Thy love look down and comfort
Their distress.

May the joy of Thy salvation
Be their strength and stay ;
May they love and may they praise Thee
Day by day.

I. S. STEPHENSON.

THE OTHER WAR.

NO ; we do not refer to the great war which the Holy Scriptures so clearly predict ; nor have we in view the industrial war which men of affairs seem to think may follow the present strife.

The war of which we are thinking is one that has raged for well nigh two millenniums, and that is destined to continue until our Lord Jesus Christ returns to claim His redeemed people. The Apostle Paul wrote of it as

“ THE GOOD FIGHT,”

and no man had a better claim so to write, for of all the great warriors who have fought for the greatest of all issues, none was greater than he. He had reached the end, he was about to lay down his arms, and to enter into the presence of his Lord, to receive not a laurel wreath, but an incorruptible crown. We can hear the ring of victory in his words as he says :

“I have fought *the* good fight, I have finished *the* course, I have kept *the* faith : henceforth there is laid up for me *the* crown of righteousness, which *the* Lord, *the* righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day : and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing.”—2 TIMOTHY IV. 7-8 (R.V.).

He realized, however, that though he was leaving, the war must go on ; that it would assume greater proportions, that it would become increasingly complicated in its character, that the tactics of the enemy would become more subtle, that some would hold up their hands and be taken captive

(2 Tim. II. 26), and that others, growing weary of the fight, would discard the uniform and desert (2 Tim. IV. 10, 16) ; therefore in handing over the flag to Timothy, his last charge was :—

“ PREACH THE WORD ! ”

(2 Tim. IV. 1, 2). We may be quite sure that this has not been recorded merely in order that we might know what Paul wrote to Timothy ; but that we should each hear ringing down through the ages, in clarion tones, the divine command, addressed to us, “ PREACH THE WORD ! ” Keeping this in mind, let us look, briefly and rapidly, at the Epistle. In chapter I. 6, we find Timothy, and ourselves, called upon to

JOIN THE COLOURS ;

in verse 7 to be fearless in presence of the foe ; in verse 8 to be prepared to rough it ; and in verses 9, 10 to know that the cause for which we are fighting can never be defeated, because it is based upon the unchangeable purpose of God. In chapter II. 1–6 we get four characteristics of a soldier, viz. Strength, Endurance, Separation, and Patience. In verse 8 there is

THE BATTLE CRY ;

it forbids the slightest inclination to retreat ; it banishes absolutely every fear of defeat ; it carries with it the positive assurance of victory. Listen !

“ REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST,

risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to My Gospel ” (R.V.). Our Victorious Leader has engaged, and has vanquished the enemy ; and He will carry His forces to triumph.

THE OTHER WAR.

17

From verses 15 to 26 we learn the secret of keeping "fit" for the fight. Let us, once and for all, rid our minds of the purely ecclesiastical interpretation which has been given to these verses, and which only serves to obscure the real meaning. They refer, not to the assembly of God as such, nor is there any allusion to the sacred feast of the Lord's Supper. The great point is, as verse 21 clearly shows, the moral state necessary for every individual child of God who desires to be a servant "meet for the Master's use," or, to keep to the metaphor, a "good soldier of Jesus Christ." In chapter III. we learn the nature of the opposition that confronts us; and we cannot sufficiently thank God for informing us of it; verses 1-8 call for our most careful and serious consideration. If the beginning of the apostasy was evident in Paul's day, and if it developed fast, as we have no doubt it did, during Timothy's life, it is now approaching the full-blown stage. In home life, in business life, in public life, in the realm of politics, in the affairs of nations, and in things religious, we see all that is here foretold fulfilled to the letter. In verses 10-17 we are instructed as to the kind of weapons required to meet such opposition. First:—

A GODLY LIFE

(ver. 12). The Apostle could point to himself as a pattern of it; and never perhaps has there been a saint so like his Lord, a servant so like his Master, a soldier so like his Leader. His "doctrine" was unassailable because based upon an immovable foundation; his "manner of life"

was formed by it ; it inspired his " purpose " ; sustained his " faith " ; promoted his " long-suffering " ; called forth his " love " ; and led to a display of " patience " closely resembling that of his Lord. Second :—

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

What a weapon ! Inspired of God—deny it, who will—that with which the Lord Jesus Christ overcame Satan ; and with which the people of God overcome him now (see 1 John II. 14-17) ; that which is alone effectual for spoiling the enemy of his prey, and leading them captive to the feet of Jesus.

In chapter IV. 1-6, the Apostle's valedictory message, is

A CALL TO ARMS !

Solemnly, in the Name of divine Persons, Timothy was called,—and we are called—to "*preach the Word.*" Why "*the Word*" ? Because men on every hand are preaching fables. Is this not true to-day ? Men who profess to preach the Word go to the battlefield to tell dying soldiers that their sacrifice for their country has blotted out their past, and has earned for them an entrance to heaven. Before going to the trenches men receive Holy Communion, so that it may prove a means of grace in case of eventualities. These brave fellows are asked to believe that in making the great sacrifice they are following Christ's example, and that they are assisting in His great work for the redemption of the world.

At home we are told that that with which the Church must meet the social and industrial

THE OTHER WAR.

19

problems that will arise when the European war is finished, is the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, based upon Christ's revelation of the fatherhood of God. On the mission field are to be found missionaries (!) who assail the integrity of the Holy Scriptures, and instil scepticism and doubt. The enemy is not employing blatant infidels to-day ; his ranks are filled by men who occupy prominent pulpits, whose names are writ large in religious literature, and who are able to influence those whose hearts are not " established with grace."

How urgent then is the call to "*preach the Word*" in all it's perfection, its purity, and its power. We need to carry the war right into the enemy's camp.

THERE WILL BE CASUALTIES

as chapter III. 12 indicates, but there will be the crown as chapter IV. 8 promises. Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, let us heed the call ; with the battle cry ringing in our ears let us go forth to the fight, and, with life and lip, let us "*preach the Word.*"

When the late Lord Kitchener was raising his great army, one of the most striking of the many appeals was a poster showing the children of a future generation asking their father

"WHAT DID *YOU* DO IN THE GREAT WAR?"

Shall we not ask ourselves, What are we doing in the Other War? There is something for everyone to do ; there is NO ROOM FOR SHIRKERS OR SLACKERS. The time is short ; the work is great ;

the immensity of the privilege and responsibility of those who have the truth proclaiming it cannot be overestimated ; while the honour of being permitted to serve such a glorious Lord is unspeakably great.

TO ARMS ! TO ARMS !! SOLDIERS OF JESUS
CHRIST !!!

To bewildered sinners, puzzled beyond measure by the babel of voices ; to miserable backsliders, led away by the devices of the enemy ; and to the children of God wherever they are to be found,

“ PREACH THE WORD ! ”

W. B. D.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

S.B., Crewe.—Observe that Ezekiel xiv. 21 is a distinct reference to the judgment of God upon Jerusalem *in the days of the prophet*, and we have no doubt whatever that it was literally fulfilled. The same inflictions, however, reappear in Revelation vi., where the Lamb opens the seven-sealed book on high. Revelation vi. deals with the last great crisis in the world's history, which is doubtless very near, but has not arrived yet. There seems no reason why we should regard the beasts of either passage as contending armies, although in Daniel vii. the Gentile powers are viewed morally as “ wild beasts.” Neither Ezekiel xiv. nor Revelation vi. speak of the terrible happening of our own time. (W. W. F.)

DOES GOD CARE ?

THE following instances of God's care for His own (and we could give many, many more), are given in the hope that they may speak to the hearts of some of His similarly tried children, encouraging them in these days of financial pressure to cast all their care on Him, for He careth for them, and also provoke others to love and good works.

While on a visit some distance from home, I went to spend the evening with an aged Christian, one not in affluent circumstances, but one who accounted herself a steward for God in all that she had. During my visit she asked if I knew a Miss G. I replied that I did, and that she had recently returned from London, where she had been staying the winter in the Brompton Hospital for consumption, with the hope that she might be restored to health, but it had been in vain and she had returned worse rather than better.

"I knew her," said my hostess, "from meeting her occasionally at my sister's some years ago. Well, about three weeks since I awoke one morning with the strange impression on me that Miss G. needed money. All the day through I could not shake it off; it came before me again and again, *Miss G.*

needs money. I could not rest till I had sent for Mr. L., who does all these little matters for me as I cannot now write myself. He could not come till after the mail had gone, but next day we sent some help to her."

A few months after this I was sitting by Miss G.'s dying bed, listening to her story of God's faithful unfailing care for her. How during the long weary months in the Brompton Hospital He had sent kind (and hitherto unknown) friends to cheer and minister to her. How He had supplied all her temporal needs without her making her wants known to any.

"And after all my travelling expenses were paid," she continued, "I reached home with still a pound in my pocket. Then two days after, the account came in for medical attendance before leaving home. It was £3, and I only had my pound, so I just knelt down and told the Lord all about it, how I had not the means to pay it, yet I knew it was not His will that I should be in debt. And then *I asked Him that He would enable me by some means or other to meet it.* Three days after that, a cheque for £5 came to me from Mrs. S. (the lady before mentioned), so I paid my account and had plenty to spare, and all these months while I have lain here, help has always been sent me whenever it was needed and from such unexpected sources, too. At first when I had to give up my work, I used to worry and

DOES GOD CARE ?

23

fret ; but," she concluded, " I have never wanted for anything, at least never since I put it all into His hands and left it to Him."

A remarkable fact in connection with this instance of God's care for His children came to light afterwards. I ascertained that it was *on the self-same day* that Miss G. was crying to Him for help to pay her debt that God laid it upon Mrs. S.'s heart to send her money.

" How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend ! "

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The second instance is as follows. A Christian tradesman had got into low circumstances, financially, through no fault of his own. One morning he received word from a commercial traveller that he would call that day fortnight for payment of his account of five pounds. The poor tradesman felt sorely troubled, for he saw no hope of meeting the bill. Each morning he knelt down and prayed God to provide him with the money in some way or other, but the last day of the fortnight came, and no five pounds were forthcoming. In bitter disappointment he knelt down and said : " Lord, I did not think Thou wouldst have disappointed me like this."

As he rose, he saw, through the open door, the traveller coming towards the house. Again he knelt and repeated what he had said before.

He was perplexed, though his confidence in God remained unshaken.

He waited for the knock, but none came. He looked down the street, but the traveller was not to be seen.

An hour later an old Christian farmer from the country entered the shop. " Mr. ——," he said, " a fortnight ago the Lord laid it on my heart to bring you five pounds. I have put off coming, for one cause and another, but here they are."

We can picture the tradesman's joy in finding that God had *not* failed him, and that his prayer had been heard, and his faith rewarded. The traveller called the next day, full of apologies. " I was nearly at your house yesterday," he said, " when I saw a fire in the distance. I rushed off to it, and forgot all about you ! "

How wonderful are God's ways ! He not only honours the faith of His children, but *tests* it, and at the same time strengthens their confidence in Him. " He knoweth them that trust in Him."

" Oh, may we then, Lord, ever,
While in this vale of tears,
Look up to Thee, and never
Give way to anxious fears.
For Thou wilt not forsake us
Though we are oft to blame ;
Oh, let Thy love then make us
True to Thy faith and Name ! "

F. A.

SHEPHERD-CARE.

“The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want.”

PSALM XXIII. I.

THE writer of this beautiful psalm, David, had himself been a shepherd. He knew what was involved in the care of sheep. In speaking to Saul (1 Sam. xvii. 34), he showed how he had felt the heavy responsibility of keeping his father's flock. Trusting in the living God he had slain both a lion and a bear to deliver from them the lamb that was in danger. In the lowly path of his duty to his father in caring for these defenceless sheep and lambs he had proved faithful.

His forefather Jacob was also a shepherd. In speaking to Laban (Gen. xxxi. 38-40) he showed how he had cared for the flock, bearing the whole charge and responsibility of it. Through sleepless nights, exposed both to heat and to cold, he had proved faithful and had presented the flock before his master entire.

David's heart turns to Jehovah, viewing himself as a simple, defenceless sheep, and he rejoices that he is in the care of the Lord. “Jehovah is *my* shepherd.” It is as though he would say: As I cared for my father's sheep so does Jehovah care for me. They were too foolish to know what was for their own

good, but I looked out for them the greenest pastures of tenderest grass and there I caused them to feed. If in journeying they knew not their own strength, I measured it and led them gently. If foes threatened they could not defend themselves, but I protected them. I watched over them night and day so that they had no need for anxiety or care. And all this and more is Jehovah to me. I am as foolish and as defenceless as any sheep, but HE cares for me.

The Lord Jesus when here upon earth said, "I am the Good Shepherd." God's people upon earth had been exposed to many dangers. Many had taken in hand to lead them, and had only proved themselves to be such shepherds as those of whom God speaks in Ezekiel xxxiv. They had eaten the fat and clothed themselves with the wool; they had enriched themselves at the expense of the flock, but the flock they had not fed. The man whose eyes the Lord had opened was deliberately cast out by them when he confessed Jesus as a prophet of God. But their cruel action, proof of their rebellion against God, only served to put him in the company of his gracious Benefactor, the true Shepherd of the sheep.

All God's people are now counted as His sheep. They may not be of the Jewish fold, but as believers upon the Son of God they form one flock with one Shepherd. For them

SHEPHERD-CARE.

27

all hangs upon the care of that Shepherd. He has received them as given to Him of the Father, and He holds them as His own sheep, in community of interest with the Father. He brings them into fullness of blessing, and in spite of all the enemy can plan and accomplish, in spite also of all the feebleness of the sheep, He holds them for His own heart and for His Father who gave them to Him.

How sweetly then, and with what depth of meaning we may take up David's words and say, "The Lord is my shepherd!" And if such be the case we can add in the confidence of faith, "I shall not want." Want cannot be known under such shepherd-care as His. The world is one vast place of need, as was the desert through which Israel passed. But in the company and under the care of the Son of God, objects of His love and that of the Father, need is unknown. Our *circumstances* may be trying, deeply trying. But when the heart is most affected by them, turning to the Lord it finds such rich compensation in Him that it exclaims, "I shall not want." Only one thing is *really* essential to my happiness, and that is His company, for all I need is found in Him, and His company is my constant portion.

The Lord is thus known individually, as it is said, "*my* Shepherd." Doubtless He is a

shepherd to others, and the more we know His care for ourselves the more ready are we to rejoice that others share it, yet we begin thus with ourselves. He is *my* Shepherd. The believer who is most feeble may *rejoice* in this ; indeed the very consciousness of his feebleness causes him to recline more fully and constantly in His love. When it is a question of our fellowship in the presence of God our portion is the same, and in the enjoyment of it we embrace in our thoughts all the children of God. When we consider our pathway in this world, that of each one differs from every other. Then how sweet it is to know that whatever it may be, we are known individually to Him and are the objects of His unceasing care.

Then again as we consider the present divided state of believers here on earth and feel that we are deprived of the care of many of God's servants, what an inexpressible comfort it is to turn to Him who is unfailing, and exclaim, THE LORD is my Shepherd. Gladly would we avail ourselves of the help of others if walking themselves in the truth and so able truly to help us ; but if deprived of all, we rejoice that we are under His eye and hand, even as we are loved by His heart.

May each beloved Christian reader rejoice more and more in the unceasing shepherd-care of our gracious Lord !

J. R.

DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

A Bible Reading on Romans v. 1-11; vi. and xii.

In order to follow the apostle's line of argument in the Epistle to the Romans we should notice that the first section of the epistle, the *doctrinal*, comprises the first eight chapters. This section is sub-divided into two, the first part ending with verse 11 of chapter v. The second section of the epistle, the *dispensational*, runs on from the end of chapter viii. to the beginning of chapter xii. The third section, the *practical*, beginning with chapter xii., runs on to the end.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

BEFORE we speak of what our practice should be like, it is very important that we should be established in the grace of God. Nothing seems to me more mischievous than for people who are not true Christians at all to be exhorted to lead a Christian life and practise Christian virtues, as if anybody could become a Christian by trying to lead the life of one, or by endeavouring to practise day by day what he believes to be Christian virtues. To live a Christian life you must first *be* a Christian. Hence the importance of being established at the start in the grace of God.

Let us therefore look first at the opening verses of chapter v. Notice how frequently God Himself is spoken of. First of all, we have peace with God; then in the second verse we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; in verse 5 we read about the love of God; in verse 10 we are reconciled to God; and in verse 11 we joy

in God. The whole passage is big, so to speak, with God Himself in these various connections.

Perhaps it is not necessary for me to dwell on peace with God, the first great Christian blessing. It is the privilege of every believer in the Lord Jesus to be in the enjoyment of it. I do not mean that every believer *is* in the enjoyment of it, though he should be, as it is his undoubtedly through grace. Peace with God, let me say, has nothing whatever to do with the circumstances through which believers pass. Our circumstances differ. Sometimes they are of a pleasing nature ; sometimes they are most trying.

It is the *peace of God* which passeth all understanding which is connected with our circumstances, but not so *peace with God*, of which our passage speaks. This is connected with the question of our acceptance with God. Having been justified on the principle of faith, what flows naturally from that is that we have peace with God. Our consciences have been awakened to the fact that we deserve condemnation, but through the work of Christ we are in the very opposite of a state of condemnation. If God condemns the sinner, he is condemned indeed ; if God justifies him, then is he justified indeed.

Now a justified person is a person whom God holds to be righteous, and against whom no charge can ever be successfully laid. If then

we are justified on the principle of faith by the grace of God, on account of the precious blood of Jesus, the natural and inevitable result is that we are perfectly at peace with God. We know very well that if *God* has justified us, we have nought to fear.

There is a further thing in verse 5. We read here of the love of God shed abroad in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit given to him. We become sensible that we are loved by God. It is the love *of God* that is shed abroad in our hearts, not love *to God*. No doubt the Holy Spirit does lead us to love God. Christians are those that love God, but this passage speaks, not of the love that is begotten in our hearts Godward, but God's own love to us. God loved us when there was nothing lovable in us, and this love of God, immense, immeasurable, is shed abroad in the heart of the believer, so that it becomes a great and a grand reality.

Passing on to verse 9, we read that "much more then, being now justified by His blood (the meritorious cause of it), *we shall be saved* from wrath through Him." Sometimes in the Bible salvation is spoken of as an accomplished thing ; sometimes as a process going on, and sometimes as a thing that is still future. There is wrath coming, a day of wrath. We shall be saved from it. The One in the power of whose blood we have been justified, who is now living

up there at the right hand of God, will take care that we shall be sheltered, and that the storms that are connected with the day of wrath shall never burst upon those who have been justified by His blood.

Moreover, as verse 10 teaches us, having been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we shall be saved by His life. That is, by the life of the Lord Jesus in heaven. How little we think of it : His present ministry, saving us all along the road, a continuous salvation. He lives to bring us safely through.

We reach the highest point in verse 11. *We joy in God.* Beyond this we shall never go in heaven or on earth. How wonderful must that grace be that can so deal with us, put away our sins, overcome the natural enmity of our hearts, and set us at rest in God's presence, so that we can joy in God, make our boast in God, triumph in God, exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ !

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Another line of teaching comes before us in Chapter VI. Here we learn that we have died with Christ. We read of two masters, sin on one side and righteousness on the other. SIN is the master that we formerly served, says the apostle. We were bondmen to sin. But we have died to our old master, and we are to reckon ourselves always and everywhere to

have died to him, in that we have died with Christ.

The apostle is led into this strain of argument to meet the objections that people raised in his day, and that many raise in our days, to the gospel of the grace of God. The apostle has shown in the end of chapter v. that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and that if sin reigned unto death, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. "Oh," says somebody, "if that is your doctrine, then a very just deduction to be drawn is that we may continue in sin that God's grace may abound yet more and more."

"No," replies the apostle, "no such deduction may be drawn." He does not weaken the doctrine of grace, but he brings in this other fact, the fact that we have died with Christ to our old master, sin, and it no longer has authority over us. We have come under the authority of God and of righteousness.

Just a final word on the practical section. In chapter xii. the apostle says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." I think this part joins on to the doctrine of chapter vi. First of all, we are to *present*. The beseeching is based on the mercies of God, some of which I have been seeking to set before you. Now we are besought to present our body, that which we have used as a vehicle for the doing of our own will, to be used henceforth

34 THE WRITING ON THE GROUND.

for purposes that will serve God's will and His glory. This is to be, on our part, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, our intelligent service. It is not to be a blind and unintelligent act the meaning of which we do not know. We are to own now God's claims over us, and day by day to glorify Him in our bodies. That is the first thing.

The second is : Do not be conformed to this world, the vast system of things that is around us, and in which God has no place, where man is the central and commanding figure, and where man's will is dominant. We know what it is. We are not to be conformed to it but to be transformed, not by a mere mechanical process, but by the renewing of our mind, the inward renewal connected with the Holy Ghost. The result of this will be that we shall prove in our daily lives what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. We shall work it out, no longer doing our own wills, but God's will being that which we seek to do ; and all being based on *the mercies of God*.

W. B.

THE WRITING ON THE GROUND.

WHY did the Lord Jesus stoop and write upon the ground ?

That simple action to me is invested with

THE WRITING ON THE GROUND. 35

wonderful significance. What did He write? Did anyone read the writing? No action of our blessed Lord was ever purposeless, so there was divine meaning in the stooping and the writing. We cannot read what was written but we can read between the lines. He was God, the mighty Maker of heaven and earth; all power was His, to create and to destroy. Before Him stands a trembling sinner whom the law condemns to death. And clamorous voices retell her sin, and shout the punishment she merits. But the God of Sinai, the maker and the giver of the law, in whose presence she is, stoops and writes with His finger on the ground. The earth on which those blessed fingers wrote was the sphere where He was acting in perfect truth and grace. Not now does His fiery chariot make Mount Sinai smoke and burn, but He who came then, with thunder and lightning His attendants and the herald trumpet sounding, is now the Man Christ Jesus, and in His grace He has stooped from heaven to earth to save the lost. To be the sinner's Friend He comes down to the very dust of earth, and would write upon the sands of time the story of eternal love.

He wrote on Bethlehem the story of His birth; on Nazareth the story of His manhood; on Capernaum the story of His mighty works; on the lonely mountain sides the story of His prayers; on Olivet the story of His

36 THE WRITING ON THE GROUND.

tears ; on Calvary the story of His finished work ; on the throne of God the story of His glorious triumph. He wrote on human hearts the story of the peace and love of God. He wrote on the ground of human need the omnipotence of God. He wrote it on the brow of the dead whom He raised to life, on the eyes of the blind to whom He gave sight, on the ears of the deaf, and on the body of the leper. He wrote it on the heart of the woman of Samaria at Sychar's well, and on Zacchæus' life, and on the heart of the weeping widow at Nain.

The beautiful silence of that blameless life amazed angels and confounded devils. The Lord of Sinai was here, Jehovah-Jesus, but here with sweet and blessed words of invitation to the lost ; here going about doing good ; here with open arms bidding the weary come to Him and rest ; here with the little children in His arms blessing them ; here the Friend of publicans and sinners ; here to weep over the unbelief of those He came to save ; here to pray in midnight hours on mountain side and in the lonely desert for those who hated Him without a cause ; here to write upon the sorrows of humanity the compassion of the living God ; here to give expression on the sands of time to the mysteries of everlasting purpose and love.

Now while the law thunders out the doom

THE WRITING ON THE GROUND. 37

of the sinner, the Saviour writes upon the ground. To all the legalists—the Pharisees—who clamour about the law to-day, He says, “*Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone.*”

He lifted Himself up upon the cross, saying, “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.*” And as the woman stands before the uplifted face of Christ she hears Him speak the words which drive her enemies away and leave her alone with Jesus. The sinner stands by the cross of Christ, and by faith he can there see every enemy overcome and destroyed. He can hear the voice of forgiving love say, “*Sinner, where are thine accusers gone? doth no man condemn thee?*” “No, Lord,” the ransomed sinner cries. “*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.*”

Christ at the right hand of God, the sinner's substitute, the sinner's Saviour, is an answer to every charge of Satan. The enemy says, “This man has been a blasphemer and a drunkard, and immoral. He has broken the law; he is condemned by the law.” But the sinner, fleeing to the sanctuary of the cross, says, “I know I have broken the law, I know I am a sinner, I know I am condemned, and justly, too; but *He died for me, HE DIED FOR ME! ‘He bore my sins in His own body on the tree.’*” And the voice of divine pity says to

38 THE WRITING ON THE GROUND.

God, on behalf of the sinner, " Father, forgive them, they know not what they do " ; and to the believing sinner Jesus says, " FEAR NOT, I HAVE REDEEMED THEE, THOU ART MINE. I HAVE LOVED THEE WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE." And the shout of the triumph of the ransomed one rings out, " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? "

" We know no condemnation,
No law that speaks despair ;
And Satan's accusation,
With Christ we need not fear."

And again the blessed Master stooped to write upon the ground, when they laid Him in the grave. He stooped to write emancipation for all, "*who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, and He death, by dying, slew. He wrote His glory in the heavens when He ascended into the glory of God. And the golden story of a Saviour's love is written on the fleshy tablets of human hearts to-day. The awful terrors of mount Sinai, the thunderings and lightnings and voices, are gone for ever ; and the vision of Calvary dominates the life, and the love of Christ constrains us to cry, "*He died for me !*"
HE DIED FOR ME ! "

H. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H.D.J. asks: How far does the great commission of Mark xvi. 15 apply to *all* Christians? And in view of the failure of Christian *men* to obey it, how far are *women* justified in seeking to carry it out?

We have no doubt whatever that the great commission applies to *all* Christians without distinction of sex. Christian women and Christian men are equally responsible for the carrying of it out; and this being apprehended, each will be so actively engaged in the particular bit of service that the Lord has put in her or his hand, that there will not be time for any sister either to be thinking of the alleged failure of her fellow believer, or to be adding the service of her perhaps apparently less active co-worker to her own.

It has to be remembered that "preach the Gospel" is not by any means limited to public speaking. Paul—the prince of preachers—"disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and *in the market daily* with them that met with him" (Acts xvii. 17). He testified "publicly, and *from house to house*" (Acts xx. 20). We want to lay under tribute every means open to us of carrying the Gospel to our fellow-creatures. In this, Christian women have ever played a conspicuous and splendid part. We rejoice as we think of the devoted band who have gone forth to the remote and dark places of

40 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

the earth ; the army of women who instruct the young from week to week ; those who visit, write gospel letters, circulate evangelical literature by hand and by post, and the tens of thousands who in their daily toil, by their walk and conversation, " adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things " (Titus II. 10). We do not think our responsibility will be discharged so much by public preaching as by the desire and determination of every individual Christian man and woman to bring the Gospel under the notice of every one within their reach. Let us begin at home, look to our relatives, intimate friends, and casual acquaintances, remember our neighbours, think of the souls of those with whom we associate in pursuit of our daily calling, and in short speak to, and live before, every creature with whom we come in contact. It is for each one to make certain that she or he is fulfilling her or his part of the great commission, and if all do this, its accomplishment will be brought appreciably nearer.

(W. B. D.)

ANON.—There is no particular significance in the use of the word "certain" in passages such as Acts VIII. 36 ; IX. 19, etc. The word might, with equal faithfulness to the Greek text, be translated "some."

" Fail not to stoop, for only so can you and others rise.
 So many leave the little things while gazing at the skies.
 Bend down to do the lowly acts which seem of no avail,
 You cannot well do greater things if you in little fail."

NEARER.

“ Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

ROMANS XIII. 11.

MANY of us can look back with thankful hearts to the day when, compelled by the grace that sought and found us, we turned to God and trusted in the Saviour. Others perhaps cannot fix the exact date of their conversion, but this is a matter of little moment, provided we have really believed the gospel of our salvation.

But we can all look forward with joyful anticipation to the fast-approaching hour when our salvation will be complete, spirit, soul and body, and we shall be translated to our eternal home.

Let us think what that blessed consummation means. We are living in a world of sin, and strife, and bitter sorrow. The gaunt spectre of death flits from place to place, on land and sea, and the earth is one vast sepulchre. Thousands of men in their prime, in the full vigour of early manhood only a few months ago, are now blinded, maimed, stricken in mind or body, and none can look on them unmoved. Women with brave but broken hearts are silently grieving over the loss of husbands, brothers, sons, and lovers. Many

XXXIV.

D

a father's pet will never welcome "Daddy" home, and maidens numberless will never see their "boys" again.

And sorrow such as this is not confined to "the world," for Christians have their share of it, and it has been a testing time for the faith of some. To such we say: "Look up, dear sorrowing hearts, for our SALVATION is near at hand." The time of release is nigh, the tears shall be wiped away, and we shall dwell in that eternal home, "where sin, nor want, nor woe, nor death can come."

There are other matters, too, suggested by our text. We have often had to lament our coldness, our indifference, our unfaithfulness, but we shall soon be where these things are unknown, and every heart will beat true to the Lord Jesus, and every voice be lifted up in praise to Him. Temptations too will no longer beset us, nor straitened circumstances hamper us. Our dull vision will be clear, and we shall "know as we are known."

But if we have hitherto been slothful, let us take heed to the exhortation: "It is now high time to awake out of sleep." Let us shake off our drowsiness, and seize the fleeting opportunities. Need, need, deep need there is on every hand, and our resources are infinite. More zeal, more fervour, more divine enthusiasm, more spiritual activity, should mark us, for our salvation is NEARER, ever draw-

“ I DON'T CARE WHAT BECOMES OF ME.” 43

ing nearer. The soul-sustaining food of holy truth awaits and tempts our spiritual appetite ; the “ sleeping-sickness ” from which so many of God's children suffer demands an instant remedy ; the sin, the sorrow, the hapless lot of the poor dupes of this world's god appeal to us for the pity, pardon, and power that we can tell them of in the precious gospel story.

Awake, look up, rejoice, for our salvation is NEARER than when we believed.

The Home beyond the shadows
Hath neither pain nor tears :
But through its cloudless regions
The light of life appears—
Dispelling every sorrow,
Removing every care,
And giving rest eternal
To all who enter there.

W. B. W.

“ I DON'T CARE WHAT BECOMES OF ME.”

A word of encouragement for those who pray for and deal with apparently hopeless cases of sinners hardened in sin.

ON September 5th the news reached London of the loss of H.M.S. *Pathfinder*. Torpedoed off Harwich, she sank, and two hundred and fifty men perished with her.

Two hundred and fifty souls hurried into eternity ! This was the outspoken burden on

the real heart of the nation as the tragedy became known. What about those souls? Where are they now?

Could any message from the other side have been received telling of their eternal safety, half the weight of that burden would have vanished. Here, then, just such a message has come across the waves from the lost ship. No apology seems necessary for passing on the story of one of the crew who, only shortly before the disaster, found the path of life that leads to eternal joy.

As far as his soul was concerned, our hero began his career in anything but a hopeful manner. “The things that are not seen” had no apparent place in his outlook. In which fact there lies an infinite encouragement.

As a boy, not only was he the despair of his schoolmaster and neighbours, but even his own parents could do nothing with him. For some time it was his unpleasant habit to appear at the Sunday-school apparently for the sole purpose of making his presence felt by the most outrageous conduct. It was often a question between his teacher and the superintendent as to how long his disturbances ought to be endured; and there is no denying the fact that when he finally took his inglorious career into his own hands, and disappeared, the neighbourhood sighed with relief.

Years went by, and no word came from the

BECOMES OF ME."

45

troublesome boy. Then one Sunday, about a month before the war broke out, he returned on this wise. The vicar, according to his custom, was holding an open-air service. "He careth for you" was his text. Twice over, in a peculiarly ringing voice, he repeated the four wonderful words; and, valiantly trying to ignore a low whistle almost in his ear, he went on to tell the old, old story of Divine love and pity.

"Remember this, however careless you may be about the future of your soul, God cares what becomes of you. He cares so much that He sent His only Son to die, so that He might make a way from earth to heaven for those who have sinned."

In simple words like these the preacher endeavoured to arrest the heart and conscience of the crowd around him, and all the while the whistling grew louder and more insistent, till it merged at last into a definite song: "I don't care what becomes of me."

Obliged to turn round at this, the vicar saw that the disturbing element was a young blue-jacket, with "*H.M.S. Pathfinder*" on his cap. Beneath the gilt letters, in spite of added years and altered dress, the vicar recognized the features of his old unruly scholar. As he had gone, so had he returned, precisely the same wild, reckless, audacious spirit that in the past had created so much trouble.

Delighted at having attracted attention to himself, our blue-jacket came back to his charge with renewed vigour. “ I don't care what becomes of me,” he chanted ; “ I don't care what becomes of me ” ; and this time he accompanied his song with the fantastic steps of the hornpipe.

The vicar, full of concern at such flagrant behaviour, dismissed the spoiled meeting, and before the sailor could make his escape, he grasped him by the arm and led him away. Once clear of the crowd, he began to reason with him on his behaviour ; but the only response to his appeal was the same refrain : “ I don't care what becomes of me.”

“ Do you care about nothing ? ” he asked at length. “ Wouldn't you care if you knew you must die to-night ? ”

“ Not I,” was the determined rejoinder ; and again the song began : “ I don't care what becomes of me ! ”

Feeling that words were useless, the vicar turned sadly away. A second thought came to him. “ Wait a moment,” he said, and from his pocket he produced a little book, on the back of which he wrote in large, clear letters : “ IF I DIE TO-NIGHT I SHALL GO TO H——.” Then he handed it to the sailor.

“ If you really do not care what becomes of your soul,” he said, “ before you go to bed to-night finish writing that last word, and then

BECOMES OF ME."

47

sign your name to it. Only remember there are *two ways* in which that last word can be spelt."

Absolutely unsobered, the man put the little book into his jumper, and swaggered down the street, singing defiantly : " I don't care what becomes of me."

The vicar went his way, slowly and sadly, wondering if he had been wise in what he had done ; and praying with his whole heart and soul that somehow or other the rebellious young life might be transformed by the grace of God. To tell the truth, there was not much faith about that prayer ; but it is not always according to a man's faith that answers are bestowed. The very next morning the answer came. At the eight o'clock service, who should be in the church but the disturber of the previous evening ! At the close of the service, a very subdued, humbled man made his way down the aisle, and followed the vicar into the vestry. He wasted no time on preliminaries.

" I am utterly miserable," he volunteered with a shudder. " I couldn't go to sleep last night. I couldn't finish that last word, for I do care what becomes of me ; and I know where I should go, if I died now."

There was no need for the servant of God to point out his utter unfitness for heaven. Sin lay like a heavy burden on the man's mind :

sin that deserved punishment ; sin that must keep him for ever outside the Golden City where “ nought that defileth can ever enter in.” The very idea of such a character as he expecting admission there drew from him a bitter laugh.

“ If I died to-night, I should go to hell,” he said miserably.

“ But Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners from hell,” answered the vicar triumphantly. “ It was because He knew the horrors of that awful place that He died to deliver us from it.”

Glancing down at the ribbon on the man's cap, which was revolving nervously in his weather-beaten hands, he went on : “ The Lord Jesus is our Path-finder. He found a plan by which He could make a path for sinners from earth to heaven. It cost Him His very life to make that way ; but He thought it worth while to die in our stead, and open the gate of heaven to all believers. Listen to this : ‘ I am the Way,’ says the Saviour Himself. ‘ No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’ You see, He Himself is the Way that leads to heaven, and the wonderful part is that ‘ whosoever will ’ may come to Him.”

The sailor did not speak, but the anxiety on his face deepened. “ I do care what becomes of me ” was written all over it.

BECOMES OF ME."

49

"Here is a comforting verse," went on the vicar in dead earnest: "'CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.'

'He died that you might be forgiven,
He died to make you good,
That you might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.'

"You used to sing that when you were a little boy, do you remember?"

Not all at once, but bit by bit the man's countenance cleared. By the grace of God, and the comfort of the Spirit, he gradually saw that faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is all that God requires from sinners for admission into His family and His home. After a few broken words of humble thankful prayer, the forgiven sailor went on his way rejoicing. Two days later he appeared again. This time he came to say good-bye. His whole attitude was expressive of the miraculous change that had come over him. He hesitatingly asked whether, before joining his ship, he might be allowed to come to the Lord's table and take his place with those who loved their Saviour. Being satisfied that he was dealing with one who did most earnestly repent and was heartily sorry for his misdoings, and by the grace of God did intend from henceforth to lead a new life walking in God's holy ways, the vicar granted his request.

50 "I DON'T CARE WHAT BECOMES OF ME."

The service over, there was only time for a last handshake, a last "God bless you," and the boy went off to rejoin his ship.

For just one month after the outbreak of war the *Pathfinder* took her share in guarding the coast. For just one month that young servant of Jesus Christ was given the opportunity to tell his shipmates what God had done for him; and then in one moment he was summoned into the presence of his Maker.

Before the casualty lists were published, his friend and vicar seemed to know by instinct that his old scholar's name would appear amongst the dead, and he longed with unutterable longing to know how that last month had been lived. Had the change been real? Had his life altered with his faith? It was only a day or two before an answer was sent that silenced all questionings.

A survivor from the lost ship came himself to tell the vicar the very things he longed to know. Making no secret of the miracle that had changed him, the once godless sailor had humbly endeavoured to tell his comrades the good news of salvation for sinners. The change in his life was so striking that his words were listened to with real interest; and several of his shipmates were led to look to the Saviour as their only hope of salvation.

Selected.

“MARKED ‘URGENT.’”

A WORD TO THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST.

IN the unprecedented conflict that raged about Verdun a company of French infantry, with a machine-gun section, held the Fort of Vaux several days against overwhelming odds. Communication was maintained between these heroic troops and the rear by means of couriers, sent usually in pairs because of the great risk ; if one was killed the other might get through.

One of these daring messengers appeared before his Colonel breathless, bespattered with mud and bleeding profusely. He had in the performance of his duty passed through a terrible “drum fire,” which in its intensity tears up the ground until it looks like a ploughed field. Saluting, he presented the message.

“However did you get through?” asked the officer, wonderingly.

“Colonel,” said he, “I don’t know ; I only noticed that the envelope was marked ‘URGENT!’”

And you, ye messengers of God, have ye not a task assigned you fraught with the utmost danger and demanding a courage infinitely greater than any born of patriotism or desire for military distinction? Death threatens,

yea, “ I die daily,” said one who of all heaven’s couriers was the model and peer ; Satan’s “ drum fire ” falls everywhere about you, in the foreign field, and throughout the homeland as well. But I have in mind especially those men and women called of God to represent Him in “ the regions beyond.” Having spent a considerable fraction of my life abroad, beyond the favoured pale of evangelical Christendom, I know whereof I speak. The temptations, the almost constant fire of criticism, the physical dangers, the threatened destruction of health, the depression of spirit, the scarcely veiled contempt of your fellow-countrymen, the indifference of those to whom you are sent, the coldness of friends at home : all this and much more is what makes filling the post of gospel messenger in the regions beyond an exceedingly trying task. Entire batteries of the enemy seem at times to be turned upon such a one ; he appears often to be passing through the midst of of a fearful “ drum fire,” as the infernal regions belch against him their horrible vomit of venom and hate. Ten thousand circumstances appear at times to combine to cast him down, or nullify his testimony, or turn him back to the more comfortable rear whence he has been sent.

It is not therefore strange that a very large percentage of those who go forth to the foreign

field (Latin America, to a marked degree) make shipwreck, either in body or in mind, while others, discouraged or incapacitated, return home. Nothing but the special grace of God and mercy from the Lord can enable one to endure, and see that the message is delivered.

But this mercy and grace are all on the divine side ; on our part there must be the purpose of heart and the ever-present remembrance that the message entrusted to us is “ marked ‘ urgent.’ ” The time is short, the Lord is coming, and in many instances the missionary feels it must be “ now or never.” Such is the scarcity of labourers in the dark corners of the earth that he knows at times that he must either get his message through at once or it will, in all human probability, never be delivered at all—a failure fearful to contemplate.

And the messenger has no choice between unfaithfulness on the one hand, and on the other an honest and self-abnegating attempt to get his message through.

The heroic couriers of Verdun were not conscripted for their almost death-inviting service ; all were volunteers. But once having offered themselves to the task they were expected to either do it or die. And the servant of the Lord in the “ regions beyond ” was not forced into the ranks of His special messengers ;

but once commissioned for the service he has no further choice ; it is with him now as it was with that greatest and typical herald of the Cross : “ Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel ! ” And his mission, like that of the “ King’s business ” of old time, *requires haste*. It is the spirit of “ *Run, speak to that young man.* ” “ Go out *quickly*, ” read the divine orders. His duty demands the utmost dispatch in its discharge. It is with him as it was with those messengers of good tidings in the gate of Samaria. “ If we tarry till the morning light some mischief will come upon us, ” or, as the margin reads, “ we shall find punishment ” (2 Kings VII. 9).

Let the couriers of Christ then in the foreign field be *toujours prêts*—always ready—and prepared for the worst. Your assignment is no sinecure. You must expect calumny from enemies, suspicion from neutrals, misunderstanding from friends, ingratitude from converts, jealousy, envy and intrigue from “ false brethren unawares brought in. ”

Nor is your health or even life secure ; in some portions of the battle-field they are almost certain to be lost. You are not promised exemption from physical evils nor from an untimely grave. Your only stay is the knowledge that your life is in His hands who has commanded you to go. He from

ETERNAL SECURITY.

55

whom you have received your commission is above all and you are "immortal till your work is done." A Martin, a Hannington, a Williams fell even in the first advance of their service to their heavenly "King and country." And you have no promise of a different fate ; you have only to obey orders, to get through with your message in that sector of the battle-field to which you have been assigned, and to remember that your communication is, in capitals, and with double emphasis, marked "URGENT!!"

Read carefully, and not once nor twice,
2 Timothy II. 10. C. K.

ETERNAL SECURITY.

"He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (PHIL. I. 6).

"JOHN, if you were to die now, where should you go?" asked an elderly Christian of a young man.

"To heaven, praise the Lord," replied John, brightening up.

"What is your ground for saying so?"

"That Christ died for me and that His blood has cleansed me from all sin."

"Are you *sure* you are trusting to nothing else but what Christ has done for you, to take you to heaven?"

"Quite sure," said John.

"And now, what about the future," continued his questioner, "say, in twenty years' time, shall you be saved then?"

"Yes, I shall be saved then," said John, "that is," he added, "if I am going on then as I am going on now."

"But if you are not going on then as you are going on now, what then?"

"Well, of course, if I should get away from God, and fall into sin, and die like that, I should be lost!"

"Then what Christ has done for you is not sufficient to take you to heaven. It requires something of *yours* as well, your going on as you are going on, now."

The young man was silent. "Until that moment," he said afterwards, "I thought Christ had done His part by saving me, and now I must do my part by keeping saved."

That terrible possibility—"getting away from God, falling into sin, dying like that, and being lost," had often troubled John's mind, but their conversation had revealed to him the faulty link in the chain of his faith. By its means he was led to see the eternal security of the believer in Christ, and that the sinner's salvation is entirely Christ's work. All that he (John) had had to do had been to turn in repentance to God and accept the salvation

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 57

which Christ had secured for him by His atoning death for him on Calvary's cross.

John also saw that as a child of God nothing could sever that relationship. God might chasten him severely if he "fell into sin," but he would be just as much God's child after as before. And as he realized his blessings as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, John greatly rejoiced.

Christ says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they *shall never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

"My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John x. 28, 29). F. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

K. (MASSACHUSETTS).—You want to know what we think of Billy Sunday and his huge meetings, his methods and his converts. We are glad that we are not called upon to pronounce judgment upon any who take the place of servants of Christ. He whom they profess to serve and who knows the hearts and searches the motives of all is the One to whom they must give account. But as to actions and methods of work, we have to test them by Scripture. Measured by this standard we fear the ways and means that seem characteristic of Mr. Sunday's campaigns come far, far

58 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

short. For one thing, his compromising attitude towards Unitarians during his visit last year to the chief city of your State is direct disobedience to the Word of God. Referring to a celebrated Unitarian preacher, Mr. Sunday said: "*We may differ about the deity of Jesus, but we shall not quarrel.*" That is, he would not renounce friendship with one guilty of debasing and insulting his Lord! At the close of the meeting where he made this statement he greeted the Unitarian ministers present *with hearty handshakes*. How does this "charitable" attitude appear to you, in view of the solemn injunction of the Second Epistle of John, verses 10 and 11?

You refer to the "truly wonderful results" of Mr. Sunday's campaigns. But are you in a position to estimate these? A Christian in Kansas City writes: "Billy Sunday held a meeting here five years ago. I was in the meeting, listened to his preaching and studied his methods, and in five years I have had opportunity to study the results, and can truly yet sadly say, that that great humanly planned and humanly conducted revival was *the most disastrous meeting in its effect upon the spiritual life of our city of anything we have ever had here.*"

Another thing much to be deprecated in Mr. Sunday's preaching, is the levity with which he speaks of the most solemn subjects. If you refer to a copy of the *Boston Journal* of November 14th, 1916, you will see that in the course of his address to the Unitarians, "the best laugh of the afternoon came when Billy consigned the unrepentant sinner straight to perdition, Billy

himself joining in the mirth." To our mind this is too awful for words.

We are not denying that a great deal that Mr. Sunday preaches is sound gospel truth, nor that sinners are converted at his meetings. When we were lately in the city of Baltimore, a good brother in whose judgment we have every confidence assured us that he personally knew of persons thus converted, persons among whom he had been holding weekly meetings for the study of the Scriptures ever since Mr. Sunday's visit there. But God is sovereign and works as it pleases Him. We are not sovereign, but subjects: subjects to Christ as our Lord and called to walk in subjection to God's holy Word.

C. E.—Your question as to the meaning of the Lord's words in John xv. 2 has been answered more than once in these pages. But the difficulty is a constantly recurring one, and it is well that once again we should examine the passage. Observe that the Lord had just previously been speaking of "the prince of this world." In Him, the evil one would find nothing: nothing to work upon, nothing to give him a foothold, nothing on which to base the slightest hope of success in his terrible purposes. But could the same be said of the little band of disciples with whom the Lord had surrounded Himself? Was there not in *all* of them, even the best, something which savoured of evil? And was not one of that chosen band the very son of perdition? He had just gone out, out into the night of thick, murky darkness. The minds of the remaining eleven were naturally

60 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

bewildered. What was the explanation of it all? Well, here we have it. The barren, fruitless branch was taken away, as every such branch would be, even though it had stood in a place in relation to the true Vine as near and intimate as that in which Judas had been. The end of such branches, when cast forth and withered, is to be burned. Could such a thing as this be predicated of the true believer? Surely not.

Nor must we imagine that the only form of fruit-bearing is the winning of souls for Christ. This is but one form of fruitfulness, and it is the privilege of Christians to be fruitful in *every* good work. For this the Apostle prayed, on behalf of the saints at Colosse. There may be, and are, varying measures of fruitfulness among the people of God. One may bring forth a hundredfold, another only sixtyfold or thirtyfold. The parable of the sower teaches us this. But it also teaches us that in *every* case where the seed falls upon good ground some measure of fruit results. We could not conceive of the life of any child of God being absolutely destitute of all gratitude, all testimony, all Christlikeness, all that is as precious fruit under the eye of God, though there are many, alas, who have never been the means of leading a single sinner to the Saviour's feet.

THE WORLD: OUR POSITION AND ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO IT.

Read JOHN XVII. 1-20.

WHAT is the believer's position with regard to the world as it exists to-day? And what should be his attitude towards it? The answer to the second question must be dependent upon the answer to the first. Our attitude in present circumstances must be governed by our position. It is futile for me to assume to settle things if I am not in a position to do so. It is of no use my writing with all the authority of the manager of a firm if I am only an office boy. So in considering what our *attitude* should be in regard to the remarkable and peculiar circumstances through which we pass, we must ask: What is my *position* in regard to them?

Let me point out that this group of chapters has one underlying thought, that is, that the believer is absolutely identified with Christ. Before God the Father is now our place. We are identified with Him in a new relationship, a new joy, and a new position which He takes up as risen from the dead.

But in chapter XVI. we get another side of the story. The Lord tells His disciples what

62 THE WORLD : OUR POSITION AND

treatment they are to expect from the world. He says, as it were, "Not only are you identified with Me in My position before the Father, in all the favour and blessing that attaches to that position, but you are identified with Me in My position of reproach and rejection before the world. If you have all the assets connected with My place before the Father, you must not be surprised to find you have got My liabilities in connection with the world." He intimated to them that they were to make up their minds to share His path of rejection even unto death. Does this sound strange to our ears? We have been so accustomed to a quiet peaceful life in this land, where Christianity has greatly modified the standards of behaviour, and have for generations past had such a time of ease, that we are apt to forget what the truth is as to the position we hold, a position of the greatest possible blessing before God, but a position of persecution and reproach, if we are true to our Master, in this world.

Now in John xvii. we have the whole case presented with perfection. The Lord Himself lays down in the clearest possible way what our position is. Look first at verse 6. We have to remember that we are among those given to Christ by God the Father out of the world. Doubtless those words had special reference to the apostles, but verse 20 shows

ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO IT 63

that they have every believer in view. The Lord prays for all His own right through the church's history, up to and including ourselves. It is a very touching thought that when the Lord Jesus paused outside the walls of Jerusalem, before crossing the brook that led to the garden, with His awestruck disciples about Him in the quiet night, He uttered this prayer. His eye swept the centuries, and He embraced us all in that for which He prayed on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion. We too have been given to Christ by God the Father out of this world. He foreknew us in the past eternity, for as we read elsewhere, we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. His thoughts for us antedates the establishment of this material earth on which we tread. We need not be surprised, then, to find that our ultimate destiny lies outside it.

When the Lord was here, His own were under His continual guidance and care, but the moment had now come when He was to leave them. He is in spirit here already beyond the cross. He says to the Father, "Now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee." He left the world, as we know, by way of death, and resurrection, and ascension. He left it because rejected. Let us never forget that.

There are people who say, "If there is a

64 THE WORLD : OUR POSITION AND

God in heaven, why does He not interfere? Why does He look down calmly on the atrocities that are being perpetrated?" Many answers might be given to these questions, but one very sufficient answer is, *Because Christ has been rejected*. The only One who can put things right has been here, and has been rejected, and until He comes again you need not be surprised at anything that may happen. Nothing can be right until the only One who can put things right takes them in hand. But when He does, it means judgment, and that is why God waits. God is never partial. In our wrongs and disappointments we would like God to interfere on our own particular and special behalf, but why should He? When God intervenes, He will do so in a far-reaching manner. He is not interfering even for the sorrows of poor Belgium, neither did He interfere for the sorrows of Germany, when crushed under the heel of Napoleon a hundred years ago. Nor did He interfere for the tortured natives of the Congo, who suffered at the hands of the very Belgians themselves ten years ago.* When God interferes it means the day of judgment. When the time comes for wrongs to be righted, *all* wrongs will be righted. If God is going to interfere in judg-

* The Congo State was taken over from the late King Leopold by the Belgian Government largely because of these abuses, and in order to put an end to them.—ED.

ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO IT. 65

ment, we can only quote that saying of old which we find in the Psalms: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified." It would mean an end of us all, apart from the provision that God's grace has made, so meantime He keeps silence. But the hour of His mercy is fast running to its close, and then He will intervene to put things right.

Here were a few fishermen, and some others of humble extraction. One of them, Judas Iscariot, has left, and is about to commit suicide. The other eleven will, in a moment of weakness, forsake Him and flee; yet they love Him, and He loves them. They are going to be left without Him in the world, and the next thing is what we get in verse 14: "I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." We are left in the world on the distinct understanding that we are not of it. We are not part and parcel of the world-system by which we are surrounded, and for that reason the world hates the Christian. Notice the Lord here makes Himself the standard. We are identified with Him in this.

Now notice a further thing in verse 18: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." We have been taken out of the great world-

66 THE WORLD : OUR POSITION AND

system. We speak of a man being a "man of the world." By this we do not intend to emphasise the fact that he lives on this planet in contrast to dwelling in the moon, or being an inhabitant of Mars. We mean that he is absolutely and in every sense a man of the world-system that is all around us. The Christian is taken out of the world in that sense. Notice here again that He, Christ Himself, is the standard. If it is a question of our separation from the world, it is even as Christ Himself is separated from it ; if it is a question of being sent into the world, as in verse 18, that also is measured by the same standard. The Lord takes us out, breaks our links with this world, and then sends us back that we may be here for Him.

He Himself came into it with one great thought before Him. The supreme object that dominated the life of the Lord Jesus was the glory of God. Our benefit, great as it was, was not the primary thought before Him. He came into this world which at the instigation of Satan had cast off divine allegiance, always rightly representing God, always perfectly revealing Him, and ultimately working out redemption for sinners. In reading the Gospels, we see how again and again there was the temptation presented to Him to turn from the main line of God's purpose and run into a siding, but never did He do so. I mean such

ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO IT. 67

instances as when a man came up to Him and said, "I have got a brother who is not straight ; speak to him that he divide the inheritance with me." The Lord's answer was, "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you ?" His business was not merely to right things, although, of course, had He been received He would have done so. His main business was not to deal with social matters and to remove those terrible inequalities which are so pronounced. Socialists have the astounding impertinence to actually claim Jesus as one of themselves, even with a scripture like this staring them in the face. Here is a great social problem presented to the Lord, and He declines to touch it. It would have been leaving the main track of that for which He was here. There was also a national or political question raised, but the Pharisees did not get the answer they expected, for the Lord only used the occasion to throw into relief that which was the supreme question : the rights of God.

Now we Christians are left here on those lines. The Lord has sent us into the world that we may represent Him rightly, and promote His interests. Remember what the Apostle said in 2 Corinthians v., "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ." An ambassador is a gentleman of very considerable knowledge and skill, who is entrusted by the Government

68 THE WORLD : OUR POSITION AND

with the important task of representing king and country in a foreign land. He does not belong to that land. The British ambassador in Paris is not a Frenchman: His business is not to see that the streets of Paris are perfectly swept. He does not concern himself with the latest social improvements of the land. He may be invited to do some things here and there, but if so he does them as an outsider. He is there in Paris simply to represent his country. His thought is, what will best further the interests of my Sovereign King George V, and of that great empire which I represent? What will be for the interests of Britain, for the furtherance of her commerce, and the prosperity of her people?

Now the apostles, in a very special way, were ambassadors for Christ. You and I may not be so, in quite the same sense, but we are *attached to the embassy*. In Paris there is the ambassador who appears on great state occasions. He is the man who holds British interests in his hands, but he has helpers. He has a gentleman who is left in charge of the embassy if he leaves, a considerable number of clerks and servants. The honour of the country is bound up with the behaviour of all, even the humblest. I hope when the house boy is brightening up the knocker on the front door of the embassy in Paris that he does not indulge in behaviour that is not worthy of an

ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO IT. 69

English lad. Everyone from the ambassador down to the most insignificant person in the embassy will so act as to uphold the credit and further the interests of the country they represent.

Let us never forget that our place in this world is to be attached to the embassy of the absent King. We belong to His country. We have got His peace, His Spirit, His joys. We are here to represent Him. If we lay this well to heart, it will answer for us a hundred different questions as to what the Christian's attitude should be. I think if I were attached to the embassy in Paris, as a Briton I should be very glad if I had an opportunity to care for the French wounded. (I use this as an illustration.) I should be glad to serve to any extent within my power the people by whom I am surrounded. I should like to treat everybody with kindness and consideration, especially in this terrible crisis, but I should always bear in mind that I am not there just to do that. That is incidental. I am there to represent my King, and everything has to be gauged by that fact.

I may be asked: Does not the Scripture say, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith"? Yes, indeed, just as when I go through the streets of Paris, if I have an opportunity to do a good turn to

anybody, I do it. Still, I should not spend the whole of my time hanging about the streets on the chance of being able to stop a runaway horse. If it comes my way, how glad I am to be able to do it, but my business in that city is to represent my King. Yes, it says, "Let us do good unto all men, and especially to the household of faith." Do not let it be said in Paris that the cook in the embassy is starving. That would be a bad testimony. Always give special consideration to immediate surroundings, but consider *first* that you are there to rightly represent your King.

Is my little parable sufficiently plain? Our great business down here is to rightly represent our Lord. Let us seek grace to do it. We are not part and parcel of the world, in fact our interests are outside it. As Christians we have great interests, magnificent interests, though as yet invisible to mortal eyes, and with those interests we are identified.

F. B. H.

A PRAYER FOR OUR SOLDIER BOYS.

TO Thee alone, O Lord, we come.
 Thy children in this land,
 We crave Thy heart's deep sympathy
 And the power of Thy hand.

A PRAYER FOR OUR SOLDIER BOYS. 71

And " Lord, increase our faith," we cry ;
Faith in Thy love and power,
Faith which lays hold on Thy great Name,
And finds it a strong tower.

And to our faith add courage too,
Which makes us strong to bear
In the conscious strength that the Lord is God,
And must triumph everywhere.

To thee we cry for our soldier boys,
In trench, or camp, or field,
Our Father, we ask in the name of Thy Son,
Be Thou their defence and shield.

We cannot tell where our loved ones are,
Thou knowest the goings of each,
Not one is too small for Thine eye to see,
Nor too far for Thy love to reach.

Oh, turn their hearts in this time of need
To Him who died on the tree,
And let them not be ashamed to confess
" He died for a sinner like me."

We leave our children with Thee, O Lord,
Thou carest for every one ;
And with subject heart, we each one say,
Father, Thy will be done.

ANON.

THE STOLEN WATCH.

SOME time ago I was listening to a young clergyman preaching on John III. 16 in Regent Square, Northampton. I was delighted to hear him prove from this grand old text that instead of God being against man, as people generally believe, He is for man, insomuch that He gave His only-begotten Son to die in order that sinners might be saved.

As soon as the clergyman finished, an ex-police-sergeant stepped into the ring, and began to speak.

“Let me tell you a story,” he said, “to illustrate the truth that this gentleman has been impressing on you: that instead of God being against you, He is for you, even if you are so afraid of Him that you will not listen to Him, nor believe what there is in His heart for you.”

“A few years ago,” he continued, “I was in Manchester Police Court. Not having any particular duty that morning I was not much interested in the case that was on. But I suddenly became conscious that the prisoner in the dock was using unusually loud and argumentative language towards the magistrates.

“‘I tell you I didn’t steal it. I bought it,’ he kept on repeating, till at last the magistrates were obliged to silence him while they con-

THE STOLEN WATCH.

73

sidered whether they should deal with him summarily or send him for trial.

“ Somehow I felt an unusual interest in this case, so while the magistrates were conferring, I asked one of my friends in court what the case was.

“ It appeared that the prisoner, whose name was Kelly, was arrested on the charge of stealing a watch. There was no doubt that the watch had been stolen ; and, alas for poor Kelly, it had been found in his possession, which was sufficient in the opinion of both policemen and magistrates to convict him.

“ For Kelly to declare that he did not steal the watch was quite natural in the eyes of the police, and bench ; but for him to say that he bought it was rather too much to ask them to believe. And when asked from whom he bought it, and he replied that he knew the man's face, but did not know his name, there was a ripple of suppressed laughter all over the court. The story was altogether too thin. The general amusement increased when the prisoner affirmed that the price he had paid for the watch was thirty shillings. Any one could see that it was not worth three half-crowns.

“ Well, just as the magistrates had apparently arrived at their decision what to do with Kelly, I stepped into the witness-box and asked to be sworn.

“ ‘ What do you want ? ’ asked the chief magistrate.

“ ‘ I want to give evidence in this case, sir,’ I replied.

“ ‘ The moment Kelly heard that, he turned on me in a rage. ‘ Don’t listen to him, sir ! ’ he said, ‘ don’t listen to him. He knows nothing about it. He has only gone into the box to tell a lot of lies. He wants to make it hot for me ; and he can’t know anything about it.’

“ ‘ It was almost useless my telling Kelly to keep quiet and listen to what I had to say. He seemed to think, because I was in police-sergeant’s uniform, that I was bound to be *against* him. At last the magistrate got him to keep quiet and told me to proceed. I said :

“ ‘ ‘ Some weeks ago I was on duty escorting two prisoners by train to Strangeways Gaol. I sat on one side of the compartment reading, while the two prisoners sat on the other, recounting their experiences as they usually do. During the course of their conversation I heard one say to the other, “ I did old Kelly the other day ! ” “ How was that ? ” asked his companion. “ Why,” replied the first speaker, “ I sold him a watch for thirty shillings that wasn’t worth a dollar ! ” ’

“ ‘ What a change on the faces of all in court ! As for poor old Kelly, he looked as if

THE STOLEN WATCH.

75

he could have kissed me. Of course, he got off, for he was proved innocent in spite of all the circumstantial evidence against him. The little bit of evidence I gave *for* him more than counter-balanced all that was *against* him. But observe that if he had had his way he would never have known what there was in my heart towards him. He would have gone to prison innocently, and thinking that I was against him, while really I was *for* him."

My friend then proceeded to tell the crowd that that was just the way some men treat God. They will not listen to Him, because they think He is against them, whereas He is *for* them.

"Yes," he said, in conclusion, "you may argue from circumstances that God is against you, and from those circumstances it might seem as though He were against you, but this one text proves that God is *for* you, even when you were against Him.

" 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' "

The next day I met the preacher close to where the open-air meeting had been held, and told him how much I enjoyed the preaching, and especially his illustration about the watch.

"Yes," he remarked, with a smile, "it was a narrow shave for poor old Kelly. But I

could not stand by and see an innocent man punished."

"Certainly not," I replied. "However awkward it may have been for the previous witnesses and the magistrates: but justice must be done even to a poor fellow like Kelly. But," I continued, "I should like to have spoken a few words after you, if it had not been so late; for while your story illustrates one aspect of the gospel admirably, it is defective in another aspect."

"What aspect is that?" asked the preacher.

"Well," I asked, "why was Kelly let off?"

"Because he was innocent."

"Quite so. But suppose he had been guilty?"

"Ah!" replied the preacher, "that would have been a different matter. I could not have helped him then."

"Then here lies the great contrast: your heart could only righteously be towards a man that was *innocent*. But God's heart can be righteously towards a *guilty* man, and not only so, but he can righteously let the guilty man go free. That is more than any Court of Justice can do without sacrificing its name and character. But God can be 'A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR' (Isa. XLV. 21) at one and the same time. He can be 'JUST, and the JUSTIFIER of him which believeth in Jesus' (Rom. III. 26). He can 'JUSTIFY the UNGODLY.' (Rom. IV. 5).

THE STOLEN WATCH.

77

After a little further conversation we parted.

But before closing this paper I should like to enlarge a little on this most wonderful, soul-establishing truth of how God “justifieth the *ungodly*” (Rom. iv. 5).

In the first place, we must understand that there is not one innocent person in the world, for God’s Word declares that :

1. “There is none righteous, no, not one.”
2. “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.”
3. “All the world” is “GUILTY before God.”

Now God does not rely upon circumstantial evidence when He summons a prisoner to appear before His court, for He knows every act, word and thought of our lives. He is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of our hearts, and all things are naked and opened to His eyes. Nor is God a man that He should lie (Num. xxiii. 19). His evidence, therefore, is unimpeachable ; and He has stepped into the witness-box Himself, and proved the whole world to be *GUILTY*.

In the ordinary way when a man is found guilty, the only thing that remains is for him to be sentenced.

So man has been

1. Summoned before God ;
 2. Found “guilty” ;
- and all that remains for him now is to be
- “SENTENCED BY GOD.”

But God (who *seems* to be against man as He appears in the witness-box) *loves* man, and now the great question is this : How can God *righteously* let the man go free when He Himself has proved him *guilty* ?

The only answer is, by SUBSTITUTION.

God of old declared that He would "by no means clear the *guilty*" (Exod. xxxiv. 7), and that "the soul that sinneth it shall *die*" (Ezek. xviii. 20). How then can God righteously lavish His love upon a sinner whom He has Himself proved *guilty* ? Does not justice demand that righteous judgment be executed against his sins ?

It is in THE CROSS that these questions find their answer. For there we see God's love to the sinner displayed in the gift of His Son (the only one who was capable of taking the sinner's place, being without sin Himself), who *bore* the sinner's sins (1 Peter III. 24), *suffered* for them (1 Peter III. 18) and *died* for them (1 Cor. xv. 3). At the same time we see God's righteous sentence executed against the sinner's sins in the Person of his SUBSTITUTE. "CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY," therefore the ungodly can go free, for

"Payment God cannot twice demand,
Once at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

T. C. M.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. (Spain).—We believe that when disciples of the Lord Jesus are gathered together in, or unto, His name, even if they be but two or three in number, He Himself is personally present in their midst. This appears to us to be the plain meaning of Matthew XVIII. 20. Observe that we say *personally*. We do not say *bodily*. Bodily, He is in heaven. But we emphasize the word “personally” to guard against the interpretation of the verse that would refer it to the Holy Spirit. It is the Lord Jesus, He who loved us, and died for us, whose presence in the midst of even two or three gathered to His name makes it such an unspeakable privilege thus to gather, whether for prayer or any other purpose.

A note from the pen of the late J. N. D. is helpful as to this. He says: “I insist that when Christ’s presence is spoken of, with two or three gathered in His name, it is Christ—not the Holy Ghost. The difference is very real: the Holy Ghost was not incarnate, was not made flesh for us, did not die for us, and in this respect cannot be the object of the same affections.” This note is to be found on page 425 of Volume XXXI of the “Collected Writings” of the author referred to.

The passage in John XIV. 18 conveys rather a different thought. Yet it may well be connected with the verse in Matthew of which we have spoken. May we again quote from the “Writings” of

80 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. N. D., this time from page 407 of Volume XXV ?
 “ The ‘ I will come to you ’ is Christ in spirit now, I believe ; Himself in spirit. *It is not merely the Holy Ghost*, but what the believer can always count on. There is a particular promise in the case of two or three gathered in Christ’s name. There is not only individual dwelling in our hearts by faith, but the particular way in which He comes to two or three gathered.”

“ OLD BRITISH N.C.O.,” OHIO, U.S.A.—We sympathize with your desire to work for the Lord among the troops on the various battle-fronts, but we are unable to suggest any way by which you might obtain an appointment for the purpose. The British military authorities afford every facility for work among the soldiers, and some, known to us, who are, like yourself, old N.C.O’s., have found wide-open doors, and have experienced much blessing from God in their labours to spread the gospel among the armies in France. We do not think there is the same liberty in connection with the American troops, though probably much depends on the will of the individual Commanding Officer. We understand that General Funston refused permission for gospel work to be carried on among the men on active service on the Mexican frontier, while Roman Catholic priests were given a free hand. But if this work is so much upon your heart, why not seek to carry the glad tidings to some of the Canadian troops still in training in Canada ? As you are not known to us personally, we could hardly give you a letter of introduction to anybody.

LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING.

“Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come,
and will not tarry.”—HEBREWS X. 37.

THE Lord Jesus Christ who left His home in glory and came down into this sin-marred world in order to achieve all that was necessary for your salvation and mine is really coming again, and very soon. It is quite within the limits of possibility that some who are reading these pages may not pass through death but be instantly changed (1 Cor. xv. 51), and translated to glory through the personal return of the world's despised Redeemer. The Lord is coming ! It is a fact. The time is fixed in the counsels of God, nothing can alter it. “ Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” He is coming ! He may come at any hour ! Are you glad at the thought of it ?

“ They tell me a solemn story,
But it is not sad to me,
For in its sweet enfoldings
The Saviour's love I see.
They say that at any moment
Upon mine ear may fall
The summons to leave our homestead
To answer the Master's call.

“ They say I may have no warning,
I may not even hear
The rustling of His garments
As He softly draweth near.

82 LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING.

Suddenly, and in a moment
 The Lord of life may come,
 To lift us from this cloudland
 Into the light of Home."

But why do we affirm with such apparent dogmatism that the Lord is coming? Because it is true. The need for His return is becoming more urgent every day, more urgent than ever it was. That He is coming is not a mere pious thought or a peculiar view held by a small majority of Christian people. No, it is an absolute fact with which all Bible students who love their Lord are well acquainted. There is no other subject referred to so frequently in the inspired Scriptures as the return of our Lord.

"Behold He cometh" seems to be written on almost every other page in one form or another.

In the New Testament alone there are 320 direct statements concerning it, that is to say, it is referred to once in every twenty-five verses throughout the twenty-seven books. There are no fewer than fourteen different Greek words used to describe it, such as apocalypse, epiphany, parousia, etc. The fact comes to us on our Lord's authority, on angelic authority, and on apostolic authority. In John xiv. 3 we have our Lord's own words: "If I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself."

LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING. 83

In Acts I. 11 it is written: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

In I Thessalonians IV. 15, 16, with a plainness which is unmistakable, it is affirmed: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord . . . the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God."

Unless the Bible is untrue it is a fact, "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." It seems almost incredible, and yet it is sadly true, that there is no fact men and women have tried harder to explain away than the personal return of the Lord. Some say, "Yes, He is coming, but that means He comes to us at death." But that is not so; at death it is not He who comes to us, but we, i.e. believers, who go to Him. His coming is not death.

"O Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming, we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal."

Instead of being bidden to prepare for death, we are told to watch and to be ready for the return of the Lord.

Others say, "Yes, the Lord said He would return, but did He not do so at Pentecost, or at the destruction of Jerusalem?" One would like to refute this fallacy with incon-

84 LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING.

trovertible evidence at some length, but let this suffice: the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost upon a believing remnant of Israel took place about A.D. 33, but all the epistles forecasting the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ were written between A.D. 52 and A.D. 68, therefore the personal return of our Lord cannot be the same as the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The destruction of Jerusalem took place about A.D. 70; the book of the Revelation which proclaims His coming and the setting up of the Messianic kingdom with power and great glory was probably not written until about A.D. 96. Therefore the Lord's second coming cannot be the same as the destruction of Jerusalem. Nearly thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem the glorified Lord sent this message from heaven, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. XXII. 20).

Perhaps some will say, "Yes, I quite believe it is a fact that the Lord is coming, but so many mistakes have been made about His coming, and so many contrary views expressed that I hardly know what to believe." It is a great comfort that we are not responsible for other people's views, but we are responsible for discovering and believing the facts which God in His Word has revealed. Now there are several facts which will help you to discover the truth concerning our Lord's second

LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING. 85

coming for yourself, and render you independent to a great extent of all human teachers on this subject. It is because these facts are generally ignored that there is such confusion in Christendom, not only on the subject of our Lord's return, but on so many other matters besides.

1. It should ever be borne in mind that the Bible, although written for the instruction of us all (Rom. xv. 4), is not all addressed to us. It has messages for three classes of people, for the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. It should therefore be perfectly obvious that in our Bible study we must note carefully to which of these three classes any scripture we are reading refers, if we would arrive at the truth. If we take that which is written concerning the Jews or Gentiles as if it was written to the Church of God we shall get error and confusion, instead of truth and harmony.

2. We should always remember that interpretation is one thing and application quite another. Interpretation is the primary meaning of a statement, application is applying its unchanging principles to present circumstances.

3. We must intelligently understand the meaning of the terms—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. This is the threefold division of mankind in this present time in the sight of God (1 Cor. x. 32).

86 LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING.

(a) The Jews (using the term in its widest general sense) are the chosen people of God, and is a term often used to describe the whole seed of Israel irrespective of tribal distinctions.

(b) The Church consists of all those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ by a true and living faith. It is not an organization, but an organism. It had a beginning after the ascension of our Lord, and its earthly story will end when He returns. It is a company of persons who, in this present dispensation, are being called out from the world, and are members of the Body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head.

The great mystery of the Church was a secret revealed for the first time to the apostle Paul (Rom. XVI. 25, 26; Eph. III. 2-11; Col. I. 24-27). The formation of the Church involved the postponement of the Messianic kingdom, and, because of their sin, the setting aside of Israel, who are now scattered among the nations, to be regathered in God's good time. In the meantime God is calling out from among both Jews and Gentiles men and women who are to form His Church, and to be an object lesson now and for ever of the glory of His grace (Eph. III. 10).

(c) The Gentiles are all those who do not belong to Israel or the Church of God, that is to say, all other men and women who are unsaved are regarded in God's sight as Gentiles

LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING. 87

whatever their nationality or moral conduct may be.

It is necessary to understand these God-revealed distinctions. The failure to recognize them results in inability to understand the Word of God and His purposes therein revealed. Unless one bears them in mind no sane and definite conclusions can be arrived at on the glorious subject of our Lord's return.

These statements in no way overlook the fact that all Scripture is for us although not addressed to us. Most of it has its application to us, but only certain portions may be interpreted as directly referring to us. We are not robbing Christians of anything, we are only distributing the sixty-six books of the Bible among the classes of people to whom they were originally addressed, and whom they primarily concern.

4. There are various terms in Scripture, between which we must learn to distinguish, such as (*a*) the kingdom of heaven, (*b*) the kingdom of God, (*c*) the Church. If we regard these terms as all referring to one and the same thing we shall never arrive at the truth, for they are used with great care in the Word of God.

(*a*) The kingdom of heaven (literally the kingdom of the heavens) is peculiar to Matthew's gospel, and occurs there about thirty-two times : it is a term used always to

88 LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING.

describe the Messianic kingdom, which our Lord came to set up, and which He finally will set up on this earth in the future, but which is now in abeyance because Israel rejected Him as their Messiah-King. The parables therefore describing the kingdom of heaven must be interpreted of the kingdom, and not of the Church at the present time, although of course it is possible to make a present application of their teaching.

(b) The kingdom of God is an expression which describes the whole sphere over which God rules known and unknown, visible and invisible. Since the whole may describe the part, but not the part the whole, the kingdom of God is used sometimes to describe the kingdom of the heavens, but the kingdom of the heavens is never used to describe the kingdom of God.

(c) The Church is the mystical body of Christ, the members of which are being called out while the setting up of the kingdom of the heavens is in abeyance. It will be removed from this world when the Lord comes, and before the kingdom is established. That the Church is one thing and the Messianic kingdom another is evident from the many scriptures which clearly distinguish between them; the Church also looks and waits for the kingdom.

5. It should be carefully noticed that there are two distinct sets of prophecies concerning

LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING. 89

the two comings of our Lord: the one concerning the return from heaven for the Church to remove it, the other concerning His return to Israel, when He appears on the Mount of Olives at the end of the great Tribulation to terminate Israel's sorrows (Zech. XIV. 4; compare Acts I. 11). What is revealed concerning the one coming must in no wise be confused with what is revealed concerning the other.

6. There are in the Scripture four prophetic days, each of which has its special characteristic. They are these:

(i) Man's Day, which is an inspired description of this present dispensation (1 Cor. IV. 3), in which man is speaking while God is silent, and in which Christ waits at His right hand (Ps. cx. 1), in which the Holy Spirit is working, and which will end in moral darkness and failure as far as man's government is concerned.

(ii) The Day of Christ. This is the day which concerns all believers in the Lord Jesus (Phil. II. 16). It is the believer's judgment day, and takes place probably immediately after the removal of the Church. It was in view of this day that the apostle Paul lived, and in the light of this day he sought to work. He refers to it in 2 Corinthians V. 10 as a time when a believer's works (not his person, see John V. 24) shall be judged, and the believer be rewarded or suffer loss according to the principles revealed in 2 Corinthians III. 13-15.

90 LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING.

(iii) The Day of the Lord, of which the Book of the Revelation is a description, and which is referred to nearly a score of times in the Old Testament, is the day when the power of evil shall be overthrown and righteousness shall be established in the earth by Israel's Messiah-King for at least a thousand years. This term seems to cover the whole period of the Great Tribulation and of the Millennium.

(iv) The Day of God. This is referred to in 2 Peter III. 12, 13, when, according to 1 Corinthians xv. 25-28, God shall be all in all, when the present sin-stained heavens and earth will have been burnt up, when sin shall have been removed from the universe, and Satan cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 10), when the new creation shall reflect God's glory and its stainless joy be realized for ever, a day which shall have no night, the eternal state of blessing for the people of God.

7. A great deal of confusion of thought will be avoided if we remember to distinguish between the three great judgments.

(i) The judgment of the believer's works (2 Cor. v. 10), which takes place in the day of Christ in the heavenlies, immediately after the Rapture probably.

(ii) The judgment of the living nations on this earth when the Lord returns to Israel, revealed in Matthew xxv., and which therefore takes place in the Day of the Lord.

LIGHT ON THE LORD'S COMING. 91

(iii) The Great White Throne judgment which, according to Revelation xx. 11-15, takes place at the end of all things, and before which all appear who have not yet been judged.

8. The resurrections should also be distinguished. (a) There is a resurrection when the Lord returns for His Church (1 Thess. iv. 16). (b) Later there is a resurrection when He returns to Israel to terminate her sorrows and set up His kingdom for the purposes of world-wide blessing (Rev. xx. 4, 5), and then (c) there is the resurrection of the wicked dead which immediately precedes the setting up of the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. xx. 13).

Volumes of course might be written on the various points touched upon in this article, but our purpose is to give the reader a general outline of this great subject, and to indicate the principles of accurate interpretation, so that the reader may study the matter intelligently and profitably for himself, and avoid the great errors into which so many writers and teachers on this glorious theme fall.

Study God's Word, dear reader, in the light of these eight suggestions, and the Bible will become a new book to you : you will see things as you have never seen them before. There will appear harmony where before you only saw confusion.

L. N.

THE WAR AND PROPHECY.

BY AN AMERICAN WRITER.

THE world is now confronted with an appalling war. We should not underestimate the gigantic struggle going on amongst the nations. But even this is not the worst. Darker days are yet in the future. Wars, energized by more than human agencies, will follow our age; they take place after the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for His own (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). Armageddon, as presented in Revelation xvi., will take place at the close of Daniel's last week—the close of the Day of Trouble. To have our mind calm and stayed on the Word of God is the great thing for us.

Predictions concerning the present war are very harmful. Scriptures which refer to Daniel's last week, if applied to the present war, are most confusing. We have seen and heard such predictions during the last half-century, and the enemy has used them to confuse many, and to discredit the truth. Let us all be warned, and use great caution concerning events as they are now taking place.

1. Within our own lifetime we can remember the great war that was waged between Russia and Turkey (and be it observed, these two Powers come within the scope of the prophetic

THE WAR AND PROPHECY.

93

word), and some thought that the end was at hand. But that conflict passed, peace was restored, and the Lord did not then come.

2. Since that time, less than a quarter of a century ago, Greece entered into conflict with Turkey to sever the island of Crete from Turkish rule. Many thought this might lead to the end ; but the great Powers of Europe restrained Greece, and temporary peace was restored.

3. Italy of more recent years entered into war with Turkey, and wrested from her part of Africa and some islands of the Mediterranean. Students of Scripture watched this conflict with great interest, especially when it was thought that Italy might take possession of the land of Palestine. Italy also comes within the scope of the prophetic word, and will have to do with events in the last week of Daniel's prophecy. But peace was again restored, and the Lord did not then come.

4. Of more recent years the Balkan States united in a war against Turkey, and many thought now the end was to be reached. But even that bloody war came to a close, and the end of the age has not come.

5. Now we are in the third year of a war which surpasses all that the world has ever yet witnessed. What a call for prayer to the whole Church of God ! What earnestness this dread conflict should awaken in the hearts of

all the redeemed people ! Fellow-Christians, how have these terrible calamities wrought in our lives ? It is clear that the present world is yet an evil world. As thousands day by day are violently thrown into eternity, oh ! for hearts to be stirred and energized by the Spirit to walk before God, and serve the Lord with increased devotion !

Yet, amidst this dread conflict, let us beware of premature predictions concerning the second coming of our Lord Jesus on that account. We cannot say that this is the last link in the chain of great events to bring in our Lord's second coming. This *may* be the last, but, times and dates do not form part of the Christian dispensation ; and it is very important to note that in all the New Testament no war is mentioned after that predicted by the Lord concerning the Romans' destruction of Jerusalem (Luke XXI. 20) until we open Revelation at chapter VI., when the same empire *revived* will once more come to the front. Wars and rumours of wars will *then* fill the air until the final struggle—the battle of Armageddon. This is important to note.

Paul's whole ministry, in which are fully made known the characteristic features of our age, giving also the marks of its close, passes over this entire subject, and never once mentions these struggles, or wars amongst the nations. If it has not already been observed,

the reader will do well to read the passage referred to in Luke XXI., and then John XIV., which gives the Lord's promised return for His own (and through the whole New Testament), and no war is presented as a characteristic feature of our closing age. Throughout the Christian dispensation wars have been many, but the entire New Testament passes them all over, and gives them no notice whatever. This silence of Scripture ought to cause special inquiry, and produce moderation as to predictions at the present time.

These solemn events should have a voice to us, surely. They show how barbaric men *are* under their veneer of culture and refinement. With all the privileges that the most enlightened parts of the earth have enjoyed, we see that human nature abides the same, *depraved, sinful, cruel*. The first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans are verified before our eyes to-day—"None good," "Feet swift to shed blood," "Destruction and misery in their ways," "The way of peace they have not known," and "No fear of God before their eyes."

But we must turn away from all these conditions—national, political, and ecclesiastical—and as we view the second coming of our Lord Jesus, stand upon a safer foundation—the unerring Word of God, and the promises left us by the Lord Jesus. Do we believe His coming

is near? If so, what is our basis for such a belief? If the New Testament is carefully read, from John xiv., where the Lord Himself says, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," throughout, to the close of the Church history in Revelation iii., the Lord's return is ever presented to the Church as its hope. From the infant days of the Church the second coming of Christ was ever before them. Wars gave them no evidence of the near approach of Christ's coming. It was the promises given by Christ and by the apostles that formed the basis of that hope. When the Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and waited for His Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 9, 10), no great political event was occurring, yet the Church has never since been so stirred by, and so joyfully looking for, that blessed hope. They were waiting for the fulfilment of His promise, "I will come again." Their hearts were encouraged in this hope by the pen of the apostle: "A little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The sure word of God, we repeat, was the firm basis upon which they looked for Christ's return.

Is it not a mark of the Church's deep declension that events such as these are required to stir us to look for the Lord's second coming? Does it not prove that we are not searching

that Word as for hid treasures ? Does it not show that we are not hanging upon that *special promise* left us before He went away, and that we are not making that blessed hope our meat and drink continually ?

Were they wrong in those early days in waiting for the Lord's return ? Surely not. It was their bright morning star. They looked for it, they longed for it ; but grace withheld that longed-for hope in order that the long-suffering of God might be fully expressed to this poor world. But the sands of time are running through the glass. Some day, how soon we cannot say, the last grain shall drop ; then, whether war is present or not, the whole Church will rise as one to join her glorified Lord in the air, and be for ever with Him.

Passing over the whole Church history till about eighty years ago, the midnight cry then was heard, " Behold the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye forth to meet Him ! " Surrounding events did not lead to that cry. Men searched their Bibles. The Holy Spirit illuminated its pages, and that blessed hope was once more found and its power realized : " The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven " ; " Surely, I come quickly." The truth as to the Church—the Bride of Christ—was also recovered, and the Bride then answered : " Even so, come, Lord Jesus." And this is the true spiritual attitude of every child of God, to be looking

and waiting for the Lord at any time. Let this blessed hope be yours and mine, dear reader, sanctifying every day of our lives.

Times and dates refer not to our time and day, we repeat ; they refer to the time following the rapture of God's people to heaven. After the Church's translation to glory, an earthly people with earthly hopes and earthly promises, with dates, years, months and days before them, will watch the occurring events with the greatest concern. The period will divide into two parts of three and a half years each, and Matthew XXIV. refers to this period. In the first part, our Lord, referring to the wars and rumours of wars, tells them, " See that ye be not troubled . . . *the end* is not yet."

This passage has again and again been taken out of its true setting and applied to our dispensation, which makes confusion. The passage refers to the end of Israel's history, to Daniel's last seven years, and has no connection whatever with the Christian age. In that chapter the sign of His coming and the end of the age do not refer to the Christian age, nor to Christ's coming in the air, but to the period *following* our dispensation. In this verse our Lord says, " See that ye be not troubled, the end is not yet "—other things must transpire before the end of that period. The gospel of the kingdom must be proclaimed by the Jewish witnesses. The abomination spoken of by

Daniel the prophet (an idol worship set up in the temple at Jerusalem) must be set up, and other signs recorded in this chapter. Immediately after the tribulation of those days they shall see the Son of Man coming in glory and power to inaugurate a new era upon earth, a period called the millennium, when Christ will rule over all the earth.

With this chapter clear in our minds, we may return to our present age, and from a New Testament standpoint look up to heaven where Christ has gone, and, according to His promise, look for Him who loves us and gave Himself for us. This is of prime importance for us as God's people. The Christian heart hangs upon the promise, believing it is near, even at the door.

Christ was first promised in Genesis (chap. III. 15). Faith, in God's people, ever looked for His coming. Sceptics may have said, "Where is the promise of His coming?"—after 4000 years the promise was fulfilled. The Babe was born in Bethlehem according to prophetic scripture. Now that God's Son has been rejected, crucified, has risen from the dead, ascended up to heaven, taken His place at God's right hand, the promise concerning His coming again is presented to us. At God's appointed moment, as the promise of the Old Testament concerning His first coming was fulfilled, so will His promise to *us* be. A. E. B.

[100]

A LITTLE WHILE.

ONLY a little more time, Lord,
Surely it cannot be long,
Ere the wilderness journey is over,
And we sing the eternal song.

Worthy, all worthy, art Thou, Lord,
Of glory, and honour and love ;
Show me Thy way, Lord, and guide me
To Thy glorious home above.

Only a little more time, Lord,
Till we see Thy glorious face,
Time just to tell to others
Thy story of love and grace.

Time just to help one another,
Those who need a helping hand,
A suffering sister or brother,
Along to the heavenly land.

Time to forgive and forget, Lord,
Seek forgiveness of those we grieve,
To have nothing but love between us,
Ere the wilderness journey we leave.

Time just to learn all the lessons
Thou teachest Thy saints below,
Depths of Thy mercy to sound, Lord,
Heights of Thy love more to know.

To learn Thou art all-sufficient,
That Thou art the Holy and True,
To learn this, and then to unlearn
All else, blessed Lord, but YOU.

By Hannah —, blind, deaf, brought up a Roman Catholic, recently converted to God in a workhouse.

DOES CHRISTIANITY MAKE OPTIMISTS?

“WHAT is an optimist? Sometimes he is a person who thinks that he has only to run his head against a wall, and the wall won't be there! Well, the wall is there, all the same.”

So writes an esteemed correspondent. In his opinion, an optimist is a foolish person indeed, a fatuous individual who lives in dream-land, and declines to recognize the existence even of such solid and substantial realities as stone walls!

The Word of God, however, puts the matter in a very different light. What a ring of sublime optimism we find in the apostle's magnificent utterance in 1 Corinthians XIII. 7: Love “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things.” Love certainly makes one an optimist of the most cheery kind; and love is the essence of Christianity. It is the fulfilling of the law. It is the nature of God.

The Christian is not only entitled, but enabled, to look at *everything* from the bright side. He himself has been brought to a region of everlasting summer, a region of sunshine which gilds *everything* with its glorious light. *All things are ours.*

Does anyone say: “No one but an incorrigible optimist would make such a sweeping statement”? Be it so. The statement is

102 DOES CHRISTIANITY MAKE OPTIMISTS ?

intentionally sweeping ; it is meant to include within its scope the whole world, life, death, things present and things to come. And he who makes the statement is the Spirit-taught, God-inspired optimist, Paul the apostle (I Cor. III. 21, 22).

Elsewhere he insists that of all God's good things He has withheld from us *not one*. Having given Christ for us, He freely gives everything else. Every circumstance that happens He makes to work for our good. Even in things that might otherwise make us rank pessimists—things such as tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and the sword—He causes us to triumph, and indeed makes us “more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.”

With such a God, what can we be but enthusiastic optimists ?

It is not that we do not see the difficulties. We do. We are well aware of the existence of what our friend speaks of as “the wall.” It is there. But it is not there for us to run our heads against, but that we might leap over it !

The pessimist croaks : “Here my progress ends ! The wall is too great and high ; I can go no further.” But the optimist sings with triumphant David : “By my God have I leaped over a wall !” (Ps. XVIII. 29). It is GOD that girds him with strength and makes his way perfect ; it is GOD that gives him

DOES CHRISTIANITY MAKE OPTIMISTS ? 103

feet that spring like those of the hind, and sets him on his high places ; it is GOD that teaches his hands to war so that a bow of steel is broken by his arms.

Pessimism destroys action and produces stagnation. The man who says " There is a lion in the way," simply turns over in his bed, like a door upon its hinges, and goes to sleep. He *does* nothing : he hides his hand in his bosom, and prides himself upon being *wise* (Prov. XXVI. 13-16).

For a wonderful example of true optimism take Elisha, when surrounded by a great Syrian host that sought his life. His servant, seeing this host, accompanied by a powerful force of cavalry and war-chariots, breaks out like a thorough pessimist. " Alas, my master ! " he exclaims, " how shall we do ? " Elisha's answer reveals the optimist : " Fear not : for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

His optimism, observe, is not born of foolish self-confidence. He proceeds to *pray*. His faith is in God. " Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see ! " This is the secret of true optimism : the opened eye, the eye that can see *the infinite resources of God*. To look beyond the difficulties that lie in our way to the God Who is above them, this is optimism, this is faith, this is wisdom.

Lord, give us evermore the opened eye !

H. P. B.

LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

MEN are propounding questions one to another to which they can find no satisfactory answer, and no wonder, for the vexed questions of the hour can only be answered by intelligent students of the prophetic word which Peter tells us has been given in order to light the children of God through dark times like the present. Let us listen to His inspired word written in 2 Peter 1. 19: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

This word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed, is scattered up and down the Old and New Testaments in abundance. Its illuminating teaching is accessible to the humblest and most unscholarly child of God who will patiently and intelligently examine its testimony. Now it would be impossible to answer a tithe of the questions which perplexed men and women are asking concerning this great European War. Our time just now is too limited for that, but by God's grace I will try and answer five questions, *not* out of my own imagination, or according to my own

LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS. 105

imperfect views, but out of the Word of truth rightly divined.

I.

Our first question shall be this :

Does not this terrible war with its unnameable atrocities justify us in fearing that there may be no God? If there was a God would He not stretch forth His mighty hand and frustrate the knavish tricks of those whose creed is that might is right, and that the weakest must be crushed?

This is the question. What is the answer? This, that the children of God have been looking out for a war like this for many a year, and if it had not come sooner or later God's word would have been falsified. Those who have studied the prophetic scriptures, as every child of God should (but most, alas! do not), know that the prophetic period described as "the times of the Gentiles" is rapidly running out: then, we are told, shall nation rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Instead of this war proving that God does not exist, it is rather a testimony to His faithfulness, and an overwhelming reminder that not a word He has spoken shall fail to come to pass. Here then is encouragement for the saint, and a warning for the sinner. The European War writes the fact in large letters: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

106 LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

But if there were a God, would He not intervene at a crisis like this? My answer is, HE WILL. Read the second psalm and a multitude of other passages of Scripture and you will discover that God will not always keep silence. The time is coming, and it is probably not far off, when He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, and the Lord shall have the nations in derision: He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. "But why," you may possibly ask, "does He not do it now?" For three reasons at least. First, because He has world-wide purposes to fulfil through this present disaster. Secondly, because He is a long-suffering God, and will restrain His wrath until the last moment. Thirdly, because He knows His postponed intervention will be more for our ultimate good and His glory. WE may not think so, but our vision is very limited, our knowledge very incomplete; but God sees the end from the beginning. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Let us therefore rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. He may try us, but He will never mock us. He may tarry, but He will never come too late. He may perplex us, but He will never confound us. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS. 107

II.

Here is the second question :

Is it not an awful thing for one Christian nation to be fighting another Christian nation ?

Yes, it would be indeed, but that is not the case. There is not, and never has been, such a company of people as a CHRISTIAN NATION, and never will be until the Lord comes. The nations, in God's sight, are regarded as great antagonistic world powers, who act at the instigation of Satan, and whose authority will be terminated by the sure and certain coming of His Christ. The people of God are one company, the Gentile nations of this evil age are quite another. The identification of the two is unscriptural, illogical, and confusing. The people of God who form the mystical body of Jesus Christ are a small company of people scattered among the nations, among nations who in God's sight present the aspect, not of Christian communities, but that of wild beasts ready to devour one another ; at least that is what we learn from the vision that the Lord vouchsafed to Daniel in the seventh chapter of his prophecy.

In this great European War the strife is not between two companies of God's people, but between various world powers whose doom is sealed ; those true Christians who are engaged in it are simply doing their duty in that

108 LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

state of life in which God has called them. Although engaged in war they hate bloodshed, and if all men were as they are (and this shall be the case some day, Isaiah II. 4) there would be no war. A little clear and logical thinking, accompanied by an intelligent knowledge of God's Word, will easily dispose of the fallacy that this war is being waged between Christian nations, for it is impossible for us to find in this dispensation a whole Christian town, village, or community, not to mention a Christian nation.

III.

A third question is this :

Will not this devastating war hinder God's work?

The answer, according to the law and the testimony, is NO, and for two reasons. First, by means of this war God is fulfilling His purposes, and secondly, by means of this war God is preparing for the Appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How is God fulfilling His purposes? In two ways. He is punishing the nations for their iniquities just as He always does and did in olden times in the cases of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and others. God could punish nations directly, but He is a great economist, and He uses the crimes of sinful men for fulfilling His purposes without endorsing the crimes, and makes the wrath of men to praise Him.

LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS. 109

For another thing, the territory of the old Roman Empire must correspond with the picture given of it by Daniel's image (see Dan. II.) before the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and Babylon, that greatest of all cities, must be built in the east according to the prophetic word. Time will show how this present war will contribute towards bringing the necessary redistribution of territory about. The way, too, is being cleared for the Second Advent. Before the Lord can return to Israel, the Jews must be in Palestine, assembled as a nation in unbelief with their temple rebuilt. The war is materially affecting the political situation of the Jews, and probably will set them free for their own land, which in some way MUST be theirs, for God has sworn to give it to them.

IV.

Fourthly :

Does not this war show the failure of Christianity ?

The Word of God replies NO. Christianity is one thing, civilization is quite another. The records of ancient Egypt prove that a high state of civilization existed centuries before Christianity was born. Past ages and this age prove the utter failure of civilization apart from regeneration. What men and women need is not civilization merely (al-

110 LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

though God knows how much in some quarters *that* is needed), but they need TO BE BORN AGAIN (John III. 3), not to be veneered, but to become the subjects of a mighty spiritual revolution from within.

Christianity is not a failure. In every dispensation God's purposes are carried through in spite of all the opposition man or devil may offer, and this present dispensation will be no exception to the general rule. Had it been God's purpose to convert the world in this dispensation then we should have to acknowledge that God had been thwarted, but that is not His purpose. His purpose is to gather out from amongst all nations a certain number of persons who shall form the body of Christ.

No power in earth or hell can thwart that purpose. That number is referred to in Scripture as "the fulness (or complement, as Bishop Lightfoot interprets the word) of the Gentiles" (Rom. XI. 25). The order of events in God's programme is clearly stated in that very remarkable passage in Acts XV. 13-17: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. . . . After this" (saith the Lord through the prophet) "I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up." In other words, God will resuscitate Israel as a

LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS. III

nation. Why? "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

As a matter of fact, numbers of men and women are trying to fulfil a purpose which appears in God's programme for the next age. No wonder they are disappointed. They are preaching the gospel of the kingdom instead of the gospel of the grace of God. They are preaching the universal fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, instead of the need of regeneration and redemption through the blood of His cross. No wonder there are no conversions and a low, Laodicean type of spiritual life in congregations, which are so contented with modern-day corruptions that they hardly recognize the truth when it is preached. Men pray to-day for the extension of a kingdom which is in abeyance, because rejected by Israel, and which cannot even commence until the Lord comes. The right thing to pray for is what is prayed for in that beautiful collect in the Burial Service: "That it may please Thee shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and hasten Thy kingdom." The accomplishing of the number of God's elect is the first event. That is being carried forward. The present war is actually helping it, for the Word of God is now gathering out from the ranks of the conflicting

112 LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

armies a great number who are definitely accepting the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. When the elect are gathered out and removed from this benighted sphere of conflict, then (at least after a dark interval) the kingdom of Christ will be established, and no power shall be able to hinder it, and it shall extend north, south, east, and west, and all nations shall do Him service, "and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

"Oh, the joy to see THEE reigning,
THEE, my own beloved Lord :
Every tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
Brought to Thee with one accord.
Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned,
Unto earth's remotest end,
Glorified, adored, and owned."

V.

Now our last question :

Will not this war bring in ultimately a reign of unbroken peace ?

The answer is NO. If it should do so then the Word of God would be proved untrue, and that can NEVER BE. What does the Lord say ? This. "Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Alas ! if what we have experienced lately is only the beginning of sorrows, what will the consumma-

LIGHT ON THE PRESENT CRISIS. 113

tion be? Worse than anything we have ever experienced, for the Lord says, after the beginning of sorrows, "THEN shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." We cannot enlarge on this theme now, but those who are looking for unbroken peace or a golden age immediately after this present war will be grievously disappointed. The world's dark night has yet to come before the world experiences emancipation and glory—a night of atheism and blatant infidelity, a night in which men and women will seal their faith with their blood, a night that shall culminate in the manifestation of the great superman, the Antichrist, who, when he has reached the zenith of his power, will be crushed by the glorious Son of Man who will be seen coming in the clouds of heaven.

"A very pessimistic picture," you say. Perhaps so, but it is not one of my own invention, but of God's revelation.

"There is no comfort in all this for me," you say. Indeed there is, for there is a way of escape from the consummation of the present sorrows. Thank God if WE ARE BORN AGAIN, SOUNDLY CONVERTED THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS, AND ARE RESTING ON CALVARY'S FINISHED WORK, then, before that night breaks upon an unbelieving, Christ-rejecting, truth-neglecting world, the "Lord Himself shall

114 IS GOD FIRST, OR THIRD ?

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and 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.”

L. N.

 IS GOD FIRST, OR THIRD ?

“**W**HEN my wife and I got married,” said a Christian brother, “we determined to have everything very nice about us, to be careful and saving, and, at the same time, to serve the Lord. We went on those lines for about two years, and then the Lord took our eldest child from us, and He put me in one bed with influenza and my wife in another, and brought us to death’s door. When we were able to get about again, we started on another line altogether. Instead of putting the Lord *third*, we determined to put Him *first* ! ”

As the result of this, our brother, who sought no place for himself, was greatly used of God as a channel of blessing and encouragement to others.

How many Christians begin their married lives with the same intentions—“to have things very nice about them, to be careful and saving, and to serve the Lord”—while

A PRACTICAL HOPE.

115

their lives after plainly show that they are carrying them out, at least so far as giving the Lord only a *third* place is concerned !

Well would it be for them if God, in His faithfulness and mercy, would roughly stir up *their* nests also, causing them to start afresh with the purpose in their hearts that by His help they will not henceforth *live unto themselves*, but unto Him *which died for them*, and rose again (2 Cor. v. 15).

F. A.

A PRACTICAL HOPE.

MANY good Christians have a mistaken notion that the study of Scripture prophecy, of "things to come" and the order of their coming, leads to "star-gazing" and useless contemplation. They fancy that to be occupied with Christ and to live in the expectation of His coming is an *unnecessary luxury*. They tell us that we have all the needed incentives to holy life and consecrated toil without thinking of this subject at all. Only a few weeks ago a minister of the gospel told me he took "no interest whatever in the second coming of Christ." "No interest" in the subject to which God has made more than three hundred references in the New Testament ! "No interest" in the blessed hope to which God has given such an important place in His Word ! Fancy a man preaching the gospel with *the hope* of the gospel left out !

Such was not the preaching of the apostles and the early Church. The hope of the Lord's coming

touched and influenced their whole life and thought, and they evidently believed, and the Word of God makes clear, that there is no more intensely practical doctrine working in the world than the hope of the pre-millennial coming of Christ.

The practical character of this hope is specially seen in two of its effects :—

(1) IT IS A POWERFUL INCENTIVE TO SERVICE.

It is often stated that to believe that the world will never be converted by the present agencies must take the heart out of preaching, and “paralyse missionary enterprise and zeal,” that the preaching of this truth must lead lazy Christians to throw upon the coming and reign of Christ work that ought to be done now. If we avoid every truth that may be distorted and twisted in a wrong direction, what truths will be left to us? But there is no ground for this fear in this matter, for this hope has an exactly opposite effect upon those who hold it. Holding pre-millennial views, the apostles “turned the world upside down,” and were among the most earnest and enthusiastic missionaries the world has ever seen. The most warmly praised of all the primitive churches was that at Thessalonica, and it was emphatically a missionary church. Writing to its members, Paul says: “Ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad” (1 Thess. i. 7, 8). And yet the character of this highly praised missionary Church was largely formed upon

this hope we are now considering. They had "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and *to wait* (not for death, nor for the fall of Jerusalem, nor for the conversion or end of the world, but) *for His Son from heaven*" (v. 10).

If we realize that every sinner converted brings His coming nearer, and so "hastens" the day for which we long and toil and pray; if in our hearts we believe these things, how can we be careless, lazy, or indifferent to the call of God and the needs and claims of perishing men? If we realize the blessedness of His coming for His own, the awfulness of His coming to His enemies, and then the following glory of His reign, we shall be ready to do all that saved men and women can do to "rescue the perishing."

(2) THIS HOPE PURIFIES CHARACTER.

How beautifully this comes out in 1 John II. 28-III. 3: "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence [or 'boldness'], and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. . . . And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

This is God's way of holiness, His great means of making His people like their Lord. Of course the mere doctrine of the Lord's coming can do nothing for us. Our hope must be set on Him, and this keeps the heart abiding in Him and this "abiding" is the source of all holiness of life and effectiveness of service (John xv. 5).

The words here rendered "boldness" and "ashamed" are two of the strongest in the New Testament, and have a much wider and deeper

meaning than the translation gives them. The former word carries the ideas of freedom of access and familiarity of speech. Let me use a simple illustration. I can think of few things that would upset me so much this week as to know that I had to meet and spend an hour with the King of England next week. I pray for him, and I know a great deal about him, but I have never been "abiding" in his presence. I know very little of court etiquette and of the ways and customs of royal society. I would not know how to go in, how to come out again, or what rightly to say or do while I was in, and I feel sure I should be very uncomfortable. Now says the apostle, "Abide in Christ: cultivate a close, intimate acquaintance with Him. Make Him your nearest, dearest, and most intimate Friend. Get to know all about Him that you possibly can, and love Him with all your heart. Then when He comes you will not feel strange, or have any distressing embarrassment in His presence, but you will be reverently and happily at home with Him, and enjoy full and free communion."

The word here rendered "ashamed" really means *disgraced away* from His presence. I can think of times when I was not glad to see my parents: when I was at home and they were away, and I had disgraced myself during their absence; when I had done something unworthy of my name—something that I knew would hurt and grieve them when they got to know about it. I did not then long for their coming and my meeting with them. I was often tempted to wish they were not coming home at all. Many a time, when

the hour of their arrival drew nigh, I have crossed the field in front of the house and hidden behind the hedge. From there I have seen them enter the house, waited until they came out again, and then tried to steal in and get away to bed without meeting them. I was *disgraced away* from them at their coming. So, says John, "Abide in Him, make Him the centre and attraction of your thought, hope, and love. Live constantly in His presence, and let Him ever be the source of your life. Then there will be nothing in your life to hinder your communion with Him, nor to make you wish to hide your head in shame from Him at His coming." Could anything be more practical than this? This is the New Testament attitude and hope, and it cannot but purify our hearts and lives if we hold it. It was just when the Church lost this hope that she lost her separation from the world and her purity of walk. It was then she ceased to be a clear witness and mighty power for God among men. And the loss of that hope is the most fruitful cause of the widespread worldliness in the Church to-day.

We may preach against worldliness, and deplore its effects upon the Church as we may, but its great cure lies in the hope of our Lord's coming. In being given up to and expecting the Blessor, we have "the fulness of the blessing." If we have "this hope in Him," we shall clearly understand and gladly obey our Lord's command, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord" (Luke XII. 35, 36).

(Abridged from "When Jesus Comes.")

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. G. L.—It is a remarkable thing that men may personally be excellent, pious, humble Christians, yet through a distorted view of truth, or adherence to a mistaken ecclesiastical polity, be hard and relentless in their treatment of others. Meyrick, in his *Church in Spain*, describes Torquemada, the most merciless of inquisitors, as “sincere, devout,” and “not naturally devoid of pity.” Yet in his zeal for the party to which he belonged (a party which truly believed itself to be on divine ground, and considered all who refused to adhere to it as excommunicated heretics) he sent more than ten thousand victims to the stake. To be of an estimable character in private life is no guarantee that one’s course is according to the mind of God. See that you are guided by His own sure Word in the matter to which you refer, and not by the opinions of men, even if their personal piety be beyond question.

C.B.—If baptism possessed the paramount importance that you seem to attach to it, it is passing strange that the apostle Paul *thanked God* that he had baptised none at Corinth but the two or three he names in 1 Corinthians I. 14–17. He evidently regarded himself as sent, not to baptise, but to proclaim the glad tidings. The eleven, on the other hand, were distinctly sent to baptise. This Matthew xxviii. 19 plainly declares. And herein lies one of the great differences between the commission entrusted to them and that which was given to Paul, and of which he speaks in such passages as Galatians I. 16, Romans xvi. 25, Ephesians iii. 6, 7.

DIVINE PHILANTHROPY.

“Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may
shew **THE KINDNESS OF GOD** unto him?”

2 SAMUEL IX. 3.

“**The KINDNESS and love OF GOD** our Saviour towards
man appeared.”—TITUS III. 4.

THE story of Mephibosheth beautifully illustrates the wonderful **KINDNESS OF GOD**. In the original “love toward man” is one word, “philanthropia”; hence the title of this paper. “Appeared” is the word used for the rising or dawning of the heavenly bodies. It occurs also in Acts XXVII. 20, and the black hopelessness spoken of in that verse well describes the miserable plight of Mephibosheth before the kindness of God appeared to him in God’s anointed, and also the darkness and shadow of death in which *we* sat, until the day-spring from on high visited us and dawned in our hearts.

Let us look at the analogy between Mephibosheth’s condition and man’s moral or spiritual state before the intervention of grace. He belonged to a fallen race. He was the descendant of a disobedient and therefore God-rejected head. Saul, his grandfather, had been endowed by God with kingly power but had used it simply for self-gratification. Hence he was set aside and all his posterity with him. *Our* descent from, and link with, a disobedient head

are clearly manifested by the fact that "we were sometimes disobedient." Well for us if we have changed our race, for in Adam all die, but to those who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation.

Moreover, Mephibosheth was lame, a helpless cripple, dependent on the power of another to carry him. On the day when the dreadful tidings came that Saul and Jonathan had fallen in the battle of Gilboa, the nurse picked up her five-year-old charge and in her hurry to escape let him fall, maiming him for life. His lameness was through no fault of his ; and our rebellious hearts are prone to plead that, if we are helpless in the power of sin, "slaves of divers lusts and passions," it is not our fault, because we were born in sin and we cannot help it. But instead of reasoning thus, let us fix our thought on what *God* can do. The kindness of God in David succoured the helpless offspring of Saul, and "when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly."

Then the question is asked, *Where is he?* Mephibosheth was not in Jerusalem, the metropolis of the kingdom at that time, the centre of earthly blessing. He was far away, on the other side of Jordan, at Lodebar. If the meaning which some have given to this word, "without pasture," is correct, it fitly describes the world, a dry and thirsty desert where no water is. In the far country to which

we had wandered, we were "spending our lives in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Not much pasture there! Thank God, if we have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd. He delights to lead us to the green pastures, and beside the waters of quietness where our souls are abundantly satisfied.

Mephibosheth, altogether ignorant of the character of the King of Israel, was hiding from him. David had to make searching inquiry before he could learn of his whereabouts. Nor can we be surprised at his fear. In the East when a dynasty was overthrown, the new king set himself to exterminate, root and branch, the family of his predecessor, a brutal but effective way of preventing "wars of succession." Perhaps he said to himself, "David is like other kings, and if he lays hold of me, I shall be a dead man." By nature we too were devoid of understanding, and in our ignorance we thought that God was just such another as ourselves. That darkness has passed for us who are saved. "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true."

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The blessing came to Mephibosheth from the man he feared, not from the man who should have helped him. Look at Ziba. His name means "plantation," and he was of the earth,

earthy ; a man of more substance than principle. The downfall of his master's fortunes had evidently left his unimpaired. And if we may judge by the size of his family and the number of his servants, he seems to have lived in plenty, while his master's grandson depended on charity. His subsequent conduct shows that he was willing to stoop to anything, even falsehood and treachery, for earthly gain. "The hireling careth not for his sheep." What a train of successors Ziba has had, pastors who have fleeced, not fed, the flock of God. But King David, like a true shepherd, used his power to succour this helpless sheep.

David had an oath to keep. At his pathetic parting with Jonathan he had sworn in the name of the Lord to show kindness to Jonathan's children. But David went further than his oath. Jonathan had asked him to show kindness, and David showed something infinitely more precious, *the kindness of God*. David had himself experienced this kindness when hunted like a partridge on the mountain by Saul, and when, after his sad declension, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God at Ziklag.

Still further did he exceed his promise. It had reference only to Jonathan's children, but for Jonathan's sake he was willing to show kindness to *any* of the house of Saul. God's mercy has gone far beyond the limits of His

covenanted people. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL men."

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With what trembling of heart Mephibosheth would hear the summons of the royal messenger. But when ushered into the royal presence he was met with the comforting words, "Fear not." God's messenger to us was none other than His own beloved Son. At His advent Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him, and even the shepherds of Bethlehem were sore afraid, until they received the assurance, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." To the cry of penitence, "I am a sinful man, O Lord," He still answers, "Fear not." Though the waves and winds of adversity may rage and roar around us, still through the gloom and tumult comes that cheering voice, "It is I, be not afraid." The love of God and fear cannot abide in the same heart, for perfect love casteth out fear.

Mephibosheth might have come boasting of his royal birth, but he took the place of humility. He called himself "a dead dog." In Oriental countries, where the dog is not the friend of man but a scavenger, no name could be viler or more contemptible. To take the low place, as a vile, hell-deserving sinner, with no hope but in God's mercy, is the way to profit by the kindness of God. Alas! how

many souls have missed it through foolish pride and self-esteem.

Now look at the ground of Mephibosheth's acceptance. There was certainly nothing in him to attract David, for "the lame and blind were hated of David's soul" (2 Sam. v. 8). He would be no ornament in the court, a helpless cripple among the king's stalwart six hundred. No, it was not for his own sake he was blessed, but for the sake of Jonathan whose love to David had been so wonderful. Yet this love sinks into insignificance when compared with the love that ever subsisted between the Father and the Son. "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us . . . *through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*" Utterly unlovely and unlovable we were by nature, yet God has accepted us in His Beloved, and for His dear Name's sake has pardoned our offences and made us His children.

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How royally David acted. Mercy, a pardon, a promise of life was probably the utmost of Mephibosheth's trembling expectations. The king might have made him a recipient of charity, a pensioner; but no, he made him a landed proprietor, he gave him an inheritance. But his grace went further still. When Darius, the despot of Persia, in gratitude for life saved,

wished to confer on his physician the highest honour, he gave him a seat at the King's table. David therefore bestowed on Jonathan's son the highest honour possible when he caused him to eat bread at his table as one of the king's sons.

Thank God, His thoughts are not our thoughts.

“Trembling I had hoped for mercy,
Some lone place within the door,
But the crown, the robe, the mansion
All were ready long before.”

Marvellous as is the blessing of the forgiveness of sins, it is but the first step. God has made us “heirs, according to the hope of eternal life,” partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, joint-heirs with Christ. The greatest blessedness of all is the company of Christ. “Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be *with Me* where I am.” The Blessor is greater even than the blessing. Mephibosheth appreciated this. When Ziba had cheated him of his lands, he said, “Let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king has come again in peace” (2 Sam. XIX. 30). Do our hearts respond to such love and delight in His company? A gentleman who had been from home for several months, was visiting a bazaar with his little daughter and a friend. Lest his daughter should trouble his friend, he gave her some money, telling her to run away and spend it. With tears in her eyes

she said, "I don't want your money, father. IT'S YOU I WANT. Don't you know you have been away from us all these months?" Precious to a father's heart is such love, and God delights in any such response in our hearts to His mighty love.

May our hearts open more and more to the gracious influence of Divine Philanthropy, the wonderful kindness of God.

D. R.

HARVESTS.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."—JEREMIAH VIII. 20.

WHAT a goodly sight is a harvest field, with its rich crops and busy reapers! But how depressing to look upon the same field when the harvest is past. No grain waves in the wind, no reapers are in view, and the field is bare. Life is now extinct where once it manifested itself in varied forms. And what makes the sight sadder is the reflection that it is final. For the warm vivifying breath of summer with its power of productiveness has departed, and the chill of an approaching winter is at hand.

Such was the vision *in a spiritual sense* seen by Jeremiah. With weeping eyes he had reviewed that people among whom the arm of Jehovah had so signally been displayed in days of old. True, there had been occasions even in those bygone times of happy memory when there was much to

HARVESTS.

129

deplore. Did not Moses, for instance, behold folly in Israel again and again? Yes. Nevertheless he also beheld the marks of Jehovah's presence evidenced in their repentance. Again, when disaster overtook the people during the days of the judges we see many examples of confession and of restoration. Further, we trace amid declension during the times of the kings signs of the reviving presence of Jehovah. Never, thus far, had a time arrived when every sign of it seemed absent and when not a spiritual movement denoted the power of recovery.

Alas! *this* was what Jeremiah had to bewail. It was the perception of this that evoked from his stricken heart the lament: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Let *us* then in a spirit somewhat akin to that of the prophet seek to look upon former scenes of spiritual blessing and ponder the fact of their cessation as we should. Let us also observe present fields of activity with that spirit of prayer so befitting us, especially in a day of sorrow such as this.

HARVESTS THAT ARE PAST.

First of all we will consider *those great and plentiful harvests in Jerusalem* that so mightily attested the presence of God in apostolic times. Three thousand souls are secured for Christ through the appeal of Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts II. 41); the word triumphs until the number of the men is five thousand (chap. IV. 4); multitudes both of men and women are added (chap V. 14); the word of God increases, and the number of the

disciples multiplies in Jerusalem and a great company of the priests is obedient to the faith (chap. vi. 7). And after Saul of Tarsus is converted the churches have rest throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and are edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit are multiplied. What productiveness, what abundant fruitfulness, what reaping is here. Wonderful harvests indeed !

But where is the mighty impulse that swayed such multitudes and made thousands of Jews flock to the gospel standard like doves to their windows ? Gradually it slackened. The ominous beginning of a change in the Spirit's activity we can perceive in the apostle's words : " So we turn to the Gentiles " (Acts XIII. 46). Finally it ceased and Jerusalem was destroyed.

Think now of *those wonderful harvests in Gentile countries* described in the book of Acts and also in secular history. Paul, Barnabas, Silas and others labour untiringly and successfully. Many cities in Asia Minor and in Europe are visited ; great numbers hear the gospel ; people of all shades of character and in all stations of life submit to the Lord, so that churches are established widely over the habitable earth and a bright light shines amidst heathen darkness. Subsequently the gospel extends to northern Africa, and Church history declares that many Christian assemblies dotted those regions. Indeed when the most crucial conflict since apostolic times arose in the Church, when Arius sought to impose his subtle denial of the deity of Christ upon the people of God, that part of the world became the very

HARVESTS.

131

centre of the Spirit's activity, for there it was that faithful Athanasius unravelled the dark plans of the evil one and refuted the fair but specious speeches of the instrument he had put forward ; there it was that he laboured and suffered through evil report and good, that the truth of the gospel might remain with us. Little do the Christians of modern times realize their indebtedness under God to a native of Africa for the intelligent, determined and successful stand he made for the truth.

But where is the Christian light and activity of Asia Minor now ? And what about northern Africa to-day, once the home both of Athanasius and Augustine ? Like a pall Mohammedan darkness lies over those lands. And although devoted missionaries rescue souls therein the very character of their labours but emphasizes the darkness reigning in lands which were once the bases of Christian light and activity. In those dark places of the earth one might almost read in the forehead of their inhabitants the awful significance of the words : " The harvest is past."

Look at another *great harvest of blessing reaped some four hundred years ago*, the effects of which remain until this day. When Martin Luther, profoundly exercised and enlightened of God, committed himself to the defence of the truth a wave of blessing rolled over Germany, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The truth made giant strides during the lifetime of this one man—Luther. But at his death the tide of blessing began to ebb, and since then comparatively little change has taken place in its boundaries. Romanists have not now the

opened ear for the word of God which they had in the day of visitation during the sixteenth century. It is not forgotten that Jews, heathen, Moham-medans or Romanists may receive blessing even now ; we are referring entirely to *harvests* of blessing, and the harvest we have been contemplating is past.

A remarkable harvest in which the destiny of an individual is involved stands out with great distinctness in Mark vi. We refer to the testimony of John the Baptist and the conduct of Herod the king. It is a day of revival in which many are affected by the burning words of John. The wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod, also Susanna and many others are drawn to Christ (see Luke viii. 2, 3), while Herod looks on. Even Manaen who had been brought up with him—a foster brother—is afterwards found in the Christian assembly at Antioch, where he participated with his brethren in laying hands on Barnabas and Saul on the occasion of their special and memorable call to the work of evangelization. For a while it seemed as if Herod himself would surely be included in the tide of blessing. He feared John, observed him, did many things, and heard him gladly. Alas ! in deliberate self-will, and because he loves his sin, he refuses to accept the message in its entirety. He reserves to himself the right to say what part he will submit to and what part he will exclude. He misses the blessing. Like a tidal wave it sweeps on and leaves him high and dry. Poor Herod ! Verily it might have been said to him : “ You had a wonderful opportunity, it came close to you, lingered beside you, caressed you ; but you would

HARVESTS.

133

not receive it and now it has gone for ever. Truly in your case 'The harvest is past.' " For Herod ultimately beheaded John and mocked Christ.

Now consider *those present-day civilized countries* where for many generations the gospel has been preached with more or less faithfulness. No doubt there are many alive in all parts of the world who can still revert to and recollect what they beheld in 1859, when the arm of the Lord was extended so widely in the salvation of the lost. But we are especially exercised to know what the Lord may be pleased to accomplish during this present generation. Especially are we looking to the Lord in respect of Europe in this day of her terrible plight. For the foundations of society are being shaken. Men are being hurled into eternity in hundreds of thousands while relatives in all parts of the earth tremble and weep. It is said that in the stricken lands many are fleeing to the Rock of Ages for shelter from a greater storm than the present. Touching tales have been told of contrite hearts finding in the Lord Jesus Christ that rest and peace so conspicuous by its absence in the institutions of men. It is said that the very terror of the self-destructiveness manifestly inherent in human civilization has driven many heart-broken souls to Him who came to heal the broken-hearted and who, once Man of Sorrows, knew so well and predicted so accurately what the end of that civilization would be. But shall this rise into a tide of blessing? Shall a cry to the Lord arise in the hour of man's extremity such as has not been heard for centuries? We have heard of the repentance of Nineveh when a whole city cried " mightily

to God," but will there be a cry in this generation from these lands where the truth, though plainly declared, has been increasingly rejected by those who were hardening their hearts in self-sufficiency?

And will *Christians* evince their catholic character by a spirit of intercession that shall comprise the entire area of distress? Or will they fail to rise beyond national boundaries? Shall it have to be owned that their prayers are hindered by a refusal to submit to the chastening hand of God while in spirit, if not in fact, they appeal to arms? Surely if the Church of God interceded as she should, divine affections would be exhibited and a harvest of blessing would ensue such as has not been witnessed for many days.

HARVEST PAST AND SUMMER ENDED

Finally, look forward to *a future day*—perhaps very near—and *consider the conditions prevailing in those countries we have just referred to*. In few words it may be described. The Lord Himself will have come and translated to meet Him in the air the redeemed of all ages. The Holy Spirit will also have personally withdrawn from the earth (2 Thess. II. 7). The remaining so-called Christian community will then be left without a ray of divine light or guidance. In the whole extent of Christendom there will not be found at that time a single Christian properly so called. The public Christian profession will have become nauseous to Christ. He will be unable to go on with it a moment longer and will spue it out of His mouth (Rev. III. 16). And what a precursor of evil coming upon the earth that will be! Will there be a

HARVESTS.

135

resting-spot for the alarmed of that day such as can be found to-day? Not one. Will there be a word of God spoken in the ear of the perplexed who will not know in which direction to turn? Not a word. Spiritual darkness there will be; blasphemy will increase on every side; anarchy will rock the nations; order, as it begins to assume shape, will be found to be diabolical in character. Great then will be the activity of evil unrestrained, but cohesive and forcibly directed. Then will the man of sin, the lawless one, the Antichrist, pretend to enlighten the nations by a lie. And he will be believed. In the very countries where the truth had been declared and repudiated by the mass of the people will words of counsel from the pit sink into the souls of men. For seeing they rejected "the love of the truth, that they might be saved," God shall send them strong delusion "that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. II. 10-12). In that day and in the regions described the harvest will be past in the most absolute sense of the word. And not only will the harvest be past but *the summer will be ended*. God will not then be shining in hearts (2 Cor. IV. 6). There will be no proclamation then of the glad tidings of the grace of God. Then with awful exactness it will have to be said: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." May the thought of it make us a hundredfold more earnest while it is called "To-day."

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THE BELIEVER'S EL DORADO.

“EL DORADO,” or “the city of gold,” was the fabulous town situated in the wilds of South America, in the vain search for which many an adventurer in the sixteenth century lost his life. The saved man has discovered the true “El dorado”: it is no mere earthly paradise with streets of gold and palaces of emeralds; it is the gift of God, and it lasts for ever—it is “eternal life.”

What is “eternal life”? No definition has yet been found for ordinary life; and certainly no definition can do justice to the believer’s “El dorado.” Truth is always greater than our statement of it, and especially is this so when God’s wonderful gift is in question. However, those who have eternal life know that they have the capacity to enjoy God; they have the source of endless satisfaction within them, like a spring of water whose flow is eternal.

But if we cannot say *what* eternal life is we know *where* it is: it is “in Christ,” for He is the “Eternal Life” (1 John v. 20). Having Christ the believer has that which meets all the needs of his many-sided nature. As a sinner he needs deliverance from future punishment: Christ his Substitute bore the wrath due to him; the penalty has been exhausted. And Christ in resurrection-glory removes the sense of present guilt from his conscience. “It

THE BELIEVER'S EL DORADO. 137

is Christ that died ; yea rather that is risen again ; who is even at the right hand of God ; who also maketh intercession for us." He is no longer the slave of sin, for the Son has made him free. His mind is now at rest for he is in touch with Him who is " the Truth."

And apart from the question of its sin, the human soul has needs that the Eternal Life alone can satisfy. We need an object to love : Christ is the eternal Lover, love for whom transcends and sanctifies all other loves. The soul is meant to cherish ideals : the redeemed soul has ever before it, in Christ, perfection in a Person. We cannot be happy in idleness : Christ is the perfect Master whose service is joy. We need to be ever growing in the knowledge of truth : our Teacher holds all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge at His disposal, and is Himself the Truth. We need a body that is free from all the trammels and infirmities that harass and weaken us in our present condition : our bodies are to be changed into the likeness of His body of glory.

Whatever our need, it is met in Christ. Apart from other reasons, we shall never fall away when we are in the better land, for if any thought of departing from our Saviour and Lord did occur to us, we should at once annihilate it by exclaiming, " To whom shall we go ; *Thou hast the words of eternal life.*"

E. A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. H. AND OTHERS.—The question as to whether it is right for a Christian to cultivate his vegetable plot on Sundays is one which, in view of present conditions, must be faced. If tested by the law of Moses, the man who works on Sundays most certainly does not come under its condemnation, for the law applied to the Sabbath, which is the seventh day, and not to the first day. Nor is there any commandment in the New Testament as to the first day of the week.

But let us not be in haste to regard this as the conclusion of the whole matter. There is something further to be considered. A Christian is one who has believed in Christ to the saving of the soul, who is indwelt by the Holy Ghost, so that, if true to his calling, his desire will be to walk according to the Spirit. Now whilst the believer is not under law but under grace, the Scriptures affirm that the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in those who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. viii. 4).

The law of Moses commands: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (Exod. xx. 9). It is evident that God's will for man is that he shall keep one day in seven free from ordinary toil. Doubtless this is good for the body, but surely the good of the soul and that which was due to God was very definitely in view, for the Jews were told that it was to be "a *holy* day, a sabbath of rest *to the Lord*" (Exod. xxxv. 2). Thus if the

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 139

day were rightly observed it was kept *to the Lord* and not merely as a day of rest.

It is evident that the Jews attended synagogue on that day, for Paul, when preaching at Antioch, referred to the Scriptures as being read at the synagogues every sabbath day (Acts XIII. 27). Surely, then, every right-minded Christian would avoid toil on the Lord's day and devote it to the Lord, remembering too how the disciples were in the habit of coming together on that day to break bread. Are we as Christians going to fall short of the devotedness of a godly Jew—we who have been so infinitely blessed?

The plea of national necessity in view of the shortage of food is urged, and the Lord's words as to the sabbath being made for man and not man for the sabbath (Mark II. 27), and as to how a man would pull his ass or his ox out of a pit on the sabbath day (Luke XIV. 5) are quoted. But in neither case did our Lord plead that labour should be done, but rather that the sabbath day should not interfere with deeds of mercy. On the first of these occasions He refuted a mere tradition of the Pharisees who found fault with the disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath and eating to satisfy their hunger. On the second occasion He showed up their inconsistency in objecting to His healing a man with dropsy on the sabbath.

Is not the present time a test as to how far Christians really value the privilege of devoting the first day of the week to the Lord? If we but truly believed how richly God has blessed us, we surely would earnestly devote one day in seven

140 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

to Him and would not readily be robbed of the privilege. Recently when out walking before breakfast, I came across a Christian man working on his plot, having risen early rather than encroach on the Lord's Day. Surely such a sacrifice is acceptable to the Lord and must commend itself to every true-hearted Christian as the better way.

The observance of the Lord's Day which has been such a boon to this land in years past is, alas ! passing away. There is, it is to be feared, very great danger that the widespread taking up of garden work will help on still further the secularizing of the Lord's Day, and surely none of His people would willingly do anything to help in that direction by their example. Shall we not do well to remember the words of Christ, " Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life " (John vi. 27). How needful is this word since men, while deeply concerned as to the food for the body, have little desire for the bread of life. May the present time of testing, when everything is being shaken, cause us to seek those things that abide for ever.

One word more : let those of us who would not think of doing ordinary work on the Lord's Day be careful that we do not use our time less profitably than those who work on their plots, thus falling into the snare of the Pharisees, who whilst very careful about many things left undone weightier matters. Do not let us forget that it is *not what a man refrains from doing, but rather what he does* that is the test of his devotedness to his Lord and Master !

(A. F. P.)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

NO student of Scripture can fail to be impressed with the important place which the Holy Spirit occupies in the sacred canon.

As with eager anticipation we enter upon our perusal of the precious volume, we are at once introduced to His activities, and when, at length, with reverent hands and worshipping hearts, we are about to close the book, it is with the call of the Spirit—in unison with the Bride—sounding in our ears.

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New Testament we see that whereas in the former the Holy Spirit was a heavenly visitor who came as occasion required, and took possession of whom He would for the carrying out of God's will for a particular time ; in the latter He descended on the day of Pentecost and took up His abode here. It is with His operations as recorded in the Old Testament that we are mainly concerned in this paper.

We propose to consider briefly :—

- I. His Personality,
- II. His Prerogative, and
- III. His Power.

I. His Personality. Let us be quite clear at the outset as to the personality of the Holy Spirit. Some think and speak of Him as if He

142 HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

were merely an influence for good, but the most cursory reading of the Scripture should immediately disabuse the mind of any such idea.

We need also to be warned of another danger. Many speak of Him as the third Person in the Godhead, and we are apt to use this in a relative sense, making Him inferior to the Son, and, inferentially, making the Son inferior to God. We do not wish to find fault with terms, but we do well to adhere to the language of Scripture, and there we find that the Godhead consists of—

God the Father,

God the Son,

God the Holy Spirit,

equal in power and glory, and each possessing every divine attribute—*God is one.*

Incomprehensible it may be, and is, but then the mystery is divine ; and in presence of the majesty of the Godhead we bow low in becoming reverence and in holy worship. If for a moment we consider the functions of the Godhead :—

God the Father, is the Source of everything ;

God the Son, is the Executor of the divine will ;

God the Holy Spirit, is the active Agent, or Divine Administrator in this World.

Let us see how He acted. Turning to Genesis i. 2, we find that, in a scene of physical darkness and chaos, He “ moved upon the face of

HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES. 143

the waters," and, at the command of God, light triumphed, and order prevailed. In verse 26 of this chapter we see that when man was to be created, the Godhead first took counsel saying, "Let Us make man, etc.," and the "Us" included the Holy Spirit.

As the result of the fall, moral darkness and disorder set in, and once more we find the Holy Spirit active. The fact that God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. vi. 3), makes it quite evident that He had been working. We have no doubt He spoke through Abel; from such scriptures as Job xxi. 13-15 and Jude 14, 15, we may safely infer that He spoke through Enoch, and, perhaps, other Patriarchs, while 1 Peter iii. 18-20, and 2 Peter ii. 5, leave us no room to doubt that He worked through Noah. Here we learn that God's mercy was ever going out towards His fallen creatures, and that the Holy Spirit found His delight in pressing upon men the claims of God in righteousness, in order that bowing to His claims they might escape His judgment. Two verses in Nehemiah ix. cover the whole period of the journeyings of the children of Israel; let us read verses 20 and 21:—

"Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst

144 HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

Thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing ; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not."

From the opening sentence we learn that, though He is seldom mentioned in the historical account of their wanderings, it was the Holy Spirit who carried into effect every behest of the Godhead with regard to them. Through judges and kings He worked ; into the lips of the "sweet singer of Israel" and others He put songs of praise ; by means of prophets He made known the mind of God, and, though they understood not His communications, yet, at His bidding, they delivered His message—"holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21).

Thus we see how the Holy Spirit, as the Representative of the Godhead in this world, gave effect to all that the Godhead had decreed, and, in observing this, let us once more remind ourselves that the decrees of the Godhead were His own decrees, for He is—God the Holy Spirit.

II. His Prerogative.—This presents an interesting subject for study. We find as we read through the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit exercised His divine prerogative in choosing just whom He pleased for a given time. To-day, He works principally through believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, amongst

HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES. 145

whom He has taken up His abode, and whom He will never leave. It was not so in the days of which we write ; then, as we have already remarked, He placed whom He would at His disposal for a specific purpose. It might be an exemplary saint, or it might perchance be a wicked sinner, all were God's creatures, and as such all were at His service. We see in Exodus xxxi. 1-5 how He took possession of Bezaleel, and fitted him for special work connected with the Tabernacle. In the well-known story of Balaam we learn how the Holy Spirit used that wicked man as the one through whom God's delight in His people should be made known ; and from whom we should learn how, notwithstanding failure, rebellion, and all that seemed so deplorable, God found pleasure in those whom He had redeemed, and whom He loved to call His people (Num. xxiv. 2, etc.).

In the book of Judges we glean plentiful instruction as to the sovereignty of His choice. We fear we cannot speak of any of the men mentioned therein as being distinguished for their piety, while the character of some is not by any means lovely, yet the Holy Spirit, in the exercise of His right, claimed their service, used them as He pleased, and has written for us the record of their success and failure, in order that we may emulate the one and eschew the other. This we find also in Kings and Prophets ; limited space forbids our enlarging

146 HOLY SPIRIT IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES.

on the subject, but our readers will profit greatly by tracing the story of how the Holy Spirit fitted and filled one and another for a certain period, and for a definite purpose.

III. His Power.—We have learned—have we not?—that power is always associated with the Holy Spirit, and indeed if we were asked: “What is the great attribute of the Holy Spirit?” we would unhesitatingly answer, “Power.” “Power belongeth unto God,” but the Holy Spirit is God. To recapitulate, we see that power demonstrated in Genesis 1. when light succeeded darkness, and order took the place of chaos, and yet again when from the dust of the ground man was formed. What divine power was that which carried the children of Israel through their desert journey!

That same prayer enabled Elijah to make the widow's cruse to abound; it empowered Elisha to raise the Shunammite's son, and to assure Naaman of cleansing. Later, we find that it gave courage to the three Hebrew children, and it closed the lions' mouths against Daniel; it gave boldness to the prophets of the Lord to witness in face of much opposition, and it sustained His servants in the hour of deepest trial. But we would encourage our readers to trace for themselves the operations of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times.

“NEGLECT NOT.”

147

In doing so we will find real profit, we will raise our hearts in thankfulness to God for giving us that same spirit to dwell in us, and to abide with us. We will also earnestly desire that we may not grieve Him, and that we may not quench Him ; but that we may be in that condition that He can carry on His present service, first, of showing unto us the things of Christ, and, next, that He may use us when, where, and as He pleases, for the honour and glory of the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

W. B. D.

“NEGLECT NOT.”

HEBREWS II. 1-3.

WHAT a wonderful basis the Spirit of God has laid for the exhortation He gives in these verses. He refers in chapter I. to the glories of the Son in relation to the great work of salvation. He shows that all partial and fragmentary communications have ceased, and the revelation now made is in the Son. When HE speaks, every shadow passes, and every mist is dissolved in the glory of that light which reveals in its shining the whole of the vast purpose of God. He Who is God has come and spoken to men in human speech. The Heir of all things came to His inheritance and, finding it under judgment because of sin, accomplished purification by His sacrifice. Now all things are committed into the Son's hands, and

on the ground of His sacrificial work He will banish by His power every force of evil, and reconcile all things, bringing everything back to God in the blessing of a new and eternal relationship. Blessed, glorious Lord! how the redeemed creation shall swell with the mighty uprisings of praise to Him, “the Father of eternity.”

But, until the predestined moment He is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. Can He be a subject of comparison with angels? Surely not, there is only contrast to be found in every way. He is in everything above and beyond them, as the Old Testament scriptures here adduced fully prove. Unto which of the angels had God ever said, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee”? How can He be thought of as on a level with angels when they are summoned to worship Him? He, indeed, is hailed as God whose throne is for ever and ever, the Lover of righteousness and Hater of iniquity. He is the One who abides unchanged and unchangeable, who sits where angels can only approach with veiled face. They are His servants made ministers to those who are heirs of the salvation of which He is the Author.

With such glories as the basis of the testimony uttered by the Lord, what earnest heed we should give to it—“the things which we have heard,” which the spirit of truth has communicated to us—“lest at any time we should let slip.” These are things from which we may very easily slip unless there is from day to day occupation with them. We must give them our most earnest attention since all is centred in and revealed through that

“NEGLECT NOT.”

149

all-glorious One of whom we speak. In view of this, *not* to give most earnest heed to these things is to do despite to the grace and wisdom of God. There is no further revelation to make. It is all complete and divinely perfect, and if to this we are not giving heed then we are suffering irreparable loss which the judgment seat of Christ alone will make fully manifest. “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,” will it mean nothing to us to forfeit His approval, and lose the good we might have possessed by doing His will? It will mean much to us, I am sure, in that day. “How shall we escape” when it is the word of such a One as is set before us in the first chapter? But the question of *our* escape is put on a much higher level than that of actual transgression or disobedience, it is “*if we NEGLECT so great salvation.*”

If you possessed a large estate would you *neglect* it? Would it not receive at your hand careful attention that all its resources might be worked and developed? Our “great salvation” is an estate of infinite value and extent. What wealth of grace and glory fills it! What streams of living water! What abundant fruit can be gathered from the trees of the Lord’s planting beside its green pastures and quiet waters! Do we till the soil of our spiritual heritage? Do we dig for the precious things that are hidden beneath its surface? Do we hear and heed the word spoken of old to the man of faith? (Gen. XIII. 14-18).

JNO. B.

THE ALTAR FOURSQUARE.

[Psalms xxv., xxvi., and xxvii. form a trilogy, which, like a picture in three panels, gives the normal development of a Christian's life : Psalm xxv. introducing for the first time in the book the twin idea of confession of sin and its forgiveness ; Psalm xxvi. telling of the practical cleanness for which a redeemed man thirsts ; and Psalm xxvii. revealing the assured outcome of these, viz. a soul enlightened, dwelling in God's house, cloistered in His pavilion, and offering, as a girded priest, sacrifices of jubilee.

The centre of the series—the hinge on which all turns—is found in the text "*I will wash mine hands in innocency,*" the writer thus pledging himself to lift up holy hands free from defilement, as he approaches the house that he has loved, adding, "*So will I compass Thine altar, O Lord !*"]

LET us accompany the Psalmist in his journey round God's altar, that four-square meeting place of man's misery and of God's grace. We shall surely find that light is shed on some of those deeper values of the Cross to which the altar points, and as we walk it may be that our hearts will burn by the way. It will be seen that history, geography, nature and revelation alike combine their testimony to confirm the truth of what is stated.

(a) Starting from THE NORTH, we remind ourselves that the Law ordained that there the priest must slay the victim (Lev. i. 11) ; death and judgment must be executed on that side and on no other. Why should this be ? What meaning did the Jewish mind, so

THE ALTAR FOURSQUARE.

151

exquisitely sensitive to physical impressions, connect with the north? A glance at the map will give us an idea. In the far north of Palestine lie the frowning, snow-capped hills of Hermon; from that range runs the river Jordan, emptying itself in the Dead Sea, apt and familiar figures of death and final judgment. Thence swept the biting winter winds (Job xxxvii. 9), and from that quarter came the hordes of Israel's bitterest foes: Syrian, Assyrian, and Babylonian, to ravage and enslave. From all this, it is easy to understand why death, the king of terrors, sits enthroned on the north side of the altar.

The soul's first acquaintance with the Cross is always as a place of judgment, sweeping, final and absolute: God and Christ in a darkness unpierced by human eyes, in that curtained chamber unpenetrated by human feet, from whence emerged Emmanuel's orphan cry, "Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani," giving us the blessed assurance that henceforth judgment is exhausted and there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

(b) Passing to THE EAST (sun-rising) we find in Scripture that a remarkable name is attached to that side: it is called "the place of ashes" (Lev. i. 16), and thus the witness of an accepted sacrifice. The early rays of the morning light, as they fell upon the east side of God's altar, revealed just a heap of ashes. What will this

suggest to us? Again the atlas will awaken and inform the mind. Straight across the desert lay the Euphrates, Ur of the Chaldees, and Eden, birthplace and cradle both of Israel and the human race. The thought of Christ's return was habitually associated with the east (Mal. iv. 2; Hab. iii. 3), and needless to say, everything turns on what He will find when He does come—hence David's prayer, "Turn to ashes thy burnt sacrifice" (Ps. xx. 3, margin), is equivalent to saying, "Let the searching light of Thy presence shine upon an accepted offering." For us, this prayer receives its truest interpretation on the resurrection morning, when "on the first day of the week, very early, the sun having risen," Mary of Magdala came to the empty tomb and received from a risen Saviour's lips the message of identification (John xx. 17).

Henceforth, saints can read in that heap of ashes (later, carried to a clean place, outside the camp, Lev. vi. 10, 11 with John xix. 40, 41) the witness of their eternal acceptance in the Beloved, and so rejoice in the ministry of the east side.

(c) Turning to THE SOUTH, we find we must tread carefully, as living waters are flowing from beneath the south side of the altar (Ezek. xlvii. 1-5), thence the river of God takes its spring, deepening with every measuring of the celestial guide. If we follow those waters,

THE ALTAR FOURSQUARE.

153

ankles, knees, and loins will in turn be reached, and finally, when walk, worship, and sanctified service are controlled by the life-giving Spirit, we find "waters to swim in and a river that cannot be passed over"—in simple speech a life absorbed in and saturated with the presence and fellowship of the Son of God. To this again geography must add its testimony, and we find that to the south of the Holy Land lay the fertile plains of Judah, the sunny south land with its springs (Jos. xv. 19), imaging to the Hebrew mind that full and abiding blessing for which his soul panted.

There, too, was Hebron (fellowship) and Beersheba (well of the oath), and many another ancient witness to the grace and fidelity of God. To us the "south side" of the Cross speaks of that fullness of life in the Spirit for which many are seeking, with what measure of success perhaps our own conscience may tell us.

(d) Finally, THE WEST. Here stood the laver, symbol of God's Word, cleansing His priests as they prepared to pass into the sanctuary, there to enjoy deeper truths and to receive fuller insight into divine realities. On the west coast of Palestine lies the Great Sea, associated in Scripture with sorrow and unrest (Isa. LVII. 20 ; Jer. XLIX. 23), telling of strange and bitter experiences from which men would glean a harvest of rare and radiant blessing if

they passed through them with God. The laver has long since corroded into rust, the tabernacle has crumbled into dust, but that to which they dimly pointed, Christ's Word and Christ's Person in their consoling power, remain firmly rooted for our faith. Many of my readers may recently have been called to walk in ways of sorrow, but in the laver of God's Word they may wash their wounds and get an anodyne to their woe in going and "telling Jesus."

These are ancient things, but as we leave the altar let us gather up our spoils and humbly pray that He who died in loneliness and shame may enchain our hearts as we look at Him as and where He was, that blinded to all else by the glory of that light we may live as vassals of Christ Jesus our Lord.

H. ST. J.

Argentina.

THE JOY OF CHRIST.

"For the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

THESE words forcibly remind us of our blessed Lord's humanity. As Son of Man He was supported through the unspeakable sorrows of Calvary by the anticipation of the joy that awaited Him after the completion

THE JOY OF CHRIST.

155

of His sufferings. We thus realize that our Lord's humanity was not only sinless, but complete.

His was the joy of *a work accomplished*. We remember how He told His disciples that His spirit was "straitened" by the thought of that terrible baptism which He was shortly to endure, and the immediate anticipation of which forced from Him as it were great drops of blood. We have all experienced in some measure a burden on the spirit when we looked forward to a painful task and difficult duty that confronted us. What a relief came to the spirit, what joy to the soul, when the duty was performed, the task accomplished! Of this nature, but infinitely transcending it, was the joy of the Man of Sorrows, when he had wrought the stupendous work of Calvary. It was the prospect of finishing the masterpiece of the ages that helped to sustain the Master Workman during those hours of indescribable anguish when He was bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.

His was the joy of *a victory won*. At the Cross the enemy gathered all his forces for the last and most terrible onslaught. Satan was using every temptation to make our Lord lose confidence in His Father. Blow after blow fell upon His heart until they broke it. He fought such a fight as had never been fought before; fought for something that was very

precious, for our souls' salvation, fought single-handed against all the hosts of men, when His disciples had forsaken Him ; fought single-handed against all the hosts of evil spirits while the angels looked on in wonder. Against His single will Satan brought every force at his command, in order if possible to mar the sacrifice and so nullify the work of redemption. If he had succeeded, our Surety's sufferings and death could not have been accepted ; the work would have been imperfect ; He would have failed to accomplish what He had undertaken on our behalf ; He would have died in vain. We shudder at the dreadful thought, and hail with glad relief the dying shout of victory, " It is finished." Salvation has been procured ; heaven can be entered ; hell can be avoided ; Satan is defeated ; sin can be overcome ; the world can be conquered ; death can be faced without fear.

Our Lord was sustained also, while enduring the cross, by the joyful prospect of being exalted to the throne of the majesty on high. The Son of Man who stooped to the dust of death, even the death of the cross, has been highly exalted, and given a name that is above every name. The world, in derision, crowned Him with thorns ; the Judge of all the earth has given Him a crown of glory. And presently the whole world, the whole universe, will hail Him Lord of all.

But the consummation of the Lord's joy was surely *the joy of winning and possessing His Church*. "We are His workmanship," and He loves His own work. We are His portion, as He is ours. Through those hours of unspeakable suffering on the Cross and also for the last nineteen centuries He has been looking forward to the consummation of His joy—to that moment when His blood-bought Church would be complete, and when He should see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

E. A.

THE LAST MOMENTS OF A JEWISH PHYSICIAN.

AN evangelist named Gurland, a converted Jew, was sent for one night by an old acquaintance, also a Jew, who for some years had practised medicine. The following is the account he gave of his visit :—

The house was well known to me. I had often been invited there, and I had spent many happy hours in the company of him who lived there. When I was Rabbi, he was my best friend ; but my conversion put an end to our intercourse, so that he became my inveterate enemy.

On entering his room, I was startled by his ghastly appearance. For some moments neither

of us spoke ; at last I broke the silence, asking how he was, and what he desired me to do for him. Looking around the room, as though he were afraid we were being watched, he requested me to close the door, which I did, not without considerable heart throbbing.. Sighing deeply he seized my hand and said :

“ Dear friend, I am very ill ; I shall not recover. You know how I have lived ; but I do not wish to die as a Jew ; I wish to be a Christian ; will you baptize me ? ”

“ My dear doctor,” I replied, “ if you only know the Lord Jesus Christ as a *man*, which is what you have always told me, it is impossible for me to baptize you. In what can you be helped by a mere man, even though he be ‘ the ideal man ’ ? No man can redeem his brother ; it is not in his power to pay the price. If you believe that Christ is only a man, and that nevertheless you pray him to save you, it is idolatry, and a grave mistake.”

“ No, no,” he interrupted ; “ you have no need to tell me that. I have had ample time to reflect during my illness. Listen to me. I attended for two months old Madame N——. The sweetness, the calm, the patience, with which she bore her terrible sufferings made a deep impression upon me, and I was compelled to own to myself that she drew that serenity of soul from a source that I knew nothing of. She begged me one day to tell her at once, and plainly, what I thought of her condition. I did not hide from her that she had a very short time to live. She received my words with great joy ; her countenance brightened at

the thought of the near approach of death, as if I had informed her of a fête day. I had never seen anything like it.

“ ‘ Doctor,’ she said, trembling and seizing my hand, ‘ I should like to tell you one thing before I die. You are a Jew ; you know not the Saviour. Without Him you cannot be saved. Oh, seek Jesus, the Saviour of sinners.’ Deeply moved I asked her, ‘ How do you know, dear madam, that salvation can only be found in Jesus ? ’ ‘ I know it,’ she replied, ‘ as surely as the sun shines, as certainly as there is a God in heaven, and as truly, for *His* Word itself says so.’ Then she offered me her Bible, adding, ‘ Dear doctor, I am very thankful for all the care you have given to a poor woman such as I. The only gift I can offer you is my Bible. Take it as a remembrance of me, but, above all, read it as the Word of God, with seriousness and prayer ; you will find there Jesus your Saviour, and then your happiness will be as great as mine.’

“ I took the old book from the trembling hands of the invalid, and returned home, profoundly moved and agitated. A violent conflict arose within me : truth and falsehood, certainty and doubt, hope and fear struggled in my troubled soul.

“ The next day, passing the house of my patient, I felt constrained to enter, without knowing why. Just at that moment, a clear, sweet, childish voice commenced to sing the favourite hymn of the invalid : *Jesus receiveth sinners*. I still hear the words of that one verse :

'Confessing my sins I come to Thee ;
 O my Saviour, look upon me !
 Come, come, come to my aid,
 For all that now, O Lord, I plead,
 Is *Jesus receiveth sinners.*'

" These words, sung by a child that I had often seen kneeling by the bed of that poor woman, entered into my heart ; the scales fell in a moment from my eyes, and I saw how miserable and naked I was before God, with all my good works.

" Christ as the ' ideal man ' merely is a fanciful image which disappears as a cloud, when one comes to the critical hour, and needs succour or consolation. He in whom I now believe is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour who has shed His blood, who has died for sinners, even for me, an old hardened sinner. The result of all my science is, that I am a great sinner, but Jesus is a greater Saviour. In the name of Jesus Christ, *my* Saviour, I ask you to baptize me."

Such was the story of the doctor. I understood, to my profound joy, that the Spirit of God, by the mouth of a little child, had done more, in one instant, in the heart of a learned Pharisee, than I by my many and frequent discussions with him.

That same night in the presence of several Jews, whom he had constrained to come, he was baptized. He fell asleep peacefully in the Lord the following day, and his last words were, "*Jesus receiveth sinners !* In His grace He received me : I am going, full of joy, to be near Him in heaven, where I shall see His face. *Jesus receiveth sinners !*"

(*Translated from the French.*)

“AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS.”

PART I

“Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”—1 TIM. 4. 12.

THE apostle's charge to his son Timothy here is most instructive. He exhorts him to be an example (the same word translated “pattern” in Titus II. 7), to show the way to his fellow-believers in Christ. This is all the more striking when we take into consideration Timothy's youth ; for we do not generally look to the young for an example ; it is not expected of *them* that they mark out the way for others. They would naturally look to their elders as examples and endeavour to copy them ; for it is the elders in the church who are called “guides” (Heb. XII. 7, New Trans.).

But it is in every young Christian's power so to live as to be an example worthy of imitation by all. And in a certain sense a young man setting an example by his godly life would have more influence over the lives of his fellow-Christians than would a more elderly man of equal piety. For it is expected of the elder brethren that they walk

162 "AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS."

in a way worthy of imitation ; it would be considered only as what was perfectly normal. But when a young man or woman so walks in the footsteps of Christ as to be a pattern worth copying, it carries with it a special weight, attracting unusual attention, and is likely to influence others to a like line of conduct, as the example of an older person would not do to the same extent. David's achievement in slaying the giant would, from the very fact of his youthfulness, attract attention in greater measure than the same feat performed by one of Saul's seasoned warriors.

Timothy was called to be an example of the *believers*. Why are they not called saints here, or Christians, or disciples, or one of the other many designations applied to the children of God in the New Testament ? Is it not because faith was so characteristic of Timothy himself ? In his second letter to his youthful co-labourer Paul calls to mind the "unfeigned faith" that was in him, which had dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and later in his mother Eunice, and last, as the apostle was persuaded, in Timothy also (2 Tim. i. 5). We may almost say that faith is the key-word of the two epistles called after his name. The word is there found twenty-seven times, as many times as the number of the New Testament books. And in the same brief epistles the words believe, believed, believers, believeth,

“ AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS.” 163

are found nine times. And it is only as *believers*, those exercising living faith for the path, that any can walk the way marked out for them in the Word of God, Christ Himself being the first great Example (1 Peter II. 21), and then His faithful servants, as Timothy and Paul, following. He was the beginner and completer of faith (Heb. XII. 2), having commenced and finished His path of testimony in perfect dependence on God. And Hebrews XI. teaches that it was in the power of faith alone that the great cloud of testimony bearers mentioned there lived and witnessed for God.

PART II

In six things Timothy was to be an example, in *word*, in *conversation* (or manner of life), in *charity*, in *spirit*, in *faith*, in *purity*.

First, “In word.” Words are intended to give expression to our thoughts. Naphtali was “a hind let loose,” free yet gentle, and he gave “goodly words” (Gen. XL. 21). How often, alas! the unbridled tongue gives anything but goodly or gentle words! The wise preacher of old sought to find out “acceptable words,” or “words of delight” (Eccl. XII. 10, margin). “Let thy words be few” is one of his sapient exhortations (Eccl. v. 2). “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the

164 "AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS."

whole body," wrote James. And the blessed Teacher of teachers Himself warns against the use of idle (elsewhere translated "barren," 2 Pet. i. 8) words, and adds, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 36, 37). Let those given to much talk heed these words of our Lord and His servants, and like David, keep their mouth with a bridle not only while the wicked are before them, but in the presence of the saints as well (Ps. xxxix. 1). And none are more apt to offend in word than those who minister much in public, as Timothy doubtless did. Let all who, like him, take part in public ministry give heed to what they allow their lips to express, and seek to "be an example" in *word*.

"Manner of life" comes next. This, too, has its importance. The words may be good and the speech fair, but if there be not the consistent godly life to back them up, of what value are they? See how the same apostle in the following epistle links his words, or teaching, with his conduct: "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life" (2 Tim. iii. 10). His walk corresponded with his talk, his ways with his words. Elsewhere he speaks of adorning the doctrine in all things (Titus ii. 10). The doctrine of God our Saviour is not naturally attractive to men. It speaks of the cross; and "the offence of the cross" has

“ AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS.” 165

not yet ceased. “ The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness,” hence the importance of Christians adorning the doctrine by a godly, consistent life, in order that beholding its beauty men may receive it and be saved.

“ In love.” Love, in nature, can never spring up at will or be produced as a chemist produces oxygen from some substance that contains it. It must be spontaneous. But it is not so with the Christian. He is commanded to love : to love his brethren, to love his wife ; and Christian wives are told to love their husbands and their children. It is God’s commandment to His children that we love one another. Even the law said, “ Thou shalt love . . .” And in that classic compendium on love (1 Cor. XIII.) the apostle mentions words and deeds, in the exact order given here, and says, without love, the essential quality and motive, he is nothing and his speaking and doing profit him nothing. Love is as the seasoning to an otherwise insipid sauce.

Closely connected with love is “ in spirit.” The apostle exhorts the Romans to be “ fervent in spirit ” (Rom. XII. 11). Pastoral work, to be effective, must be undertaken in the “ spirit of meekness ” (Gal. VI. 1). The blessings of heaven’s kingdom abide with the “ poor in spirit ” (Matt. v. 3) ; and the King Himself, the High and lofty One who inhabits

166 "AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS."

eternity, whose Name is holy, dwells with him that is of "a humble and contrite spirit" (Isa. LVII. 15). And "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" is in His sight "of great price" (1 Pet. III. 4).

How much the value of an act depends on the spirit in which it is performed. Many a deed, in itself praiseworthy, is entirely spoiled by the spirit in which it is done. And it might with propriety be said to not a few of the children of God, seeing the manner in which some of their otherwise very proper things are done, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke IX. 55).

"The same spirit of faith" (2 Cor. IV. 13) is the connecting link with the fifth virtue in the list, "faith."

How much the faith of one's soul is strengthened by example; and this is especially true of *living* examples, ever before one's eyes. And if men called to be leaders in the church fail in faith, if their faith wavers or becomes weak, how disastrous the effect of such example!

Barnabas is called in the Word "a good man," and an essential part of that goodness was his being "full of faith" (Acts XI. 24). The early church chose Stephen, a man "full of faith," as one of their seven deacons (Acts v. 5-8). Faith is an essential characteristic for all who may be called to leadership in the

“ AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS.” 167

church. The Lord, in denouncing the leaders in Israel, accuses them of omitting “ judgment, mercy, and *faith* ” (Matt. XXIII. 23).

“ Hast thou faith ? Have it to thyself before God ” (Rom. XIV. 22), is an exhortation of Scripture good and true ; but it must be read in its connection, for no man liveth to himself, and in the matter of faith I should seek to be an example to my weaker brethren.

“ Purity ” completes the list. Timothy is elsewhere told to keep himself pure (1 Tim. v. 22). Youth has its own peculiar disadvantages and dangers ; hence the exhortation to this choice young man of God. Failing to heed it many a promising evangelist, or other gift, has made shipwreck and cut short his career with moral disaster. Paul approved himself as a minister of God “ by pureness ” (2 Cor. VI. 6), so could, with perfect consistency, call upon his son Timothy to exercise a like carefulness in his conduct.

So wrote Paul to his beloved Timothy, and so have we endeavoured to examine in detail that which was written for his and our learning by that mighty man of God. Let us suffer this not unnecessary word of exhortation, and seek, all of us, whether young or old, to be an example of the “ believers,” not only in the cluster of qualities mentioned here, but “ in all things ” (Titus II. 7).

Aspirants to leadership in the church are

168 THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK

never wanting ; examples, models, guides, of the order suggested here are lamentably lacking everywhere. May we each in our measure, beloved fellow-servants of Christ, covet, by the grace of God, to help decrease the deficiency by augmenting the supply.

C. K.

THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK.

GOD'S purpose in calling us to be labourers together with Him during this present age is not simply that the apparent work which He sets before us may be accomplished, it is rather that, in the accomplishment of this work, we may be prepared for our chief and ultimate service in the age to come.

But too often men, judging simply from the narrow view of the present time, suppose that the present conquest of evil and the immediate establishment of righteousness in the earth are the main objects God now has in calling us into His service. This they conceive is the work He has given us to do. But if this work were the chief thing in view He could more easily accomplish it by other and better agents. He could set His own hand to it more vigorously, and call in more supernatural agents than He now does.

All power is in His hand, and He has but to

THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK. 169

use it to bring about the result. There is a time coming when He will arise in His might and make short work in the earth. And if the immediate rooting out of sin and the establishment of righteousness were the chief things to be accomplished, He might thus arise at once and speedily work this short and radical work. But evidently this is not His chief aim at present. And unless we discern what the real end is, which He has in view, we wonder as we behold the long and dreary reign of sin, and survey the vast extent of the misery and sorrow that abound in the earth. We are ready to cry, "How long, O Lord!" We wonder why He that hath the keys of death and hell does not turn them in the lock—why He that hath the residue of the Spirit does not pour it out upon the earth. Or, looking at our great Example, we ask: If work were the chief thing, why did He spend the greater part of His life on earth without working? Why did He give only about three of His thirty-three years to work; and why did He allow Himself to be cut off at so early an age, when, apparently, He was best fitted to work? Or, further yet, following the history of the Church, why was Stephen, when full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and doing wonderful works, cut off so soon, and why have so many of the rarest workers been cut down so prematurely? Why, then, are all these things as they are?

170 THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK.

We do not presume to give all the reasons of God's administration when He Himself does not give account of His matters. But one evident reason we can see. And this one is that *the worker is more than the work*—that character is more than mere deeds—that the doer is more than the things done. It is the character more than the deeds of the Church that God now contemplates, since her chief sphere of service is to be in the ages to come. The present age is disciplinary rather than executive. We are *disciples*, that is, *learners*, more than we are workers, at present. Is it not modern self-importance that has set the name "workers" above that of "disciples"? To be sure we are workers, but this is largely because the work may be necessary to learning, since there are some lessons that can be best learned in work. We are workers in order that we may be learners, in order that we may be fully equipped for the age to come. When our character is perfected our present age work is largely done, even though we may seem to have accomplished so little in the way of pulling down the strongholds of Satan or in building up the cause of God. The Saviour could say, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do," even when His whole nation was rejecting Him, and His own chosen apostles were forsaking and denying Him. He was One in whom the Father was well pleased, notwithstanding the world

THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK. 171

was not won to God. So also, Paul could rejoice when nearly all his fellow-labourers had forsaken him, and apostasy was creeping into all the churches he had founded, for he had *kept the faith. His boast was not what he had achieved in the way of work, but what he had come to be in the way of character.*

If, now, we inquire what are the elements that God is seeking to produce in the worker, we may say that the first is *godliness*, that is, a proper appreciation of God—such a vivid apprehension of Him as will keep us constantly thoughtful of Him and reverent toward Him. Ungodliness—that is, inappreciation of God, is the marked manifestation of the wicked, especially in the last days. Of the wicked the psalmist said, “God is not in all their thoughts.” But the true disciple learns to realize and recognize God in all things and at all times. He prays without ceasing because God is such a constant reality to him.

The prayerfulness of the Lord Jesus is a marked witness to this fact. His prayer at the tomb of Lazarus is eloquent in this regard, showing not only His own constant communion with the Father, but also His desire that the bystanders should learn to recognize God as the source of the power about to be so signally displayed. And if our work gives us a vivid apprehension of God, and brings us into communion with Him, it largely accomplishes

172 THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK.

its end, whether it seems to be "successful" in the eyes of the world or not. The wonderful prayer of Christ just as He was being rejected by the world illustrates this point. *He* knew God most thoroughly, whether He had led others to know Him or not. Blessed is that work, however appearing to the public, that makes us know God.

Another element in the character of the worker is *submission to the will of God*. This, perhaps, is a greater acquisition than even the appreciation of God. It is blessed to have the mighty God bend to aid us in our work ; but, if He shall will that we suffer rather than that we achieve, we must be very close to Him if we say with sweet submission, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." This we see most perfectly set forth in the Lord Jesus when He bowed in Gethsemane and uttered this supreme submissive petition. Often in the exigencies of our work we are brought into the holy hush of profound submission.

But there is another sense in which the worker needs to become submissive to the will of God, not so much passively as actively. The will or the purpose of God is sometimes far beyond what we ask or think. *He purposes larger than we plan*, and we must be led to comply with His purposes rather than with our plans. *It has ever been the vice of God's people that they have not accepted the whole of His pur-*

THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK. 173

posed salvation. Christ has continually something against us, because we do not accept the fullness of His salvation. We are frequently stopping with some partial, local, temporary phase of blessing instead of reaching out to the complete and final prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How many are putting their best energies on superficial "reform" instead of grasping the will of God concerning man as revealed in the Scriptures and set forth in Christ !

How few submit their wills to God's will in this respect ! And yet are not the failures of works of reform and of various endeavours of man's devising teaching men that they must finally submit to and accept God's wonderful salvation ? Would we ever really learn God's purposes unless driven to them by the exigencies of our work ? Was not the futile attempt of Moses to deliver Israel by his own might when forty years of age, and his consequent sojourn in Midian, one thing that prepared the way for the sublime deliverance that God finally brought about ? The final Moses was infinitely superior to the incipient Moses, by reason of the work and the consequent acquaintance with God that lay between. Oh, may God cause us to cease going about to establish our own righteousness, and lead us to submit to the righteousness of God by faith !

F. L. C.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE WORLD.

I CORINTHIANS VII. 31.

THIS subject is full of interest for the child of God, who, although he is in the world, is not of it. The subject is also a very practical one, for it touches every Christian at all points. We are not given a list of hard and fast rules which we are commanded to obey ; nor is it a question here of enforced obedience. We are left to our own conscience and spiritual understanding to decide how to carry out the exhortation to use the world without abusing it.

We need a principle to guide us. Many things in God's Word are spoken of in a general way, and we are left to apply them to our own particular case. The Bible does not say precisely to what lengths we may go in our devotion to our Lord. It does not fix the exact amount of good works which are to prove that we are children of God, although it names the characteristics which mark those who have passed from death to life. Again, a principle is more comprehensive than a fixed law. We may sometimes be able to evade a law when we cannot escape the principle upon which the law is based. A principle gives co-ordination, harmony and unity to the life, and safeguards us from becoming the victims of

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE WORLD. 175

temporary impulses. The life of the man who is guided by principles will not be a patchwork of effort and apathy. The life will flow on in an even stream. To follow principles marks the age of maturity. God would have us grow out of spiritual infancy.

What is the meaning of "the world" as here used? The word "world" has many meanings in the Scriptures. It may mean this planet, or the Roman Empire, or the Gentiles as opposed to the Jews, or humanity in general, as in John III. 16, or the unregenerate, or the world system, or the world spirit.

Most of these meanings do not concern us here. We are certainly not to use the world-spirit, or "spirit of the age." Another name we might give to this subtle but extremely powerful force is "public opinion." The "world-spirit" is the moral atmosphere in which the unregenerate live and move and have their being. An atmosphere may be difficult to define, but we know it when we come into it. The world-spirit is the sum of the ideals, the points of view, the aims and aspirations of those who seek to make life a success *apart from God*. The modern world is strong in advocating self-culture, self-improvement, self-development: but always apart from the true God. There can be no question of the Christian using the world in this sense. He is to manifest the spirit of

176 THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE WORLD.

Christ, which is completely antagonistic to the spirit of the world.

Again, there is the world-system: the sum-total of the output of man's activity on the earth. Call it "civilization," if you will. Here we find world within world. There are the professions, the arts, the sciences, governments, organizations, combines; there is the world of politics, of business, of pleasure, of fashion, of travel, and so on. These things may not strike us as being evil, but we know that they are permeated by the world-spirit—by ungodliness. God may and does permit things to go on which are not in harmony with His will. Under the Jewish dispensation He tolerated the law of retaliation, of slavery, of polygamy, etc., although these evils were to be swept aside by the fuller revelation of His will given in the gospel. The Christian is perforce in the midst of the world-systems, and he must use them. He must avail himself of the world's means of locomotion, the world's trade, the world's discoveries and inventions.

The world in our text would also take in all creation—the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms; the trees, the flowers, the lakes, the rivers, the mountains; in fact everything that is evident to our physical senses, the sum-total of what is material, visible, temporal. Natural relationships are of course

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE WORLD. 177

also included (the whole chapter deals largely with the subject of marriage) ; in fact the text would take in all that is incidental to human experience on the earth, things neither good nor bad in themselves, but working either for our spiritual growth or our spiritual decline according as we use them rightly or wrongly.

Relaxation is a necessity. The bow that is always kept bent loses its elasticity and strength. In recreation we do less for the time in order that we may do more later on. It is in the matter of recreation that the Scripture under consideration tests us. We have to apply it to such things as music, art, literature, poetry, science, athletics, etc. God is not a Pope who makes a list of books which it is forbidden to read. Of course there can be no question of using anything that has the least taint of sin about it, or that comes between our souls and God. But each individual has to judge for himself. What may be harmful to one may be harmless to another. At one end of the world's pleasures we might place the music-hall. At the other end might come gardening, called the purest of human pleasures. And in between there are countless forms of relaxation, and each must judge for himself as to which he may "use," and to what extent.

What is wanted is a general principle. In framing this principle there are a few con-

178 THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE WORLD.

siderations that will guide us, two of which appear in 1 Corinthians VII. We are exhorted to serve God without distraction, that distraction or encumbrance which was just the weakening element in Martha's service. Again, we are reminded in this chapter of the transitoriness of the things of this life ; the fashion of this world passes away. Therefore we are not to rest in the things that are passing. Further, in seeking a general principle to enable us to know how to use the world without abusing it, we should consider that we are witnesses to an absent Lord, living as strangers and pilgrims in the place of His rejection. We are servants waiting for the return of our Master before whom we must stand and give an account of our stewardship. And lastly we are physicians in a time of universal plague.

With these considerations before us, we might arrive at some such principle as the following to guide us as to the proper use of the world : *Use the world so as to gain ultimately the most spiritual profit.* Use the world to bring in spiritual income. Bring all the details of the life into the circle of the divine will, and this will enable you to do all to the glory of God. Use the world, but do not rest in the use of it, although the pleasure that may be incidental to such use is not sinful, for God has given us all things richly to enjoy.

This may appear a high standard, but it is

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT. 179

better to aim high than to aim low. And there is encouragement in knowing that if we deny ourselves lawful but unedifying pleasures, we shall probably spare ourselves many sorrows.

E. A.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

S. B. (CREWE).—Isaiah LXI. 1, 2 clearly shows that the expression “the acceptable year of the Lord” refers to a period of time in which God is acting in grace, namely, proclaiming glad tidings to the meek, binding up the broken-hearted, and setting at liberty the captive.

Our everyday use of the term “acceptable” gives the meaning of the word. For instance, having received a present from some kind friend, we write a letter of thanks for the very “acceptable gift.” By this we mean that the gift exactly meets our present need. So the Lord’s “acceptable year” is a period of time that exactly meets our need as poor sinners, for therein God is acting in grace.

For the commencement of this period of grace we must go back to that great day when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, the Lord commenced His public ministry. There He “opened the book” and read the above passage from Isaiah; then He “closed the book” and began to say to them, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke IV. 16-21).

It is clear then that “the acceptable year of

180 ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

the Lord " commenced with the public ministry of the Lord, and equally clear from 2 Corinthians v. 18 to vi. 2 that "the acceptable year of the Lord " continues while the Church is on earth. The Apostle not only states that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," but he also states that God "hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," and, referring to Isaiah, he says, "Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."

In citing the prophet Isaiah the Lord stops after the first clause of verse 2. The clause immediately following speaks of "the day of vengeance of our God." In place of reading this the Lord "closed the book." But soon—very soon—the Lord is again going to open the book. This will take place in heaven after the Church has been caught up, and the result will be the closing up of "the acceptable year of the Lord" and the commencement of "the day of vengeance," when judgment will take its course (Rev. v. vi. 1 *et seq.*).

Only the Lord's anointed could open the book and announce the dawn of the year of grace: only the Lord could close the book and withhold the judgment, and only the "Lamb as it had been slain" is able once again to open the book and let judgment take its course upon a world that has despised "the acceptable year of the Lord."

H. S.

[181]

GOLDEN BELLS AND POME- GRANATES.

“**A** GOLDEN bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate upon the hem of the robe round about.”

I’ve had them words stuck up in the little back parlour in my cottage a whole year. They are right over the door leading into the shop. I see them twenty times a day, as I go in and out. Some folks wonders at them, and says as some other text would be a sight better. Now, I don’t think so at all. I’ve got a fine array of smarter ones all in gold and colours, and they make my dark little room look bright, and my heart glad, for they’re blessed words, all of them, but none ain’t like this shabby old card my boy Owen printed for me.

The letters, I know, are a dingy black, and not all of a size, and the lines aren’t straight, and the card is curled and smoky ; but I often looks up at the words as I goes about my work, and bless the Lord for the message they brought me a year ago.

I was a bit disappointed, ’tis true, that evening, when a strange preacher gave out them words for his text. “Going back,” says I, “to Jewish laws and ceremonies ? They’re all done with now. We’re living under gospel light.” The fact was I thought myself one of the most enlightened, never guessing how the

182 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

light was going to break in on my heart through them very words.

The preacher began to tell about profession and practice, and how they should go together, sweet sounds and ripe fruit, first a bell and then a pomegranate, not a row of bells alone, and went on telling how the bells were golden, and the fruit rich and good. I felt pretty safe about my bells. I hadn't never been ashamed of my Christianity ; pretty nigh everybody knowed what I was. I rang plenty of bells, but I didn't feel quite so sure about their being all golden ones.

“ The Pharisees,” said the preacher, “ had bells, lots of them, bells when they prayed, and bells when they fasted, and bells when they gave alms ; but there wasn't any fruit of obedience, mercy, and love ; and the bells, too, were harsh and grating, not mellow and golden. Peter had bells on his garments. Hear them ring. ‘ Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.’ But how about his pomegranates ? On the robe of Nicodemus hung *only* pomegranates at first. He was afraid of the sounding bells of profession, and crept silently, in the darkness, to the Lord's side. But they rang out sweetly and clearly years after, side by side with rich fruit, when he boldly spoke up for his Master before accusing Pharisees, and dared to anoint that sacred body on the eve of the Passover.

GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. 183

On the garments of our Lord Himself see them both together, bells of holy teaching, and precious fruit of kindly deed and gracious miracle."

But what the speaker said at the end was what came down on me. He was telling what them bells mean, how they rang on our garments when we had family prayers in our households, and when we went to meetings regular, and gave to collections for the Lord's work, and all them good things. "Well," says I to myself, "I've got all them bells, sure enough," though still I felt just a bit uncomfortable about the pomegranate part of it.

Then he says, "And how do all these bells ring in your neighbours' ears, those of you who have them? Are they making a sweet soft chime so that everybody loves to listen to them; or have they a harsh, rough, ugly sound that goes through you, and makes you stop your ears?"

Well, I hung my head a bit when he said this, for I knew *my* bells weren't very sweet, but I'd always thought that wasn't *my* business; if folks didn't like my ways, I said that was their fault, and only 'cause they weren't converted like me, and their wicked hearts couldn't abide them as served God.

Now I found myself wondering whether the fault weren't a bit mine after all, and I seemed to hear that great iron bell down at Slocum

184 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

Station a-ringing and a-ringing fit to craze one, for if there's anything as riles me 'tis a clatterin' bell.

But the preacher hadn't done yet. He was going on to tell about the pomegranates, the good fruit that Christians bear to God's glory. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and a lot more he spoke of. "Now," thought I, "he's a-coming to good deeds, and I've done a many," and I was going on to a lot of good things I'd done, when, all on a sudden, I pulled up. These weren't *fruit* at all. They were bells. I meant them to make a great sound. They weren't *golden* bells either, I was afraid, but very ugly, tinkling tin ones! I felt real bad. I couldn't listen to no more; and when the preacher said in closing, "See your bells are all golden, and that there is a pomegranate to every one," I was hot all over; and after the prayer I just walked out and straight home in a sort of a daze, and never spoke to no one.

When I got in I sat down and began to think. I was the Lord's, and must try to serve Him. *That* was clear. I'd been making dreadful mistakes, but I wasn't going to give up. All I had got to do was just to find out where I'd been going wrong, and get the Lord to set 'em straight.

First I went down on my knees, and asked God to show me the way, and then I took up my Testament, and tried to find the text about the fruit, the "love, joy, and peace." I couldn't turn it up in a hurry, but I came across

GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. 185

these words in Colossians—I was reading the Revised Version, which I had only bought a week before—“Put on, therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any.” Here was a row of ripe pomegranates. I knew in my heart that I had not borne much of such fruit. I knew I must do so now. I determined they should hang side by side with real golden bells.

Well, that week was a crooked one. Queer thing, isn’t it, how just when one’s made up one’s mind to do something right, everything goes contrary? I tell ye ’twas hard work that week to bear pomegranates.

Charlotte, that’s my eldest, came home on Monday, all on a sudden like, with a sprained knee. She couldn’t do nothing, and there was I a-nursing and a-serving in the shop by turns all the week through. Charlotte’s a good girl, I never had no trouble with her. She’d always been regular at Sunday-school till she went out to service, and she was very patient with all she’d got to suffer. I told her, as I sat beside her, how she must trust the Lord to know best, and as how ’twas His doing in letting her be lame and helpless for a little. Bells were those words, I hope golden ones. Now, thought I, the fruit must just come in

186 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

between every one of them. And there was plenty of room for it.

How I was worried that week, what with the little ones, and the shop, and Charlotte upstairs to wait on ! And Charlotte's mistress called one morning. She was very hard and unkind, said as how it was very tiresome to spare Charlotte just then, and made out there weren't nothing the matter with her. I up and gives her my mind, and let fly at her a bit for setting my girl to work as she did with her bad knee, and then she tells me I'm a pretty sort of a Christian to go in a passion like that, and forget my place. Well, I couldn't say much, and when she was gone I felt real sorry. There weren't any pomegranates that day, and the bells were all out of tune.

The next day was a bit better. Mrs. Kerry's youngest little one was crying pitiful in the morning, just outside my shop door. He wasn't a child I ever took to, and his mother owed a long reckoning (she owes it still) ; but I just picked out a red sugarstick while I was setting the bottles straight in the window and putting them out of the sun, and I pops out and gives it to the little chap. My ! how he brightened up, and shoved his fist into each eye to dry up the tears. I don't think he said "Thankee," but that didn't matter, for he run nome to his mother as bright as a daisy, and—well, I thought perhaps my bells of profession

GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. 187

would sound a bit more softly in her ears when she found I had "a heart of compassion."

Charlotte was better, too, that day, and in the evening I got out to the service. It did me good, and all seemed just for me. I missed Widow Crabb, who always sits just in front. As I went home something said, "Look in and see her" (she lives near by). I didn't want to at all. I was in a hurry to get back to Charlotte, but, somehow, I went.

Now Widow Crabb has the rheumatics bad, and they don't sweeten her temper; in fact, she is not at all a pleasant person to visit. She was ungracious enough that night, and asked snappishly what I'd come about. I said as I'd only called in just neighbour-like to see how she did, and then I told her some o' the sermon, and about my Charlotte, and tried to comfort her a bit in her pain. She didn't say much, but she looked at me very keen all the time, and as I was getting up to go, she says, "I always knew you was a regular one at meetings, so punctual too, and all that, but I thought you hadn't much feeling for a body, that's why I wondered to see you come in to-night."

Bless you, I *did* feel small when she said that. My bells hadn't sounded sweet to her for certain and the fruit had been—nowhere. But I think I popped on a pomegranate of *kindness* then and there.

Next day some neighbours came in, and I

188 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

very nearly boasted how much fruit I had been bearing. I knew they'd been whispering about me, and noticed I was a bit different. But I only said that I knew my bells hadn't been golden, and I hoped they would sound more sweetly now, and then I held my tongue. One pomegranate of *humility* was worth twenty jingling bells after all.

I had a fine chance to practise humility, and meekness too, a few days later. Charlotte's mistress called again to see how the girl was, and I knew I ought to own as I'd been in the wrong to speak as I did before. My! How bad I felt, just as if I *couldn't* humble myself, and say I was sorry! But I did it, and the lady looked so took aback she didn't seem rightly to know what to say. I really believe she felt worse than I did, and she spoke quite kind-like as she went away, and said that she would spare Charlotte a week longer, so she must have seen another pomegranate between the bells.

As I was saying, I had a deal to worry me then, and Owen was often that tiresome he'd make me downright cross. Well, I'd been put about terrible one day, what with the shop, and all the gas pipes being torn up just in the path, and one of the little ones down with the whooping cough, when if that boy didn't turn up in the evening sent home in disgrace. I'd just got him a good place, and thought he was going on first-rate.

GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. 189

Well, as I says, he comes in as sheepish as can be, and I couldn't get nothing out of him, only he'd been turned off all of a sudden. I knew he thought as I should have flared up, and so I should a week or two afore, and boxed his ears soundly, and so he sits there, dogged-like, ready to give me back as good as I gave. I was real riled to be sure, but I only spoke a bit sharp, and then held my tongue, and bid the lad sit down and have his supper.

Owen didn't understand it nohow, I could see; and that made me feel right down ashamed to think my boy should be so took back to see his mother *didn't* go in a passion! Well, he eats his supper and never says a word, and then goes off to bed without saying good night.

I sat still a few minutes thinking, afore I raked out the fire, and then them words I read that Sunday night came back just as clear as if they had been spoken in my ears, "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering," and that last word seemed to go on growing bigger and clearer and brighter, and kept ringing, too, in my ears when the others had passed away. *Long-suffering!* How long had I suffered or borne with my boy? If the blessed Lord had not had ten times more patience with me, what would have become of me? And then the hot tears came, tears of shame and sorrow, and the Lord spoke, com-

190 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

forting and forgiving me, the God who is full of compassion, gracious and long-suffering.

When I went upstairs I crept into my boy's room, expecting to find him asleep, for he was dead-tired when he came in. The moon was shining faintly ; but I couldn't see the lad's face, and I stood still to listen for his regular breathing. But Owen was not asleep, and he saw me, and he says very quiet-like, " Mother."

I went to my boy, and knelt down in the moonlight by his bed, and kissed him softly, just as I used to do when he was a little rosy baby in his cot, and I said, " Owen, boy, what's the matter ? Tell mother the trouble, and we'll see if they won't take you on again." I suppose I spoke gentle-like, for the story all came out. Not all at once. Nothing came at first but tears. My big Owen just sobbed as he'd done when he was a little chap in my arms years ago, and had broken his toys. And he then told me about it, and there wasn't no great fault after all ; my boy had only been thoughtless and careless, and offended his master, who's got a peppery temper, and he'd sent him off sharp. But this cut me most when my Owen said, " I thought you'd be so wild, mother, and wouldn't listen to nothing, and so I wasn't going to try and tell you. I just meant to put up with all the scolding for a day or two—I didn't think as you'd believe I'd been *real* bad—and then I meant to run away."

GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. 191

Oh, how those words stung me ! My boy, whom I had loved and worked for, whom I would have died for, *he* run away ! I had prayed for him ever since he was in the cradle, and I had taught him all that was good, and taken him to meetings and had watched over him, and was wondering why he didn't grow up no better, and here was the secret of all my mistake. Bells, bells, but no pomegranates ! He'd heard plenty of profession, but he had seen very little fruit. A little "long-suffering," and my boy was won. I got him took on again, and he's been a different boy from that day.

One more pomegranate, and then I've done my story. In the middle of my shop window there stands a little wire basket, and it's mostly full of fine brown new-laid eggs—not the best French ones just picked out, but *real* fresh ones, for I've always kept my own hens. Well, one morning I went down the yard to feed the pretty dears. I had some true Polish ones then, and they were as tame as could be ; they'd come pecking round my feet, and out of my hands, too, and from the basket on my arm, if I'd let them. Well, as I was a-saying, I went down to feed them, and there I saw about the saddest sight I'd ever set eyes on. I could just have sat down and cried. My beautiful pets lay dead, strewn about the yard, all but one, and she had her pretty wing broken, and was so hurt it was pitiful to see her. And this

192 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

wasn't the work of thieves, for there wasn't one taken away, nor of cats or dogs, for the fowls weren't torn or eaten. Ah, I knew pretty well who had done it, even if the cruel, sharp stones lying all about hadn't told their own tale.

My next-door neighbour, Mrs. Winton, had a spite against me I knew, because I'd had coal tickets in the winter, and she got none. She was such a lazy, untidy body that they wouldn't give her any. She had never been quite the same since, and she would have her fling at me at every chance, about my "cant" and "hypocrisy" and the rest of it. My bells hadn't been golden in *her* ears, that's very certain.

There was very little doubt those rough boys, Joe and Luke Winton, had pelted my poor pets to death, and that their mother had had some hand in it. My blood boiled with indignation as I stood there and looked at the poor innocent creatures dead and dying!

When Owen came in he was in a perfect fury, and I had rare work to stop him from dashing in and paying out them two cowards. But we both held our tongues, and after a day or two my temper cooled a bit, and I was real glad I hadn't spoke up when I felt so mad. I had met Mrs. Winton once or twice in the village, but she always shied off, as though she was afraid of me.

Well, a week after, Owen come in from work,

GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES. 193

and he says, "Them neighbours of ours have got paid out now, mother."

"What's the matter?" says I.

"Why," says Owen, "Winton's fell from a scaffolding this morning and hurt himself awful. He's brought home, but they don't think he'll live."

It gave me quite a turn. "Here am I," says I to myself, "a-harbouring angry thoughts towards Mrs. Winton, and she, poor soul, with her husband a-dying!"

I don't know what I said to Owen, for I was struck all of a heap to think I'd been so unforgiving, I who expected God to forgive my trespasses. A little voice said, "Go in, and see how Winton is."

I didn't do it that day, but I had a hard battle the next, and then I went. I felt mighty awkward over it, and I believe Mrs. Winton felt worse. "I have just come in to ask how your husband is," I stammered, when she opened the door.

"He ain't no better," said she, gruffly enough.

"Is he very much hurt?" I went on.

"Yes, course he is," said she, "or he wouldn't be a-lying there. Did you think he was shamming?"

I was a bit flustered, and was trying to say something kind-like, when she said crosser than ever, "We don't want no one a-pryin'

194 GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

about here, and I can't stand a-gossipin'," and then she shuts the door ; and I came home wondering what was the use of my going after all, when it had been so mighty unpleasant, and didn't seem to do no good.

But I found out a day or two after. Mrs. Winton went by when I was in my little front garden, and she looked dreadfully sad ; I asked her how Winton was, and she didn't answer gruff and snappish, only said, very low, that he was worse, and I could see the tears in her eyes. She was worn out, she said, with nursing him day and night ; she never got no rest, but she didn't think it would be for long. I could not say much, such a lump came up in my throat, but I just handed her over the fence the bunch of mignonette I was picking, and I said, " I'll come in to-night, and sit with him, if I may, Mrs. Winton, and then you can get some rest."

I shan't never forget how that woman looked at me. She didn't say never a word ; but she took the flowers, and I saw two great tears come tumbling down on her shawl as she turned away. I suppose she had seen a pomegranate between the golden bells. Anyway, I knew I might go and help her.

I went. Not one night, but half a dozen ; and Winton got well, and his wife confessed to me, some time after, all the story of the poor stoned hens.

WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT? 195

We've been close friends ever since. We always sit together at the meeting ; and Joe and Luke and my Owen beside us ; and it all came of a little patience and forbearance. " Forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any ; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye."

And the peace of Christ *rules* now ; not perfect yet in my heart, He knows, for there is still a deal of sin there. But I ain't ever miserable or despairing ; and, while the golden bells ring out, He is helping me to add to each some fruit. " A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate upon the hem of the robe round about."

Adapted from a booklet by Lucy Taylor (Messrs. Partridge and Co.).

WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT?

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . **THINK ON THESE THINGS.**" PHILIPPIANS IV. 8.

"As he thinketh in his heart, **SO IS HE.**"

PROVERBS XXIII. 7.

THEY were striking texts that met our gaze as we turned to the invaluable "Cheering Words" Calendar on that glorious

196 WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT ?

Lord's Day morning. The sun streamed in at our window, all nature looked her best ; and we were made to feel that it was good to be alive. Just the previous evening we had been conversing with some dear brethren in Christ, and almost the parting words of one of them had been the first of the two texts. The question suggests itself :

WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT ?

We are always thinking. We cannot always read, or speak, or listen, or work ; but we cannot avoid thinking. Our thoughts form our moral being, guide our actions, colour our ways, and affect our relations with those with whom we come in contact. I believe there is a Spanish proverb that says :

“ Sow a thought, reap an act ; sow an act, reap a habit ; sow a habit, reap a character ; sow a character, reap a destiny.”

But the whole thing is summed up in the second of the two texts.

“ As he thinketh in his heart, SO IS HE ” (Prov. XXIII. 7). We are not necessarily what our words seem to convey, nor what our actions appear to indicate, for there is a certain measure of unconscious hypocrisy about every one of us.

WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT? 197

WE ARE WHAT WE THINK IN OUR HEARTS.

As we keep this in mind, we shall be the better able to appreciate the immense importance of the first text. If we

“ THINK ON THESE THINGS ”

then thoughts just the opposite in kind to those therein indicated will be quite unable to gain an entrance to our mind. We shall hear the unsavoury language of those with whom we have to rub shoulders day by day as though we heard it not, because we shall be pre-occupied with such things as our text suggests. In short we shall be thinking about our Lord Jesus Christ. We judge that the Psalmist realized the large part that thoughts played in his life, when one day he exclaimed :

“ I HATE THOUGHTS.”

but then he added, “ Thy law do I love,” and of the latter he said, “ It is my meditation all the day ” (Ps. CXIX. 113 and 9).

A beloved servant of God, who has been with his Lord for many years said :

“ The secret of peace within, and power without, is to be ever and only occupied with good.”

Shall we see to it that we are so occupied with our Lord Jesus Christ, His love to us, and our preciousness to Him, that His glory

198 WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT ?

and His beauty are so filling the vision of our souls that we will

THINK ALWAYS ABOUT CHRIST.

As we do so, our conversation will be about Him, our actions will be for Him, our lives will be like His, our delight will be in Him, and our greatest desire will be to see His glorious face. Someone may remark : “ Surely it was not by accident that the compiler of the Calendar put that text down for the Lord’s Day ; it is comparatively easy to ‘ think on these things ’ on that day.” We judge that it was not done by accident, but that the compiler caught the spirit of the desire of the Holy Spirit of God, that we should begin each week, and go on through the week, begin each day and continue throughout the day to “ think on these things.” It requires no effort to concentrate our thoughts upon, and ever think about those in whose love we delight, and whom we ourselves dearly love. As we revel in Christ’s love to us, and our hearts go out in responsive affection to Him, we will think about Him, and as we do so we will become morally like Him.

“ Our Lord, our Life, our Strength, our Shield,
Our Rock, our Food, our Light,
Each THOUGHT OF THEE doth constant yield
Unchanging, fresh delight.”

W. B. D.

“OOR DADDY’S COMIN’ HAME THE NICHT.”

WE were walking along the main street of a village in Aberdeenshire one morning, when we were met by two wee boys. As they approached, their clean, chubby faces lit up with a smile that was quite contagious.

Encouraged by our answering smile, the older boy said: “Oor daddy’s comin’ hame the nicht.”

Thinking we had better endeavour to speak in their native vernacular, we replied: “Wulln’t he be gled tae see his loonies?” (“Will he not be glad to see his boys?”)

“Ay,” said the young spokesman, “he’s ma daddy.”

The story could easily be imagined. Father was on military service; word had arrived that morning that he had got leave and expected to reach his distant northern home in the evening. The little fellows’ hearts were so filled with joy that they simply had to tell somebody.

We learned a lesson that morning. We thought of the good news we had received that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming, and we longed that we might be so affected by it, and that our hearts might so overflow with delight, that

with a face wreathed with smiles we might
announce to all around

JESUS IS COMING !

and be able to clinch it by saying, " HE IS MY SAVIOUR ! "

W. B. D.

NOT "WE," BUT CHRIST.

AN aged sister in Scotland wishing a hymn without “ we ” or “ us ” in it, composed the following :

There's only one Man to be trusted,
Only one Man to be praised,
Only one Man for the Father,
That glorified Him all His days.

This is the Man that's rejected,
This is the Man that has died,
This is the Man that's ascended
And patiently waits for His bride.

This is the Man of His purpose,
This is the Man of His plan,
This is the Man of His pleasure
Set down at the Father's right hand.

This is the King that is coming
To set up His throne in display.
Hallelujah ! for ever and ever,
The Spirit doth even now say.

[201]

DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED?

“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

(JOHN XV. 7.)

WE are going to have a little talk on the all-important subject of prayer. The most wonderful privilege within reach of human beings is the exercise of prayer. Many of us are so used to the form of prayer, that we fail to appreciate its value and wonder. There is nothing of such *vast* importance to the church collectively and individually, and to the world generally, as prayer. We want to learn how to get into such a position before God that we may ask and get what we want. The text tells us *how*. “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

Let us think of it for a moment in this way. Is it not a remarkable thing that poor things like ourselves, trusting in the Lord Jesus, can kneel down and call upon God, and be sure that He hears us, and is going to answer us, and to change things in our own lives, and in the lives of those for whom we pray? Prayer is very much like telephoning. You go to the telephone, you say you want to get into communication with “So-and-so,” giving the

XXXIV.

M

202 DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED ?

number. Presently you are on, you see no one, you simply speak into the air; you enquire, "Are you there?" and if the person is at home, you get the answer immediately, "Yes," and you carry on a conversation. Praying is very much like that, only better. You need not go to any particular place to pray, you can pray where you are. The line along which you seek communication is never overcrowded. You never have to wait to "get on." You see no one with your physical vision, and yet you are sure some one is there, so sure that you never enquire, "Are you there?" for you know there is no need. You commence to talk at once. At one end is yourself, at the other end is God. At one end is your need, at the other end is God's wealth. At one end is your cry, at the other end is the gracious, sympathetic Listener.

If these things are so, is not prayer a *wonderful* thing? You can turn to God at any moment, and He will say, "I am here, My child, what is it? What do you want? What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? According to thy faith be it unto thee." Do you not think that we should pray a great deal more if we really believed prayer was just like that? *And it is just as simple as that.*

In our busy and noisy cities the telephone apparatus is concealed in a secluded shelter which helps to shut out earth's noise and din,

DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED? 203

and enables a person to carry on his conversation more comfortably, for although the voice may be speaking quite sympathetically the other end, it will not be clearly heard this end if there is too much noise. It is the same with prayer. If we are going to be conscious of the Ear listening to us, we must exclude earthly sounds, we must close the eyes on earthly scenes lest they divert the mind from the thing in hand. We must have a quiet room, we must have a quiet spirit, we must get beneath the hush of the Spirit of God, then we can speak, and *what is more*, then we can hear too.

Blest be that tranquil hour of morn,
And blest that hour of solemn eve,
When on the wings of prayer upborne,
The world I leave.

Let us say it again, the exercise of prayer is a wonderful thing. It is more wonderful than service, indeed it is the highest form of service. Some persons, who are laid aside and are quite unable to engage in active service as in former days because their strength is gone, need not complain that God has put them on the shelf, for if they can still pray they can do more than those who *only* work, for prayer is work ; they can pray until God calls them home.

Our service—that is, our work for Christ—is confined to the spot where we live, but by means of prayer we can touch any and every spot in the world. Through prayer we can

204 DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED ?

soften hard hearts in China, India, or Africa. Through prayer we can oil the machinery that is working but stiffly in some remote part of the earth. Through prayer we can bring lives far and near into harmony with the will of God. Someone says, "Prayer loosens out the gracious, persuasive, irresistible power of God on behalf of others." This seems almost incredible, but so God has ordained it. The greatest thing that one can do for another is to pray, and those who love their fellow-men most pray for them most, for love always desires to do its best.

Some years ago, when D. L. Moody came to London, and tens of thousands of lives were through his instrumentality swept into the kingdom of God, it was afterwards discovered that the Spirit of God moved that man of God over to the seaboard and across the water, and into the needy city of London, in response to the prayers of a lonely sick woman. No one need despair of doing world-wide service for God who can pray. It is a great thing when you pray to get what you want *always*. But maybe you ask, "Is that possible?" Yes, quite possible on certain conditions, which are these: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Is it possible to ask what we will and get it from God? Let us ask two other questions. Is it possible to abide in

DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED? 205

Christ? Is it possible for His words to abide in us? Yes, most certainly, these are possibilities within the reach of the humblest believer; attained perhaps only by a few, but obtainable by all.

Let us try and get a clear idea of what it means to abide in Christ, and for His words to abide in us. There is nothing so strange about the expression "abide," or the experience the word describes, that we may not understand and know it. Of course before we can abide in Christ, we must *be* in Christ. You cannot abide in a house until you have entered it, and in order to be in Christ you must have received HIM, and He must have received you. There are two sides to the great transaction—the definite acceptance on the part of the individual soul of Christ, and the personal welcome of Christ to that soul. We are received by Christ to abide in HIM *not intermittently* but *always*. The word "abide" is employed in the New Testament in connection with house and home, and means "to remain in." If a man remains in Christ, treating HIM as a home, making HIM the place of his shelter, the object of his devotion, the source of his pleasures, the satisfaction of his soul, then there is only one will between that man and Christ, so that he may ask what he will and obtain it. Another word which admirably describes "abiding" is fellowship. You may read the text if you like in this way:

206 DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED ?

“ If ye have fellowship with Me, and My words remain in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” We know what it is to have fellowship with a person, it is to be in perfect agreement and harmony, with no grievance or difference in between. Get, dear friend, into that position towards Christ, ask Him to put you and keep you there, and “ ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

To have fellowship with Christ will produce in you desires and petitions similar to those which He is unceasingly presenting to the Father. Throughout the ages Christ has been asking of God. This is the perpetual attitude of the Son to the Father. He cannot ask what the Father may not give. To get, then, into the current of His prayer is to be sure of success. But you may ask, “ Must I not pray, ‘ Lord, if it be Thy will, do this or that ’ ? ” Well, so to pray will show that your will is in harmony with the will of God, and yet it is not necessary, for if you are really in fellowship with Christ, it will be impossible to ask for anything He is not willing to give, for fellowship with Him makes prayer infallible and prevailing.

But how may I know when I am in fellowship with Christ, and in such fellowship that I may ask what I will and get it ? How do we know when we are in fellowship with a friend ? You say, “ When there is perfect sympathy, when

DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED? 207

there is nothing between.” Just so may we know that we are in fellowship with Christ, when we are not conscious of anything in between, when we are living in unbroken obedience up to the limit of our light, *then* “ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

But there is the other condition, “If My words abide in you.” The words of Christ forbid unsuitable prayer, they are a corrective. If we allow them to challenge our every petition, then our asking will also be in accordance with what He is prepared to give.

“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Let us remember that this is possible. We have been redeemed, called, received, that we might have fellowship with God, that *our* wills and His might always be going the same way, that the discord sin has created might cease, and that the harmony for which God has made us might take its place. The Apostle John writes: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, *that ye also may have fellowship with us*: and truly *our fellowship* is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1. 3). In one of our well-known hymns we ask that we may “live as we pray,” and we do live as we pray, and pray as we live. Our life depends on our fellowship in the secret place, and our power to

208 DO YOU GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED?

pray depends on whether or no we live day by day in fellowship with God. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you," *then*, "ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." There are some who are poor and have nothing—or, at the most, very little—to give. There are others who are not very gifted, and therefore are unable to preach or to teach. There are yet others who seem to have but little influence on account of their social obscurity. No one need be downcast about these things who can pray. If you can pray you can loosen the purse-strings of those who can give; you can touch with the power of God the lips of those who can preach and teach. You are known to God, and He will respond to *your* prayer.

Oh, let us abide in CHRIST! Let us make our hearts the home of His words as well as of HIMSELF, and then *nothing* shall be impossible to us that God can give.

Lord, what a change within one short hour
 Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
 What heavy burdens from our bosom take!
 What parchéd grounds refresh as with a shower!

We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
 We rise, and all the distant and the near
 Stand forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
 We kneel—how weak! We rise, how very full of
 power!

L. N.

THREE EXCEPTS.

THE discovery of that factor which renders possible what is otherwise impossible, is of the utmost importance in any department of knowledge. Once found, the condition is well worthy of the most serious study.

The function of divine revelation is to make known that which cannot be learned by the processes of human reason, and God has been pleased to reveal in His Word, conditions essential for the attainment of certain ends, which deserve the most reverent scrutiny. Let us consider three examples from the Gospel of John.

I.

I cannot refrain from starting with a consideration of the foundation of all Christian blessing : the death of our Saviour Jesus Christ. In meditating on His surpassing love, the heart is lost in wonder. The query, Why did He die ? will take eternity to answer, but what was impossible apart from His death is made known in that wonderful text : “ *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* ” Poor fallen, sinful man had wandered far from God, but divine love pursued him : the joy of having many sons in glory led

our blessed Redeemer to endure the cross, to despise the shame, to taste death. But, thank God, if He has gone into the place of darkness and of judgment, He is risen from the dead. The power of death has been annulled ; apparent defeat was a glorious victory.

Love, that on death's dark vale
Its sweetest odour spread,
Where sin o'er all seemed to prevail,
Redemption's glory shed.

Nor can death blight the fruit. Death has lost for a prey those who love Him. " For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him," so that we can sing " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? "

This song could never have been ours apart from His death ; apart from that atoning sacrifice there could be none to sing, " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, *it bringeth forth much fruit.*"

Thou wast alone, till like the precious grain,
In death Thou layest, but didst rise again ;
And in Thy risen life, a countless host
Are all of one with Thee, Thy joy and boast.

This verse recalls the passage in Hebrews, " For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Surely,

THREE EXCEPTS.

211

since we have been placed in such an exalted position, it behoves us to seek grace, that we may live worthy of our vocation, pleasing unto God and bearing fruit to His praise.

II.

But this cannot be performed by our own efforts: "*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me.*" No one would contend that the branch bears fruit by any effort of its own. It bears fruit in virtue of its union with the source of nutriment. Cut it off from the tree, isolate it from the root, and death ensues. The lesson is simple. Would you bear fruit, dear brother? Then live in communion with the risen glorious Head, and He will make you a fruitful bough, in which He can have pleasure.

Teach me, O God, to fix mine eyes
On Christ, the spotless Lamb,
So shall I love Thy precious will,
And glorify His Name.

III.

But if it is blessed to see this, the saved soul can rejoice to look back to the starting-point, the day of his conversion, and see that even his faith was not his own, but the fruit of the work of grace in his soul. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves—it is the gift of God."

212

THE LATE COL. S. L. JACOB.

In the words of the Lord Jesus : “ No man can come unto me *except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him.*” All praise be to God ! Every iota of blessing we attribute to Him ; nought to ourselves we owe.

Father, 'twas Thy love which knew us
Earth's foundation long before :
That same love to Jesus drew us
By its sweet constraining power,
And will keep us
Safely now and evermore.

R. McC.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE LATE COL. S. L. JACOB.

THE first time I saw him was at a prayer-meeting. He did not speak till late in the evening ; then he knelt and said, “ O God, we do thank Thee that we are so exceedingly dear to Thee.” There was more which I do not remember, but those opening words were to me like the key to his life and ministry. He was then just returning to India ; but some months later I had the privilege of meeting and hearing him, publicly and privately, and the theme of his teaching was constantly, “ God loves you so much, He longs to bless you, He wants to make you happy, it is your own will that is all the trouble ” ; and one night, at the end of his address, he asked, “ Will you put yourself unreservedly into God's hands ?

SOWING AND REAPING.

213

All you have and are? Your health? Your strength? Your usefulness? "

"Your usefulness!" That was the hardest of all; but to one of his hearers, at least, that was the beginning of a new life.

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The last time I saw him we had spoken of "abiding in Christ," and he went to have a season of prayer before going out to give an address. Just as he was leaving, he said, "Here is another little thought for you about 'abiding in Christ.' I think it is like rhythm. You know, if you place a B and a C tuning fork on the piano, if you touch the note B the B fork vibrates and the C is silent; while if you strike the note C, the C fork vibrates and the B is silent. It should be thus with us—our souls should vibrate in response to the Lord, in harmony with Him."

B.

SOWING AND REAPING.

"**W**HATSOEVER a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). What a solemn word of warning this is to us! that *now*, in this present time, whatsoever we sow *that* we must also reap!

If our eyes are opened to see it we can trace God faithfully carrying this out even in the sowings of our everyday life.

I sow neglect of God's word; I reap barren-

ness of soul. I sow lack of prayer ; I reap a sense of distance from God.

I sow the denial of Christ in my daily walk ; I reap His denial of *me* when I speak for Him.

I sow indifference to the perishing souls around me ; I reap seeing those to whom I could have spoken pass into a lost eternity.

In many a trying circumstance too of our life, we are brought to recognise the reaping of that which we sowed years before.

Much of the reaping of that which we have sown to others comes to us in the form of unavailing remorse. Oh ! what would we not give if we could undo the past ! Alas ! we cannot undo it, only remorseful memories are left us.

In some cases the reaping which comes from remorse is very terrible. A Christian once said to us, one who, before his conversion to God, had lived a life of unrestrained wickedness in Australia : “ I would be willing to have my arms and legs chopped off if I could *lose the remembrance* which comes to me at night of the wicked things I have done. I know they are all washed out in the blood of Christ, and I have no fear ; but *oh ! it's the remembrance of them,*” and the anguish in his face told how terrible these memories were to him.

Many of us have heard the story of the man who, when he was taking his old father on his back to the Workhouse, sat down on a certain

JERUSALEM ON EARTH.

215

stone. The old man burst into tears : “ I sat on this stone,” he said, “ when I carried *my* father to the workhouse.”

“ Whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap.”

F. A.

JERUSALEM ON EARTH.

(An Answer to a Correspondent.)

WHAT a wonderful place this city has been in its glory, is now—in spite of its desolate condition—and will yet be in its millennial splendour, when at length its distinctive name shall be “ The Lord is there ” ! (Ezek. XLVIII. 35). Then, indeed, will rejoicing hearts turn thither in worship and gratitude. “ Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto Thee.” It will be, surely, the Fountain of Israel, as Psalm LXVIII. 26 tells us ; but, wider still, all upon earth shall derive blessing and ascribe praise to this centre of good.

It is, too, the place from which to read the various points of the compass, as we say, in the Scriptures : the North, the South, the East, and the West. It must be so ; otherwise, as the readers of the sacred volume are all over the world, how could they understand what is written ? Further, this city is the centre for earthly scenes always, which will help us to see clearly what is told us of future events on the earth in various Old and New Testament Scriptures.

I refer more particularly to that time of sorrow

yet to come which precedes the glorious era predicted in Psalm LXVIII., before the Lord takes up His people's cause (Deut. XXXII. 40-43), when Jerusalem will be in a most terrible way the centre of the earth for its judgment as well as for her own.

There will take place the onslaught of the king of the North (Ezek. XXXVIII. 15, 16), the king of the South, who has fought with Jerusalem's wilful king, attracting his (Northern) Assyrian foe. Then the apostate Jews appeal to their protector, the Roman prince—a Western power—who hastens to help them and their king, a covenant having been made with him (Isa XXVIII. 15) in view of the overflowing northern scourge, as Daniel IX. 27 tells us. Besides these three, there are the kings of the East whose way is prepared by the great river Euphrates being dried up (Rev. XVI. 12). In verse 24 we read of the kings of the earth and of the whole world being gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

All this is in connection with Jerusalem and its sinners, and with those nations, on the other hand, who had oppressed or corrupted her. What a centre for judgment in that great day !

In going over these points of the compass it would seem that the "Babylon" of that day, while losing none of the characteristics of ancient Babylon in imperial power and pride, is nevertheless connected with the seven-hilled city of Rome, and, geographically, is western in its scope.* It

* When Daniel recorded his visions the city which was to be the seat of the fourth great empire was scarcely built ; hence its location had to be determined by later

JERUSALEM ON EARTH.

217

is the fourth of the great four world empires of Daniel, and combines in its description in Revelation XIII. 2 characteristics of all four, though distinct from these in its history, portraying that which is still future. No city is rebuilt in that chapter, but it arises out of the *sea* of nations and has its power given it by Satan, while Antichrist, who belongs to the *land* (of Israel) works miracles, and induces all to worship him whose names were not written from earth's foundation in the book of the slain Lamb.

This imperial power sustains apostate Christianity, whose seat is Rome, until, with the help of the ten kings raised up in that day it destroys it (Rev. XVIII.), to be destroyed itself on its participation in the great conflict at Jerusalem already spoken of.

Once more shall Jerusalem be the centre of judgment after the millennium, as Revelation XX. 7-10 tells us, when the nations in the four quarters of the earth are gathered together to battle, compassing the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, only to be destroyed by fire from God out of heaven.

What a wonderful place this earthly centre is, in God's ways! Better still for us it is to be connected with Jerusalem above, where all is joy, praise and blessing for ever!

W. N. H.

events. If the actual city of Babylon was to be rebuilt and be the capital of the fourth empire in its final form, it would have been so easily in accordance with prophetic usage to have indicated its locality as in Chaldea, and on the plain of Shinar. This militates against the belief of some that Babylon is to be rebuilt and that Isaiah XIII. 19-22 describes the doom of a city yet future.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. D. B.—The answer to your question as to cleansing by the Word, in John xv. 3 and Ephesians v. 26, is found in the fact that the Scriptures speak of cleansing in two ways, distinct though connected.

The first mention of it is in Exodus xxix. 36. The cleansing is there connected with the making of atonement for the altar. In Leviticus xvi. 30 we find a similar statement made in regard to persons and not things. It reads, "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."

Here then, in the beginning of the sacred volume, we find the word used in its primary and fundamental force. The cleansing which we as sinners need is not merely a purifying of our thought and morals, which might end in nothing more than a reformation of character; we need a cleansing wrought in the virtue of an atonement which purifies from the guilt and stain of sin before the Lord. We turn towards the end of the New Testament and we find the same great truth, not in a type but in the clear light of the Antitype, in the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." The blood of Christ cleanses fundamentally because with judicial exactness it meets the whole question of sin, and removes it.

But, on the other hand, there would be still something lacking if this judicial cleansing stood alone. We believers are cleansed according to 1 John i. 7;

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 219

and yet, according to the very next verse, it is impossible for us to say with any truth that we have no sin in us. This being so, God has graciously provided that cleansing of a moral sort shall go hand in hand with the judicial cleansing of which we have spoken. By moral cleansing we mean the purifying of the mind, the affections, the will, the motives, and consequently of all the actions in a practical way.

Old Testament as well as New Testament scripture refers to cleansing in this sense. Psalm cxix. 9 may be referred to as well as John xv. 3 and Ephesians v. 26 as to which you ask. In each case it is the Word that cleanses, that Word of which water is a type.

Have we not as Christians had some experience of the cleansing power of the Word of God? Do we not know how it searches and detects, and reveals us to ourselves, while at the same time it shows us God's condemnation of all that we are, and also sets before us an Object great and attractive enough to lift us out of the old fleshly rut and set us upon new lines altogether?

By this cleansing process, which continues right through our lives, we are brought more and more into conformity with what has been accomplished by that judicial cleansing which took place once for all at our conversion.

The subject is one of great practical importance. The space at our disposal does not allow of our enlarging further upon it, but you will find a fuller unfolding of it in *Blood and Water*, a booklet which our publishers will be pleased to send you on receipt of 1½d. (F. B. H.).

220 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. B. (LUCKNOW), and others.—We cannot accept responsibility for all the views of our various contributors. While we would not print anything that we deemed subversive of the truth, we do not feel called upon to exercise too rigorous a censorship as to details about which earnest and devoted students of the Word of God may differ. With regard to a future rebuilding of the actual city of Babylon, we do not see anything in Scripture to lead us to suppose that this is to take place. But may we refer you as to this to an article in our present issue, entitled “ Jerusalem on Earth ” ?

H. L. S.—Well ! well !! You remind us of the Venerable Bede, who, after describing the high spiritual character of a contemporary Christian, added slightly : “ But, unhappy man, *he did not keep Easter our way !* ” It is to be feared that many are only too ready to discount the worth of a fellow-Christian, though his spiritual qualities be of a high order, simply because his way of doing something differs from their own. Fie upon such pride and uncharitableness !

TASMANIA.—How can you affirm that such God-fearing men and women as Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, were not born of God until Christ came and they received Him ? We believe that they had been born of God, by the sovereign and gracious work of the Holy Spirit, before the coming of the Saviour, and that the fact of their having been thus born of God was manifested by their reception of Christ, while the nation of Israel, as a whole, rejected Him. Read, in this connection, John I. 11-13.

GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

SOME years ago I was travelling from Northampton to Dublin, and on joining the Irish mail at Rugby took the only vacant seat in a compartment beside a Salvation Army officer. Everything about him indicated that he was not only an intelligent, but a spiritually-minded man ; and I felt that a little conversation on the things of God would be mutually profitable. So I handed him a little poem of mine which had just been published. It ran thus :

A THREEFOLD CORD

(Eccles. iv. 12).

Sovereign mercy, grace and love,
 Threefold cord from heaven above ;
 Cord which ne'er can broken be,
 Now, nor through eternity.

Sovereign mercy saves us all,
 Lost and ruined by the fall :
 Yet our God in mercy still
 Mercy has on " whom He will."

Sovereign grace which e'en could choose
 Such as would that grace refuse ;
 Grace which follows till we yield,
 Then becomes our sun and shield.

Sovereign LOVE ! Oh why should He
 Love such loveless things as we ?
 Search the heart of God above
 For the answer—" GOD IS LOVE."

Human love must find its rise
In its object, which supplies
Something which must correspond
To the love that doth respond.

God's great love, contrariwise,
In Himself doth find its rise ;
Nought in us to call it forth ;
Hateful, hating ; nothing worth.

Yet He loved, we know not why :
Loved, and gave His Son to die.
Love which far exceeds our need ;
Surely this is " love indeed."

" Very good ! very sound ! " was his comment, at the same time asking if he could keep the leaflet.

" Certainly," I replied. " I am very glad you appreciate it ; for only yesterday I handed a copy to a religious gentleman at Northampton and he objected to it very strongly."

" Why ? "

" Well, he said that I had a very poor estimate of man, especially in saying that there was nothing in him to merit the love of God."

" Well," said my friend, " now you mention it, I would be disposed to disagree with you on that point. It is tantamount to saying that there is nothing good in man ; and I believe there is something good in everybody."

" Except the apostle Paul," I interjected quickly.

" What do you mean ? " he asked in astonishment.

"Well," I replied apologetically, "I was only referring to his own words in Romans VII. 18. He there says, 'I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.'"

"Ah, but what did he mean by that?"

"What he said, I should think; for, apart from the fact that he was inspired by the Holy Ghost, and wrote at the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. XIV. 37), "he was a very sober-minded man, and always said what he meant, and meant what he said."

"Well, I could understand his giving vent to such an expression about himself in a moment of depression; but he doesn't say it about everybody as you do."

"I should have thought that if it were true of the apostle Paul it would be true of everybody; but I know where he says three worse things about everybody in one verse."

"What verse is that?" he asked, in a challenging tone of voice.

"The seventh verse of the eighth chapter of the same epistle (Romans). Let me read it to you. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.' That is, it hates God. Do you believe that?"

"Indeed, I don't," was his immediate and emphatic answer. "How could I believe it?"

"How could you disbelieve it? is what I ask. But if you don't believe the first thing in that verse it would be useless for me to proceed, for the other two are worse still."

“ Then I couldn't believe them.”

“ Very well, I will close my Bible and say no more except this, that it is a very sad thing to hear you—a preacher of the Gospel—say that you can't believe the Bible.” So saying, I closed my Bible and put it in my pocket. Feeling, however, that he was a genuine soul, I closed my eyes and prayed to God to give him grace to believe His Word. When I opened my eyes he was looking at me, and in a tone that showed how much it cost him to say it, he said, “ I can't stand that ! ”

“ What ? ”

“ I can't stand your saying that I don't believe the Bible. Why, I have always urged people to believe every word in it, even if it clashed with their feelings.”

“ Very good advice ; but let me urge you to use your own prescription to cure your own disease. Believe God's Word in spite of your own feelings.”

“ I will : I believe that ‘ the carnal mind is enmity against God.’ But what is the second thing ? ”

“ That ‘ the carnal mind (which is enmity against God) is not subject to the law of God.’ Do you believe that ? ”

“ Well, that seems to clash with facts ; for I know people who are not converted who seem subject to the law of God.”

“ I am glad you use the word ‘ seem,’ for the

Scripture says they are not subject to the law of God. There are many in this country who seem to be subject to the law of this land who hate it. They submit to it because they fear the consequences of disobeying it ; but that is a very different thing from being subject to it, in the sense of voluntarily yielding to it because of one's delight in it " (see Romans VII. 22).

" I see the difference, and quite believe that the carnal mind of man is not subject to the law of God in that sense. But what is the third thing ? "

" Well, you must be prepared for something stronger still. Let me read you the verse once more : ' The carnal mind is enmity against God ; is not subject to the law of God ; *neither indeed can be.*' Do you believe that ? "

Throwing his head back as though to give the fullest possible emphasis to his reply, he said : " No, I don't, and I won't believe it."

" Then you won't believe God ? "

" I won't believe that, no matter who says it."

" Very well. Now I must decline any further conversation with you. But let me quote one more text to you. The Word of God says : ' He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar ' (1 John v. 10). What a solemn thing for you—a professed servant of God—to make a liar of your Master in public."

Our fellow-passengers, who had dropped their newspapers, etc., and were apparently much interested in the conversation, looked to see what reply he would make to this last text, but his chin sank down on his chest and he remained silent. I closed my eyes and looked to God in prayer again for him. The silence seemed longer and more painful this time, but at last he said : “ It seems that I have been displaying all those three things myself this afternoon.”

“ Yes,” I replied, “ you have been allowing ‘ the mind of the flesh ’ to act : now let the other mind—‘ the mind of the Spirit ’—act. Believe God in spite of your feelings and fancies.”

Never have I seen such a complete change in a man in so short a time. Looking upwards, he exclaimed, “ Lord, I believe ! Help Thou mine unbelief ! ”

“ But,” continued he after a while, “ if there is nothing in man to merit the love of God—which is true, I admit—how is it that God does love man ? for it seems impossible to love an unlovely thing.”

“ It is impossible with man, but it is possible with God, for ‘ God is love ’ (1 John iv. 16). In fact, in the scripture which describes man in his most unlovely and unlovable condition by nature and practice, we find the greatest expression of God’s great love towards him.”

GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

227

“ Where is that ? ”

“ In Ephesians II. Let me read it to you : ‘ And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.’ These Ephesians (and what was true of them is true of man generally) were dead—morally dead in the sight of God : ‘ dead in trespasses and sins.’ Moreover, the scripture continues, ‘ Wherein in time past (that is before conversion) ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.’ And, lest we should deceive ourselves by thinking that this was true of the Ephesians only, and did not include us, it adds, ‘ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.’ To sum it all up, we were dead towards God as regards what was good ; but alive against Him as regards evil by walking according to the world (the friendship of which is enmity against God—James IV. 4), indulging in the flesh (which hates God), being controlled by the devil (the greatest enemy of God). In fact, ‘ the world, the flesh, and the devil ’—that awful trinity of evil aptly describes our place, our pleasure, and our power. Now do you think it possible for God to love us while we were in that state ? ”

“ It seems impossible for God, who is holy and hates sin, to love such sinners.”

“ It does : but let us not forget that while God hates sin, He loves the sinner. So we read in the next verse, ‘ But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus : that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.’ That is, God, who is rich in mercy, moved by the great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins, lifts us up from the worst place in which we could be by nature and practice, makes us live in Christ, and sets us in the best place (in the heavenly places) and in the best Person (in Christ). He lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set him among princes, and to make him inherit the throne of glory ” (1 Sam. II. 8).

“ Great love ! Great love ! ” was all that my friend could say, while the tears flowed down his checks, which seemed aglow with God's great love.

“ Yes,” I continued, “ and lest we should take some—if only a little—of the credit to ourselves, and imagine that it was because of something that we were or had done that made

GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

229

God act thus towards us, it adds : ' For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.' "

It seemed as though the whole compartment radiated with the love of God that afternoon ; and the few minutes which remained until we reached Crewe, where my friend had to change, flew by all too fast as we conversed on the various aspects of that love. As he bade me farewell, he took both my hands in his and said, " Good-bye ! I thank God from the bottom of my heart for having met you to-day ; for you have put something in my soul that was never there before."

" And," I replied, " I venture to say that it will never be taken out : for ' whatsoever God doeth (and it is He who has done it, by His Spirit through His Word) it shall be for ever ' (Eccles. III. 14). But, above all, remember that it is by the blood of Christ. Before God could righteously take you up from those depths of sin and shame in which you were by nature and by practice, the question of your sins had to be settled to His satisfaction. This was done by Christ on the cross, where He bore your sins (1 Peter II. 24), and suffered for your sins " (1 Peter III. 18).

Thus we parted—he, I trust, to pass on to others what he had learned that day—God's great love to great sinners.

T. C. M.

DEPRESSION AND ITS CAUSES.

ONE has sometimes heard it said that the Christian should always wear a bright face. In fact, some would almost make out that a believer who wears a long face is guilty of a sort of treason against the Lord! The Scriptures, however, tell us not to judge from the exterior, but to judge righteous judgment. The world is proverbially governed by appearances; but the church of God is to live in the power of eternal realities.

Many shining and devoted saints have experienced seasons of terrible depression, and have sometimes been almost on the borders of despair. Martin Luther was certainly not one of the weaker sort, but he sobbed himself into his last sleep like a wearied child. And it is not to be wondered at if the rank and file of Christ's army at times are almost overwhelmed by depressing thoughts and feelings.

There are many reasons for it. We are still in this "body of our humiliation." Depression is often *constitutional*. Some men seem to have been born under a cloud. Although they are not burnt at the stake, they suffer a daily, hidden martyrdom. Their body is a continuous clog on their activities of mind and soul. This constitutional depression is not necessarily a hindrance to usefulness. Some plants thrive best in the dark. Ships need

DEPRESSION AND ITS CAUSES. 231

ballast as well as sail, and so does the church of God. Many a man has never begun serving the Lord until his health was ruined. The buoyancy and brightness that come from high animal spirits are not Christian graces. The face may be always wreathed with smiles, but this is no indication of true godliness. Jeremiah was a weeping prophet, but he faithfully delivered God's terrible messages. And even the sullen Jonah was a true prophet of the Lord. John Calvin wore a sour face, but he was one of the greatest of the Reformers.

Again, depression is often the result of *monotonous occupation and surroundings*. The bow that is always kept stretched loses its elasticity and strength. Rest and recreation are a law of our nature and cannot be denied us without serious loss. When we take a holiday, we do less in order that we may do more. We may blame the spiritual life, whereas, if it be right to blame at all, we ought to blame the body. Those who work with their brains are more liable to depression than those who toil with their hands. Brain work and heart work wear out the nerves, while manual labour builds up the muscles. Nothing is so depressing as monotony ; the thoughts revolve in the same dark circle, and the outlook is a mass of grey. In such a condition, a physical change may work wonders.

Peter tells us that we may be overtaken

232 DEPRESSION AND ITS CAUSES.

with "heaviness" through various *trials and temptations*. The great apostle to the Gentiles knew what it was to have continual sorrow at heart and be burdened with many cares. If it is true that "sorrow and pain knock more often at the door of the heart than joy and gladness," then we need not be surprised that heaviness is sometimes our experience.

Our confidence has as its foundation the cross, and *the cross* spells a cruel death. It is an emblem of shame and suffering. We are to mortify those things which are opposed to our Lord's wishes. We are to put out of our lives those principles which involved our Saviour's death. We are to deny the things which the flesh delights in. Surely the believer suffers more keenly than does the unregenerate soul. Further, we live in the midst of a lost world. We see men passing away, often, we fear, into eternal punishment, among them, perhaps, our own relations. We know that God's only remedy for man's ruin is hateful to the carnal mind; everywhere men are trampling underfoot their only hope, quarrelling with their own mercy, and rejecting their own salvation. And we know what their doom is to be. If we were to put happiness before duty, and sacrifice truth for the sake of what was agreeable, we might well refuse to believe in hell and so wear more smiling faces.

Sometimes we are at a loss to account for

DEPRESSION AND ITS CAUSES. 233

our depression except on the ground of *Satanic assaults*. The great enemy loves to discourage the people of God, and he uses as a handle the things we have mentioned. It sometimes happens that the Lord allows him to tempt us in this way before or after some season of special usefulness. Take the case of Elijah. Shortly after his great victory at Carmel we find him fleeing in panic before the face of the wicked Jezebel; and we remember his utter prostration of spirit when he had reached a temporary refuge in the far south of the country. No doubt, too, in this case, physical exhaustion had much to do with the discouragement of his soul. A celebrated minister of the gospel said he used to count upon periods of depression as being the sure precursors of seasons of special blessing. In the midst of his triumphs he must be made to realize that he is but dust and that the glory is the Lord's, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Of course, *getting out of touch with the Lord* is another fruitful source of depression. If our hearts condemn us we lose the joy of our salvation. In this case the remedy is easy to know, though it may be hard and bitter to put into practice. But repentance is not all bitterness; there is sweetness mingled with it, and our God is ever gracious to those who have fallen.

One lesson that we may deduce from the above remarks is this : never to walk by feelings, but ever by faith—a lesson, surely, which oftens takes a lifetime to learn thoroughly. Blessed is he who, in the midst of depressing feelings and circumstances, remains calm and confident in spirit, resisting the enemy, refusing the evil, choosing the will of God, and claiming His power to overcome. Such a one gains a victory which angels may well be constrained to admire. E. A.

THE THREE MOTOR-CARS.

SOME time ago I was in a motor garage, containing a fairly large stock of cars. These vehicles were of different types. Some were war service cars, painted a uniform grey ; others were private pleasure cars, more elegantly fitted, while there was a trade van or two. Amongst the cars, however, three attracted my special attention. They were upholstered in the most luxurious material, every part was spotlessly clean, and the bodies were constructed of such material that if the cars were exposed to bright sunlight, the effect would be dazzling to the eye. I understood, from enquiry, that they had been driven with great care to the garage, and that the chief of the garage would not allow them

THE THREE MOTOR-CARS

235

to be brought through the streets if the weather was wet and the streets dirty. On enquiring the destination of these beautiful vehicles, I was much interested to find they were for one of the Indian native rulers, and that the Prince was going to use them on State occasions.

While viewing the cars, I felt irresistibly reminded of a greater display which is yet to come, a greater exhibition of grandeur than has ever been shown by any earthly potentate. Unlike the vehicles around them, the three cars were destined for a sunnier land than this island of ours, with its fogs and rains. Dear fellow Christian, your destiny and mine is not linked up with this world in which our lot is cast, with its ups and downs, its clouds and sunshine. We have been called to glory with Christ, and though for the time being we have to mix with things of earth, yet the time is coming—and soon—when we shall be taken out of these surroundings, and transported, not into the presence of some eastern ruler, wealthy though he be, but into the very presence of the glory of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

If those in charge of the cars, destined for an Indian Prince, were so careful to protect the vehicles under their care from the dust and dirt, how much more should we seek grace and help from above to be preserved from the pollution and defilement all around us. While

we endeavour, through God's grace, to save some out of the midst of the corruption of the world, yet the word of the Lord to us is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

The Prince of my story, when he wished to show his greatness before the subjects of his State, had in view to make a triumphal procession with his cars. Will not our blessed Saviour be admired in His saints, and wondered at in all them that believe? Think of it, that although we may see little of Christ's likeness in one another to-day, yet of each of His own, in that coming day, it may be said, in the words of the hymn,

They shall shine in His beauty
Bright gems for His crown.

. Our God and Father will show in the ages to come, "the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." We shall be seen in all the brightness and glory of Christ, and through that wonderful company, composed of all Christians from the day of Pentecost till the return of our Lord, God will show forth how rich He is. The Indian Prince might show forth his power before his people, but his glory would only last for a time, but not so with the God whom we have known through Christ, for do we not read, "Unto Him be glory in the church, through Christ Jesus, throughout all generations."

W. McD.

SPIRITUAL VIVISECTION.

IT is for our spiritual good to be dissected by the Word of God, which is “ quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” We have to do with a God who sees us through and through, for “all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Now divide yourself into three parts as follows :—

1. What you are ;
2. What you think yourself to be ;
3. What you appear to the world to be ;

and you will then find that there is a good deal of difference between parts one and two, and a still wider divergence between parts one and three. The fact is, there is no consistency about you, and as a child of Adam you are not morally sound.

Firstly, in regard to what you are ; you must needs get into the light of God’s holy presence to learn the truth about yourself ; it may prove a painful lesson, as in Job’s case, for when at last Job came to himself he said :

“ I am vile—I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” It was the same with Peter when the light shone into his soul and he cried out to Jesus, “ Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Paul, too, who had to confess himself to be the chief of sinners, truly said, “ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” Realise what you are, that you have really nothing of your own but your sins and your sinful nature, and that you need a Saviour. Then you will be prepared to take sides with God against yourself. When your eyes have been opened in this way you will learn how God has not only provided a wonderful Saviour for you in His beloved Son, but He is able and ready to give you a new life in Christ Jesus, so that you may be free from the dominating power of those evil desires which belong to your Adam nature.

Secondly, in regard to what you think yourself to be. “ The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? ” Perhaps you have hitherto managed to persuade yourself that you are not so bad after all, just like the Pharisee who stood and prayed thus with himself, “ God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican.” Or, possibly, you have set before yourself an ideal of what you think you ought to be, whilst secretly you have often felt dis-

appointed that somehow you seem to have fallen short of it. Then you have decided to lower your standard a little and try again—a clear indication that you expected some good thing from yourself—but what a hopeless struggle self-improvement is ! It is, of course, a great wrench to have to let go things in which you have naturally prided yourself, and only the cross of Christ can enable you to do so. The fact is, you need a stronger power than you possess in yourself to “cast down reasonings, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Let me tell you that God is able and ready to give you that power by the working of His Holy Spirit in you. The Spirit of truth never occupies us with make-beliefs ; He is here to show us what is real and lasting in Christ, even “the unseen things which are eternal.”

Thirdly, in regard to what you appear to the world to be, I would point out that this world in which you move is made up of appearances, and people put themselves to no end of trouble for the sake of keeping them up. Look at the time and money expended on outward adornment. Look at the labour bestowed in order to obtain the good opinion of others. And yet it is better to have the secret sense of God’s approval in all that you do. The world

consists of three things : the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and there is a ready answer in you to each of these three things. You may be very self-denying because of the war. You may be full of patriotism, which is right enough in its place. But the best thing this world can produce is not going to last, "for the fashion of this world passeth away." And the best thing this world can give you will never satisfy you, though it may be the means of gratification for a time. God gives to His children the love of a Father. "The Father Himself loveth you." That is an enduring and unchangeable love which satisfies.

In conclusion, let me recapitulate God's wonderful provision for you :—

1. In place of what you are, a new life with new desires in Christ.
2. In place of what you think yourself to be, His Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth.
3. In place of what you appear to the world to be, your heart filled and satisfied with that love which is of the Father.

These are not visionary blessings but divine realities to be enjoyed now in the goodness of the Godhead, if we are willing to walk by faith and not by sight.

H. D. A.

CAWNPORE, INDIA.