

T H E
CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

EDITED BY
ALFRED H. BURTON.

VOL. III.

LONDON: JAMES CARTER,
THE CLARENDON TRACT DEPOT,
ALDINE CHAMBERS, 13 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C
1901.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
"All my Springs are in Thee" - - - F. L.	I
An Accepted Worshipper - - - J. N. D.	112
"Come unto Me" - - - J. N. D.	203
Correspondence - - - 55, 80, 138, 221, 280, 334	
Early Beginnings - - - J. N. D.	169
Enoch - - - H. R.	22, 43, 64, 98
Extracts - - -	196, 308
Faith and Confession - - - J. N. D.	261
Fragments - - -	140, 252
Fragments for Babes - - - H. K.	229
"Hath Made us Kings" - - - W. J. M.	322
Hints on Daniel. A. H. B.	7, 49, 67, 103, 119, 143, 185, 197, 235, 264, 281, 311
Jacob's Funeral - - - J. G. B.	309
Jesus Wept - - - J. Willans.	250
Kept by the Power of God - - - W. J. M.	287
Looking to Christ - - - J. N. D.	317
Many Mansions - - - F. L.	141
Present Grace - - - J. N. D.	26
Poetry—A Praise Song - - - —	279
Evermore - - - —	195
Satisfied - - - —	168
The Coming King ; or, The Soldiers of	
Christ - - - A. E. P.	27

	PAGE
Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham	F. G. B. 225,
	253, 291
Remarks on the Lord's Supper - - -	J. N. D. 34
Sacerdotalism and the Confessional - - -	F. G. B. 126
The Awakened Conscience - - -	J. N. D. 167
The Baptism of the Holy Ghost—Is it Once for	
All or Continuous? - - -	B. W. R. 326
The Epistle to the Romans (A. H. B.)—	
Lecture I.—The Gospel of God - - -	13, 29, 75
,, II.—The Righteousness of God - - -	85, 113, 150
,, III. - - -	211
,, IV. - - -	242, 271, 303, 329
“The Last Days” - - -	Bellett. 192
“The Lord's Death, till He Come” - - -	F. G. B. 162
The Marriage Feast - - -	J. Willans. 297
The Sympathies of Jesus - - -	J. Willans. 218
Thoughts on John xv. - - -	J. N. D. 94
“To-day if ye will hear His Voice, harden not	
your Heart” - - -	F. L. 57
What is Our Position as Christians? - - -	J. G. B. 132, 154

The Christian's Library.

“All my Springs are in Thee.”

(Ps. lxxxvii. 7.)

THERE can be no real happiness for man apart from God or outside His presence. The last and grandest of the divine creation, the fruit of special counsel of the Godhead (Gen. i. 26), was endowed with a spiritual nature capable of knowing and enjoying God, receiving this capacity by the inbreathing of the Lord God (Gen. ii. 7). This enjoyment was broken and lost at the Fall, though the blessed God came down to commune, as at other times, with the man. If there was a difference, it was not first shown by God, but Adam having gained his conscience was afraid. Then the door of access and communion, which Adam felt his unfitness to enter because of his sin, was closed judicially, our first parents being thrust out of that garden of delights, the Cherubim with flaming sword guarding every avenue of access to the tree of life (Gen. iii.).

In these circumstances the human family commenced its extension. Children are born

outside Paradise, with the weight of the curse upon them, containing within them an evil and fallen nature, which their parents had alone the capacity to transmit (Gen. v. 3). In such a condition a holy God could only sanction an approach to Him on the ground of a sacrifice, which spoke of a life forfeited. This Abel learns and practises, while Cain refuses it, and is rejected, deliberately turning his back on God's "presence" in grace (Gen. iv. 16), as Adam had lost that presence in communion while innocent.

Is, however, God's purpose in creation to be frustrated, and Satan's success to be not merely temporary but eternal? Shall both creation and the creature remain for ever beneath the power of the enemy, and evil triumph everlastingly over good? It might almost seem to be the case, judging from man's humiliating history, for he defiles every privilege committed to him, and forfeits every blessing presented for his enjoyment on the condition of obedience. Gleams of hope appear, indeed, among these dark and desolate ruins, showing that, amidst all the failure and sin, God had not changed His mind or intention. Enoch and Noah walk with God, finding grace before Him; Abraham receives wondrous secrets of the divine bosom, passing off the scene as "the friend of God" (Isa. xli. 8); while to Moses the eternal God spoke "mouth to mouth" (Num. xii. 8; Exod. xxxiii. 9-11), and he had the distinction of first being able to

“ALL MY SPRINGS ARE IN THEE.” 3

commit God's mind to writing, concerning creation, and the line of faith up to Israel's separation, redemption, and the threshold of the promised land. With the priesthood this intimacy is carried on, and upon its failure the prophet becomes prominent, as the one to whom Jehovah confided His thoughts; and divine communion was granted (though with increasing reserve) to kings and herdsmen, priests and prophets, warriors and preachers; but from the message of Malachi the voice of God is silent for four centuries.

Then there appears on the scene in the fulness of time the Son of God, in whose Person God spoke (Heb. i. 2). The lips that pronounced the message, the heart that felt the need, were those of a real Man, but the words were the words of God. Yet man refused to hear the voice of the charmer, charming never so wisely (Ps. lviii. 5). They hated Him without a cause (John xv. 25), and cast out and crucified the Prince of Life. But although the hatred of their hearts desired nothing more than to be rid of the blessed Saviour, God had plans and counsels which rested for accomplishment upon this very death. This is very beautifully shown in Hebrews ix., where we find how completely the death of Christ has retrieved and reversed the results of the Fall. The vail of the temple, which had told the solemn lesson that God was not free to come out and delight in a sinner, nor could that sinner

dare to intrude upon the holiness of God's presence—this vail was rent, by God's hand, from the top to the bottom. And the precious blood of Christ enables those with a purged conscience to enter that inner sanctuary, and worship the living God, having the sense of a perfect fitness to be there (Heb. ix. 6-14). Then the exhortation is in chapter x., "Let us draw near," as those who have "boldness," a holy confidence "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," by a new and living way through the vail (now rent and no longer debarring entry), and in the sense of "having a High Priest," the same Jesus risen and glorified, who maintains our cause and sustains our weakness even in such holy service (v. 19-22). We enter in the sense that we have been made "fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and have been "forgiven all trespasses" (Col. i. 12, ii. 13); but if we are to render praises and worship "acceptable unto God" it must be by "Jesus Christ," that holy Victim, who has become the great High Priest on our behalf. Should communion be interrupted by anything contrary to this holy calling of God on high, and the believer sin, he may then know that service of Advocate, by which our blessed Saviour still sustains our cause (and righteously on the ground of His work), in no wise sanctioning the evil, or making light of it, but as the One to whom God responds on our behalf as a matter of righteousness. The be-

“ALL MY SPRINGS ARE IN THEE.” 5

liever then confesses the sin and is restored (1 John i. 9, ii. 1).

Such are the pains that God has taken that we might without fear take advantage of the wondrous work of Christ, which has been wrought for God's glory and our salvation ; such is the desire, too, of that same blessed God, that there should be no hindrance to His creature's communion with Himself, which was the end and object of our race being set up. Of course, although this intimacy may be really enjoyed now by us, as those to whom the Son of God has declared all those blessed things He had heard from His Father (John xv. 15), yet for the full fruition of these wondrous plans and the unhindered enjoyment by the creature, with the full degree of divine satisfaction, we must look to the eternal day, the “new heavens, and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet iii. 13 ; Rev. xxi. 1). This is a *perfect* scene. All taint of sin will then have been removed, and all things wondrously renewed (John i. 29 ; Rev. xxi. 5). God's tabernacle will then be among men, and He will dwell among them, and be their God.

It were idle to attempt to describe, or even to imagine, the ineffable complacency with which our God will survey that glorious scene, in the sense that the whole array of blessing and glory is the fruit of the travail of the soul of His own beloved Son. With what freedom, how unre-

strainedly, will "the fountain of the water of life," the very source and spring of blessedness, be afforded by our God, and enjoyed by our souls. And in such a scene will God rest, a holy eternal calm of blessing and joy unspeakable. In the spirit of it we shall say then with adoring hearts, "All our *springs* are in Thee."

The scripture at the head of this paper shows us, however, that under God's good hand faith can antedate that day. In a scene which has not the same stamp of perfection upon it, the earthly "ransomed of the Lord having returned to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. xxxv. 10), that city shall be the joy of the whole earth, for the Most High shall stablish her (Ps. xlviii. 2, lxxxvii. 5). In this latter Psalm the godly anticipates and places in the mouths of the sons of Korah a song of the "days of heaven upon earth" (Deut. xi. 21). What grace that such a song should be provided for such lips (*cf.* Num. xvi.). The fair proportions of that city God had chosen "to place His name there," come vividly before his spirit, and he dwells with joy upon God's choice, and the things of glory spoken of her. Egypt and Babylon are summoned to view the sight, oppressors as they had been of the people; and Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia are acquainted that a mysterious and glorious Man was born there. And of Zion herself, among all the births recorded within her precincts, none can compare

with that which Jehovah counts when He en-registers the peoples.

The Psalmist has surveyed the city and its joy, and has arrived at the *source* of all its blessing and grandeur, in the Man that was born there ; and when "everything that hath breath shall praise Jehovah," "in singing and dancing" (so it should read) "they shall say, All my springs are in Thee."

May it be ours to antedate that glorious day heavenly as will be our portion, and as those to whom a deeper intimacy is afforded. F. L.

Hints on Daniel.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

(Daniel v.)

IT is not in keeping with the object we have in view in these papers on the Book of Daniel to enter at any length upon the attacks of rationalists against the authenticity of the book or the truthfulness of its record.

Hostility of heart to the great truth of the divine inspiration of Scripture is the main basis of their position, whilst conjecture and speculation are the great arguments with which they seek to overthrow faith. An overweening con-

fidence in their own ability and professed honesty seems to blind their eyes to evidence which has satisfied the minds of men at least as learned and as capable of weighing evidence as they.

No one acquainted with the "Daniel controversy" will need to examine Dean Farrar's recent work in order to find new weapons of attack against the Word of God. In this respect there is nothing new in the book. It is easy to be a compiler, but more profitable to be a compiler of facts than of doubts. We would not notice the work were it not that it is one of the latest popular attacks upon the inspiration of this portion of the Bible. Most of the objections so triumphantly arrayed have long since been thoroughly examined and satisfactorily answered. If obscurity still hangs round others, it would be wiser to wait for further light should God be pleased to vouchsafe it.

The Christian reader has learnt to trust implicitly those divine oracles which have spoken in power to his heart and conscience. He has no need to appeal to the testimony of Assyrian antiquities, nor Babylonian cylinders and clay tablets. Nevertheless these exist, and in the providence of God these long-buried witnesses are rising from their resting-places to condemn the rashness of the rationalist who dares to impugn the veracity of Biblical history—and none are better aware of their existence than the so-called "higher critics."

HINTS ON DANIEL.

9

It is difficult to imagine what standard of morality leads Dean Farrar to write in reference to the chapter of Daniel now open before us: "To those who, with the present writer, are convinced, by evidence from every quarter . . . that the Book of Daniel is the work of some holy and gifted *Chasid* in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, it becomes clear that the story of Belshazzar, whatever dim fragments of Babylonian tradition it may enshrine," &c.; and this from the pen of a man who has given his solemn adherence to Article VI., "In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church."

It matters not to the Dean that the lips of the Son of God have testified that Daniel himself was the writer; no, it was a holy and gifted Chasid some 440 years after the time in which Daniel lived! If such were indeed the case he would need to be a man "gifted" with marvellous skill to be able to cheat the world with such an imposture for well-nigh two thousand years—an imposture which the "higher critics" have at length been enabled to unmask! But "holy"! Is this the adjective to apply to the perpetrator of such a fraud?

Enough, we trust, has been said to put our readers on their guard against such enemies of the Word of God, be their reputation what it may in the eyes of the religious world.

We have already seen that in chapters iii. and iv. God has been pleased to show us the moral traits that the Gentile powers possess more or less throughout their whole course from first to last. We now come to that character of evil which will infallibly bring down the judgment of God upon the last representative of that world-system which began with Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had indeed acted in folly and wickedness, but he had been arrested in his course by the chastisement of the God of heaven. But Belshazzar's sin reaches such a pitch that there is no remedy. Nebuchadnezzar had persecuted God's people; Belshazzar sets himself in open antagonism to God Himself. This profanity and impiety led to his own ruin and that of the Babylonian dynasty.

It was for her sins that Jehovah had suffered Judah to be "carried away captive out of his own land." "The Lord was as an enemy" to His people (Lam. i. 5). He had "cast off His altar," and "abhorred His sanctuary," but was this a reason why, in the pride of his heart, Belshazzar should insult Him to His very face? There is a limit beyond which man's sin cannot go with impunity. It was so with Babylon of old, and it will be so in the case of the last representative of the Gentile powers in a day not far removed. This character of blasphemy will come before us when considering the solemn outline of the future contained in chapter vii.

HINTS ON DANIEL.

II

“Belshazzar the king made a great feast.” Noted for its grandeur and magnificence Babylon had always been, but on this occasion it had exceeded itself in its dazzling display of earthly glory. Surrounded by a thousand of his lords, he abandons himself to the unbridled gratification of the lusts and passions of his depraved heart. Profanity and impiety are stamped upon this closing scene of Babylon’s greatness. God was not in all his thoughts, unless it were to mock and insult Him. The vessels of the Lord’s house which was in Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar his father had carried to Babylon. Belshazzar “whiles he tasted the wine, commanded” that they should be brought forth, and in impious defiance “the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them.” Intoxicated with the “pleasures of sin,” they drank wine, and “praised the gods of gold,” &c. What a picture of the world without God! How like to much that takes place to-day in the heart of Christendom itself!

Long years before had the Lord foretold Babylon’s doom. Well-nigh one hundred and fifty years previous to this very night Isaiah the prophet had been inspired to enter in descriptive detail into the circumstances of Babylon’s fall, even mentioning by name, and that long before his birth, the one that should be raised up to carry into effect Jehovah’s judgment upon her (Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1).

Later on, as the hour of her destruction drew near, "Seraiah, a quiet prince," was deputed to read all the words that had been written by Jeremiah the prophet against Babylon (Jer. l., li.). But all was in vain, and now the sin that had been unchecked by all these solemn warnings has reached its climax, and the writing on the wall stands out before the astonished and terrified gaze of the king and his associates.

Eyes that up till now had been blind were opening. Consciences that hitherto had slumbered now began to condemn. Hearts that but a moment ago were levity itself now were filled with troubled thoughts. What took place in Babylon of old will soon be re-enacted in more guilty, because more privileged, Christendom. Indeed, much that is said of the literal Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's and Belshazzar's days is repeated in the Apocalypse with reference to the spiritual Babylon that is now in rapid formation.

Space will not admit of any lengthened notice of the remainder of the chapter, the details of which are so well known, and have been so often dwelt upon. The terror of the king ; the impotence of the wise men of Babylon, who "could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof" — how true is this of all the wise men of Christendom, rationalists, higher critics, call them what you please. Then, the separation from the world, both in heart and life, of Daniel ; the consequent spiri-

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 13

tual intelligence, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him"; his calm and dignified bearing before the king; his bold and fearless testimony—how instructive it all is, and how well it deserves our serious and prayerful study!

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."



The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE I.—THE GOSPEL OF GOD.

MY object in announcing the subject of the Epistle to the Romans was that we might, as the Lord may enable us, get a short outline of the epistle as a whole; not by any means to go into it in an exhaustive way or in detail, but to get such an outline as may be a help to any who may not be familiar with the epistle, to study it in their own homes. I believe meetings of this kind entirely fail in their good results if they do not help us to a more diligent study of the Scriptures. We may go to hear and like what we hear, but I do not think that any permanent good will come to our souls unless we are helped to search the Scriptures more diligently and more prayerfully in our own closets.

The teaching in the epistle is indeed most

important, for it treats of fundamental truths. It presents the gospel to us in its first principles, stating most clearly the ground upon which the soul can have relations with God. The apostle Paul had never been to Rome although he was the Apostle of the Gentiles. He tells us in the second chapter of the Galatians that "He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles." He was the apostle for the Gentiles, and that is remarkable when we come to the Epistle to the Romans, because the Church of Rome looks upon Peter as the one with whom they have the greatest links ; but the striking thing is that, instead of Peter having a special link with Rome, it was Paul. Peter, as we know, was chosen by God to open the door at the first to the Gentiles, and of course there was great wisdom in choosing Peter to do so ; but when he had opened the door in the house of Cornelius, Peter seems to have had little more to do with the Gentiles, and Paul comes upon the scene to preach the gospel to the uncircumcision.

It is important for us to remember that, when it is a question of the sinner having to do with God, it is and must be an individual matter. I have no doubt that we have often, most of us at any rate, observed that we get very little in the Epistle to the Romans about the Church. It is alluded to (chap. xii. 4, chap. xvi. 25), but

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 15

it is not the main subject of the Epistle to the Romans, because this epistle treats of man's condition before God, and of how the sinner can be brought into relationship with a God of righteousness and holiness. That is the great subject-matter of the Epistle to the Romans, and that is the important question for every soul, no matter whether he be a Jew or a Gentile. How can a sinner have to do with God? God is a God of justice, a God of holiness, a God who cannot put up with sin, and how then can man be just with God? This was Job's great difficulty (Job ix.). Job had learnt that the heavens were not pure in His sight, and how much less man! The question was raised but never answered until now. Job got no answer to it. Job saw no solution to his great difficulty, "How can a man be just with God?" but God gives us an answer in this Epistle to the Romans.

In the first verse Paul states the ground on which he claims the attention of these Romans; he gives the reason why he can speak with authority. It is not, it will be observed, what is so much spoken of to-day, namely, the authority of the Church; it is God speaking to the soul, and he uses the apostle as His instrument, and so Paul here states the ground on which he addresses these Romans. He says, I am the "servant of Jesus Christ," that is the first claim he has; but there is

something more than that ; he says, I am an "apostle." Now a man might be a servant, as indeed I trust all who know the Lord Jesus Christ desire to be, very feebly in these days, no doubt, compared with Paul. I trust we all desire to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, but Paul says, I am an apostle of the Lord, and that, too, in a very distinct way. He was called of God, and became an apostle by that very call. This brings us back to the journey that he took down to Damascus, when he was haling men and women and casting them into prison. The Lord Jesus Christ shines down upon Saul of Tarsus and makes Himself known to him, and that not in the same way as the other apostles had known Him ; Paul had to do with Him as a glorified Christ ; that is where he starts from. His first link with the Lord Jesus Christ was with a Christ in the glory of God, and he says, That is whence I date my authority to address you Romans. I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am an apostle called by Him from the glory.

But there is a third thing in these verses, he says, I am "separated"—I have nothing else before me ; and that is a wonderful thing, because Paul was a man and only a man, a very faithful man, doubtless, but still he was a man, and he says, I am "separated unto the gospel." There is nothing in my life but that one thing. It was so in a very especial way

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 17

in the case of Paul, there was nothing else he lived for. He lived for one thing only, and that was the gospel; and no matter what happened to him in his life, whether he was beaten with rods or cast into prison, he says, My one concern is that Christ may be magnified, whether it be by life or by death. He has nothing else to live for, as he says in the ninth verse, "God is my witness": it was not merely what he could boast of before man, but "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son." His whole life was taken up with but one thing, and what an authority that was with which to go and speak to people about their souls! His life was given up to this one thing—the gospel of God.

I think that little expression, the "gospel of God," is the great key to the Epistle to the Romans. The expression, "the gospel," has got to be such a commonplace sort of thing that people think that everybody knows what you mean when you use it. But it is very important to distinguish the different ways in which the gospel is spoken of. There is the "gospel of the grace of God," and "the gospel of the glory of Christ," and the "gospel of the kingdom," and it is well that we should understand the difference between these expressions. Here, however, it is the "gospel *of God*," and that is what I wanted to speak a little of to-night.

There are three things that I would like to present to you in reference to this "gospel of God." The first is, *what is the source of it?* It is altogether from God, it is *of God*; but that is not what man thinks of when he speaks of the gospel. He thinks of it as that which meets his own need, and surely it does; it meets us just where we are, and it brings us just what we need. If I am a guilty sinner, the gospel brings me forgiveness and justification; and if I am an anxious soul, the gospel brings me peace. It brings us just what we need, and a blessed thing for us that it is so. But when we have believed, we want to get to God's side of the matter, and to see that it all originated in God's heart.

Where does this gospel come from, and at what stage of the world's history did God begin to speak of HIS gospel? Well, we all know the history of the world, such as God gives it to us in His Word, from Eden right on. What a history it was! How man got worse and worse from the moment that sin came into the world! That is very different from the thoughts of men. They look upon the world as getting better and that man is improving. They think the state of things is infinitely better than it was years ago, and that man has improved and developed, and that he is going to get better yet, but God's Word gives us a very different picture. Man had been getting worse and

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 19

worse from Eden right on, and God's last test was when the Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world. As we find it put in the 21st chapter of Matthew: one servant had been stoned, another had been beaten, and at the last the owner of the vineyard said, They have refused all my messengers, and would not listen to a word they had to say: I have one thing left, they will surely reverence my son. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world was God's last test of man, and they said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him!" They cast Him out, and that is the stage at which God begins to speak about His gospel.

The gospel of God came out from His heart after man had done his very worst. Man had proved himself to be what he was in sinfulness and in enmity against God, as we read in the 15th chapter of John: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin"—that was what man was proved to be by the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world, not only a sinner but a positive enemy of God. It is not merely a question of keeping the law; we are told later on in the epistle that "the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," so that on the ground of law man is hopelessly lost, but the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ has proved that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Somebody was saying a little while ago, com-

paring the 21st and 22nd chapters of Matthew: in the 21st there is the Son coming into the world, and the husbandmen saying, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him"—there was forgiveness even for that; but in the 22nd, after man had crucified Christ, and said, "Away with Him," what does God do with Him? He raises Him from the dead and puts Him at His own right hand, and He says, I am going to have a marriage for My Son, and He invites poor sinners like you and me to come and have a part in it, but man says, I will not have it. There is no forgiveness for that—the despising of grace. There was forgiveness even for the sin of crucifying the Lord of Glory, but none for the sin of refusing the salvation that God offers through His death.

If I think of the gospel—that is the glad tidings—I say, there is something which comes from the heart of God. We are told in the second verse, that God had "promised it afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures." It was *promised* before, but the gospel as now revealed had not been *preached* by the prophets. They prophesied of the grace *that should come*, &c. (1 Pet. i. 10-13). It was when the fulness of the time had come that God sent forth His Son.

Now, if the source of this gospel is the heart of God, what is the *subject* of it? If you were to ask many people what the gospel is about, they would say, "It is God's way of salvation."

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 21

If you press them further they would say, "It tells us how poor sinners like we are may be saved." Another will say, "I consider that the gospel is a message from God to tell a poor worm of the dust how his sins may be forgiven." But when God tells us what the gospel is about, He raises it to a very much higher level than that, He says, it is the gospel of God "concerning His Son," and not merely concerning our blessings. The *source* of the gospel is God's heart, and the *subject* of the gospel is God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. It takes us out of ourselves altogether, and occupies us with a theme that we can dwell upon and never get any harm in dwelling upon, whereas if we dwell upon ourselves, we get into a low state, but we cannot dwell upon Christ and get into a low state. We were singing just now :—

"No more to see Thy chosen few,
In selfish strife divided."

I do not think that there would be any selfish strife if every heart were full of Christ and occupied with Him. How would there be room for all the things that so darken the history, not only of the professing Church, but of the true children of God here? Ah, dear friends, that is a thing which displaces everything else. "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

(*To be continued.*)

Enoch.

I. THE FAMILY OF SETH.

THERE was once a man named Enoch, and two things describe his life: "He walked with God," and "He was not, for God took him."

It was a sad world in which Enoch lived. The multitude walked in "the way of Cain" who slew his brother, and who, for this reason, was driven from God's presence, and *organised* the world as we see it to-day. When Eve listened to the words of the serpent, and the first man fell, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life found a dwelling-place in man's heart (Gen. iii. 6; 1 John ii. 16). It was thus, as to its principles, that the world was *formed*. Shut out from God's presence, Cain organised it by building the first city, and thus gathering men together in society with all the *advantages* of wealth, commerce, art, and pleasure (Gen. iv. 17, 22). Doubtless this city was possessed of some sort of religion, for Cain was a religious man in his way (Gen. iv. 3). What is the difference, let me ask, between Cain's world and the world of to-day, unless it be that now the world is fully *manifested* as the enemy of God, consequent upon the murder and rejection not of Abel, but of the Son of God Himself?

In the days of Enoch, many hundreds of years after the murder of Abel, wickedness had increased on the earth. Men had become *ungodly*, openly defying God, and their words and actions bore out this impression (Jude 15). A few centuries later, and the earth, "corrupt before God and filled with violence," was ripe for judgment (Gen. vi. 11). Thus we see that even before the Flood there had been phases in man's history. Between the Deluge and the final judgment by fire there are further phases. Cain's family, once destroyed, is seen again in its moral characteristics after the cross of Christ, and according to Jude's epistle it has three successive stages: the "way of Cain," the "error of Balaam," and lastly the "gainsaying of Core," or the open defiance by apostate Christendom of the person of Christ.

Amidst the ruin of Cain's family, God appoints to Eve in the person of Seth, *another seed*, instead of righteous Abel whom Cain slew (Gen. iv. 25). Seth became the head of a new race, linked by God, not with Cain, but with a slain Abel. He and his descendants were like a resurrection of Abel, the just one. Cain was "of that wicked one" (1 John iii. 12), and his family became the seed of the serpent (Gen. iii. 15); but, blessed be God! the death of Abel, as did later that of Christ, bore fruit, and there was then as now a family of God on the earth, created and preserved by Him.

Now let us look at the moral characteristics of the family of Seth. We are told that "to him also there was born a son, and he called his name Enos"—*i.e.*, man, mortal (Gen. iv. 26). In thus naming his first-born son, he acknowledged that the judgment of God rested on all men, and that death, the fruit of sin, was their due. Cain admitted this judgment, but did his best to forget it, whereas Seth proclaimed it. To acknowledge oneself to be a lost sinner is faith's first movement.

There was a second trait belonging to Seth's family: "Then began men *to call on the name of the Lord.*" This is a sign of *faith*. It is written, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. x. 14).

To call on the name of the Lord is in the first place to find *salvation* by faith, with all the countless blessings therein contained. "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13). But when I possess salvation, then I call upon the name of the Lord *to worship Him*, and this is the meaning of the expression, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Thenceforth there were worshippers on earth of the true God, and every man of faith in the Old Testament called upon the name of the Lord. Abram built an altar at Bethel, and called upon the name of the Lord (Gen. xii. 8). David built an altar at Moriah, and called upon the Lord

(1 Chron. xxi. 26). Elijah built his altar, and called upon the name of the Lord (1 Kings xviii.). One might multiply examples. To call upon the Lord is to worship Him, and according to these passages, worship is connected with *sacrifice*. We become priests unto our God, in virtue of the slain Lamb who is Himself the subject of our adoration before God. "We have an altar. . . . By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 5).

By these two traits we can recognise the family of Seth. Not that all who were born to this man of faith and to his descendants were saved,* for the household of faith at the time of the Flood was reduced to eight persons; but in this descent the link with God was recognised. Nevertheless, as we have seen, death existed, the terrible result of sin. The words "and he died" recur like a funeral dirge all through this chapter. Lamech died five years before, and Methuselah the very year of the Flood, as if the Lord wished to take His own to be with Himself before the great cataclysm. Enoch was born to the family of Seth

* At any rate, if I understand the passages rightly, it looks as if the heads of families were men of faith; "the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14), and "Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. ii. 5).

(*To be continued.*)

Present Grace.

IT is a very blessed as well as a most solemn thought, that we have to do with a God fully revealed, and that also knows all the secrets of our hearts. Are our souls at peace with God? Are we in the full, unsuspecting, blessed confidence of the favour of God, that flows from God thus known in perfect grace? There should not be a suspecting thought. That is the true state of a Christian; he may have to blame himself as to many a thing, but he has never a doubt in his soul of the divine and blessed favour of God towards him. It is perfect grace.

When Jesus was on earth He could not let out the fulness of it. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

Death had not come in; atonement had not been wrought. He could not go and present to God that which let open the flood-gates that the love of God might flow out in all its fulness. The death of Christ did not *procure* it; but the death of Christ must be there, as the only means by which it could flow forth.

This is where we see the unclouded fulness of God's love. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." There is nothing to be learnt about God but what is revealed and fully

told out. He who has borne all the sin is in the presence of God. The question of sin has been settled; it has been gone through with God. Christ being in the presence of God, it is there we see the unveiled glory. It is there Paul saw Him. There we see Him. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v.). We are standing in grace, a present grace.

J. N. D.

The Coming King; or, The Soldiers of Christ.



BATTLE was raging 'neath Africa's sun,
And laurels of glory were brilliantly won,
For Queen and for country they bearded the foe,
Not loving their lives, if their life-blood must flow.

* * * * *

I thought, too, of those who had gone to that land
To carry the water of life in their hand,
To whisper to souls who were dying around,
That all, *all* they need can in Jesus be found.

A helmet, a sword, a breastplate and shield
Belong to the soldiers of Christ on *His* field;
The banner of truth is the flag that they bear,
With the name of the King who of all things is heir.

I thought of His soldiers all over the world,
Enduring the conflict, their banner unfurled,
With the name of the King once rejected and slain,
With the name of the King who is coming again.

What led them, rejoicing, their all to forsake?
What lured them to enter the lists at all stake?
'Twas the grace of their Leader who came from on high,
The love of the Saviour who came down to die.

He took not the kingdom, nor sat on the throne,
When by Israel rejected, though all was His own ;
One breath would have withered the strength of the foe,
How lowly and meek was that King here below.

He waited the time of His Father and God
To rule with the sceptre and smite with the rod ;
To Him it is given o'er all things to reign,
The Lord of all lords is the Lamb that was slain.

He alone was the Victor 'mid weakness and woe,
When He bruised the head of our terrible foe—
In the dust of that death—'twas on Calvary's tree
He suffered and conquered our Saviour to be.

Not after earth's laurels nor palms do we yearn,
We crave not the pomp of her heroes' return ;
But a crown incorruptible on yonder shore,
To cast at the feet of the Lord we adore.

Oh ! hearken ye men who in spite of His love
" Will not have to reign " the blest King from above,
The Man of God's counsels—the Conqueror slain—
" Kiss the Son " lest you perish, when He comes again.

For " He cometh with clouds," and all eyes shall then see
The despised Nazarene whom they nailed to the tree ;
He cometh—and over all lands He will reign,
And the earth shall rejoice at His coming again.

A. E. P.

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE I.—*Continued.*

BUT the gospel comes to all ; and, to begin with, in this world there were two great divisions of mankind—Jews and Gentiles. The Jew would say, I do not understand about this gospel coming to everybody, what about the Jews ? They were God's peculiar people, and are they all going to be ignored ? Are you going to bring in these Gentiles on exactly the same ground as God's chosen people ? Well, there were promises, and most blessed promises, made to the Jews ; promises, too, which will be fulfilled in a far better way than under the law, but the Jews had forfeited these promises. They boasted of the law, and yet they did not keep the law ; and as we know in the history of Israel in the Book of Exodus, they made a golden calf and forfeited every blessing that God had given them.

Then God said to Moses, I will sweep them all away, and instead of them I will make of you a great nation. What a picture we get then ! Moses reminds God that His name and His promises to Abraham would be set aside, and he intercedes for the people, and then God says, "Verily, I will have mercy," and in the future all their blessings must be on the ground of mercy. "I will have mercy on whom I will

have mercy" (Exod. xxxix.; Rom. ix.). It is the sovereign mercy of God which is the only ground on which any man can obtain blessing from God. And if mercy, why should not the Gentiles get it as well as the Jews? If God is going to act towards man according to His own sovereign mercy, why then should not God show that mercy to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews? The Jew might say, that is all true, but what about the Messiah? The Christ of God, what about Him? Well, what did you do with Him? He has come to you, and you have cast Him out and crucified Him. You have forfeited all your blessings in every way—both on the ground of law and on the ground of the promised Messiah. God has sent the Messiah, but He has been rejected, and now the One that the gospel is about is that very Messiah. We get it noticed in the third verse, "concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." That is the subject of this gospel that Paul preached: it includes the promised Messiah, for this very Person that the gospel is about was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. But He was something far more than that which He was according to the flesh, important as that is, and He will get His rights on that ground too. The Lord Jesus Christ will yet, as the Son of David, get all that is prophesied in Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Messiah.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 31

But He is more than the Son of David, and that is what we get in the next verse: He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," and what a thought that is! This Christ that the gospel tells us about is not a mere man. He was a man and a perfect man. As was said by one whom many of us used to know, "far more truly a man than any of us, because He was a perfect man and we are fallen sinful men." But was He only a man? He was God manifest in the flesh. As we see the Lord Jesus Christ passing through this world, whom do we see? We see God in this world, for the blessed Lord, though perfectly a man, was yet declared to be the Son of God. He was declared to be the Son of God, so that there is no possibility of making a mistake; and every man is left without excuse, for all ought to have discerned who He was. We are told in the Epistle to the Corinthians that the princes of this world, had they known it, would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But was that an excuse for them? Certainly not, they ought to have known it.

First of all, He was declared to be the Son of God with power. There was not a miracle that He wrought that did not manifest His divine power. When He fed the five thousand with five loaves, was not that a manifestation of His divine power? As the Lord says when it was

a question of raising Lazarus to life, "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John xi. 4). Man was left without excuse if he did not bow to the evidence that was before his eyes of who He was. And what is the next thing? "According to the spirit of holiness." As Jesus walked through this world, where sin abounded on every hand, and where its defilements affect us so much, did they defile Him? If He touched the poor leper, did that defile Him? If He came in contact with death; if, as we read in the 7th of Luke, the Lord Jesus came and touched the bier, was He defiled with the touch of death? It is wonderful to see how every word and every act of the Lord Jesus is a constant witness, if men had only had eyes to see who He was. But man would not see it, he was blinded by sin and Satan and hardness of heart. Yet there was ample witness in every act and step of His life that He was the Son of God. As He says, elsewhere, John "bare witness unto the truth." John said, "Behold the Lamb of God," and "on whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." And then He says, the "works that I do bear witness of Me" (John v. 32, &c.). I daresay we have all dwelt on the four witnesses of the 5th of John—the witness

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 33

of John, the witness of Christ's miracles, the witness of the Father's voice from heaven, and then the witness of the Scriptures.

Here in Romans i. 4, we get three ways in which the Lord Jesus was declared to be the Son of God—by power, by the spirit of holiness, and by the resurrection from the dead. He could not be holden of death. That is a wonderful testimony!—He could not be holden of it. We know, too, that by His mighty power we shall be raised from the dead; the resurrection by-and-bye will manifest the glory of the Son of God, but He has Himself been raised by the glory of the Father. Well, all these are witnesses of the glory of this blessed Person who is the subject of God's gospel. The *source* of it is God's heart, the *subject* of it is God's Son, and where is the *sphere* of its activity? To whom does it come? For whom are these blessings that God has devised? Are they to be limited to any particular class, are they to be sent to one nation only?

The gospel overleaps every dispensational barrier. This is what Nicodemus could not understand. He could have understood if Christ had spoken about blessing coming to Israel. But what staggered Nicodemus was that the love of which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke there was a love that flowed over every barrier that God Himself had set up. The gospel which tells us about God's love cannot be narrowed down to any particular nation. If God loved, He loved the

world, and if God saves, it is salvation for the lost, no matter whether he be a Jew or a Gentile who is lost. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations." There is no limit to it, the gospel is world-wide in its application. The source of it is God's heart, the subject of it is God's Son, and the sphere through which it spreads itself to bestow all the blessings of which it speaks stretches wherever man is—it goes among all nations. The righteousness of God is unto all—it is world-wide in its application, so that nobody can say, it is not for me. Nobody can say that it is not *unto* all; but in its application it is only *upon* all them that believe, and that is what is brought out here. It is on the ground of faith.

Remarks on the Lord's Supper.

(I COR. XI.)

THE apostle here touches upon the subject of their (the Corinthians') assemblies. In verse 2 he had praised them, but on this point he could not do so (ver. 17). Their assemblies manifested a spirit of division. This division concerned the distinction between the rich and the poor, but as it seems gave rise to others; at least others were necessary to make

REMARKS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER. 35

manifest those who were really approved of God. Now these divisions had the character of sects ; that is to say, particular opinions divided Christians of the same assembly, of the assembly of God, into schools ; they were hostile to each other, although they took the Lord's Supper together—if indeed it could be said that they took it together. Jealousies that had arisen between the rich and the poor tended to foster the sectarian division. If, I observed, it could be said that they broke bread together, for each one took care to eat his own supper before the others did so, and some were hungry while others took their fill. This was not really eating the Lord's Supper.

The apostle, guided by the Holy Ghost, seizes the opportunity to declare to them the nature and the import of this ordinance. We may notice here that the Lord had taught it him by an especial revelation—proof of the interest that belongs to it—and that it is a part of the Lord's mind in the entire Christian walk, to which He attaches importance in view of our moral condition, and of the state of our spiritual affections individually, as well as those of the assembly. In the joy of Christian liberty, amid the powerful effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost—of the gifts by which He manifested Himself in the assembly, the Lord's death, His broken body was brought to mind, and as it were, made present to faith as the basis and

foundation of everything. This act of love, this simple and solemn deed, weak and empty in appearance, preserved all its importance. The Lord's body had been offered for us!—to which the Holy Ghost Himself was to bear witness, and which was to maintain all its importance in the Christian's heart, and to be the foundation and centre of the edifice of the assembly. Whatever might be the power that shone forth in the assembly, the heart was brought back to this. The body of the Lord Himself had been offered,* the lips of Jesus had claimed our remembrance.

This moral equilibrium is very important to saints. Power, and the exercise of gifts, do not necessarily act upon the conscience and the heart of those to whom they are committed, nor of those always who enjoy their display. And although God is present (and when we are in a good state, that is felt), still it is a man who speaks and who acts upon others; he is prominent. In the Lord's Supper the heart is brought back to a point in which it is entirely dependent, in which man is nothing, in which Christ and His love are everything, in which the heart is exercised, and the conscience remembers that it has needed cleansing, and that it has been cleansed by the work of Christ—that we depend

* I do not say "broken," the best MSS. omitting it; but it is the memorial of Christ slain, and His precious blood poured out.

REMARKS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER. 37

absolutely on this grace. The affections also are in the fullest exercise. It is important to remember this. The consequences that followed forgetfulness of the import of this ordinance confirmed its importance and the Lord's earnest desire that they should take heed to it. The apostle is going to speak of the power of the Holy Ghost manifested in His gifts, and of the regulations necessary to maintain order and provide for edification where they were exercised in the assembly ; but before doing so he places the Lord's Supper as the moral centre, the object of the assembly. Let us remark some of the thoughts of the Spirit in connection with this ordinance.

First, He links the affections with it in the strongest way. It was the same night on which the Lord was betrayed that He left this memorial of His sufferings and of His love. As the paschal lamb brought to mind the deliverance which the sacrifice offered in Egypt had procured for Israel, thus the Lord's Supper called to mind the sacrifice of Christ. He is in the glory, the Spirit is given ; but they were to remember Him. His offered body was the object before their hearts in this memorial.

Take notice of this word "Remember." It is not a Christ as He now exists, it is not the realisation of what *He is* ; that is not a remembrance — His body is now glorified. It is a remembrance of what He was on the cross. It

is a body slain, and blood shed, not a glorified body. It is remembered, though, by those who are now united to Him in the glory into which He is entered. As risen and associated with Him in glory, they look back to that blessed work of love, and His love in it which gave them a place there. They drink also of the cup in remembrance of Him. In a word, it is Christ looked at as dead: there is not such a Christ now.

It is the remembrance of Christ Himself. It is that which attaches to Himself, it is not only the value of His sacrifice but attachment to Himself, the remembrance of Himself. The apostle then shows us, if it is a dead Christ, who it is that died. Impossible to find two words, the bringing together of which has so important a meaning. The *death* of the *Lord*. How many things are comprised in that He who is called the Lord had died! What love! what purposes! what efficacy! what results! The Lord Himself gave Himself up for us. We celebrate His death. At the same time, it is the end of God's relations with the world on the ground of man's responsibility, except the judgment. This death has broken every link—has proved the impossibility of any. We show forth this death until the rejected Lord shall return to establish new bonds of association, by receiving us to Himself to have part in them. It is this which we proclaim in the ordinance when we keep it.

REMARKS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER. 39

Besides this, it is in itself a declaration that the blood on which the new covenant is founded has been already shed ; it was established in this blood. I do not go beyond that which the passage presents ; the object of the Spirit of God here is to set before us not the efficacy of the death of Christ, but that which attaches the heart to Him in remembering His death, and the meaning of the ordinance itself. It is a dead, betrayed Christ whom we remember. The offered body was, as it were, before their eyes at this Supper. The shed blood of the Saviour claimed the affections of their heart for Him. They were guilty of despising these precious things, if they took part in the Supper unworthily. The Lord Himself fixed our thoughts there in this ordinance, and in the most affecting way, at the very moment of His betrayal.

But if Christ attracted the heart thus to fix its attention there, discipline was also solemnly exercised in connection with this ordinance. If they despised the broken body and the blood of the Lord by taking part in it lightly, chastisement was inflicted. Many had become sick and weak, and many were fallen asleep—that is, had died. It is not the being worthy to partake that is spoken of, but the partaking in an unworthy manner. Every Christian, unless some sin had excluded him, was worthy to partake because he was a Christian. But a Christian might come to it without judging himself, or appreciating as

he ought that which the Supper brought to his mind, and which Christ had connected with it. He did not discern the Lord's body ; and he did not discern, did not judge, the evil in himself. God cannot leave us thus careless. If the believer judges himself, the Lord will not judge him ; if we do not judge ourselves, the Lord judges ; but when the Christian is judged, he is chastened of the Lord that he may not be condemned with the world. It is the government of God in the hands of the Lord who judges His own house : an important and too much forgotten truth. No doubt the result of all is according to the counsels of God, who displays in it all His wisdom, His patience, and the righteousness of His ways ; but this government is real. He desires the good of His people in the end, but He will have holiness, a heart whose condition answers to that which He has revealed (and He has revealed Himself), a walk which is its expression.

The normal state of a Christian is communion according to the power of that which has been revealed. Is there failure in this ?—communion is lost, and with it the power to glorify God, a power found nowhere else. But if one judges oneself, there is restoration ; the heart being cleansed from the evil by judging it, communion is restored. If one does not judge oneself, God must interpose and correct and cleanse us by discipline—discipline which may even be unto

REMARKS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER. 41

death. (See Job xxxiii., xxxvi. ; 1 John v. 16 ; Jas. v. 14, 15.)

There are yet one or two remarks to be made. To "judge" oneself is not the same word as to be "judged" of the Lord. It is the same that is used in chapter xi. 29, "*discerning* the Lord's body." Thus, what we have to do is not only to judge an evil committed, it is to discern one's condition as it is manifested in the light—even as God Himself is in the light—by walking in it. This prevents our falling into evil either in act or thought. But if we have fallen, it is not enough to judge the action ; it is ourselves we must judge, and the state of heart, the tendency, the neglect, which occasioned our falling into the evil—in a word, that which is not communion with God, or that which hinders it. It was thus the Lord dealt with Peter. He did not reproach him for his fault, He judged its root.

Moreover, the assembly ought to have power to discern these things. God acts in this way, as we have seen in Job ; but the saints have the mind of Christ by the Spirit of Christ, and ought to discern their own condition.

The foundation and centre of all this is the position in which we stand towards Christ in the Lord's Supper, as the visible centre of communion and the expression of His death ; in which sin, all sin, is judged. Now we are in connection with this holy judgment of sin as our portion. We cannot mingle the death of

Christ with sin. It is as to its nature and efficacy of which the full result will in the end be manifested, the total putting away of sin. It is the divine negation of sin. He died to sin, and that in love to us. It is the absolute holiness of God made sensible and expressed to us in that which took place with regard to sin. It is absolute devotedness to God for His glory in this respect. To bring sin or carelessness into it is to profane the death of Christ, who died rather than allow sin to subsist before God. We cannot be condemned with the world, because He has died and has put away sin for us; but to bring sin to that which represents this very death in which He suffered for sin is a thing which cannot be borne. God vindicates that which is due to the holiness and the love of a Christ who gave up His life to put away sin.

One cannot say, "I will not go to the Table" (that is, I will accept the sin and give up the confession of the value of that death). We examine ourselves, and we go; we re-establish the rights of His death in our conscience—for all is pardoned and expiated as to guilt, and we go to acknowledge these rights as the proof of infinite grace.

The world is condemned. Sin in the Christian is judged, it escapes neither the eye nor the judgment of God. He never permits it; He cleanses the believer from it by chastening him, although He does not condemn, because Christ

has borne his sins, and been made sin for him. The death of Christ forms then the centre of communion in the assembly, and the touchstone of conscience, and that, with respect to the assembly, in the Lord's Supper. J. N. D.

Enoch.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD.

LET us now look at the two things which characterised Enoch, as before mentioned.

The first is that *he walked with God*.

The principle of his walk was faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him," or to walk with Him. Everything depends on faith, our salvation as well as our conduct. It is a fatal mistake to leave out faith; one grain of it gives life and strength, and the words "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," remain as evidence of the immediate results of faith.

But Enoch did not merely *walk*, he walked *with God*. And here let me observe that to walk with God is quite another thing to God walking with us. The first is the fruit of faith and faithfulness; the second, of redemption. Israel was hardly redeemed out of Egypt when Jehovah began to walk with them, associating

Himself in the cloud and in the tabernacle with the wanderings of a people who had found grace in His sight, and whom He had made fit for His presence (Exod. xxxiii. 16; Lev. xxvi. 11-13; Deut. xx. 4, xxxi. 6). No sooner was the work of redemption accomplished on the cross, and sealed by resurrection, than the Lord drew near to walk with the disciples at Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 15). It is a striking fact that He associates Himself with them, because He had made them fit to be His companions. Truly these two were not possessed of any great faith or intelligence, their very journey was distancing them from Jerusalem, but Jesus could walk with them, when they were far from qualified to walk with Him. Let us never doubt the truth of this. Our assurance springs from what God is for us, and what He has made us for Himself, and although our enjoyment depends on the measure of our faithfulness, still He who has made us "accepted in the Beloved" can never turn away His face from us.

To walk with God is another thing. To walk with some one necessitates our being together. Enoch, though on the earth, walked in company with God. He lived a heavenly life outside the principles which govern men's conduct. His walk was characterised by principles which flowed from communion with God in heaven.

Communion is inseparable from a walk with God. "Can two walk together except they be

agreed?" (Amos iii. 3). When we walk with God, there is unison of thought, conduct, and aim between us and Him.

The immediate result of a walk with God is, as before stated, to reproduce down here the divine character and heavenly principles. One man alone has carried out this in perfection, and His walk must ever be the absolute pattern for ours; but having the same life, the same love, the same spirit, we can more or less perfectly copy the pattern. To walk with God, my heart must have an object, God Himself, as He has revealed Himself in Christ. I am occupied with Christ as He is in heaven, and I reproduce in my walk this heavenly man as He was in this world. Thus my life is the manifestation of that which I possess in Christ in heaven, and the life of Jesus down here is my example.

How is it possible to enumerate the varied characters of Christ as man? His whole life, His every word, step, and action, are the demonstration of the heavenly life, for "He went about doing *good*." Psalm xvi. depicts the manifestation of the divine life in Him in the pathway of service. He walked with God in perfect holiness, having no other object but Him. Confidence, dependence, humility; finding His delight in those who pleased God absolute separation from evil; seeking His portion in God only; entire satisfaction with the

lot that had fallen to Him ; praise, assurance, and joy ; hope, prospective enjoyment of the glory—all this and much more was seen in Christ. Let us read, too, Psalm xvii., which is the path, not so much of the *saint*, as of the *righteous* one ; righteousness of speech, heart, and conduct (vers. 1-5). Is it not wonderful ? There has been a man, Jehovah's "fellow," a man whose "fellows" we have become, who has walked with God in absolute perfection. If we want other passages to show it, let us read the gospels, and worship as we trace His footprints. Let us watch Him in the expression of His *love*, His inexhaustible love, yet never belying Himself. His every act was love, and even when He proclaimed judgment, we can see how His love suffers. "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !" (Matt. xxiii. 36, 37).

Was He not also the expression of God's word to man ? "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do *justly*, and to love *mercy*, and to *walk humbly with thy God* ?" (Micah vi. 8). And again this word addressed to Levi : "The law of *truth* was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips ; he walked with me in

peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" (Mal. ii. 6).

May we have grace to walk in the steps of this beloved Saviour, to be imitators of God as dear children, and to walk in love as Christ has loved us.

Enoch walked with God three hundred years. During three centuries his character of a heavenly stranger was maintained. Those who bring divine principles amongst men are always strangers. As a new-born babe, Jesus was a stranger in the inn; later on He had not where to lay His head; the Pharisees said of Him, "We know not whence He is;" and the people said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Finally, in that solemn hour, when all God's glory was manifested in His sacrifice, they say, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

His course of thirty-three and a half years was morally of infinite length, and far more complete than Enoch's three hundred years, because it was the Lord Himself, God become man, who accomplished it. How humbling it is for us to see how far short we come even of Enoch, we who walk with God perhaps only one day, and on the morrow have lost sight of our object, and forgotten that we belong to heaven!

The expression (Heb. xi. 5) "walked with God" is quoted in the Septuagint version as

“pleased God,” for these two things go together as we see in Col. i. 10, “That we might *walk* worthy of the Lord unto all *pleasing*.” If we walk in the footsteps of Christ, we must please God, for He has said, “In Him is all My delight.” God can find His delight in us also to whom He has given faith and a nature capable of loving and serving Him. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” By faith Enoch drew nigh to an unseen God, realised His presence, and walked with Him, looking to the future for a reward. Scripture not only says that he pleased God, but that *before his translation* he had this testimony that he pleased God. His translation was not the testimony, neither is it recorded that God gave him a bright testimony before the world, that being reserved for a future day ; but he *received* the testimony that he pleased God, like Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. This suffices to a faithful soul. “If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and *My Father will love him*, and we will come unto him, and make our abode *with him*” (John xiv. 23). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. ii. 17). The heart has the witness in itself of a favour consequent on faithfulness.

(*To be continued.*)

Hints on Daniel.

SEVEN TIMES.

IT has been before observed that there is more in these historical incidents in the Book of Daniel than mere history.

No one who has not had his faith shaken in the inspiration of the Scriptures, either through his own wilful unbelief or through the wicked insinuations of his fellows, need have any difficulty as to the miraculous incidents related in this book. To the gainsayer no other answer need be given than that with which the Lord Himself met the Sadducean rationalists of old which said that there was no resurrection of the dead — “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?” (Mark xii. 24). With God all things are possible.

It cannot be too clearly understood either by individuals or nations that true greatness can only be attained and maintained by giving God His rightful place. Nebuchadnezzar learnt to his cost that “those that walk in pride He is able to abase,” and this lesson must be learnt sooner or later by all. For seven years the proud monarch was driven from amongst men and dwelt amongst the beasts of the field till at length the tardy confession was wrung from him

that with God "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing ; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou ? "

But in the interpretation of the dream we are doubtless meant to see more even than that which happened to Nebuchadnezzar himself. In stating the duration of the judgment that befell the king purposely, it would seem, a symbolical measure of time is used, " Till seven times pass over him." Later on in the study of the book we shall find that " times " is a symbolical way of expressing " years," but in this chapter I have no doubt that both should be borne in mind ; the literal seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation and the symbolical seven times, or a complete cycle of time at the end of which the Gentile powers will learn the lesson of submission to the Most High God.

The title that is given to God by Daniel, and owned by Nebuchadnezzar in the previous chapter as well as here, is one of those indirect evidences of inspiration with which the whole Scripture abounds. Every student of the Word knows the importance to be attached to the names of God, and the connections in which they are found. One verse suffices to show the intention on God's part in the use of a particular name in a particular case, " I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by

HINTS ON DANIEL.

51

the name of God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (Ex. vi. 3).

To the patriarchs God was known as the Almighty; to Israel, as Jehovah; to Christians, as Father; and to saints in millennial days He will be known as Most High. This is not the place for a full discussion of the subject, but it is impossible not to pity the poor rationalists who, blind to the moral and spiritual teaching of Scripture, waste their time and learning upon mechanical theories of separate documents.

Not only are the Scriptures inspired of God's Spirit, but the Spirit is needed to rightly understand them (1 Cor. ii. 9-16). No mere human learning will enable any one to know the mind of God as to any portion of His Word. A simple and unlettered man, born of God's Spirit, and indwelt by God's Spirit, will be able to enter into the truth of God as revealed in Scripture for edification and blessing, where the whole tribe of "higher critics" with their scissors, and paste-pots, and coloured inks remain in the darkness of the natural man that receives not the things of the Spirit of God.

When the interpretation of the dream stood out before Daniel's astonished mind, we are told that "his thoughts troubled him." In his dream God had given Nebuchadnezzar to see "a tree in the midst of the earth." In the first instance, no doubt it was true that Nebuchadnezzar himself was symbolised by the tree, "It is thou, O

king." But he, being the first of the Gentile powers, stands for the rest, and the tree in Scripture is constantly used as a picture of man in all his greatness (see Ezek. xxxi.). Nevertheless, "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Ps. xlix. 20); even so has it turned out, not for the Babylonian monarch alone, but for the whole political system of the world from that day to this.

Where evil is, government must be. It is an institution of God. "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice" (Prov. viii. 15). When for their sins the Jews were given up of God, though for a time only, and the throne of the Lord was removed from Jerusalem, then the tree of Gentile government was planted in the midst of the earth. It grew and became strong. Its leaves were fair, its fruit abundant, and the beasts of the earth found shelter under its branches. Has it not been so with all the trade and commerce of the nations? and to whom do men as a rule trace all their prosperity and their riches? Is it not to themselves, to their own talents, and to their own wisdom? But "durable riches and righteousness" are with God, and His fruit is "better than gold, yea, than fine gold" (Prov. viii. 19). Let a man of the world read these lines, would he not sneer at the very thought? Is it not true that where riches and wealth are most quickly

acquired, God is least thought of? Let the gold-fields of Australia and California in the past reply. Need we point to Klondyke or Johannesburg in more recent times?

It may be answered that these are but avaricious men who have no fear of God before their eyes, but it is different with governments. Now the solemn truth that the whole book of Daniel teaches is this, that what characterises the whole political system of the world from the days of Nebuchadnezzar on to the time when the kingdom will be the Lord's, and He shall be governor amongst the nations, is the utter disregard of God, which is becoming more and more pronounced at this very time.

This will come before us more fully when we are considering chapter vii., but here we are symbolically taught the same sad lesson in the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's heart was "changed from man's," and a "beast's heart" was "given unto him."

The glory and dignity of man is to look up into heaven and walk in the fear of God; a beast on the other hand is without conscience, and has no moral relation with God. When first the Gentile empires were established they were of course pagan, and had no knowledge of the true God; even when at times forced to acknowledge Him, as was the case in more than one instance in the life of Nebuchadnezzar himself, how quickly was all forgotten!

It may be said that now they are Christian, and this makes a great difference. True, since the days of Constantine, paganism was put down and Christianity established by imperial authority, but it is not thus that people really become Christians. Nothing but personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will make any one a Christian in anything else but in name. Nevertheless, while it is readily conceded that Christianity has made marvellous changes for the improvement of man's condition on the earth, yet, where is the nation that pretends even to shape its course or carry on its affairs according to the mind of God as revealed in His Word? The politician who in a debate would venture to make any reference to the Bible except by way of profane quotation would be at once put down as a canting hypocrite.

What Scripture shows is that, though individual rulers may have the fear of God before them, yet as a whole the Gentile powers are characterised all through their course by "the 'beast's heart' towards God, caring only for self, gratifying pride and lust of power."

But the "seven times" will come to an end, and at the close of "the times of the Gentiles" the Most High God will be acknowledged by all nations, kings, and rulers as the One "all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment." Then will Israel be blessed in their own land, and with Christ their once rejected king but

then acknowledged Jehovah in their midst, become the earthly centre from whence during the thousand years will flow joy and peace and blessing to every nation under heaven.

“Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. . . . There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. xv. 10-13).

Correspondence.

WE heartily commend the subjoined letter to the attention of the Lord's people in every place. May all be stirred up to more earnest prayer and increased devotedness. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. xv., 57 58):—

“We have been having *special* meetings for prayer for some time now. (1.) For the whole Church of God, that each one (believer) might be awakened by the ‘midnight cry,’ that all ears may be opened to hear the Bridegroom's voice, He who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, who loves us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and who in

no unmistakable tones says to that which is so dear to His heart, 'I will come again,' 'I come quickly,' 'Surely I come quickly.' (2.) That every unsaved member of His people's households may be brought in, that our faith may be able to take in 'Thou and thy house,' that we may awake to our privileges and responsibilities. (3.) As those who are so blessed, may we think of those who have nothing, and hold forth the 'Word of life' steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for surely we are living in the last days of this dispensation. It is very dark, it hangs like a pall over poor Christendom, for the first man is prominent with his ritual, his images, and incense. The grace and the glories of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven unnoticed but by few—what must that patient One see as He looks down at it all which professes to be His?

"Oh, dear brother, may we look to Him to be kept bright in His service, and all His own, that by grace we may refresh His heart, which was broken for us at Calvary, counting all things loss down here, and laying hold upon those things which abide for eternity.

"We have been encouraged by the Lord answering in some measure our prayers, and I can say we are much strengthened and blessed in our souls."

C. H. F.

"TO-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE." 57

**"To-day if ye will hear His Voice, harden
not your Heart."**

IT must have come like a thunder-clap among the select ranks of the Pharisees, when John the Baptist delivered his divine injunction and appeal, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." A caste that could pray in the temple, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men" (Luke xviii. 11), and in their Council say of the poor and uninstructed of their own nation, "This people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed" (John vii. 49), would with considerable reluctance welcome such a message. Yet the fact had to be faced. The new prophet was making a great stir, and all men mused in their hearts, whether John were the Christ or not (Luke iii. 15). The ruling sect at Jerusalem could no longer afford to ignore the matter. They sent messengers to inquire (John i. 19), and some even came themselves to his baptizings (Matt. iii. 7), bringing with them their inveterate opponents the Sadducees, to see this new thing, and judge for themselves what steps were to be taken to stop the work.

Well-nigh eight generations had come and gone since Malachi's grave indictment of the nation. The notes of his trumpet-blast of coming

judgment, of the refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, had died away, and few remained of those who cherished the hope of the dawn of that day, when the Sun of Righteousness should arise with healing in His wings (Mal. iii. 2, iv. 2). The darkness, always most intense immediately before dawn, was unprepared for the advent of this burning and shining lamp (John v. 35), who brought the assurance of that true Light of day about to break (John i. 8, 9). But the man of God, that greatest of prophets, was not deceived, and upon their arrival he delivers a stirring and vigorous rebuke, which must have sounded strangely to the ears of those long steeped in self-complacency. "Generation of vipers," he exclaims in his discourse, "who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?" Upon those so perfect in phylacteries, so exact in doctrine, so observant of the law, coming wrath surely could have no claim! And yet the same message of repentance applied to them, and he bids them look to it, that "fruits meet for (*i.e.*, consistent with) repentance" should be brought forth in life, and this in view of at least three very solemn considerations. Let us examine them and weigh them well, for they have a clear voice for ourselves to-day.

Firstly, the time was come that a place of privilege would not avail without reality. "Think not to say within yourselves," says John, "we have Abraham to our father." Being in the

“TO-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE.” 59

line of faith, according to the flesh, will not absolve each from individual faith in God's Word and obedience to that Word; and the occupation of a place where blessing is to be found, does not in itself conduct into spiritual relationship with God, where conscience and heart are unaffected. Surely there never was a day when the servants of God needed more to insist upon this solemn truth. Judaism has passed away, and the advantage of being born in that system was “much every way,” chiefly by reason of the possession of God's Word (Rom. iii. 2). Christianity has, as a witness, replaced Judaism, and it will be surely conceded, that it is no small favour that one's lot is cast beneath its beneficent shadow. Having God's precious Word, the full revelation of Himself, and of His love in Christ; being in the place where the Holy Spirit dwells, and where He still is acting for the glory of Christ; to be alive in a day when God has so marvellously recovered His truth from the mediæval darkness of popery—these and many another privilege are at the disposal of professors of Christianity in this country. Does it count for nothing before God if such be disregarded? and does the holy eye of God distinguish naught between such a case and a heathen who has never heard the truth, sunk perhaps in degradation and superstition? “For all these things,” as said the preacher of old to the young man, “God will bring thee

into judgment." Have *you* seen that to be a member of a Christian family, a regular attendant at your church or chapel, a communicant, a class-leader, a district visitor, will not in themselves bring you one step nearer God, if in your heart of hearts you have never bowed before Him in repentance, owning your condition as a sinner, and seeing that, despite all these surroundings of Christianity, and all the privileges you enjoy, the heart is far from God (Matt. xv. 8).

The heart! Ah! yes, this leads us to our second point in virtue of which repentance is enforced. "Already the axe is lying at the *root* of the trees" (Matt. iii. 10). Such is the real meaning of the passage, and, by reading in this way John's warning, we see how important a moment it was, what issues hung, as it were, in the balance. God's dealings since the Fall, and under law, had been directed to pruning off the *fruit* of the tree. It is true that the *root* was not ignored, for the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," showed clearly the divine acquaintance with man's restless will, and propensity to prefer independence to obedience. Still in the main it was *actions* that were judged and detected and forbidden in the system of law, which Israel grasped so greedily, and to which our fallen natures even now pertinaciously cling. It is the "*root* of the tree" which was menaced at that time. The behest of divine justice had,

"TO-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE." 61

as it were, been uttered, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke xiii. 7), but divine mercy, ever rejoicing against judgment, had rejoined, "Let it alone this year also." Its plea had been heard, but *the axe was there* ready to do its work of holiness, in levelling the responsible man to the ground, as both guilty and lost.

If any poor Pharisee could only have seen and believed this, what a blessing it would have been to his soul! In their anxiety to keep the exterior of the cup or the platter clean, the interior had been ignored; as the whited sepulchres of the prophets, that their fathers had slain, they were outwardly spotless, but within death reigned (Matt. xxiii. 25-33). In view of this the call goes forth to "repent" lest the sentence of excision be carried out. Alas! the cry fell upon ears that were "heavy," and hearts that were "fat"; being dull of hearing, and of a hardened and impenitent heart, they filled up the measure of their iniquity in slaying the Just One (Matt. xiii. 15; Acts vii. 52). The tree has now been "cut down," and man lies (as it were) prone in death, without a spark of spiritual life (Eph. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13). Yet as still actually alive and responsible the call sounds out to-day, "Repent, and believe the gospel" (Mark i. 15; Acts ii. 38, iii. 19). Nay, "God *commands* all men everywhere to repent" (Acts xvii. 30, 31), because judgment must de-

scend upon a world that crucified Jesus. The proof given of this is that God has raised His Son from the dead, divine justice thus firmly reversing man's unholy sentence. Have you bowed to this command, dear reader, in acknowledging by repentance the wickedness of such an act perpetrated by hands and hearts like your own, and by owning the justice of God's action in placing Jesus in the highest place that heaven could afford, His own right hand. "Turn you at My reproof," said the Lord (Prov. i. 23). Life is uncertain, and judgment is coming. Take care lest you be too late, who, despising reproof, have that certain fearful expectation of judgment (Heb. x. 27), and in the end that withering word, "Depart from Me: I never knew you" (Matt. vii. 23, xxv. 41).

Yes! judgment is coming. This is the third reason enjoined by the Baptist why man should bow in repentance. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, *and cast into the fire.*" And this burning up "the chaff with unquenchable fire" is attributed to Christ Himself, who is described in this glowing passage as the *Baptizer* with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. iii. 10-12). Judgment is coming, because Christ is coming. These words show the two parts of His service, as Saviour, Dispenser of blessing; and as Judge, the One to whom all judgment is committed.

At the moment John preached, Christ was

“TO-DAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE.” 63

about to be manifested as the King of the Jews, the Saviour of the world, to distribute blessing to mankind, blessing connected with the Holy Spirit, since He is the Power for the enjoyment of the gift of God. But John knew that to reject this baptism of the Holy Ghost would be for the nation of Israel to invite a terrible baptism of fire from the same hand. For us poor Gentiles, the rejection by the Jews of their blessing of this precious enjoyment of the power of the Holy Spirit, has led to our knowing the baptism of the Holy Ghost in a manner probably transcending anything to which the faith of John soared. “For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,” and of this body of believers Christ is the Head in heaven (1 Cor. xii. 13; Eph. i. 22). And one may well repeat that, in virtue of such a blessing being offered in the world, man should repent, seeing what large thoughts of grace God has still in His heart in spite of our rejection of His Son. But to refuse this, the choicest offer that divine grace can ever devise, is to court a baptism of fire nearly too awful to contemplate.

Repent then, my reader, and believe the gospel while it is called “to-day,” “the day of salvation.” Those believing the Word of Christ “shall never come into judgment” (John v. 24), they know on the authority of the same Word that they are already “made fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. i.

12). But to reject such a blessing and disbelieve such a testimony, is tantamount to saying that the message is not worthy of acceptance—in fact, to make God a liar (1 John v. 10). Receive, rather, with meekness the Word of God which is able to save the soul (Jas. i. 21), recognising God's *goodness* that has allowed you to receive one more appeal of His grace, that goodness "that leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. ii. 4).

F. L.

Enoch.

HIS TESTIMONY.

NOT only did Enoch receive a testimony, he rendered one. Doubtless his life as a heavenly stranger in this scene spoke for itself, but before his translation he was permitted to witness publicly for the Lord, in whom he believed. Like Abraham the friend of God, he became the depositary of God's hidden counsels, and in proclaiming them before the world, he was the first of the prophets.

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14-16). The Lord is the principal subject of his prophecy, as indeed with all the prophets. He shows that the Lord is on the point of claiming His rights, and that He will come in glory with His own to execute

judgment. Such was the hope of this man of faith. He received a revelation, which though not actually the mystery of the rapture of the Church, yet forms part of it : "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." Also in 1 Thessalonians iv., before speaking of the rapture of the saints, the apostle says, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring with Him*."

Some have objected that these *myriads of saints* are simply angels, as in the passage, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance" (2 Thess. i. 7), or, as in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, "He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of His saints." But without excluding angels, other passages in the Old and New Testament show us who they are who will come with the Lord at His appearing. "The Lord my God shall come, and *all the saints* with Thee" (Zech. xiv. 5). "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13). "And the *armies which were in heaven* followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean." "The fine linen is the righteousness of *saints*" (Rev. xix. 14, 8). It will therefore be the saints who will accompany Him, "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them

that believe, in that day" (2 Thess. i. 10), the day when He will be revealed with His mighty angels.

Such was the testimony which Enoch rendered to the Lord, and in so doing he publicly affirmed his hope, and at the same time proclaimed the judgment reserved for the world. His prophecy was not confined to the men of his day, for Scripture is careful to tell us that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," and all prophecies carry us on to a future period. Besides it says, "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied *of these*, saying" (Jude 14). Who are "these"? The ungodly of the last days, belonging to Christendom. "*These*," says Jude, "are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear" (ver. 12). "*These* are murmurers" (ver. 16). "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers *in the last time*, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. *These* be they who separate themselves" (vers. 17-19).

Enoch in his short prophecy went beyond the limits of the revelation made to all the prophets of Israel. He did not look at judgment as confined to Israel and the nations in the future, but as applying to men in our day, who have been depositaries of the truth of

God, and who have corrupted themselves, and will form part of apostate Christendom. "To execute," he says, "judgment *upon all*, and to convince all that are ungodly *among them* of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (ver. 15).

Hints on Daniel.

THE LIONS' DEN.—Chapter vi.

THE chapter that now lies open before us is the last in the series of historical chapters.

But we have already seen that there is more than mere history in this first portion of the book (i.-vi.).

Rationalism assumes that the writer of the book, whoever he may have been, "is dealing, not with the real, but with the ideal." According to Dean Farrar, "The problem of the writer was to manage (!) his 'Haggada'* in such a way as to make private prayer an act of treason; and the difficulty is met—not, indeed, without violent improbability (!), for which, however, Jewish Haggadists cared little, but with as

* A sort of moral and religious novel with possibly some slight historical foundation.

much skill as the circumstances permitted (!).” Nothing is certain here except that the Spirit of God had nothing to do with the inspiration of this portion of the Scriptures.

We turn away in pity and disgust from this deceitful handling of the Word of God, and yet not without the sorrowful conviction that all such tampering with the faith of others is hurrying on the apostasy of Christendom's last days, and bringing about that very state of things outlined for us in these prophetic histories, and entered into in far greater detail in the after part of the book.

In chapter v. we have seen the downfall of Babylon, typical no doubt of that which bears the same name in Revelation xvii. The judgment of literal Babylon is described in Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, of symbolic and spiritual Babylon in the Apocalypse. Earthly glory and idolatry are the distinguishing features of both systems. “It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols” (Jer. l. 38), is said of “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency” (Isa. xiii. 19), and of that vast religious system now in rapid formation, soon to be manifested in terrible distinctness, of her it is said that she “was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls . . . and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HAR-

LOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. xvii. 4, 5).

But in Daniel vi. the historic circumstances connected with Darius are made use of by the Spirit of God to set forth in type one other form of evil which will characterise the Gentile power at the close, and will bring down upon it the righteous judgment of God. It may, to some of our readers, seem far-fetched to speak of this portion of the book as being typical, and yet we are persuaded that interesting as the history may be, there is more than mere history. Without doubt we need to exercise caution, and to keep imagination from leading us astray in thus explaining this or any other portion of God's Word; and yet, who can question that much of Scripture most distinctly bears this character? Certain it is that prophecy has abundantly foretold that at the close a man will arise who will exalt himself, and put himself in the place of God. We are far from saying that Darius equalled in wickedness what the Antichrist will be. But what through foolish vanity the Persian monarch was ensnared into by others, the Antichrist will exercise all the power of Satan in forcing upon men by-and-by. He will set himself in the temple of God, and pretend that he is God. In our further progress through the book we shall learn much in reference to this terrible character who will play so prominent a part in the future history of the world.

But there are others as well, who, though possessing some features in common, should nevertheless not be confounded. The Beast of Revelation xiii. and xvii. is not the Antichrist, though resembling him in some respects; one of which is this very one, that he will become an object of self-exaltation and worship. "They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the Beast, and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast?" (Rev. xiii. 4). We would not affirm that one of these two, Antichrist or the Beast, to the exclusion of the other, is typified in Daniel vi., but it is evident to us that that character of wickedness, man exalting himself and putting himself in the place of God, is purposely brought before us in the history, and from other parts of Scripture we learn that this it is which will meet with the judgment of God wherever found. Both the Beast and the False Prophet, who doubtless represent the future chief of the Roman Empire, and the Antichrist, will possess this feature in a special and awful degree, and their judgment will be none the less severe when, with all His saints, Christ shall appear in glory as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." They both shall be cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 11 to end).

But it must not be forgotten that there will be saints upon the earth in those days. The Church will have been taken to heaven at the coming of the Lord into the air (1 Thess. iv.),

HINTS ON DANIEL.

71

the *heavenly* saints will have been caught up, but *earthly* saints, the Jewish remnant for instance, converted after the removal of the Church, will be upon the earth during the awful period of the Beast's activity. These are typified by Daniel himself in this chapter. They will cleave to their God in the face of terrible persecution. Some will be martyred (Rev. xiii. 15), others will be delivered. But the tribulation of those days will be so great that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved (or delivered), but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22). What they will need in a special degree is the spirit of endurance, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv. 13). This verse does not refer to the salvation of the soul, but to the deliverance of the person from man's fiery persecution.

But Daniel's faithfulness in his day, typical of that of the Jewish remnant in the last days, may well inspire the saints of God in every dispensation to tread their earthly path with firmer step and more implicit obedience to God and His Word, regardless of all consequences.

How it was that Daniel came to occupy the exalted position under Darius in which he is found in the opening verses of our chapter we are not told. God, for the accomplishing of His own purposes, had brought him into favour

with the king, and he thus became the object of envy and jealousy amongst the presidents and princes of the kingdom. Eagerly did they watch him, and seek occasions against him, but they found none. In all matters concerning the kingdom "he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."

But not only was Daniel faithful to his earthly master, he yielded implicit obedience to his God. This his enemies knew right well, and here lay their only chance of ridding themselves of one whose uprightness and integrity was a constant witness against themselves. "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Accordingly these wicked men plot and plan, and consult together, and actually succeed in persuading Darius to sign the blasphemous decree prohibiting all prayer except to the king himself on pain of being cast alive into the den of lions.

Here was a test to Daniel's faith and obedience. But without a moment's hesitation, "when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house . . . he kneeled down upon his knees . . . and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." A captive in an enemy's land, and far away from the city of Jehovah's choice, and the house that had been built for His name, yet in faith he avails himself of that provision of divine grace so marvellously

HINTS ON DANIEL.

73

recorded at the dedication of Solomon's temple amidst scenes of joy and glory (1 Kings viii.). The times had changed, the people had changed, but God remained the same. Oh! what lessons may the Church of God not learn, in this the day of her ruin and failure, from this deeply interesting episode in the life of Daniel the prophet!

For the moment Daniel's enemies seem to triumph. "Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God." Did Daniel not know that the king's decree had been signed? Did he not know that the law of the Medes and Persians "altereth not"? Did he not know that the den of lions awaited him? Yes, he knew all this; but like his *three companions of an earlier day (chap. iii.)* he trusted in the living God, and like them is found enrolled in that noble company "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of the fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong" (Heb. xi. 33, 34).

With eager haste "these men," Daniel's cruel persecutors, come near before the king. "That Daniel," they say, "which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee." To a certain extent this accusation had a semblance of truth about it, for here was a case where God must come first, cost what it might. If

Daniel was faithful in all that concerned the affairs of his earthly master, he was also, according to the king's own confession, the "servant of the living God," and he proved that that God was as able to deliver him from the lions as he had delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the burning fiery furnace. The lions' mouths were shut, the faithful captive was delivered, but what of his oppressors? "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken" (Ps. ix. 13).

Even so will it be when the Lord shall appear on Mount Zion for the deliverance of His oppressed and persecuted earthly people. Then shall He be "known by the judgment which He executeth"; then shall the wicked be "snared in the work of his own hands."

There are two ways in which the Lord may be known, *now* in grace, or *then* in judgment; the first is salvation, the second will be perdition.

The "arm-chair" rationalist and "higher critic" may see in these inspired histories nothing but improbable fiction; the devout believer finds therein instructive types of what from other parts of Scripture he knows will take place in a future, and possibly not far distant day. Without doubt, we may add that those faithful saints whose lot will be cast in those times will derive therefrom the very encourage-

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 75

ment and comfort which they will then stand o much in need of. Of this we may be ure, that this, with every other part of "all cripture, is given by inspiration of God" 2 Tim. iii. 16).

The Epistle to the Romans.

WE have been looking at what the gospel is from God's side, let us ask, What is the state of those to whom this gospel comes? God first of all tells us what it is about before He speaks of the condition in which those were found to whom He sends it. And what is the state of man?

Here in this first chapter it is the heathen that are spoken of—and what a state they were in! People often ask, What about the heathen? Is God going to be unrighteous? No, God will never be unrighteous. But you say, It seems to me an unrighteous thing that those who have never heard the gospel should be dealt with in the same way that you and I are dealt with. But who says they will? We are told in this first chapter of the Romans the ground on which God will deal with the heathen. It says in the nineteenth verse, "because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shown it unto them;

for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." What are God's invisible things? If I look on the mountains, they are not invisible things; if I look at the sun and the moon and the stars, they all declare the glory of God, but they are not invisible. Yet it says here, "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen." That seems an inconsistent thing, that invisible things should be clearly seen! "Being understood by the things which are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Now here are the invisible things. "Power" is not a thing which you can see, it is an invisible thing. "Godhead" is an invisible thing. They are invisible things, and yet it says that they are clearly seen. And where are they seen, and how? "Being understood by the things which are made." That is to say, I look up into the heavens and they declare the glory of God. I look on the earth—not on the havoc man by his sin has wrought in it, but—on all the works of God's hands, on the mountains and on every blade of grass, and they all declare the glory of God and the power of God. That is a wonderful thing, and the more you examine the works of creation, the more you are struck with the beauty of them all and of all that God has made. It may be but the dust on a butterfly's wing, but the more you increase the magnifying power of the glass through which you look at it, the more

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 77

marvellous it appears. But now look at what man has made ; the finest cambric handkerchief that could possibly be got, when put under a microscope, looks like the coarsest sackcloth. Man's works will not bear inspection, but God's works will.

At the end of the twentieth verse he says, "they are without excuse." The heathen have a witness of His power and Godhead before their eyes at all times. They have that testimony constantly before them, so that they are without excuse. A man is thoroughly without excuse when he looks up into the heavens and sees all that is there, and yet bows down before a stock or a stone which he himself has made. It is the veriest folly. Further it goes on to say in the twenty-first verse, "when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." They *had* a knowledge of God. People talk about our having developed ourselves out of a lower condition of things. They look down on the heathen, and call them inferior to themselves, and below them come the monkeys, and so on ; they say that man has developed himself through ages and ages from the lowest depths, till he has reached to the present high point. But God sees things very differently from that. The fact is that man has gone back, for he had the knowledge of God, but he gave God up. "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." It is a wonderful thing when we come to look at the evidences of

man's existence upon the earth in by-gone ages. God has been pleased to preserve to us these records. Take for instance the earliest of man's works upon the earth—the Pyramids. Could you build anything like that now? Why, it brings us face to face with an intelligence and a power that we should find it difficult to equal to-day with all the appliances of science.

I remember the last time I was in Egypt a large mass of gold ornaments was found, dating back to the period of four thousand years ago. The value of the gold itself reached some thousands of pounds (£40,000), and the workmanship was marvellous, such as it would be difficult to imitate in these days with all the recent improvements and developments of men. And what does that tend to show but that man has moved in a retrograde manner. Man had the knowledge of God, but he gave it up. In these two verses we get the ground on which the heathen are dealt with. And what is it? For refusing to believe in a Christ of whom they have never heard? No, but for closing their eyes to a testimony that they have constantly before them, and that, too, after they had had the knowledge of God from tradition. Later on, in the next chapter, we get another thing, and that is, "their conscience also bearing witness" (chap. ii. 15). The heathen have a conscience. It may be a very degraded one, but God took care that man should have a conscience. When man was driven out of the

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 79

Garden of Eden, God made him carry a conscience with him. Thus there are three grounds on which God holds man responsible—tradition, creation, conscience.

But further, there are the oracles of God, and the Jew made his boast in them. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (chap. iii. 1, 2). But the greater the advantages, the greater the responsibility. The Jew had privileges that the Gentile had not. God had spoken to Moses and to the fathers, and the Jew had the law written by the very finger of God. But what does the law of which you boast so much say? You Jews, you pride yourselves that you have a testimony that the heathen nations have not, but what does that law say? "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law" (chap. iii. 19). You boast of the law, and say, We have the oracles of God which the nations around us do not possess. But what does that law say? "It is written, there is none righteous, no not one," &c. &c. And what the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, therefore it says it to the Jews, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Your mouth and my mouth, no matter whether in heathen lands, or in Jewish lands, or in pro-

fessedly Christian lands, with all the increased privileges that we, as Christians, possess—every mouth is stopped. “That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

God first of all tells us what His gospel is about. He says, It starts from Me, My heart is the *source* of it—it is the gospel of God. Then, the *subject* of that gospel is My own Son, the promised Messiah to this earth, but My Son. And, thirdly, the *sphere* through which that gospel spreads its blessings is, “every nation under heaven.” And what is the state of the people to whom that gospel comes? Gentiles without excuse, and Jews condemned by the very oracles of which they boasted so much. Every mouth is stopped before God.

Next time we may go on to look at the *remedy* that God brings to man in that state.

(*To be continued.*)

Correspondence.

Goole.—Who are the palm-bearing multitude in Revelation vii. 9? Will they have part in the First Resurrection?

During the short interval between the coming of the Lord *for* His saints into the air, and His coming *with* them to the earth in judgment, there will be a great gathering out from amongst

the heathen nations. In Revelation vii. we see a parenthesis of mercy amidst a scene of judgment. A definite though doubtless symbolic, number from all the tribes of Israel (except Dan) are sealed, and an innumerable multitude of all nations, &c., are saved. These latter are Gentiles; but it appears to me that both these companies must be distinguished from those who have part in the First Resurrection (Rev. xx. 4). They are saved not for heavenly but for earthly blessing, and enter the millennium alive without passing through death at all. The palm-bearing multitude, we are distinctly told, *came out of* the great tribulation. It is not great tribulation in any vague sense of that word, but *the* great tribulation. How could they have come out of it if they had died during it?

The expression, "Therefore are they before the throne of God," does not prove that they are in heaven. This must be understood, not in a *local*, but in a *moral* sense. The same expression is found in Revelation xiv. 3, where clearly the people referred to are standing on Mount Zion.

Further, they serve God day and night in His temple, but that temple is on earth, for of the heavenly city John says, "I saw no temple therein" (Rev. xxi. 22). But though on earth throughout the thousand years, they hold an altogether special place—"He that sitteth on the throne shall *tabernacle over* them." This is

a different expression from that found in Revelation xxi. 3. Here it is tabernacle "over" them, there it is tabernacle "with" them. To tabernacle "over" reminds us of the cloud upon the tabernacle of old (Exod. xl. 34-38). That cloud rested not upon the *court*, but upon the tabernacle itself. So these saints from amongst the heathen or Gentile nations, specially tried and tested as they will have been, specially faithful, too, in spite of all, will be specially blessed during the thousand years. They will occupy a special place of nearness, as *priests* to God, having access to, and serving Him day and night in His temple.

Other Gentile millennial saints will be more like the worshippers in the court outside (Rev. xi. 2), to use the figure of the tabernacle of old, whereas these will have access as priests more directly to God.

They will have the consolation, too, of knowing that they are the special object of the Lamb's care, and that none of those earthly trials to which they had been exposed could touch them under His protecting hand.

ED.

London.—"Have you found any difficulty with Daniel vii. 23, 24, compared with Revelation xvii. 12-16? Would not the number of the kings be reduced to eight?"

It does not appear to me that the little horn in Daniel vii. is called a *king*. I suppose he is what is commonly called the head of the Roman

CORRESPONDENCE.

83

Empire, and in Revelation xvii., "*an* (not, *the*) eighth." He comes upon the scene *after* the ten kings are already there (Dan. vii. 24). His first act is to *subdue*, not necessarily to *destroy*, three kings. The ten kings will continue, though these three may have a limited place and power compared to what they had. The little horn becomes prominent over them all, and his blasphemous actings and words become the occasion of God's judgment falling upon the whole Gentile power (Dan. vii. 11).

I am much interested in your remarks upon Revelation xiii. 18. ED.

Our correspondent writes:—"There is another subject which has come to my mind lately on reading Revelation xiii. 18, 'For the number of the beast is the number of a man, and his number is Ch, X, S ($\chi\xi\varsigma$).' Why is this stated in the three double letters, instead of being written at length, as all other numbers are in the New Testament? The chief reason perhaps is, that they are a convenient mark to put upon the followers of "the king" (Antichrist), but may there not be another reason also? They might be initial letters of three words, characterising some blasphemous expression of "the king," something of this sort—Christou Xulon Stauros (Christ's Cross, a mere block of wood).

"We have a sample of this kind of acrostic in

the adoption of the fish by the early Christians as a symbol of the Church, because the Greek for 'fish' is Ichthus, which is the initial of Iēsous Christos Theou Uios Soter (Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour)."

F. G. S.

Paignton.—Is the judgment of the living nations in Matt. xxv. 31 final, or will they be judged again at the great white throne?

There seems no reason whatever to suppose that this judgment is anything but final. Christ, the Son of man, is the appointed judge not only of the dead, but of the living (2 Tim. iv. 1). If Rev. xx. proves that for the dead this judgment takes place at the close of the thousand years, Matt. xxv. makes it equally clear that for the living (*i.e.*, the quick) it will be at the commencement of the same period. But when Christ judges He will judge the world in *righteousness*; no need for any *retrial* of the case as though any miscarriage of justice were possible. He *sits* as judge upon the throne of His glory; the living nations appear before Him. This is different from the *warrior* judgment of Rev. xix.; there "the remnant were *slain* with the sword," and will, without doubt, appear for judgment before the great white throne. In Matt. xxv. there is no hint whatever that either sheep or goats die, and the great white throne is for the dead only.

ED.

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE II.—THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. (Chapters iii. and iv.)

IT might be helpful if I just pointed out that in the first chapter as far as the eighteenth verse there is a kind of introduction to the epistle, and in that introduction we are given briefly the great truths that in the after-part of the epistle are more fully developed. Now, there are two great subjects that the gospel of God is about, viz., the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ—and in that gospel God has been fully and perfectly revealed.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth, He was the perfect revelation of God, so much so that He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also." He was God here manifest in the flesh. God had come into the world where sin was, He had come into the midst of this world, He had come near to sinful man in grace. That did not bring man nearer to God, and it is important that we should understand that. Though God was here amongst men in the person of His Son, that in itself did not bring us one bit nearer to God than we were before. On the contrary, it showed how far morally we were from Him. It required that the Lord Jesus Christ should die, and that in

His death He should accomplish that mighty work of atonement for us to be brought near to God ; and that is one of the great subjects of the gospel.

The apostle says in the sixteenth verse, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Man is ashamed of Christ, professing Christians are ashamed of Christ, and it is a remarkable thing that it is only those who profess the true religion who are ashamed of their religion. You do not find a Mohammedan ashamed of his religion. Paul, however, says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation." Is there anything to be ashamed of in that? That into a world where man lay lost because of his sinfulness, God's power should have come to save him out of that condition—is there anything to be ashamed of in that? Certainly not. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." That is God's order—the Jew first and then the heathen.

And in the next verse he says, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." In the cross of Christ every attribute of God has been glorified ; all that God is has come out and been glorified, God's righteousness, His love, His hatred of sin and His love to the sinner, all has been shown forth in the wonderful work that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished. All that God is in

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 87

reference to sin has been manifested at the cross, and His nature in this respect is absolute abhorrence of sin. So it says in the next verse, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." Before the cross God had brought upon His earthly people, Israel, various judgments and governmental chastisements. For instance, the Assyrian of old was used as the rod of His indignation upon His people. But at the cross of Christ God's hatred of sin was brought out, and His wrath from heaven was revealed, and that is what now makes the moral state of man before God so serious ; that, too, is what makes the gospel so precious.

From the nineteenth verse of the first chapter on to the twentieth verse of the third chapter, we have unfolded in great detail the condition in which man found himself when this gospel came to him. First of all the state of the heathen. The heathen world was left without excuse, shutting their eyes to the testimony that God gave them of His eternal power and Godhead in creation, refusing also the testimony of tradition handed down from father to son, closing too their ears to the voice of conscience, they were left without excuse, and instead of glorifying God as God they made gods of their own and bowed down to stocks and stones, so that God gave them over ; but not until they had given Him up.

Well then, in the opening part of the second

chapter, down to the end of the sixteenth verse, we are shown the state of a certain portion of the Gentile or heathen world. That is to say, the philosophers amongst them, of whom there were many, as Plato, Socrates, and others, who had systems of religion or philosophy; they condemned the follies and sins of the heathen, and yet they committed exactly the same things—so that they, too, were inexcusable.

Then from the seventeenth verse of the second chapter down to the end of the nineteenth verse of the third chapter, we have brought out the special privileges that belong to the Jew, and the increased responsibilities that press upon him. He had the law and boasted of it; he prided himself in being better off than the Gentiles, for he had the oracles of God. True, says the apostle, and it is by no means a small privilege to have the oracles of God—to be addressed by God as they had been under the law. But what does the law say? and to whom does it say it? When the law speaks it speaks to them that are under the law. Then in the opening part of the third chapter, beginning at the tenth verse, we are told what the law says to them who are under it—“none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God,” &c. &c. It is God's verdict on the whole human family that we get in the nineteenth and twenty-third verses of the third chapter. We will read from the nineteenth verse, “Now we

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 89

know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped"—the Gentile or heathen mouth has been stopped already, the philosopher's mouth, too, has been stopped, and now the Jew's mouth is stopped just as much—that "all the world may become guilty before God."

Then we read in the twenty-third verse, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"; and mark *what* we have come short of! It is not merely that I have come short of what my conscience tells me I should be or what the law tells me I ought to be, but I have come short of the glory of God. In other words, God has been fully and perfectly revealed, and man in every condition—heathen, philosopher, and Jew—has come short of what God's nature requires that man should be, in order to be in moral relationship with Him. Man has been on his trial, and that is the verdict. Of course we know that the day of judgment is yet to come. God has appointed the day, we read; and man has to die, and after that the judgment. All that is true; but man has already in a certain sense been brought up before God's judgment bar. His whole case has been gone into already. All the evidence has been gathered together, and the whole world has been pronounced by God to be guilty before Him. Is there no remedy?

I can well understand that a man, whose conscience has been in the smallest degree pricked by these things, will say, What is to be done? Is there a remedy? Now, look at what is said in chapter iii. 20. Before God tells me of a remedy, He first of all tells me where there is none. There is no remedy in the law. There is no remedy to be found for man's sinful state by works that he can accomplish. By the law is the knowledge of sin. No law can justify a guilty man. The law of this land could not justify one who was guilty of breaking it. It can show up his guilt, but it cannot justify him. So we are told, "by the law is the knowledge of sin," not its forgiveness. And forgiveness is what we need. But in the twenty-first verse we read, "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," and that word "without" is a peculiar word, it means altogether independent of the law—the righteousness of God entirely apart from the law. The righteousness of God is not the same thing as the righteousness of the law. The righteousness of God is the only remedy which God proposes for man's state in the gospel.

I want to speak a little to-night on that subject—the righteousness of God. What is it? It is a new sort of righteousness altogether. It was a sort of righteousness that man until the cross knew nothing about. He knew something about the righteousness of the law, but that was a human righteousness; a righteousness that

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 91

God demanded, no doubt, but a righteousness that He demanded from man, it was a righteousness which, if man could accomplish it, he would be entitled to call his "own" righteousness. Look at the Epistle to the Philippians, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law" (Phil. iii.). It was not a legal righteousness which Paul now possessed. He could make a boast of his legal righteousness, he could pride himself in it. His legal righteousness he could speak of as something peculiarly his own; he had worked for it and wrought it out by his own power; just as we get in the Book of Deuteronomy, "The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us" (Deut. vi. 24, 25). "It shall be OUR righteousness," that is not the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is a new kind, a new character of righteousness altogether. It comes from God, it is not a righteousness that God demands from man, but a righteousness which God bestows upon man. It is not a righteousness which God claims from the sinner, it is a righteousness which God provides for the sinner. That is a totally different thing! When man has been proved to have no righteousness for God, God says, I have one for you. I will

relate an incident to you in connection with this :—

At the close of a meeting in Switzerland some years ago, I noticed an old lady apparently thoroughly enjoying the gospel, and so I got into conversation with her and asked her how she had been brought into peace with God.

She said, "That carries me back many years. It was when I was a girl, and I was very much distressed about my sins, but nothing seemed to meet me and give me what I needed for the peace of my soul. I heard of an Englishman who was preaching in the town, and that he had told the people some wonderful things that had never been much heard of here before, so I thought I would go and listen for myself. The moment I heard him I felt, That man has the remedy for my state. But I did not get an opportunity of speaking to him for a long time. At last I sought an interview late one night.

"‘Oh,’ I said, ‘I am in terrible distress about my sins.’

"‘I am very glad to hear it,’ he replied, ‘because it shows me that God is at work. The Spirit of God has done that for you.’

"‘But,’ said I, ‘I am in terrible distress.’

"‘What have you been doing?’ he asked.

"‘I am doing the very best I can, and that has not succeeded; the more I do, the worse I get.’

"‘That is a terrible case,’ he replied, ‘cannot you do something more?’

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 93

“‘No, I do not think I can, I have done all that I can think of.’

“‘That is a sad thing,’ he said, ‘because God requires righteousness.’

“‘I know it, and that is the very thing that troubles me,’ said I.

“‘Well, and have you not a righteousness that is sufficient for God?’

“‘No,’ said I, ‘if I had I should be perfectly happy.’

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘if you have not got a righteousness of your own, who is your righteousness?’

“Slowly I replied, ‘Is it Christ?’

“‘Very well,’ he said, ‘and do you want a better?’

“I saw it in a moment, I had no righteousness of my own for God, but Christ was the righteousness of God for me and I could not have a better, and from that time I have never had a question, never had a doubt.”

Now that is what we get here—the righteousness of God. It is a different kind of righteousness altogether from what Paul had known before, or man had heard of under the law. This was the righteousness of God. But if the righteousness was of a different sort, the righteousness was also obtained in a different way, so in this 22nd verse it goes on to say, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ.”

(To be continued.)

Thoughts on John xv.

YOU may remark, beloved friends, that all blessings spoken of here are with regard to the responsibility of those related to the person of Christ.

In the 14th chapter you get the whole ground of the disciples' happiness in His presence with them, notwithstanding because He was going away sorrow filled their hearts. In the 15th chapter, the place of the true vine in its earthly relations. You don't plant vines in heaven. Nothing in chapter xv. refers to a heavenly condition; this so far refers to our present condition in its analogy to what the Church is upon earth.

It is not here speaking that Christ is the Friend of sinners, but if we are following Him we are His friends; we have to look at the disciples as to the place they then were in—responsibility not as to law, but that *they* might abide in the enjoyment of His love; here you are called upon to walk so as to abide in Him practically and in His love too.

Israel was God's vine. Christ says that wasn't the true vine, but He was. Israel was in the place of the servant, but never acted up to it (Isa. xlix.). Everything is transferred to Christ. He takes the place as true servant. Israel a

servant, Christ a servant ; then Israel is *called* the vine, but bore no fruit. Instead of Israel being the vine, it was Christ Himself who was the true vine, and the disciples the branches.

The moment I get Christ the vine, I get One that cannot fail. He sets His disciples now to take the place, and (that is what applies to us) they were responsible as to fruit-bearing. A branch may be broken off ; if that meant the Church, His body would have been imperfect. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit," &c. If I'm in Christ, I'm part of Himself in glory ; here we talk of bearing fruit—we want pruning ; and this is what He is occupied with as we are passing through the world, and comforts them with "Ye are clean . . . *abide in Me.*"

All through He puts our confidence first: Abide ye in Me. It is entire confidence so as to express the dependence and get the power. If we haven't present confidence we can do nothing, that is just the opposite to abiding in Him. When we thus abide in Christ, we bring forth much fruit. What has He left us here for ? He has put us in a place of exercise to bear fruit, where, so to speak, everything hinders us bearing the fruit where He has set us ; it is that people may see fruit in the power of Christ in us while He is away.

Verse 7 does not say, Ye *know* My Word. It is not sufficient simply to abide in Christ, but in Christ and His Word. "If ye abide in Me, and

My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." We are called to walk in a path which is the wisdom, goodness, and power of God in a world of sin. There is a path which is described in that "which the vulture's eye hath not seen." It is not setting the world right, but showing a divine principle where it isn't right; showing the divine life or Christ's life. When Christ was in the world He was subject even to wrong, He was the obedient One. The Word of God is the expression of that divine life. The Word He has given is the one single thing that is come from God to us, not merely as salvation, but as showing a path through the world. I live by the word that comes out of God's mouth. I've got a perfect thing, God's wisdom in it. The practical life of a Christian is to abide in Christ, no strength in himself. The moment I'm walking as guided by His Word, it is walking in the wisdom and guidance of Another. If His Word was always in me, I should show nothing but fruit of God's Word in me.

Do you never think you like to follow something in this world? Well, that is getting away from Christ. Here, in the way, we are being modelled unto Him with whom we are to be for ever. He puts the believer in the place of living dependence upon Christ, and you "ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." That's what we want, a great deal more realising His

THOUGHTS ON JOHN XV.

97

presence and leaning upon Him. We can't go and ask what we will when it is *our* will. Where the believer has the mind and thoughts of the Lord, he can ask what he will and it shall be done ; that we are set in this world of evil makes it the greater privilege.

What He brings out in verses 9 and 10 is "abiding in the love of God." Not only was Christ the only eternal Son of His delight, but God was well pleased, all His life unfolding the perfect blessed obedience and love. I have been with you in this world just as My Father has been with Me. Besides the sovereign goodness of God in our election and His delight in us, His heart has been watching over us with earnest delight. I want you to be keeping *close* to Me that the outgoings of that delight may be known in you. If thus walking in Christ, we never walk in darkness.

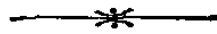
The discernment of the divine will depends upon the spiritual state. I (Christ) walked in obedience and had always the enjoyment of the Father's love. The Christian's life should be bearing fruit and the blessedness of enjoying His love. His joy did not come from the world. He had a deep constant source of joy that nothing could dry up—constant communion with His Father ; and that's how we are to walk with regard to Christ, that path where the light of life is found. Christ is never darkness to those who are walking with Him. His love is

sufficiently true to us to make following His Word a path of blessing to us.

The Lord give us grace and confidence in His love in order to trust His Word!

The last two verses, 26 and 27, are remarkable as showing the character of the Church. In chapter xiv. Christ sends the Holy Ghost from the Father because He is to be a revealer of heavenly glory. In chapter xv. the Comforter is Himself present, and chapter xvi. shows what the Holy Ghost does when He is come. I would only say, Are your hearts content to abide in Him and know nothing in this world but Christ?

J. N. D.



Enoch.



HE WAS NOT.

THE first thing recorded of Enoch was that he walked with God; the second, that he "*was not, for God took him.*" And this event was intimately and indissolubly connected with his faith and walk—observe the expression, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Heb. xi. 5).

One would rather have expected to read, "By faith he pleased God and *then* he was translated;" but no, his translation formed part, so to speak, of his course of faith. It was the aim of his life,

which reached on to his translation, although probably it was not revealed to him beforehand. But he knew that the Lord would come with ten thousand of His saints, and it was such a reality to his soul, that he said, "Behold the Lord has come" * (Jude 14). It was a thing ever present to his soul, he lived in view of the blessed prospect, and lo, suddenly his faith was confirmed by the event taking place. He was caught up to be with the Lord, and to return with Him. His life on earth, as we have seen, had been a heavenly one ; it had begun in heaven and was going to be continued there. His existence was not divided into two parts, earthly and heavenly. His life had brought heaven to earth, and now it carried back heaven to heaven.

Even to think of it is extremely humbling, for this man of God was far from possessing the full extent of the revelations made to us. The eternal counsels reserved for us were hidden from him, he had never known the Word made flesh ; he had neither seen, heard, nor touched what the apostles had seen and communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. And yet he had lived three hundred years with one object in view, for the Lord was his object, and he reached his goal without faltering. Could the Lord say of us, "By faith they were translated !" Yet He has said to us, "I come quickly," and we believe it

* See J. N. D.'s translation in German, French, and English.

and know it. How are our days spent? To what purpose is our activity? Is a coming Lord the end of our course? Is He the bright guiding-star amidst the darkness? If we were really waiting for the Lord, how clear our testimony would be, for this hope is the spring of all Christian life.

Moreover, even if the believer has, like so many of the saints, to pass through death, to die or live, should not make much difference to him, except that to die is *gain*. For the apostle Paul, to live, was to live with and for Him. Was not to die, also to live with and for Him?

Enoch did not die; he was translated "that he should not see death." He was the first witness to a power which had during three centuries withdrawn him *morally* from a region of death to enjoy life with God, and which was also able, instead of raising his dead body, to transport him alive out of this scene, stripping him of everything mortal. Enoch was the first to realise the words, "This mortal must put on immortality." By faith he thus escaped the lot common to man, which is, "once to die." By faith he also escaped the impending judgment which so soon overtook the world, and was kept from the hour of temptation which came upon all the habitable earth (compare Rev. iii. 10).

Enoch's faith qualified him to be almost* the

* I say "almost," remembering the call of Rebekah, which is another striking type of the Church.

only type of the future destiny of the saints, the mystery which was not yet revealed in the Old Testament.

It is said of Enoch that he "was not found because God had translated him" (Heb. xi. 5). When he disappeared men sought for him as they did later on for Elijah, but they did not find him. The world had lost Enoch. They had not troubled themselves about him during his life, but once he was gone they would perhaps have liked to recall him. It was too late. The world will never more see Jesus coming in grace, nor will they see those who, however feebly, have brought them some echo of the grace of Jesus. Christ in the perfection of His character, personally present among men, had shone like the sun over this poor world, and lighted it with the full daylight of His divine beauty. One would have thought that in presence of His perfect grace, the world could not be indifferent ; but let us see what they did.

With a few strokes of the axe and hammer they made a common gibbet and nailed Him to it like the vilest criminal, He whose only crime lay in being the personification of beauty and goodness. Next the world invites men to another spectacle which it has been preparing for centuries, a magnificent pedestal of marble, alabaster, ivory, gold, and every precious thing. It already reaches up to the clouds, almost to heaven itself, and when it is completed the

world will place its ideal upon it, man filthy with wickedness and hatred, corrupt, belching out infamy, slave of Satan and enemy of God, man whose murderous hands are red with the blood of the Just One. But God, who has highly exalted the Crucified One, will precipitate man from his pedestal. "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment, they are utterly consumed with terrors, as a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image."

Yes, the world will not see Christ except in judgment. When once the saints are caught up to be with their Saviour, they will no longer be found. After that, until the final judgment, there will be no sun or light for the world, no beauty or goodness, no rest or peace, no holiness or justice, no love or mercy, nothing, in fact, which has any Divine savour. Alas, alas! what will be left for man? The power of evil and violence, hatred and blasphemy, the reign of all that is subversive of every moral principle, corruption in all its hideousness, revolting even to those who loved it. Nothing to console or ease or attract the heart, only sorrow and anguish and such endless despair that they will seek death a thousand times and not be able to die. It will be the reign of night on the earth, the invasion of the power of darkness.*

* See the whole of the Apocalypse.

But of Enoch it was said, "God took him." The friend of God could at length enjoy the full satisfaction of the joy of His face. To this lowly pilgrim the right was given to dwell in the glory even before judgment overtook the world. For Enoch it was the conclusion of a continuous heavenly walk.

May we have a similar history ; may our life resemble Enoch's, and may we reach the goal like he did !

H. R. (*From the French*).

Hints on Daniel.

DANIEL'S VISIONS.

(Chap. vii.)

THE most cursory reader of Daniel cannot fail to observe a striking change in the whole style of the book, starting with the chapter which now lies open before us.

In the first place we may observe that in the early portion of the book the order of the events narrated is strictly chronological. We have before remarked that chapter i. forms a sort of introduction to the whole book, giving a beautiful picture of the moral condition of the faithful Jews in the midst of the general declension of that day. Absolute and unswerving

obedience to the Word of the Lord characterised them in every detail of their life.

The last verse of chapter i. informs us that "Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus." This closes the first introductory portion of the book. In like manner the second or historical portion terminates with the words, "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (vi. 28).

In chapter ii. the writer goes back upon the history to describe dreams and visions of an earlier monarch, and one even of an earlier dynasty than that of Cyrus. The chapters that follow (ii.-vii.) present a terrible picture of the moral features that characterise the great empires of the earth during the whole period of "the times of the Gentiles," times which began with Nebuchadnezzar about the year 607 B.C., and which are still running their course. Coming now to chapter vii., we find that in a similar manner the chronological order is interrupted and the prophet retraces his steps to describe a vision which came to him in the night season during the reign of Belshazzar, King of Babylon.

Further, it is easy to see that the chapters we have hitherto been considering are what may be called *historical*; though, at the same time, these histories have a prophetic and typical signification. But in that portion of the book which follows, the visions and communications given to Daniel are as evidently *prophetical*, though to a

large extent in symbolic language. The moral character, or, in other words, the attitude Godward, of the Gentile powers which began with the empire of Babylon, has been clearly and solemnly delineated ; we are now to learn what will be their special relationship to the Jewish people, and that more particularly in days yet to come.

Hence it is that from chapter vii. the communications are addressed to the prophet himself and not to Nebuchadnezzar. We might have thought, Why should not Jehovah have sent Daniel direct to His people with a "Thus saith the Lord?" Had not Jeremiah but a short while before received the command to "go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem" (Jer. ii. 1). Why, now, should the nation be apparently ignored, and the prophet alone be addressed? The sorrowful answer is evident. The time had come when God could no longer recognise the Jewish people as His people ; to have continued to do so after the awful iniquity of Manasseh and other kings of Judah, to say nothing of Israel, would have been to support the people in their wickedness, and this in faithfulness to His own character He could no longer do. "If we believe not, He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13), is a principle of ever-abiding application.

God is a God of government as well as grace, and if in His own sovereign grace He had chosen

Israel to be His people and had brought them up from the land of Egypt, for this very reason, yes, because, "you only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 1-4). The time had now come when God could no longer walk with His people. For their sin, especially that of idolatry, He is obliged to deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, though, blessed be His name! the faithful remnant may still walk with Him even though carried away captive to Babylon.

While writing thus, it is important to remember that we are not alluding to the matter of the soul's salvation. This rests upon the atoning sacrifice of the cross, and is eternally secured for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a one once saved, is saved for ever. Christ gives to His sheep eternal life, they shall never perish, and none shall ever pluck them out of His, or His Father's hand (John x.). They may be chastised here for their failures and sins, they may even, in extreme cases, be removed in God's discipline from this world (1 Cor. xi. 30), but, if so, with the very object that they should not be condemned by-and-bye (ver. 32).

But in Scripture we see another great truth, namely, the government of this world, and for this, Israel as a nation is the centre of all God's dealings with the earth. A well-known passage

in the Old Testament (Deut. xxxii.), given at the commencement of their history, lays down in prophetic language, the principle on which God will act in judgment, and for final blessing towards all the nations of the world. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam (Gen. x.), He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people" (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9).

Found in a desert land (Egypt), led through the wilderness, instructed and kept as the apple of His eye, the Lord alone was the leader of His people, and no strange god was with Him. But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, he forsook the God which made him, lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation, and provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods. This idolatry, begun at Mount Sinai with the golden calf, continued right through their wilderness journey, reached a climax in the land of Canaan under Manasseh, King of Judah (2 Kings xxiv. 3), so that Jehovah said, "I will hide My face from them . . . for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith" (Deut. xxxii. 20). In righteousness He might well have made the remembrance of them to cease from among men, but what then would the enemy have said? (vers. 26, 27).

But, after all, the enemies of Israel were the

enemies of Jehovah (see ver. 41). He might use the nations, Assyria, Babylon, &c., as His rod of chastisement upon His people, but in the end these very nations would come up for judgment because of their own iniquity (see Jer. xxv. 12-34). "Their feet shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. xxxii. 36). And in that day will the apostate nation of Israel escape? No, "for the Lord shall judge His people"—but what of the godly remnant of those times? The Lord "will repent Himself for His servants" (ver. 36). But in the end, *after judgment*, and terrible judgment, has done its work, there will be final blessing to all the Gentile nations in association with Israel His people. "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people" (ver. 43).

This chapter (Deut. xxxii.), with many others, speaks in a general way of the Gentile nations that are found at enmity against Israel. But from other parts of Scripture we learn that there are two great classes of these, carefully distinguished the one from the other, both as to the period in which they display their enmity, and the time and circumstances of their future judgment.

When the Jews were still recognised as God's

people, when the temple was still standing, and when the kings of Judah were still occupying the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem, the great Assyrian empire was their chief enemy. Others there were of more or less importance, such as Syria and Egypt, but Assyria was the mightiest of them all. One remarkable thing that prophecy reveals is this, that in the future when Israel is once more back in their own land, and God once again recognises them as His people, this great enemy, the Assyrian, will likewise once more revive. One passage of Scripture at this stage will suffice in support of this, "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria," &c. (Isa. x. 12). Some of our readers may say, But the Assyrian is gone, he no longer exists. True, but has the Lord performed His whole work upon Mount Zion? Clearly not yet. Then the Assyrian is not yet done with. Ezekiel's prophecy (xxxviii.-xxxix.) shows, in connection with other scriptures, that the Assyrian will be the last enemy dealt with before the setting up of final blessing during the millennium. Geographically he will occupy the territory now known as Turkey in Asia, and also the vast north-eastern empire now in rapid process of formation under Russia.*

* See "Russia's Destiny."

In connection with this subject we may point out that a remarkable passage in Peter is strikingly illustrated—"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20). The meaning of this much misunderstood text is doubtless that the scope of no prophecy of the Scripture is to be had from its own isolated interpretation. Let us apply this to the subject now before us, the Assyrian. When Isaiah was giving forth his inspired testimony the Assyrian was in all his glory. He was sweeping through the land of Palestine, and was at the very doors of Jerusalem; "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages; they are gone over the passage; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled," &c. (Isa. x. 24-34).

But while the Spirit of God was leading Isaiah to speak of circumstances that lay immediately around, He nevertheless was looking through and beyond those circumstances to a time yet future, and inspired the prophet to use language which will only be literally fulfilled in a coming day. For in the past Assyria was destroyed before Babylon came into power, whereas in the future the Assyrian will be judged *after* the representative of Babylon has met his doom. This we learn from many parts of God's Word, but a striking and most interesting chapter

gives us the order of events so far as Israel and its enemies are concerned.

In Isaiah xiv. are described the circumstances that attend the restoration of Israel to their own land, once more called "the land of the Lord" (ver. 2), and the order in which these take place. We cannot now do more than point them out, leaving to our readers the happy task of a close study of the passage. "The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel." He will employ *the peoples* (not people) to "bring them to their place." Then will all the power of Babylon* be destroyed (vers. 4-24). After that, "I will break the Assyrian *in my land*." Observe, Assyria judged after Babylon! It was not so in the past. Then Palestine, or Philistia, that is the nations surrounding Israel, melt away; and we know from Daniel xi. 41, and Ezekiel xxv., that certain nations are reserved to be dealt with by Israel *after* the judgment of the King of the North.

In result the triumphant answer will be that "the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of the people (Jehovah's people) shall trust in it."

* Here Babylon stands for the Beast of the Book of Revelation (*e.g.* chapters xiii. and xvii.). The Beast will be the fourth of those great world empires introduced by Babylon. Babylon the Great is another system of things altogether.

(To be continued.)

An Accepted Worshipper.

HOW came poor Abel to be an accepted worshipper? "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering ; but unto Cain," &c. (Gen. iv. 4).

Abel was accepted by blood. There was this testimony in his offering : I cannot go to God as I am ; I am driven out of paradise, sin has come in between me and God, and death, "the wages of sin," must come in between me and God, or I cannot go to God—I cannot go as I am.

Abel took the place of a sinner, and in faith put between himself and God the blood of a victim that had been slain. Unless in his going to God he had owned his necessity that He could not get into the presence of God at all but by blood, he would not have been accepted any more than Cain. But Abel knew and owned that he could not get to God without blood ; he was of faith, and faith ever sees that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). He put death—judicially inflicted death (by slaying the victim)—between himself and God, and then he comes into the presence of God as an accepted worshipper. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts ; and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. xi. 4).

J. N. D.

The Epistle to the Romans.

(Continued.)

HUMAN righteousness was by works, God's righteousness is by faith. Do you say, That seems a very simple way of getting it? And is that not the very thing that you need? It is because we are in this lost condition that we need a righteousness so simply procured that one look of faith makes it ours. "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." But if this righteousness is on the ground of faith, where is the limit? Is it only for the Jew? Oh, no, it goes out to all, and it is of importance to see this. It is a righteousness that is unto all; there is no limit, there is no bound. Be it a Jew or a heathen, this righteousness of God is unto all. But is it *upon* all? If it is unto all, man might reason then that all would be saved. But here is the limit; it is *upon* all them only that believe. Apart then from faith this righteousness is not available. It is a righteousness that goes out to everybody; all may have it; nobody can say, I wanted it but could not get it. It is a righteousness obtainable by all, but when it comes to the application of it, it is on the ground of faith alone. That makes nothing of man but magnifies God. But that is not all. None can say, I am

114 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

better than another. There is no difference if all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

But where does this righteousness come from? It is a righteousness that has a different source from that which Saul of Tarsus had known before. It says in the twenty-fourth verse, that we are justified freely by His grace—that is the unmerited favour of God. Oh! that is a wonderful thing. God is not against the sinner if the sinner is against God. God is not against man, there is nothing in God's heart for man but grace. It was God who gave His Son. There is nothing in God's heart towards this sinful world, towards you and me, but grace and love. "Justified freely by His grace." But if the heart of God is full of love to man, yet God is just, and, therefore, we get at the close of that verse, "Justified freely by His grace *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" There must be a righteous foundation upon which God can display Himself in blessing towards a poor sinful world; and that is the work of Christ on the cross. God had revealed Himself in love in the person of His own Son as He walked through this world, but now we get the work of Christ as the righteous foundation upon which God can bless the sinner and bring him near to Himself, and so the next verse says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation"—that is a peculiar word, it is really *a propitiatory*, or mercy-seat; and what was the mercy-seat in

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 115

the tabernacle of old? It was the meeting place between God and Moses, who was the representative of the people of Israel.

Turn back for a moment to the twenty-fifth chapter of Exodus. If you read at your leisure from the seventeenth verse, you will see what this mercy-seat was made of, but in the twenty-second verse, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony." It was the meeting place between God and Moses. It was made of pure gold, and that, in symbolic language, tells us of the righteousness and glory of God. There was the meeting place between God and man, but that meeting place could not be available unless the blood of atonement was sprinkled upon it. Now we have a meeting place not merely according to the requirements of the law, but according to the requirements of a Holy God fully revealed. His righteousness is manifested, His glory perfectly revealed, and we have the precious blood of Christ, which meets it all on our behalf. On this basis is the meeting place where sinners, like we are, and a Holy God can meet together, not in judgment but in blessing. At the day of judgment there will be a meeting between a Holy God and sinful men, but that will be perdition. But the gospel tells me of a meeting place between a Holy God and a sinful man in blessing; and yet God does

not lose one iota of His glory and majesty, nay, all that God is, is manifested and glorified at the cross, and by the same means the poor sinner is justified. So it goes on to say, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."

To what does that word "past" refer? Not to our individual past sins, but to the sins of past ages, the sins of a David and of the Old Testament saints. God passed them over; He did not visit them with the judgment which those sins deserved. But that did not look like righteousness. Nobody would have called it righteous on God's part to pass over the sins of David. What would they call it? Forbearance. And so the verse goes on to say, "through the forbearance of God." When God passed over the sins of His saints of old, His forbearance was shown, not His righteousness. And what does He say in the next verse? "To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness." At *that* time His forbearance was manifested, but at *this* time, that is, since the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has been declared righteous in passing over the sins of those who believe, and that is the only thing that will give real, settled, solid peace to the soul. It is not merely the grace of God forgiving the sinner, but it is the righteousness of God justifying him. I need to know that the love of God is shown in pardoning the

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 117

sinner as well as that the righteousness of God is declared in justifying him. But what gives me peace is to see this, that God is just, and at the same time that He is just, He justifies me, as it goes on to say, "to declare at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

What a wonderful thing that is! God just, yes, perfectly just, and yet He justifies me. Yes, God can justify the guilty; it is not merely that He forgives the guilty. We can all understand that, if a person was brought up for trial and found guilty, the judge might say, There is no question about your guilt, but I forgive you. You might say that such a judge is not worthy to sit on the bench, but we can quite understand that a guilty person might be forgiven. But what we cannot understand is that a guilty person should be justified; nevertheless God proves man's guilt beyond question, and then He says, I will clear you from all charge of guilt, and how does He do it? Not by passing over the sins as though they were nothing, but by visiting the judgment that they deserved upon the head of the sinless One—His own beloved Son. At the cross a work has been done that has glorified God. At the cross I see that the whole question of my sins has been settled, and everything that could come between me and God has been cleared out of the way. God laid my sins upon Christ, and He has borne them all.

The judgment has been borne, and that is what gives peace. The day of judgment cannot bring to light a single sin that has not been borne on the cross. I can look forward to the judgment day; is there anything to come out then that has not already come out? Nothing. Christ bore the judgment and the believer stands clear before God. God is just, and at the same time that He is just He justifies me, a poor guilty sinner who believes, on the ground of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and that is a wonderful thing.

I daresay many of us have heard the illustration given by one known to many of us. He used to say that people hope that their sins will be passed over and that God will not take account of them. But that will never give anybody peace. What gives us confidence with God is that He knows all our sins, and that He did not pass over one of them at the cross. Suppose I am in my house trembling because I hear a footstep at my door, and I fear that a man is coming to whom I owe some money, and I have not a farthing to pay the debt with. The man, a stranger to me, comes in, and he says—

“I understand that you are in debt?”

I say, “Well, I do not owe very much,” and I make as light of it as I can, “I only owe a few shillings.”

Then he asks, “How much more do you owe?”

I mention another little matter.

He asks again, "Is that really all?"

Then I tell him of another small sum.

"How very slow you are in telling me your debts," says the stranger, "I have come here to pay them, I have not come here to demand the payment."

Ah! now I tell them all out as fast as I can. The only thing now that can give me comfort is to think that I have not forgotten one.

But where has the change come? Not in the man who came to pay the debts, he came intending to pay them all, and the debts were just as great before as they are now, but my thoughts about the stranger are completely altered. When he first came in I looked upon him as an enemy, but now I trust him as a friend. So we see God in His love and righteousness clearing the guilty who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(To be continued.)

Hints on Daniel.

THE FOUR BEASTS.

Chapter vii.

THE chapter to which we now desire to turn the reader's attention is one of the most interesting and important of the prophetic writings.

Except for the fact that Dean Farrar looks upon the whole Book of Daniel as a magnificent fraud, it would be hard to understand why he should pronounce the second portion to be "unquestionably inferior to the first part (chaps. i.-vi.) in grandeur and importance as a whole."

The Dean admits that "the vision is dated, 'In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon,'" but this, he hastens to tell us, is "merely a touch of literary verisimilitude." It is sad to think that men who fill the highest positions in the Established Church to-day are such utter unbelievers in the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is a sign of the times more serious than words can express that the infidelity of rationalism and the superstitions of ritualism are sweeping the multitude along towards the predicted apostasy of Christendom.

So far from lacking in importance, this vision of the prophet carries us right through the whole period of the times of the Gentiles. It extends over a vast stretch of time, commencing with the rise of the Babylonian empire, about B.C. 600, and continuing until the coming of the Son of Man, when there shall be given to Him "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him" (vers. 13, 14).

The chapter divides itself into four paragraphs, at verses 2, 7, 13, and 17. The first three are introduced by the words, "I saw in the night

visions ;" the last is "the interpretation of the things."

In the first of these paragraphs the general fact is stated that there were four beasts, and then a brief description is given of the first three ; but brief as it is, details are given which were so remarkably fulfilled that nothing but inspiration could account for the miracle. Indeed, the very brevity of the description, coupled with the accuracy of accomplishment, leaves no room to doubt that Daniel "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost."

God was pleased in vision to present to Daniel's thought the great sea lashed into fury and thrown into storm and unrest by the four winds of heaven. In this symbolic language we are given a picture of the nations of the earth in a state of chaos and confusion. Scripture not unfrequently uses this figure to describe this state of things. "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas ; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters !" (Isa. xvii. 12 ; compare also Isa. lvii. 20 ; Rev. xvii. 15).

Out of this restless condition of the nations, produced in the providence of God for the accomplishment of His designs upon the earth, four great beasts are seen to rise. "The four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea," and in truth stormy winds of whatever kind do but fulfil His will.

From this troubled mass, then, Daniel sees in vision the uprising of the Gentile empires. In this we are given their *providential* origin, whereas in verse 17 we are told what is their *moral* origin: they come from the earth and not from heaven.

There can be no reasonable doubt that these four beasts represent the four Gentile powers already portrayed in the great image of chapter ii. There, the course of empire is presented to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar as one whole, whereas here, Daniel perceives it in its successional form. There it stands before the monarch's gaze, in all its imposing grandeur as instituted by God, here it is seen utterly destitute of any moral link with God.

"Four great beasts"—wild beasts—"came up from the sea." A beast spends its existence entirely regardless of God; this we have already seen has especially marked the whole course of Gentile rule since it was set up under Nebuchadnezzar. At the close it will assume an attitude of open rebellion and blasphemous hostility to God and His people. It may be well to observe in passing that the beasts of Daniel vii. must not be confounded with the four beasts in Revelation. The words are different—in Daniel, they are *wild beasts*; in Revelation, *living creatures*.

"The first was like a lion." Here we have the Babylonian empire. Nor is this the only place where Babylon is thus described. The

prophet Jeremiah speaks of Nebuchadnezzar in these words, "Behold, he shall come up like a lion," &c., adding the other symbol that Daniel saw in vision, "Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle" (Jer. xlix. 19, 22). But the strength of the lion and the swiftness of the eagle did not prevent the humiliation of the proud Babylonian empire: "I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked," &c.

"And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side" (ver. 5). We need not appeal to history to prove that this could mean none other than the Medo-Persian empire, for the Book of Daniel itself leaves no room for doubt on this point. The dream was given to Daniel while Babylon still flourished under Belshazzar, but we have already been told in the historical portion of the book (vers. 30, 31) that on the night when Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was slain, "Darius the Median took the kingdom."

The devout student of Scripture need not have his faith in the inspiration of those Scriptures disturbed in the smallest degree by the wild assertions of the higher critics. Dean Farrar cannot believe that "Darius the Median" ever existed because no such person is mentioned in history. But the same doubt was thrown by the rationalists upon Sargon the king of Assyria (Isa. xx. 1) until quite recently, when his name was discovered upon one of the monuments. The

124 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

more closely the Scriptures are examined, the more absolutely reliable they are found to be; the more they are exposed to the crucible of sound criticism, the more completely are they proved worthy of our implicit confidence and faith.

But the second empire, represented by the bear, is of a composite nature. It is not the Median alone, but the Medo-Persian. It is difficult to understand why Dean Farrar should refer us to Daniel v. 28, 31, vi. 8, 12, 15, viii. 20, in support of his contention that "those who explain the monster as an emblem, not of the Median but of the Medo-Persian empire, neglect the plain indications of the book itself, for the author regards the Median and Persian empires as distinct." One would naturally suppose that these references proved the very reverse; but then the theory of the rationalists requires that the fourth beast should be the Grecian empire and not the Roman, and for this it is necessary to split into two what the Word of God has most evidently given as one (viii. 20). Nevertheless though the empire was composed of two peoples joined in one, yet one of these was more prominent than the other. This the prophet sees in vision: "It raised up itself on one side." The same fact is told us in figurative language in the following chapter (ver. 3), for the ram of chapter viii. is the same as the bear of chapter vii., but there another trait is added, "The higher came up last." How admirably accurate are all

these details every one in the smallest degree familiar with history knows right well, for the Medes were heard of earlier than the Persians, though the Persian element eventually gained the ascendant.

“After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads” (ver. 6). The Grecian empire under Alexander the Great is here indicated, noted for its swiftness in conquest—“four wings of a fowl.” There is also added a feature, well known to history, which is more fully dwelt on later on in the book (chapters viii. and xi.), that is, the division of Alexander’s kingdom, after his death, into four parts—“the beast had also four heads.”

When we remember that the vision was given to Daniel in the reign of Belshazzar king of Babylon, that is, before the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires were in existence, and that in a few brief sentences details are given which were accurately fulfilled in the after-history of those empires, it is impossible not to bow the head in worship before Him who for His own glory and the glory of His beloved Son was pleased to make known these things to His servant Daniel, and to inspire him by His Spirit to record them for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope (Rom. xv. 4).

(To be continued.)

Sacerdotalism and the Confessional.

EVER since the Oxford Movement began, the growth of sacerdotalism in the Church of England has been specially marked. Some time ago Lord Halifax wanted the Pope to recognise the validity of Anglican orders, with a view to giving the priests power to transubstantiate the elements at the Eucharist into the real body and blood of Christ.

The setting up of a sacerdotal caste is a necessary part of the sacramental system; because, where so much efficacy is attributed to Church ordinances and ceremonies, the due administration of them is held to be only possible in the hands of a priestly class: thus they constitute themselves the channels of blessing from God to man. Now, to one who bows to the authority of Scripture, it is evident that the whole theory of a sacerdotal class of persons, as set apart from ordinary Christians, is a denial of the essentially distinctive truths of Christianity.

Under the Jewish system there was an order of priests ordained and established by God Himself, because the way of approach into the presence of God was not yet made manifest,

SACERDOTALISM AND CONFSSIONAL. 127

as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us. The work was not yet accomplished, in consequence of which the veil (which barred the way into the holiest of all, where God dwelt) was rent. But when Christ died the veil was rent, the way into the presence of God was opened up, and every believer has boldness to enter in at all times by the blood of Jesus ; in fact, he is invited to draw near where his Great High Priest has entered, Jesus, the Son of God (Heb. x.). Christianity, the basis of which is the work of atonement and its results, supersedes the Jewish system. Christ, having entered in once into the holy place, presenting His own blood before God as the efficacious ground of that atonement, has obtained *eternal redemption* for us ; and as a consequence every true Christian has free access to God's presence now. Under Christianity, therefore, priesthood is not confined to a class of persons, it is the common privilege of all, inasmuch as all have access *directly* into God's presence—within the holiest, where only the high priest could enter under the Jewish system. This is confirmed by various scriptures. For example, the apostle Peter says, "Ye are . . . a royal priesthood" and a "holy priesthood," and the apostle John, in Revelation i., gives thanks to Him who has made us "kings and priests unto God and His Father." All Christians are recognised as priests. But the corrupt Christianity to which so many are now going back is a

mixture of Judaism and Christianity, which spoils both, and is destructive of the truth in its most vital points.

It is quite true that Scripture plainly teaches the value and importance of true ministry, and God has given gifts as He pleases—teachers, pastors, evangelists, &c. There were in the early Church, too, overseers and deacons who were appointed to take an oversight of things in the places where they lived; but this is very different from setting up a class of persons between the soul and God. It has been well said that true ministry makes nothing of itself, hides itself, in order that it may bring those to whom it ministers to feel that they have not to deal with man at all, but with God. False ministry, on the other hand, makes much of itself; it interposes itself between the soul and God in order that it may support a falsely assumed position.

The apostolic warnings as to this false assumption of authority show how God foresaw all from the beginning, and He did not fail to provide for the evil day.

Paul says to the Ephesian elders that even from among themselves men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them; grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock; and to Timothy he speaks of the “perilous times” of the last days, when men would have a form of godliness, but deny

SACERDOTALISM AND CONFESSIONAL. 129

the power ; evil men and impostors would wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. If the evil is faithfully foretold, the resource for the faithful is equally plain ; so the apostle commends them, not to a line of successors, but to God and the Word of His grace, and he enjoins them to continue in the things which they had learned and been assured of—these things we have in the Scripture.

Peter, in like manner, warns against false teachers who would come in among them, and draws a dark picture of their ways. But, instead of pointing the faithful to those who assumed to be his successors, he tells them to remember the words spoken by the prophets and the commandments of the Lord and Saviour—these are left to us in the Scriptures.

Jude begins his epistle by saying he intended to write about the salvation common to all Christians, but certain men had crept in unawares corrupting the truth, and therefore he has to turn aside to exhort them to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. No mention is made of a body of Church dignitaries as those to whom they were to look in these evil times : they are told to build themselves up on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. This faith is preserved to us in the Scriptures pure as it was given.

Lastly, the apostle John says, "It is the last time." Already there were many antichrists:

and then, so far from making the Christian dependent on a succession of priests as the expositors of Scripture and the channels of Christian blessings, he says to the youngest in the faith that they had an unction from the Holy One and knew all things. Yes, they needed not that any one should teach them. It is not that one would undervalue true ministry, but the Holy Spirit teaches through the Word of God, and in this way the Christian is safeguarded against what is not true. Then he exhorts them to let that abide in them which they had heard *from the beginning*; there can be no new developments in Christianity, for it was complete when it was given at the beginning. *Truth*, just because it is truth, does not admit of change or succession; it cannot be other than what it is: nor does it need to be secured to us by a successional order, for we have it in the Word of God.

Confession to a priest naturally flows out of the principle which puts a man between the soul and God. The sin-burdened soul is supposed to go to his confessor to unburden his conscience and to look for ghostly counsel and relief. All this secures for the priest an immense accession of power and authority, and human nature loves power. The degrading side of the evil, as practised in the Church of England, is sufficiently shown in Mr Walsh's "History of the Oxford Movement," in the chapter dealing with

SACERDOTALISM AND CONFSSIONAL. 131

that evil book, "The Priest in Absolution." It is an evidence of the fact that, when blinded by devotion to a false system, men who take a high religious stand will pursue a course of conduct which any right-minded man of the world would not be guilty of in the ordinary affairs of life.

The passage in the Epistle of James, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed," is a very plain proof that confession to a priest was unknown in those days. It was a mutual exercise of love and confidence one towards another amongst Christians, so that the chastisement for the sin might be removed, when the heart was restored and right with God. If we are to listen to what God says in His Word, the place confession has is plain enough; the Christian is told what to do when he sins: "If we confess our sins, He (God, our Father) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). Not a word about going to a man as confessor, for we are brought to God to know Him as Father. The Christian is to go *directly* to God his Father, against whom he has sinned, and acknowledge his fault and get restored to the happy enjoyment of communion with Him. Again, "If any man sin, we have (it does not say, a father confessor to go to; no, indeed, but) an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Christ is always there as the believer's righteousness before God;

He is his Advocate, to carry on his cause in the presence of God, and his *relationship* as a child of God is not broken by his failure, but his *communion* is interrupted until he confesses his sins and gets restored again to the happy enjoyment of the Father's presence.

For a poor fellow-mortal to take the place of confessor, and to pretend to have authority from God to pronounce absolution from sin, is certainly daring presumption, wholly unwarranted by the teaching of Scripture.

F. G. B.

What is our Position as Christians? And what ought to be our Prayer in relation to the Holy Ghost?

IT is of the utmost moment to all the people of God to ascertain whether the Holy Ghost has returned to heaven since Pentecost, and has to be sent again on every fresh occasion of blessing, or whether He remained, and still remains, on earth with us since that great event. And such is the important subject now under our consideration.

More than eighteen hundred years ago, a small company of the disciples of Jesus were accustomed to meet in an upper chamber for prayer and supplication in expectation of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost according to the promise of

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 133

their blessed Master, to be shortly accomplished (Acts i.). They were feeble and fearful (John xx. 19, 20), and quite unenlightened as to the purposes and counsels of God respecting the calling of the Gentiles and the Church, having still, for the most part, Jewish views and feelings (Acts i. 6), with prejudices which nothing but the action and direct authority of the Spirit of God afterwards sufficed to overcome (Acts x. 45-47, xi. 15-18). Besides this, they had no power to preach or declare the Word of God, and were especially directed by the Lord Himself to wait until this was conferred on them by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts i. 4, 5, 8); nor could they, until that event took place, be formed into one body, the Church (1 Cor. xii. 13), and its order, organisation, and privileges were unknown to them.

This state of things continued until the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, which is thus described :—"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts ii.). Thus was fulfilled the promise of Christ, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (John xiv. 16).

The terms of this promise were that the Comforter should *come* to abide with them, in accordance with which we see on the day of Pentecost, not only the "cloven tongues as of fire," resting upon each individual, emblematical of the gifts and powers which the Holy Ghost conferred, but His own personal presence in their midst, indicated by the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, which, coming from heaven, "*filled all the house where they were sitting.*" Thus was the advent and presence of this Divine and Almighty Agent announced to them all in an unmistakable way. Thus they knew that though the Son had returned to heaven, another Divine Person of the blessed Trinity had descended to earth to remain with them, according to the promise of Christ, for ever.

His presence changed the aspect of everything. Courage and confidence succeeded to fear; weakness was exchanged for power; and boldness in public testimony for Christ for what had before been only in private; "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance." Besides which, the Church is now first spoken of as an existent body that could be added to (Acts ii. 47), the unity and love which characterised its members becoming conspicuous to all (44-46), whilst those who were enrolled exhibited the living agency of the Divine Spirit of truth in continuing steadfast "in the apostles' doctrine

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 135

and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayers"—four all-important things which show distinct and instructed organisation and spiritual power.

We have, in addition, the conversions which took place under the ministry of the Word by the apostle Peter, on one day three thousand being brought in (Acts ii. 41), and on another two thousand after the healing of the impotent man (Acts iv. 4). But these conversions were not the outpouring of the Spirit which had been previously exhibited in the apparent form as of a rushing mighty wind, and of tongues of fire which rested on the believers; but they were the blessed effects of the Holy Spirit's presence, making itself felt subsequently upon the hearts of sinners.* These things ought not to be con-

* Hence the apostle Peter says, before any conversions had taken place, when addressing the multitudes who had come together attracted by the report of the gift of tongues :—"Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He *hath shed forth* this which ye now see and hear." This clearly shows that the apostle applied the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, not to the conversions that followed, but to what had now been received and enjoyed for the first time by those who had long been believers in Jesus. For he speaks of the "shedding forth" (the same word in the original as "outpouring") as having been already accomplished, and as being manifest by the effects which they had been drawn together to witness; and it is in this sense that the word outpouring is always used in Scripture—that is, the abundant bestowment of the Holy Ghost, after the ascent of Christ, on those who were *previously* Jewish or Gentile converts.

founded; the former was the coming or descent of the Holy Ghost, the latter is only one result of it, though a very blessed one. He comes to the disciples to dwell among them and show His power. He acts when present in the Church, on the world *outside*, and that by means of a testimony given by the lips of the apostles who were filled with the Holy Ghost.

In Acts iv. a scene presents itself of great importance in our present inquiry. An attempt is made by the leading authorities of the Jewish nation to put a stop to this work of God by threatening the apostles and commanding them not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. This leads to prayer—prayer to God to carry on His work, to convert, and save, and bless, in the very way which Christians now desire to see it effected. It seems like the first great prayer-meeting of which we have any account, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, though held without any previous concert. But for what do they ask? Not that the Holy Ghost may come, or be sent, for they know Him to be there with them; but that boldness may be given them to speak the Word of God in face of all opposition, and that the name of Jesus may be magnified by the display of its power among men. The answer came at once. “*And when they had prayed*, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness.”

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 137

The presence of that Divine Comforter who had come at Pentecost, and filled all the house where they were sitting, is now sensibly felt by the *house being shaken* where they were assembled, and they are all *filled with* the Holy Ghost, and speak the word with boldness. With great power the apostles give testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ; great grace rests on all, with unity of heart and mind and self-renunciation for the good of others who were in need ; whilst believers are added to the Lord—*multitudes, both of men and women* (Acts v. 14) ; and those who bring their lie into *the presence of* God, the Holy Ghost, *to whom* Peter declared the lie to have been told, are struck down by divine judgment. From this we may gather what our prayer should be, whether for ourselves or for sinners around us.

If the Holy Ghost had returned to heaven, then should we indeed have to pray that He may be sent again, and that He should come down to us again ; but to what a condition of weakness and desolation would the Church then be reduced ! How could she then bear testimony to the world ? How uphold the name of Christ or the truth of God on earth ? Without a Comforter, a Divine Person to sustain the people of God in the world, they would be indeed, as the Lord said He would *not* leave His disciples, orphans or comfortless. But it is not so ; our position is not that of the disciples when they

were waiting for the Holy Ghost to come, with all the feebleness as we have seen that resulted from His not having yet been given (Acts i.), but rather that which is represented in chapter iv., and we may well take this prayer for our guidance at the present moment and ask for the same things. That we may be filled with the Spirit and speak the Word of God with boldness, that grace may rest on us, that love may abound as then, and that the name of Jesus may be magnified in His being made known to many hearts that have never tasted His grace.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

Perplexed:—Gen. ii. 17 ; Ezek. xviii. 4 ; Rom. vi. 23 ; Heb. ii. 9.

Through the first Adam's disobedience sin came into the world, and with sin came death so far as man was concerned—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. v. 12). No doubt the death spoken of in Genesis ii. 17 is both physical and spiritual. There is no difficulty in this, for the word "day" does not mean a period of twenty-four hours. Had sin not entered, man would not have died; but death has now come in, and for man nothing is more terrible, indeed death is called "the king of terrors" (Job xviii. 14). It is the ruin of all his

hopes, the end of all his projects, and the destruction of all his plans.

But death is not merely the humiliating evidence of man's weakness, it is also "the wages of sin," and thus has terror for the conscience. Satan, too, wields over man "the power of death." These are solemn sentences of God's Word—"The power of death," and "the fear of death" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Let the sinner reason as he will, yet he will tremble when in his utter weakness he stands helpless in the presence of this hideous monster.

But there is more than human weakness—more, too, than Satan's power; there is the judgment of God. Death, mere physical death, is not all—"After this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). How can it be anything but terrible!

Blessed be God! Christ has come into the midst of this scene of death. There where sin had plunged man, Christ came in grace. He died, and in His death suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust. He tasted death, not merely physical death, but death as the judgment of God against sin. He was made sin for us. His was an infinite sacrifice. As you rightly say, "An eternity of woe was all compressed in those hours of darkness." All that sin was in its horribleness in the sight of a holy God Christ has borne.

Did you and I not deserve to be banished from God's presence for all eternity because of our

sin? Yes, indeed. But Christ has fully borne the judgment of God which was our due; He has borne it all for us before the day of judgment comes, so that now death has lost its terror for the believer. In the words of another: "Condemnation and judgment are entirely over, as a question of the soul's acceptance. The dreadful ordeal is passed; but by Another—so that it is my deliverance from it according to the righteousness of God."

So far as I remember there is no such expression in the Scripture as "eternal death." Death will be destroyed, but rejectors of Christ will live on for ever, just as certainly as the saint. The passage in Ezekiel has reference to God's government of men upon the earth, and refers to their physical death. The word "soul" is used there in the same way as in the common way of expressing a shipwreck, so many souls perished.

Take unto you, dear friend, the whole armour of God whereby all the enemy's fiery darts will be quenched, and above (or, *over*) all the shield of faith, not reason. Ed.

WE may have been brought to see the sinfulness and evil of our condition before God, and the power of the blood of Jesus in satisfying the holiness of God; but we do not know liberty till we see God for us in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. J. N. D.

Many Mansions.

THERE is a beautiful parallelism in John xiv. 2-23 somewhat obscured in the English Bible, from the fact that the same word in the original is translated in two different manners ; but the expression is used in such a way as to leave no doubt that our blessed Lord intended both a comparison and a contrast.

In speaking to His disciples of His departure He explains that He would be an *invisible* object of their faith, as was the God they and their fathers had long worshipped. They had never seen this mysterious Being dwelling between the cherubim of glory, yet they believed in Him : just so (says Jesus) "believe in Me." Then using the figure, suggested probably by the invisibility of Israel's God—the temple—and employing the very expression He applies even to Herod's temple, "My Father's house" (John ii. 16), He gives to it a profound and heavenly meaning, with which it was His habit to invest the simplest facts and truths with which He dealt.

"In My Father's house are many mansions" or "abodes," He assures them ; "if it were not so, I would have told you." An Israelite's thought would have been arrested at this "*many* abodes." The temple provided but few chambers, and they were sacred to the priestly family and to the Levites (1 Chron. xxviii. 11,

XVIII.

12; 2 Chron. xxxi. 11; Neh. xiii. 9; Jer. xxxv. 1, 2, xxxvi. 10). Here was an assurance of ample space and wonderful nearness to God, to be enjoyed by all who shared this belief in the Saviour during His absence. A blessed view this gives surely of the freedom and communion to exist in the Father's presence, into which an entrance has been guaranteed by Christ Himself; the very place has been prepared by His going to the cross to meet our judgment, and ascending to glory as our Forerunner.

"My Father and your Father" (John xx. 17) tells the tale of the place prepared for us—and peculiarly so surely—of being sons before the Father, of whom *He* is the firstborn (Rom. viii. 29). Into this He will Himself introduce us, for it is not a service to be entrusted even to the archangel. "*I* will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where *I* am, there ye may be also." His love and care would not cease with the preparation of the place, and will withhold nothing of all that joy and glory He has won, which is possible to be communicated to the creature (John vii. 22, 23).

But in verse 23 we find another "abode" or "mansion." The intermediate verses show that the blank caused by the absence of Christ was to be filled by the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, the possession of whom by the believer is not as a guest, but as One that abides for ever, "dwelling with us" and "in us" (vers. 16, 17).

It is the Spirit who gives the sense of sonship (Gal. iv. 6), and enables us to take the position of obedience and dependence, characterised by keeping *Christ's* commandments—which cannot certainly be the law. The enactments and prohibitions of the decalogue have no sense applied to Christ, because they suppose a spring of evil within—a will that needed to be bridled—a lust that demanded a curb. This Christ never had (2 Cor. v. 21 ; 1 Pet. ii. 22 ; 1 John iii. 5).

Acquaintance with these “commandments” is gained by hanging upon the Lord’s “words,” and He who is so conformed to His mind will find a blessed spiritual manifestation of Christ’s presence and favour, incommunicable to another by us, yet really known, felt, and enjoyed. Such a soul becomes an “abode” which the Father and the Son can already inhabit, as He has said, “I will dwell in them and walk in them” (2 Cor. vi. 16). Would that there were “many” of these “mansions” !

F. L.

Hints on Daniel.

THE FOURTH BEAST (Dan. vii. 7-13).

WE come now to the second division of our chapter. In the first the prophet had seen in a general manner four great beasts coming up from the sea, but three

only of these were described, and that briefly, though with striking accuracy of detail.

Here, however, the fourth beast is exclusively noticed, and there can be but little doubt that the Roman empire is intended thereby. The Babylonian captivity had lasted seventy years, and this we may roughly take as the duration of the empire; for though Babylon was one of the most ancient cities of the earth—we find it mentioned in Scripture as early as the tenth chapter of Genesis—it had yielded to the power of the Assyrians. Babylonia had become an insignificant province, and the city of Babylon had been razed to the ground. Under Nebuchadnezzar, however, it was rebuilt after a gorgeous fashion about 607 B.C., and it is to this period of its existence that the vision of Daniel refers.

Roughly speaking, we may say that the Medo-Persian empire lasted a little more than two hundred years from the fall of Babylon under Darius the Mede, about 538 B.C., to the time of the defeat of Darius the Persian by Alexander the Great at the battle of Issus in 333 B.C.

The Grecian empire, as we have seen, then asserted itself, and existed in greater or less degree for three hundred years. Towards the middle of this period another people began to make their presence felt in the affairs of the nations; these were the Romans. For many

centuries this people had existed, for Rome was founded in 753 B.C., but in that form in which they came into prominence in connection with God's plans as to this earth we must look not at their earlier history as a republic, but at their later under the emperors. In other words, it is the Roman empire as such that is seen in vision by Daniel as this great and terrible beast.

Magnificence had characterised Babylon. Rapacity and greed were the prominent features of the Persian dynasty. Rapidity of conquest marked the Grecian, especially in its commencement under Alexander the Great. But the Roman empire was diverse from all the others. It was "strong exceedingly." Nothing could stand before it; it had "great iron teeth" with which it devoured all the peoples against whom its arms were directed. This remarkable power of the Roman empire to absorb the nations that came under its influence marks it off completely from all the beasts that had preceded it. Where it did not absorb them, they were broken to pieces and stamped into submission.

But another remarkable feature stands prominently before the prophet's vision; "it had ten horns," and these ten horns, we are told, are "ten kings that shall arise" (ver. 24). There can be no serious question that this fourth beast of our chapter is the same that we find so frequently mentioned in the Apocalypse. In

146 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

Revelation xiii. 1, John sees a beast rising out of the sea, that troubled state of human society, with "seven heads and ten horns"; these ten horns are here also explained as being "ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet" (xvii. 12).

The more closely we examine these chapters in Daniel and Revelation the more we are persuaded that this ten-horned state of the Beast looks on to that stage of its existence which is yet future. For the Roman empire is not done with, it is yet to arise, and will enter largely into the affairs of Palestine and Europe during that brief period of terrible trouble which follows the coming of the Lord for His saints, and immediately precedes His return with them in judgment.

We would direct the reader's attention to a well-known but most remarkable passage in this connection. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition" (Rev. xvii. 8). Here, then, there are three stages clearly noticed and marked off from one another. It "was"; this takes us back to the early days of the empire when in all its dreadful and terrible strength it rose up into power amidst the nations of the earth. So wide-stretched was its dominion that a decree went forth from its first emperor, Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed (Luke ii. 1).

But it "is not"; that is to say, it has ceased to exist as a world power; instead of breaking others to pieces, it has itself been broken to pieces. Of course it must be distinctly borne in mind that we are not speaking of the Romish Church. The Roman empire is a political and not a religious power. The two are clearly distinguished in Revelation xvii.; in that chapter the Beast is the political, and the woman sitting on the Beast is the religious system.

But, further, we are told that it "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"; this is the awful form that it will assume in the future. There will be at the close of this world's history, just before the setting up of the kingdom of the Son of man, a vast political system in Europe. Its seat of government will be Rome, the city of the seven hills (Rev. xvii. 9). Its form of government will be that commonly called *imperial*, that is to say, it will not be merely a king reigning over his own people, but an emperor who will have under him ten vassal kings. "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (ver. 12).

It seems clear from this that the ten-horned stage is yet future, for never in the history of the Roman empire has there been such a condition of things as is here described. There was a time when the Beast existed apart from

the ten kings. If the present broken state of the empire be looked upon as the ten-horned condition, then where is the Beast separate from and holding sway over the ten? No, the condition of things described in Revelation xvii. has never yet been seen—namely, a great imperial head named The Beast, and *at the same time* ten kings who will give their power and strength unto the Beast.

The Word of God is specially concerned with what will take place at the close, and with those circumstances which lead up to the coming of the Son of man. Consequently the Spirit of God concentrates Daniel's thoughts upon a change of a remarkable nature that will take place amongst these ten kings at that time. "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots" (Dan. vii. 8). Comparing this with Revelation xvii. 14, we gather, not that these three horns are positively destroyed, but that their power is broken, for the whole ten are seen at the end in open war with the Lamb, and He it is that destroys them.

The little horn will become notorious, and alas for him! notoriously wicked (ver. 25). He will be a man possessed of unwonted intelligence—"in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man" (ver. 8)—coupled with arrogant pretension—"a mouth speaking great things;" and

from the moment that he makes his appearance he thenceforth becomes so prominent in the affairs of the Beast that he and the Beast become identical. No one who reads Revelation xiii. 1-9 in connection with the description given of the little horn in Daniel vii. can fail to see the identity between the Beast who opens his mouth "in blasphemy against God," &c. (Rev. xiii. 6), and the little horn who speaks "great words against the Most High" (Dan. vii. 25).

All seems to prosper until God's time for the execution of judgment has fully come—"I beheld till the thrones were set up" (ver. 9). The authorized version is here misleading. The thrones here spoken of are not the earthly thrones of human government, but the heavenly thrones of divine judgment. Little as man may believe it to-day, an end will come to all the blasphemous hostility to God, His Word, His truth, and His people, which is gaining strength every day, and which will burst forth with appalling fierceness the moment the restraining power of the Holy Ghost is taken away by the removal of the true Church at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. ii.).

Judgment it is, and not the conversion of the world through the gospel, which will end the history of the times of the Gentiles. "I beheld till the thrones were set up, and the Ancient of days did sit," &c. Who is this Ancient of days? The description here given

resembles so closely what is said of the Son of man in Revelation i. that it would be impossible not to identify the two. Indeed, our chapter does so further down, for in verse 13 we are told that "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days," whereas verse 21 informs us that it is the Ancient of days that came. It is the Lord Jesus Christ to whom, as Son of man, all judgment has been committed (John v. 27), and who, while truly man, is as truly God. In His blessed Person we see One who, according to the prophecy of Micah (chap. v. 2), came forth out of Judah, and therefore was man, and yet, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, and hence was God.



The Epistle to the Romans.

(Continued.)

"**W**HERE is boasting then?" Is there any room for it? Oh, no, says the apostle, "it is excluded. By what law? of works?" No, it is excluded by the law (or principle) of faith. That is the principle on which boasting is excluded.

I do not dwell on the end of the chapter, but just a few words on the next chapter.

The Jew says, What about Abraham? There

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 151

were promises made to Abraham. Well, says the apostle, all the blessings Abraham ever got were on the ground of faith. If Abraham were justified by works he has something to glory in, but nobody can ever glorify himself before God through any works of his own. No, Abraham believed God—it was faith—and so Abraham, this one to whom the Jews looked, was justified, not on the ground of law, because the law had not yet been given; Abraham stood on the ground of God's promise, and that was faith, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. He was reckoned to be a righteous man before God on the ground of faith. Never mind whether you understand it or not, God says it. On what ground does God reckon me to be righteous? On the same ground on which He reckoned Abraham to be righteous—he believed God. It is not merely *what* God told him to believe, but the *fact* that he believed *God*, no matter what God told him. Faith and reason are not the same thing. You may believe a thing because you consider it to be reasonable, but that was not what Abraham did. It was an unreasonable thing that God told him. He said, Look at the stars, and so shall thy seed be. That was enough to make Abraham stagger. It was most unreasonable to think that his seed should be as the stars for multitude, but Abraham believed what God told him, no matter what He told him. It is not faith to believe

God because I think He tells me a reasonable thing, but to believe God because He says it. That is faith; and at the end of the fourth chapter we see that the ground on which we get the blessing is the same. In the twenty-third verse it says, "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." In other words, it is not merely an interesting history or episode of the past, it was not written for his sake alone but for our sakes; it is given to us for a certain definite purpose—"for us also, to whom it shall be imputed." If Abraham was reckoned righteous before God, so will I and every poor sinner who believes be reckoned righteous. But there is this difference between Abraham's faith and ours. Abraham believed that God was able to do what He promised, but we believe that God HAS DONE two things.

We are told in the last verse, that Christ "was delivered for our offences." Let each one ask himself and herself to-night, Do I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was delivered for my offences? Ask yourself the question honestly before God. You say, Christ died for sins. But was He delivered for your sins? Did He suffer for your sins? People often say that they believe in the forgiveness of sins, but if you were to go to many persons who say that as regularly as each Sunday comes

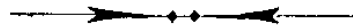
THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 153

round and ask them, Whose sins? they could not tell you. Do you believe in the forgiveness of your own sins or of somebody else's? It is no use to believe in the forgiveness of sins unless it be in the forgiveness of your own. As you look back by faith at the cross, can you say, The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered for my sins? And for how many of them? If He bore them at all, He bore them every one, and if He did not bear them every one, there would be no gospel for you to hear or for me to preach.

Every believer may look back at the cross and say, There the Lord Jesus, God's beloved Son, bore my sins and every one of them. That is the first thing that the gospel tells us to believe. What is the second? That He "was raised again for our justification." If Abraham had ground to trust God when He told him He was going to do a thing that to Abraham himself seemed most improbable, how much more should you and I believe God when He tells us that He has done these two things—Christ *has* been delivered for our offences and He *has* been raised from the dead for our justification; and believing it, what is the result? I have peace with God. Oh, may God in His mercy bring this gospel home with power to all our hearts here—the remedy that God has provided when man had done his very worst! Not only was he sinful, as he was in the Garden of Eden; not only had he transgressed

the law, as he did at Mount Sinai, but when he had crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, when he had done his very worst, then God comes with this gospel to deliver him from his evil state, to extricate him from it and to bring him into His own presence, never to go out again, never to lose it ; because to be, according to God's righteousness, brought into His presence is an eternal thing, never to be lost.

May God give us to rejoice in it and never to lose the power of it in our souls !



What is our Position as Christians? And what ought to be our Prayer in relation to the Holy Ghost?

(Continued.)

BLESSED be God, the Holy Ghost is not gone back to heaven, that He needs to be asked to come again ; He dwells still in the Church and in the heart of every believer.

Tha tthis is so is evident from the promise of our blessed Lord, that as the result of His intercession that other Comforter should be given, who should abide with us *for ever*. These words "*for ever*" distinctly set aside every notion that would imply the Holy Ghost's ever leaving us. As long as the Church remains on earth, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is her companion

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 155

and support and guide. He is given to lead her into all truth, and to take of the things of Christ and show them to her, and so to glorify Christ in the hearts of those that are His.

But besides this, in John xvi. His action on the world—the subject we are now speaking of—is thus set before us in the words of our Lord: “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.” Here the coming of the Comforter is said to be the result of Jesus going on high, and He is said to be sent, not to the world, but to the disciples. “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come *unto you*; but if I depart, I will send Him *unto you*.” But when He was come, and dwelling with the people of God, He would reprove the world of its condition in the sight of God—of sin in the rejection of Christ—of righteousness found in Jesus alone who had left it and gone to the Father—and of its ultimate judgment.

Is not this what has been going on ever since Pentecost? Has it not been in consequence of the presence of the Spirit of truth here that this divine and gracious operation has been carried on and souls have been converted and brought

to believe on Christ as their righteousness before God? It was His presence here in the Church, our Lord tells us, that was to accomplish this, and the conversion of souls which has continued, and been going on more or less ever since, is therefore owing to the continuance of that blessed presence on the earth, and His consequent acting on the souls of men.

How, then, it may be asked, are the times of revival that have occurred at different periods in the history of the Church to be accounted for?

To this the reply may be readily given from the passages we have referred to, that not only the existence of the Church itself, but all blessing that has come to the Church since Pentecost—all its guidance through the difficulties and dangers of the world, and its support against the power of Satan ; all spiritual ministry (1 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 11) for the edification of the saints ; all the spread of the gospel, and the maintenance of the truth of God on earth ; all the testimony borne to the efficacy of the blood of Christ or the power of His name before God ; all the revivals that have ever occurred ; all the conversions which have taken place, whether few or many, whether suddenly or more gradually—all is due to the great fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost here on earth. Just as a reservoir in a town supplies all its different parts with water, so needful for the support of natural life, so does the Spirit of God here present maintain all the functions of

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 157

spiritual life in the people of God, and afford an abundant and ever-present supply for their necessities and the wants of sinners, when there is dependence and the prayer of faith to draw it out.

Surely it ought to encourage us to know that we have this divine and blessed Person here with us as an abiding source of strength and consolation. He cannot fail in His care for the Church, and He has but to put forth His power and the work is done. And it may well stimulate our souls to look to God, that as He has done so much for us in giving us this Divine and Almighty Comforter, so His power may be displayed for our blessing and the awakening of sinners.

All this, however, could not take place, as we know from John vii. 37-39, until Jesus was glorified. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

From this we learn that the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in individual believers, and be the source of their joy in the truth and power in witnessing for Jesus, is the result of Christ hav-

ing taken His place at the right hand of God, after having glorified God by His death in the putting away of sin (John xiii. 31, 32, xvii. 4). The Spirit comes to be in the souls of believers the witness and seal of the efficacy of that blessed work which Jesus accomplished on the cross ; His presence in each believer proves that sin has been blotted out by the blood of Christ, that it is now gone from us because it is gone from Him who, for our sakes, took it on Himself, and that we are now as clear of it in the sight of God as He is (Rom. iv. 25, viii. 34; Col. ii. 10). He could not have been raised again if it had not been completely and entirely put away ; and His taking His place on the throne of God is the triumphant clearance of every believer from every charge which could be laid against him, whilst it makes his acceptance as perfect as that of Christ Himself in the glory of that throne. The Spirit of God now unites him to Christ as part of His body, and therefore gives him to share in His position and privileges (Eph. i. 6, 13, 19, 22, 23 ; 1 Cor. vi. 17, 19 ; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22).

Besides this, the veil which the justice and holiness of God interposed between Himself and sinners, which hid God from man, prevented his approach to God, and hindered the outflow of divine love, has been rent by the death of Jesus. The Holy Ghost has come here to witness that that death has broken down every barrier which

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 159

subsisted between God and man, and that the blood being carried into the holiest of all, the way in there is now manifest; and the gospel and the coming of the Holy Ghost witness that God's love suffers nothing to stand between Himself and sinners, the blood of Christ being provided for their reconciliation to Him, and the veil of the temple rent "from the top to the bottom." Compare Mark xv. 38, and Hebrews ix. 8, 11, 12, x. 19, 20. Thus the meaning of the words of Christ becomes apparent: "The Holy Ghost was not yet," * so far as the blessing of man and His presence with men was concerned, "because that Jesus was not yet glorified;" and again, "If I go not away, the Comforter *will not come unto you*; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

This scripture, however, shows us that this blessed Person acts as the agent of the Father and the Son, by whom He has been sent, and whose purposes of love He has undertaken to carry out; and so much is this the case, that of His communications it is said in the same passage (John xvi. 13), "He shall not speak of (or from) Himself, but whatsoever He shall *hear*, that shall He speak;" and "He shall glorify *Me*, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

We have thus seen that the Scripture speaks

* The word "*given*" is put in by the translators.

of the presence of the Holy Ghost down here in a twofold way, as having taken up His residence in the Church collectively, and also in each individual believer; that being the second part of the promise of Christ to His disciples in John xiv: "He shall be *in you*." This latter truth is not so much insisted on here, being more generally admitted, though the way in which His "influence" is often spoken of by Christians makes it too evident that they but little enter into the reality of the truth that the body of the believer is "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

It will be evident to every one how strengthening to faith and encouraging to prayer, and every other effort for the conversion of sinners, the sense of the abiding presence of the blessed Comforter must be, and how weakening as well as erroneous is the supposition that the Holy Ghost has gone back to heaven, and has to be brought down again by prayer whenever any fresh and extended blessing is desired. Nor can it be denied that the petitions which are constantly heard for the Holy Spirit to "come," or "descend," are utterly inconsistent with the thought of His being here, and show that those who utter them are unconscious of His presence, or they certainly would not ask for it. The same might be said for the most part of the frequent use of the word "outpouring" of the Spirit, inasmuch as it is generally used to express all that took place at Pentecost, which was far more than

WHAT IS OUR POSITION AS CHRISTIANS? 161

the conversion of sinners, though that, as we have seen, accompanied it.

From these things also we may believe that when Christians are assembled like the disciples of old (Acts iv.) to seek for blessing from God, and the extension of the work of God around them, in the name of Christ and in dependence on the Spirit of God, His* presence will be there to preside amongst them, and to guide them in their prayers, and show them what to do. And if His presence is looked for as a Sovereign and Divine Person, it will lead us to leave things in His hands to order and direct for the common profit, and for the glory of God (1 Cor. xii. 11).

Besides this, the conviction of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believer will strengthen the soul in its supplication to God ; for, says the apostle, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And it is in our hearts that He does this, as the next verse shows. "And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according to (the will of) God" (Rom. viii. 26, 27). J. G. B.

* While fully admitting the truth of the Spirit's presence in the Church collectively, as well as His indwelling in each individual believer, it seems important not to confound with this the promised presence of Christ Himself in the midst of His gathered saints, when gathered by the Spirit to His (Christ's) name (Matt. xviii. 20).—ED.

“The Lord's Death, till He Come.”

(I COR. xi. 26.)

IN these few words there are two wonderful truths brought before us—the Lord's death, and the Lord's coming. We stand between these two great events; the one is past, the other future. At the Lord's Supper, which is the immediate subject the apostle has in hand, the Christian looks back to remember the Lord's death; and he does it in view of the Lord's coming, on to which he is going and which may take place *at any moment*.

But what wonderful words the Spirit of God has here linked together — “the Lord,” and “death!” Yet true it is that the Lord of life and glory, the Prince of life, has died; what infinite and divine grace and love to man! No less a sacrifice could have met the claims of divine justice and righteousness in such a way as to vindicate God's glory, outraged by the entrance of sin, and glorify God in doing it. The Lord's Supper is not, as many teach, a means of grace, or a meritorious service rendered to God; quite the contrary. The Christian partakes of it because he is the subject of grace, and rejoices in the results of the atoning death

“THE LORD’S DEATH, TILL HE COME.” 163

of Christ. It was on the same night *on which He was betrayed* that the Lord Jesus took the bread and cup, and gave thanks and said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” Death was before Him in all its reality ; Satan’s power in all its terribleness ; the bitter hatred of men ; and, far above and beyond all, the righteous indignation and wrath of a Holy God against sin, the extent of which Jesus alone could know. But, with all this, it was *then*, at such a moment, that He spoke those words, “This do in remembrance of Me.” Rising above all that pressed on His spirit in that dark hour of anticipation of His sufferings and looking forward through the whole period which should elapse between His death and His coming, He provides this touching remembrance of Himself—Himself in His death. No human mind would have thought of bringing together such words, “the Lord,” and “death :” but these are great truths, laid deep in the structure of both Old and New Testament Scriptures ; the glory of His person on the one hand, and the depth of His humiliation on the other.

He was “the Man,” “Jehovah’s Fellow,” smitten with Jehovah’s sword (Zech. xiii. 7) : owned by Jehovah, at the lowest point of His humiliation as “My Fellow.” Consequently, linked with the dignity of His person, is the efficacy and value of His work. Indeed, there is no limit to the blessed results of redemption,

as Psalm xxii. so strikingly proves. It begins with those words which, though not the first part of the Psalm historically, yet come first in moral order, as expressing the burden and weight of the Psalm—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It was what pressed on His spirit beyond all else; and then at the close of those hours of darkness on the cross, He cries with a loud voice and gives up the ghost. He was heard from the "horns of the unicorns"—it was the extreme point of suffering—and He is answered in resurrection, as we know from Psalm xvi., &c.

But the remainder of Psalm xxii. is nothing but widening circles of blessing. It is like a pebble dropped into a lake, you see circle after circle widening out from the centre. First, He declares Jehovah's name to His brethren; and we know how this was fulfilled for us, when He sent Mary with that wonderful message, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." This was a new name—Father!—a wholly different relationship, which characterises Christianity; just as it was unknown in Judaism. In fact, He places us in the same place and relationship which He enjoyed as man in this world.

Next, in the Psalm, there is the call for praise from those that "fear the Lord," the "seed of Jacob;" then the Psalmist says, "My praise shall

“THE LORD’S DEATH, TILL HE COME.” 165

be of Thee in the great congregation”—that is the assembly of redeemed Israel; then “the meek”—those godly ones that trusted in Him—are called on to praise; then, “all the ends of the earth . . . All the families of the nations”—for the blessing will flow out to the Gentiles in that day; and finally, “a seed shall serve Him . . . they shall come and declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born.” Thus the tide of blessing consequent on His atoning work expands out to the close of the millennial day; yea, far beyond that, into eternity itself.

There is something very precious to the soul in connecting together the Lord’s death and the Lord’s coming. *Who* is it that is coming? It is the same One who bore those sufferings due to our sins upon the cross—who loved us and *gave Himself* for us; whom we remember as oft as we eat this bread and drink this cup. It is Christ Himself; for He is not going to send an angel or even the archangel to fetch us—He is coming in person, into the air, to shout that quickening word, and then we shall see Him face to face.

This is the day of the “patience of Jesus Christ.” He is waiting; for He has not sat upon His own throne yet, but upon His Father’s throne, and He is waiting the Father’s time; waiting too till the last saved one shall be gathered in. That moment is rapidly drawing nearer; and He would have the heart’s affec-

tions of His people to be going out in earnest expectation, ready when He says, "Surely I come quickly," to respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

These two great events are one just as real as the other—the Lord's death has had its blessed result in fitting all who trust in Him for His coming. Thank God no failure of the Church, as a responsible witness for God on earth, can change either the one or the other. He loved His own when He died for them; He loves them now that He is exercising unceasingly His priesthood and advocacy on high for them; but there remains still one act in the exercise of His divine love and power—that they should be with Him where He is. This is the One who is coming for His people! Are they amongst those who "sleep in Jesus," when He comes? His voice shall raise their precious dust, and give to it a fashion like to His own body of glory. Are they alive when He comes? Then that same voice shall change them in a moment, transforming them to be with Him and like Him for ever.

May the blessed Spirit of God revive these truths in the hearts of the Lord's people; not as so much mere knowledge in the mind, but in all their living freshness and power, so that they may overflow with praise to Him now as they rejoice in the results of His death, and that they may go out in longing desire for His coming!

F. G. B.

The Awakened Conscience.

WHENEVER the natural conscience is awakened, there is a certain sense of responsibility to God (indeed that is, in a sense, the awakening of it). The knowledge that God takes notice of all that is going on, of what we do, and the like, and that there is a judgment to come. Therefore the moment a man's conscience is so awaked (the grace of God not being known), he begins to inquire whether his conduct is such as God can approve and accept; and thence he draws some inference as to his own future happiness or misery. This is the natural state of man—of every man that thinks about the matter.

But it is, alas! the real condition of multitudes of believers in Christ. There is a constant tendency in the heart to turn again to self—to a condition in which man stands responsible to God. It is always the case when the soul has got out of the power of the testimony of the Spirit of God as to the completeness of redemption; as also when we have not come to a distinct knowledge of the hopelessness of our condition before God as sinners. I say to a distinct knowledge; that is, when the soul has not estimated truthfully the hopelessness of its case, that in the flesh good does not dwell and

become fully satisfied that everything—all the practical righteousness, holiness, or graciousness of the saint—is consequent upon the introduction of that new thing created in us by the power of God because of the risen Jesus.

J. N. D.

Satisfied.

THE following lines were written by and found under the pillow of a dear girl after she had departed to be with the Lord Jesus Christ, who was very precious to her.

H. W.

“I SHALL BE SATISFIED.”

I shall be satisfied,
But not while here below,
Where every earthly cup of bliss
Is wisely mixed with woe.

When this frail form shall be
For ever laid aside,
And in His likeness I awake,
I shall be satisfied.

“HE SHALL BE SATISFIED.”

He shall be satisfied,
When all He died to win,
By loving-kindness gently drawn,
Are safely gathered in.

When in the glory bright
He views His glorious bride,
Sees of the travail of His soul,
He shall be satisfied.

Early Beginnings.

Notes of Mr J. N. Darby's Journey, and an Outline of the Work of the Lord in Germany, Switzerland, and the South of France. Taken at the Tea Meeting at Rawstorne Street, 24th November 1853.

IT is of great importance that we should most deeply feel that the work *God* is doing on the earth, it is *He Himself* that is doing it. It is true that He uses us as His servants in it, but there is always the danger of SELF appearing in anything that connects itself with man, who is merely an instrument—but so far as man is hidden, God is glorified, and all goes on well. Therefore, in thus speaking of the wonderful works of God (Acts ii. 11), the trials and difficulties of those engaged in it never appear, and of course cannot be known, for you cannot enter into the details and various shades of the work.

It is quite a right thing that the saints of God should know that the power of God's grace is still working in drawing sinners to Himself, and by the power of His Spirit He is driving away individually the gross darkness that covereth the people. Therefore it is right that the saints in distant places should have such intelligence of the work as to feel fellowship with those who are thus contending against Satan's power in the world. For while waiting for the Lord's coming

from heaven to set everything right, our lamps should be brightly burning, and our hearts filled with the consciousness that, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, whatever things are wrong now will *then* be set right, and *never before*. For Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And the whole desire and devotedness of our hearts should be set on this one point. It is true that the very thought of souls being brought to the knowledge of the Lord should rejoice our hearts. As the witnessing of God's grace still working in the midst of abounding evil, this stirs up the soul and gives it fresh energy to follow on in the work of the Lord, and besides this it also gives fresh energy to the soul of God's servant, to be found working in *God's line of things*, for God has His own thoughts concerning everything that is now taking place on the earth, but He will work according to the counsels of His own will, and who shall let it?

But still the more we go on we shall feel, and rightly so, as David says: "I have seen an end of all perfection" (Psalm cxix. 96). But when He comes who is perfection itself, then the hearts of such will be satisfied, for if we feel what salvation is in ourselves, having been brought to God, the thought of one soul being brought there is endless joy.

The Lord is working in these last days preparatory to His coming (I fix no time, long or

short) in a most manifest way in quickening souls, and in a way more remarkable than ever He did, for while the world is in trouble in various ways, men are thus led to seek their rest elsewhere. Souls are being shaken and disturbed by things around, and are the more cast on Him to find their rest. For without pretending to say when it may be, it is evident that the bonds of everything are weakening, and the men of the world know and feel that all outward bonds are dissolving, not of *evil*, for they are growing stronger, but all ties that held society together in good feeling are daily dying out. Men are meeting in synods and are entirely at their wits' ends to know what is to be done when all their external things are gone. None question that there was a mighty work of God's Spirit at the Reformation,* which has lasted these three hundred years, but there has long since ceased to be that life and energy, so that they do not know what will be done when Roman Catholicism comes in in power. Evil has come in, for there is an astonishing reaction of evil principle at work at the present time in Europe — take an instance, that of Romanism (Rationalism?) in Germany. At the same time there exists the full consciousness in the Evangelical Church of the want of energy to keep itself alive.

Then on the other hand it cannot but be seen

* Many, alas ! do now, in 1901.—W. H. B.

that there is also at this time a remarkable energy of God's Spirit, producing heavings in the large inert masses of professing Christians, and also working individually, by an amazing energy in one and another springing up among them, and this works for good, and if they are not allowed to work there God takes them somewhere else. For if a man will not work while he himself is out of the evil, God will work by some one in it, for He will have instruments. I have also seen places where, through the slackness and languor of Brethren, the work has been given to others; this has not surprised me, for if you are slack in seeking souls He may discipline in this way. God will not wait to quicken souls till you have energy enough, but will use somebody else, for *God must have souls*, and it is most useful for us to see this, for if this is the way in which God is working, I am most anxious we should all look soberly at it, and lay it to heart, and go to the source of all power for fresh strength and energy, for in the midst of the greatest languor God can arouse and give fresh strength. In speaking to you of the work I will mention the places as I visited them last year on my leaving England, and will endeavour to take you all there with me in spirit.

FRANCE.

PARIS.—Here is a despised little flock of happy, fervent, devoted Christians. The place

EARLY BEGINNINGS.

173

itself is one of great difficulty from the excessive vanity that surrounds them, and being principally servants, lady's maids, and the like, they have great difficulty in getting to the meetings, but still the number is increasing. They have no one labouring among them in the way of preaching—they edify one another, and God is still adding to their number. There are about thirty or forty of them. After going through deep trials, that we helped them to, for some years, they are now going on better, are very happy, and more united than ever. *Elie Meylan*, who was in England last year, has been at Paris for a little while, and found them happy.

LYONS.—Here the saints have gone through great trials. The place itself is Roman Catholic. It is also the centre of the Evangelical Alliance in France. There is a large Evangelical Church at Lyons, where there is decided blessing in conversions. In this church is a M. *Fisch*, who is well known to myself, and labours with much blessing in this most trying place. M. *Fisch* and another brother with him have a full knowledge of the truth we hold, as—the coming of the Lord, the presence of the Holy Ghost, the union of the Body to Christ, &c. M. *Fisch* is fully convinced that we are right, so that he has been spreading the truth we hold, both outside and inside, yet he himself is very clerical, and has not sufficient courage to break with the position he is in, and leave system altogether.

Some half-measures have been taken, that is, they break bread every Lord's Day. But these half-measures will only hinder souls who receive the truth he teaches from coming out and walking with God. The Brethren meeting at Lyons have a brother, named *Vey*, most remarkably gifted, though uneducated, who is ministering among them with great blessing.

NICE.—Here the Lord has been working in a most wonderful way. Three or four years ago people would not have been allowed to take a French or Italian Bible into Nice. On arriving there this year I found the funeral of a brother, who had been a known Catholic, was about to take place. He had got peace through a brother at Nice, named *Boissier*. He was buried by a club to which he belonged, and several hundred workmen were present. It caused a very great sensation in the place on account of its being a Protestant burial, as there had not been one before. An immense crowd followed him, and as we passed through the town many more were added to the number. At the grave a minister prayed, then a converted priest spoke, and then our brother spoke a full hour with very much power and blessing. The people were most attentive.

MARSEILLES.—This large town is the Plymouth of the south of France. There are forty breaking bread. *Violet* and *Campredon* are working there. The Protestants of Marseilles

have appointed deaconesses to visit and care for the sick and poor, and one of these deaconesses came lately to break bread with us, and although she was quite willing to go on with them, yet they have utterly cast her off. She was considered the best deaconess in the place. This circumstance has awakened much attention and persecution at Marseilles. There are vast opportunities for labouring in this place.

THE PYRENEES.—At Pau our brother *Barbet*, who is now laid aside, has worked for many years with much blessing. Then there is much blessing in the neighbouring district. At Orthez and other places fully two hundred are breaking bread in various spots. They have been occasionally troubled by the police. They are gathered together again, and many more have come into communion. There have been, and still are, many conversions there.

Our brother, *Violet*, has been much blessed at Lausanne. When staying there some years since, two brethren asked me to read the Scriptures with them. I hesitated at first, fearing it might hinder me in my other work. However, three more came, who were with a schoolmaster, and had learned so much truth, that he said they might go. They joined the other two, and thus they went on till the number got up to twelve. I read with these daily from ten till one. We then dined together, and we also broke bread together every day after

dinner. On the first day of the week we broke bread with the rest of the saints. I had, in the large building, where we met for worship, some rooms where these brethren met. It was no plan of mine, for in truth I was shy of it at first, but the Lord ordered it all, and if I were to attempt to do such a thing now, I could not do it. These brethren are now working in different parts of France and Switzerland with blessing. *Vialet* was one of them—it was this that led me to mention these facts—and he has been working in the Pyrenees with blessing. One hundred and fifty or so have been converted. *Carrière*, a nice useful brother, a farmer, lives in this neighbourhood, and does what he can.

BORDEAUX, in the north of the Pyrenees, where there are a good many Christians, but without much energy. Our brother D—— is working at a place near where some twenty or thirty are going on happily. An evangelist has been sent into the neighbourhood by the Church of M. *Fisch* at Lyons. At Clairac a little more east, a considerable number are gathered and many conversions. Our brother *Guignard* has been preaching here with much blessing. There is also a Free Church here into which much truth held by Brethren has penetrated. There are about sixty or seventy there.

MONTPELLIER, east of the Pyrenees, quite in the south of France. In this neighbourhood is St Hippolyte. For a long time I preached to

one hundred and fifty women and only two men, because the men were ashamed to come ; they were such infidels. Our brother *Favez* also had great labour and patience there. I was much struck with the Lord's way in keeping them very low and humble ; difficulties pressed hard upon them ; they were very much tried with . . . for seven years, yet conversions were going on, and the Lord was adding to their number. He chastened them and now they get on better.

At the centre of the south of France the work of God's Spirit is very manifest by others as well as by Brethren. A brother from Lyons, who had been a merchant, but lost all his property, except £150 a year, has devoted himself since to going about as a missionary. He is an upright, zealous, faithful man ; his name is *Mourton*. He took his knapsack on his back and went about the country thrashing the people with the law, but had no conversions, as he did not preach the gospel. *Mourton* came into Montpellier, thundering the law, but had no conversions, but still he prepared the ground ; for when he was followed by our brother *Sabbatier* bringing the full gospel of the grace of God, many conversions were the result of his preaching, the seed having sprung up. There are about eighty or a hundred breaking bread. At St Laurent in this neighbourhood I was very happy ; several have been converted there this year. At St André

de Valborgne, a very dear godly brother is labouring amidst much opposition and blessing. At St Hippolyte, a Swiss brother, *Guignard*, has been much blessed. At Montpellier, one by one have been added by a very dear godly brother who is a physician, M. *Parlier*, who lives there and who receives the saints into his house. There are now happy conversions and much activity of life in the different villages surrounding Montpellier. If labourers were there, many doors would be open, the Spirit of God producing the sense of need. At Frisa, one of the villages of St Jean du Gard, it was very uphill work for many years, but there have been forty or fifty converted within the past year; in some cases whole families were brought out. When I was travelling I met the mayor of the place, who was once very much opposed, reading one of my works. I asked him about it, when he replied: "Oh, I don't suppose you will like it." When I told him I was the writer, he said that if I would come and preach there, I should have not only one hundred but twelve hundred to hear me, and so I found it. The meetings were once broken up by the police, but they were resumed again through the husband of one of the sisters, who was a Roman Catholic, and who wrote to the Commissioners and said that his wife had always had such meetings without any evil consequences following, but on the contrary, she got blessing from them, upon which the police retracted, and they

have continued these meetings ever since with much blessing, but the room is not large enough and labourers are wanted.

The DRÔME (back of the Rhone).—Here, too, there has been very uphill work. One brother was imprisoned three months for the truth, but now there is much blessing. Thirty or forty Roman Catholics have been converted, and humanly speaking, there would have been more had there been labourers. There appears to be a great awakening amongst them all. Three or four clergymen have been converted who were infidels. The people saw that there was a great awakening, and it so laid hold upon them that the Wesleyan ministers were allowed to preach in the infidel pulpits. The windows even of the building where the preaching was were crowded all round on the outside when I was there, and many could find no room. Twelve women, silk spinners, came to me to speak about their souls the morning I came away. One clergyman, who was an infidel, got into another strain and preached the gospel evidently with another life, leaving his infidelity behind his back, who, if he had been questioned about the inspiration of the Scriptures, might have been puzzled. In fact, the power of the Spirit of God carried them away from their infidelity without their knowing anything about it. In short, the movement of God's Spirit was so remarkable that it seemed to carry persons altogether beyond themselves

into a new life. Up the mountains, I suppose, there must be a hundred breaking bread.

ARDÈCHE.—A hundred were converted here last year. One brother came and preached the *law*, and he was followed by our brother *Guignard*, who preached Christ fully, and thus souls got life and liberty in Christ. There have been seven or eight hundred breaking bread. At Montbéliard we held a fortnight's reading, which was greatly blessed. As our way is abroad to set apart a fortnight at a time to read some book of the Scriptures together, as we have lately done at Bath; for, if we are to be teachers of others, we must be making progress in the knowledge of Scripture ourselves. At Montbéliard and two other places there are very near three hundred breaking bread and conversions going on. Almost the whole village of Colombier-Chatelot is converted. At Besançon, a large popish town, about forty or fifty are breaking bread.

SWITZERLAND.

In Switzerland it is a much older work; at one time many of those who worked here went to France to meet the demand there, but languor has crept in and it had grown cold; but now two clergymen have been lately raised up to work there.

At LAUSANNE there are two hundred gathered; the Lord blessed me with conversions there this year. At Vevey much blessing is going on.

EARLY BEGINNINGS.

181

One hundred and fifty are breaking bread. In the surrounding country there is much revival, most happy meetings in various places, and many breaking bread, and in the Canton de Vaud violent persecutions. When persecutions arose in Switzerland, the dissenters gave up their meetings in various places, but the Brethren did not; they still went on and the godly ones joined them. The president of the dissenters' meetings is much blessed among them.

NEUCHÂTEL.—Here there is great blessing and extension of the work. There also lives here a very godly brother, ———, a person of consideration in the world. His aunt has built a hospital, according to the custom of the country, and all who go in there get blessing; for meetings are held there. About seventy or eighty converted. Several are now meeting at La Chapelle; also at Berne and Basle there are a few breaking bread.

GERMANY.

FRANKFORT.—Here our sister Miss Whately is and the converted Jewesses, the Misses Stern, also a godly shoemaker who has been much blessed there. I found blessing and was happy there with them. The next I might mention is Tübingen in Wurtemberg, about thirty or forty are breaking bread. At Düsseldorf and Elberfeld, there is a remarkable work of God's Spirit. There has been what is called a Brüderverein set

up in this neighbourhood by the Church people, which Brüderverein is a kind of home missionary establishment, where persons get qualified as Scripture readers. Amongst them were evangelical clergymen, very legal, but still Christians, although of a very low standing and worldly state. (*Krumacher* was once here.) When some of these Brüderverein saw their liberty of preaching Christ, and were forbidden by the clergymen of the Society to do so, they united with the Brethren in fellowship and service. Our brother *Von Poseck* got hold of one or two of these Brüderverein who were going about selling Bibles and reading them to others. Through them he circulated amongst them various tracts which he had translated from the English as, "The Hopes of the Church," &c., and some of the Brüderverein receiving truth from these tracts imparted it to others. When they understood that they were to preach Christ, if they had ability, they told it to the clergymen of the Mission, who forbade them and turned them off telling them they might go about their business, and accordingly they went immediately on the Lord's business, which was now their own business. The work thus begun has resulted in eight hundred or more conversions, most of which have taken place during the past year. There are forty meetings in this neighbourhood, but they do not break bread at them all. About twelve brethren are labouring amongst them. They go on foot preaching the

gospel as far as the frontiers of Holland and of Hesse in each direction, and are much blessed in the work, the Lord being with them. They have had many interruptions by persecution, and have had their meetings broken up by the police, and then they went elsewhere. They were fined several times for having what the police called a procession, when it was merely a dozen or fifteen returning home together from a meeting in the country. They were always obliged to give notice before they could hold a meeting, but however, all this has not hindered, but rather helped on the work of the Lord, for the chief of the Burgomasters became converted, and then he called the other Burgomasters to order for hindering their meetings. I trembled much for these brethren, for the danger with them is this—they had formerly been under the influence of the popular preacher, who kept them under law and taught them that to be always on their faces crying to God to help them as poor sinners was a healthful state of soul. When they subsequently got hold of the truth of their being dead and risen with Christ, and were so full of joy in knowing their sins put away, when they saw that they were not to be thinking of their sins, but their eyes were to be fixed on Christ, they said: "Oh, we are dead and risen with Christ, and have nothing more to do with our sins." Now while the Spirit of God keeps them really looking to Christ, this is most blessed, but what

I fear for them is that they should neglect to judge themselves for the sin still remaining in them. I felt the danger from the sudden influx of light in the time of declension. However, I was very happy with them, and spoke to them freely on this point.

In FRANCE the police magistrates require the names and occupations of those meeting. We could not always give a list of names because all Christians are received whose walk is godly. In general the names are given which leads to imprisonment. Sometimes the police have come in when persons have unexpectedly come into a meeting and increased the number, and have turned out the overplus. Thus if twenty-seven had been the number of names given in, the police would turn out into the street all above the twenty-seven. One brother was imprisoned fifteen days for the truth; another three weeks; another was fined £12; another was fined for not giving the names of all who came. It is also required to state the principles and objects of those who meet, and thus the Lord's coming and other important truths are spread before magistrates on all hands. One of the official persons with whom I had an interview when I put before him our objects, said he was thankful that we should edify one another and so forth, but it must be done as authorised by law. There was some difficulty in this, for I felt it would be scarcely honest to ask to be

authorised, when I well knew we should meet just the same if not authorised. One Christian officer has had an interview with the present Emperor, in order to present to him some articles belonging to Napoleon Bonaparte. He had thus an opportunity of setting before the Emperor (who had previously been prejudiced against the Brethren, saying they were red republicans) all the principles of Brethren, their separation from politics, &c. &c., thus removing the stigma usually attached to Protestants, who are, in truth, most of them, red republicans, and the Emperor was satisfied. A Prefect was directed to protect the meetings of Brethren through similar representations of a lady, connected with the Minister of the Interior, so that now they let them be quiet, and meetings are multiplied all about the country, and there are twenty or thirty labouring in the gospel.

Hints on Daniel.

“The kingdom of the Son of man” (chap. vii. 13, 14).

IN the second and third visions of our chapter (vers. 7-15) we have clearly laid down *what* will be the end of “the times of the Gentiles,” *why* that end will be brought about, and *how* it will be effected.

The solemn future of this world is this, that God will interpose in judgment. The Ancient of days will sit, a fiery stream will go forth from before Him, myriads of the heavenly host shall stand before Him, the judgment will be set, and the books be opened. This is not the judgment of the great white throne (Rev. xx.) where the wicked dead are alone in question, a judgment which will take place at the close of the millenium; here we are informed of a terrible judgment which will overtake living people on the earth, not after but before the Son of man shall have taken His kingdom. Christ is the appointed judge of both quick (the living) and dead, but these judgments will not take place at the same time.

While it is a truth that no one who is subject to the Word of God can for a moment question that God will judge the world in righteousness, nevertheless it is a very solemn consideration what will be the immediate cause of this judgment. "I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

From the time of the fall of man in the garden of Eden sin has been in the world. Moral iniquity of the darkest character has abounded ever since, and crimes of the most awful description have been perpetrated. All this will come out in the light of God's presence at the great

white throne, and shall receive its righteous award when the dead shall be judged according to their works.

But here (Dan. vii. 11, 25) the cause of judgment is different. The power that God originally put into the hands of the Gentiles will in the end be directed against Himself. It matters not that these Gentile nations have become outwardly Christian; none but the blindest will deny that with the large majority it is but an outward profession, and that even this profession is rapidly being given up. An event which the world little suspects may be near, but which rapidly increasing numbers of true Christians are waking up to believe is close at hand, will reveal in a startling manner the difference between real faith and mere lip profession. The Lord is coming, and in the twinkling of an eye will take His own away, then it is that the true character of the beast will manifest itself. Those that are left behind in these so-called Christian lands will be given over to apostasy and to believe a lie. It is terrible to contemplate that large numbers of the pulpits of Christendom to-day are saturating the population with the infidelity which to-morrow may produce these awful results so plainly described in Daniel and Revelation as well as elsewhere.

Few who read these pages will have any difficulty in identifying the fourth beast of Daniel vii. with *the* beast of Revelation xiii. and

xvii. At the time that Daniel wrote all four beasts were yet to arise, consequently they are numerically distinguished according to the order in which they took their place amidst the nations as world powers. In this succession the Roman empire was the fourth. But when John wrote the three first had ceased to exist as powers, the fourth alone remained, and hence in the Apocalypse it is spoken of as *the* beast. But in the last phase of this empire it will possess an imperial head controlling the ten kingdoms which go to form the whole beast, called in our chapter "the little horn." Sometimes the expression "the beast" is used for the empire as such, sometimes for its head, and it is of importance to see which is meant in each case. For some might find a difficulty in the fact that in Revelation xix. 20 the beast is said to be taken and cast *alive* into the lake of fire, whereas here (Dan. vii. 11) it is said that he was *slain*. There is no contradiction, for in Revelation it is the chief or head that is in question, whereas here the empire as such meets its judgment, and is destroyed because of the great words which the horn spake in blasphemy against God.

"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time" (ver. 12). Only one empire was to be in power at a given moment. When the Medo-Persian arose the Babylonian declined; and when the Grecian be-

came prominent the Medo-Persian gave way. In like manner the Grecian fell before the power of Rome. But though these empires lost their dominion in succession, the nations and peoples of which they were made up continued. To this day the Persians exist as a nation, and likewise the Greeks, though their dominion as empires has been taken away. In our further study of the book we shall see that a representative of the Grecian empire is to play a very important part in the future in connection with the Jews.

We have seen that the end of all this world's pride and politics will be a pouring forth of God's righteous and fiery judgment because of the arrogant and blasphemous rebellion against Him of the little horn. How will it be brought about?

"I saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (ver. 13). Here we have vividly described the coming of the Lord, not as the Bridegroom for His bride, but as the Son of man in judgment. It may be well to say in passing that wherever the coming of *the Son of man* is spoken of it is always His coming in judgment. One passage that might seem to go against this is Matthew xxv. 13, but in that verse it is acknowledged that the words—"wherein the Son of man cometh"—are an in-

terpolation, and should be left out. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." The Lord will first come and translate His people from earth to heaven to meet Him in the air, then will follow a brief interval of apostasy and rapidly increasing evil, and all will then suddenly be cut short by the coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven.

When He comes for His own the dead in Christ and the living saints are caught up together *in the clouds* to meet the Lord *in the air*, but here the Son of man comes *with the clouds of heaven*, and He comes *to the earth*. To this our blessed Lord referred when adjured by the High Priest to declare whether He were the Christ, the Son of God, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Moment of awful import to this poor world! The crown of thorns will then be replaced by the diadem of glory, and the reed which man in mockery placed in His hands shall be changed for the sceptre of righteousness.

It was this, too, that John in Patmos beheld in vision when he announced, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen" (Rev. i. 7). In Daniel the Son of man "came to the Ancient of days," for Christ is there seen as man, whereas in the Apocalypse

the Son of man is seen by the prophet possessed of all the attributes that belonged to the Ancient of days (*cf.* Dan. vii. 9, and Rev. i. 14), for in truth in the Person of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ are combined in absolute perfection both the human and divine natures, and these in Him though distinct are inseparable. Infinite and holy mystery which defies the finite creature's grasp to comprehend. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27).

After judgment has done its work, then, and not till then, will be set up the glorious kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. A king shall then reign in righteousness. The iron heel of the oppressor shall be lifted from the earth. Mercy and truth shall meet together. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9).

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (ver. 14). No other earthly kingdom will follow that of the Son of man; this is the force of the word "everlasting" in this passage. So long as earthly kingdoms last, His will endure and never be destroyed. We know from other parts of Scripture that at the close of the millennium the mediatorial kingdom of the Son of man will be "delivered up." The verse we are here considering does not allude to the eternal state, for

the prophets of the Old Testament confine themselves to descriptions, and blessed descriptions too, of the earthly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of man, and this we are told will last for one thousand years, hence called *the millennium* (Rev. xx.). When that is over and the last enemy, death, is destroyed at the judgment of the great white throne, then will the Son deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God in the plenitude of His being shall be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24-29). A blessed description of the eternal state is given to us in the Apocalypse (xxi. 1-8).

“The Last Days.”

I HAVE been just thinking how the great apostate systems, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are to advance in strength and magnificence just as the day of their doom and judgment approaches. Witness the woman in Revelation xviii., and the beast in Revelation xiii.

And I ask, Is not this moment through which we are passing giving pledges of this? Do we not see the great ecclesiastical system advancing to occupy itself of the world with something of giant strength? And is not the world, as a civil or secular thing, spreading itself out in luxuries and attainments and cultivation and magnificence

"THE LAST DAYS."

193

beyond all precedent? And are not these things the pledges that all is on the road to the display of the woman and the beast in their greatness and grandeur, which are divinely destined to precede their judgment.

But again I ask, Is there any such notice under the hand of the Spirit, that the saints are to rise to their great or beautiful condition before their translation? The apostate things are to be great before their judgment comes, but I ask, Is the *true* thing to be great in its way before its glory comes?

This is an affecting inquiry. What answer does the oracle of God give it?

The 2nd epistle of Timothy contemplates the *ruin* and *break up* of the Church. But what condition does it anticipate things to be in afterwards? No restoration to spiritual strength or beauty in Church order, but the *pure in heart* calling on the Lord together outside, and following the virtues and cultivating the graces that belong to them and become them in company.

Jude anticipates the last days. But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored order and power, but encourages the "beloved" to build themselves up in holy faith, and to be looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life.

The 2nd epistle of Peter also contemplates the last days, and fearful unclean abominations among professors, and the scorning of promises in the world. But he gives no hint of restored order

and strength in the Church, but tells the saints to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, in the assurance that the promise of His coming and majesty is not a cunningly devised fable.

John contemplates the last days also; but it is under one strongly defined characteristic—the tampering with and the denial of the inestimably precious mystery of the Godhead Persons, and the truth about the Son. But He expects us only *individually* so to hold by that mystery, that we * may not be ashamed before Him when He Himself appears (1 John ii. 28).

The judgment of the seven churches takes place in Revelation ii., iii. It is a solemn scene. There is some good and much evil. There are many healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition, but there is no promise of restored order and power. The churches are judged, left under the word of judgment, and we hear no more of them *on earth*; the next sight we get of the elect is *in heaven* (chap. iv.).

All this, beloved, is serious yet happy, for all is strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us at this moment.

It is well. It is gracious in the Lord to cast up before our eye, in His Word, the high road along which we were destined to travel, and the

* The “we” here refers to the apostles.—ED.

sights we were appointed to see. And it is happy to know that our translation does not wait for our regained condition of corporate order and strength. We might wait *long* if that were so, according to present appearances.

The wrong things will be in their magnificence, just when their judgment comes ; the true thing will be in weakness till its glory comes.

BELLETT.

Evermore.

BLESSED only Son of God,
 Soon by heaven and earth adored,
 Gladly now we own Thee Lord,
 Evermore.

We shall see Thy radiant face,
 Thou alone wilt fill each place
 In our hearts, redeemed by grace,
 Evermore.

Of Thy sufferings infinite,
 Of Thy death, which won the fight,
 We shall tell with deep delight,
 Evermore.

In Thy body and Thy Bride,
 Like Thee, with Thee glorified,
 Lord, Thou wilt be magnified,
 Evermore.

Extracts.

I KNOW right well the deep abyss of gloom that, like an atmosphere, surrounds the human heart ; and I know, too, how often even physical weakness lets one drop into it, and how hard it is to shake it off.

Our strength is gone and oft we "wist it not,"—so that I always say to myself, "Take care ! ward it off in the beginning." If one gives way, one drops deeper and deeper into it ; into the thing, of all others, most fallen, most afar from God—a dark, brooding human heart. The Lord is very pitiful to such an one, very tender and gracious, but if (as has been said) I have *all* the grace of Christ, I have no business to give way as if it were not "sufficient."

What oppresses me to-day will be gone to-morrow, but a glimpse of Christ—the felt answer of His heart in the moment of oppression—will last until to-morrow, and the next day, and for ever and for ever.

Shame on the heart that can go down so low for the worry of the moment, and rise so little to the realities that are to last for ever ! G. V. W.

IF we can say, that "in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," we have thought quite long enough about ourselves." J. N. D.

Hints on Daniel.

“THE INTERPRETATION OF THE THINGS.”

(Chap. vii. 15—end.)

THE fourth and closing division of our chapter contains the interpretation of the three preceding visions. But, as always in Scripture, the explanation adds details, and enlarges upon what has gone before ; for Scripture never merely repeats itself.

Thus in verse 17, the four great beasts are explained to be four kings, and these are said to “arise out of the *earth*.” This in no wise contradicts what is said in verse 3, where we are told that they “came up from the *sea*.” It was out of a state of restless confusion of nations that these four beasts arose ; this seems to be meant by the figure of the sea. Great empires, such as Egypt and Assyria, had existed before these four of which the prophet writes, but they had been broken up and disorganised, and out of the chaos that ensued these four kingdoms of Daniel’s vision are seen to arise. It is interesting to note from history that though they did not all spring into power at once, they nevertheless all had their origin at pretty much the same period, though the Eastern powers developed much more rapidly than the Western.

But not only did they providentially arise out

XX.

of a state of chaos, *morally* they are seen to have an earthly origin. They arise out of the *earth*; this no doubt is in contrast to the kingdom of the Son of man who will come with the clouds of *heaven*.

In verse 18, another feature of great importance is added, viz., "the *saints* of the Most High shall take the kingdom." We are not to suppose that this is a mere repetition of what had gone before. Some have imagined that this is a figurative way of describing the reign of Christ. But no, when the time comes for Christ to take His great power and reign, the saints of the Most High will reign with Him.

It may be asked, Who are the saints of the Most High? Other parts of Scripture will help us to a right reply. No doubt the expression is similar to that with which we are familiar in the epistle to the Ephesians, and indeed the marginal rendering appears to be the more correct, not "saints of the Most High," but "saints of the high (or heavenly) places." It would seem to mean the heavenly saints in contrast to the earthly, for at the time at which Daniel's vision will be fulfilled, God will have saints upon the earth, as well as saints in the heavenly places. These earthly saints are alluded to further down in our chapter as "*the people of the saints of the high places*" (ver. 27).

We are not to expect to find the Church alluded to in any direct or special manner in

HINTS ON DANIEL.

199

Daniel, but nevertheless we have no doubt that the saints of this present period are included in the expression. It seems to us that the Old Testament saints, the saints from Pentecost to the rapture, that is the Church, and the saints martyred between the rapture and the appearing of Christ, will all be included amongst "the saints of the high places" who will "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (ver. 18).

But while this is so, the Church alone possesses the intelligence of her heavenly position during her sojourn on earth. How great should be the influence of this upon our walk and ways! Greater privileges and nearer relationships to Christ belong to the Church than those spoken of here, but this would lead us too far from our subject. It is well, however, to remember that the greater does not obliterate the less, and the apostle uses the very truth brought before us in Daniel, to bear upon the Corinthians in a practical manner (1 Cor. vi. 1-9).

There are many details of exceeding interest in the remaining part of the chapter, but one object seems to occupy a very prominent part in the mind of the Spirit of God; it is the "little horn." He will be a character of exceptional wickedness, and is to fill a very important part in the future of European politics, and is likewise to come into very close contact with the

Jewish people in the end. He will possess intelligence to a remarkable extent—"in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man" (vers. 8, 20), but all will be directed to his own aggrandisement—"a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." Owing to these qualities, some have been led to think that the little horn is the same as the antichrist, or the man of sin of 2 Thess. ii.

Later on we shall see that this is not the case. There will be a personal antichrist alive at the same time, but the sphere of antichrist's activities will be Jerusalem, whereas the "little horn" will flourish in Western Europe.

We do not mean by this to imply that this chief of the Roman Empire will have no connection with Palestine, and the antichrist who will be reigning there. In verse 21 we are told that "the same horn made war with the saints." Some might ask, Who are these? Have not the saints already been caught up when the Lord comes into the air? How then are there any more saints upon the earth? The answer is that these saints are Jewish saints converted after the rapture. Revelation vii. is clear as to this point, that many from amongst the tribes of Israel, as well as a vast multitude from amongst the heathen, will be converted after the Church has been taken away. It is a fatal delusion to imagine that any from amongst Christ-rejecting Christendom are included in these two com-

panies. Christendom's opportunity is *now*; at that time the door will be shut, so far as all those are concerned who have the opportunity to-day, but despise it. No one giving a serious consideration to 2 Thessalonians ii. can have any doubt of this.

That these are Jewish saints seems clear from verse 25. The little horn will blaspheme God. There can be little doubt that the same evil personage is described in Revelation xiii. 5-8. But not only does he speak great words of blasphemy against God, he will blaspheme "them that dwell in heaven," who would no doubt be the same as "the saints of the high places" (ver. 25). These would be in heaven, and are not the same, it appears to us, as the saints against whom he prevails (ver. 21), who are evidently on earth; "it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Rev. xiii. 7). These last are doubtless Jewish saints, the persecuted remnant of Israel when back in their own land.

What confirms us in this thought is the fact that the "times and laws" are given into his hand. These are evidently the Jewish feasts and solemn days which will once again be observed according to the law; they and not the saints will be delivered into his hand, but not for ever—"until a time and times and the dividing of time." Later on in our study of the book we shall learn more about this defined

period ; at present it may be sufficient to say that it coincides with the forty-two months of Revelation xiii. 5. It will be the period of "the great tribulation" which is to last for three and a half years. At its close "the judgment will sit," and the dominion of this exceedingly wicked power will be taken away. This will take place by and at the coming of the Ancient of Days. The Son of man will appear with power and glory, and the fiery judgment of God will be poured forth upon this representative of all the pride and blasphemy of man. Other parts of Scripture enter more fully into this, and these will come before us in due course.

But how sublime is the picture here given. On the one hand, man on earth in all the littleness of his own self-importance in tumultuous activity setting himself against God, against His saints, against heaven ; on the other, God in heaven in all the dignity and tranquillity of His majesty and power, unseen by mortal eyes, yet seeing everything. At length the last blasphemy rolls from man's lips, the last deed of daring defiance rises up before the eye of God. Then all is changed. Heaven is astir. The wheels, wheels of burning fire, of that throne on which sits the Ancient of Days begin to move. Then the coming of one "like a Son of man," and yet much more than man, and to Him it is given to execute judgment, long delayed, yet justly earned.

How solemn it is to see everything rapidly converging to this in the world around us. The times are moving quickly. "Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but My words shall not pass away" (Luke xxi. 33). But how bright the prospect for this world after judgment has done its work, and all things that offend, and them that do iniquity have been gathered out of the kingdom of the Son of man (Matt. xiii. 41) ; then "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (ver. 27).

"Come unto Me."

(Notes of a Lecture given in the Priory, Islington, by
J. N. D. on 30th November 1863. Matt. xi.)

THIS chapter, beloved friends, is full of beauty in this way. It passes in review all the ways and dealings of God and the effects of them in the mind of Christ, then what goes on in men's hearts as the result of His dealings with them.

We find the Lord in all this, and one thing is especially touching—to have what was passing in the Lord's heart with regard to us, it is sweet to hear the Lord's voice, after all that *He* had gone through, saying "Come unto *Me*," and oh! how little can we enter into His feelings as He said, as the final comfort for a broken heart, "Come unto *Me*." He finds men's hearts, as it were, passing in review the world around, to learn that it is empty and vain—well, He enters into their thoughts and says, "Just come to *Me*." It is only vanity and vexation of spirit—but "come to *Me*." Christ, beloved friends, presents *Himself*, One that has had experience of it as well as you—knows all about it; He can tell you you had better come out of it to *Him*, and with the fullest experience of what the world was, the Lord Himself tells us where alone our souls can have *rest*, and that is *in Himself*!

Take a converted man, if he is not full of Christ he is empty, and he cannot bear it; he will turn to this and that, but his heart is dissatisfied—it is a place in which the soul continually learns that if it turns in upon itself it preys upon itself. Now, beloved friends, the Lord calls us out of it—the world is a world that has tried to sweep up its empty chambers of a dissatisfied will to try to live without God and it cannot.

Well now, there is another place; the world floats down the stream because it cannot help it,

but in verse 13 a great change comes in, "for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John": we see man from the Fall getting far away from God; the law tries to bring them back, to love God and their neighbour as themselves, but it was not so. Then the prophets strive with them to deliver them from the heathen world—a people for His name, to bring them back to God; but it was all in vain—then comes John and says, "His fan is in His hand," the winnowing has begun, it is a new scene, the axe is laid to the roots of the tree, He is setting up something else and the kingdom of God comes in. God comes in, in judgment to tell you you are all lost. Well, the Lord is passing all this in review.

It is a terrible thing to be at ease away from God, and not at ease in His presence—a child may be so totally insensible to his father as to be indifferent to him, and in this way John awakens the conscience; but the world would not stand it, and he is put in prison. This, too, the Lord passes in review. Well, John came mourning they were away from God—he would have them return and repent—he could say, "The tree that bringeth not forth fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire." One fruit is repentance, and he called them to it—then he gets out into the wilderness *alone*. Well, then comes another, and *pipes to them*, but they will not dance—there *was no returning to God*. The

goodness was spent on man, but there is no returning heart, no ! Let God pipe to the world ; they would rejoice far from God, but not *with* Him ! Then the Lord's heart passes in review all this, verses 20-24, "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not."

"But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." What would come of all this but judgment? He had come with a heart full of love and goodness only to discover that man would not come to Him. Perfect love in His nature discovering that it was *useless to man*. Now what must the Lord have felt? what must have been the sorrow of His heart in passing through this world to find He was spending His love for them and it was no use. "Wherefore when I came, was there no man ; when I called, was there none to answer? The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to Him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learner." Because I've clothed Myself in lowliness only to give "My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair" (Isa. 1.). Only think, beloved, what the path of Christ was in this world, and "how am I straitened till it be accomplished."

Well now, has He to say anything of this to

you? Where's the meeting Him, where's the heart going out to Him? Are there not hearts that have to say, "I never heard His call?" It is like the deaf adder that stops her ears at the voice of the charmer charm he ever so wisely. Is there no cause for sorrow in Christ's heart on account of what there is in yours? But we get the perfect rendering of His will to God's, and after passing it all in review He sees the grace that is in it all, and can say, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." There were *these babes*. He was not going to minister to the pride of man's heart, to its intellect or its wisdom—but to *their wants*, and these were *babes*. When I see the Son of God coming down from heaven for me, I say, "Oh, was there ever anything like this?" and so it is, beloved friends, with our souls, we get all our wants supplied.

I'll suppose that you have not listened to the voice of the charmer, that the Lord has gone through it all, and you have, like the deaf adder, stopped your ears; every appeal, every proof of grace and goodness has been rejected—well now, suppose the pride of that is gone, and you have the world, a wretched place, and you have got a broken heart, and that for a broken heart the world has no heart (the Lord has in that sense separated Himself from the world; it had

no place for Him). Well, He says, "*I* know thoroughly now what the world is, I have gone through it, and like the dove that Noah sent from the ark, that found no rest—if you find in any way the world will not meet you nor satisfy the cravings of your heart, well, *come and try Me!* If you are tired with yourself and the world too, *come to Me*, and I will give you rest!"

Now let us see, beloved friends, how the Lord not only is a *divine* sympathiser (for He went through the world Himself, and found it to be a dry and thirsty land where no water is), but if there is a thirst, if there is a want, if there is a yearning unmet, He says, Come to Me, and I will meet it all—and first, I will tell you, "God is love;" but I can tell you more, His love has not driven you away but *called you*—"Come to Me." I have gone through it; put your foot upon Me. I know your guilt, I know it all thoroughly, I have been amongst men, I have gone through it all; if you will come to Me, I will give you rest from it—*Come to Me*. If you want to be rid of the fear of death, I have been in it, I have overcome it, I have conquered its terrors—*Come to Me*.

The Son of God that came out of death says, Come unto Me. If your heart is tired of the world, wearied of it. Come to Me. It is after the Lord has gone through all this, and did not get an answer or sympathy, met no returning heart, *after all this* He says, Come to Me. If your sin

"COME UNTO ME."

209

and guilt and hardness of heart made you wearied (and "rest" is a large word, beloved friends), there is no more uneasiness about it--the rest is complete. He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "I will give you rest." Then, I say, *I may rest*. God rests in Christ, and I say, Oh, *I rest in Him*; and Christ is resting too at God's right hand, then *I rest*.

But now the question comes, Can God love? because I am not satisfied with myself. Can I expect that I have His favour and love? Then I say, He gave His Son for us, and then, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Then my heart can rest in the divine righteousness, and putting away of sin, I can rest because it is divine. An end of weariness, *it is rest*.

He does not merely say you shall have it, but He has as much and more delight in giving it, than I in receiving it. Do your souls really believe His Word when He says, "I will give you rest." Do you simply believe in the finished work so that your souls *are at rest*? *Have you got that*? He does not deceive us.

There is one word I would add, suppose the conscience is purged from dead works, there is another kind of rest, and you do not always get it, there is a restlessness of heart. Now, I say, beloved *brethren*, you who know the Lord, do

not you find sometimes a restlessness of heart, a craving after other things? Well, the Lord says to you another thing, "Take My yoke upon you, and *learn of Me*, . . . and ye shall *find* rest unto your souls." "Ye shall *find*" not merely that He will give it, but He says, "If I can get you to be meek and lowly in heart, ye shall *find rest*." Have you a will at work? Was HE ever restless? NEVER! Here we have Him thanking God for the very thing He was reproaching the cities for.

Take another case—in the garden. "Father, save Me from this hour, yet for this cause came I unto this hour." Then says Christ, "I shall draw all men unto Me,"—instant submission. He was meek and lowly! Then as regards such He says, Let go your will; *learn of Me*; bow as *I bow*. There should be the entire bowing to the will of God.

Now do not you find the will at work making you restless? Cannot you look through it to God? If you do you cannot help having *rest*! There are things to make me sorrow and grieve, well, I meet it with God, and the blessing and quiet and peace of heart flow from this, that *I am no more: Christ is all*.

I only return now to say we see the Son of God as man here, passing through *all* things, and in and with this, knowing it all, He says, *Come to Me*. I have given myself entirely up to God, and in love I have come now to tell

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 211

you. I know the world as you don't, you will *never* get rest in it.

How wonderful it is to see the blessed Lord say, It's under the flood that I have gone, through and in *Me* you have rest. Now, beloved friends, have you got this rest? In Himself (as contrasted with the world) *is divine rest*.

The Lord only give you, beloved friends, to know and to hear the voice of that charmer saying, "I will give you rest." He is the truth, and in Him we have rest to our souls.



The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE III.

(Chap. iv. 19-25, v.)

IT is my desire to-night to speak a little of the wonderful consequences of the gospel that we were looking at on previous evenings—the results that flow to the believer and that it is the privilege of all believers to enjoy. God has anticipated every need of the soul—past, present, and future. There is nothing that has escaped His notice in His care for His people. We have peace as to all the past; we are brought into such nearness to God that we are in His present and constant favour; and we rejoice in the hope of coming glory.

Now it is a blessed thing to see that all these things are true for every child of God.

Let us look for a moment at the close of the fourth chapter. The love of God we have seen is the source of all blessing for the soul. There is not a single blessing for time or throughout eternity but proceeds from the heart of God as its source, and all is based upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as securing a righteous foundation for it all. If the heart of God is the source, and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which all these blessings rest, they can only be obtained by faith, and that is the great principle that is established here in this fourth chapter. We are brought into these blessings on the ground of faith, not on that of law.

Now this is what the Jew could not understand. It seemed to open the door too wide. If the blessing is on the ground of faith, the Gentile is admitted to it as well as the Jew, and if it comes in that way alone, the Jew had to humble himself to take it on the same ground as the poor heathen. But this principle was illustrated in the case of Abraham. The Jews boasted of Abraham, and the apostle shows clearly that he obtained everything on the ground of faith and not of works of law. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." It was not a question so much of *what* he believed but the

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 213

fact that he believed God. Now what God had promised to Abraham seemed on human grounds to be impossible. But Abraham did not stagger at God's promise through unbelief; he gave God credit for being able to perform all that He promised. He believed God. God took him out and asked him to count the stars if he could, and then God said, "So shall thy seed be." God had not yet done it, but He said, "I will do it." Abraham did not consider circumstances, he did not reason about it, he simply believed God. God said, "I will do it," and Abraham said, "Amen."

Now we are told here that this was not written for his sake alone. God had us in view in giving us the history of Abraham. He established, therefore, in the case of Abraham a principle which is applicable to every single one of us. The only ground upon which we can stand before God is the same upon which Abraham stood. Abraham stood on the ground of faith, and you and I must stand on the very same. But notice the difference: God said to Abraham, "I am going to do a certain thing;" but God *has done* what He has promised in our case. The faith of the believer now rests on two things that God has already done. The last verse of the fourth chapter tells us what they are. Christ "was delivered for our offences," in other words, "Christ died for our sins;" and we know that if Christ was delivered

for our offences, we have been delivered *from* them. If the Lord Jesus Christ has had my sins laid upon Him, as He has—"The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"—if my sins have passed upon Him they have passed from me. He was delivered for my offences, and consequently I have been delivered from them. But not only this, "He was raised again for our justification;" now the faith of the Christian rests on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has come into the very place where death was, for Christ was there in death for us, and God comes into the midst of that scene where Christ lay in death and raises Him from the dead in token of His perfect acceptance of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. He has been raised again by the glory of the Father. It was God who raised Him from the dead; having glorified God about our sins, God has raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly glory. Well, the moment we believe that, the next verse goes on to say—and this is a definite conclusion according to the reasoning of the Spirit of God—"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). The Lord Jesus Christ was raised for our justification. Therefore the believer stands before God on this ground now—that he is justified before God. Not merely forgiven, though surely he is for-

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 215

given ; we have learned the love that has forgiven us, that has pardoned us ; but the ground of peace with God is the fact that God has cleared me righteously from all my sins so that I stand before Him perfectly cleared and eternally justified. God Himself cannot bring a single charge against a believer when He has already justified him from all things. Now that removes all fear from the heart and settles every question for the conscience.

When the conscience is first awakened and God begins to work in the soul, what troubles us is our life of sin and guilt. We may go on for years without being troubled at all, but when the conscience gets awakened and God begins to work, all our past comes before us. Of course we have forgotten a great deal, but when we recollect that God does not forget anything, the trouble of conscience gets worse and worse. But what is the great truth that, as a believer, I start with? This, that being justified before God and God Himself being the One who has justified me, I stand now at perfect peace before Him. We have peace with God. We do not hope to have it, we have it now. We stand before God justified from all things and clear of every charge of guilt. We have peace with God about it all. Let me ask you, dear friends, Have you peace with God? It is not that I have a hope of my sins being forgiven some day! I have peace with God *now*.

True, it goes on to say, "through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then comes the question, How does God look upon me from day to day? If I look at Adam in the garden of Eden, I find man driven out of God's presence; happier, possibly, outside the garden than inside it, because inside he was full of fear, he knew that he was not fit to be in God's presence. But look at the answer God has given us in the gospel to all that sin has brought in. If man was driven out of God's presence by his sin, we are brought into His presence by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. "We have access by faith into this grace," that means, the favour of God. This is our abiding-place. We learn this, dear friends, that not only has God loved us in the past—He loved us so much that He gave up the Lord Jesus Christ into death for us—but we learn that we are always standing before Him in full and perfect favour. So we are told, in a different connection, that God loves us as He loves His Son (John xvii. 23). How little our hearts appreciate this love! If we are believers at all, we know that all our blessings come to us through the love of God, but how much do we realise that we are the objects of the same love wherewith He has loved His own beloved Son? We are at perfect peace as regards all our sins, we are brought near to God so that we can enjoy His presence day by day ;

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 217

“access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” But what about the future? “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” The Christian is perfectly happy while he is here. He may have troubles, but they need not hinder his happiness. We do not know what a day may bring forth, we do not know what trials may arise in our pathway, but we know one thing—we are going on to the glory of God.


We, believers, are going on to the glory of God and we rejoice in hope of it. That word “hope” does not mean that we are in any uncertainty. Somebody, to whom I was trying to explain that heaven was not a matter of hope, once said to me, “Oh, but what does it mean when it speaks of the hope of the glory of God? Is not that an uncertainty?” It is the very fact that it is such a certainty, that every step I take is only taking me nearer to it, and notwithstanding all that may come in between, I am so certain of being there, that I can rejoice in it. If I think of the past, I am at peace with God; as to the present, I can rejoice in His favour, a favour which is better than life; and for the future, there is nothing before me but the glory of God, when I shall be like Christ and with Him for ever.

N.B.—It has been pointed out to us that the article which came out in our May and June issues entitled “What is our Position as Christians? And what ought to be our Prayer in relation to the Holy Ghost?” was not by J. G. B., but by A. C. O.

The Sympathies of Jesus.

NOTES OF A GOSPEL ADDRESS.

(Read Mark v. and Solomon's Song.)

FTER we are called, we have the wilderness to pass through, and mighty may be the difficulties and mighty the trials by the way, but we are not to count it strange nor be afraid with any amazement. Come what will in it, all our desire should be that Christ may be magnified in our bodies, whether by life or by death. Many a saint may have the desire without knowing how to glorify Christ. The Word alone enables us to form right thoughts. Christ is in every part, *that* Christ who is God.

The whole power of worship is in the desire that Christ may be magnified in our bodies, led by the Holy Ghost to contemplate Him in the glory, gazing up to see what He is, and led by the Holy Ghost to make good what He is. Alas! how often by circumstances we are driven away from Him. How much happier we should be if we could see things in His light, and be so occupied with Him in every circumstance as to turn everything to account that He may be magnified in our bodies. If He in wondrous goodness has poured glory down on us, shall He not shine out through us?

How the thought of one day seeing the glory

THE SYMPATHIES OF JESUS. 219

of God causes the things of time and sense to wither up. He who formed man, down here as man, looking on men with the eye of God, knowing every throb of their hearts. Have you ever gone to Him and met with disappointment? ever at the wrong time? Has the heart not always audience, a ready access at all times?

In the Song of Solomon the heart has found its object, the beloved *One*. We get a soul who has got Christ before his eyes. One spot is always green in the heart of a saint, and the thing is to discover that spot, to strengthen and make it good: that should be our object in dealing with others. Are we occupied in speaking of Jesus? all the charm of our being being Him, and His being in everything? There is the heart's repose; its only disquietude is seeking to get on without Him. Every right occupation begins from having Christ within. When all is right at home surely all will be well outside. What comforts the heart in all the trials by the way is thinking how soon we shall be at home. We are in the last days, and there is much for believers to suffer, but, think you He does not know it? Faith knows that wherever God brings us He can carry us through.

Turn to Mark ii. Salvation is a part, a blessed, happy part; but happier yet to know the sympathies of Jesus. How sweet to lie down and know His eye, His ear is over us; that nothing

escapes His eye, nothing changes His purpose ; blessing He WILL bless ; every hair of the head numbered ; the feeblest taken up because of needing the most guidance. A mother may forget, &c., but He *never*. He nurses, fondles His children ; their very weakness only brings out more love ; the very things we see in one another only the plea for more love from Him. The Almighty God is eyes, ears, feet to His people ! Happy people to have *such* a God of love. How many a one here can say, If He had not been on my side, I should not have been here to-night !

Oh ! to know Jesus simply and heartily, then to hold by Him on our way. Epistles of Christ, read by all. What we want to know is the sympathy of the heart of God. *Saved*, yes ! but that's only the first drop of the ocean still to flow. My salvation opened God's heart to me, and in the sense of this love forgetting my own salvation. Who having such a God could wish to have anything of his own ? In the communication of life to you the heart of Jesus throbbed with love ; there was sympathy to go out ; you touched the whole divine being ; virtue goes out of Him. Do you know the sympathy of Jesus to be yours ? "*Who touched Me ?*" Bring that one near, let Me see the one who used Me. Who was so gracious as to love Me ? I want that one, where is she ? Oh, any poor sinner here to go home and say this night that you have made Jesus

happy because you have used Him! And have you who know Him, used your heaviest afflictions to make you lean with double pressure on Christ? You cannot lean too heavily; if you cannot lean He will *carry* you. I told you to pray; don't you know 'tis music in my ears? Why lose so many opportunities? What so sweet in heaven as a mortal praying upward?

Nothing but trouble here, but God in the trouble. Look at this poor woman touching Jesus. Think of God incarnate pressed in a throng, looking to behold a heart for His sympathies to go out to. "Who touched Me?" Who used Me? So His heart goes out to those who use Him. She feared and trembled, but had the hand and heart of God for her. Do you know what that is? Do you use Jesus?

J. WILLANS.

Correspondence.

London :—If Christians exercised enough faith, would all disease be overcome? (Jas. v. ; Mark vi. 13).

The "faith-healing" theory is really based upon the mistaken supposition that all sickness is due to the individual's sin. That this is not so is clearly proved by Philippians ii. 25-30, Epaphroditus was nigh unto death "for the work of Christ."

On the other hand, that in certain cases

sickness was sent as a chastisement in God's governmental dealings with His people 1 Corinthians xi. as clearly proves—"For this cause (*i.e.*, their course of unjudged sin) many are weak and sickly among you." But here the remedy was not a sufficient amount of faith, but self-judgment because of the sin that had made it necessary for the Lord so to deal. 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.'

Then again in James (chap. v. 14-16) the cases supposed evidently include that of sin committed which, being judged and repented of, the prayer of faith on the part of the elders of the Church saves the sick, and the Lord raises him up. Remarkable cases of this kind are on record, where the power of God has come in most wonderfully. But much spiritual discernment is needful, for there are cases which we are distinctly told are sins unto death, and for these we are not to pray, for it is God's intention to remove His erring child—a solemn case indeed (1 John v. 16).

Further, there were cases where even an apostle who possessed a miraculous power to heal saw fit not to exercise that power for some reason not revealed to us—"Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. iv. 20). But the miraculous power given to the twelve was a special thing (Mark vi. 7), which pride and ignorance alone would arrogate to itself to-day.

We must not forget that we are at the close of the dispensation, and not at its commencement. Miraculous power to impress the mind accompanied the new testimony God was rendering at Pentecost. Now amidst the ruins of the Church saints are exhorted to "hold that fast which thou hast," for "I come quickly" (Rev. iii. 11). That there is a sad lack of that faith, even as of a grain of mustard seed, that can remove mountains, is true, but so also is that loyalty to Christ in this evil day, which is manifested in keeping His Word and not denying His name (Rev. iii. 8). May we learn to be less occupied with ourselves, whether our faith, or our holiness, or whatever else, and to be more set on pleasing Christ and contending earnestly for His glory, in obedience to His Word, and with humility of mind !

ED.

Carlow :—"What do you mean by 'breaking of bread' ? Is it not the same as Church Sacrament ?"

It is always wise to cleave closely to the veritable language of Holy Scripture, and there we read nothing about the "Sacrament." The Bible speaks of "the breaking of bread" (Acts ii. 42, 46, xx. 7), which is an expression taken from the action of the Lord Himself on the occasion of the institution of the Supper (Matt. xxvi. 26 ; Mark xiv. 22 ; Luke xxii. 19). The

Lord's Supper and the breaking of bread are the same thing (1 Cor. xi. 20 to end).

The Supper was instituted by our Lord on the night of His betrayal, and it was the privilege as well as the responsibility of His people to observe it until His return (1 Cor. xi. 26). It was a thanksgiving service, and was to be the central act of Christian fellowship and worship (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). Only true Christians, that is converted people, were to be partakers. It is not a means of salvation, nor is it a sacrifice for sins, as many now erroneously hold and teach. It is simply the memorial of the sufferings and death of our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It was the custom of the early Christians to come together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts xx. 7). We believe it to be still the duty of all true believers to gather together for this purpose. It is a sad sign of the coldness and indifference that has come over the people of God that they should esteem that to be of little importance which was instituted by their Lord on the night of His betrayal, which was reiterated from the glory (1 Cor. xi.), and distinctly enjoined to be observed until His return.

“ Oh, let Thy love constrain
Our souls to cleave to Thee,
And ever in our hearts remain
That word ‘Remember Me!’ ”

ED.

Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham.

THE call of Abraham was a new departure, if we may so say, in the ways of God. Man had been tried and tested in various ways, both before and after the flood, and the result was always failure and sin. Now idolatry had appeared, for the earliest notice we have of it is in the family of Terah, the father of Abraham, as we read in Joshua xxiv., "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [Euphrates] in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods;" and God, instead of restoring what has fallen, *calls out* a people as a distinct testimony to Himself, in separation from the world. "The God of glory," as Stephen says in Acts vii., appeared to Abraham while still he dwelt in Mesopotamia, and said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

At first Abraham stopped short. He left his country and kindred, but not his father's house; and it was not till after the death of Terah, that he fully responded to the call of God, as we see from Acts vii. Hence the account in Genesis

XXI.

begins, "Now the Lord *had* said unto Abraham," &c.; and a little lower down we read, "so Abraham departed, *as* the Lord *had* spoken unto him." There was an interval after he left Ur of the Chaldees, and before he entered Canaan, during which he stayed at Charran.

The path of faith is a path contrary to the natural mind of man, and even things right and lawful in themselves may often hinder us from pursuing it, besides, we naturally like to be guided by sight and sense instead of by faith. But this path of faith, illustrated so remarkably in the life of Abraham, is just that to which God calls His people now; only that they have, what the patriarchs had not, Christ as the perfect example of one who ran the whole of that path from beginning to end; the Holy Spirit indwelling, and all the privileges which belong to the full revelation of the Father in the Son.

There were many things calculated to hold Abraham in Mesopotamia. Reason and prudence would have argued that it would be very unwise to leave his country and family relations, and to go into a land where he had nothing tangible to depend upon. But the way of faith is not the path of human reason; and besides, Abraham had the word of the God of glory—this was enough. He was not left to choose a land for himself; he was to be guided simply by the Word of God; "unto a land that I will show thee," said the Lord.

LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM. 227

Abraham was governed by God's will, not his own ; by faith, being called, he obeyed (Heb. xi.), and went out, not knowing whither he was going. Obedience and dependence are principles which mark the path of faith ; and we have the perfect example of this in our blessed Lord Himself. He ran the whole course of faith from beginning to end without a single falter, and never swerved from the place of dependence and obedience, never acting apart from His Father's will. He could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Again, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent ME." Perfect light always shone on His path, for it was always one of unwavering dependence. What an example for us !

Abraham does not settle down in the land ; he "passed through" the land where the Canaanite dwelt ; and, as has been truly remarked, what distinguished him was, his tent and his altar. The inspired commentary in the New Testament tells us that "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob." Faith in God, and obedience to His call, made him a pilgrim and a stranger, and a sojourner. Then God appears to him in the land, and he builds an altar unto the Lord ; this constitutes him a worshipper. This is just, in type, the position of the Christian ; he is a pilgrim and a

stranger in the world ; his home is on high, where Jesus is, at God's right hand. No doubt God uses the various trials and difficulties of the way to wean His people from the world and show them that this is not their rest ; but it is only as faith is in exercise and Christ is the object before the heart, that we can enter into what it is to be a pilgrim and a stranger and a worshipper.

Soon a test arises, for "there was a famine in the land," and it was a "grievous" one. Abraham went down to Egypt, but we do not read that he had any command to do so ; and he had certainly got out of the path of simple obedience and dependence on God. Here he makes an agreement with Sarah to say she was his sister—it was expediency, not faith, and it led to his denying the relationship before Pharaoh. After all, there was only One who ever walked the whole course of faith unwaveringly—the Lord Jesus Himself. We find Abraham saying Sarah was his sister again when he went to Gerar, but God comes in in grace on both occasions. Isaac also denied the relationship, when with this same Abimelech, king of the Philistines, at Gerar. The more the church got into the world, the weaker the sense of her true relationship to Christ became ; in fact the great mass of Christians know little or nothing of what it is to be united to Christ, though this blessed truth is so plainly taught in the New Testament. We do not find that Abraham

had any altar in Egypt ; but when he comes back to Bethel, where his tent and altar had been at the first, there he calls on the name of Jehovah.

(To be continued.)

Fragments for Babes.

From JOHN xiv.

THE Father and the Son are both alike the objects of our faith, and invite the confidence of our hearts.

Our eternal dwelling-place is none other than the "Father's house."

The Lord Jesus, who is now personally in that *place*, will Himself return for us, and conduct us there, to be His bosom companions eternally.

He is not lost to us (as Joseph was to Jacob for a time), though we only know Him, during the "little while" of His absence, by faith ; *we know* where He has gone, and with whom He now is, even with the Father.

The "way" to the Father for us now, all the "truth" for our hearts concerning the Father, and the "life" communicated to us in the new birth, that we might be in the relationship of children with the Father (John i. 12, 13 ; iii. 8),

all alike as to source and channel, are centred in the Lord Jesus Himself.

To *know* Jesus is to know the Father; to *see* Jesus is to see the Father; the *words* which Jesus spake were entirely from the Father as their source; the *works* which Jesus did were done by the Father dwelling *in* Him; thus they are one in the testimony of divine grace to our souls.

There is revealed to us (twice repeated) this infinite mystery concerning two of the Persons of the Godhead:—"I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" Jesus also said, "I and the Father are one" (John x. 30). This is the ROCK on which is built our all for time and eternity.

Whatever we ask now of the Father in the name of the Son, the Son declares He will do, and the answer to our request furnishes occasion for the Father to be glorified in the Son.

He invites from us to Himself the active expression of the *obedient* affections inherent in our new *spiritual life*, by the delicate constraining power of His divine "if." (Compare—"He made as though He would have gone further," Luke xxiv. 28.) He does not need, nor does He ask for outward proof that this *life* and its nature *love* exists *in* us (see John xxi. 17), but His heart cannot be satisfied with anything short of the adequate *outward* display of our love to Him, according to the model He

has Himself left us. (See also John xiii. 36; Mark x. 39; Phil. iii. 8-14.)

Instead of His own personal presence with us here, to manage all our affairs for us Himself, the Father, in response to His request, has sent us another "Comforter," or "Advocate," to undertake this service for us, and He will abide with us in this capacity for ever.

This other "Comforter," whom the world can neither *see* nor *know*, we know, and that in the most intimate way, for He dwells *with* us all collectively, and also *in* us personally, each one. (Eph. i. 13, 14; 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. i. 22.)

We are orphans through Christ having departed out of this world to the Father, but we are not always to remain so; He is coming to us again. Meanwhile He has committed us and all our concerns to the care of the fully competent ONES, and charged Himself with the supply of all our need until He Himself returns. (Luke x. 35; John xvi. 11, 15, 17; Phil. iv. 19.)

Having received divine and spiritual life from Him, with the affections of *love* proper to this *life* and inseparable from it, He assures us that it is utterly impossible (see John x. 28-30) that we can cease to all eternity to possess and live this life with Him who is its source, for He, our Life-Giver and Eternal Lover, says, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

While we are in this world, so vital and close, and yet so mysteriously divine is our link with

Him up there, that its *nature* as well as the *fact* is revealed by the inscrutable words—"I am *in* My Father, and ye *in* Me, and I *in* you."

As the Father, in sending the Son, gave Him a commandment to *keep* (xii. 49, 50), and He obeyed those commandments and so abode in His Father's love (xv. 10), so has He given to us the same words (xvii. 8, 14), and looks for us to *keep* them also, thus *manifesting* by our obedience that *we love Him*. This display by us of *obedience* working by love, draws forth from the Father *and* the Son the aspect of divine love which is responsive to such acts alone. To secure this special divine favour, it is not enough to *have*, but we must also *keep* that which the Lord has entrusted to us.

The *obedience* of our love, shown in *keeping* Christ's words, is so precious to the Father that He responds with that character of His love only thus called forth, and further, the Father and the Son unite in showing their delight and approval, by coming and taking up their abode with the *obedient* child and disciple.

To *have* His *sayings*, or words, and yet not *keep* them, is to entirely deprive the Lord of that love from us to Himself in which He so delights. Further, to disobey this *word* of His, which He has caused us to *hear*, is not only to lightly esteem His affections for us and good pleasure in our company, but to treat the Father likewise, for He it is who has sent us this word

through the Son, to obey or keep as He obeyed it. (John xii. 42, 43, xix. 38; Acts xv. 38; 2 Tim. iv. 10.)

The Holy Spirit sent down to us by the Father, is our Teacher now in all things that God our Father would have us instructed in, and He loves to remind us, too, of all that Jesus spake when here, so that nothing is lost to us of all that proceeded from His gracious lips.

Peace He leaves with us, a peace founded on His atoning sacrifice—peace of conscience; and lest by any means (though surrounded, within and without, with all that divine love can give for the way home) our hearts should be tossed with anxious care, He gives us, counting upon our *obedient* walk, His own "Peace,"—His own heart's repose when here, in doing His Father's will, at all cost to Himself, through life and in death.

None of His gifts to us were given after the manner in which the world bestows its favours;* nothing that is of us naturally ever could or did draw His love and favours towards us. He chose to love us and bless us accordingly, for infinite and eternal reasons of His own, the secret of which is hidden in His own heart.

* The world *gives a thing away*; Christ, while giving to us, loses nothing of what He gives, He brings us into the enjoyment of it all with Himself.

A love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its blest co-heirs.

Because of this, He says to us—"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (See Deut. vii. 7, 8; Rom. xi. 29; Eph. i. 4; 1 John iv. 10.)

The Father, in sending Him, commanded Him what to speak (see v. 36, viii. 38, xii. 49, 50) and also what to do, even as to death itself (x. 18, xiv. 31), and it was His unchanging delight to obey (Ps. xl. 8; John viii. 28, 29); in John x. 17, He tells us that it was this love in the final act of His perfect pathway on earth, that in a peculiar manner drew to Himself the love of the Father.

The "prince of this world" was allowed every opportunity (of which he took the utmost advantage), to use every cunning art, and device, and pressure that he could command, to turn Him from doing His Father's will, but all was of no avail; He says of Satan's crowning and final effort, when the *cross* was immediately at hand, he "hath nothing in Me."

The youngest babe in the family of God may learn from these precious portions of the written word, how well-pleasing it is to the Father and the Son, *when* we are found "imitators" of Him who has left us an example "that we should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21-23; Phil. i. 29). The *present* consequences in suffering, and shame, and loss, inseparable from such a path, from Satan, from the world, and at times from those

that are His own, are scarcely alluded to in the chapter, but are fully recognised by God, and treated of elsewhere (John xii. 26 ; 1 Cor. xv. 58).

How precious to the Father, to the Son, and to the Spirit, is the *obedience* of saints. H. K.

Hints on Daniel.

THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT.

(Chapter viii.)

GOD is pleased to cause a second vision to pass before Daniel. It is still the period of the first beast's power. The Babylonian empire, though nearing its end, is still in existence. But the prophet is carried in vision to the capital of the kingdom that was to follow upon its downfall.

It is of importance to observe that a remarkable change comes at this part of the book. From the first verse of this chapter to the end of the book the language is Hebrew, whereas from chapter ii. 4 to vii. 28 it is Chaldee. The reason of this is that in the first part of the book we have especially what has reference to the course of the great Gentile powers, their rise and fall, their succession, and their moral characteristics, hence the language used was that in common use in the Babylonian capital. But in the chapters that follow, God is pleased to

describe what has specially to do with His own people—the Jews—consequently Hebrew is the language employed. True, we likewise find much about the third and fourth beasts, or at least their representatives in the last days, but this only because of their close connection with the history of the Jewish nation.

It is well to remember that whilst stupendous changes may be taking place amongst the nations of the earth, empires may rise and empires may crumble into dust, God has one object of interest on the earth, and that is the people that He brought out of Egypt. So far as the earth and God's dealings with the earth are concerned, that only is of importance which has to do with them. They are beloved for the fathers' sakes, and of them as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom. ix. 1-6.)

The attempt of the rationalists to prove that Daniel lived under the third or Grecian empire breaks down at every turn, it is evidence to all but themselves of that hostility to God and His word that fills the natural mind which is enmity against God. The spirit of God is here giving us through Daniel a marvellous outline of what was all future at the time that it was written, and much of which, as we shall see, remains to be accomplished.

“I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two

horns, etc." (ver. 3). We do not need history to explain, for in verse 20 we are told that "the ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia."

The ram of chapter viii. is the same as the bear of chapter vii. If we remember that the empire had not yet arisen, we cannot but be struck with the remarkable accuracy of the details given. Need we wonder? God is the author of the book, Daniel is but the instrument. The ram had two horns; here we are shown the composite nature of the Persian empire. Two peoples went to form it—the Medes and the Persians. But of these two horns one was higher than the other, and this fact is well known to history, for the Persian element preponderated; and yet, strange to say, it was the later in asserting itself: "the higher came up last."

In all this we see the absolute accuracy of the Scripture. It would have been impossible, apart from divine inspiration, to have given in two or three lines such a perfect forecast of the future. No wonder that the deniers of revelation exert their utmost powers to disprove the early date of Daniel. Porphyry, the heathen writer of the second century, did the same; how sad and awful a spectacle to see the twentieth century theologians and doctors of divinity in such company. But apostate christendom is more guilty than dark heathendom, and its damnation slumbereth not.

The ram pushes "westward, and northward, and southward" (ver. 4). It is an Eastern power—Eastern so far as Palestine is concerned—that is here represented, and in this language we are shown the direction of its conquests.

But now the prophet's gaze is directed to the west: "an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth" (ver. 5). The chapter further on explains this to be "the king of Grecia" (ver. 21). It is the same as the leopard of the previous chapter. He is seen to come on the face of the whole earth, and with such impetuous rapidity that he "touched not the ground." Unlike the ram, which pushed west, north, and south, aggrandizing itself slowly, if surely, according to its own will, the he-goat has one point of furious attack, "he came to the ram . . . and ran unto him in the fury of his power." But this is not sufficient to describe his bitter antagonism, he "came close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him." The fact was that Greece had an old and very real ground of antagonism to the Persian empire. The vast armies of Persia had invaded Greece in the days when this latter was but a small and insignificant people, but now God's time had come for the passing away of the second empire and the uprising of the third. "There was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."

But further details are given that place beyond

all doubt the true interpretation of the vision ; “the goat had a notable horn between his eyes” (ver. 5), and this great horn, we are told, is “the first king” (ver. 21). It was Alexander the Great, the mighty conqueror so well known to history. Only here let us remember, the Spirit of God was giving prophetically what was not accomplished historically till nearly three hundred years after. Through Alexander’s extraordinary energy the power of Greece made itself felt far and wide in a remarkably short space of time, “the he-goat waxed very great” (ver. 8). But at the very zenith of his fame and power he was suddenly stricken down, “when he was strong the great horn was broken.” He died when he was still but a young man, only about thirty-three years of age, and in the midst of his victories.

Then after a short time the empire that Alexander had built up was divided into four parts, over which four of his generals became rulers. No language could more accurately describe what really took place. When the great horn was broken, that is, after Alexander’s death, there “came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven” (ver. 8). Though powerful, yet they were not so strong as he, “four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power” (ver. 22).

Nobody in the smallest degree familiar with the history of those times can fail to be struck

with the marvellous accuracy of the description here given so briefly. Had Daniel been writing history instead of prophecy it would have been absolutely impossible to have given a more correct account of what actually took place. So clear is this that a mere schoolboy can discern the perfect accord between the facts of history and the words of Daniel. If, as the higher critics assert, Daniel lived in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century before Christ, that is to say, *after* the events had taken place, how is it that what he wrote was not understood? The last verse of our chapter tells us that Daniel was "astonished at the vision, but none understood it." This alone is sufficient to shatter the rationalists' pet theory of the late date of Daniel.

But Scripture does not merely relate history, even prophetically. Nothing is inserted without definite purpose, and here, as we have seen, the object before the Spirit's mind is to record what concerns the Jewish nation, and that especially in the last stages of its history. Consequently two of the divisions of Alexander's empire are passed over in silence. Two only out of the four came into close contact with the Jewish nation, and though all appearance of their dominion has long since passed away, yet they are destined to revive, and representatives of these will play a most important part in the future history of God's earthly people.

HINTS ON DANIEL.

241

They are spoken of in chapter xi. as "the king of the north" and "the king of the south." The first of these, the king of the north, is typified by "the little horn" of chapter viii.

We must not suppose that the little horn of chapter vii. is the same as the little horn of chapter viii. They are two distinct personages, each of which will influence in a marvellous way the affairs of the world, and of the Jews in the future, possibly at no very distant date. Some have thought that the little horn of chapter vii. was the Papacy, and that of chapter viii. Islamism, the great scourges of Christendom in the West and the East respectively. But it is of importance to remember that Daniel is treating not of Christians and the Church, but of the times when God will once more be directly dealing with His earthly people, Israel. If this were better understood many sincere and well-meaning Christians would be saved from their lamentable and futile attempts at fixing the date of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. What have the 1260 days, call them years or what you please, to do with anything taking place during this unreckoned period? In saying this we do not for one moment question that they are literal days. But these days will not commence to be counted until the removal of the Church, and the resumption of God's dealings with His earthly people.

(To be continued.)

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE IV.

(Chap. v., *continued.*)

GOD, then, has brought me into infinite blessing. I stand before Him perfectly justified ; "accepted in the Beloved," too, though that is not so much the subject here. Yet that is the place we occupy before Him, but we are in the wilderness, we are travelling home, and the Christian's life is not an easy one. He will have tribulation to a certainty. It is promised to him. Christ said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But if I am rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, I am to rejoice in tribulations also, because it is the same word in the two verses—we rejoice in hope of the glory, and we rejoice in tribulations down here. We are passing through a world where troubles are on every hand for the Christian. I am speaking of the peculiar trials that beset the child of God in a world where everything is against him because everything is against Christ. And why am I to rejoice in tribulation? Because it works patience. I find that if I have my will set on anything here, God will very likely have to break it. It is a very hard thing to have all my plans that I have made for myself broken

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 243

up. And yet that is what a Christian often does find. He maps out a plan for himself, and he makes up his mind to do a certain thing, and God breaks up the whole thing. It exercises our hearts and consciences often. But what is it to lead to? Patience. We go through the world patiently with subject spirits. That is a thing that the world does not understand, but the Christian learns by it. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." What is this experience that I discover from it? Is it experience about myself? Not at all. If we make experiences about ourselves, they are most humbling experiences; the experiences we make of ourselves are generally experiences in the path of failure, but these are experiences in the path of faith. I find out what God is for me; I learn all that God is in His infinite wisdom, His almighty power, and His everlasting love. I find experiences of all that God is for me in my pathway down here.

And experience worketh hope and no wonder! What I have learned in the past fills me with confidence for the future. I know that the God who has been *for* me by the way, no matter what the tribulation that I have to pass through in the path of faith, will be *for* me to the end, and I learn to trust that God, and to know that His love will lead Him to do everything and anything for me. And so we learn that experience worketh hope, and what next? "Hope maketh

not ashamed." All the confidence that has been awakened in my heart makes me face everything here with perfect boldness. What I have learned of God in the past gives me perfect confidence in Him for all that is to come ; so that I can go out into the world with boldness, because the love of God is shed abroad in my heart.

I have often heard people speaking of another, and saying, "I am sure he has got the love of God in his heart." What do they mean by that? Well, that he loves God. But this verse is speaking of God's love, not of our love to God. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." All the great love that fills the heart of God is shed abroad in these poor hearts of ours by the Holy Ghost given unto us. These are the experiences which we make in our Christian path. We learn more of God—we learn how great His love is. And the place where we learn it in its fulness, is no doubt the cross of Christ, because it goes on to say, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." We were without strength, we were ungodly, and, still worse, we were enemies, and yet God loved us in that state. That is the character of His love.

The next verse says that man will love one whom he thinks to be good. He will not lay down his life for a righteous man, but he might for a good man. That is man's love. He will

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 245

love a man who, he thinks, deserves his love. But that is not God's love. Look at the eighth verse, "But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "God commendeth His love," that is a love which is altogether peculiar to Himself, a love that the world knows nothing of. Did He wait until we deserved His love? "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us." And look at the tenth verse, "When we were enemies (not only sinners), we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son"; we were all sinners, we have all sought our own pleasure in the world, and that has led us away from God. Through God's grace we may get arrested at the very start, but the path of our own will always leads us away from God, but not only that, we are at enmity against God. The heart of man hates God, and if we want a proof of that we have only to look at the cross of Christ. It was man who put Him there. When God said, I love the world, and I will give My Son for it; man said, We hate God, and we will nail His Son to the cross. There is an example of the enmity of the heart of man. Have we learned that our nature is one which is at positive enmity against God? Have we learned that? And yet it says, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

God's love comes to us not only as sinners, but

as enemies. We hated God, and yet He reconciles us to Himself by the very thing that proves our great enmity against Him, and that is by the death of Christ. And now look at the eleventh verse, "Not only so, but we also joy in God," and not in our blessings merely ; it is the same word that is used in the second and third verses. We not only rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but we can rejoice in the dealings of God with us in our pathway home ; and not only this, we can rejoice in God Himself, and that is the very highest point that we can possibly reach.

There are two subjects treated of in this Epistle to the Romans : first of all the sins that we have committed, and then the state of sin in which we find ourselves. Up to the eleventh verse of this fifth chapter it is all a question of our sins, our wicked deeds, and how God has brought in a remedy for that ; after the eleventh verse, it goes on to speak about what we are—not what we have done, but what we are ; and God has a remedy for that state which it is most important for us to understand. We will not go into it to-night, it will be our subject for next week. But up to the eleventh verse it is our sins, our guilt, what we have done for which a remedy has to be found, and that is what we get in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that I can find my delight in God's very presence. Instead of being driven out from before Him as Adam had been, we can joy in God through our Lord

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 247

Jesus Christ. That is our portion as we pass through this world. We shall surely, when we get to heaven, joy in His presence, but what a thought that we can joy in Him even now. How often we find things coming in to hinder our joy in God—the little things of daily life for instance—but let us remember that that is our privilege.

“By whom we have now received the reconciliation,” not the atonement, of course the atonement was the work done Godward, but in this verse the word should be “reconciliation,” whereas in the second chapter of the Hebrews it should be “atonement.” “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make (not reconciliation but) atonement for the sins of the people.” Through Christ’s work on the cross we receive reconciliation. The atonement was for God, the reconciliation is for us. And what a place that brings us into! Instead of my being afraid of God, and instead of my being at enmity against God, I am brought into His presence at perfect peace and reconciled to Him.

But perhaps you say, what about the future? If I am on the road to the glory there is many a thing that may happen to me before I reach it, and perhaps I may not reach it at all; is it not in some way dependent upon myself? Look at

the tenth verse, "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life"—it is a most interesting thing to notice the "much mores" of this chapter. It gives one an idea of the superabounding grace of God. It is a wonderful thing to be reconciled to God, for a man who is born at enmity against Him to be brought near to God. Who but God could have devised such a thing as that? But, He says, "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Why does it say, "*We shall* be saved?" Does not a believer know that he *is* saved? And yet here it says, "We shall be saved by His life." It is perfectly true that the believer *is* saved by grace, and yet there is another sense in which we *shall* be saved. Moreover, if it be true that we are already saved through the *death* of Christ, yet it is also true that we shall be saved by His life. But not the life of Christ before the cross; it is speaking here of His life on the other side of death. If we were reconciled through His death; if when we were enemies, God was able to reconcile an enemy, how much more will He keep us now that we are friends! It means that we shall be saved right on through every difficulty and danger in spite of all the power of the flesh, the world and Satan against us, because there is all the power of the Lord Jesus Christ in constant exercise for us, and He never loses

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 249

sight of His people—the youngest and the weakest—and we are all weak. The Lord Jesus Christ never takes His eyes off us and, with His continual intercession, His who lives in the power of an endless life, we shall be delivered from every hostile power, and saved to the very uttermost.

Is it not a wonderful thing how God has met every need of our souls! He has brought us to Himself, so that we are at peace with Him about all our sins, then He gives us a standing before Him so that we can be ever in His favour, and then He fills our hearts with the hope of glory so that we can rejoice in a dark scene such as this is, and every day experience His love and His power to give us all that we need to draw us nearer to Himself, for that is what God loves—that we should be near Him. We are perfectly near Him in Christ, but He wants to draw our hearts nearer to Himself practically. It is not merely a doctrine that we understand, but it is something for the heart to enjoy. So that every blessing that flows to us through Christ brings us closer to His peerless person. The person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the blessed subject of which God speaks to us in the gospel.

May the Lord lead our hearts into the enjoyment of it, and draw us closer and closer to Himself, so that we may be brighter witnesses for Him, living for Him and waiting for His coming again!

Jesus Wept.

JOHN xi.

THOSE who know heaven to be their home can look upon all things here as a stepping-stone helping them on up there.

All must pass away here ; the stamp of death is upon everything, but marvellous the power the gospel gives to face it all ! To nature death is terrible, and there is sadness in the thought even of the fading of a flower not to be expressed, seeing flowers in the room of a sick one and feeling both are fading and dying, and the hand that gathered shall gather no more. Yet the grace of God comes in just there in all the sweetness of the gospel, giving His dying children to realise and to know all the brightness of their future home in heaven. What if all the power of the enemy is brought before us at the grave, have we not all in the second Adam to uphold and lift us above everything. We are all passing on, going home. We have to look upon heaven as a home to which we are on our way, so to have hold of the hope of the gospel with the one hand as to let go the world with the other. The gospel brings eternal realities before the soul, and shows us we ourselves are linked with them.

JESUS WEPT.

251

Oh! how bright the glory of God burning in the lamp of our future.

To have hold of Christ is to have hold of the resurrection and the life. He is the power and spring of life. He spake as it were upon the tombs of us all in this vast charnel house. We see in Him the God of creation and the God of resurrection, He who could people the earth out of nothing, and raise the dead out of nothing by one and the same power. The very fact of our Creator being presented to us as a man, how marvellous! To have Him who spake and it was done down on this earth in our form, God manifest in flesh! To have Him up there on the throne of God a man still, and able up there to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; to know there is nothing for us in all our sorrows but gathering round this tender-hearted risen Jesus, how blessed a thought!

Alas, alas! how we do shut out God from His creation. How would you have your Creator manifested to you in this vast charnel house, where pining sickness and misery meet the eye on all sides? If you don't know your God you may know Him by His having been manifested down here, and when He manifested Himself it was to meet the condition in which the world was.

Mark Him in this death scene, He, the resurrection and the life, weeping with the weepers.

Mary does not go to the grave, but to Christ.

Terrible to nature to see one we love in the dust of death, yet sweet to think we commit those we love to His care, at whose voice they will come forth in everlasting vigour and fresh immortality.

There is something so marvellously blessed in the fact of God in human form down here to weep with man, and by almighty power to turn man's sorrow into joy, to see Him going hither and thither to give life to the dead, and entering the house of mourning for that purpose. Here we read when God saw the poor woman weeping, He groaned in spirit, anguish choked His utterance—God in human form joined issue with man and wept with him. It was worth as it were an ocean of tears to see those precious drops. It was through the human nature of Christ the heart of God was let out,

“and Jesus wept.”

J. WILLANS.

THIS has been, for some thirty years, a deep conviction of my soul, that no book can be written in behalf of the Bible like the Bible itself. Man's defences are man's word; they may help to beat off attacks, they may draw out some portion of its meaning. The Bible is God's word, and through it God the Holy Ghost, who spake it, speaks to the soul which closes not itself against it.

* * *

Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham.

LOT, Abraham's nephew, had gone up with him from Ur of the Chaldees ; but evidently there was no exercise of faith on his part, he followed in the faith of another. Soon a testing time comes—there was a strife between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle, and that in the presence of the Canaanites who dwelt in the land. It is an unseemly thing for saints of God to have contentions, especially in the presence of the unconverted world. Here the moral elevation of the man of faith, above worldly and selfish principles, shines out particularly brightly. He says, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. . . . Is not the whole land before thee?" &c. He had such a portion in God Himself, that he could afford to leave the choice of worldly things to one whose heart, after all, was set upon them. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere ;" it was "even as the garden of the Lord," and most attractive to the natural mind.

Lot, we know from the New Testament, was really a saint of God ; but his heart was set on

254 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

worldly things and possessions, instead of on pursuing like Abraham the path of faith which God had marked out. His downward course to Sodom was gradual; like many a Christian, who begins by losing first love to Christ, and gradually becomes assimilated more and more to the world. First, Lot "beheld all the plain of Jordan"; then he "chose for himself all the plain of Jordan"; then he "dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom"; and, lastly, "he sat in the gate of Sodom": but the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinners before the Lord.

The same down grade has been evidenced in the history of the Church of God collectively, and in the course of many of the people of God individually. The wise virgins in the parable in Matthew xxv., as well as the foolish, losing sight of Christ as the Object, and the bright hope of His coming as that which delivered them from the world, all gradually got into a sleepy state—for this is the meaning of the word "slumbered"—and, eventually, they went fast asleep. They became identified with the world, in its ways and practices, and lost sight of the portion they had in Christ, and the hope of His coming to take them to Himself.

But how clearly the contrast in the case of Abraham, the man of faith, shines out in this portion of the Word. Abraham dwelled, not in the polluted atmosphere of Sodom, but in

LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM. 255

the land of God's choice—Canaan. “And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever.” If Lot lifted up his eyes and was caught by the worldly attractions of the plain and its cities, now God tells Abraham to lift up his eyes, for all the land was the gift of Jehovah to him and to his seed for ever. And if the blessings promised to the man of faith in that day were great, how much more wonderful are those with which God has blessed His people now, in virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ! The apostle bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, that the saints might apprehend what is the length and breadth and depth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. He would have them look out from this wonderful centre of glory, to which they are brought in grace, and survey all that the counsels of God had marked out for the glory of Christ, in its vast extent; to be made good manifestly in the day that is coming; but which we can enter into now in faith.

Lot soon suffers the consequences of his association with the world, for, when war arises, the King of Sodom is defeated, and Lot is carried away captive—he “dwelt in

Sodom." Like the two and a half tribes who settled east of Jordan, short of the promised land—they were the first to be desolated and carried away captive, when the enemies of Israel came into power. Here, again, God gives victory to the man of faith; and Abraham recovers Lot and his property. Christ has won the victory for His people, and He will yet reign over this world in millennial glory as king and priest. This is typified by Melchizedek, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who comes out and blesses Abraham, and receives a tenth of the spoils. Abraham refuses to take anything from the King of Sodom; he had learnt of God in the secret of communion, and now, when the occasion arises, he refuses to be a receiver from the world.

The word of the Lord now comes to Abraham in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." He was to learn that protection, and all that the man of faith could need, were to be found in God Himself. God promises that his seed should be as the stars of heaven. Faith does not look at difficulties, or at second causes; but at *God*, who is above all difficulties. The apostle Paul refers to this in Romans iv. 3, and Galatians iii. 6—"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness"—to show that justification was not on the principle of law or works, but on the principle

LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM. 257

of faith. James quotes it also in order to prove that, while we are justified, as before men, by works, these works are of no value before God unless they are the fruit of faith. Faith sets to its seal that *God is true*: Abraham "believed God." Had God promised?—then, if so, His promise must infallibly be fulfilled, however much appearances may tell to the contrary. This is an immense principle for the people of God to realise, in all ages. It is just where we lack; for nature always likes something tangible and visible to rest upon. So it was with Israel, and so it is with us; as the Lord says through the prophet, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that hold no water." The first failure is letting go direct and implicit dependence on God; and consequently there must be the turning to men and men's arrangements instead. God, then, graciously comes in and makes a covenant with Abraham; renewing His promise to give Him the land; and, at the same time, revealing to him that his seed would have to sojourn in a foreign land four hundred years, for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.

Abraham now listens to Sarah his wife, and tries to obtain the fulfilment of the promise that God made him in a fleshly way. Sarah had no child, and yet God had promised that

his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude ; but, as regards the accomplishment of the promise, the effort to attain it before God's time comes to nothing, and only brings bitterness in the end.

After this the Lord again appears to Abraham, revealing Himself as "the Almighty God." Previously He had revealed Himself as "thy shield and thy exceeding great reward,"—this is what He was *for Abraham* ; but now He declares Himself to be "God Almighty"—what He *is* in Himself. This title was most suitable for the time ; Abraham being a stranger and sojourner needed His protecting care. Many people, and even many true Christians, speak of God as "the Almighty," and it is quite true that He is this, being unchangeable in Himself ; but it is not at all the relationship in which He is *now* revealing Himself. When the Lord Jesus died and rose again from the dead, He sent that wonderful message by Mary Magdalene to His disciples, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father ; and to My God, and your God." The relationship into which the Christian is introduced is that of a child to *the Father* ; for "because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father." Before Christ the time had not come to declare this new and blessed relationship so characteristic of Christianity ; but when the work of redemp-

LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM. 259

tion was accomplished, the Holy Spirit came down to make it good in our hearts, and to lead the children of God into the conscious enjoyment of it. Here God talks with Abraham and confirms His covenant with him, renewing His promise to give to him and his seed the land wherein he was a stranger, for an everlasting possession, and to be their God. God promises that Sarah should have a son, to be called Isaac. This seemed impossible to nature, and Abraham still looked to the son born of Hagar: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" God gives the covenant of circumcision: it signified death to the flesh, for we must learn that "the flesh profiteth nothing." He puts faith to the test by a long process of waiting, but the trial is always in grace and for our blessing in the end.

The next time God appeared to Abraham was by the oaks of Mamre as he sat in his tent door in the heat of the day. He assumes human form, coming with two angels also in human form. What wonderful intimacy there is here between the Lord and His servant! Abraham treats them with every respect, and prepares a repast for them, and they ate. The Lord promises a son to Sarah. Sarah, in unbelief, laughs "within herself," but the Lord knew all that was passing, and says, "Why did Sarah laugh?" Abraham, when a similar promise was made to him, laughed also, but one cannot doubt that it was with joy, not in un-

belief; and God will prove, in His own time, that nothing is too hard for Him.

The two angels then go on to Sodom, but Abraham remains standing before the Lord, enjoying communion with Him, but with all the reverence due to His presence. Unlike Lot in Sodom Abraham is separated from the world. He is in the clear light of God's presence, enjoying intelligent and intimate communion, instead of breathing the polluted atmosphere of that defiled city. Abraham pleads that Sodom might be spared, in that spirit of reverence and confidence which his acquaintance with the character of God inspires; and so he is called the "friend of God." The Lord says, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" In John xv. the Lord Jesus says to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." We give our *commands* to our servants; we confide our inmost desires and intentions to our friends. What intimacy of divine grace it is that can say, "*All things* that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you!"

Poor Lot suffers the consequences of his worldly choice, for he loses everything and only just escapes from the overthrow of Sodom. The language in which the inspired Word has expressed his deliverance is striking—"And God

remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow." It does not say He remembered Lot: no doubt it was not His mind that Lot should perish, but Abraham was in the path of separation from the world, enjoying communion with God and interceding for Sodom; and being in this place, God remembered him and delivered Lot.

(*To be concluded.*)



Faith and Confession.

(ROM. x. 8, 9.)



IGNORANT, alas, on the side of that which God taught—being ignorant of *God's* righteousness, they sought to establish their *own* righteousness.

“Secret things,” the lawgiver had said, “belong to our God;” that is to say, the law was given as a *condition* to the enjoyment of the blessing; but what God might do in grace, under the consequences of a broken law, remained in the secrecy of His supreme will. Upon this another principle is distinctly revealed, namely, that when the fulfilment of the law was impossible, *then*, if the heart turned to God, He would accept. It was no longer the law, it was faith. If so, it is Christ

who is its object. The testimony of God was the hope when all was ruined.

The word of faith as being the hope was that which Paul announced, that if *any one* confessed with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in his heart that God had raised Him from the dead, he should be saved. Precious, simple, and positive assertion! borne out, if it were needed, by the Old Testament, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed." The words heart and mouth, are in contrast with the law.

Observe it does not say, if you *love* in your heart, or if your heart is what it ought to be towards God, but, "if you *believe* in your heart." A man believes with his heart when he really believes with a heart interested in the thing. His *affections* being engaged in the *truth*, he desires, when grace is spoken of, that that which is told him should be the *truth*. He desires the thing, and at the same time he does not doubt it. It is not his having part in it that he believes, but in the *truth* of the thing itself, being concerned in it as important to himself. It is not the *state* of his affections, a very serious consideration *in its place*, but the importance and the truth of that which is presented, its importance to himself, as needing it for his salvation, a salvation that he is conscious of needing, that he cannot do without, a truth of which he is assured, as a testimony from God Himself. God affirms to such a one that salvation belongs to

him, but it is not that which he has to believe in as the object of faith ; it is that of which God assures *every one* that believes.

This faith is manifested by the confession of the name of Christ. The faith of the heart produces the confession of the mouth. It is to say that Christ has conquered. It is a confession that brings in *God*, in answer to the name of *Jesus*. He believes in Christ unto salvation, he *has* the faith that justifies.

The human heart perplexes itself so much the more because it is sincere, so long as there is any unbelief and self-righteousness remaining. It is impossible that an awakened soul should not feel the necessity of having the heart set right and turned to God, and hence he thinks to make the favour of God depend on the state of his *own* affections, whereas God loves us while we are yet sinners. The state of *our* affection is of all importance, but it supposes a relationship *already* existing. *God's* love *has* done something, according to our necessities, and according to the divine glory. It has *given* Jesus, and Jesus *has* accomplished what was required in order that we might participate in *divine* righteousness, and thus He has placed *every one* who, acknowledging that he is a lost sinner, believes in Him, in the secure relationship of a *child*, and of a justified soul before God, according to the perfection of the work of Christ. Salvation belongs to this soul according to the

declaration of *God* Himself: loved with such love, saved by such grace, enjoying such favour, let it cultivate affections suitable to the gift of Jesus, and to the knowledge of Him and of His goodness.

J. N. D.

Hints on Daniel.

“A KING OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE.”

(Chap. viii.)

WE have already pointed out that the little horn of this chapter is a totally different personage from the little horn of chapter vii. Here we have to do with the Grecian empire, and not the Roman, as in chapter vii.

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Grecian empire was divided into four parts, as we have seen, and “out of one of them came forth a little horn” (ver. 9). This little horn waxes exceeding great, and exerts its influence “toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.” In other words, it is the “king of the north” of chapter xi., and geographically occupies the position of Turkey in Asia. In the mind of God its importance is due to its connection with that land which is “the glory of all lands”; the land which Jehovah had espied for Israel whom He had chosen, and

to whom He had made Himself known in the land of Egypt as their Redeemer and Deliverer (Ezek. xx.). Palestine, in spite of all its desolations, was still to the prophet Daniel "the pleasant land."

The little horn waxed great, even to "the host of heaven," a term which doubtless applies to those in authority amongst the Jews. We cannot too frequently remind our readers that the circumstances to which these prophecies relate are Jewish and not Christian. Hence we must not expect to find here an allusion to Mohammedanism any more than to the Papacy in chapter vii.

We believe that there has already been a partial fulfilment of this prophecy. Antiochus Epiphanes, the notoriously wicked king of the Seleucidæ, is no doubt referred to as the little horn, yet he was but a type of another, a king of fierce countenance, who is still to come. In the study of the Old Testament prophets, it is of importance to bear in mind that the Spirit of God always has in view the glory of Christ and those events which are to take place at the end. Indeed, we are told in this very chapter, when Daniel seeks for the meaning of the vision, that "at the time of the end shall be the vision"; and Gabriel explains to him what shall be "in the last end of the indignation" (ver. 19).

"The indignation" was a period in the history of Israel with which the mind of the prophet was familiar. Such a passage as Isaiah x. 5-25 would

no doubt rise to his thoughts as the angel speaks to him of "the last end of the indignation." Was not this indignation the period of Jehovah's anger against His people? Who was the instrument in His hand to execute it? Was it not this very king of the north? For the Assyrian and the king of the north are the same individual.

It is clear that this remarkable passage in Isaiah goes very much further in its application than to the circumstances existing at the time the prophecy was given; for the Assyrian of Isaiah's day has long since passed away, and yet most certainly the Lord has not yet performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and in Jerusalem (ver. 12). But what are we told in this passage? Is it not that when that whole work has been performed, and not till then, the Assyrian will be punished? What is more clear than this, that some one is yet to arise in connection with Israel in the last days, of whom the Assyrian of the past was a type?

The worst part of the indignation against Israel is yet to come. The time of this great tribulation is yet before them. It will last for three years and a half, or 1,260 days, but "the indignation shall cease." And how will it cease? By the destruction of this very Assyrian, whom Jehovah will use for the chastisement of His people (ver. 25).

The little horn then, has no doubt had a partial

fulfilment historically in the notoriously wicked Antiochus Epiphanes, while at the same time it is evident that the explanation of the prophecy carries us on to the time of the end. But in verse 11 and the first half of verse 12 we find a parenthesis which refers, we believe, to that period which is yet to come. It will be observed that there is a remarkable change of the pronoun from "it" to "he." The "it" of verse 10, and of the latter part of verse 12, refers to the little horn, and has been fulfilled in the history of Antiochus Epiphanes. He had a special antipathy to the Jewish people, and set himself against those in prominence amongst them. In this he succeeded, as history informs us, and as the prophecy was beforehand in announcing; "it cast down some of the host and of the stars," &c. (ver. 10).

But in verse 11 we read of one who will magnify himself "even to the prince of the host," the Lord Himself. It is no mere accident that the pronoun is changed from "it" to "he," the Spirit of God would thereby draw our attention to the parenthesis, containing details of immense importance, which none understood (ver. 27) at the time the prophecy was given, but which doubtless the remnant will understand in a coming day.

At the close this one typified by Antiochus Epiphanes will set himself not merely against the leaders of the Jewish nation, for they will at

that time be back in their own land, and once more recognised as the people of God, but he will "stand up against the Prince of princes." This clearly means the Lord Himself, the Messiah of Israel. This is the one referred to in verse 11 as "the prince of the host." Here it is important to observe that the marginal reading is the correct one. Not "by" him, but "from Him the daily sacrifice was taken away." In other words, the "him" of this clause refers to Christ and not to the king of the north of the future. While it is true that during the period of the great tribulation the restored sacrifices shall be made to cease, nevertheless this will be brought about by the leader of the Roman empire, the little horn of chapter vii., and not by the king of the north, or little horn of chapter viii. This will come before us while studying the next chapter. We merely allude to it in passing as another instance of the absolute accuracy of Scripture.

No doubt even verse 11 has had a measure of fulfilment, for Antiochus Epiphanes entered the sanctuary and offered a sow on the altar in profane mockery, and while by no means dogmatising on the point, we are inclined to think that the 2,300 days of verse 14 refers to this past profanation of the temple rather than to the future. At any rate, it is well to remember that whether past or future it has exclusively to do with Jewish times. To see this will save us from the attempt to fit it in

with any dates during the period of Christendom's history.

There can be no doubt that the close of the chapter looks on to what is yet future. However improbable it may appear to those unacquainted with Scripture, that a mighty king shall yet stand up in the region once ruled over by Antiochus, this portion of the prophetic Word, along with many others that we may glance at later on, leaves no room for doubt on the point. Who this king will be, whether it will be the Sultan who now rules, or misrules, that territory, we do not attempt to predict. But it is clear that in "the latter time" when the transgressors are come to the full—for things are going from bad to worse there as everywhere else—a king of fierce countenance shall stand up. His policy will not only be one of war and conquest by the force of arms, though this he will do and that most effectually. But he will likewise "cause craft to prosper"; he will be a man of intellectual ability, "understanding dark sentences," and all this power both mental and material will be directed towards the furtherance of his hostile designs against "the mighty and holy people," that is, the Jews.

It may seem strange that God should speak in such terms of that nation, but we must remember that "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes," and that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi.). God will

never go back from His promises, whether these be in connection with earthly blessings or heavenly ; and though they may seem to us all unworthy of such a title, nevertheless it is theirs on the ground of responsibility no less than of privilege.

A striking detail is added in verse 24. Mighty as this king will be, he will have one behind him of greater power still—"his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." We know which of the so-called Great Powers* of the present day is busying itself especially in the affairs of the Sultan. It is impossible for any student of the Word of God not to look with thrilling interest upon all that is transpiring in the political world to-day. The awakening of the national spirit amongst the Jews, their active preparations for a return on a large scale to the land of Palestine, the state of unrest at Constantinople and throughout the lands generally where the Sultan exercises his sway, and the ever-increasing interference of Russia in those parts, are amongst the signs of the times which none but the utterly indifferent can fail to observe.

That there will be wars affecting all those countries which are contiguous to Palestine is unquestionable—wars in which this king of fierce

* The reader will find this subject treated at length in a pamphlet entitled "Russia's Destiny in the Light of Prophecy," by the Editor.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 271

countenance will take a prominent part; this will come before us later on, but we would again point out that there will be a policy of craft and intrigue as well; "by peace" as well as by war shall many be destroyed. But in the end he will "stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand" (ver. 25).

These days are nearing rapidly. The coming of the Lord to take His Church to heaven is nearer still. May all who know Him be on their watchtowers—

"Watching and ready may we be
As those who wait their Lord to see."

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE IV.

(Chap. v. 8-21.)

WE have seen that in the first three chapters of the epistle, God was bringing out the sinfulness of man, viewing him in every sphere of life. Gentiles, heathen philosophers, Jews—all were brought in guilty before God. God was showing up in these scriptures what was the condition in which the whole world was found, and, as we noticed, the summing up of the whole argument

was, that every mouth was stopped and all the world was guilty before God (chap. iii. 21).

Then we are told what God is, and what God's remedy is. We might naturally have supposed that when God had proved man to be guilty, He would straightway speak of condemnation ; that He would at once have told us how He was going to judge a guilty world. But not so, when God has proved man's guilt beyond question, He then speaks of justifying him, and, as we have seen, it all comes from the heart of God. In the gospel we learn what God in His grace and love has done in order to bring man out of the terrible state into which his sins had plunged him ; it was God devised the means by which the guilty sinner might be brought into His presence at perfect peace with Him.

The opening of this fifth chapter of Romans is familiar to us all, and I do not purpose to dwell upon it now. I suppose the bulk of us here to-night have already received the blessings of which it speaks. That is, I presume that we are all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if so, we are privileged to know that we are justified from our sins and therefore at perfect peace with God, though there are numbers of true believers who have not learned it. They may not be in the habit of hearing a pure simple gospel, and there may be other reasons why they do not know it. But there can be no question about this, that if we take God's Word

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 273

as our guide, the privilege of every believer is to know that he is justified from all his sins, and, thus being at perfect peace with God, the future has no fears for him, but he rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. Then as to his present position, he "has access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," so that he may live, and walk, and spend the little time until the Lord comes for him, in the full assurance of God's favour and love. Now all this starts from God Himself, and we read in the eighth verse of our chapter, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Instead of speaking to us of judgment, instead of telling us, *You are guilty, and I am going to condemn you*; to such as we are, God commends His own love, a love peculiar to Himself.

In verses 8 and 9 two things are said about us: first, we were sinners, and, secondly, we were enemies. What is the remedy God has for us as sinners? "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners"—while we were still in that state, sinners and guilty—"Christ died for us." That is to say, that the Lord Jesus Christ has been in the very place where our sins had brought us. God Himself has met us just where we were; He has brought us the very things that we need. It is a wonderful thought that—"while we were yet sinners." He did not wait until we had got

out of that state, until we had improved our condition. He did not wait until we had done the best we could, but, just as we were, "yet sinners," Christ died for us.

But not only were we sinners, we were at positive enmity against God. Now look at these two "much mores" in the ninth and tenth verses. "*Much more* then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." We are *justified* by God, not merely forgiven. You know how we were justified; the Lord Jesus Christ has Himself been to the place where the judgment of our sins was. He as our substitute, has been where our sins were, and where the judgment of a sin-hating God was against them; and He has borne them, and has endured that judgment; the wrath of God against sin has been exhausted. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken that upon Himself, He has borne the judgment, He has suffered what we deserved; He suffered and therefore we stand justified by His blood, and, if we are justified by His blood, much more we shall be saved.

Somebody may ask, I thought that every believer was saved already, what then does it mean in this verse when it says, "we *shall*

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 275

be saved from wrath"? If the Lord Jesus Christ has borne all the wrath of God for us on the cross, shall we go on continually groaning out in this world, "from Thy wrath, O Lord, deliver us"? The Lord Jesus Christ has already endured that for us. We have been justified by His blood, justified by faith, justified by the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has borne the wrath and the judgment. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved." But that seems to imply that salvation is not yet complete.

There is a sense in which salvation in Scripture is looked upon as a future state. If you turn to the eleventh verse of the thirteenth chapter, "knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The moment I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I am saved. What then is the meaning of saying here that our salvation is nearer than when we believed? Salvation is spoken of in two senses. The moment I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I am saved, and every believer can say, I am as much saved now as I ever shall be so far as my soul is concerned. In that sense I am saved now, and when I am in heaven I shall not be more saved. And yet it says of the believer here that his salvation is *nearer* than when he believed. It is speaking of salvation in the

complete sense, and that will not be until we have our glorified bodies. We are passing through a world where dangers are on every hand, and where trials and difficulties beset our path, and where all the power of Satan and of the world is against us, and our own evil hearts are against us too, and our salvation in that sense will be complete only when we reach the glory.

Now look at another passage which speaks of the same thing, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12). We know how misunderstood that verse is. People say, I must do the best I can, I must work it out for myself. These Philippians were already saved; they were believers, and therefore they *were* saved. The apostle had been with them at one time and helped them through their difficulties when all the power of the world and Satan was against them; but now he is in prison and therefore no longer present with them, so he says, You cannot look to me for any help now, you are thrown upon your own resources. "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence"—now that you are left to battle through this

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 277

world by yourselves, much more now that you have not me to look to—"work out your own salvation ;" but do not forget that "it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Now look at the First Epistle of Peter, and we shall see the same thing there, "You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter i. 5). And further on in the same chapter, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (ver. 9). We have already received the salvation of our souls, but "we are kept by the power of God unto salvation ;" nothing else but the power of God can keep us. There are so many difficulties in our pathway—Satan, the world, the flesh—that unless we are kept by the power of God we should never get to the end at all. But the certainty we possess of getting there fills our hearts with joy now. Satan might reason with us, You may never get there at all, you may stumble by the way. God says, I will keep you. "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed." I believe that it is in that sense that the word is used here in our chapter. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

Now look at the tenth verse, "when we were

enemies"—not merely sinful and doing things to please ourselves regardless of God, but at enmity against God. At the cross we see the enmity of man's heart in all its intensity against God. If I am a believer, and am now justified through the death of Christ, is there any fear that I may be lost, or danger that I shall never reach the end of the journey? "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*"—God is now reasoning from His own side, from what He has done to what He is going to do in the future. If God, when I was an enemy, reconciled me, much more is He going to save me now that I am reconciled. It was a more difficult thing, so to speak, when I was an enemy, for God to reconcile me to Himself, than now that I am reconciled to keep me. God brought me out of the state in which sin had put me, to Himself, through the death of His Son, and now He is going to save me by His life. We were pointing out last week the reason of saying "by His life," because people think that it should be "by His death."

The salvation of my soul comes to me through the death of Christ, but salvation, in the sense of which we have been speaking, and which includes salvation all through the wilderness journey to the end, is by His life. What keeps me? Just that Christ ever lives

for me. We shall be saved by His life. That is a very great blessing—to know that the Lord Jesus Christ lives for me; and that it is by the power of that life, which He now lives on the other side of death, that I shall be kept to the end of my path here.

A Praise Song.

SERVICE eternal in rest never-ending,
 Myriads uniting Thy praise to repeat;
 Saints, in a transport of ecstasy bending,
 Bright crowns of glory to lay at Thy feet.

Gazing for ever in wrapt admiration,
 Saviour and Bridegroom, upon Thy loved face;
 Grasping in full, with sublime adoration,
 Fathomless secrets of goodness and grace.

Radiant in light which is but the reflection
 Caught from the blaze of Thy beauty divine,
 Wearing Thy name in its spotless perfection,
 Jesus! the Church in Thy likeness will shine.

Lord! Thou wilt see, with a joy none can measure,
 Blessèd result of Thy travail of soul,
 All Thy redeemed ones, to suit Thy heart's pleasure,
 Safely brought in to the heavenly goal.

—*From the French.*

IF God had let everyone off in mercy, that would not have been love; it would have been indifference to sin.

Correspondence.

Bromley :—Is the Bride in Revelation the Church or Israel?

“None other class of saved ones (besides the Church) could, with any appropriateness, be termed the Bride, the Lamb's wife, because of the following considerations :—

1. Israel is always represented as the married wife; the Church as the espoused one; the Bride only as the Lamb's wife, after she is no longer on earth. Israel is the wife under divorce, and put away in the meantime, and to be received back on her repentance; and,

2. The word *Lamb* (*αρνιον*) is representative of *rejection*, and only the Church could suffer with Christ, and, as His affianced bride, occupy His place as rejected in this world. No other could be *arnion's* (the rejected Lamb's) wife; for in no other age was there a rejected Lamb to be rejected with.

3. Also as a third thing, the false bride—the harlot—is surely the harlot of this Christian period, not a Jewish adulteress; and if she be the *Christendom* harlot, then the true bride must be the chaste *Christian* woman, or there would be no contrast; for what is the false fornicating *Christendom* a travesty of save of the pure Church of God, that shall come out of its awful defection, as “the Bride, the Lamb's wife”?

B. W. R.

Hints on Daniel.

CONFESSION AND PRAYER.

(Chap. ix. 1-20.)

THE portion now before us is filled with moral instruction of the most important character. For a right and intelligent understanding of its prophetic teaching, it is no doubt essential that we should study it from a correct dispensational standpoint. But it may safely be asserted that no exposition, however clear, no interpretation, however sound, will suffice unless accompanied by that attitude of soul so beautifully depicted in Daniel himself at the commencement of our chapter.

We have before observed that the chapters in the book of Daniel do not follow one another in strict chronological sequence. Chapter vi. has already described what took place in the reign of Darius the Mede, whereas chapters vii. and viii. record visions of the prophet before the Babylonian dynasty had passed away. But here in chapter ix. we find ourselves once more in the time of Darius.

Babylon had been judged. But Daniel's heart is still oppressed with a heavy burden. The "desolations of Jerusalem" still continued. Was there to be no end to this?

XXIII.

An expression repeatedly found in the Psalms and the Prophets will, no doubt, come to the reader's recollection. How often do we read the words, "How long, O Lord?" It is faith's question amidst days of ruin. No matter what be the dispensation, the heart that fears the Lord can never be satisfied so long as the people of God are found in misfortune and distress.

Neither Media nor Persia was the land that God had promised to Abraham, any more than was Babylon; and yet a multitude of God's people were still in captivity, and worse than that, the city of Jehovah's choice was still a heap of rubbish and desolation.

Daniel was a man of faith. Years before (chapter ii.) he had uttered his firm and solemn conviction that there was a God in heaven, that God was his God, and this captive people belonged to Him. Daniel knew enough of God to be assured that this desolation could not last for ever, deliverance must come. This it was that produced in him that attitude of soul which finds expression in the language of acknowledged need, but of expected blessing, "How long?"

But further, Daniel finds comfort and relief in turning to the Word of the Lord. As with Jeremiah a short while previously (Jer. xv. 16), so now with Daniel, "Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." He was a

HINTS ON DANIEL.

283

diligent student of the Scripture, and not only a prophet. At the close of the chapter he was inspired of God to give forth one of the most marvellous prophetic utterances of the Old Testament, but here at the commencement he is reading with deep and prayerful attention what had already been communicated through Jeremiah.

Away in Jerusalem with broken heart and streaming eyes (Jer. ix. 1) had Jeremiah stood forth and faithfully declared the warnings of Jehovah in the midst of the rebellious nation. "The word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye have not hearkened" (Jer. xxiv. 3). But now the threatened judgment is at the door, and Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, was Jehovah's servant to carry this judgment into execution (Jer. xxv. 9, xxvii. 6).

And yet amidst the desolations that were to follow, faith is not left without its consolation. "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the King of Babylon" (Jer. xxv. 12).

Seventy years! The time had just come. We can well imagine the eager interest with which the captive in the Persian kingdom perused the letter sent by Jeremiah the prophet "from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom

Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon" (Jer. xxix. 1).

Did not Daniel see in that awful night of revelry in Babylon, when the finger of God wrote upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it"—did he not see in that the fulfilment of this very prediction? The seventy years had come, and the stroke of judgment had fallen upon Babylon.

But Jerusalem was still desolate, and Daniel was still a captive. On he reads,—“For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to “be carried away captive” (Jer. xxix. 10-15).

The immediate effect of this discovery upon Daniel's spirit is most beautiful. Instead of

springing to his feet in an ecstasy of joy, he falls upon his knees in confession and prayer. We may surely learn a deep lesson in all this. We might safely say that not a single captive Israelite was less guilty than was Daniel, and yet in the spirit of Christ he identifies himself with the sin and failure of the nation.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour identified Himself truly with our sin after a manner that no other could. Spotless Himself, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. In redeeming love He identified Himself with His people's sins in such a way that He bowed His head beneath the judgment of a holy God on their account. This none other could do.

"For none but He in heaven or earth
Could offer that which justice claimed."

"*We* have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled," says Daniel, confessing the sin of the nation as his own. "Neither have *we* hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land" (ver. 6).

When God speaks He speaks to *all*. A principle lies here which in these days of ecclesiastical and sacerdotal pretension it is most important to hold fast. Not only did God send His message to the kings and princes, but to *all* the people of the land. When God

speaks, every soul of man is responsible to listen and obey.

"Righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face." Not only does Daniel condemn himself and confess his own and the nation's sins, but he justifies God.

But with the Lord were found "mercies and forgivenesses," although not one of the people deserved them. "The law of Moses the servant of God" had been transgressed; against God they had sinned, and "yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God." The judgment long since threatened (see Deut. xxviii.; Lev. xxvi.) had now come, and Daniel in the energy of faith avails himself of the gracious provision of the Lord who had declared through His servant Moses, "If they shall confess their iniquity, . . . then will I remember My covenant" (Lev. xxvi. 40-46).

Daniel pleads with Jehovah on the ground of *redemption*, "And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt," &c. He pleads with Him too on the ground of *righteousness*, "O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech Thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away." If God was righteous in taking vengeance, He was righteous too in fulfilling His promise of blessing.

Yet once more does Daniel plead, and this time on the ground that low as they had

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD. 287

sunk, they nevertheless were the people of the Lord, "Thy city Jerusalem—Thy holy mountain—Thy people" (ver. 16). This is a beautiful climax to Daniel's petition. He can claim nothing upon the ground of what the people are in themselves, but he does present an earnest petition on the ground that they are "Thy people" and "called by Thy name."

It is beautiful, too, to see how if Daniel identified himself with the nation in their sin, he likewise links them with himself in confession, though possibly and most probably few were to be found ready to take that ground in actual fact,—“we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies” (ver. 18).

(To be continued.)

Kept by the Power of God.

(I PETER i. 5.)

THE transfiguration scene never faded away from the mind of the apostle Peter. The holy mount was to him what the ladder was to Jacob at Bethel, and what the third heaven was to the apostle Paul. And even the beams of the brightness of the mount are seen to shine out, so to say, through Peter's Epistles. Hence the many references therein to the

appearing of Jesus Christ and the glory to be revealed in that coming day. And so much is this the case that in reading these epistles we almost imagine ourselves in the confines of glory, and the intervening wall luminant with the light from within.

But if the appearing of Christ is thus held before the believer, it may be asked, How about the manifold temptations, the fleshly lusts, and the devil who goes about as a roaring lion? If the believer is confronted with so much that is against him, how is he to be carried through the wilderness? The apostle anticipates these questions, and gives the reply.

Peter, by the Holy Spirit, says, "*You who are kept.*" We do not keep ourselves. We are not asked to do it. God does not entrust us with our own keeping, and certain it is we should not like to be trusted with it ourselves; although there is a keeping, of a different sort, which is enjoined upon us. Elsewhere it is said, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21). The believer is held responsible to do this, and his spiritual instincts must feel how needful is the exhortation. But here, in Peter, we are told that we "are kept by the power of God." Nothing short of this will suffice. It is a power outside ourselves, and one that is divine, and therefore almighty. The heart of Him who elected us *before* the foundation of the world, has also provided a means by which He will

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD. 289

preserve us while we are passing *through* the world—no matter what the opposition may be.

Seeing that the believer is kept in this divine way is not, however, to be made an excuse for supineness or indifference. We are told it is “through faith.” The heart is not to be without its exercise. It is with the heart man believeth. The believing principle is to be acted on. Faith is to be at its post.

Nor is this power merely displayed as occasions for it may arise. It is pledged on behalf of the saints “unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Salvation here is looked at as at the end; although, it is true, we have the salvation of our souls now, as stated by Peter a little later on in his epistle. So also, *e.g.*, in Romans xiii., “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” This divine power is now being put forth without a break during the whole of the period from the time of conversion until the revelation of Jesus Christ. In point of fact, it is concurrent with the whole of the believers’ life down here.

In Old Testament days also, God was known as the One who kept His people. The Psalmist could sing:—“He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy Keeper.” There was the recognition not only that God was their keeper, but that the keeping was unceasing. That which characterised the One who kept Israel was, that He neither

slumbered nor slept. If the Psalmist could say so in that day, even more can Peter in his.

But we might go further back than David's day. Reference has already been made to Jacob at Bethel; and there it was the patriarch received the well-known pledge from the Lord:—"I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." Whatever the vicissitudes of the way might be, and Jacob had many, he held a guarantee that God would keep him wherever he went; and I venture to think he never forgot it. It is true a saint now is not given a promise such as this in the same direct and personal way, for it is not the day of oral communications from heaven. Nevertheless, he is to accept such a precious statement as we are considering from the pen of the apostle Peter as if it were made to him personally by the Lord Himself. Scripture is the great resource of the saints just now, and it cannot be broken.

It is for believers, therefore, at the present time to tread their way through the world with hearts encouraged and fortified with the reassuring fact that they are kept by the power of God—the fruit, surely, of the care and faithfulness of Him who made them the objects of His electing love before the world began. W. J. M.

Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham.

AFTER this Abraham journeyed south and sojourned at Gerar. For the second time he denies the relationship with his wife, and says, "She is my sister." He had gone aside, for the time, from the path of simple faith and dependence on God. To apply the principle to ourselves, the same danger exists for us as did for the saints at Colosse to whom the apostle wrote, of "not holding the Head": for the Christian is united to a risen Christ, and it is easy to forget this and lose the consciousness of our union with Him. Still, here God in grace comes in again and speaks to Abimelech in a dream: He acknowledges Abraham as a prophet and preserves him. Though he had departed from the place of obedience for the moment, God even tells Abimelech that Abraham will intercede for him—"he shall pray for thee"—and on his supplication Abimelech's household is healed.

At last the time comes that the promise is fulfilled, and Isaac, the true heir, is born. The son of Hagar was born after the flesh, but Isaac was the child of promise. How wonderfully the Divine Word of God is interwoven together, and how far beyond man's thoughts

and conceptions God's ways are! The Epistle to the Galatians shows that these things had an allegorical sense and represented the two covenants: that of law, under which Israel put themselves; and that of free grace and promise, the blessings of which belong to believers now, for we are the children of promise. Isaac was the type of Christ, the true seed, and the One in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen—they are verified and made good in Him. He is the centre of all God's counsels and ways, as well as the One through whom all blessing comes, whether to us or to Israel in the millennial day of manifested glory.

Abimelech now owns that God is with Abraham, and Abraham reproves even this great one of the earth on account of a well of water which his servants had violently taken away. Then they make a covenant at Beersheba, the well-of-the-oath; and Abraham plants a grove there, marking out the boundary of the land, and calls upon the name of Jehovah, "The Eternal God." Here we have another title of God, He is the unchanging One; not only "The Almighty," but the One in whose hands all the blessings connected with the promised seed will certainly be made good.

After these remarkable revelations of Himself which God had vouchsafed to Abraham, there still remained one great trial of faith, far severer than anything which had yet arisen in his path.

LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM. 293

It came to pass "after these things"—all these wonderful experiences and revelations of what He was in unchanging and faithful grace—that God tried Abraham. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." God says, "thine only son." It is true that Ishmael was his son also, but not at all in the sense Isaac was, for *he* was the special subject of God's intervention in grace; the child so long promised, and in whom all the promises centred for the time; besides being the particular object of Abraham's affections. Abraham does not say, "O Lord, how then can the promises respecting the seed be fulfilled?" No, he goes off at once in unwavering and unquestioning obedience. What a wonderful example of faith in the God whom he had learnt and trusted! Arrived near the place, Abraham says to his young men, "Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again."

We know from the Epistle to the Hebrews that he firmly believed that even if he offered up his son, God was able to raise him again from the dead, and therefore he can say, "I and the lad will . . . *come again* to you." Then he takes the wood and the fire and a knife, and "they went both of them together." This remarkable expression which occurs twice in the

chapter, reminds us of the wonderful antitype of what is prefigured in the scene before us. There was perfect unity of purpose, counsel, and thought between God the Father and the Son, concerning the sacrifice offered up on Calvary. He could say, "Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God"; when, looking forward from that bye-gone eternity, He undertook to accomplish all that the will of God required; to offer Himself without spot to God, in the body prepared for Him. This is a blessed fact for us; for God's will was our salvation, and Christ was the willing victim—the only One competent to settle the great question of sin, to God's glory and our eternal blessing; yea, not ours only, but the blessing also of Israel and the Gentiles in the future day.

The voice of the angel of the Lord stays the hand of Abraham, just as he was about to slay his son; morally, he had really offered him up and the act was complete. Isaac was, doubtless, of an intelligent age at this time; he says, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" and then, after Abraham's answer, we have the words, "so they went both of them together." Josephus says he was twenty-five years old at this time. However this may be, he yields himself to do the will of Abraham in simple obedience, and thus furnishes a striking type of Him who was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

It is interesting to notice here, that in the

LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM. 295

Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, the same word "spared" is twice found, which the apostle employs in Romans viii. God says to Abraham, "For My sake thou hast not spared thy beloved son"; and in Romans viii. we read, "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" So far as Abraham's faith and Isaac's willingness were concerned, the test was complete; all was done morally, but, in *fact*, Isaac was spared, whilst the Lord Jesus had to pass through the dark waters of death and judgment in all their terrible reality. The God who gave this great pledge of His love will surely, with Him, give us all things.

Abraham then returns to the Well-of-the-Oath. Sarah dies; and Abraham, who has no possession in the land, buys the field of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite, in the presence of the sons of Heth. He insists on paying for this field, although it was only for a sepulchre; for, as before he would accept nothing from the King of Sodom, so now he will not accept from the inhabitants of the land, but remains a pilgrim and a stranger in it. Abraham, as a man of faith, has the mind of God, and the right judgment which accompanies a walk with God. He makes his servant swear that he will not take a wife for his son Isaac from amongst the Canaanites, but from his own kindred; and he was in

no wise to bring him back to Ur of the Chaldees, from whence he came out. In type, Isaac prefigured the risen Christ, for whom the true servant, the Holy Spirit, is providing a bride, His Church ; and He is conducting her home to meet Him, and to be presented in His presence according to the desires of His heart, without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Here the inspired record of Abraham's life closes—he dies in a good old age, and is buried in the field which he purchased from the sons of Heth. God confirms the promises to Isaac ; that to his seed He would give all these countries, and in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The reason He assigns is quite in keeping with what has been before us—"Because that Abraham hearkened to My voice," &c. ; and again, "I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, *for My servant Abraham's sake.*" How exceedingly precious in God's sight is whole-hearted, implicit confidence and faith in Him as the God to be trusted and counted on !

And *now* God has revealed Himself in a closer and more intimate relationship than ever He did in Old Testament times ; for He has come out in all the fulness of His grace in Christ, brought us into the place of children, and given us the Holy Spirit, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

F. G. B.

The Marriage Feast.

(PROV. ix. ; MATT. xxii. 1-14.)

THE Word of God lays bare before you man, his real condition, and God's all-sufficiency to meet it. It is everything to accredit God's Word. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," &c. (Heb. xi. 3).

The Spirit of God anticipated all the circumstances through which each of us should pass. He that saw us from the womb calculated all our need to supply it. Oh the calm quiet of the soul that believes on God, that leans on His Word and is supported by the Almighty, whose power created the world! Oh the interest with which we should approach it, we that are hastily passing the poor sea of time, making swift way into the ocean of eternity! That Word, the only light, the only beacon we have to steer by as we pass on. What are we? We all do fade as a leaf—the wind passes over us and we are gone, and our place knows us no more. Oh that God would give such power to His Word that you in weakness could look up and lay hold of it!

In this ninth chapter of Proverbs the Spirit puts two characters before us—wisdom and evil. Why does Wisdom cry aloud, why were they

in such a condition? How came they to be simple? What is there to meet their need? At every turn we get the blessing; not a sorrow, a thought, a feeling, but the Word of God meets it. We know not how, nor the heights and depths of love, but we can believe it. He stoops to conquer us.

Turn to Matthew xxii., there the gospel is presented by Christ Himself. We often forget *who* it is who speaks: the One who said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you at the last day"; the One who said, "Let us make man in Our image." Oh to receive words of healing from God's mouth, to hear Him say, "If it were not so I would have told you!" If it were not all grace and love He would have told us, He who came from heaven shining like the sun into the cold, dead heart of man, bringing the message of love and peace to poor sinners—"Come unto Me." It could be none other than our God who could say, "Come unto Me, I know you, it was I who made you, I put you together; put your head on My bosom, I am your Maker, your Saviour-God, you are Mine; come unto Me, all ye weary ones, and I will give you rest"; and this is what they would rob you of nowadays, intellect is set up to rob man of that rest in God, but they cannot do it, man *wants* and must have rest *in God*.

We never wanted Him as much as He wants

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

299

us; none would have been here to-night with happy hearts but that He would have them, and He moved their hearts to want Him. Sin ruined us, but God so loved us, and sent down the Son of His love to tell us of it. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Years roll on, time slips from under your feet, bit by bit He will sweep away every refuge and make you see how foolish you were to put hindrances between the sweetness of His love and your souls.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.” Who could know it but He? The God of heaven alone could tell us of the joy of heaven. Oh to be so shut up *into Christ* that we cannot move, no turn without Him. Blessed necessity! Would you not be shut up to Him? All fulness is in Him, He puts us in our place in His presence, and *such* a place, far better than our created place had it not been lost by sin, far better to be put before God in His own righteousness. Who could tell us what heaven is, what God is, save God incarnate? There came One from heaven to tell us about a marriage. How strange a thing to us in this place of lamentation and woe, and death. Man as a flower of the field, here to-day, gone to-morrow. Go to many a hearth, many a well-remembered corner—*gone*, no occupant there now.

To speak of a marriage feast in such a scene

of dilapidation and ruin, and a king making it, and inviting—who? Sinners, undone, hurrying into eternity. Yes, to *you* is offered this resting place, Christ at the door invites you in. Oh, they won't come! He sends the message again, He opens out His whole soul, and He takes you up as part of His Bride; He undertakes *all* for you, every burden, every circumstance. He sends out a bill of fare: "I have prepared My dinner," &c. "Come and sit down to it." Is it possible *such* an invitation from heaven to poor sinners on earth! And the One who brought it, God from everlasting to everlasting. He came Himself with it; it is in receiving and believing Christ's word—mark it well—that you have your place there. You got your being by His word, you get spiritual life by His quickening word. He invites, but they scorned and would not hear, they went *their* way, not God's way, they balanced Time against Eternity, and threw up all. The servants were slain; He sent forth, therefore, His armies and destroyed them, and that was the close of that dispensation.

"To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." The doors are therefore open, go into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. If you had all the sins of the world on your conscience the goodness of God could meet and receive you. Oh, that you may receive according to God's grace. He has declared that sal-

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

301

vation is ours if we believe His Word. It is *God's* salvation, as many as you can find, bring in. And are not these the words of eternal life to as many as receive them to-night?

Poor sinners, in Christ's name we bid you to the gospel feast. Boundless grace has opened the channel for every poor sinner here to float into heaven washed in the blood of the Lamb; God's gospel coming to you in this blessed invitation. But what is your answer? Will you scorn it? Christ asked me to come—drawn by the Father, I came. I am His, and when I fold my arms and sleep in the dust, I know He will awake me at the resurrection. If any reject the invitation, their place will be filled up, not one wanting at the marriage supper. Is a soul rejecting, and Christ bidding, proclaiming you are welcome? Can you kneel before God and say—Christ met us this night, and we have refused His invitation; the door of mercy was opened and we saw over it the superscription, but we won't read it, put it in the fire, I'm for my farm, I'm for my merchandise? Do you *forget* God's Word is the savour of life unto life or of death unto death? Remember Christ has asked you to the marriage supper by the Holy Ghost. Turn not away, it is your everlasting peril if you do. If Christ has with His own lips invited you, and you have not listened, better were it for you that you had not been born.

Can you lie down quietly this night, the clock ticking by your bedside, and every hour that strikes bringing you an hour and an hour nearer to *Eternity*, yet say, "I've not accepted Christ's invitation, I have not turned when He called"? Poor perishing sinner! God's heart yearns over you. Oh that you may not be found not having on a wedding garment. God is for every one who can put his hand on his heart and say, "The Lord Jesus is mine."

But oh, we find here a man that entered in without a wedding garment, without being clothed with Christ as his righteousness, without anything that marks those that come in there, the family features, that affection beaming in the eye of every child because of having been brought to cry "Abba, Father." Here was one without a single mark, "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind," and when the King came in to see the guests, He said, "How camest thou in hither? I see no trace of a garment washed in blood"—he is speechless. No time then to make the excuses you would put God off with now. He was speechless. "Bind him hand and foot and take him away," &c. "Many are called, and few chosen."

Oh, if you are His, tell to all the tale of His unchanging love; sweet will you feel it to serve Him, ever saying, "What can I do for Him who gave Himself for me, what shall I render unto Him?" . . .

J. Willans.

The Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE IV.—*Continued.*

(Chap. v. 8-21.)

WE now come to the break in the epistle. It has often been pointed out, that up to the eleventh verse, we have the subject of our sins treated, that is to say, the things that we have done; but from the twelfth verse of this chapter on to the end, another subject altogether is taken up. Not "sins" but "sin." Do you understand the difference? There is only the difference of a letter, but there is all the difference in the world between "sins," which are the *fruit*, and "sin," which is the *root*. There is a great difference between the fruit and the root of a tree. You might take all the fruit off a tree and yet leave the root. The state in which man was by reason of sin, the evil that is in our nature is taken up at the end of this chapter. Well, here it points out that sin came into the world by one man, and death by sin. Had there been no sin, there would have been no death, but death has passed upon all men, not only because Adam sinned, but because all have sinned—each one has added his own individual sins. Sin came into the world by Adam's one transgression, and every person since that time

304 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

has been born into the world with a nature that is sinful, and produces evil things, and so death passed upon all men because that all have sinned.

Now from the thirteenth verse to the end of the seventeenth is a parenthesis, and a very important one. Let us look at what it says—"Until the law sin was in the world." What does that mean? Ever since the Garden of Eden sin has been in the world; the law was not given until Mount Sinai, but all the time between sin was in the world. How do we know? Because people died during all that time, and they would not have died if there had been no sin; and that is just the meaning of this passage. From the moment that sin came into the world at the Garden of Eden right up to the giving of the law, sin was there, proved by the fact that death was there. And mark what it says, "Even over them that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." That seems a little difficult perhaps, but it is really very simple.

What is the meaning of sinning after the similitude of Adam's transgression? Well, Adam had a law given him—"You are not to eat of that tree"—and Adam disobeyed God; he broke God's commandment; he transgressed the law under which he had been placed. But there was no law from Adam to Moses; man was not put under any law between Adam and Moses. They had not sinned

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 305

in the same way as Adam, they had not broken a positive commandment given to them. There was a positive commandment given to Adam; there was a positive commandment given to Moses, but there was no law between Adam and Moses; there was no positive commandment given between Adam and Moses, and yet there was sin there all the while, because death reigned from Adam to Moses. I believe that this refers to a verse we get in the Old Testament. If you will turn back to the prophet Hosea, "But they"—that is the Jews—"like men have transgressed the covenant" (Hos. vi. 7). In our version we have "like men," but the word used in the Hebrew is "Adam." Adam had a commandment given, and he transgressed it. "They like Adam have transgressed the covenant." I believe that that is the verse that is alluded to in the fifth chapter of Romans, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that is to come." Adam was a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. In what sense? Well, Adam was the head of a race of sinful beings. He became the head of a race, after sin came into the world. But Christ, too, was the head of a race. If Adam was the head of a sinful and fallen race, Christ is the head of a new race, a redeemed and justified race.

In the fifteenth verse we get the two heads, and notice how it is brought in. "But shall not the free gift be as the offence? For if through the offence of one the many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many." If Adam's one offence brought sin into the world, and all connected with Adam, the head of the sinful family, were involved in the results of his sin, is the grace of God going to be inferior to Adam's sin? If Adam's sin involved all those connected with him in the consequence of his sinful act, on the other hand, all those connected with Christ are going to be involved in the blessings resulting from His one act.

Verses 15, 16, and 17 present the same truth from different standpoints. The fifteenth verse speaks of the two *men*—Adam and Christ. The sixteenth verse speaks of the *acts*—"the judgment came by one to condemnation;" "one," that is, one sin. You do not need to commit more than one sin to be condemned. But look how the grace of God is superior to this; when justification is spoken of, I get justification from "many offences." One sin is enough for condemnation. Adam's one act of sin closed the Garden of Eden to him, and one act of sin closes heaven to me; but the moment we speak of justification through Christ, all the sins that it is possible for a man to commit can be put away

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 307

by the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is wonderful to see how the grace of God is superior to all that man is or could have been.

Then in the seventeenth verse we get the *effects*, "If by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Death reigning is the result of Adam's sin, but there is the "much more" which shows how the grace of God is superior to everything that man's sin has done. "If by one man's offence death reigned ;" it does not say, much more shall life or righteousness reign, but "*we* shall reign in life." God, in the abundance of His grace, has stooped down to us in all our terrible condition, and, having bestowed upon us the gift of righteousness, "we shall reign by one, Jesus Christ." We were here sinful, and death was reigning all around in this world, and God takes up a poor sinner like I am, justifies me from all my sins, and then He says, I am going to make you reign.

And then it goes on to say in the eighteenth verse, "therefore as by one offence, towards all men to condemnation." This is a very abstract statement, but it means that Adam's one act of sin involves the whole human family in the consequences of his sin. God indeed has found a means by which we can get extricated from that, but that is the tendency of Adam's act. People say sometimes that it is an

308 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

unrighteous thing for God to condemn them for what Adam did. He is not going to do so, though we get a sinful nature by the Fall. The influence of Adam's act was world-wide, it extended to all, but what was the influence of Christ's act? "Even so by one righteousness towards all unto justification of life." This puts in contrast man's sin and God's grace. If man's sin, Adam's sin, involved the whole human family in the consequences of that sin, Christ's act, that is His death, involved all those who are linked with Him.

(To be continued.)

EXTRACTS.

IF God has given a revelation of His mind, that revelation must be worthy of Himself; and He has taken particular pains to call it His Word. Undoubtedly He wrought by various means, but He never calls it the word of Moses, or David, or John, or Paul, but the Word of God. Let us never forget this.

SATAN is trying to undermine everything. . . . It is high time that every man who is by grace a believer, should declare plainly what he is. Does His goodness not claim it at our hands to be confessors if not martyrs?

Jacob's Funeral.

IT remained for Joseph to do the last office of this piety to the memory of his father ; and he does it, we need scarcely say, in all grace and faithfulness. He buries his father as his father had willed it, in the land of Canaan. But the whole is conducted with much solemnity, and the occasion is such, that we must wait upon it for a little moment.

In other days worship was a magnificent ceremonial. Temples, altars, feasts, holy days, sacrifices and the like furnished it, and officers of different orders in appropriate vestments conducted it. Because in those days worship pointed onward to certain great mysteries which had then to be realised. But now these mysteries have been accomplished in the manifestation of Christ, His person, work, sufferings, and victories, so that gorgeous worship is now but a reproach on all that which is found in Him in its full substance and efficacy.

So as to funerals as well as worship. In other days they were to be gorgeous. Because resurrection was then only in prospect, and funerals then were a kind of pledge of the expected resurrection ; and it was fitting that the pledge should be magnificent according to the glory of that which it pledged. But now,

since resurrection has been realised in the person of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the gorgeous funeral, like the ceremonious worship, is rather a reproach, as though the great mystery itself had not been yet realised in its substance and efficacy. For it is not funereal pomp which is now the pledge of our coming resurrection—the resurrection of the Lord is that, the first-fruits of a promised harvest.

Accordingly, worship and funerals are now, in like simplicity, to bespeak the Church's faith in *accomplished* mysteries. We are now in sight of the victory of the Lord Jesus. We no longer give or receive pledges of it as in ordinances, but we *celebrate* it. Joseph of Arimathea gave His body a gorgeous funeral, as Joseph, the son of Jacob, here gives the body of his loved and honoured father. We read of Jesus: "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." In that day of Joseph of Arimathea, the grave had not been spoiled, and pledges therefore—like pledges with these in the day of the Patriarch—might still be given. But in the burial of the Lord Jesus, we properly see the last of these pledges; because in Him we see the first of the fruit of hell's destruction. Jesus rose. The grave clothes and the napkins lie in the empty sepulchre as spoils of a glorious war, and trophies which tell of glorious victory. Death was overthrown, and *faith* now celebrates what offices and usages, as well as ordinances

and ceremonies, had once only pledged and fore-shadowed. And let me add that faith *did* learn this lesson; for the funeral which followed that of Jesus had neither its embalming nor its magnificence. It was shortly disposed of, reverently withal, and lovingly. But it was no solemnity. "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him."

Had we faith, deeply should we prize all this. Our privileges are great indeed. In the services of the house of God now, the table has succeeded the altar, and instead of a sacrifice we have a feast upon a sacrifice. And so have we to see death and burial too, in the light of the resurrection of Jesus.

J. G. B.

Hints on Daniel.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

(DAN. ix. 20-27.)

WE have already been considering the attitude of Daniel's soul as revealed in the opening part of this chapter.

Before passing to an examination of the prophecy at the close, it may be well to remark that the prophet in his prayer and confession dwells upon "the oath that is written in the law of

Moses" (vers. 11-14), and does not allude to the promises made to Abraham. Upon the ground of those promises the Jewish people will eventually be brought into their land in blessing; but meanwhile they are put under responsibility to walk in obedience to the law.

In Leviticus xxvi. 3-14, a most beautiful picture is drawn of the earthly blessings that would have been theirs had they walked in Jehovah's statutes and kept Jehovah's commandments. Fruitful seasons, plentiful harvests, peace and prosperity, would have marked their inheritance. Jehovah Himself would have set up His tabernacle amongst them, and would have manifested to all the nations around that He, their God, dwelt and walked amongst them, and that they were His redeemed and chosen people.

Then follows a long description of the judgments, woes, and desolations that would fall upon them in the event of their disobedience. "I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her Sabbaths" (Lev. xxvi. 33-35).

It was this very judgment that in Daniel's day was being put into execution. The captivity in Babylon, whither Daniel had been carried, was to this very end, "to fulfil the word of the Lord

HINTS ON DANIEL.

313

by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil three score and ten years" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21).

These seventy years were now about to end, and Daniel, deeply conscious of the desolation that had befallen the city and sanctuary of Jehovah, confessed the sin that had brought it all about. He appeals to the Lord for His forgiving mercy, "for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." To faith they were still the people of God.

Daniel's lips were still moving in prayer when God sends the answer. This is not always the case. In the next chapter we find Daniel praying for three weeks before the answer came. Sometimes when an immediate answer is not given we are disposed to assume that God has not heard. But this is not so. Faith may need sometimes to be tested, and there may be other reasons too, but "this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us," &c. (1 John v. 14, 15).

And now a fresh revelation is made to Daniel. "Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people" (ver. 24). To understand the prophecy we must banish from our minds all idea of applying it to the Church, or the people of God in this present time. Daniel's people were not Christians, but Jews. "Thy holy city" was none other than Jerusalem. Indeed the whole atmo-

314 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

sphere of the passage was Jewish. It was "about the time of the evening oblation" (ver. 21) that the prophet bent his knees in prayer. Far away from Jerusalem, deprived of the joy of treading the courts of the house of the Lord, nevertheless his thoughts were there, and God answers him according to His promise (Lev. xxvi. 40-46).

The study of Jeremiah's prophecy had brought to Daniel's soul the glad prospect of a speedy deliverance, but the Spirit of God here carries his thoughts forward to a time of blessing which has not yet been reached.

"Seventy weeks." These seventy weeks, all are agreed, represent weeks, not of days, but of years. That is to say, each day of the week stands for a year; therefore seventy weeks stand for 7×70 , that is, 490 years.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (*i.e.* the Jews) and upon thy holy city (*i.e.* Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

It is to be noted how God, in His answer, takes up the very words that had been on the lips of His beloved and heart-broken servant. Daniel had been confessing as his own the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of his people, and God holds out the bright and glorious prospect that all this history of failure and guilt should

HINTS ON DANIEL.

315

end, and "everlasting righteousness" take its place. Clearly, this has not yet been fulfilled. Israel lies at this very moment under the consequences of far greater guilt than that which brought upon them the captivity in Babylon. If for seventy years they were driven from their land because of idolatry and departure from the law, what has been the greater crime which has scattered them for nearly nineteen hundred years? Is it not the rejection and murder of their Messiah, foretold in this very prophecy we are considering? And yet there is forgiveness for even this !

Some may be surprised at the thought that all the blessings enumerated in this verse are yet future. They may ask, Has not an end been made of our sins at the cross? Has not everlasting righteousness been already brought in? Quite true, the believer in Christ to-day may rejoice to know that all his sins have been put away by the blood of Christ, and that he is now made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21). The Christian now may thus apply these expressions to Himself, while yet the proper fulfilment of it all for Daniel's people awaits a coming day.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks," &c. What a marvellous answer to

Daniel's prayer is here! What an honour conferred upon this faithful servant, to reveal to him and through him to others, the very time of Messiah's advent. For the dates are here precise. The point of departure where these seventy weeks commence is given in no vague and uncertain manner. Some have thought that the passage referred to Ezra's journey to Jerusalem about B.C. 536. But the main object before Ezra was the building of the house or temple (Ezra i. 2, 3), whereas here it speaks of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem—not the temple, but the city. The allusion is clearly to Nehemiah i. and ii., and the date is B.C. 445.

From this date, then, the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, unto the Messiah, the Prince, were to be reckoned sixty-nine weeks, that is, 7×69 years = 483 years. But these 69 weeks are subdivided into 7 weeks and 62 weeks. It may be asked, Why is this? The 7 weeks, no doubt, was the time during which the wall was being built, "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." These troublous times are described in the book of Nehemiah, when the builders, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon (Neh. iv. 17). Then follow the 62 weeks, making a period of 69 weeks, or 483 years to the time of Christ.

Looking to Christ.

(HEB. ix.)

WE get here the contrast of the condition in which the Jews were ; in the early part of the chapter are described the vessels with which they were all familiar. There was a veil there, and when Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent. It is what the apostle meant in Romans iii. 25, "for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." The work was not done till Christ died on the cross. God forbore with their sins, but His righteousness was not manifested in the forgiveness of sins. Now it is revealed perfectly and fully. That veil showed that the thing was not fully revealed. They trusted in a promise and prophecy, but we trust in a thing done, as to the work that saves, cleanses, justifies. I look back at it *done*.

Then we have another thing ; he speaks of man's condition, what comes from sin, namely, death and judgment ; this is our natural portion. Man's thought is, There is a day of judgment and I must prepare myself to be able to stand in it ; but there's no Christ in that.

The effect of all the dealings of God was to show that the heart of man was at enmity with God. Are you going to be in heaven as a sinner ?

Impossible. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." God is comparing the natural portion, and then He shows what He has done because of that state, how He has met it. He has dealt with us in grace before ever the judgment comes. He did not begin with a final judgment of man. He told them what they were as fully as He will at the great white throne. (See Romans iii).

I get another thing, "To them that look for Him will He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He will have no more to say to sin. What will He come for? To take them to glory. There are a set of people* looking for Him. As to His Person, He was always without sin, but He will have no more to do with sin as regards those who are looking for Him. The first time He appeared He was made sin for us. His whole business was about sin and sinners, and the reason He has no more to do with it the second time is because He put it away the first time. We all know that death is here, and unless we are scorning sin that judgment will follow.

"He appears now in the presence of God for us." Now mark where He puts the believer. He did not say, "Now do you be good and come to me, and *then*," etc. He comes on the cross

* NOTE.—That is, all believers.—ED.

and endures such agonies and sufferings no heart can fathom, but we can taste the infinite love of Christ made the curse of God. This we get if our sense of sin is great, we get the shadow of it so to speak, and why He had to say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." He comes here to lay down His life and take this curse and burden of sin on Himself. What put it into His heart to do it? Well, all you can say is, it was there. The Victim perfect, His love to His Father absolute, and then He meets this terrible thought, "I am going to be made sin." But He goes on in perfect obedience and love to His Father and love to us, and then He is made sin for us, totally alone—made sin in the presence of God to put it away. If I come to the cross, I own all my part was the sins. And what makes it so clear is that God raised Him from the dead perfectly satisfied. All the work is finished and God has accepted it, and He is sitting at God's right hand, and that is where I know Him now.

Nothing else could put away my sins but the death of the Son of God, they are so bad. I am sure He has put them away because God has raised Him to His right hand, and I know it by the Holy Ghost come down. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." God presents it to us in every shape that we may have peace—I am justified, cleansed from all defile-

ment, forgiven all my sins, and made the righteousness of God. There I get what is done in His first coming. Now I get people looking for Him. As regards this work, He has nothing more to do. He could not do it if there was because He is raised in glory.

It is well to think of it that Scripture constantly repeated in the strongest possible way turns the eye to His coming again. He is coming again to receive me to Himself (John xiv.), not to judge me. You would like to be in a condition to receive Him if you really believed it.

There are two things needed to look for Christ, not I perfect, but a perfect conscience; if I thought Christ had something against me, I could not look for Him. By the work of Christ He has made our consciences perfect. If I look up to God I have no idea of His imputing sins to me, because Christ is there who put them away. *Always* there in the presence of God for me as the perpetual witness that He put them all away. I have to watch against sin, of course, every day in conflict down here. You could not have peace with God if you had sins on your conscience. You may have a dead and a dull conscience, but you can't have a bad conscience and a free heart with the One that has authority over you. If I fail in holiness, I have to be humbled in the dust and hate myself and go to God. Supposing

I go and sin, the Spirit of God makes me think of it, and it's ten times worse because it is what made Christ's agony. That's what makes it so dreadful to me. To have indulged even for five minutes in what made Christ's agony. Sin becomes more dreadful to me as regards God's holiness. If I say, there is no imputation to me, I say what a dreadful thing that is I have done. I detest myself for having done it. That judgment of it in holiness is just what the Christian has to do.

Now there is another thing that is needed really to look for Him, and that is I must love Him. If I love Christ, I shall be looking for Him. My heart must have Him as the object of its delight, and I say, "Oh, if He were here." He sees it good to leave us here to learn ourselves and God's faithfulness in leading us along, but the dying thief had a title to go into Paradise that same day. We have poor feeble hearts, but still the love of Christ should be there, so that I should be glad to see Him. Nothing contributes more to a holy walk than waiting for Him. In spirit we go in there already. The conscience is perfect through the work of Christ, and the heart is won by the love of Christ so as to long for Him. Have your hearts so learned to love Him because He first loved us, that you are longing to see Him? If He came to-night would you be glad to see Him? Could you honestly in heart look for Him?

The Lord give you to know the perfectness of His love which He has shown to us in Christ, He has not left us to spell it out so that you may wait for Him. God would not have sent His Son to save us if it were not necessary.

J. N. D.

“Hath made us Kings.”

(REV. i. 6.)

BELIEVERS are familiar with the truth that they are to live and reign with Christ for a thousand years in the coming kingdom. Then shall Christ possess all royal rights and power on earth, while His people shall share them with Him.

Another like truth, though not such a familiar one, is that “They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” No limit is assigned to this reign in life, so, I conceive, it will extend beyond the thousand years, and have no termination.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that the Son of God is the appointed heir of all things. And I ask, Will He, in the coming day, take the inheritance alone? Indeed, He will not. Was Adam to have the Garden of

“HATH MADE US KINGS.”

323

Eden, with all its bounties and benefactions, alone? Indeed, he was not. His happiness and joy were not complete until Eve was presented to him. So will it be when Christ enters upon the inheritance. He will have His joint-heirs with Him. And such are we. “If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.”

But in the passage at the head of this paper we have the truth disclosed to us that believers now are kings—through Christ’s death, I need not add. It may be asked, How can I understand this, seeing the kingdom has not begun? Just in the same way as we understand any truth in Scripture, viz., by faith. When the kingdom comes the fact that we are kings will be self evident; yet is the fact looked upon as subsisting at the present time. And this is nothing strange in Scripture.

Let me refer to a word in another connection by way of illustration of this: “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified” (Rom. viii. 29). Does it stop there? No, it goes on to say, “And whom He justified, them He also glorified.” It may be said, But we are not glorified yet. Nevertheless, the Spirit of God speaks as if we were, and faith accepts the statement without raising any question about it.

Again, is it making a greater demand upon the principle of faith to believe I am now a

king, than to believe I am now a child of God? Indeed, it is not. Surely is it a nearer and greater thing to be a child of God than to be a king "unto God."

"Jesus Christ," it is said, "hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father."

It is true our feet are not yet treading the courts of the King. We are still in the usurper's world, yet in it, so to say, as kings in disguise. Poor, obscure, and despised we may be now, yet satisfied to wait "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

But while on the road which leads to the reign, faith holds the great secret that royalty is attached to us. David knew well that he was the anointed king, although an outcast, and persecuted by Saul. But no Cave of Adullam, nor any like place of reproach, could efface the work of the anointing oil. Sovereign grace gave royal rights to David, and set him at last on the throne at Jerusalem. The same grace has given like rights to us, nor will it relinquish its cherished work until we occupy the thrones seen by the apostle John, and written about in Revelation xx.: "I saw thrones,* and they sat upon them."

And did not the apostle Paul in his day carry with him the secret of his share in the coming reign? When writing his last epistle

* The word *thrones* is used by way of symbol, but the meaning is clear.

he turns his gaze in faith towards it, and writes to Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." If it is suffering *here*, it will be reigning *there*.

Here I would stop for a moment to notice that this divine secret, and many more besides, lay in the heart of God ere they were disclosed in the Book of God. The secrets of the divine mind were not to be confined there always, and so, when the time came to divulge them, all publicity must needs be given to them. But it is faith in the believer that discovers these rich and wondrous mysteries. And long they lay in the Bible, I need not say, before we learnt any one of them.

In the meanwhile, though not wearing the royal apparel, are we not to be bearing ourselves in kingly ways, and with a sense of the dignities befitting us? Knowing, too, that the first expected stage in the journey to the kingdom will be when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with the conqueror's shout, and conduct His people to the Father's house. But of this let us be assured, no kingly ways will be ours now without the power of the Spirit of God, and lowly obedience to the Word of God.

"Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

W. J. M.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost—Is it Once for All or Continuous?

THE baptism of the Holy Ghost was on the day of Pentecost. The Comforter *came*; He cannot come twice in this order of things, because He was to dwell for ever. But He is given, says Peter, to all them that believe. Again: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Cornelius was a special case, God demonstrating that He would receive the Gentiles, when even the apostles would not as such. He was not previously baptized, which was the regular order (Acts ii. 38).

Samaria (Acts viii.) is nothing to the point, but to show how He was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands; so with Paul proving he had the same title (Acts xix.).

The pouring out of the Spirit is what happened on the day of Pentecost (so Peter tells us), but individuals receive it on believing in Christ's work for the remission of sins. That giving of the Holy Ghost to the individual is the unction and the sealing, and becomes the earnest.

Being filled with the Spirit is another matter. It is the Spirit which is in me, so taking possession of all my mind and faculties that nought

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST. 327

else is there, and the things He reveals occupy the mind, and there is power from God in the soul as to them.

As to a person subsequent to Pentecost being baptized with the Holy Ghost, I should say He was introduced into an already baptized body, but by receiving the Holy Ghost by which he is united to the Head—Christ. I am not anxious as to the word “baptism,” but it is not generally employed as to the individual reception. Acts xi. 17 and 1 Corinthians xii. are the nearest to applying it to an individual or individuals ; but it is not actually used. But the receiving of the Holy Ghost is equivalent, they having what was originally treated as baptism of the Holy Ghost, and are looked at, as *they* are, as partakers of the same thing. The sum of the gathered disciples were baptized on the day of Pentecost. An individual receives the same Holy Ghost, and is a member of this same body, and is one, and is looked at as one of the baptized body. Acts i. 5 tells when ; but Acts ii. 38 tells them, that on repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, they will receive this same Holy Ghost ; so did Cornelius (see his case before). Thus they were incorporated, and were the same as those to whom the Holy Ghost was first given ; and that continued when all the first were gone, for the Comforter was to abide for ever.

As to 1 Corinthians x. 3, 4, there is a certain general analogy, but that was baptism with

water, the sacramental assembly—not the body. It is only in verses 16, 17, we come to the inner circle of the body.

Abundance of scriptures show that it was not merely for testimony the Holy Ghost was given. It is the Spirit of adoption; the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. I know that God dwells in me by it, and I in Him; that I am in Christ and Christ in me; the body is dead and the Spirit is life. A thousand precious things concerning my state with God and the Father depend on the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and my consciousness of these things abounding as life through Him. He is the Comforter come down withal on which all our condition depends. He is sent by the Father in Christ's name, and by Christ from the Father—one giving conscious relationship as sons, the other knowledge of Christ's glorifying and its consequences, and a great deal more than all this, for He is the power of all good here. No doubt, therefore, He is the power of testimony, and so the Lord plainly declares (Acts i.). The word itself is the sword of the Spirit. All true power and wisdom so flows into us. All truth is revealed, communicated as revealed, and received by the Holy Ghost.

As to I Corinthians xii. 12, 13, it is the aorist (*ἐβαπτίσθημεν*) and therefore says nothing of continuity: it is continuous, if we speak of individuals receiving the Holy Ghost.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 329

But people look for a *re-giving* of the Holy Ghost, as if He did not abide for ever; and the thought of re-giving denies that, and also the responsibility of the Church consequent upon it, which is a great evil. Asking that an individual who is not free—is not sealed—may receive it, is quite another thing.

Asking in general for the Holy Ghost for the Church says, He is not here, which is wrong; yet I doubt not, where sincerely desired, though expressed ignorantly, God has answered the desire, and blessed. But that leaves the ignorance; and the conscience is left unmoved, as to the responsibility in respect of a present ever-abiding Spirit. It is not accurate language I look for, but faith working in the conscience.

B. W. R.

The Epistle to the Romans.

WE were noticing the difference between the righteousness of God being “unto all” but “upon all them that believe.” It is world-wide in its extent—“unto all”; but limited in its application—“upon all them that believe.”

Since the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has been able to offer justification to the world freely. Adam sinned, and all the

human family was involved. If Adam's sin was towards all men to condemnation, how can I be justified? Because the Lord Jesus Christ has come and done a work. Is God going to confine His grace to narrower limits than man's sin? If Adam's sin was towards all, is Christ's work going to be to some only? Why no, it must be towards all to justification, though only those who believe are justified. You see the contrast between condemnation on the one hand, and justification on the other; and not only that, there is the contrast between death and life.

Death reigned by one, and if God justifies me, is He going to leave me dead? No, that cannot be; I get life too. You see how the grace of God has come in, and has overleaped *all the effects of sin, and has brought in something infinitely better.* It is far better to be before God justified, and with a "justification of life." What does that mean? That the life which believers possess is a life which cannot be linked with condemnation. It is a life which is inseparably linked with justification. It is a life which is on the other side of death and judgment. It was after Christ passed through the judgment of God for our sins, that we, believers, were not only justified from all things, but have been given life in Him. The two thoughts are linked together—justification and life. It is a life to which justification attaches. It is a better life than Adam had in the Garden of Eden. He

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 331

could lose that, but we cannot lose the life that we have in Christ. It is a life on the other side of death and judgment.

Now it says in the nineteenth verse, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." That is a little difficult. You say, How can I be made a sinner by another man's disobedience? The word "made" means "constituted." It is not the question here of my individual sins or my individual conduct, but it is the effect of the act of the head with whom I am connected. I was connected with that first man, Adam, and I was involved in his act. Of course I have added many sins of my own to that one act of Adam's, and if I have not trusted the Lord Jesus Christ I shall be judged for what I have done myself. But this nineteenth verse is speaking of the present state of the world, "constituted sinners"—brought into that state by reason of Adam's transgression.

Believers are linked with Christ, the Second Man and the Last Adam. Why does it say the Second Man and the Last Adam? Christ is called the Second Man because the first man is a failure altogether and cannot be improved. God says, I cannot improve the first man, but I have a Second Man, and can you improve on Him? No, that is impossible, therefore He is the Last Adam. Rationalists speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as coming in the course of the development of man. They look upon the time

when he was here as a sort of infancy of man, but God does not do that. The "Second," because the first was a failure; the "Last," because the second was perfect. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." I was in a sinful state; I am now brought into a state of righteousness. We are brought into a new state and condition before God, that of righteousness.

It says in the twentieth verse, "The law entered, that the offence might abound." It does not say that the law entered that *sin* might abound. God could never do anything that could make sin abound. It would be inconsistent with His nature to do that. The effect of the law, *when it came into this world where sin already abounded*, was to make every act of sin a positive transgression of God's law. That is what it means when it says that the entrance of the law made the offence abound. It was doing wrong before, but when the law came it was doing what God forbade—each sin became a positive offence. In the next clause it says, "where sin abounded." It changes the word there. If it had said, "where the offence abounded," the Gentile would have said, I do not come under that, because I was never under the law. When it is a question of grace He says, "where sin abounded." That takes in the Jew under law and the Gentile who was not under law.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 333

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” There is no possibility of confining the grace of God to narrower limits than man’s sin, and it closes up with this, “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign”—not righteousness; if it had been righteousness reigning, we should have been condemned; if righteousness was to reign where sin abounded, the result would have been condemnation to everybody. But it changes the word there, “as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” That is to say, God is sovereign in His grace. If righteousness had reigned where sin abounded, there would have been condemnation; but God is superior to man’s sin, and, therefore, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin had reigned unto death, so might grace reign. But God is righteous, and, therefore, if grace reigns, it must reign in righteousness. If God saves me, it is because He is sovereign in His mercy: He is righteous too, and if He is going to save me, He must save me in a righteous way. “Grace reigns through righteousness.” They go hand in hand, and that is the only thing that gives me settled peace. God has found the way of dealing righteously with my sins, and no one can say, You have no right to have that person in heaven. The devil might say, You have no right or title to heaven,

but he cannot say anything to God when He opens heaven to a dying malefactor; he was too bad to live upon the earth, and yet God has taken him into Paradise, and He took him there in righteousness, and, therefore, where sin has reigned unto death, even so might "grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life."

And there we get a wonderful grouping of truths — grace, righteousness, life — the three things we need when we are sinners. We need the grace of God to deliver us, for we deserve nothing but wrath; we were guilty, and we needed a righteousness in which to stand before God; we were dead, and we needed life, and we get them all linked together in Christ. "Grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

The close of this fifth chapter may be difficult, but all difficulty will be over if we once see that it deals with Adam as the head of a fallen and sinful family, and Christ as the head of a saved and justified one.

Correspondence.

"What is to be done with evil thoughts, unbidden and hated?"

DEAR —, I have your letter, and I am sure that the enemy is very busy, as well as the evil heart within. What you need is thorough deliverance from yourself, that is, the flesh.

CORRESPONDENCE.

335

You speak of evil thoughts, unbidden and hated, springing up in the heart even when you seek to be occupied with the Lord; this too when really thinking of Him. Then you stop to confess them, and the occupation for a moment in confession only provokes another evil thought, and so it is as you say, an unending all day work. My feeling is that you have never yet enjoyed full deliverance from self and flesh. You are what Scripture calls still "in the flesh," though a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe if your soul were free you would find the simple yet profound truth of "reckoning yourself dead" (Rom. vi. 2) would so act that the thought of turning aside to confess what would spring up unsought for in your soul, would be found to be really and only *allowing the flesh a triumph* in leading you to be occupied with it.

When there is no *will* such thoughts will be left, turned aside from, and treated as "not I." Of course when the soul is not free I could not say you could do so at all, but were freedom enjoyed you would not be the sufferer from such things.

What I would simply say to you is, when evil thoughts are present to your soul, unsought for and hated, do not stop or cease from your measure of occupation with the Lord to confess them. If *will* enters, they must be confessed, but if not, pass them by as you would avoid an

evil person who is not yourself, and who you know is incorrigible, and with whom contact is only misery and defilement. Avoid such, pass not by them. *To own them at all* is but to give the flesh the place it seeks—a recognition in some way or another. This, even, when it is only to abhor its workings, will be a *satisfaction to the flesh*. Oh, that you had grace to leave “the flesh” unrecognised and disowned, and to pass on conscious that it is always there, and will be in you to the end. How blessed that we can by grace disown and refuse to have its suggestions when it works, knowing through mercy that it is no more “I.”

Your case is one that has been and is common to most of the Lord's people, if not all. I refer to unsolicited, hated, and wandering thoughts; you should simply go on and take no notice of them whatever, as by so doing you only give the flesh the place it seeks. Go on as not hearing the suggestions, be as it were deaf to them. Confess to God if you find *will* at work, but not so as to be occupied with the analysis of the evil, rather look up to Him, the sense of weakness and impotency filling your heart, and in the attitude of dependence of soul, pass on with your eye resting on Him, out of whom strength comes whenever there is conscious weakness.

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

J. N. D.