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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Great Calm - - - - -	F. L. 331
A Sound of Abundance of Rain - - - - -	Ed. 79
Ahab, Obadiah, Elijah - - - - -	W. R. C. 218
An All-Satisfying Object - - - - -	J. N. D. 231
"Art thou for us, or for our Adversaries?" - - - - -	W. R. C. 49
Christ, the Wisdom of God - - - - -	O. H. 150
Conversation on Romans viii. - - - - -	- — 26
Correspondence - - - - -	53, 138, 161, 193, 247, 276
Editor's Note - - - - -	112, 167
Epistle to the Romans. A. H. B. - - - - -	21, 29, 65, 103, 132, 183, 225, 253
Fragments - - - - -	140, 195, 224, 252, 280
"He Came and Preached Peace" - - - - -	W. H. S. F. 319
How to Read the Bible - - - - -	- 179
Inasmuch - - - - -	L. W. R. 122
Misunderstood, but Divinely Defended - - - - -	W. R. C. 259
My Servant - - - - -	W. H. S. F. 203
Notes of an Address on 1 John i. - - - - -	J. N. D. 236
Notes of Lectures on Exodus. John Willans. - - - - -	44, 57, 92, 124, 141
Notes on Luke xii. - - - - -	J. G. Bellett. 14
Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians. - - - - -	W. T. W. 169, 197, 240, 264, 282, 309
Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews. - - - - -	W. T. W. 1, 36, 70, 85, 113
Poetry :—	
An Old Hymn - - - - -	- 308
"Take no Thought for the Morrow" - - - - -	Rossetti. 193

	PAGE
Rationalism - - - - -	J. N. D. 334
Remarks on Romans viii. 9-11 - - -	T. H. T. 82
Showers of Blessing- - - - -	Ed. 147
Signs of the Times - - - - -	- Ed. 316
Sons of your Father - F. M. H.	180, 210, 233, 271
The Antichrist - - - - -	H. L. 187
The Day of Small Things - - - - -	W. E. S. 325
"The Father of Mercies" - - - - -	W. E. S. 108
The Last Week : Where Found - - -	W. J. C. 98
The Passover and the Red Sea - - -	J. N. D. 298
The Red Sea and the Wilderness - - -	J. N. D. 6
Various Aspects of the Gospel - - -	W. J. C. 281
Village Evangelisation - - - - -	- Ed. 295
Who are the "Dearly Beloved Brethren"? -	- H.T. 289

The Christian's Library.

Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

ALTHOUGH no information is given in Scripture as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it has ever held a chief place in the minds of the Christian Assembly, in spite of the fact that the especial class of people to whom it was written has long since disappeared as a known company. Converted Jews there are, and have been from time to time throughout the whole period of the Church's sojourn here below, and such there will be till we are caught up to meet the Lord ; but no longer does there exist among Christians a body of persons still called by the name of Jews, occupying as such an important and distinguished place, but maintaining Jewish customs and observances, zealous of the law, and, while it stood, following the Temple worship, in spite of persecution and contempt from their unbelieving Jewish brethren.

XXXVII.

To such as these was the Hebrew Epistle addressed, as also, and more particularly so, was the Epistle of James, though the latter no doubt at an earlier period when the state of things among the Jews, and even among the believing part of the nation, was not so fully ripe for judgment as when this Epistle to the Hebrews was written. This judgment was consummated in the destruction by the Romans of the city and the Temple, together with the whole Jewish national polity, and the scattering of the people abroad, as to-day, throughout the whole earth.

It cannot be doubted that God would have preserved governmentally, and in grace towards His earthly people, a confession of the name and faith of Christ among them, as even among Gentiles to-day, but when in wilful obstinacy and hardness of heart they rejected a heavenly gospel, as they had already done a Christ on earth, then they were smitten as a people with judicial blindness, fulfilling thus the Scripture; so that now to be a Jew is to be an antagonist of Christ.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the Hebrew Christians when this sentence had been pronounced against the people in the heavenly courts, and was about to be executed in their overthrow and destruction of the city and Temple. The believers among them were warned of this (Heb. x. 25-31), and that henceforth their connection with the earthly and

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 3

Jewish system must be severed, since there was no link, according to God, between a legal Christ-rejecting Judaism and the truth of the Christian position—a position which, while it had been always theirs as believers, was now to be taken in its practical results (Heb. xiii. 10-15).

This epistle was therefore written so that this might be done in faith and with a conscience divinely instructed with respect to the mind of God and the present position of Christ. The place of Christ determines that of His saints, and the revelation of it is given in order that we may now enter in our consciences by faith into the divine understanding of it in order that the state of our souls and communion accordingly may be governed by that revelation, and thus a testimony be maintained for God as a present thing in doctrine and manner of life. It is mere carnal indifference to say that because I believe in Christ the complete result of all that He is and has done belongs to me, so that I need not to occupy myself so earnestly with what is revealed in the Scriptures. It is sufficient to know that I am saved from wrath, and shall spend eternity in heaven. Not so; God has revealed in the sacred Scriptures all that concerns His glory, as far as it can be known by us now, not only what is necessary for our salvation; and the Christian is left here in the place of Christ rejected to carry on the

testimony of what God is: of course, morally only, not in his person, as God was in Christ (Eph. v. 1, 2). Moreover, he is the witness in life and word of the accomplishment, so far as a heavenly and exalted Christ is concerned, of God's eternal purposes for man, the Christian being in Him by the new life and the Holy Spirit. Besides this, there is the special relationship of the Assembly to Christ in life and love as His body and His bride.

These things are all revealed in the New Testament for faith to receive, so that the life may be governed accordingly, and a living testimony produced similar to Christ's, only in those who have been redeemed and born again, and, having sin still in them, bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. With us, too, this testimony is imperfect, though it ought not to be, whereas Christ was personally and perfectly what He testified of.

Now for us to bear this testimony it is necessary that the Word of God which reveals it should have entered our consciences in the love of it; though the sovereign grace of God has made true in every one of His children that which was divinely true in Christ Himself, so that the darkness is passing, not putting out the light as in the rejection of Christ, and the true light now shineth for eternity in those who are His (1 John ii. 8). The declaration of the Father in the person and ministry of the only-begotten Son finds its

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 5

counterpart and perpetuation among Christians in that we love one another.

This is true of every believer in Christ, not measured by their varying degrees of apprehension of divine truth, but by the sovereign communication to them on God's part of eternal life. Yet as in the place of testimony to what God has wrought, and as holding forth the word of life, this can only be according as our souls have received the revelation of God in the power of the Spirit (Phil. iii. 15). Otherwise the written Word would have been purposeless and in vain.

The great point of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to bring in divine power by the Word to the hearts and consciences of the saints, the cardinal fact that Christ is now set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; and thus as the effect of this to separate them absolutely from all association with the legal system to which they belonged as God's earthly people with its ineffectual ceremonies and sacrifices. In four different ways is this supreme and glorious position of Christ presented in the epistle. First, in respect of the divine dignity of His Person; He sets Himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high (i. 3), His manhood in which He suffered being that in which He is crowned and is to be set in supremacy over all things (ii. 7-9). Secondly, in assuming the office of heavenly High Priest He has set

Himself down on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens, Mediator of a better covenant founded on better promises than those which related to earth and a legal covenant (viii.).

Also in purifying the heavenly things He is presented, for the third time, as setting Himself down in perpetuity at the right hand of God (x. 10-14), a proof of the perpetual virtue of His sacrifice to sanctify and perfect those who come by Him to God. Lastly, as our pattern, the great Leader and Completer of faith, having endured the cross, He sets Himself down at the right hand of the throne of God.



The Red Sea and the Wilderness.



IT is easy to understand Israel's distress—the sea shutting them in before, and Pharaoh and his host pursuing, so that they were sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord, and said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

Although, as we see, they had cried to the Lord, they had not in their hearts reckoned on His delivering them. It must therefore have been a wondrous thing to them when God was so publicly manifested to be on their side. And

THE RED SEA AND THE WILDERNESS. 7

so is it with our hearts, when thus tested with trial on every side; shut in, as it were, with trouble of one sort or another, our hearts are often found buried under the circumstances, instead of calculating upon the God who is above them either to sustain us under them or deliver from them.

Israel was dealt with in unqualified grace, whatever might be their murmurings, till they reached Sinai, that they might know how entirely God was for them. Afterwards, through their folly in putting themselves under the law, which they ought to have known they could not keep, they brought upon themselves a different line of treatment. In Exodus xvi. when they murmured for food, God gave them quails (as well as manna) without any reproach, that Israel might know that God was feeding them on the ground of perfect grace. But afterwards, when they again murmured for flesh (being then under law), we read that, while it was yet in their mouths, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote them with a very great plague (Num. xi. 33). But God would first have them know how entirely bent He was on doing them good, bad as they might be.

It is well to distinguish, for our soul's profit, the difference between the Passover and the Red Sea. For a person may hear the gospel and receive it with joy, and be rejoicing in the

forgiveness of sins ; he may see the loveliness of Christ, and have his affections drawn out towards Himself ; but if full redemption is not known, as typified by the Red Sea, if he does not know himself to be risen with Christ, on the other side of death and judgment, he is almost sure to lose his joy when temptation comes in and he feels his own weakness.

The joy of Exodus xv. is, that God has absolutely redeemed the people out of Egypt, and brought them in His strength to His holy habitation. A very different thing from the joy of the Passover—being delivered from just and deserved judgment. In the Passover He had made Himself known to them as the God of judgment. The blood on the door-posts screened them from judgment ; it kept Him out, and He did not come into their houses to destroy. Had He come in, it must have been in judgment. At the Red Sea it was another thing—even God coming in in strength as their salvation. The Passover delivered them from His judgment, the Red Sea from their enemies. The moment His people are in danger from Pharaoh, He comes in. The very sea they dreaded, and which appeared to throw them into Pharaoh's hands, becomes the means of their salvation. Thus through death God delivered them from death ; like as Christ went down into the stronghold of Satan, went down under the power of death, and rising again from

THE RED SEA AND THE WILDERNESS. 9

the dead, delivered us from death. Thus was there an end of Pharaoh and Egypt to them for ever. The Red Sea is redemption out of Egypt; God Himself is their salvation. He whom they had feared, and justly, as a Judge, is become their salvation. They are redeemed; no longer hoping for mercy, but able to rejoice that judgment was passed, and to sing His praises for having brought them to His holy habitation—to God Himself; in the light as He is in the light; and brought there before they had taken one step in the wilderness, or fought one battle with their enemies.

There is no conflict properly till redemption is known. They did not attempt to fight with Pharaoh, but only to get away from him. They groaned under his yoke, but did not combat against him. How could they? They must be brought to God first—be the Lord's host before they can fight His enemies or their own. And so it is with an individual soul. I have no power to combat Satan while I am still his slave. I may groan under his yoke, and sigh to be delivered from it; but before my arm can be raised against him, I must have a complete and known redemption. The Israelites are not only happy in escaping the pursuer: it is a full, conscious redemption from Egypt and Pharaoh; and they can count on God's power for all the rest. "The people shall hear and be afraid, the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away" (vers.

15, 16). Their joy does not arise from having no enemies, but from God's own divine power taking them up, and putting them in His own presence.

"Thou shalt plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance" (ver. 17). This was yet to be done; but they were already with Him in His holy habitation—not *theirs* but *His*. And thus are we in His presence, brought to *God*, though not yet in the place prepared for us on high. So, in Ephesians i., the apostle prays "that they may know what is the hope of *His* calling, and the glory of *His* inheritance in the saints." It was God's land they were to dwell in. The Father's house in which our home shall be. It is His glory, and He will bring us into it. No fear of the enemies by the way: to faith they are powerless. Full confidence belongs to redemption. Is it, then, as men would say, all plain sailing now? In no wise. It is the wilderness, and there is no water; and, mark, it was by the Lord's command they pitched in Rephidim.

Does this make redemption uncertain? Not at all. Yet it is a dreadful thing to have no water; it was certain death in those countries. Had He then brought them through the Red Sea and unto Himself to kill them with thirst! When at length they did come to water, it was bitter. But this was to prove them, and bring out what was in their hearts. The bitter water

THE RED SEA AND THE WILDERNESS. II

did not show what was in God's heart : redemption had shown that ; but in their hearts lay much that had to be manifested and corrected. They must drink into the power of death. Being redeemed for ever, they must learn that there is nothing for them in the wilderness. All supply must be from God Himself. This is the very effect of redemption, and there is so much in us to be brought out and corrected. But He makes the waters sweet.

We must all learn death (being redeemed we have life), and it cannot be learnt in Egypt. They had no Marah in Egypt. It is wilderness experience. Redemption must be known first, and the effect will be death to sin, to selfishness, to one's own will ; and all this is very trying. A person might be tempted to say, All this trial comes upon me because I have not redemption. Not so ; it is just because you *are* redeemed. We may seek to avoid the bitter waters of Marah, but God will bring us to them. We must break down all that is of the old man, and then, in His own good time, He will put in that which sweetens all. But because God has brought me to Himself, He is putting His finger on everything (be it love of the world, setting up self, my own will, or whatever it may be) that hinders complete dependence on Him, or my soul's full enjoyment of Himself. But count it not strange, though it be a fiery trial which is to try you ; for as surely as you are redeemed,

so will He break down your own will. Yes, beloved, God will make you drink of the very thing (death) that redeemed you.

And now Israel is going on with God, and He is dealing with them. He gave them statutes, &c. He did not do so before He had redeemed them. They had been troubled before by Pharaoh, but now it was from God. This was the effect of having to do with God, and now they learn God in a new character—"The Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. xv. 26). A different thing from His promise, that if obedient He would bring none of the diseases of Egypt upon them. They are exercised by God, but it is that they may know Him as the Healer; it is for this that the whole heart has to be brought out before God. We cannot escape it. He will so order circumstances as to bring it about. Sometimes we are humbled before men: this is very trying, very bitter water; but, then, what a wretched thing it was to be seeking to magnify oneself! As soon as the tree (the cross) is in the waters, they refresh the soul. This is joy in tribulation. Joy in redemption first, but now in the healing. First, God makes us to sing in the knowledge of redemption; and then, if we are to have the practical effect of redemption, which is the enjoyment *of God* Himself in our souls, the flesh, which would always hinder this, must be broken down in whatever form it works. It was

THE RED SEA AND THE WILDERNESS. 13

to prove them. God knew what was in their hearts; but *they* did not, and they must learn it.

After this they come to Elim. Now they experience the natural consequences of being with God—the full streams of refreshment—as soon as they were really broken down. Had Elim come first, there would have been no sense of their dependence on the Lord for everything, and nature would have been unbroken. But trial produces dependence, and dependence, communion. It is only for this that He delays, for He delights in blessing His people. The numbers 12 and 70 are different figures of perfection. Perfect refreshment, perfect shelter, perfect rest, and all this in the wilderness.

They must be exercised at Marah, that they may fully know and enjoy Him at Elim. Redemption brought them indeed to God, but now it is joy *in* God. And so it is with us. Although we are redeemed, we cannot have these springs from God Himself, flowing through our souls, with unbroken flesh. But whatever trial we are in, however deeply we may have to drink into death, there is resurrection as well as death; and when we see God's hand in it—when we see the cross of Christ in the bitter waters—we understand God's mind and purpose in them, and they become sweet to us. We cannot walk in the way of faith without faith, so we must be put to the test. Not that, for the present, tribulation seems joyous, but grievous,

but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. Flesh is not faith. If I lose my trust in God for one minute, that very minute the flesh comes in, under some form or other. Whenever we feel perplexed or at a loss, the eye is not single: it shows I am out of communion, otherwise I should know what to do. If the eye were single, the whole body would be full of light. Or there is something yet to be detected in us, something we have not yet found out in our own hearts. It may not be wilful sin; but there is something He will exercise our hearts about, something as to which He will manifest Himself as Jehovah Rophi (the healer). Thus we learn to rejoice in tribulation also, and then to rejoice in God—finding springs of joy, refreshings in the wilderness in that God who brought us there.

Let us, then, not count trial a strange thing; for we know its purpose, even that we may joy in God Himself. . J. N. D.

Notes on Luke xii.

THE instruction of this chapter is very simple. The Lord is not so much here a revealer of the secrets of the Father, as He is a teacher, one addressing us upon very

NOTES ON LUKE XII.

15

homely truth, and it is very happy to see the Lord coming down to the practical detail of daily life. It is in this way we read the chapter. We have here the duties of the soul in passing through the scenes of life.

The first matter is HYPOCRISY (vers. 1-3). Don't practise it, purge out the leaven of the Pharisees. It is all folly in you, and how beautiful are the figures He uses to enforce the practical lessons. There is a day coming when all shall be revealed.

The next thing is FEAR (vers. 4, 5). "I say unto you, my friends," &c. This came very naturally after the other, for "the fear of man bringeth a snare." Don't fear man, his terror only extends to this life. Then He passes on (vers. 6, 7), if you rightly apprehend God, He need not be a spirit of fear. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings," &c. He first conducts the heart from the fear of man and the fear of God, and then conducts it a step farther, and shows that God is not really an object of fear; "He numbers the hairs of your head," don't be afraid.

"Also I say unto you," &c. (vers. 8-12). Still He has the heart in His hands to lead us to confidence in God. Let me tell you that God has special care over you. You may be rejected, but when you become witnesses in the earth, the Holy Spirit will teach you, and the world must not gainsay you. What a beautiful place

that puts the poor disciple of Christ into ! Here he is not only the care of God, but the vessel of the Holy Ghost, and as a vessel of the Holy Ghost, protected and guarded by God. These are not difficult things to apprehend. Do I know that He numbers the hairs of my head, and having given me His Spirit, He watches over me in the moment of my difficulty, and to teach me in the hour of danger how to carry myself?

COVETOUSNESS—A very common thing in the moral of this life (vers. 13, 14). Jesus would not take the place that this man's covetousness put Him into. There was in all this much of reverence to Christ. This was not a profane man. In one sense he was a religious man, but ah ! the love of the world may mix itself in the heart when there is very much of reverence to Jesus Christ. I see in this man a certain measure of deference to Christ. He took his cause to Christ, not to the magistrate, but He mistook Christ. "Who made Me a ruler?" &c. (ver. 14). As if he said, "Do I come to settle the interests of this life? Cast all your care on Him who careth for you." I came to take you out of all this (ver. 15). "Take heed . . . a man's life consisteth not," &c. This is the first corrective.

Don't measure *yourself* by what you have, don't value a man according to what *he* has. The ground of a certain rich man," &c. (ver. 16). This parable was the proof—the man

NOTES ON LUKE XII.

17

was prospering, getting richer and richer, and see how the Lord cut the account very short indeed. But He has not done with the subject. "Take no thought;" "Consider the ravens;" "God feedeth *them*." Here He is leading the heart from the scene around to God, who is above all. The ravens have not a storehouse nor a barn, but they have *God*—could you and I be as the raven, and as the *sparrow*? they have, I say, no storehouse nor barn, they *have* the God of the *spring*, and the God of the *harvest*. What a simple figure! I may be sitting as a sparrow alone upon the housetops without these things, but having God. Now He counsels the heart further, "Consider the lilies." The lily has no spinning-wheel, but the lily has God, as the raven and the sparrow have God. Solomon had the purple of Tyre—the merchandise of all the nations. Ah, how simply the divine teacher speaks to my heart, and I want a heart open to this beautiful admonition.

This is all homely life—the Lord came to the door of Abram's tent and spoke of the concerns of his family. Here He comes to my heart to talk about the raven and the lily. "*Seek not ye*" (ver. 29). "*Your Father knoweth*"—exquisite! That is, your Father knows that your body wants clothing and food—that gives reality to the Lord's thoughts; and oh, in the perplexities of life all this is verified. "Rather seek ye," &c.; "Fear not, little flock," &c. That shows that

when He tells us to seek the kingdom it is not a doubtful matter as to whether we attain it, but to seek it so as to have our hearts upon it. Don't then be seeking in doubt as to whether you shall reach the kingdom, but in desire to have your heart upon it. "It is your Father's good pleasure;" "Sell that ye have." The more I transfer my expectations to heaven, the more my heart is on the road to it; there is no doubt of this, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If you want to improve your property, the care of that will employ your heart. If you are bent on the improvement of your mind, that will engage your heart. If I have my expectations in the presence of the glory of Christ, I should be enabled to sell that which I have here. Whatever we are looking upon as an object to cultivate or improve, that will have our hearts.

"Let your loins be girt," &c. (vers. 35, 36). "*Immediately*"—why open immediately? Because they are watching. If I am not able to open *immediately*, and that there is something to be done before I can do so, the heart is not free for Christ. Are we in the attitude of expectation? or can I say, I desire to have the girded loins and the burning lamp. I pray the Lord to gird my loins a little tighter, and to trim my lamp a little more. I am conscious the girdle is loose, and the lamp burning dimly, but I can say to the Lord, Tighten the *one*, and

NOTES ON LUKE XII.

19

trim the *other*, and so be ready. Oh! pray Him by His Spirit to do all this for you. Beautiful figures here as expressive of expectation. This puts you into an attitude, not as in the spirit of bondage or fear, but of desire; not in the spirit of those who seek the kingdom as doubtful of obtaining it, but as a thing really *desirable*.

"Be ye also ready" (ver. 40). Beautiful! beautiful and yet serious—you don't know the hour, and it is very happy you don't, because the operation of that is to keep us always watching—there would have been a grand moral defect if the hour had been known. "*Then Peter said,*" &c. (ver. 41). The Lord knows that the capacity of expectation depends upon moral character in the world. If I am loving elevation and importance, this contends with the expectation of the kingdom. Let us ask the question honestly, Do I love power here? Yes, my poor heart does. Well, the Lord has taken you for better or for worse. The Lord Jesus knows all, but we should watch against all this. If I am indulging in the low habits of the flesh; if I am eating and drinking with the drunken (mark, not being drunk myself); if, I say, we are indulging in these things, they contend with the trimming of the lamps.

"I am come to send," &c. (vers. 49-53). Here is serious truth, homely truth, verified in every age and dispensation (ver. 52). When the converting power of God enters a family—what it

does ! It is even so ! We cannot linger over this. But will He ever come to give peace ? Indeed He will, and His name shall be the "*Prince of Peace*," and of the increase of His government and of His peace, there shall be no end. Oh, ask God speedily to accomplish the number of His elect, and to hasten His kingdom. "*He said also*" (ver. 54), "*Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right*" (ver. 57). This is beautiful ! Do you prize that thought ? We have the mind of Christ and know all things. "*He that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" This is the same truth, but more faintly here in the chapter before us. Pray for this mind, don't be satisfied merely with a good conscience, though that is blessed, but look for other habits of the Lord, even the apprehensions of a spiritual mind. The priests did so under the law, they could say "*that is clean*," and "*that is not CLEAN*," so we should carry a priestly mind. "*I beseech you by the mercies of God*" (Rom. xii. 1, 2). This is all *priestly* character, *priestly mind*. May the Lord carry us through the moral memory of life thus. We should shrink instinctively from what is defiling, and choose what is good. Look to keep the conscience unrebuking. May the Lord endow us thus to walk practically through the scene, yet rise above it all, and to walk cleanly through the scene, but with a mind above it !

J. G. BELLETT.

Epistle to the Romans.

AT the close of chapter ix. the setting aside of Israel nationally had been proved from Old Testament Scripture; but at the same time the door of entrance into blessing was as open for any individual amongst that nation as for the Gentile, "Whosoever"—be he Jew or Gentile—"believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (chap. ix. 33).

In chapter x. this subject is continued, and the difference between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the law is further developed. To be outwardly the chosen people of God did not suffice, the apostle's earnest desire for Israel was that they might be saved. In truth they had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge. They were ignorant of God's righteousness, and endeavoured to establish their own. Not that they had any of their own in reality.

How many in this our day are on exactly the same ground, and in precisely the same condition? Man's own righteousness, if he had any, would be what Moses describes as "the righteousness which is of the law" (ver. 5), a righteousness on the principle of doing; but on this ground all are guilty and lost. The righteousness of

God is that spoken of in verse 6 as "the righteousness which is of faith." How great the difference! The former is human and on the principle of works; the latter is divine and on the principle of faith. But Christ is the object of that faith, and hence for every one that believeth He is the end of the law for righteousness. In other words, Christ has closed up the whole dispensation of the law for every one that believes. The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ; not to bring us unto Christ, for this it never could do, but until Christ came. Now that faith is come, faith in a crucified risen and glorified Christ, we are justified by faith and are no longer under the schoolmaster (Gal. iii.). Christ is the end of the law, it is done with for the believer. The believer has found righteousness on another principle, namely, that of faith.

And this was no novel idea, for even the Old Testament foretold it. This we were told in chapter iii. 21. The righteousness of God by faith was not revealed or manifested in Old Testament times, for then God was demonstrating the inability of man to obtain righteousness by deeds of law; "but NOW the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." This witness the apostle now proceeds to develop.

The book of Deuteronomy had announced beforehand the failure of the people under law. They were to be cast out of their own land,

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

23

and scattered amongst the nations for their disobedience. Hence, therefore, it could be no question of their obtaining righteousness through a law that they had broken. Their governmental chastisement at the hand of Jehovah was evidence that they had not done that which the law required. Now in chapter xxx. we are told of God's provision for them when scattered, should they in heart turn to Him in the land of their exile. Sinai's law they had not kept, they were in captivity for not doing so, hence all hope of obtaining righteousness on that ground was over; but says Jehovah to them through Moses, "The commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou shouldest say, "Who shall go up for us to heaven? . . . But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. xxx. 11-15). These are the very words which are applied by the Spirit of God in Romans to Christ, and God's way of righteousness by faith in Him. "That is, the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 6-14).

Again, the Scriptures said, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed," quoting Isaiah xxviii. 16. But this blessed "whosoever"

let in not only a believing Jew, but a believing Gentile as well, "for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek : for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." There was no difference in the ruin, for all without exception had sinned, but likewise there was no difference in the God-provided remedy.

This "whosoever" doctrine, so blessed in its far-reaching results, was not confined to one prophet, for not only Isaiah, but Joel also declared that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13 ; Joel ii. 32). Doubtless this will have an accomplishment in a very special manner in the persecuted remnant of a future day, nevertheless the Spirit of God here uses it to demonstrate the fact that the principle of individual faith in days of general ruin should have been no strange doctrine to the Jew.

But step by step the argument proceeds. If salvation comes to whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, be he Jew or Gentile, then there must be faith or none could call upon Him. But there cannot be faith in One of whom they had not heard, and to hear there must be a preacher. So here, again, Isaiah was fulfilled, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace," &c. (Rom. x. 15 ; Isa. lii. 7). But all who heard, alas, did not obey in that day any more than in this, "for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

25

This principle is thus established on all grounds, and from every side, by Moses, Isaiah, Joel, and the Psalms, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (chap. x. 17).

How is it that Israel did not know after all this abundant testimony from the Psalms, the law, and the prophets? Moses had long before declared, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people" (that is, by the Gentiles), "and by a foolish nation" (Gentiles) "I will anger you" (Deut. xxxii. 21). But Isaiah goes further, and with greater boldness still declares, "I was found of them that sought Me not" (Gentiles). . . . "But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (vers. 20, 21). So true was it, that going about to establish their own righteousness they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.

It is important to notice in these days of rationalism and higher criticism how unquestioningly an inspired apostle quotes, as the words of Moses and Isaiah, that of which modern unbelief unblushingly refuses them to be the authors. And not only this, but when reading these or any other portions of the Bible it is the Scripture that we read, and "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35). When Hosea writes it is "God speaking in Osee" (Rom. ix. 25) when Isaiah writes it is "the Scripture saith" &c. (Rom. x. 11).

Conversation on Romans viii.

I TOLD Mr D—— I was much troubled about Romans viii. I did not know whether to connect the work of the Spirit there with Pentecost or with John xx.

He answered that he well knew my difficulty, that no passage had given him more trouble, especially verse 9. He then explained as follows :—

In the first eleven verses the question is of the power of life ; this is not properly the gift at Pentecost. After verse 11 the Spirit Himself as given at Pentecost is brought in. Before verse 11 we are occupied with the question of life, as belonging to the new state into which we are brought, the state described in verse 1 as “in Christ Jesus.”

I asked how the expression “in Christ Jesus” could be intelligible to the Romans when no allusion to it had been previously made in the epistle.

Mr D—— said that it was the contrast to “in the flesh” in chapter vii. That up to the middle of chapter v. the question of sin is dealt with ; after that the *state* into which we are brought, and the *state* from which we are delivered are in question, resurrection being the means by which we pass from the one into the other.

CONVERSATION ON ROMANS VIII. 27

I then asked whether in that case the new state did not date from John xx.

He answered that as regards the actual life it did, for Pentecost was not a gift of life but of power, but that though the life was there before, we only came into the consciousness of what it was, and consequently into the power of it, at Pentecost.

I asked, what then was the difference between the life given in John xx. and that which Old Testament believers had, if John xx. was not yet union with Christ. He said it was certainly not yet union, but it was a fuller life, the resurrection life of Christ. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*." It was not simply a life *from* God, but specifically the life of Christ, but still not yet union. It brought us into a new relationship with God, that of children, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." I said it was difficult to separate this from union, as we became children as He was, and that by communication of His life.

Mr D—— answered that it was quite a different thing from union, it was relationship. A man's brother is not himself—"go to My *brethren*," &c. When it is a question of union there are no brethren, only the one Christ. This we get at Pentecost, and could not get it earlier because it is not only to the risen Man, but to the glorified Man that we are united. He must first be in

glory, and then we are one with Him by the baptism of the Spirit. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Till we have this, we do not know what the life is that we have got. None *now* can *start* from a lower level than John xx., only they don't know it till they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, then He brings out what we are, and we can rejoice in it.

I asked what was the force of "Spirit of Christ" in verse 9. Whether *that* was in connection with John xx.

He said he thought not, but that it was union, the being baptized into the body of Christ. "None of His" means "not of Him," not a member. A believer is not a member till he receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, but God, in speaking of the blessing, must speak of it as it is in its completeness. Anointing and sealing are used of the Lord Jesus, baptizing never. Baptism is only in reference to the body—no one is baptized as an individual—Christ is the one into whom the Holy Ghost baptizes *us*—the nucleus so to speak. He could not therefore have the expression "baptized by the Holy Ghost" applied to Himself. But sealing is the mark set by God on the individual who is baptized into the body, and is another thing, though the same act of the Spirit does both. The anointing, too, is a simultaneous act, but that, like baptism, looks forward, that which is sealing looks back. What follows after verse 11 is the result of all these.

Epistle to the Romans.

THE question is now distinctly raised, "Hath God cast away His people?"—that is, His people Israel (Rom. xi.). Their rejection of Christ, and the admission of the Gentiles into blessing, consequent upon this, might give ground for such a thought. But no, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (ver. 29). God is not a man that He should lie, what He has promised He will perform, hence all the unconditional promises made to Abraham and the fathers (the *Jewish* fathers), will yet be fulfilled.

But the Spirit of God here leads the Apostle to give distinct and definite ground for the assertion, "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew" (ver. 2).

1. The Apostle himself was a standing witness. Was he not an Israelite? Was he not of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin? Yes, surely. Paul himself, then, resembled the remnant in the days of Elias; everything in Israel had then sunk to a terrible level, yet had God reserved to Himself seven thousand men. Even now in this present time there is an election—but, mark it well!—"an election of *grace*" (ver. 5). How carefully all through our epistle does the Spirit of God insist that all

XXXVIII.

gospel blessing is on the principle of grace, and not by works of law. On the ground of law man is lost, on the ground of grace alone can he be saved.

We learn, then, that Israel as a nation has not obtained the blessing that it sought, but the election has obtained it. Paul was not the only one, for others from amongst Israel were likewise blessed, as the early chapters of the Acts abundantly testify; but, solemn words! "the rest were blinded" (ver. 7). Long before had this judgment been pronounced (Isaiah xxix. 10); but only now, on their national rejection of Messiah, was the sentence of judicial blinding executed. They stumbled at the stumbling block.

2. "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" (ver. 11). Had God no other purpose for them than this? God forbid. He brings blessing, and even greater blessing, out of their very failure. Does this minimise their sin? In no wise; but it magnifies God's grace. "Through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles." Glorious words! What a marvel of divine grace, that thus lets in the writer and reader of these lines! But so far as Israel was concerned, the object of letting in the Gentiles to participate in the blessing was "to provoke them (*i.e.* Israel) to jealousy" (ver. 11), and therefore in no wise was it a sign that God had cast away His people.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

31

Though there is here no direct quotation from the Old Testament it is nevertheless evident that the allusion is to Deut. xxxii. The same inspiring Spirit that caused Moses to write long ages before, here causes Paul to use those very writings with marvellous accuracy ; not by way of direct quotation, as we have said, but nevertheless applying by inspiration past prophetic utterances to elucidate God's present dealings both with Israel and the Gentiles. Israel had moved God to jealousy with their idols ; God would in turn move them to jealousy " with those which are not a people " (Deut. xxxii. 16-22.)

But further, the voices of the prophets had abundantly spoken of Israel's future and final restoration to blessing. Here, then, the Spirit reasons afresh that if their temporary fall be the riches of the world ; if their diminishing be the riches of the Gentiles, " how much more " would " their fulness ? " It will be by contrast like life from the dead. Indeed it will not be until the day of Israel's restoration that the fulness of blessing will come to the Gentiles. This likewise is taught in Deut. xxxii., as repeatedly in the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets. In the past dealings of God Israel was blessed, and the Gentile nations were left out of any participation in this blessing ; in the present, the Gentiles are admitted to blessing, whereas Israel as a nation is set aside ; in the future, Israel *and* the Gentiles will be blessed *together*—" Rejoice, O ye nations

(Gentiles), with His people (Israel).” And again, “God shall bless us (Israel); and all the ends of the earth (Gentiles) shall fear Him ” (Ps. lxvii.)

We now come to a further development of the subject, viz., the tree of promise and earthly blessing. Sin having come in and risen to a climax of corruption and violence, God sent the flood in judgment. After the flood, man's rebellion and pride of heart rose to such a pitch that God scattered them and divided them into nations (Gen. xi.); these nations speedily turned to idolatry, out of which state of things Abraham was called (Josh. xxiv.). Abraham thus became the object of God's electing mercy, the subject of His sovereign call, and the depository of His promises for the earth. Abraham was the first-fruit, the root of the olive tree of promise. Election, calling, and promise were thus seen exemplified in the history of the patriarch.

It is important to observe that the subject here is not salvation, nor membership of the body of Christ. These truths are connected with heaven, whereas the olive tree has to do with the earth. No members of the body of Christ can be broken off. Thank God for that !

But if Abraham was the root of this tree of promise, Israel were the branches, the natural branches. Now through their unbelief, some of these natural branches, not all, were broken off. In their place the Gentiles, branches of a wild

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

33

olive tree, were grafted in, and became partakers of the root and fatness of the true olive tree. It ill becomes them to boast, for they did not bear the root, it was the root that bore them.

How humbling is all this reasoning of the Spirit to Gentile high-mindedness! How it tends, too, to check the disdainful spirit so prevalent in our day against the Jew!

The Gentiles might boast that "the branches (Jews) were broken off, that I (Gentile) might be grafted in" (ver. 19). Well, this was true; they were broken off, not all, but some (ver. 17). But why was this? "Because of unbelief." And here the Gentile is warned not to be high-minded, but to fear. By faith alone can he stand. If God spared not the natural branches because of unbelief, will He tolerate the like, if not greater, unbelief amongst the Gentiles? TAKE HEED, is the solemn admonition. God's severity has been shown in His dealings with Israel, His goodness towards the Gentiles; but on this condition, "*If thou continue in His goodness: OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF.*"

Has Christendom continued in God's goodness? Are the abominations and persecutions of Babylon the Great a continuance in God's goodness? Is the widespread and rapidly increasing plague of rationalism and infidelity a standing by faith? Is it not rather downright unbelief? The warning has been unheeded, Christendom's doom approaches, the hour of

Gentile cutting off is at hand. But the tree of promise will still remain, and the natural Jewish branches may yet be grafted into "their own olive tree ;" and so they will, "if they abide not still in unbelief."

3. Here we reach the third proof that God has not cast away His people which He foreknew, viz., the distinct and definite testimony of the Word of God through the prophets that in the end they shall be brought back as a nation with repentant hearts owning their sin in rejecting their Messiah ; at that day their sins should be taken away, and all Israel should be saved.

Blindness in part had happened to Israel ; this, we have seen, the prophets had foretold. But this blindness would not endure for ever, but only "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." This does not refer to the conversion of the Gentile nations and their blessing during the millennium, which will not be until *after* Israel's restoration. The "fulness of the Gentiles" alludes to the complete number now being brought in by the gospel to share Christ's heavenly glory, in other words, *the Church*. When this number is completed the Lord will come and take the Church away ; the history of grace and the calling out of the Church will cease ; and the mere professing branches will be cut off. Then will God begin afresh His dealings with Israel, and they as a nation will be saved.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

35

It is most important to remember that the olive tree is typical of *earthly* privilege. After the partial blindness that came upon Israel consequent upon their rejection of Messiah, the Gentiles were admitted to this place of privilege, and ever since the blessing, for the most part, has flown along Gentile lines. Doubtless all those who in reality receive the blessing also form part of the Church, but this is a totally different subject. When we speak of the Church we must lose sight of distinctions between Jew and Gentile; "the middle wall of partition" is broken down, and in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile (see Eph. iii. ; Gal. iii. ; Col. iii.).

All through this chapter (Rom. xi.) the distinction between Jew and Gentile is carefully made and diligently observed. When Israel stumbled through unbelief, the Gentiles were grafted into the tree of promise. When these in turn will be cast off for not continuing in God's goodness, then Israel will again be taken up. They are looked upon as entirely separate, and in no sense as made into "one new man" according to the Spirit's teaching in Ephesians ii.

While the Gentiles are blessed by the Gospel the Jews are enemies, but for the fathers' sakes they are beloved because of the election. Their future restoration will be not on the ground of law, but on that of promises made to the fathers (see Exod. xxxii. 13 ; Lev. xxvi.); and yet will it also be on the ground of pure and

XXXVIII. 2

sovereign mercy. Verse 31 should read thus:—
 “Even so have these (the Jew) not believed in
 your (the Gentile) mercy, that they also may
 obtain mercy.” In the riches of the wisdom and
 knowledge of God He so brings it about that
 all are concluded in unbelief, so that He may
 have mercy upon all, both Jew and Gentile.

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him,
 are all things, to whom be glory for ever.
 Amen.”

Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(CHAPS. i. and ii.)

THE PERSONAL GLORY OF THE SON.

FROM what has been said already it will be
 seen that the main subject of this epistle
 is Christ in the seat of heavenly supre-
 macy according to the four different characters
 in which He is viewed therein. We will now
 consider the object for which the Spirit of God
 thus reveals Him. The object is undoubtedly
 to fashion the souls of the saints in conformity
 therewith.

But before examining in detail the various

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 37

chapters, let us recall that most touching incident in the Lord's last journey to Jerusalem when, drawing near to the city, He wept over it as its ruin passed prophetically before his eyes (Luke xix. 42). And a little later, predicting the desolation of the Temple, He cries, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 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. 37). We see how His love longed after and would have gathered Israel under His all-sufficient and protecting power—a haven of safety from all evil.

But they would not; and instead, the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel together that they might seize Jesus by subtlety and kill Him, and finally persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. Thus was His life taken from the earth; and blessing for man in the flesh, in virtue of promises made to him, was for ever lost as depending upon His responsibility, and instead, His blood was upon them and their children.

Irretrievable as was the consequent ruin of Israel and of man after the flesh, no floods of evil can drown the love of Christ, neither can the many waters quench it; so that when they crucified Him in the place called Golgotha, or a place of a skull, and the malefactors one on the right hand and the other on the left, Jesus said,

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Impossible that His cry on behalf of others should be unheard, or His intercession not prevail, proceeding as it did from a heart in which the infinite love of God found, and only there, the theatre of its glorious display. Therefore in answer to His cry, the remission of sins is preached to them in the gospel on the day of Pentecost; and the promise of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled which He had poured out when exalted by the right hand of God.

Thus as the divine Son of David (Acts ii. 30-35) He is revealed as exalted, and in heaven made both Lord and Christ; but beyond this His place is undefined. Subsequently Peter proposes the blessing to them according to God's word to Abraham, which says: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," and he offers that upon repentance the Lord would send Jesus Christ (Acts iii. 19-25). Earthly blessing in the seed of Abraham was still possible then and there; and He would come out of heaven to establish it if they would receive Him. But instead they laid hands on the apostles and put them in prison, beating them on another occasion and commanding them not to speak in the name of Jesus. Thus put they Christ's ambassadors to shame.

Still the Lord lingers over them in patience, loth as it were to break the links with that

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 39

earthly system which bore His name, and to which His saints still clung. So when the Spirit opens heaven to the view of Stephen, he bears testimony that the Son of man is *standing* at the right hand of God—not yet set down, but still as in the act of intercession for the people. Yet him they stone in murderous hate, and the final breach is made which leaves to the saints the heavenly place alone.

Hitherto it had been the joy of the Jewish believers to have the glorious position of Christ thus revealed in ever-increasing distinctness and grandeur, but a change is now observable, and Saul of Tarsus, become the chief instrument of the Spirit's energy, converted by the direct vision of the Lord Jesus in heaven, not only excites from the outset the murderous opposition of the Jews, but also is viewed with suspicion by the disciples themselves (Acts ix. 22-27). This clung to him throughout his course in an ever-increasing measure, and the prejudice with which he was regarded even by his brethren in the faith caused his ministry to be neglected and himself despised (Acts xv. 2, xxi. 21-24; Gal. i. 11-16; 2 Tim. i. 15, iv. 10, &c.).

So it came to pass that the *sitting* of Christ at the right hand of God, the doctrine of which is taught exclusively in Paul's epistles * (Col.

* The nearest to it is 1 Peter iii. 22; cf. Mark xvi. 19, Revelation iii. 21, for the historical fact.

iii. 1 ; Eph. i. 20 ; cf. 2 Cor. iv. 1-6), found but a very inadequate place in the hearts and consciences of the saints, and consequently had very little effect on their life and walk. To remedy this defect in the faith of the Jewish saints the Epistle to the Hebrews was written.

A feeble and intermittent communion with God not only leaves the soul exposed to the attacks of Satan, but, what is more, leaves us uninstructed and uninterested as to the thoughts and purposes of God, so that we become occupied religiously with our own thoughts. Thus the world is set up in the heart, though perhaps in a religious way. It was so with these Hebrews, but how graciously the Spirit labours to fix the eyes of their faith upon Jesus seated at God's right hand, and thus bring them into line with what God was doing.

Although the city and the land could be no longer called their own, fallen as they were under the dominion of the Romans, there remained to them still the holy place and the law in which to boast (Acts vi. 13, xxi. 28 ; cf. Matt. xxvi. 61). Now they had received the law as ordained by the ministry of angels (Acts vii. 53 ; Gal. iii. 19) in the hand of a mediator ; and prior to the gospel it was in the prophets that in many parts and in many ways God had spoken, but always intermediately. All these agencies, however, now gave place to the Son in whom He Himself had personally spoken to them. In Him law

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 41

was superseded though fulfilled ; angelic glory paled before the personal dignity of the Son, and a mediator was no longer possible if God held immediate intercourse with man. Their ancient glories and privileges, and so their prepossessions, were annulled in view of that revelation which is not ancient because it is eternal.

Man shrinks from committing himself entirely to the thoughts of God, but how far better are His thoughts than ours ! The inheritance given to man he has spoiled, defiled with his sins, yet would he seek his happiness therein, though all his days are sorrows and his travail grief. But He by whom the worlds were made, and by whom they shall be inherited, enters the scene of ruin wrought by sin, and, having made purification of sins, set Himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high. Thus He takes a supreme place as having done a supreme work ; and every creature, however great and glorious, must take a subordinate place under Him as benefiting by His work. God's angels that excel in strength shall worship Him. If He made all things He shall rule them in uprightness, and in due time unmake and change them. His gladness He shares with companions in manhood, anointed like Himself. Above them, indeed, because He, though truly in manhood, is God the Son, the alone Unchangeable, whose years shall not fail.

Of the material universe He disposes at His

pleasure; His companions are chosen from among men. The angelic hosts are ministering spirits sent forth to serve such in unjealous grace; but no longer to be intermediate between God and man—no longer to furnish law with its solemn terrors on the one hand, and on the other to veil its inexorable exaction, so that man in the flesh might be tested. God has Himself spoken to men and made *them* companions of His gladness (Heb. i. 9). Thus He is everything for them. To the heirs of salvation the Son is all, and angels retire from the ministry of law imposed on man, to serve those who inherit salvation, in whom a far more excellent glory than that of law is displayed, and a nearer and more intimate place with God. Yet angels in yielding the glory of law's high authority for the place of lowly service of grace, follow the pattern of Christ's humility.

This necessarily sets man as under God in the highest and most authoritative place. But of what man or Son of man does Scripture speak? Not of Adam, who was not son of man, but of Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death. He it is who is crowned with glory and honour, so that by the grace of God He should taste death for everything. God the eternal Son, who, having made purification for sins, sets Himself on the right hand of the greatness on high, is found in manhood on the throne, and is there crowned

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 43

with glory and honour (ii. 9) as man, under whose feet all things are subjected.

We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus the leader of our salvation, bringing the many sons to glory through sufferings, so as to display gloriously everything that God is morally and in His nature. Not as in the first creation, which merely exhibited His eternal power and divinity in what He did; this manifests what He *is*. It is the setting up in the man Christ Jesus of the new creation, where all things are of God; though this is not the subject of Hebrews.

In this He makes us all of one (ii. 11) with Himself, the Sanctifier and the sanctified, calling us brethren; and having taken part in flesh and blood, in which we were participators, He annuls through death the devil, who has the power of death. Death opposes an insuperable barrier to the might of the foe. To pass *through* it is to escape for ever from his bondage. This Jesus does for us, and we are effectually freed, since He and we are all of one; so that in resurrection He makes known the Father's name, and sings in the midst of the assembly.

As lawful captives we needed to be redeemed from the hand of the enemy; but without a Friend, a Merciful and Faithful High Priest in things relating to God, how could we have hoped to reach the glory? This, Jesus becomes for us; but if so, it behoved Him (ii. 17) to pass through

every circumstance of suffering in which His people may be found. A Priest on high, He is now able to succour those that are being tempted, for He being tempted has suffered even unto death.

But this introduces the high-priesthood of Christ, His present heavenly service, which, after setting forth the dignity of His person—His supreme deity and true humanity—is the next great subject presented in this epistle.



Notes of Lectures on Exodus.

LECTURE I.

[These lectures, hitherto unpublished, were delivered in the year 1855 by the late John Willans. The practical truths so simply pressed are as needed by the people of God to-day. May our ever gracious Lord apply them to us all with living power !—ED.]

(Read Exod. iii. and iv.)

GOD and His Word are sufficient for every time and circumstance; we are apt to think there are no such difficulties as ours, no times so hard to serve God in as ours; that is not *faith*. Let the soul look to God, and it will find *Him* enough, be the trial never so great and the times never so hard: this is true not only of private or temporal affairs, but as

NOTES OF LECTURES ON EXODUS. 45

regards the failure in the Church, the corruption of systems, &c. &c. What then? Just leave them all and come to *God*. In 1855 you will find God the same, the great, the *present* God, and prove it, aye more blessedly, for having Him *alone* than if you lived in the best days as men speak.

The people did not care about going to Canaan, but God did for them. God's truth and faithfulness cannot fail; spite of the people's backwardness, spite of the king's wickedness, He will bring His purposes to pass—yea, God uses that wickedness to show out His glory. No excuse this for men's wicked acts but a great comfort to us, an assurance that how wretched soever the time is in which we live, how wicked soever those with whom we have to deal, God will pilot us through shoals and straits and make His glory shine out the brighter.

What an honour! to have our hearts in sympathy with God's thoughts, to have fellowship with God in having our thoughts occupied with what concerns His glory! How often we forget that God has brought us to Himself, and that we upon earth have the one *object* with God in heaven, even His Christ!

The apostle tells us that by *faith* the parents of Moses hid him. The hope of the Messiah was strong in their hearts, the destruction of the male children threatened the annihilation of that hope—his mother made an ark of bul-

rushes when she could no longer hide him. Faith made a coffin for the babe and committed it in death to God—the living God—who gave him back to her in resurrection! An unparalleled fact, a mother received wages for nursing her own child; we should say the joy of doing so was enough, God's way is to give more than enough.

Moses' zeal was beyond his discretion, and beyond his faith, too. He defended his oppressed brethren, but he looked hither and thither, before and behind; he was afraid, he was not sure he was right; that was not faith. Proverbs says, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee" (iv. 25). Faith looks straight to God, and if I do that which is right in His sight, what matters who sees me?

Chapter iii. 7, 8. "I have seen, heard, and known, and I am come down," &c. — we are apt to forget how God sympathises with our troubles, we chafe under them, but that is of no avail, better far come and pour them out before God, but we are slow to do that. We are only right as long as God keeps us, we only stand up straight so long as God upholds us; oh! we need to be kept *every moment*. A great mercy to be kept, but a greater still to know our need of being kept. Oh that our first thought in the morning may be, "Keep Thou me"; and at night we shall give Him

NOTES OF LECTURES ON EXODUS. 47

thanks for having kept us. Let us bless Him this night that we have got through this day; we leave the morrow to Him; but each day that is added to us, let our cry be unto Him to keep us.

Whom God brings out of the clutches of Satan He will assuredly bring to glory. Redemption includes everything, in counsel, in time, to all eternity. We have the history of Moses, not to make a great man of *him*, but to show *God's great grace*. The Bible is the history of men who in themselves are bad, yet upheld by the great God; that we may be comforted by the like grace having to do with the same God. How wondrous the condescension of God! He comes near, not to crush us, not to consume us, but to talk with us. Shall we not talk with Him about everything, even as He has to do with us in everything? The object God sets before us is Christ in death and resurrection; and not only that, but it is God's estimate of Christ's work and worth which gives us the privilege of coming thus near Him, that enables Him to come thus near to us and not consume us.

Moses says, Who am I? (Exod. iii. 11). He has not done with self; he had a great schooling before he had done with that and was satisfied only to have to do with *God*. What makes us fit for service? If we believe in God we are as fit to-day as to-morrow: it is grace, grace, grace:

that is all we want from the first day to the last. The oldest can only the best tell the young ones, that we *have* nothing, *are* nothing, all is of grace. Our power is the eye of faith fixed by grace on *God's* object, not on our faith. Some make this mistake, alas, alas! and turn their eyes on *their* faith instead of on Him, who died and rose again, *God's* object.

This is the token (ver. 12), wondrous token, only for faith to apprehend. God can't meet your own condition, but by God's Christ, obedience brings you into blessing. What was ever gained by fighting with sin? we shall only return like dog to vomit or sow to her wallowing. Study God's Word, be occupied with grace which is in Christ Jesus, forget your sins, have to do with God, with His grace. It will be *hard* to sin in *such* presence of such grace, such love, and there will be your victory.

"I am" (vers. 14-17). For ever, is, and was, and will be: how majestic! a present living power. I am! Abraham, Isaac, Jacob sleep—I am ever!

God said, "They shall hearken," &c. (iii. 18); Moses says, "They will not" (iv. 1). Unbelief always contradicts God; in the sinner, and also in the saint, its language is one. Remarkable the way God takes in His condescension to convince him that He is God and not man (the rod, the hand leprous and healed, alike in their lesson showing how the power was all of God). God

never answers unbelief but by Himself. Strange reply! we might ask what had the one to do with the other? No difficulties with God. You say, I am so and so; what is that to God? God knew all you were and all you would be long, long ago! It was a hard lesson for Moses. Past experience is no help; we want God for the present moment, and, blessed be His name, we have Him. Study the Word diligently that you may learn *what* God is—how good! what man is—how vile!

Moses became more humble through contact with God. Moses kept high company and became lowly and learnt that God does not take us up to use because we are fit, but He takes us to make us fit. Oh, that we may so remember that He knows us altogether, so as to be humbled about all, and then He will keep us *through* all.

“Art thou for us, or for our Adversaries?”

FRIEND or foe? Helper or hinderer?
Strengthener or weakener?

It may be clearly seen in the ways of God that “light is sown for the *righteous*, and gladness for the *upright in heart*.” It is on be-

half of those whose *hearts* are perfect that *He shows Himself strong*, and He is a "rewarder of them that *diligently seek Him*." It is the *diligent soul* that is "made fat."

But the *salvation* of the soul and the *prosperity* of the same are different matters. Through redemption we are brought to God quite apart from any question of diligence on our part, but to enjoy Him is another thing. Again, fitness for *heaven*, and fitness to serve Him on *earth*, are different things. Delivered from the authority of darkness we assuredly are, yet fitness to be used to the deliverance of others is different again. If it be desired that we should be "vessels meet for the Master's use," it is evident that *unfitness* may exist.

The foregoing train of thought has been suggested by the consideration of the question at the head of this paper, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Joshua was the speaker (John v. 13). "And it came to pass when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan, from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel" (Josh. v. 1). This crossing of Jordan takes it out of the enemy, so to speak.

This is followed by circumcision, as to which

ART THOU FOR US?

51

see what Paul teaches (Col. ii. 11), and read "the putting off of the body of the flesh;" it is the root and not the branches of the evil tree that is spoken of as put off. Then, the old corn of the land is eaten, "neither had the children of Israel manna any more." The manna is wilderness food, and prefigures Christ in incarnation and humiliation; while "the old corn of the land" points to Him as the risen and ascended One. How profoundly instructive is all this to a believer in Christ.

After Gilgal, and subsequent to eating of the old corn of the land, the captain of the Lord's host appears. Abraham, "the friend of God," was not privileged with manifestations of the Lord's presence while increasing in wealth in Egypt. No tent or altar there! not until returning to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, he calls upon the name of the Lord. Though the enemies' heart had melted, they were there still, and though it appeared an easy matter to thrust them out, we know as a matter of fact Israel never did. At Ai we see how soon the adversaries gained heart again, for was there not an Achan in the camp? The people, flushed with pride, took credit to themselves for a victory *God* had given, and these are the things to give heart to the enemy. How pathetic are the words of the Lord (Ps. lxxxi): "Oh that my people had hearkened unto Me! . . . I should soon have subdued their enemies, and

turned My hand against their adversaries. . . . He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." Plainly, Joshua feels the seriousness of his position.

His question implies that there is something that might be lost. No mere trifle at stake. To let an enemy in who feigns to be a friend may do more harm than many enemies known as such. We can imagine the result of a battle when one of the belligerents, does not trouble to distinguish between friend and foe.

It will be understood that we are writing in a practical way. While all true Christians are in Christ and over Jordan, yet conflict is not over, and that with wicked spirits too—"wicked spirits," active in evil, and who stop at nothing as far as they themselves are concerned. What a comfort it must have been to Joshua to hear in answer to his question, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? Nay; but as captain of the Lord's host am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face, and did worship; and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto His servant?" This is beautiful. We would commend this portion of Scripture to those who lead or aspire to do so.

It behoves us all to sing with lowliness and fervency—

"Lead on, Almighty Lord,
Lead on to victory;
Encouraged by Thy blessed Word,
With joy we follow Thee."

CORRESPONDENCE.

53

Joshua falls at the Lord's feet, and worships. Oh for more of this! May we give Him His place, and follow Him. Victory will then be ours. If, on the other hand, we are actuated by a spirit of self-exaltation, defeat and confusion must inevitably follow.

In the fable of the serpent we are told that the tail quarrelled with the head, and instead of being forced always to follow, insisted that it should take a turn at leading. This the tail undertook to do, and as it moved forward, at all danger it tore itself terribly, and the head, which was obliged against nature to follow a guide which could neither see nor hear, suffered likewise in its turn.

Surely it is not in vain that the Scriptures teach: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

W. R. C.

Correspondence.

Inquiry concerning the Hindu religion.

I SEND you a few notes as to the Hindu religion. It is of course a vast subject, and volumes have been written upon it.

It is what is called a *polytheistic* religion, that is, it has a plurality of gods. Of these there are three chief ones—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. But besides these there are a host of others, lesser ones, to the extent of thirty-three millions! But these gods are more or less imperfect and finite creatures, mighty and immortal, merely in comparison with man. They had a beginning and they will have an end.

The Hindu religion, though claiming great antiquity and divine inspiration in its origin, has changed very greatly from age to age. Its deities have changed, and the systems of philosophy connected with their conceptions of God are radically different to-day from what they were at the time of the *Vedas*, their early sacred writings.

From the *Vedas* it would appear that the religion was monotheistic, and even to-day amongst certain sects (there are an infinite number of sects in Hinduism) there is a tendency to abandon the polytheistic belief. The present form of Hinduism is only a few centuries old.

The *popular* belief is very different from the *philosophical*. In the former idols are to be found, whereas in the philosophical section, which cleaves much more closely to the *Vedas*, idolatry is condemned. From this, and on other grounds too, it may be seen that there is no consistency in Hinduism.

Coming to the three special deities, *Brahma*

CORRESPONDENCE.

55

is the creator, and does not appear to have been ever worshipped ; *Vishnu* is the preserver ; and *Siva* the destroyer. This last seems to be held in awe more than the others, and it would appear that the general idea is, that the evil deity requires more to be propitiated than the good. How different is this from the true God as revealed in Christianity ! “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John iv. 10). We, Christians, know the true God, a God of holiness, righteousness, and truth, whose nature abhors sin and demands its punishment ; but who, on the other hand, is a God of mercy, love, and grace, who loved a world of sinners, and who provided in His love that propitiatory sacrifice which His justice made necessary.

There is no such belief in Hinduism as the immortality of the soul, either for the good or the bad. After a time, longer or shorter as the case may be, the soul returns to earth in another body—reptile, fish, giant, divinity, &c. &c.—and after a variety of migrations, ascends or descends again to man ; this is called the transmigration of souls—individuality is lost.

In all this there is a groping after God, but nothing but darkness and profound ignorance of His nature. “Canst thou by searching find out God?” (Job xi. 7). God must reveal Himself or none can know Him ; and this He has done,

first of all in Judaism, and then in a fuller, yea, a perfect manner in Christ.

In Hinduism there is no revelation of God—there is the sense, which is world-wide, that a God there must be, and along with this, fallen man's futile efforts to reach to Him.

According to Scripture the heathen are specially distinguished by this that they know not God (Ps. lxxix. 6; 2 Thess. i. 8), and this is clearly evidenced in Hinduism. There is an immense amount of philosophy and speculation, but nothing certain. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18).—ED.

"WHEN the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8).

The truth here taught is plainly confirmed by the rest of the Old Testament, that Israel is God's earthly centre, around whom the nations are yet to revolve, when the Messiah takes His kingdom here below; for the Jews (not the Church, which has higher hopes) are the objects of God's counsels, as regards the earth and the nations.

Lectures on Exodus.

LECTURE II.—Exod. iv. 18, v., vi.

WE closed last time with the secret of Moses' backwardness to go on the mission God called him to, and from this point we shall look at the history to-night. Here we have Moses on his mission (iv. 19). During the interval between this and God's appearing to him at the burning bush, Moses is being prepared for the work to which he was called.

"Israel is My son, My first-born" (iv. 22). What emphasis is laid in Scripture on the *first-born*. He who put such affection in the heart of man for his first-born, would not be believed in this affection Himself. Now we see Him putting this people in the place of His first-born; to Pharaoh He says, "Let My *son* go." It is a question now of power between *God* and *Pharaoh*, not between *Israel* and *Pharaoh*—just so is it in our case. The conflict is not between *us* and *Satan*, but between *God* and *Satan*.

In the rite of circumcision, which had been neglected by Moses (iv. 24), we see the importance of *separation*. It is *imperative* upon those who are called out for God. Let those who have to act for God in their families take

this caution. There is a caution, too, in it to those who hinder their relations and friends from a decided testimony for God : they are preparing a rod for the back of those they love, as well as bringing a rod for themselves by-and-by. Now Moses has to attend to this appointment of God before he goes forward in the work he is called to : when done God's wrath is appeased, and Moses goes on his way.

"And the Lord said to Aaron," &c. (iv. 27). Mark you here all necessities for the accomplishment of God's purposes towards His people were provided for, and think you there is anything in our circumstances to-day that are not fore-known and provided for? God's foreknowledge is the sheet-anchor for the souls of His saints.

"In the desert God will show thee
What the God that thou hast found."

God in Christ must be learnt by us, and come what will, there is sufficient. All is provided to meet the circumstances, and only when under unbelief can Satan have the advantage over us. When faith is in exercise, Satan has no power over us. Step by step God was with Moses, and step by step was he confirmed in what would happen from his mission being from *God*, and he had the comfort of knowing that the God of his mission was with him. The salvation of God is known by many who do not know the God of their salvation.

Now, when all is in preparation, the conflict

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

59

begins (v. 1, 2). God says, "Let My people go," but Pharaoh will not let them go. Pharaoh buckles on his armour and enters into a struggle with God. We shall see in the sequel who is the stronger.—Pharaoh or God. Observe, that if this battle is fought, and the victory won, *redemption is accomplished*. This is the gospel of our salvation; this is really what the saint may delight in. Christ on the cross wrestled with His enemies and ours, redemption was secured by the Captain of our salvation. Entering the lists, He won the victory alone, we enter into rest; He accomplished the work, we enter into the joy of it; we have to believe, and sing Hallelujah; we come in to receive His wages. They are called to keep a feast, how grateful the sound! . When called out of Egypt into Canaan—out of darkness into light—it is to keep a feast unto the Lord. Truly it is in the wilderness, and ever will be; but what a feast the gospel brings us into, "His body broken, His blood shed," &c.

Pharaoh says, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord." He ought to have known the Lord, the stone walls of the granaries, &c., ought to have taught him; he was responsible to have known the Lord. As it was then, so is it to-day.

Now comes the trial of faith and the pressure of circumstances (v. 4-10). Consequences are the Lord's. We are bound to obey His word. God says, Put down the foot; and we must put it down, but He must keep it there.

God says, Step out ; and we must step out, and not ask how to step back. He sees that—we must leave the results with Him. He calls us to learn the character of the Shepherd.

It is not that we shall not be silly sheep ; we are and shall be silly sheep ; but we have a wise Shepherd, there's the blessing. Not one circumstance can we be in, but God, the Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent God, has known and provided for it. We have to walk by faith, to live by faith, and we come to God's Word as a sure rock to learn what God is.

Because deliverance was so near, pressure was heavy. We have known, spiritually, corruption like rolling waves before freedom is given ; we forget that with the temptation He will make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it. We get so occupied with the temptation, and forget that God is above all. There is great peace in knowing this : the power of faith so brings God into the circumstances that we see the trial secondary and God primary, and He will either remove the trial or make us happy in knowing God above all circumstances.

Many judge of God's power to them by their own circumstances. "One event happens to all." The spiritual man is discerned by the way he passes through his trouble, whether he has to do with God in it or not ; by externals we can neither judge ourselves or others, but by the way externals affect us.

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

61

Pharaoh's intention in all this opposition (v. 10-16) was to prejudice them against God; happily their affliction did not affect their safety, and was really for their good. We should never know God were we not brought into the path of faith; take heed where you wish for peace and quiet of circumstances instead of trial. Trial is the best thing that can happen to us. "Woe to them that sit at ease in Zion." Rather let us thank God: when we have got this one, be prepared for another, this is the place of conflict; as soon as we make head against one trouble, we have to breast another wave of sorrow; therefore buckle on your armour and be ready for the next conflict. Beware how you say, if you had not taken this or that part of obedience you had not had this or that trouble. Great knowledge of God is gained in trouble. We had never known the blessing but for God exercising the faith He has given. Satan cannot hurt when we stare him in the face—"resist the devil, and he will flee from you." But for the trials we deplore, we might have had worse failures to deplore.

Do you say, We do not know where we are? What! Don't you know where you are? You are where God is, and know how strong God is when we have to lean upon Him alone. And is it nothing to be where God is? Trials are needful that Satan may be driven back. They are often sent us for this very end. "When

affliction sits heavy, sin sits light," is a trite saying but a true one. If it is suffering now, it is glory afterwards ; it cost the Church dear to follow Christ. Christ is a "bloody husband" in this sense to us ; following Him involves daily conflict, cutting off the right hand, and this lust and that lust to be mortified ; but there is a heavenly country afterwards, a "city which hath foundations," &c. Paul said, "To depart and be with Christ is far better," but to abide was needful for the Church. He submitted in this to God's will, he was glad to bear a little more sorrow and trial to serve *Christ*, he knew there would be no service for him like this in heaven. Be awake, then, to your privilege of being able to serve Christ down here. If trouble comes in like a flood, never mind ; we have come to Christ, and He has overcome sin, Satan, and the world.

How little patience is in the best and meekest of men (v. 22). We cannot stand trial, nature is impatient—"why is it that Thou hast sent me"—won't give God time ; no, not a minute ; flesh is never quiet ; arguments are nothing in trouble, they are like the beams Samson carried away with him. Nothing but the power of the Spirit will lift you above trial. God did not take us up, any more than this people, because we were better than others, but found us by the roadside, and took us up to teach us and make us what He would have us.

Now all, as it were, cries out for God (vi.) ;

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

63

God appears upon the scene : the people were to go and Pharaoh could not hinder them. Whatever the trial by the way, the end is sure. We may pitch our tent one day here, another there ; but with God in the trial, God in the scene as here, let us get honey out of the carcase of the lion and not be discouraged. There was a terrible look-out for the people in the last chapter : what a change now. "Let them go," God had said it, they did not apprehend it. Faith had to be formed upon God's power to work. The answer to unbelief is, "I am the Lord," past, present, and future. "I am the Lord." God did not deign to answer them but by His character. He silenced them with a breath of His great name. We get upon His name, and we rest. "I am the Lord," that was what Moses and the people were to trust to. When God would encourage His people's faith, He speaks of Himself. There are trials indeed, plenty of them, but God's answer to unbelief in them is His own character. Christ says of God, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." "I am the Lord."

There is mighty majesty in the way God speaks of Himself. When His presence is before the soul, there is perfect repose ; the sense of His everlasting love is the power of obedience. He takes for granted their murmurings, He takes no notice of them. They were not called because they were good, neither because they

were bad could His purpose be hindered. And does not our God know our character and our failures? Yes, but He does not condescend to speak after *their* manner, but of Christ who died and rose again, and the word is to "Whosoever believeth," &c. God's work accredited in the heart, the soul is saved; it is not by faith and good works, but faith without works counted for righteousness.

"I will bring you in," &c. (chap vi. 8). The question of redemption is never by halves. When He brings out from Egypt, He brings into Canaan. The blessings begin with, "I am the Lord." We are in the centre fenced up, the Lord before, behind, around. Not blessing because we believe it, but because He would have it so. They could not apprehend it for anguish of spirit. But God would not do it *because* they apprehended it, neither would His purpose be hindered because they apprehended it not.

The Lord tells you to come; the word *come* is sufficient warrant for any soul in this company to-night. If God has brought us in against our will, He will keep us in. Do not say you are this and that. You are welcome all the same; the Lord is come, whether you like it or whether you like it not; and when you cease to like it you must obey. You say you are all bad, you are this and you are that. Let nothing cut you out from His welcome; Christ has done this and that, and you will get it, and that is all.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 65

The more you fall out with yourself, the better for you ; the more you will keep in with Christ, the more you keep out with yourselves ; and the less you think of yourself, the more you will think of Christ. God's people fall out to the end of the chapter ; but suppose all God's people had gone wrong. God abideth the same, God is true. If we have no fellowship with saints, we have the living God. If we have to die, we shall have no saints to go *with* us, though we go to the communion of saints.



Epistle to the Romans.

WE now come (chap. xii.) to the practical exhortations of the epistle ; and it is important to notice that even here all thought of law and legal obligation is entirely absent.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,” &c. (ver. 1). Nowhere under the Mosaic economy could such language be found ? The thunderings and lightnings of Sinai could never have been prefaced by such words as “I beseech you.” And yet the practical standard of living under grace is not lowered in the smallest degree ; may we not rather say, that it is infinitely higher than that under law ?

Firstly, let us observe that the apostle here is not addressing himself to the world at large; "I beseech *you* therefore, *brethren*." Those to whom he writes already stand in close relationship to God; they are in His family, and as such are brethren. But further, they have been introduced into the circle of divine favour.

The doctrine that has been so fully developed in the previous part of the epistle is here taken as the ground of exhortation—"the mercies of God." The gospel of God in all its blessed simplicity had been unfolded; divine grace, the alone ground upon which the guilty sinner can stand before a holy God had been clearly established. No depths of human guilt were too great for the love of God to reach in saving power; "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (chap. v. 20). Not only this, but dispensational barriers were no obstacle, the Gentile might be saved as well as the Jew, and the Jew must be saved, if saved at all, in the same way as the Gentile; mercy was free to all alike, on that ground alone could any be saved in the present; and in the future, as we have seen (chap. xi.), Israel will be saved on the self-same principle—"God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (chap. xi. 32).

On the ground, then, of all this undeserved and infinite mercy of God, the saint is besought to present his body as a living sacrifice to God.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 67

What an answer is this to the base ingratitude that would argue that, because all was right with the soul for eternity, therefore we might do what we like with the body here on earth !

Those to whom the apostle was addressing himself, both Jew and Gentile, were familiar with the thought of sacrifice ; but in their case it was that of a dead animal where was no question of a walk well pleasing to God. The Christian is besought to present his body as a *living* sacrifice ; this had been unfolded as a doctrine in chapter vi., here it is enforced by way of exhortation. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord ; . . . yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead," &c. (chap. vi.). Nothing short of this entire yielding of ourselves becomes those who have been the recipients of such favour—"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable (or, intelligent) service" (chap. xii. 1). Yet it is not by way of legal effort, such as a daily mortifying of this or that lust or evil desire. It is rather an act completed once for all, in the power of which the Christian seeks to walk to the end of his earthly journey. Such infinite mercy on God's part demands by the constraining power of love divine, that we should present our bodies a *living* sacrifice. This involves holy living, and a walk well pleasing or acceptable to God ; un-

like that which characterised the legal dispensation, it will be an *intelligent* service. What distinguishes Christianity is that intelligent entering into the mind of God as revealed in His Word, an intelligence which should ever grow and deepen according as the Spirit of God is ungrieved. In Judaism were found forms and ceremonies which were unintelligible to him that did the service; in Christianity God is worshipped in spirit and in truth.

How much that bears the name of worship in Christendom to-day is really a going back to Judaism, a return to the shadows of the law and a refusal of the substance, Christ! Yet is it not of deepest importance to press upon one another, that growing intelligence in the revealed will of God should ever be accompanied by increasing devotedness to Him? How sad if mere knowledge should be aimed at. We would not weaken the importance of progress in the knowledge of God's Word, but desire to bring home to our own hearts as well as to the reader's the necessity of whole-hearted consecration to the Lord. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." May every member of our ransomed being—hand, foot, eye, ear, and tongue—be yielded in loving service to God!

But we are surrounded by the world, a world which is in every department astray from God: then, "be not conformed to this world." The world crucified Christ, it still seeks its pleasure

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. 69

apart from Him, even where sin in its grosser forms may be refused. A walk in separation from the spirit and ways of the world is enjoined ; and yet not a mere outward separation which would leave the heart still seeking for as much of it as possible, but “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

It is just here where many come short, and so miss the joy of the Christian path. The world may be refused from a just sense of its sinfulness and alienation from God, but unless that positive path of submission to the will of God be chosen, the heart will never be fully satisfied. This path was trodden in its perfection by the feet of our blessed Saviour, and He has marked it out for His people here on earth. He came to seek and save the lost ; He always did the things that pleased the Father. “The Son of God could bring down heavenly motives on earth, and live a life of grace and separation from all evil in the midst of all the evil in the world, holy and obedient, displaying a new and divine character on the earth, heavenly in its nature, yet adapted in grace to man, such as he was on the earth. This way we have to learn, to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God—that will Christ came to do, and in which He has walked in the midst of the evil ; a way not only right, but of obedience.”

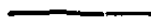
What blessed experience will be ours as we

tread this path in communion with our Master and Guide! We shall *prove*—this is practical and experimental—what is that “good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

Under the law God forbade this and that ; but in Christianity God imparts a new life, showers upon us infinite and unmerited mercies, and puts before us a heart-captivating object.



Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews.



III.—THE SON'S GLORIOUS PRIESTHOOD.

(Chaps. iii.-viii.)

THE subject of the priesthood must now engage our attention. The personal dignity of the Lord in His Godhead and Manhood is fully set forth in the previous chapters in order that the super-eminent and glorious way in which He fulfils this or any work or office undertaken by Him may be truly understood and appreciated by the saints.

Priesthood was a familiar thought to the Hebrews ; and the sense of need of a priest in their national and religious relations with God, permeated their education and earliest recollec-

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 71

tions. The apostate condition of the priesthood had not effaced this thought, nor destroyed its influence. On the contrary, where any conscience of sin was in exercise there was a deep-seated desire and expectation of divine interposition to purify and restore (Mal. iii. 1; Mark i. 2; John iv. 25; Luke vii. 27). This was recognised and answered to in various ways by the Lord when on earth, especially in His repeated cleansing of the Temple, the state of which, being His Father's house, was sufficient warranty for His so doing.

The appointment of the priesthood was in connection with the establishment of a dwelling-place for the divine glory among God's people (Exod. xxviii.), that they might be acceptably represented before Him, so that He might dwell among them (xxix. 45), and also that the feeble and defective state of the people might not be an occasion of judgment to them (Num. xvii., xviii.) This appointment was the thought of God, but the need lay in the condition of the people, of which it was the only resource.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the priesthood, which is after a new order, and is undertaken by Jesus, the High Priest of our (Christian) confession, is viewed, to begin with, from the side of the people's need. They are being tempted, and require a merciful and faithful high priest; one, too, who should make propitiation for their sins (Heb. ii. 17, 18, iii. 1). The latter is the lowest

point in which the high priest could be engaged on the people's behalf with God, and then not in his proper priestly character, but as their representative, owning their sins, and making atonement for them. This Jesus did for us in dying upon the cross, taking the lowest place for us, though in the highest and most precious grace. His heavenly priesthood is based upon this, but is only properly exercised in heaven.

Though strongly marked by contrast in the detail, the Aaronic priesthood is presented as typical of its exercise, but the order of Christ's high priesthood is according to that of Melchisedec and not of Aaron (ver. 6, *et seq.*). The legal Levitical order is displaced by the grace that preceded law (Gen. xiv.), and by the glory that follows it (Ps. cx.).

It will be found that the priesthood in Hebrews refers largely to two chief subjects, namely, to their godly infirmities in passing through this wilderness world on the one hand, and on the other to their place of approach and intercourse with God, answering thus to the type in Exodus xxviii., xxix., and Numbers xvii, xviii. respectively.

In chapters ii. 17 to iv. Jesus, the High Priest of our confession, concerns Himself with His brethren in regard to their temptations. But He is also their Apostle, a greater than Moses, inasmuch as He builds them into the house of God, and leads them onward to the rest of God (iii.-

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 73

iv. 13). In passing we may notice that for Christians God's house is a purely spiritual and living one, composed of His saints ; and the rest is that which remains when God has rested from all His works, as when in the six days He formed the present world, and rested on the seventh. Thus the house is where God is known, and the divine life developed in its nature and relationships. This is already true of the saints on earth (iii. 6). The rest is the fruit of His eternal thoughts, the scene where His heavenly purposes of grace are accomplished, and is wholly future as yet (iv. 9). Those only who believe enter in—a faith which is tested, and indeed created, by the living Word of God which searches the heart, where this word is hearkened to ; the rest remains for such, but is not entered into otherwise.*

Meanwhile Jesus, the Son of God, is our great High Priest, so that we may well hold fast our confession (iv. 14). Compared with Aaron He is indeed “great,” passing through, not merely entering, the heavens, or, as Aaron did, the earthly courts. But glorious as is the place,

* The use of Psalm xcv. in this parenthesis of warning (Heb. iii. 7–iv. 11), shows the position taken by the Hebrews epistle. The Lord is about to appear in glory, but is not yet manifested, and it is still the day of faith. Redemption by blood is accomplished, but the rest of God is yet to come ; and, as in the wilderness, the people are warned not to harden their hearts, but to hearken to the word. Thus only could they enter in.

He forgets not us, and is still presented as acting with respect to our infirmities (iv. 14, 15). Tempted like us in all things when down here, He is able therefore, though above, to sympathise with our infirmities. Having suffered, He is capacitated to help ; having been tempted, He is able to sympathise. In this confidence we draw near to God freely, to the throne of grace in the heavenly place, where Jesus is, from whence all mercy and help are surely received.

To the end of chapter iv. the Spirit of God had applied the priesthood of Christ to our infirmities only. He now proceeds, as already pointed out, to develop it, being according to the order of Melchisedec, in connection with our heavenly place of intercourse with God, and our especial links of relationship with Him (v.-viii.).

There are first of all three things noticed in chapter v. as necessary for a high priest. He must be ordained or established for men in things relating to God. This concerns the authority with which he is invested for the office. He must be able to exercise forbearance—a capacity or acquirement which qualifies him for it. Thirdly, he must be personally called of God to exercise it. Thus the Son, born in manhood here, is by the Father's word set a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec (ver. 5). Psalm cx. shows us that this is not on earth ; and indeed, His qualifications for the office consisted in having suffered unto death,

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 75

and learned obedience by the things which He suffered. With the earthly priests this was not the case; the fact that they were themselves clothed with infirmity was what qualified them to use forbearance. But Jesus had consummated the whole pathway of godly suffering in death itself before being "perfected,"* or consecrated as priest for the actual exercise of His office. He is then, in entering the heavenly courts, saluted of God as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, and become to all that obey Him author of eternal salvation.

Let us distinguish carefully between the "eternal salvation" which we have by our Lord Jesus, in connection with the heavenly place, as contrasted with temporal deliverances, and the being saved through all the difficulties of the way, right to the end (vii. 25), which Jesus also undertakes for us. The unsettling of eternal salvation by teaching that it is a continual or progressive thing, and not a settled and final one—in fact, confounding it with being saved through the dangers of the path, has occasioned very much defective doctrine as well as a corresponding defective state of soul among Christians. Indeed it has tended to keep souls in the immature state, of which the epistle speaks (v. 12-14,

* The word translated "perfected" is used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew word signifying to "consecrate," or "fill the hand."

vi. 1-3). To "full growth" belongs not merely the "beginning of Christ," for this gave no security or stability, nor entered into that within the veil. It gave not a hope as anchor of the soul, nor a strong encouragement for those who fled for refuge. But all this now belongs to us, Jesus having entered *within the veil* as forerunner for us, and become for ever a high priest according to the order of Melchisedec. It is as solid food to full-grown men with senses exercised to distinguish good and evil according to the mind of God.

Remark that "full growth" refers not only to the external privilege of Christianity, but enters into that within the veil, where our hope enters as anchor of the soul, and where Jesus is entered as forerunner for us. Our true Christian place is thus indicated much more definitely than before. Previously it was merely said (iv. 14) that He had passed through the heavens, and sympathised with our infirmities. But now it is a question of the unchangeableness of God's purpose, confirmed by His unchangeable oath. Needed encouragement for those who had fled from the guilt of Messiah's blood to God in the heavenly sanctuary!

The personal title and qualifications of our High Priest were given in chapter v.; now, in chapter vii., we have the character and order of His priesthood. In the first place it is an uninterrupted (ver. 3), and an eternal one (vers. 17,

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 77

24). It supersedes the earthly Levitical priesthood and the law with which it was connected ; for our Lord sprang from Juda, of whose tribe came no priest according to the law. But the law perfected nothing, and could only exclude us from the holy presence of God. Therefore, in the grace of God, a different Priest arises constituted according to the power of an indissoluble life ; and a better hope is introduced by which we draw nigh to God. And approaching by Him to God, He is able to save us to the end, since His priesthood is unchangeable, and He is always living to intercede for us.

These two verses (vii. 19, 25) show clearly that the question is now one of approach to God ; not merely of sympathising with our infirmities, but of maintaining us in a practical way, feeble as we may be, at the full height of our heavenly privileges and relationships. Little as we may realise or properly appreciate it, we nevertheless belong to and have our links with God in that place which is higher than the heavens. Our High Priest must therefore be there, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners," He who, once for all, has consummated all sacrifice in offering up Himself, not having infirmity like the legal priests, but constituted by the oath of God subsequent to law, a Son consecrated for eternity.

Thus the Spirit in this epistle not only shows us Jesus, entering within the veil, but lifts up

the eyes of our faith to behold Him become higher than the heavens. Nay, more, He sums up the doctrine in these words : " We have such an high priest, who is set (or, set Himself down), on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens " (viii. 1).

On earth He would not even be a priest, for only the shadows of heavenly things were there. But His ministry is more excellent ; He is the mediator of a better covenant established on better promises. That first covenant, much as His people might boast in it, was not faultless. There should be a new one ; and meanwhile the first grows old and disappears. The legal system passes away for ever ; but the new covenant is not yet made with Israel. Anticipatively, the believer enjoys already the essential provisions of it, viz., the law written in the heart, grace putting in us what was natural to Christ, delight in the law of God after the inward man—result of the new nature ; then, secondly, our sins forgiven, and never more remembered. This latter blessing is developed in the two following chapters (ix., x.), in connection with the glory of Christ's sacrifice.

Meanwhile, let us remember that the benefit to us of Christ in His heavenly high priesthood is eternal salvation, perfect security, and assured acceptance at all times, as well as availing intercession in our infirmities and temptations.

(To be continued.)

A Sound of Abundance of Rain.

THESE words were spoken by Elijah the prophet, to Ahab King of Israel (1 Kings xviii. 41). No refreshing shower had fallen during a period of three years and six months, and not a cloud was rising from the horizon when this man of faith and prayer gave utterance to this hopeful sentiment.

Some of us can look back twenty years, and thirty years—some even to the great revival of 1859. What seasons of blessing in the gospel! What times of conversion amidst all classes of society! The Spirit of God was moving in mighty power through the land. But of late it has not been so. A widespread apathy and indifference has pervaded the borders of Christendom. There has been an abundance of work,—hard work too; there has been much preaching,—earnest preaching, faithful preaching; but the results have not been such as to encourage with the thought that many were being led to the Lord. This has been the universal and widely expressed feeling of all who have laboured in the gospel field.

Brethren, has there been that spirit of prayer which at one time prevailed?

“Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain ; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (Jas. v. 17, 18).

We write these few lines to stir up every Christian who may be a reader of our magazine to earnest, believing, and continued prayer—definite prayer, too, for definite results. It was prayer that preceded the great revival of 1859. Two men in humble life residing in the North of Ireland, deeply sensible of the state of spiritual deadness by which they were surrounded, agreed to meet in a cottage to cry to God for an awakening. They went on crying to God, and the spirit of prayer caught on all around until house after house was opened for prayer. God heard, and the revival came. The revival spread all over the land, multitudes were saved—the writer amongst the number.

Brethren and fellow-labourers in the gospel, a spirit of prayer is abroad. Thank God! A year ago we heard from a friend in Western Australia that Christians all over the colony were meeting for prayer that God would awaken souls and convert them in large numbers. Private houses were opened, and hitherto half-hearted and worldly-minded Christians were led to prayer instead of pleasuring. The revival came.

For several months in Melbourne every Tues-

A SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN. 81

day night there were prayer meetings held in from 1,600 to 2,000 different houses. Is it any wonder that an awakening followed such as the colony has never had before? "Why," said one, "*anybody* could have preached in Melbourne, the atmosphere was laden with prayer and filled with expectation of revival."

We have recently returned from Switzerland, and it was our privilege to witness such scenes of interest in the gospel as have not been seen for long. It is our firm conviction, that there, and in France, they are on the eve of a great spiritual movement. Pray, brethren, pray!

We met recently a Christian man labouring in Italy. He had just been spending a whole week in humiliation and prayer along with seventy others interested in the work of the gospel in that land. The testimony of each of these was, that the country had never been so open for the gospel as now. Everywhere doors were open, and willing listeners could be found.

A friend in the country writes: "Yesterday afternoon we got together for special humiliation, praise, and prayer."

In every direction we hear of the people of God gathering together for prayer for a world-wide revival.

What does it all mean?

We believe the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh, and a great ingathering of souls will take place e'er He comes.

Why are we writing?

That both writer and reader may have the joy, the privilege, and the honour of having a little share in these good things. Let us not be robbed of active participation in this God-honouring, Christ-exalting, glorious work of bringing others to the Saviour.

We would affectionately and earnestly suggest meetings for special prayer in every locality where this little magazine circulates, that God would come in and work mightily for the honour of His great name, for the glory of Christ, for the blessing of His people, and for the salvation of souls.

God willing, we shall add a little on this subject in a future number, and meanwhile shall be thankful for the prayers of the people of God for some special meetings we are now carrying on.

ED.

Remarks on Romans viii. 9-11.

IN these verses the Holy Ghost is spoken of in three different ways, as "the Spirit of God," then as "the Spirit of Christ," and lastly as "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." In the first instance, in connection with the new place the believer is in

REMARKS ON ROMANS VIII. 9-11. 83

before God, in contrast to his old standing as "in the flesh." Secondly, "the Spirit of Christ," as formative in power of the new man. If any man has not the Spirit thus, "he is not of Him,"—"none of His."

It is well to remark that in the first verse of this chapter, the believer is said to be "*in Christ*," but in verse 10, we have another side of the truth brought before us, namely, that Christ is "*in us*."

It is difficult to understand the true force of the words, "not of Him," in verse 9, if we separate it from the statement, "and if Christ be in you, of verse 10."

It is *not* union by the Holy Ghost, with a glorified Christ, the Head and the members, as in 1 Corinthians xii. 13, but Christ *in us* as life, and the Spirit as formative of that life, in character and power. To be "not of Him," or "none of His," is *not* to have the Spirit, "the Spirit of Christ," indwelling us. This does not touch the question of conversion, or new birth, but is connected with the indwelling of the Spirit, consequent, not only on faith in the person, but in the redemption work of Christ. One who has "not the Spirit of Christ," is not in the Christian place. Thus in these verses, the Spirit defines our standing, our character, and in result secures, in view of resurrection, our mortal bodies, which are to be quickened "by His Spirit" which dwells in us.

In John xiv. 20, we have a statement which bears upon what we have before us in Rom. viii. 1 and 10,—“at that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me” (*e.g.* Rom. viii. 1), “and I in you” (*e.g.* Rom. viii. 10). To introduce any thought of the body into the passage, Rom. viii. 9-11, would, I think, cloud the meaning, and be faulty interpretation. Although the Christ we have to do with, and in whom we are, is glorified, yet as to the doctrine in the first eight chapters of the epistle to the Romans, it does not appear that the apostle is presenting Him in that aspect, but as dead and risen, the federal head of a new race, who derive from Him, and in Him have their new standing in life, liberty, and righteousness before God.

T. H. T.

NOTE.—It will be seen that these “remarks” bear upon an article that appeared in the January number of this magazine. We commend the subject to the prayerful and extended study of the reader. It is clear that those to whom the apostle was writing, were members of the body of Christ, as well as individually belonging to Christ. The question for consideration is, whether the expression “not of Him” contains in it the thought of union or not. It seems to us that the latter half of verse 9 is as much connected with the first half of the same verse as with verse 10. And while it is true that the truth of the body of Christ is not developed in the epistle as a whole, this does not necessarily preclude all allusion to the subject, as is evident from chapter xii. 4, 5, and xvi. 25.—ED.

Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE ONE SACRIFICE.

(Chaps. ix.-x.)

IT is important to see that the character of the sacrifices governs the whole form and order of God's ways and dealings with men until final judgment. The blood of bulls and goats was brought to Him in a worldly tabernacle, by earthly priests in obedience to carnal ordinances, for men in the flesh who were excluded from the divine presence, and from whom the glory was veiled, since their consciences were unpurged. It purified the flesh only.

Christ's blood characterises His coming in connection with a spiritual tabernacle in heaven, and a high priest there ; the new and living way opened into the holiest, sins forgiven, conscience purged, and the worshippers perfected in perpetuity. Moreover, instead of an old covenant, impotent for blessing, the blood of the new is shed, and an eternal inheritance is in view instead of a polluted one that passed into other hands.

The old covenant was one under which God's people transgressed and incurred judgment ; and as the covenant was a legal one which bound

their sins and judgment upon them, so the sanctuary was a worldly one consisting of two tabernacles. Into the first the priests had access at all times, despite the curtain which forbade entrance to others. But God was not there. Another tabernacle lay beyond ; this was the holy of holies, into which the high priest alone could enter, but once a year, not without blood. Here was the presence of God and the glory manifested as in His dwelling-place, but the way into it was not made clear so long as the first tabernacle remained, with its ordinances of service for man in the flesh. Into the first tabernacle indeed the priest could bring both gifts and sacrifices ; but these were unable to perfect the conscience, and were but temporary until the time of setting things right. It was therefore death to pass beyond the veil into the presence of the Holy One ; for a fleshly purification, which was all the law in itself was designed or able to produce, could not fit a sinner to approach in worship the living God.

But Christ being come, His high priesthood, established specially in view of the coming day of millennial glory when He will dispense on God's part blessing to all His creatures, and in return minister to Him their blessing in thanksgiving and universal praise, is now exercised in grace as Aaron's was, but in a heavenly tabernacle formed by no creature-hand or agency.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 87

His coming, as revealed in the gospel, is marked by another fact of infinite importance—a divine sacrifice for sin, in which the creature has no share except in the benefit of the eternal redemption which He has found. For having offered Himself by the eternal Spirit spotless to God, He has entered once for all into heaven itself.

Of what precious and divine efficacy is this work? It purifies the conscience from the vain legal efforts of the flesh to please a living God with dead works. By it man's transgressions, measured by his responsibility under law, have been redeemed, so that he may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. But not only is there forgiveness, the heavenly things themselves are purified by the blood of the Christ. Then all that God is, displayed in His own heavenly dwelling-place, is vindicated and glorified as to the whole question of sin that compromised His nature. So perfectly is this done that Christ is there for us, as occupying our own place; and the basis is laid for the absolute putting away of sin from the universe for the glory of God. This shall yet be accomplished in power in a new heaven and a new earth, but already by it believers' sins are borne; and when He appears a second time it shall be for salvation to those who look for Him.

One more detail may be noticed. The Jew might urge: Why all this talk of blood and death beyond the sacrifices of the law? In con-

nection with this it was that we received the promise of the inheritance, as a divine and inalienable bequest. A bequest, "a testament," answers the Holy Ghost, "is of force after men are dead," not while the testator is alive. But Jehovah Himself bequeathed it; and the divine Son in manhood has died. Then, if so, the whole ground of the Christian and spiritual system is established in a Christ who died on earth but lives in heaven. Judaism is annulled and the legal system rejected. Indeed, the latter with its inefficacious sacrifices could only bring sins to remembrance—never put them away.

Every other means to this end having been tried and failed, Christ has been manifested once in the consummation of the ages for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice. In the value of this shall God's universe of blessing be cleared of every trace or memory of sin, and not merely by an act of power and judgment, but in a way by which already His nature of love and light has been, and shall for ever be, gloriously displayed. Meanwhile the sins of many have been borne by Christ once offered; and to them who look for Him He will appear the second time for salvation, since for them the whole question of sin was settled for ever at His first coming. Sin brought in death and judgment by God's appointment; and death and judgment alone can put it away, either by grace in the sacrifice of

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 89

Christ or at the great white throne in righteousness and power.

As we have seen, chap. ix. sets forth the general efficacy of Christ's offering—entrance once for all into the holiest, eternal redemption, conscience purged, transgressions redeemed, the eternal inheritance promised, the heavenly things purified, Christ appearing before the face of God for us, the putting away of sin, the sins of many borne and salvation for them when He returns. Here salvation is viewed in its full and final accomplishment.

Chap. x. speaks of the particular application of the sacrifice. It is to do the will of God He comes; and that will was that we should be sanctified to approach Him in the holiest, suitably to His nature and glory. The law indeed foreshadowed good things, but its sacrifices could not perfect the worshippers nor purge the conscience of guilt. These sacrifices therefore, and the whole legal system connected with them, He in coming takes away that He may establish the will of God regarding us. But this is, and can only be, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. As to sins the priests on earth are ever on duty, their work is never finished, for the sacrifices they offer cannot in the nature of things take away sins. But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins, has, in contrast with them, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God.

Thus the absolutely divine glory of the place where He has taken His seat, not alone shows that the work is done never to be added to or repeated, but testifies to the divine and glorious perfection of that work done in darkness and death, and when forsaken of God. But it was to do the will of God respecting us ; and inasmuch as He, having finished the work, is seated uninterruptedly at the Right Hand, so we, who are sanctified according to His will, are by that one offering perfected uninterruptedly, *i.e.*, in perpetuity, without the possibility of a break ; for He sits there until His enemies are set for the footstool of His feet.

Remark that we are not only sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, so as to be fit for God's presence ; but also, by that one sacrifice upon the cross, we are perfected in perpetuity, and express before God, as the fruit of that glorious offering, all that which is divinely His delight—a delight which can never be increased. For nothing can be added to the sacrifice which can never be more perfect, and never less perfect. Never therefore can the divine delight be diminished, for eternal is the preciousness of that offering, of which preciousness we are the first and most magnificent proofs, as once we were the most defiled and guilty of His creatures.

The incomparable and perpetual perfection in which we are before God was shadowed forth

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 91

in the consecration of the Aaronic priests, to which this undoubtedly refers. Not only were they sanctified, but anointed with the blood of the ram of consecration, as well as with oil, and the breast and shoulder were put in their hands and waved before the Lord—an offering that made them gloriously welcome in their garments of glory and beauty before the Lord. Thus were they consecrated and their hands filled.

It is all important to observe the virtue of the sacrifice and its part in the Christian blessing. If we are in Christ by the new life and the Holy Spirit in us, it is not this that makes us to be there the righteousness of God, but solely and exclusively that Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21). We have our place indeed according to the nature and counsel of God as those who are livingly identified with Christ ; but it is because He has passed through and out of judgment that as He is in respect of it so are we in this world. So also in Hebrews x. 19-22, we are sprinkled as to our hearts from our wicked conscience and washed as to our body with pure water, but what gives us boldness for entering the holiest is the blood of Jesus only, though the way through the veil is a new and living one. Our qualification to be in the heavenly place—the character according to which we are there, is quite distinct from our title for it, the great fundamental righteous cause. The latter

is solely the work of Christ upon the cross ; the former is Christ in us our life.

Having now fully developed the value and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, adducing the *will* of God, the *work* of Christ, and the *witness* of the Holy Spirit, which declares that their sins and their lawlessnesses God will never remember any more, and drawing divinely the consequence that there is need no longer to offer a sacrifice for sin (x. 18), the Spirit connects with it the priesthood (x. 21), resorting once more thereto to show that in Jesus we have a "great" priest unequalled in His dignity, position, and service—so divine and glorious is He. Yet no lesser and none other priest would become us, since no other could occupy the place to which we belong. But having Him in it, and supreme there, we are to approach God boldly in the holiest itself with a true heart and in full assurance of faith.



Lectures on Exodus.

LECTURE III.—Exod. x. 1-9, xi., xii. 29-39,
xiii. 17, xiv.



THE book of Exodus sets out primarily the mode and manner of redemption. Bringing out the weakness of Israel and the strength of God ; the resistance of Pharaoh and

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

93

the power of God ; the sorrows of Israel, their burdens increased by reason of their deliverance being demanded, and their consequent unbelief.

God never stoops to our thoughts of our belief as regards circumstances. He may bear with them, but He *goes* on. The Word of God is given us to *form* our faith in God. When God enters into conflict with Pharaoh, He shows Himself that He is God. We lose by not considering such records. They were written for strengthening our faith and trust in God. God, when He has fixed His own terms, will have no other. God not only humbles Pharaoh, but takes the strong man's will in His hand and bends it, and makes the most unwilling willing, turning his will into His (compare chap. v. 1, 2, with chap. xii. 31, 32).

God turned the tables thus upon the strong one. And there are struggles within our own hearts known only to God. Think you not that He will give us power over our besetting sins and cause us to thrust them out—aye, the very ones we rolled as a sweet morsel under our tongue? The practical use of the display of this great power is that we should roll ourselves on God, asking His power against those sins which would overcome us.

Now for the final struggle—thy first-born for My first-born ; having taken the people to be His people He will dignify them as His people. When we have closed with His great redemption and accepted God's mercy in Christ—put into

relationship with Him—we ought not to have to learn how safe we are (we are most safe) within the house ; but we need to learn how weak we are, and how good, how strong God is. The importance of what He has done for us and in us, is best understood by Himself—the immense dignity put upon us who are brought into relationship with Him. He made the difference, He best knows the greatness of the difference. Let us be more occupied *with the Lord* than with the difference which He has put between us who by grace believe and they who believe not.

I dwell not on chap. xii., the redeemed people under shelter of the blood, &c. ; my object is to trace the conflicts of Israel and the power of God. But in verse 31, &c., we see it is no longer needful for *Moses* to entreat, May we go? for Pharaoh calls them to be gone. Who ever fought against God and prospered? Who ever entered the lists against Him and conquered? Measure not God by your feelings and apprehensions of Him, but by His testimony of His own power. Man ever changes, but God's power and grace are ever the same ; as He was, so He is. Unless converted, man is in as great collision with God now as was Pharaoh. If you refuse to come to God by Him whom He hath ordained, His Christ, you are at issue with God. It *pleased* God to bruise Him. Why? because there is no other way. Deny the needs be for Christ's coming into the world, and you charge God with doing what was useless.

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

95

It is a question of man's need, but as regards you, you do not want it. God grant you may feel the need, and go into the shelter!

"Lest they return" (chap. xiii. 17). Wonderful grace of God! We anticipate evils, and we make them; we would stave them off, but thereby often double them; but when God undertakes to do it, it is another thing altogether. How tender His care, knowing their weakness! He will not bring them into trial. The Lord will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able (1 Cor. x. 13). He will only send as much as His people can bear, no heavier burden. Don't see difficulties, see God—the same God to-day as then. Such testimony to God lifts up the soul. Learn to fall back upon God. These proofs of God's provision and foreknowledge are a wonderful help to the tried soul (ver. 19). He that believeth shall not make haste. There is no haste here. A man had trusted God with his bones, and in the bustle of that night the dead man's bones were not forgotten—how gracious, how condescending our God! This Joseph trusted My promise, and I'll remember it; his bones shall rest with his father in the land of promise. How calm, how grand, everything that God does! He can do the largest work without neglecting the smallest matters. We have to do with the same God who will not neglect the most minute circumstances; nay, more, is interested to be brought into them all—aye, and *delights* to have

us bring Him into them at lowest ebb ; think of this scene at night and the dead man's bones, and it shall lift you up.

Pharaoh, the enemy of God's people and God's enemy, sets out in pursuit of them, but unknown to them, not unknown to God. God prepared for every emergency. Unfailing provision ! The enemy has not to do with us but with God ; if we are in our right place let the enemy arise, let trouble come, my answer is with God. With the Church it is the same thing ; thrown in simple dependence on the Holy Ghost, what is the value of our position of faith ? 'Tis everything, 'tis safety. We shall be attacked, not a doubt of it ; we shall be tried, not a doubt of it ; our faith shall be tested, not a doubt of it, for God sets us there (*i.e.*, in the position of faith).

It was God who undertook to bring up the people : it was God who undertook to shelter them and guide them in the way ; it was God who undertook to bring them into the land. He swore unto their fathers, He had prepared a place for the people, His provision secures them in every step of the way of danger that awaits them. See God stepping aside, talking to His servant—the blessed Friend—and the care taken of His people. They were converted to Him, and He pledged to them. He was never a whit behind the enemy of His people, but beforehand with everything that could militate against their happiness. To fall back on this is peace, none besides.

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

97

We are brought to *God*, we can afford to be quiet from fear of evil, for He knows everything and undertakes for us. Instead of thinking of God when they scud away from Pharaoh, they only thought of what they said, and were properly frightened, "Better we should die," &c. (Exod. xiv. 12, &c.). And is it not so with us? Do we not get frightened in trouble before God is brought in? Yet God settled with the enemy; they struggled hard to get to Israel, but they could not; nay, more, they should not, God's power was against them.

But was this the people that *God* so loved? for whom He had put forth His mighty power? Yes, and this is written that we may know God—"there is none like unto Thee"; and if any here are saying, "I am too bad, I am too weak," or anything else, they may see here what a long-suffering gracious God is He with whom we have to do.

Oh, let us learn to *trust* Him? We ought to get on in this way; we ought to give credit to God and the lie to the devil.

But they had nothing before them but Pharaoh and their own opinions of God. What a terrible position! There is no arguing with those who will not take God's word. "Go forward—pray for them—out—go you forward." What if reproached? Jesus was—our God was by His own people—'tis but sympathy with Him.

Oh, the mercy of having to do with a God who

knows us altogether ! Who is a God like unto our God ? Why do we ever leave our great resting-place in *Him* ? Oh, may we increase in the knowledge of Him ! How thoroughly has He wrought out our redemption ! We need not ask Him to be kind—He is kind. We come to beg Him to show us how gracious, how kind He is, and trust Him.

Water always finds its level, we say, but when God bid those waters stand, they seek not their level, they make a *wall* for the *chosen* (God above the law He gives His creation). Moses' song in everything referred to *God*—God brought forth His people. So in redemption everything is guaranteed, all glory acclaimed to Him, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



The Last Week : Where Found.

(Dan. ix. 27.)



“**F**ROM the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks ; ” this makes sixty-nine weeks, and leaves only one week to complete the seventy weeks.

THE LAST WEEK: WHERE FOUND. 99

In searching where the last week is to be found, two things should first be considered. In Messiah's time here, what point answers to "unto Messiah the Prince"? His birth? The beginning of His ministry and presentation to Israel? His public entry into Jerusalem? The cross? or what?

Also where comes the break in the course of the seventy weeks, for seventy weeks are not yet completed, and sixty-nine weeks transpired when Christ was here. This break undoubtedly may be seen at the cross. There Christ was definitely rejected, and there Jehovah breaks with Israel, and their house is left unto them desolate "till" by-and-bye (Matt. xxiii. 38, 39).

At the beginning of His ministry we find in Matthew iii., He identifies Himself with the godly remnant, or those who answered to John the Baptist's call to repentance—the forerunner of Messiah. These, we read, "were baptized of him, confessing their sins. . . . Then cometh Jesus . . . to be baptized of him." Notice, He was not *leading* them to be baptized—as though He was an example for them. This He could not be, seeing He had no sins to confess, but He identifies Himself with the godly remnant, "the excellent of the earth, in whom is all My delight." (Psalm xvi. 3, 4, refers to the unbelieving mass of the nation, who hasten after Antichrist by-and-bye, when "he that believeth shall not make haste" or "hasten

away"; as Isaiah xxviii. 16 refers to the future believing remnant who reject Antichrist.)

At this moment "when He was baptized," "the heavens were opened unto Him," and He is accredited by the voice from heaven—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight." Compare Matthew iii., Mark i., and Luke iii.

In *Matthew*, the gospel of *the Messiah*,—"this," marking *His presentation to Israel*.

In *Mark*,—"Thou," the personal acknowledgment of *the servant* about to take up service.

In *Luke*,—"Thou," the Man in lowly grace among men.

Is not this moment of His identification with those Jews, who were taking their true place in "*confessing* their sins," a most important and definite point in Messiah's time here, and answering to "unto Messiah the Prince"? *Then*, it was, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and constituted Messiah officially, while, of course, from His birth He was *personally* such. Besides, His being the Messiah was preached by the Twelve, and received by some, and confessed by Peter (Matt. xvi.). If, then, Matthew iii. marks the moment "unto Messiah the Prince," when sixty-nine weeks are expired, then His three and a half years' ministry following is seen to be the first half of the last or seventieth week, and the last half is all future, and begins with the abomination (idols) that

THE LAST WEEK: WHERE FOUND. 101

makes desolate standing in the holy place (Dan. ix. 27, and Matt. xxiv. 15).

But, it may be objected, are we not told of "one week" at the end by-and-bye? Yes, but notice the connection of "one week" in the context. Some seeing "one week" yet to come, have been forced to conclude that no more than sixty-nine weeks can be found up to the cross. "He shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week." *Here "one week" is found in connection with "the many" or mass of the unbelieving nation.* For *them*, they having rejected their Messiah, His three and a half years of patient service and presentation of Himself *goes for nothing*, and for *them* "one week" is found yet future and in connection with the infidel "beast," showing awful departure from Jehovah (Isa. xxviii. 15-19).

The Antichrist is not seen here, and in all this connection the remnant are not found. Possibly Antichrist would favour this covenant till the "midst of the week" when the covenant is broken; then, he establishes idolatry "in the holy place." This may be when he is *definitely* accepted by the nation. But this point of idolatry established is what the Lord directs His disciples to, saying, "When *ye* shall see the abomination that makes desolate stand in the holy place, then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains" (Matt. xxiv.). This appears to be *morally*, and in God's estimate, the recontinuation of the course of the seventy

weeks. It had been broken off at the cross. "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). Notice, "*Ye*" (Matt. xxiv. 15)—the then Jewish remnant, and looked at as the one remnant going on to the end—the Church parenthesis which we know does not belong to Israel's history, is here, in Matthew xxiv., not noticed.

In accordance with the foregoing it has been noticed: there are two great crises in Israel's history, viz., their rejection of Messiah at the cross, and their acceptance of Antichrist: *these points morally coalesce* in their history (John v. 43). These points looked at historically and extended in time would show the present parenthesis of Church calling and history.

And now we should consider what "the chronologer" says, who would fix the point of "unto Messiah the Prince" or the expiration of sixty-nine weeks "to the very day," at the Lord's public entry into Jerusalem. Chronologers might differ about this. However this may be, an interpretation of where "unto Messiah the Prince" is found, if the chronologer so trusts his chronology as to disregard the time of Messiah's ministry to Israel beginning at Matthew iii. and also His being accredited by the voice from heaven, and also His being anointed by the Holy Spirit, &c.,—the literal counting of the sixty-nine weeks "to the very day" may be

distrusted. Is it known when the seventy weeks began "to the very day"? Also, when the public entry into Jerusalem "to the very day"? The occasion of the public entry was, no doubt, a fulfilling of Scripture (Zech. ix. 9), which testified to Messiah, but did it testify to *the occasion* being that of "unto Messiah the Prince"? Again, we should remember that God's dates are moral dates, and apart from this consideration, the chronologer would fail to interpret the seventy weeks, *e.g.*, mere chronology would fail to fix when is "unto" and "after" of Daniel ix. 25, 26. W. J. C.

Epistle to the Romans.

THE exhortation that we have been considering, it is important to observe, applies not only to a few in the household of faith, but to all. There might be a danger to suppose that only those who occupied a more prominent position in the field of service were called upon to tread a path of such consecration; but this is not so. "For, I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3).

There may be differences in the measure and energy of faith, but in the standard of consecration and holy living there can be none. The path that Christ trod is the only one His people should aim at. Infinitely short of their blessed model, they will each one come, but nothing less should satisfy them. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5). But the closer we follow in His footsteps the less room will there be for high-mindedness or self-glory; with the eye upon Him, not upon one another, still less upon ourselves, we shall learn not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, each one esteeming others better than themselves.

Further, we are each one members one of another (vers. 4-9); "we, being many, are one body in Christ." This, we need hardly press, is not to be narrowed down to any sectarian limits; the whole body of Christ, composed of every true Christian, is here in question. The present state of confusion in the professing Church is not here contemplated; but we have to learn to apply these unchanging principles of truth to the circumstances of ruin in which we find ourselves; those have least ground for high-mindedness, who through grace have been privileged to enter the path of faith in this evil day.

Though every Christian is a member of the body of Christ, and therefore each one member of every other member, yet all do not fill the

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

105

same office. Each member has an office to fill, and a gift to exercise. The gifts differ, but grace is given to each for the exercise of that gift, whatever it may be, and each one needs to stir up the gift given, and to exercise it in the energy of individual faith.

All are not called to the same work, but each one is necessary to the well-being of the whole ; the one who has received the more showy gifts of prophesy or teaching should not despise the others, and those who show mercy or give, need not attempt the exercise of a gift for which they are not fitted. Each has his place in the body of Christ, and that a God-given one.

Next, the saints are exhorted to let their love be real ; "let love be without dissimulation (or unfeigned)." Partakers of the divine nature, this must express itself in accordance with the character of God ; "be ye therefore followers of God as dear children ; and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us," &c. (Eph. v. 1). But is this inconsistent with a stern refusal of all that is evil ? How striking, especially in this day of indifference to Christ, to find in the same verse exhortations apparently so different as "love" and "abhor" ! Never was the importance of this injunction greater than in these commencing days of apostasy. There is a growing tendency to use the word "charity" as a plea to cover any amount of tolerance of evil doctrine. But the saint is called upon to abhor what is evil,

whether of doctrine or practice, and to cleave to that which is good.

Unfeigned love, then, and abhorrence of evil are perfectly compatible ; nevertheless a danger here presents itself lest the solemn need of refusing what is evil should weaken the obligations of brotherly love ; “be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honour preferring one another” (ver. 10). This latter clause in reality conveys more than at first sight appears, and may be rendered as follows :—“As to honour, each taking the lead in paying it to the other.”

How often is the next sentence used to excuse indifference to the claims of God, and spiritual idleness ? Are we not told to be diligent in business ? says the worldly-minded Christian, so engrossed with earthly matters as to find no time for the spiritual exercises of reading the Word of God and prayer. In fact the verse means exactly the opposite—“As to diligent zealousness, not slothful ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord” (ver. 11). It is evident that all this refers to diligence in the Lord's business, not our own.

This introduces a thought already expressed (Rom. v. 2, 3), “rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation” ; the future is bright with glory, though the present path may be one of suffering ; and meanwhile, from first to last, what a strength and stay do we not experience in making known

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

107

all our requests to God!—"continuing steadfastly in prayer" (ver. 12).

And if God has blessed us with temporal mercies, it is that we may be thoughtful for others, doing good unto all men, though chiefly to the household of faith (Gal. vi. 10); "distributing to the necessities of saints; given to hospitality," not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.

But in an evil world, where the selfishness of the human heart, fallen through sin, seeks its own pleasure irrespective of others, we may meet with enmity and a persecuting spirit. Should this produce the worldly feeling of retaliation? In no wise; "bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not" (ver. 14).

Sympathy with others, whether in their joys or sorrows, is next enjoined; and along with this, that unworldly spirit of respect for each and all, regardless of earthly differences. How unlike is this to the radicalism and socialism of these closing days that would rob of esteem those to whom honour is due, in order to exalt itself; here, each one is exhorted to "go along with the lowly," for the rendering of the Authorised Version ("condescend to men of low estate") is far from expressing the true thought. The flesh would be in danger of flattering the rich, and treating the poor with condescension, but only grace can enable to esteem all alike, and that "better" than ourselves.

108 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

On no account is there any excuse for the Christian to meet evil with evil ; he is called to walk as Christ walked, and to overcome evil with good. In so far as it depends on him, the Christian is to live peaceably with all men, especially is he besought not to avenge himself, but to give place to the wrath of the enemies, and the reason given is a solemn one, "Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord." Judgment will infallibly and with righteousness reveal where lies the guilt, but meanwhile grace opens up a noble way of reaching the heart, and overcoming the enemy ; if he "hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink" (vers. 17-21). From first to last in this chapter how beautiful to see that Christ is the one pattern and model of the Christian's life, whether as regards his relations to God, to his fellow-Christian, or even to the world.

"The Father of Mercies."

THERE is an exceedingly fine description of what God is in times of trouble in 2 Corinthians i. 3, 4. The sorrows and sufferings through which the Christian passes in this world have made God known to him as "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort."

“THE FATHER OF MERCIES.”

109

Tribulations are keenly felt, but they serve, after all, to show us God's goodness in tenderly meeting the necessities of such occasions. If it were not for tribulations we could not realise what it is to know God as “the Father of mercies,” and we would not enjoy Him as the God of all comfort as we ought. “The Father of mercies and God of all comfort” just suits a tried and suffering apostle and servant of Christ, and every troubled and sorrowing believer in Christ too. God is not indifferent to our tribulations, but in them all He comforteth us, as He alone can most perfectly.

Christian friends, loving brethren, can and do pity and comfort us in our sorrows, but there is no one who can pity and comfort us like God. He only can just exactly enter into their depths, and He soothes and comforts the heart. Sympathy for a grief-stricken and tried follower of Christ is keenly appreciated and most thankfully received, and would that there were more of it shown to each other at these times ; we need all the sympathy that can be given us then. But the comfort of God is what we should lean upon, and be encouraged with in all our trials and sorrows. When comforted of God we are able to comfort others, while they are passing through tribulations, with the same comfort wherewith we ourselves were comforted of Him.

Many of the sorrows the apostle Paul passed through were occasioned by persecutions from

the enemies of Christ, and by his faithful and devoted service to the Lord. With the Corinthians most of their tribulations were brought on themselves by their own fault and lack of faithfulness to Christ; nevertheless they were real and poignant, and having been repentant before the Lord, they found the loving heart of the Father going out to them in compassion, binding up their broken hearts with His comfort, and encouraging them to a closer walk in communion with Himself. And thus it is with us: God comforts us in *all* our tribulations. Some of our troubles, alas! like those of the Corinthians, are brought on ourselves by self-seeking, or worldliness, or lack of faithfulness to the Lord Jesus; but when we have judged ourselves before Him, and there is true repentance, the Lord pours in the oil and wine which heals and comforts the heart.

Tribulations also may arise as with the apostle Paul, only with him in greater degree and with more faithfulness and devotedness to Christ than any one else, for his was a special service; none had a mission like he had, and no one ever will have again such as he had. He was specially raised up of the Lord to suffer great things for His name's sake, and was the apostle to the Gentiles—our apostle. With him the sufferings came from both Jew and Gentile because of faithful service to Christ, and because of living entirely for Christ, and in such a case how very

"THE FATHER OF MERCIES." III

precious are the comforts and compassions of our God and Father.

Tribulations also come from being in this world, such as sickness, infirmity of the body, and death. The Lord has said, "In the world *ye shall* have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world " (John xvi. 33).

There are also difficult circumstances, such as poverty, business reverses and the like, and loss of friends and other trials common to men, but in them all He is "the Father of all mercies,"—let us not forget this—"and the God of *all* comfort" to us. "At that time," when the great cities of Judea had rejected Him and His ministry and word, Jesus thanks the Father. And oh! what a dark time that was: He felt it keenly. He alone, being perfect and holy, and the Son of God, could know the depths of it all. "At that time" He rests in the Father, the Source of rest and comfort, and delights in His will and His way. He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. . . . Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25-30).

What an immense comfort it is to learn of Jesus, and walk in fellowship with God! He is our Example. It is our privilege to rest in the love and mercy that is in God, "the Father of mercies, and God of *all* comfort, who comforteth us in *all* our tribulations." These

sorrows are allowed in His love for us. They bring out some wonderful grace and goodness and compassion, an otherwise undiscovered display of Himself to our hearts. We learn in our trials that every comfort, every compassion, and every mercy is all traced to Him; He is the spring of it all; He is "the Father of mercies." We can indeed thank Him for the very precious way in which He makes Himself known to us in the dark periods of our history while we are on our way through this world to the Father's house above, which is our eternal home.

Soon the Lord will come and receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also; therefore it is only for a little while we shall have to endure tribulations. We shall dwell with Him for ever then, and behold the beauty of the Lord; and this will amply compensate us for the sufferings of this little while.

W. E. S.

The article on page 98 has reference to a chapter in "Hints on the Book of Daniel." It raises a most interesting question, which we hope all our readers will study with prayerful attention. It is quite possible that *for faith* the first half of the seventieth week was accomplished in the three and a half years of our Lord's ministry; nevertheless it is well to remember that Scripture does not state this. It is clear that as regards length of time a whole week has yet to be completed. We should be glad to hear what others have to say on this matter, briefly and concisely; not necessarily, though possibly, for publication.—ED.

Outline of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

V.—CHRIST ENTHRONED—THE OBJECT AND PATTERN OF FAITH.

(Chaps. xi.-xiii.)

THE heavenly throne is especially prominent as the place in which Christ has seated Himself when seen as our high priest and also as our pattern. In the latter case, too, as well as in that of the sacrifice (x. 12), His high and glorious position takes its particular character from God Himself. But when the divine dignity of the Son is in question, the place in which He sits is spoken of as “the greatness” or “majesty” on high (i. 3). This is also said of Him in priestly power, though “the heavens” are particularised and “the throne” introduced.

The reason for specifying the throne when Christ is in question, as priest and as pattern, is clearly as to the former, that we, for whom He acts as priest, approach to the throne, and therefore need Him there (iv. 16, viii. 1). If seen as Jesus, the leader and completer of faith, our object and pattern, the throne of God is the due reward and proper result of the path of faith and patience, the whole of which He has

XLI.

traversed in absolute perfection (so that no circumstances in which any saint may be found can call for any other spiritual grace than that which has already been exhibited in Jesus for our example). Not merely, therefore, has He left us a model, as in 1 Peter ii. 21, that we should follow in His steps: in the Hebrews we see Him enthroned at the right hand; and fixing the eye steadfastly upon Him, we are enabled thus to lay aside every weight and sin which so easily entangles us.

The pathway of faith in the case of the blessed Saviour has this special to itself, that an infinitely lower depth and greater height than ours are its moral termini. On the one hand, He endured the cross, despising the shame; and on the other, He set Himself down at the right hand of the throne of God (xii. 2). All that *lies between* these extremes we may in our measure more or less experience. We may resist "unto blood, wrestling against sin" (ver. 4), which would be death by martyrdom, the lowest point to which any saint could go on the one hand. On the other hand, we are come, not to Sinai and the legal covenant, as the moral starting-point of our path, like Israel in the wilderness, but to Mount Zion, the principle of sovereign grace, and to the heavenly centre of God's millennial government, and to the universal gathering of angels, and to the assembly of the first-born enregistered in heaven, and to God the judge, and

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 115

to the spirits of the just perfected, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling. These form the highest point of the pathway of faith, and we are already come to them for faith (xii. 18-21).

The believer's walk lies morally between these two points, and consists largely of God's discipline as of His son's (xii. 4-11). This was not the character of Christ's pathway. On the contrary, it was from sinners He endured so great contradiction against Himself. However, considering Him, we are kept from being weary or fainting in our minds; and neither despise nor faint when reproved by Him. His dealings with us are not in judgment but in grace, to make us partakers of His holiness—that quality as found in God Himself. Meanwhile in our own practical path we are to pursue peace and holiness—the active character of this in actual effect. Moreover, the path is exclusive of any who lack grace within, or who bring in defilement from without, as well as of those who would link the name of Christ with the corruption of the flesh, or barter the heavenly privileges to satisfy its lusts (xii. 14-17). This path too leads, as we have seen, to that which cannot be shaken, but which will remain when all created things shall be removed, and already we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. In connection with it Christ speaks from heaven, as once He did on earth at Sinai. How fatal then to refuse

116 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

Him ! and inevitable the judgment of those who turn away from Him !

Jesus is here presented as the mediator of a new covenant in connection with the blood of sprinkling. It is one of sovereign grace on God's part, blessing being dependent not upon human responsibility as under law, but solely upon God's mercy. We are therefore to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, not to turn away from Him, for our God is a consuming fire (vers. 28, 29).

Passing from the mediatorship of Jesus, the Spirit in chapter xiii. rests His exhortations upon the continuity and abidingness of the Person and character of Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come." The saints therefore might certainly appropriate all His gracious communications in the past for present encouragement with the assured certainty of eternal blessing. But in this the legal system, with its ordinances imposed upon the flesh, have no place at all.

It is true the camp may still remain on the principle of earthly links of relationship with God and blessing dependent upon fleshly responsibility. But Jesus had left it all in order to sanctify the people, suffering without the gate. We are therefore to go to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach where He is not, and offering to God our praises by Him in the holiest where He is.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 117

The continuity in power of all the Word of God is to be distinctly kept in mind. Those who have spoken it in the past are to be remembered (ver. 7). Those who lead by it in the present are to be obeyed (ver. 17). They have their especial responsibilities and place among the saints (ver. 24).

Finally, God is brought before us as the God of peace. For if the rest is still future, peace is already fully established in His bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus. He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep, but is so in resurrection, and the power of the blood—that which is the guarantee and security of the eternal covenant. Smitten in His death, the Jewish flock was scattered and the one flock gathered in its place by Him risen from the dead. But this accomplished, Israel shall become “the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand” (Ps. xcv.) once more. Well may He be called “the *Great Shepherd*,” leading as He does each in its turn, the earthly and the heavenly saints.

In conclusion, let us turn back to chapter xi., not so much to note the varied features and qualities of faith, though largely found there in the particular incidents recorded of the Old Testament worthies. From this point of view it has often been remarked that the first seven verses place before us the life of faith in connection with the great acts in which God has revealed Himself—creation, justification, translation, and

118 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

salvation. From verse 8 to verse 22 the patience of faith is in question, and verses 23-38 give the energy of faith.

We may, however, also consider this chapter according to the varied characters in which God presents Himself to faith, and is therefore known and enjoyed in communion by the saint. Of this, the first elementary principle of faith is the believing that "He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who seek Him out" (ver. 6), so that it is not a vain or unprofitable thing to seek Him. In fact, He is a good and gracious God. Of this, creation (ver. 3) is a witness, adapted as it is in every way for the good and benefit of His creatures, particularly for man set at the head of it.

It is true that ruin and confusion now characterise the scene through man's failure, but this has only afforded a further opportunity for the display of God's goodness and grace. He accepts the offering of faith, and testifies that the offerer is righteous, bearing testimony to his gifts. Thus righteousness for the sinner is established irrevocably on the ground of a divinely accepted sacrifice (ver. 4). But more, the transcendent proof that God is good and pleased with faith and rewards it, finds display in the translation of Enoch that he should not see death; and indeed, before this climax of heavenly grace, He deferred not to declare the pleasure He had in him (ver. 5). Yet another instance, that of Noah, final in character, shows

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 119

that He is good to him who believes. Oracularly warned of the coming flood, Noah prepares an ark for the saving of his house. The unbelieving world is condemned, and he becomes sole representative and heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

That God is good to those who seek Him is the first great lesson learnt by faith, whether in creation or justification, translation or salvation.

But faith's intercourse with God takes now a wider basis, and at the same time a special and more definite form. It is faithfulness to His Word and promise of which verses 8-16 speak. Abraham was called to go out into the place he was to receive for an inheritance. He obeyed, trusting the faithfulness of God. Arrived in the land of promise, he sojourned as a stranger in a foreign country. Still he trusted God and waited, assured that He would not disappoint, but provide a better inheritance, a city of divine and enduring construction. Sarah also "counted Him faithful who had promised," and not in vain, for according to that promise were born of one become as dead, even as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the countless sand by the seashore.

God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who count Him faithful. In His governmental ways He gives them in the coming age an established place (ver. 16) of heavenly authority.

It is indeed blessed to know that God is good and faithful to His word, amid the exigencies of the path of faith; but to pass on unmoved by difficulty and trial, we also need to know and confide in His almighty power. Of this verses 17-22 now speak.

Again Abraham affords a chief example. When tried, he offers up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him from the dead, whence also he received him in a figure. So also Isaac in his turn blessed Jacob before Esau, preferring the "plain man dwelling in tents" to the cunning hunter, a man of the field; for God had said, "The elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. xxv. 23, 27), and He was able to bring it to pass. Jacob again, at the end of human strength and his earthly journey, blesses the younger of Joseph's sons before the elder, perpetuating confidence in that power of God of which he was himself so striking a proof, and testifying besides to the double portion of the rejected man. Joseph completes the array of witnesses to this truth so necessary for faith. God is almighty to fulfil His promises, and would surely visit His people and bring them out, even were they in the grave itself. In the confidence of this power Joseph gives commandment concerning his bones.

The remaining verses (23-40) enlarge to the full the thoughts of faith in regard to its knowledge of God. It is not merely that He is good and faithful and all-powerful. He is now

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. 121

seen to have His own purposes in reserve, purposes of blessing, far beyond any promises made to man on earth, that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard—a better thing for us. Of this, the history of Moses affords an instance. Engaged by the beauty of the child, his parents became the humble instruments of saving him who should lead God's people into God's inheritance. Moses, when come to years, viewing by faith the purposes of God, chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, who, though poor and oppressed, were clothed to his heart with the glory of the God who called them. Identifying himself with Christ, rejected and reproached in His people, he had respect to the recompense of a future day, and meanwhile his path was governed by God's purpose for His people and His Christ. Seeing Him who is invisible, he persevered, braving the anger of an apostate world; and bowing meanwhile to the claims of God in judgment, he obeyed the divine provision of the sprinkled blood which met it, and sheltered His people.

When the purposes of God are before the eye of faith, the wilderness disappears. So here, the Red Sea is passed through as dry land (ver. 29), and then Jericho's walls fall down; for the better thing alone, God's inheritance and rest, is in question. We may notice too that when faith rises up to communion with God, in respect of His purposes, persecution largely marks the path.

Of such the world is not worthy (ver. 38). But God has foreseen some better thing for us. Let us therefore run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith.

W. T. W.

Inasmuch.

HOW easily we, as saints, are inclined to miss some of our choicest privileges! And this is the result of our overlooking the simple statements of the Word.

The clean animal in Old Testament Scripture was one which, besides being cloven-footed, *chewed the cud*. It not only gathered its food, it chewed it over again afterwards. Do we have our quiet times over portions we have gathered? If not, we never get the full benefit of them. And this is a great loss, for we forget much we have gathered, and consequently miss many a choice privilege.

Take for instance the words of our Lord in Matthew xxv. 40:* "Inasmuch as ye have

* No doubt we may apply this principle in a practical manner as is here done, nevertheless as a matter of exegesis it is well to remember that it refers to the judgment of the living Gentile nations by-and-by, who are judged in accordance with the way that they have treated the Jewish brethren of the King.—ED.

done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Have you ever quietly meditated upon this, letting it have its full weight upon your heart and mind? Think of it; the Lord here definitely states that whatever good thing is done to one of His brethren, He reckons it as done to Himself; and it is so put down to the account of the one who does the good deed.

Now let us challenge our hearts. Do we in all our dealings with our fellow-Christians remember this? I do not ask if we understand it, for the words are too simple to admit of mistake or question; but, beloved friends, do we remember that He is counting our actions towards His own as done to Himself? Perhaps a further test will help us. Suppose Jesus were visibly upon earth to-day, as He was nineteen centuries back, walking up and down among us and visiting His people as then, what would our attitude be towards Him? Should we not count it the greatest honour that could be bestowed upon us to have Him as a guest beneath our roof? Would anything be too good for Him? Should we not gladly give Him of our very best? Well, beloved, He Himself tells us we *have* the privilege at our very doors; for, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto *one of the least* of these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME."

Can we take it in, beloved? May we have grace so to do. By-and-by when we *see* what

now we know by *faith*, how welcome will it be to those who have acted according to the simple Word, to have it acknowledged openly, that, during their sojourn upon earth, they were ministering to HIM?

And if we need this as an incentive, the converse is equally true as a corrective. "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. . . . Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these My brethren, *ye did it not unto ME.*" L. W. R.

Lectures on Exodus.

LECTURE IV.—Exod. xii., xv., and xvi.

AS we said before, Exodus is the book of redemption; salvation is all of God. God's Word is given to form faith upon. The daily amount of evil would overwhelm, but we hold fast the truth that as this people was brought up harnessed out of Egypt by God, we see them to be the subject of His grace. Being found in our proper place before Him is our strength. Nothing can overcome us as long as we can pray, because nothing can overcome

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

125

God. There may be pride of heart, self-sufficiency, conformity to the world, &c., for which God may leave us a while to prove we cannot do without Him; but this once learnt and confessed, He lifts us up, overcomes for us, and restores us by His grace.

In chapter xii. we get the people put under the privilege of the blood: their security perfect: He prepared to redeem; all contingencies are provided for. Everything is concluded and included in redemption, from the first moment of spiritual life till we shout "Hallelujah" in glory. "Of Him and to Him and through Him are all things." We are apt to think what we have is our own; we are, or ought to be, only dispensers—a blessed privilege—faith and grace are as needful for the rich to dispense, as in the poor to receive: have it in God.

They were to date their chronology (ver. 2) from the day of their redemption. We never did live till we were born again: people in covenant relation alone, who have passed under the protection of the blood. "Bitter herbs eaten with it," through much tribulation, &c. The blood on lintel and doorposts without, they retreated within and there were to abide. Doubtless after it was done as bidden many were within wondering, anxious, perhaps some doubting if it was distinctly visible, &c., troubled perhaps with their thoughts about it, but their security rested not upon their thoughts, but

on God seeing the blood, and what He sees, He sees for ever ; His watchfulness, His character is our safeguard.

We name Christ's work and God's Word—"That our faith and hope may be in God"—the soul feels no evil, resting and counting on His omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, and love : the living God our true portion. We fall back upon the fact that we have to do with the living God. It is our positive position : nothing can happen to us but God sees it ; nothing can spring up in the course of time but God foreknew it ; there's our safety, that's our peace. How happy our portion ! What power in these truths to sustain the soul in trouble ; realising them we shall fear no evil. Peace is perfect, no circumstances can touch it, and it is just here we are landed who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

The grand thought of being under the shelter of the blood is, the Lord will not suffer the destroyer to come near. A thousand fears might possess the heart ; the answer is, "The Lord will not suffer." So with us, how unworthy soever, how miserable soever about ourselves, no matter, God sees the blood upon the purged conscience. Fear not if sincere in heart, anxious for the genuine experience in the heart and not for the credit of religion before men, God will keep, God will comfort. He says, *I see the blood upon thy conscience, My child, and it is enough ;*

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

127

the work, the way is Mine, *to go forward* is thine. I know what I have to do, I will not fail, do you according to My Word.

God is sufficient for our troubles to-day ; live to-day with *God*, go through it *with* Him ; walk through the trials of it, and above them if you can, and leave to-morrow. You may never see it ; leave yesterday and to-morrow alike alone. We spend hours in useless regrets ; past sins, past failures occupy us, instead of to-day's business. Don't repine about yesterday or anticipate to-morrow. Paul says, *forgetting* the things behind, &c. Observe, God had undertaken to bring them in. He speaks of them as settled in and their children yet unborn as occupying lands they planted not, houses they builded not, before they were free or the wilderness passed.

In chapters xv. and xvi. we have the *redeemed* people brought under process of education, being taught to know God ; brought into the wilderness to learn God ; brought where there was nothing for the eye to rest on, no ostensible resource, outside everything that could be leaned upon, to learn the resources they had in the living God, who created all things, was above all things, could act for them in their circumstances or above them, or could do without them. Thus to live upon God alone. And what are we brought to Christ for, but to learn God. And why are we left here ? To learn more of Him. He has revealed Him to this end. But

it is a most difficult thing to learn because we do not deal with Him. We do not seek to have acquaintance with Him. Our apprehension of Him would not be so slow if we did. But He will have us learn Him, and we are brought into difficulties that we may learn what resources there are for us in God. Yes, day by day to find something *fresh* in God, through daily increasing trial it may be; and that is why we are left in trials, that we may learn God's way of *meeting them*. The rich man is taught not to trust in his riches, the poor to be raised above his circumstances, the true levelling system bringing blessing to each; the one to look to God for what he wants (*e.g.*, the ravens), the other for grace to dispense what he has.

Marah—the tree cast into the waters is typical of Christ. Christ must be in the water before it is drinkable by His people: unless Christ can be brought into everything it is Marah. We are absolute gainers by bringing Him into everything, more love, more kindliness.

Elim—this redeemed people do behave wondrously; flesh is flesh, we cannot trust it; all testimony to it is one. We need not experience, if we would but have faith. What God says is bad, believe it to be so; we don't want to prove it. Confession to our liability to fall is power never to fall; it is then for God to keep because we have thrown ourselves upon Him.

"Would to God we had died," &c. (chap. xvi.

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

129

3). It is possible for believers to look after fleshpots. Who is safe then? They whom God keeps. Trouble came, and they forgot the blood; trial absorbed them. Nature never *did* credit God and never *will*. Unbelief, never still, would rather go back into Egypt. In railing against Moses they railed against God, regarding people and circumstances and not God. Yet He shows Himself ever the same. There may be nothing around us to encourage us, we can lean upon none; but God even in these days will get a place in some hearts, and make us glad to boast in Him, aye, and rejoice that we have nothing else to boast in. How did God answer? Did this conduct weary or astonish Him? Did it take Him by surprise? Infirmary only brings out more grace. "I will rain bread from heaven for you," and this to prove them. Oh, what a mercy that He knew what was in us before it came out: when we fail, *He* meets us, so as to cause us to bless the hand that left us to fail and bring out such grace. Even now we may be largely fed in the word to "prove" us.

We are often passing judgment on others, and think they will have to suffer such and such things, and are astonished we do not see the judgment come upon them for their careless walk, &c. But lo! some fine morning we hear of great blessing happening to them, and *so He* brings them back in grace. That is God's way — not His saints'. He shows them His

| glory, this is His remedy, we are taken up in resurrection beyond nature. Risen in Christ, we ought to have done with all expectations from ourselves; having Christ, we have to be conformed to His image. Resurrection has settled the question now, it had not then—Christ's death is the end of nature. Pharaoh knew "I am the Lord" in one sense, Israel know "I am the Lord" in another sense. God shows Himself as their heavenly and gracious Father that they might know Him. The saints would not talk about God as they do, if they knew Him; He says, Look at My love,—talk to Me—if "I spared not My Son," will I not freely give? think you I would withhold from you any good thing? By all that I have done, by all that Christ has suffered, I claim your confidence.

Quails—the quantity suits the person. God fills us according to our measure. Paul had immense capacity, and he got it met. The weak and strong alike have what they need. Everything taught us that we shall have need of: meet it is that grace given should be proved. We are sometimes foolish enough to waste time wishing we were others, whom we think have more grace, but we shall have no lack, God gives to each his measure.

Manna—given day by day, but unbelief acting upon our character and not on God's will, lays up. We should not be living upon past experiences and saying, "I was so happy;"

LECTURES ON EXODUS.

131

we should be as happy to-day. We have God and Christ and the Holy Ghost for to-day, and we should grow happier every day. Where we shall be to-morrow, God only knows; let us depend upon Him, that is what we want, to trust Him and grow in dependence. "It bred worms and stank" when kept, not so on Sabbath, kept by God's ordinances; the Holy Ghost can make old truth very unctuous, whilst new truth sought simply for knowledge is quite powerless. We can live upon very little with His strength and power, until we come unto the mount of God (Horeb). Nature is no better in the people taught of Himself (John vi. 49, &c.). They turned out worse than their fathers, it is written for our benefit. Let it lead us to have done with nature. God has acquitted us. Christ died for us. The Holy Ghost works in us, but flesh to the end is all bad—good or evil, alike profitless. Let us not seek to polish what is radically bad. Paul speaks of concision and circumcision; let us not go about to mangle and hack it and expect good of it after all; it was cut off by the cross of Christ. Let it be cut off. We have no life but in resurrection. There is no bettering ourselves. Thus we go down in our own estimation. We confess to sins of commission, sins of omission. See Christ bearing all and have done with it. Judge all as God has. Throw all props away and settle on God's foundation, Christ Jesus.

In Hebrews ix. 4 we see the manna was laid up in a golden pot, and what was it?—a memorial of the people's sin; but it was put under the mercy-seat, as also Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of stone; three memorials of sin and unbelief, locked out of sight, under the mercy-seat. God blessing above all: we have no power against sin like seeing grace in the mercy-seat triumphing over all our waywardness, rebellion, unbelief.



Epistle to the Romans.

CHAPTER xiii.



THOUGH the Christian is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world (John xvii.), yet is he in the world, and so is brought into relation with earthly authorities and powers. Hence in this chapter (xiii.) the Spirit of God, through the apostle, instructs us upon this important matter.

Government in this world is an institution of God. When God had created the earth and all things therein, He gave to man the first place under Himself. Created in His image and after His likeness, man stood as God's representative on the earth, and to him was given "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

133

air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth " (Gen. i. 28). We can scarcely, perhaps, adduce this first establishment of human dominion over the lower creation as an illustration of *government*: for this latter supposes the presence of sin and evil, which has to be kept down, and in the days of Genesis i. sin had not yet entered. Very soon, we know only too well, did the fall of man take place, and yet not at once did God institute government of man by man. For a time man was left to himself, and Genesis vi. hints at the appalling wickedness that then overspread the earth: moral corruption before God and violence of man against his fellow.

After the flood God introduced a new order of things in Noah. Not only dominion over the lower creation which was found in Adam (Gen. i.), and is here repeated (Gen. ix. 2), but, and for the first time, power vested in man to control and govern his fellow. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (ver. 6). This solemn and fundamental principle of human government was originally established, not for the satisfying of human greed and lust of possession, but for the upholding of the honour and majesty of God in whose image man had been created.

Quickly here as elsewhere, and always, man failed, and soon we read of Nimrod, the "mighty one in the earth" (Gen. x. 8), who, not content

with the subjugation of the beasts of the field, sought great things for himself, in the shape of power over and amongst men. Babel was the beginning of his kingdom (Gen. x. 10), which soon develops into open defiance of God (Gen. xi. 1-10).

The history of nations now commences (Gen. xi. 8, 9), and the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth. But in no haphazard way, for, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8).

Universal idolatry supervened, and out of this God called Abraham (Josh. xxiv.), from whom sprang the nation that became the sphere of the display of God's government upon the earth. In the midst of that nation God dwelt, hidden it is true behind the veil, and yet, "What nation is there so great," said Moses, "who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. iv. 7, 8).

It would lead us too far from our subject and our chapter (Rom. xiii.) to pursue the history of that nation in all its twistings and turnings, from the day in which they stood upon the borders of the land of promise and hearkened to

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

135

the solemn charge of Moses, the servant of the Lord, exhorting them to obedience to these statutes (Deut. iv.), until the days of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, when they were carried away captive into Babylon because of their grievous and manifold sins. Suffice it to say that it was then that the government which had been displayed in the midst of the chosen nation passed into the hands of the Gentiles. To Nebuchadnezzar it was said, "Thou, O king, art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory, &c." (Dan. ii. 37).

The power and authority thus vested in the hands of the Gentiles has remained there ever since, so far as earthly government is concerned, and there it will remain until taken up by the Son of man during the blessed period of the millennium.

As originally instituted, this power was royal, but kings have sometimes been deposed and republics and other forms of government have taken their place. With this the Christian has nothing to do but simply to obey. He is not called upon to alter or to withstand the government under which for the time being he is found. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1).

We do well to remember that at the time these

words were written the imperial court of Rome was in a terribly immoral condition, and violent persecution was raging. Some might have argued that submission in this case was not so obligatory ; but on two grounds is the Christian to obey. In the first place, because the power exists, and the magistrate "beareth not the sword in vain." He may use the sword unrighteously, he may unjustly cast into prison, as has been often done, especially where religious animosity enters into the question, but however trying it may be, submission and not resistance is the Christian's path of duty.

But further, he is to be subject "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (ver. 5). The ruler is the minister of God, and as such must be obeyed in all matters that do not conflict with the direct claims of God Himself. We see in Daniel a deeply instructive case in point. No fault could be found in him so far as his earthly behaviour was concerned, but when an order was made that directly interfered with his obedience to God, he had to obey God rather than the king's decree.

So with the Christian, "the powers that be are ordained of God ;" purposely is the form of government here left vague. There is nothing here to encourage the Christian to enter into the arena of politics, whether to resist what he considers unjust laws or to appoint forms of government which he may fancy better than those

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

137

already in existence. He may, and indeed should, pray and intercede, and even give thanks for kings and all in authority, that he may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness (1 Tim. ii.). Thankfulness, too, should fill his heart for every enactment that favours a walk and worship according to the dictates of conscience enlightened by the Word of God, and that admits of spreading the blessed gospel of God. These things may get more difficult as the evil days of Christendom's apostasy advance, but meanwhile we need to accept with thankfulness every protection that the law affords, and render to all their dues, whether tribute, custom, fear, or honour. This submission to human government was as needful to inculcate upon Jewish believers (1 Pet. ii. 12-18) as upon Gentile.

The question of debt is next treated, and nothing can be plainer nor more direct than the injunction, "Owe no man anything." There is scarcely anything that a worldly man judges more unsparingly in a professed believer than laxity in the performance of monetary obligation. One debt alone was to be always outstanding, viz., to love one another. A glance at the commandments enumerated in verse 9 is sufficient to establish the principle laid down in verse 10; love in activity is the fulfilling of the law, in that part of it which has to do with man's relations with his fellow.

138 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

Another principle of great importance to direct the conduct of the Christian is now introduced—"The day is at hand." The hope of the Lord's coming sheds a light upon all the scene of darkness through which our journey lies. If submission to earthly authorities is enjoined in the beginning of the chapter, conflict with the powers of darkness is shown to be no less a duty at the end. This deadly struggle will grow more intense as the darkness deepens just before the dawn of day; so much the more reason to "awake out of sleep," to "cast off the works of darkness," and to gird on "the armour of light."

No stand can be made in this dark and evil day, no headway against the power of the enemy, unless those in the conflict maintain a conscience void of offence, and walk according to the principles of that coming day of manifested light and glory, before the day itself in all its brightness dawns upon the world.

With what power the exhortation falls upon the heart and conscience, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (ver. 14).

Correspondence.

FROM various quarters we have received encouraging words in connection with the article in our March issue. To still further promote the

spirit of prayer and intercession, we print the following letter. We are more and more persuaded that God is about to send out a mighty wave of blessing. Pray for it earnestly, expect it confidently, and soon we shall have cause to praise God for it joyfully.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I feel thankful for your article, "A Sound of Abundance of Rain," and share your belief that the Lord will awaken His saints, and work a revival in view of His coming. I do not think that implies that one says, "My Lord delayeth His coming," for who can tell what He is working at this hour in the souls of His own? But it is so like Him to specially prepare His people for what He is about to do. The "shout" will not fall on unheeding ears, but on ears prepared by grace and waiting for Him. Indeed, the "midnight cry" in the parable of the ten virgins is preparatory to His arrival, and *only* profits to the "wise virgins" who are *all* awakened and trim their lamps. That is true *revival*.

As to an ingathering of souls by the gospel, I look for that too, believing that it may take a few moments or a few years. He is coming "quickly," and as His people are roused to prayer and humiliation, so can He use them abundantly even at the last moment. Such a mighty work can be done without any public rehabilitation of the assembly, and so grace can triumph where man has failed.

But humiliation must accompany prayer, as you say. In many assemblies saints are found out of harmony with one another, instead of being of one mind. How often through lack of care are souls found straying. Then, too, *self*-judgment is needed, for it is with oneself that judgment must begin.

I Timothy ii. is the great warrant for prayer for the gospel. "First of all," not preaching but prayer. "I will that the men *pray* everywhere." God will not fail to ordain preachers to testify, but all should pray and give thanks too, for the ransom has been paid for all. "God, our Saviour," what a precious title!—Yours affectionately in the fellowship of the Spirit,

F. M. H.

IN John xiii. 31, 32 we find that God will not keep the Son of man till the glory of the millennial day to invest Him with His honours, but will glorify Him "straightway": in Luke xxiii. 42, 43, we see that the blessed Son of man will not allow a repentant soul (even a dying robber) to wait till that same kingdom to obtain a portion of remembrance, but will encourage his last hours with the assurance, "*To-day* shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

May we not say that the latter is a perfect reflection of the former? Except that the first is the response of righteousness to absolute perfection, and the second infinite grace meeting as deep a case of need as the world could afford.

F. L.

Lectures on Exodus.

LECTURE V.—Exod. xvi. and xvii.

WE will read 1 Corinthians x. 1, 2, as our warrant for thus looking into these scriptures. So early as these days of Paul, we see warning instructions needful to be drawn from all parts of the Word of God—the Word of God is quick and powerful—to say nothing of the dignity put on us as His children preserving it for our instruction.

We were occupied on the last occasion with the manner in which the manna was gathered—communion in fact (John vi.)—God instructing them how to maintain it—how to eat of the true manna. No such thing after we are brought into fellowship with God and His Son as going by ourselves; no such thing as taking the leading of the Spirit without the word—all delusions spring from this; heresies arise from men acting outside the *Word*—no such thing as truth without the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Truth is the Holy Ghost.

Rephidim. First they had no bread, now they have no water. The people the moment they were in trial fell out with God's servants, and fell out with God Himself. So Christians forget redemption. They ought to know that all is con-

firmed in it, and even to the end. The cause of failure is that Christ has not the beauty in our eyes He should have. The Christ of God is ever precious to God: hence our security. God having respect to Christ, cares for us by the way. The people break out into murmuring and rebellion and hard thoughts of God, and fall out with trouble by the way, forgetting the cross comes before the crown. So now, no sooner do trials come connected with the cross, than people wish they had never known it, forgetting they are the marks of the family.

Well are we taught from one end of the Word to the other that all is vain until taught by the Spirit, as our Lord witnessed, "Ye must be born again." When God Himself speaks—God the Lord—He will speak peace to the people and comfort to His saints. The Holy Spirit in the Word tells one unvarying unchanging story of God's eternal love to us in Jesus Christ.

"They be ready to stone me" (ver. 4). What a character! Yet that is our nature. We do the same; flesh is flesh, ever judging unkindly of God. The history of the past shows us the present. Enough to lead us to despair; but blessed desperation if it leads us to the gospel of Christ, to Him and to the Bible, there to find what God is towards us: alas, we have found out what man is towards God: our evil is brought out fully in the cross of Christ. "That Blessed" man laid hands on and put to death. We have

not need to learn it practically, the cross brought an end to all expectation of the flesh. All that we have to do daily and hourly is to judge the flesh and walk in the Spirit: conformity of thought to Christ, conformity of walk with Him our daily work; no longer as a question of getting to heaven, that is settled already. We have to walk in the wilderness, to endure buffetings from Satan, and harassings of our own hearts. We have to hold fast that which has been committed to us; this is not a light thing, in fact the very hardest; constant need of dependence on God for that thing given of God to be kept alive *by* God. Often Christians suppose that because they have life they can sit carelessly down and have no more to learn; this is true in one sense, but we need *His* power to *live*. Nature can never again be trusted. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; yea, make a prisoner of every thought; lock it up, and keep it *subject* to the Word (2 Cor. x. 3-5).

Reasoning! Satan is an adept at reasoning; *put it aside*; Satan is an overmatch for the most skilful; "the Serpent *more subtle*," &c. (Gen. iii., iv.). The Proverbs were written to teach subtilty to the simple and to give young men knowledge and discretion (Prov. i. 4). How did God meet the outbreak of the flesh? Before He brought them into the wilderness He knew them, and what they were. He who brought

such redemption was not going to turn aside because the flesh showed itself. He knew what was in man, and He who gave His Son was not going to give us up because what was *in* came *out*. All our springs and hopes are beyond the grave *now* (vers. 5, 6, 7). Compare 1 Corinthians x. 4. How touching Paul's comment! How confirmatory to the faith of our souls this day! How simple the testimony and sure that nothing could meet our need but the cross of Christ!—the rock flowed water to Israel. Thus all that Christ is flows for us. We cannot enter into conflict until instructed how to eat and how to drink. Conflict can only be carried on in communion with God. A blessed conflict it is, and this book is precious as showing us all the way of redemption.

Now for the battle, the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Exod. xvii. 8-16). Moses went armed with the rod of God. No thought of bringing the flesh into this battle. No power but the Word for fighting with Satan. No remedy in the midst of these evil times but the Word; there is the triple aspect of evil, Cain, Balaam, Korah (Jude 11); the more the darkness prevails the more need of keeping yourselves in the love of God (Jude 21); if iniquity is abounding, the remedy is abounding grace; the antidote to the evil around us is the love of God and faith of Christ, the panoply of truth with which we began, and we are kept by the

same unto eternal life praying in the Holy Ghost.

And Joshua "fought with Amalek." Moses on the top of the hill upheld between Hur (royalty) and Aaron (priesthood). Whilst praying and looking up all was well; so with God's people to-day. But who is to sustain in the power of prayer? Who but God? When we cease to pray we fail; but Christ's intercession and royal priesthood are still our stay. Seated on the stone, a type of the Rock, Christ, kingship and priesthood sustained Moses till the sun went down. The end of the believer is bright, settled and stablished on this Stone; Christ as Priest sustains us on the right hand, as King protects us on the left. So He who begins the good work will carry it on to the end (Phil. i. 6), confirming in the grace of the blessed gospel. How happy to know the Lord Jesus Christ ours for every circumstance. Joshua discomfits Amalek, blessed result of prayer of faith, the enemy daunted: who is able to sustain but God: blessed provision!

Sometimes we say we cannot pray, but to put ourselves in His presence and say we cannot pray is oftentimes the best prayer: the most urgent prayer we can make is when our lips can't speak—the Spirit makes intercession. Our fluency in prayer often takes us off our hearts' needs, the attitude of dependence is oftentimes the best prayer. When saints meet in a body,

146 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

no utterance may be given; yet prayer is the greater when the need is acknowledged. God has respect to the soul's position before Him. "I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."

"Write this for a memorial" (ver. 14). How He causes His people to triumph! tell it over and over again, we need constant reminders. Oh, what power should we get over him did we see it as God's enemy, to remember God reckons your enemy His. I'll fight it for you; our corruptions are too strong for us, a straw will turn us out of the path. Many a time is God's child crying out, Oh that I were rid from remorse, harassings, distresses. But if they did but remember that God has promised to overcome *in* them and *for* them, how soon would victory be won! He has given a banner to them that fear Him to be displayed. He would have you unfurl your banner in face of your foe. Christians often fail to put up their banners after victory won and acknowledge God in it. The banner is never to be furled, because God will have war with Amalek from generation to generation (ver. 16).

In chapters xvi. and xvii. God patiently teaches them what there is in Him, and shows up to them what there is in themselves. What a contrast! Murmurings, chiding, rebellions, even desiring to return to Egypt, in *them*. Nothing but unfolding of grace in *Him*. We must be humbled and bow down before God. The

knowledge of grace is the alone key to the character of God. What are our works? We have nothing to say to our good ones; we must with the blood of Christ silence our bad ones.

To be where Christ is owned is our happy position, holding fast faith and grace. Our evil? We must judge it, but we must not, we dare not allow it to be that which God will judge us for. Our evil just moved God towards us and brought Christ down to die. Evil was judged when Christ died on the cross. He was judged for it. No judgment for us, except to judge ourselves; our business this side of the grave is to judge ourselves: on the other side acquittal and blessing. It was because we were evil that Christ died, and that ends it.

Let us in the sense of acceptance and dependence on the Spirit strive by that Spirit to obey and walk in nearness to God!

JOHN WILLANS.

Showers of Blessing.

IN our March number, under the heading "A Sound of Abundance of Rain," we drew attention to the fact that a widespread feeling existed that we were on the eve of a time of much blessing in the gospel.

We are confirmed in our thought that this is

XLII. 2

the case. Wherever the gospel is preached simply and earnestly, there seems a growing desire on the part of the people to hear; and wherever the people of God have been led to come together for prayer on behalf of the gospel in all parts of the earth, signs following have been the result.

Many during the last year have followed with prayerful interest the movements of some well-known evangelists, and have given thanks to God for what seems to be a great ingathering of souls. But in most of these cases there has been a great deal of organisation which might to a large extent account for the great crowds drawn together.

Now, however, tidings reach us from the north of Scotland of a most remarkable revival which bears more resemblance to those soul-stirring times in 1859 when the Spirit of the Lord moved in such mighty power over the land. May it not be that there will be just before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ such another season of blessing, aye, and greater still! God grant it!

Along the Banffshire coast whole families are being saved. No individual missionary is prominent, but every building where the Word of God is preached is crowded to the doors. The preaching does not last long, but the services themselves often continue for six hours. Business is at a standstill, and commercial travellers can get no ear for trade purposes. All are

absorbed in the weightier concerns of the soul and eternity. We are told that many of the people have not had their clothes off for several successive nights, and that the workers can scarcely snatch more than a few hours' sleep in the early morning.

We would encourage all our readers to pray that this work of grace may spread far and wide. Let each one ask himself and herself—

“Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Should this article penetrate to places where no suitable preachers are found, at any rate get together for prayer. Pray for the conversion of individuals known to you. A manuscript book now lies before me containing the requests for prayer presented at a little weekly cottage meeting in Somersetshire in 1862. Prayer was asked for the conversion of husbands, wives, sons and daughters, &c. It is encouraging to see in many cases the word

“Answered”

pencilled on the same page. Some of these we are personally acquainted with. Many have entered into their rest.

Let us not hinder by our unbelief. Let each one

Get right with God.

Let each one spend much more time in prayer and the reading of the Word. Should an un-

saved reader be scanning these lines, we would say to such, "Do not wait until a revival breaks out in your district, but come to the Lord Jesus Christ now, this very moment."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

"Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need.
Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead."

ED.

Christ, the Wisdom of God.

(PROV. viii. 22-35.)

THE inward man, begotten of God, delights in Christ, the Son of God; finds in Him ever an object of unspeakable joy and satisfaction; has always, whenever and in whatever character His glories are presented for contemplation, a responsive chord awakened in the heart which answers back—"Unto Him that loved 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!" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

The renewed soul, partaker of the divine nature, delights also in God and in the things of God; rejoices in His joys and esteems it the

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD. 151

highest privilege to be admitted into this intimacy and to share His thoughts : to learn in communion with Him, not only what Christ is to us, but what He is to God : to have thus revealed the glories appertaining to and inherent in the Son—glories which can only increase His value to the soul, while at the same time the heart bows in reverent worship to Him, the One who is above all.

This is fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ ; it is indeed an inestimable privilege ; it is fulness of joy (1 John i. 3, 4). And note : it is not here as in 1 Corinthians i. 9, "His Son Jesus Christ *our Lord*." The soul in this fellowship with the Father learns the relationship of Jesus Christ, not so much to us as "our Lord" (though this be blessedly true) but, to God and His Father as "His Son." Wondrous grace ! such as could be alone in the heart of God our Father, for it is as His children that we are admitted into this fellowship, it is the intimacy of the family circle in the family home. Israel will yet learn in intimacy with Jehovah of the preciousness of Jehovah's Christ, we learn in intimacy with the Father of the preciousness of "the Son of the Father." Yet it is the same Person, and therefore even what is predicted of Him in Old Testament times is precious to us. Every ray of His glory shines with a brightness which quickens the pulsation of the heart of the believer. The anointing oil may be poured

152 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

upon His head, but it flows down to the skirts of His garments.

In such a way (*i.e.*, what Christ is to God) He is presented to us in Proverbs viii. The passage speaks of wisdom, yet not of wisdom as a mere abstract quality in God, but as personified in One who is God and also with God (ver. 30). And He who is *with* God is also *for* God—a daily delight to Him. Now we are left in no uncertainty who this One is, for the Spirit of God in 1 Corinthians i. 24 tells us that it is Christ: not an unknown Christ, but one well known to us, one whom we treasure above everything, for it is He who was crucified (ver. 23), who is *our* Lord, and who is also *His* Son (ver. 9). We *learn* to know Him as sent forth in due time, as the Word *become* flesh. But in the essence of His being and in the glory of His power He is before all time, and that not only as “God” but as “Son of the Father.” In Him there was a joy for God, a daily (constant) delight; an object for the love of the Father which was from all eternity. And the renewed soul, “renewed unto knowledge,” rejoices in this: to know God not only as the *eternal* God (and upon this rests the believer's salvation and blessing now, as by-and-by that of Israel, see Isa. xl. 28), but also as the *blessed* (happy, 1 Tim. i. 11) God whose heart has had an object for its delight from eternity.

“The Lord possessed *Me*.” When man had

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD. 153

no existence, when this world (to possess which the mightiest men have striven) was not, *then* the Lord possessed Him, *then* God had an object for His constant delight. If, then, this delight was before the world was formed, before man was made, this delight was also independent of this world and of man—it was solely in Christ His Son, solely in what this Son was to Him—"the Father loveth the Son." The natural man delights and interests himself only in things which concern him or in any way have an application to him, values only people who value him or are of use to him. The renewed mind delights in God and the things of God, the things which bring glory and joy to God: delights to meditate on Christ as the joy of God—of which joy man never could be a cause, for man was not even in existence then.

And this joy and delight in His own Son, which was God's before ever the world was—"Thou hast loved Me before the foundation of the world"—is not to be mixed up with His refreshment and joy in His work of creation (Exod. xxxi. 17; Ps. civ. 31). There are "His angels that excel in strength," but "unto which of the angels said He *at any time*, Thou art My Son?" This Son is the only-begotten, His own Son—alone and supreme in glory and greatness: the Son who is "appointed heir of all things." And though man be set to have dominion over the earth, and even if he should be highly

honoured by God, like a Moses or Elias, yet when Peter, to whom the Father had just before revealed Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," would place them on the same level with Him, God the Father—ever jealous of the glory of His own Son—at once steps forward to give *Him* honour and glory, when there came such a voice *to Him* from the excellent glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And when this voice was come, "Jesus was found alone."

This greatness and glory of the Son is indeed the theme in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He is greater than any angel, greater than Moses, greater than Joshua, greater than David, greater than Aaron, greater than Abraham, greater than Levi or any of the Levitical priesthood. Aaron, when made priest, received an honour which he never had before, but He by the glory which is inherent in His Person—Jesus, the *Son of God*—gives value to His priesthood. It is God who has already owned Him, saying, "Thou art My Son," who salutes Him as "high priest after the order of Melchizedek." And it is this superiority of Himself surpassing every one and everything, that gives its special character to the pathway of faith in Hebrews xii., as to the life of faith in Galatians ii., "the faith of the Son of God." An Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and the many others of whom the world

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD. 155

was not worthy, may in various measures and in divers manners be witnesses (God thus speaking through them) of the blessedness of the pathway of faith ; yet *now*, we are to look away unto Jesus. He is to be the only One we are to consider and follow, the only One we are to have as object before us. And those whose faith we are to follow now are not the Old Testament saints, but those who have spoken to us the Word of God, summed up in this : " Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

And further, this joy of God in His own Son is an eternal joy ; He is ever the same, " One Son " (Mark xii. 6) : whether in the glory with the Father before the world was, or down here on earth when He took " the form of servant and was made in the likeness of men," or now raised by the glory of the Father and exalted high, made " both Lord and Christ." At all times and in every place and circumstance He is the object of the Father's ineffable delight. Who can tell what He was to the Father before the foundation of the world ? We know it only from Him who could testify of it and who has said : " I was daily His delight," and again, " Thou hast loved Me before the foundation of the world." Who can tell what He was to the Father when down here ? None but the Father Himself, who by a double (*i.e.*, complete) testimony testified, " This is My beloved Son in whom I am well

156 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

pleased"; this testimony was equally given to the Son, when in grace and to fulfil all righteousness He was found associating Himself with self-confessed sinners at the Jordan, as when on the Holy Mount "the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering." But neither this transfiguration enhanced His value in His Father's eyes, nor could His association at the Jordan with self-confessed sinners detract from it. He was always, and is always, the only-begotten who *is* in the bosom of the Father. And now in resurrection and by resurrection He is "marked out" by God to be the Son of God in power; raised by the glory of the Father, as well as by the power of God.

Thus, as the Father's delight in Him is eternal, so is it also always perfect; and the renewed mind delights to know this. There was a joy for God in the works of His creation, but that joy was soon ended. The anointed cherub "in the day that he was created" was perfect in beauty, perfect in his ways, but a time came when his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and God had to pronounce his doom. There was a time, when God "saw everything that He had made, and behold! it was very good." But a time came, when "it repented the Lord that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart, for God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth." And again,

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD. 157

only judgment could be pronounced upon man "with the earth." But this delight which He finds in His Son is ever the same, perfect and complete. He who in eternity could say, "I was daily His delight," could with equal truth say when down here as man, "I do *always* those things that please Him." God was robbed of His joy in man by man, but the heart rejoices to know that His joy in the Son is ever perfect. And more, through His Son God will have His joy again in His creation, through Him of whom it is written, "I restored that which I took not away"; giving thus—to speak as a man—an added cause for the love of His Father to Him, as He said, "Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." He takes it again as head of a new creation in which He should no longer abide alone, but fill all things with His redemption glory. And God thus receives a glory to His name, such as even the first creation before man's fall could not witness to. As it says in 2 Corinthians i. 20, "In Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God *by us*."

It is indeed the glory and perfection of His person which give value to His work and to all the associations into which by grace He may enter. On this is founded the whole argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as has been already noticed. The "how much more" of resulting blessings in chap. ix. 14 is

based on the fact that it is by the blood of *Christ* that they have been effected, even as the "how much sorer punishment" in chap. x. 29, is owing to the fact that it is the *Son of God* who is trodden under foot. The dignity and value of our calling is this that we are made companions of *Christ*. And not only, nor even chiefly, is it the blessings which we have received which are brought into view in connection with the atonement work of Christ, but there is that aspect in it which brings out God's portion—"He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to *God*."

God could only be a fault-finding God with a people under the first covenant (chap. viii. 8). He could find no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin (chap. x. 8). But that which neither law-covenant nor sacrifices could accomplish both for the joy and for the glory of God, the Son of God has done—"I come to do *Thy will*, O God." Thus not only in eternity, not only in His life down here, not only now in glory, but in His very death in obedience to the will of God His Father, He was ever the perfect delight of His Father; He "hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to *God for a sweet smelling savour*"; "wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and

CHRIST, THE WISDOM OF GOD. 159

that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord: to the glory of God *the Father*." He who will be owned by the whole universe as Lord, is He who is owned by God as Son, for this is the name that is above every name—a more excellent name than that of angels. The glory in which He will be displayed will be not only as the Son of man (who has glorified God) in the glory of God, but as the Son (who has glorified the Father) in the glory of the Father (*cf.* John xiii. 31, 32, and xvii. 4, 5), and He will be owned as the worthy object of that glory.

And as the glory of His person gives efficacy to His work, so also does it give value to the resultant blessings into which we are brought through His work—"He hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour." He gave Himself in all the value and preciousness of His own person to God for us: identified Himself with us on the cross, that we might be identified with Him—the Sanctifier and the sanctified "all of one." And over the whole of this scene as seen by God, rests, for the joy of God, the sweet smell of the savour of the worth and preciousness of His own Son (2 Cor. ii. 14, 15): those who are brought into sonship *by* Jesus Christ are accepted (graced) *in* the Beloved.

Such is indeed "the grace which He for us has won!" "Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." This is our blessed portion

and position before God always and in every place, so that wherever He may lead us about in triumph, we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ. The voice from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," was to Him and Him alone—His by right—at the Jordan; yet the company of self-confessed and self-judged sinners might know for the joy and comfort of their own hearts that this beloved Son had come into *their* midst and identified Himself with them "to fulfil all righteousness," so that though they cannot claim for themselves any share in that voice to Him, they can claim Him for themselves.

The believing soul may enter yet very little into what the full blessedness of this association is, or what the glories of this Person are who thus associated Himself with them in grace; as even John the Baptist testified, "I knew Him not." But even though an Andrew find only the Messiah in Him, yet the soul which found Christ (the Messiah), has found Him who is the Christ *and the Son of the living God*, Him who is chosen *of* God and precious *to* God; and for us who believe is the preciousness. We are indeed before God *in Christ*, in all the preciousness of of His person. "Whoso findeth *me*, findeth life and shall obtain the favour of the Lord."

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give to us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge *of Him!*

CORRESPONDENCE.

161

And may He grant that the Christ may dwell
in our hearts by faith, being rooted and grounded
in love !

“ The higher mysteries of Thy fame
The creature's grasp transcend ;
The Father only Thy blest name
Of Son can comprehend.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow !

Yet, loving Thee on whom His love
Ineffable doth rest,
The worshippers, O Lord, above,
As one with Thee, are blest.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow !

Of the vast universe of bliss
The centre Thou, and Sun,
Th' eternal theme of praise is this
To God's beloved One.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow !”
O. H.

Correspondence.

DANIEL'S LAST WEEK : WHERE FOUND.

(Dan. ix. 24-27.)

IN the April number, W. J. C. considers this question rather from the point of view as to what is the meaning of “unto the Messiah

the Prince." It may be helpful to consider it for a moment from the other point of view, as to what is meant by the word "*after*" in verse 26. "And *after* threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing." When is the cutting off?

Now it should be noted that Scripture does not say after sixty-nine weeks shall Messiah "come," but shall be "cut off." It should be equally noted that Scripture does not say "during," or, "in the midst of," the seventieth week, shall Messiah be cut off, but it says distinctly, "*after* sixty-nine weeks (7 + 62) shall Messiah be cut off." Scripture does not say how long after, but it is perfectly clear that the cutting off is subsequent to the completion of the sixty-nine weeks, "*unto* the Messiah the Prince." Therefore though Scripture does not speak of the seventieth week in so many words, the seventieth week is, for faith, clearly entered on before Messiah is cut off, there being no break between the sixty-ninth week and the cutting off.

I doubt not, therefore, that W. J. C. is correct, and that Matthew iii., that is, the Lord's baptism and presentation to Israel, after John had prepared His way, marks the moment "*unto* the Messiah the Prince," and that the three and a half years of the Lord's ministry immediately following after the sixty-nine weeks, are a *certain* fulfilment of the first half of the last or seventieth

week. The nation had not eyes to see it. The Messiah was cut off and had nothing. The break in the seventy weeks is clearly at the cross.

This same "unbelieving generation" that received not Him who came in His Father's name, will, in their wilfulness, again in the land, in accepting the "one week," be allowed to repeat the first half of the last or seventieth week, receiving the one that shall come in his own name. In the midst of that week, the godly remnant giving heed to the Lord's warning, "When *ye* shall see the abomination," &c., will, in faith, connect that moment, the beginning of the last half of the last or seventieth week, with the cross, which consummated the cutting off of Messiah, and closed the three and a half years of the Lord's ministry, or first half of the last or seventieth week, which to unbelief, but surely not to faith, had gone for nothing.

The first half of the last or seventieth week has therefore a double fulfilment: first, when Messiah was here and was cut off—the true half week; and secondly, when the Antichrist will be here, and will be received of the many—a sort of Satan's counterfeit.

The break in the seventy weeks—the entire Church parenthesis—is therefore not between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week, but between the cutting off of Messiah at the cross and the definitely receiving of the Antichrist at the

164 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

setting up of the idol of desolation, that is between the true first half and the last half of the last or seventieth week.

I say *entire* Church parenthesis, because the catching up of the saints (1 Thess. iv.) is short of the entire interval.

The false or repeated first half of the week is really a part of the break or parenthesis, and will retrospectively overlap the true first half of the week, and thus connect the last half week of Israel's history directly with them both, and so close up again the gap.

God in His wisdom does not allow "the chronologer" to fix His dates "to the very day," but He does give the wise to understand His Word (Dan. xii. 10).

R. J. K.

"ONE WEEK."

It cannot properly be said that there has been any partial accomplishment of the "one week" of years of Daniel ix. Scripture does not present the matter in that light at all. It simply says that "*after* the three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing" (see margin).

The *one week* is future. Who is *he* who confirms a covenant for one week? He is the prince of verse 26, who was *future* when his people destroyed Jerusalem, city and temple,

after Christ was cut off. He was yet future when John penned the Book of Revelation. "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (chap. xvii. 10). [Does any one ask, "Where is the Roman beast or empire now?" We are living during an interregnum which may end at any time.] He is future still, being the *seventh* head of the beast. The eighth head only lasts half a week of years or forty-two months (chap. xiii.). It is therefore the seventh head which confirms a covenant for a week of years, which the eighth breaks when he comes up healed of his mortal wound. Wounded as "seventh," he comes back as "eighth."

The second beast, or false prophet (doubtless the Jewish Antichrist) comes up after the first, and the abomination of desolation is promptly set up in the holy place. (This seems to be done in momentary confederacy with the Assyrian. See Isaiah viii. 7, 8, xxviii. 14-18.)

The "seventh" head comes to his end in the universal upsetting under the sixth seal, when the heaven itself departs as a scroll when it is rolled together. That is the end for the Roman earth of rulers drawing their authority from God according to Daniel ii., for though the beast of Revelation xiii. is also part of that great image, it draws its authority from the dragon who for the first time is able to give "his power and his seat and great authority."

F. M. H.

“UNTO MESSIAH (OR CHRIST) THE PRINCE.”

Notice on what occasions the New Testament Scriptures present *His coming* the first time:—

At His birth—“When He cometh into the world He saith . . . Lo, *I come* (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. x. 5).

At His coming—“That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (*or that coming into the world* lighteth every man)” (John i. 9).

As to the general fact—“He *came* unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John i. 11).

At about thirty years of age—“Then *cometh* Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him” (Matt. iii. 13; Mark i. 9; Luke iii. 23).

At the beginning of His public ministry—“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus *came* into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mark i. 14; compare Matt. iv. 12-17).

John's question—“Art thou He that should *come*, or do we look for another?” (Matt. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19).

At His transfiguration—“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man *coming* in His kingdom” (Matt. xvi. 28).

At His royal entry into Jerusalem—“Tell ye

CORRESPONDENCE.

167

the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King *cometh* unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matt. xxi. 5).

At His death—"This is He that *came* by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood" (1 John v. 6).

At His entry into heaven—"But Christ being *come* an High Priest of good things to come . . . by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 11, 12).

F. M. H.

 EDITOR'S NOTE.

We have received several communications upon the subject of the last week. Some of our correspondents do not sufficiently distinguish between the Antichrist and "the prince that shall come" (Dan. ix. 26). They are not the same, though for a time closely leagued together in their iniquitous policy. We would refer our readers to a pamphlet by the late J. N. Darby, entitled "An Inquiry into the Antichrist of Prophecy." The author, who, we suppose, was chiefly instrumental in bringing these deeply interesting and important subjects afresh before the minds of the Lord's people in all their bearings, at first took them to be the same individual; but his more matured judgment was that they were not. As this point does not seem clear to some, we might suggest it as a further subject of

Scripture research, and should be glad to hear from others briefly on the matter.

We are not prepared to endorse all that our correspondent F. M. H. says as to the seventh head (Rev. xvii.). We have always considered that to be past, possibly Napoleon Bonaparte. We leave this, however, to the spiritual judgment of our readers.

Nor do we think that the abomination of desolation is set up in confederacy with the Assyrian. This latter is rather the rod of Jehovah's anger for the chastisement of the Jewish nation in consequence of the terrible idolatry introduced by-and-by through the instrumentality of the Antichrist in league with the Roman prince. All three are alluded to in the last verse of Daniel ix., which may be rendered as follows: "And he (*i.e.*, the Roman prince) shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the overspreading of abominations (*i.e.*, the idolatry introduced by Antichrist), there shall be a desolator (*i.e.*, the Assyrian), even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (*i.e.*, Jerusalem).

A fourth personage who will appear upon the scene at the end has been perhaps somewhat lost sight of, viz., the king of the south (Egypt).

Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

THE Epistle to the Ephesians, written from Rome by the apostle Paul during his imprisonment there, contains, without doubt, the revelation of Christian truth in its highest character. In considering it, therefore, it is well to briefly recall the circumstances connecting the inspired writer of it with Ephesus, and the relation which the epistle bears to his other writings.

Paul had already visited Athens and Corinth, the great centres of Greek learning and civilisation, preaching the gospel, in the latter place especially, in the Jewish synagogue; and there it was that the great rupture took place with the Jews. When they opposed and spoke injuriously, he formally separated from them, saying, "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts xviii. 6).

Paul's action on this occasion formed a great and momentous turning-point in the service of the gospel, to which the Lord Himself gave His personal and special approval and encouragement, saying to him by vision in the night,

XLIII.

"Fear not, but speak, and be not silent, because I am with thee." From this time the Christian assembly stands forth in its distinctive character and separateness from the earthly Judaistic religious system (cf. Acts xiii. 46, 47).

After teaching there a year and a half, the Jews with one consent rose against Paul, and sought, but in vain, to put the law in force against him. In the providence of God, man's judgment-seat, though inert and oblivious in divine things, becomes in this case a protector of the truth. From thence Paul sailed for Syria, and on his journey visited Ephesus. Here he entered into the synagogue and found a company of Jews interested in the Word of God, and evidently of unprejudiced minds. It is not said how far their consciences were reached, but it is not a little significant that Paul declined to remain longer with them, but promised to return again if God willed.

At Ephesus, too, it was that Apollos first appeared upon the scene, knowing only the baptism of John; nor is anything said of his Christian baptism. Aquila and Priscilla unfolded to him more exactly the way of God; and afterwards he departed thence for Corinth. At this time Paul again visits Ephesus, and finds there disciples, twelve in number, who had not received the Holy Spirit, being only baptized to John's baptism. He instructs them that they should believe on Jesus, and then baptizes them to His

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 171

name ; and having laid his hands on them, they receive the Holy Spirit.

This is the last recorded instance of men owning the baptism of John ; they are brought into the assembly or house of God by baptism to the name of Christ, and the last bond which seemed to connect Judaism and Christianity or to be a link of transition between them is finally snapped. Thus we see at this important juncture that the testimony rendered distinctively to the Jew, which, after the warning at Antioch in Pisidia, had been formally closed at Corinth, though in divine long-suffering continued still at Ephesus, was now to cease for ever.

Accordingly, after speaking boldly at Ephesus during three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the kingdom of God, Paul at length separated the disciples from the hardened and unbelieving Jews, and reasoned daily for two years in the School of Tyrannus. All the Jews and Greeks who dwelt in pro-consular Asia were thus enabled to hear the Word of the Lord.

Moreover, the God-forsaken and helpless condition of the Jew, in contrast with the divine power and glory manifested in Paul, is clearly evidenced at this time. Diseases were healed and wicked spirits cast out by merely placing upon the sick napkins or aprons brought from Paul, while Jewish exorcists, particularly the two sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest, pretending to exert the same power, were overpowered by

the demoniac, and driven out of the house naked and wounded. Thus the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, and fear fell upon all, both Jews and Greeks, who inhabited Ephesus. The Word of the Lord also increased mightily and prevailed, whereas their books of charms and magical arts were burnt publicly to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Thus, as opposed to the false pretensions of Judaism, the dominant power of the name of the Lord and of the Word of the Lord, found exclusively in the Christian assembly, was publicly established for the first time at Ephesus, and thenceforward there is no further testimony to the Jews, except a witness of rejection.

It was clearly declared at the outset of Paul's ministry that the Jew would reject his gospel (Acts xxi. 10), and, at the close of it, that the Gentiles would hear it (xxviii. 28). Paul's earlier epistles strongly insist on this, together with the absolute annulling of the legal system as a ground of relationship with God. At the same time he shows in Romans that though Israel had fallen, and thereby salvation come to the nations, yet they should be grafted in to their own olive tree again, to the great blessing of the world. Meanwhile blindness in part had happened to Israel until the fulness of the nations was brought in. The coming in of the fulness of the nations and the blessing of the world are thus put in strongest contrast.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 173

The setting aside of Judaism and the whole legal system is dealt with fully in the Epistle to the Galatians, which also clearly affirms the new relationships of grace with God and Christ. An example of this was afforded in the person of Paul himself. He had been foremost in Judaism, but God, who had set him apart from his birth, had called him by His grace, and revealed His Son in him, not only as the object of faith, but also as the power of life (Gal. ii. 20, 21). But the Christ who lived in him had been crucified, and had died under the curse of law. Paul therefore had died to law, being crucified with Christ. This was especially true also of believers who had been under law and were obnoxious to its curse, but were redeemed out of it, Christ having become it for them. Justification also comes to the nations in Christ Jesus, and the Spirit is received through faith.

Law, therefore, as a principle of relationship with God is annulled, and the blessing, as well as the inheritance, is established for Jew or Gentile absolutely on the principle of faith. Hagar the bondmaid, typical of the legal system, and her son must be cast out, for the fruit of law, a legal state of soul, can never participate nor inherit with that which is the fruit of heavenly grace, or with those who are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and being of Christ, are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise, prior to law.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians take for granted the rejection of the legal system. The Christian assemblies are addressed as of God in Christ Jesus, whereas the Jews are branded with the mark of Cain, having slain the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and driven out the apostles by persecution. Wrath had come upon them to the uttermost, but Jesus the Son of God, whom the believer awaits from heaven, delivers him from the coming wrath. Heaven is therefore the source of the Christian hope, affording also the glorious display in holiness of that love which works in them to-day. We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. He shall bring us into the Father's house, His own heavenly dwelling-place, while the heathen persecutors, as well as the idolatrous apostates from Christianity and Judaism, shall be destroyed everlastingly from the presence of the Lord.

While declaring the cutting off of the Jew, the Epistle to the Romans also reveals the bringing in of a new race, in which all believers, Jew or Gentile, are partakers, of which Christ is the Head and Source—a race in position and character like Himself, flesh being set aside in death with Him.

These epistles do not, however, develop further this new thing, nor teach what the Church or assembly is as such. This is reserved for the Corinthian epistles, which view the saints as a gathered company on earth and one body, being

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 175

members of Christ. Ephesians and Colossians show them joined to the Head in heaven.

While at Ephesus, or at least in the province of Asia, Paul dictated 1 Corinthians (cf. xv. 32, xvi. 19), and 2 Corinthians after the assault upon him by Demetrius and his fellows (cf. Acts xix. 11 ; 2 Cor. i. 8). Ephesus is thus connected in a very interesting way with Paul as the inspired vessel of the truth of the Church.

Consequently a new character of testimony is opened out in 1 and 2 Corinthians. At the outset the world is set aside by the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, whether it be the Jews seeking signs or Greeks wisdom. But the Christian is of God in Christ, who is made to him wisdom, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption. He is spiritual, and discerns what is spiritual, for the Spirit of God dwells in him, and in the actual Christian company on earth, as His temple. But more, among them is found the Lord's cup and the Lord's table, at which the communion of the blood and of the body of Christ is enjoyed by them, as one loaf, one body. For by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, and the body is not one member but many, yet the body is one. Of this living and divinely articulated spiritual organism, love is the principle and spring of power. The natural body, moreover, mortal and corruptible as it is, shall be raised in glory incorruptible, immortal and

spiritual, suitable to the heavenly treasure that even now is in it. For believers are now heavenly ones, but then shall we bear the image of the heavenly One, the second Man out of heaven.

Therefore we trust in God who raises the dead, and has already established us in Christ, having anointed and sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Thus are we the epistle of Christ, who Himself is the pattern and the power of this, being the contrast of Moses and the law, for the glory of the Lord shines in His unveiled face. Moreover in the gospel the glory of the Christ shines forth, as the image of God, who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Reconciled to God, His righteousness in Christ through Christ made sin, we are of the new creation, and bear the message of reconciliation for others as sons and daughters of the Father.

At Jerusalem the Lord had said to Paul in ecstasy, "Make haste, go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me." At Corinth His message was, "Speak and be not silent . . . for I have much people in this city," demonstrating, as we have seen, the rejection of the Jew and the calling of the Gentile. But now at Ephesus there is no heavenly vision, for the saints themselves are seen in the heavenly places in Christ.

Here, therefore, we are brought to the third epoch or great unfolding of the testimony of

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 177

God, not now merely revealing the new race, or the new-creation order of manhood in an ascended and glorified Christ, but while developing this fully (Philippians in a practical way), Ephesians and Colossians treat especially of the mystery of "Christ and the assembly," which is His body.

Colossians first shows the hope laid up in heaven, and the saints fit already to enter in. The power of darkness that once held them being for ever broken, and sins being forgiven, the Father has translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Then Christ is seen to be Head of the body, the assembly, firstborn of all creation, being in it, and firstborn from the dead having risen out of it, pre-eminent in all things. By His death the saints are reconciled now, and all things will be when the glory is displayed. But as Christ's body, the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations is Christ in them, the hope of glory. They are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power, being quickened together with Him, and the body of the flesh put off by death.

Ordinances, too, have been nailed to the cross, by which man in Christ has earned supremacy above principalities and authorities. For us the old man is also put off and the new put on, renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him; and the body being

ministered to and united together by the joints and bands, increases with the increase of God.

Ephesus shows the saints seated in heavenly places, not merely the hope there. In Christ according to counsel, chosen before the world, they are like Him in relationship to the Father as well as in moral nature, and endowed in Him with the inheritance of the universe. Over this He is supreme Head to the assembly which is His body, and which shares it with Him.

In Colossians the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him. In Ephesians He forms the one new man in Himself. In Colossians the Father has made us meet. In Ephesians we have access to the Father through Christ by one Spirit. Ephesians begins with Christ dead, and we are quickened with Him out of death. In Colossians we put off the flesh in Christ's death, are buried and raised as well as quickened. The cross in Colossians makes peace, and reconciles us so as to be presented suitably before the fulness of the Godhead; by it the handwriting in ordinances is annulled, and principalities and authorities spoiled. In Ephesians the blood brings nigh to God, annuls the law of commandment, makes peace between Jew and Gentile in one new man, both being reconciled in one body to God by the cross. Here also alone the Bride is revealed. Finally in Ephesians there is the putting on the panoply of God: in Colossians the putting on the character of the new man.

How to Read the Bible.

WE generally, I fear, consult the Scriptures too negligently, and reflect on them too superficially, with no greater degree of attention and care than we employ in perusing mere human composures (and I would to God we employed always as much in one case as in the other).

We do not sufficiently consider *who* it is that speaks to us there, nor *what* it is that He says; what weight, what fulness of sense, what excellent variety of matter and wonderful depth of thought there must be in words dictated by, or at least spoken [written] under the overruling influence of Infinite Wisdom. . . .


We dwell on the letter only, on what offers itself to us at the first view; but we do not make ourselves acquainted with the life and spirit of them. And yet for this reason among others, these Holy Writings are left us by God, that we might, as good David speaks, exercise ourselves in them day and night, have perpetual matter for our inquiries into, and improvements in the knowledge of things divine, and DRINK always of these WATERS OF LIFE.

*From Sermons and Discourses of Francis Atterbury, D.D.,
Bishop of Rochester, vol. iii., pp. 53-56, Lond. 1737.*

Sons of your Father.

I.—IMITATORS OF GOD.

(Read Matthew v. 44-48.)

ONDUCT suitable to God's children, and not the way to become His children, is the theme of the Lord Jesus in this passage. "Be ye followers (imitators) of God, as dear children," is the apostle's exhortation in Ephesians v. 1. God sends rain and sunshine both on the wicked and on the good; imitate Him therefore in loving enemies, in doing good and in praying for those who may harm us, thus shall we be proved to be the children (*lit.*, sons) of our Father which is in heaven.

Similarly in Romans viii. 14 we read, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Their walk shows it, their conduct glorifies God. Compare Matthew v. 14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Such conduct would be impossible to any one who is not a child of God; indeed, the relationship of these *sons* with their Father is clearly shown in the very terms that the Lord uses: "That ye may be the sons of *your* Father which is in heaven." But let us not overlook the fact

that the exhortation of the Lord refers, not to the birth, but to the behaviour of God's sons: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Perfect in filial conduct, as imitators of God *to-day*. Do you say this is impossible? Will it be more possible to-morrow, next week, next year? Do you read the passage aright, simply as it is written? Or do you import another sense into it, such as, try to *become* perfect, and hope to become more perfect by degrees? The Lord says, "Be perfect," *not* "become gradually perfect." Growth indeed there should be, growth in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. But growth is not the subject here, nor is there here, or elsewhere in the Scriptures, a question of *attaining* to any perfection half-way from here to heaven. Such an attainment would fall far short of likeness to Christ in glory, and it would add nothing to the perfect acceptance of the believer in God's Beloved, which is the standing of every child of God. Beware, fellow-believer, of any half-way-house perfection. It is not good enough, it is not Christ.

"I want to become better, more Christ-like," is the heartfelt cry of many a pious soul. Give up the former, the desire of *becoming better*, and listen to our Lord's exhortation, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." In practising this perfection day by day, you will indeed grow in the grace and

knowledge of Christ ; and when we see Him, we shall be like Him (1 John iii. 2).

But perhaps you say again : " Does the Lord really mean what He says, '*Be perfect*' ? Am I to be perfect to-day ? " Yes, indeed, the Lord really does mean what He says, and He exhorts us to daily perfection in imitating God in His dealings with men. Do we fail in this ? Indeed we do. What can we do then ? Confess it to God, humble ourselves to Him, learn of Him, and having restoration of soul by means of our Advocate, seek help through our great High Priest to go on in obedience to the exhortation of the Lord Jesus, " Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Is anything less than perfection suitable to the *Father* ? Can any lower conduct be suitable for His sons ? Let us the rather praise God that He has called us to the privilege of such behaviour.

" The privilege of such behaviour," what do you mean ? some one may ask. I mean that only children can behave as children ; or, to take an earthly example, only children of a king can behave in a way suitable to royalty. Great, therefore, is the privilege, in this respect also, of the members of the family of God, of those who are His children (sons) by faith in Christ Jesus.

To conclude, I will add just a word as to the Father's name. We may notice that the Lord did not say in the Sermon on the Mount, "*My*

Father *and your* Father" (John xx. 17); that revelation was only made after His resurrection, but the Father is the same Father, though our relationship with Christ as His brethren was not revealed in Matthew. Compare John xvii. 26, "*I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.*"

F. M. H.

Epistle to the Romans.

FROM chapter xiv. 1 to xv. 7 another matter of great practical importance is treated, and a variety of principles of daily application are inculcated.

Mutual forbearance with one another is enjoined in all matters where conscience is concerned. There should be the avoidance of all that would produce needless discussion (ver. 1), a judging spirit (ver. 2-12), or that would be a stumbling-block to our brother (ver. 13); all should aim at that which makes for peace and edification, ever keeping the example of the Lord Jesus Christ before the eye (xiv. 17-xv. 7).

"Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation" (ver. 1)—that is, not for the disputing about doubtful or unsettled points. There was no doubt some difference of judgment amongst Jewish and Gentile believers

upon such matters as the observance of days and the eating of meats. The Jew had been trained up from infancy to observe certain days and to abstain from certain meats upon religious grounds. The Gentile, freed from all such trammels of conscience, was in danger of despising him for such scruples. On the other hand, the Jew was apt to judge the Gentile believer for what he considered laxity (see Acts xv.). Both were wrong.

In all matters of conscience it is with God we have to do directly and not with man. "To his own master he standeth or falleth," and, thank God, it is added, "Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." It is beautiful to see how the highest motive is here imputed both to the eater and to the one who eats not. Each is supposed to act with direct reference to God, seeking to do His will and giving Him thanks. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Further acquaintance with Scripture and increasing light from God may make clear to-morrow what to-day seems doubtful.

At any rate, let us not judge one another, as we are so apt to do; leave all such matters to be decided at the judgment-seat of Christ. It is most instructive to observe the different manner in which the same apostle is led to apply the solemn truth of the judgment-seat of Christ in Romans and Corinthians. In Romans the saints

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

185

were in danger of judging *one another*, and they are exhorted not to do so, for the simple reason that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Whereas in Corinthians it is used as a reason why we should judge *ourselves* now, for we must all appear then.

In any case the saint should remember that, whether living or dying, he is the Lord's. Christ who died and rose is Lord both of the dead and living. He it is that has a claim upon the allegiance and obedience of the believer, and none should seek to usurp His place, least of all those who are the most intelligent.

In matters such as those treated of in this chapter, which might be called ceremonial rather than moral and doctrinal, free scope must be given to conscience, and above all let no one put a stumbling-block or occasion to fall in his brother's way (vers. 13-23).

The apostle himself had no uncertain judgment as to the question of meats. In itself nothing was unclean, of this he was persuaded, and that by the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless if any had a conscience as to certain meats (Lev. xi.), "to him it is unclean," and the spirit of Christian charity would lead the strong to consider the weak.

Some may feel a difficulty as to verse 15. How, it may be asked, can a brother be destroyed? Certainly he cannot be in the sense of being lost; and yet, so far as the *conscience* of the

weak brother is concerned, he is brought under condemnation if he violates it by eating when doubtful as to its being the will of God. One may with clear conscience before God eat meat or drink wine (of course not to excess); but if this leads another to do it who has a conscience troubled about it, the tendency of the action on the part of the first is to destroy the other. But we ought rather to edify one another. "It is good, therefore, neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth," &c. For we should seek the Kingdom of God, and this is not a question of meat and drink, but of the far weightier matters of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

It makes a great difference whether it be a question of the scruples of a weak brother's conscience or the determined legality of false teachers. If the latter, the inspired communications by the same apostle leave no room for doubt (see Galatians and Colossians), and no quarter is to be given. If the observance of days and the question of taking flesh and wine be sought to be enforced on the principle of legal bondage, it is a return to the weak and beggarly elements of the law, and thus undermines the whole gospel of the grace of God. It must be resisted with firmness.

Doubtless great wisdom will be needed to discern between "the infirmities of the weak"

and the inroads of legalism. But this will be given if Christ be the object before the soul.

We are exhorted, then, to receive one another, not because all have attained to a certain standard of intelligence, but as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Christ's own example is set before us in our dealings one with the other (xv. 1-8). How far do we not come short of it!

The Antichrist.

THE Antichrist (1 John ii. 18), the man of sin (2 Thess. ii. 3), the king that shall do according to his own will (Dan. vi. 36)—all different titles of the same individual—and his confederacy with the last head of the Roman Empire, is a subject of prophecy even as the true Messiah. Not merely does Scripture present him in his moral characteristics, but as an absolute individuality.

It was necessary in the fulfilment of Scripture for the true Christ to be presented and rejected by His people the Jews, before the false could be presented and accepted (John v. 43). There must be a true before a counterfeit. Prophetic chronology concerning this dual confederacy of evil under Satanic control (compare Rev. xiii. 2,

11) makes no mistake; its language is clear and conclusive. There is a prophetic time given for their career, however much the Lord may be pleased to cut it short in righteous judgment for the deliverance of His persecuted remnant (Matt. xxiv. 22).

With these few prefatory remarks, let us turn to Scripture. First, when does this career commence? Daniel ix. 27 furnishes the answer. We must not confound "the people of the prince that shall come" of verse 26, with the "he" of verse 27. The people of the prince that shall come were to destroy the city and the sanctuary. This they did subsequent to the Messiah being cut off. It was God's government upon those who rejected Him, as shown by the Lord in Matthew xxii. 7. The Romans under Titus were the instruments of this, and from thence wars and desolations continue. But the coming of the prince of Daniel ix. 26, the "he" of verse 27, is still future.

Doubtless, most who study the subject are clear as to this. Why then should there be difficulty about the one week distinguished from the rest in the seventy weeks determined upon Daniel's people, &c.? Has anything happened in the history to show that this singular prophetic period has commenced? A careful study of this remarkable prophecy necessarily leads us to a conclusion in the negative. The sixty-nine have been fulfilled in the cutting off of Messiah, the

Prince* (see vers. 25, 26), but the one week has particularly to do with the "he" of verse 27. We read, "And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the overspreading (wing) of abominations, there shall be a desolator, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (we quote from a more literal rendering of the passage). It is therefore evident from the way the prophet brings before us this isolated week, that its fulfilment is immediately connected with this evil man whom we identify as the first beast of Revelation xiii., the last imperial head of Rome, with whom Antichrist, the false King of the Jews, the false prophet, the worker of miracles under Satanic power, will be in confederacy.

In the midst of the week he breaks covenant with the Jews. This covenant, we observe, he makes for one week. This is the only mention we get of the one week in so definite a way. This breach of covenant is doubtless referred to in Psalm lv. 20, 21, although Judas may be fore-shown in previous verses of the Psalm (see vers. 12, 13, 14), for the treatment of Christ in His day answers very much to what the persecuted

* It is scarcely correct to say that "sixty-nine weeks have been fulfilled *in* the cutting off," &c. The verse says, "*After* the three score and two weeks," &c., but how long after is not stated.—ED.

190 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

remnant will have to endure in that day ; and verses 20, 21 is the waking up of that remnant to his deceptions.

Now it is clear that the book of Revelation notices specially the fulfilment of the last half of the week, but the apostasy of Christendom is to be consummated too, and this, after the removal of the Church (2 Thess. ii. 3). With the removal of the Church a resumption of prophetic events takes place, perhaps not necessarily immediately, but certainly events will go on which culminate in the coming "of the man of sin, the Antichrist." It is clear from the Psalms that two characteristics show themselves in this man, viz., deceit and violence. May we not say that he gains his position by the former, after which he develops the latter ? Time will be occupied in his gaining the summit of his power, time in which to mature his plans ; when these are matured he will throw off the mask. Joining affinity with the first beast of Revelation xiii., his sway for the aggrandisement of that beast (whom we have referred to as the prince of Daniel ix. 26, the "he" of verse 27) will be fully recognised, both by the infidel section of the Jews, and the ten kings who give their power and honour to the first beast.

This will be the signal for the judgment of the Mother of Harlots (see Rev. xvii. and xviii.), that the name of Christianity may be stamped out of the earth. For God will put it into their

THE ANTICHRIST.

191

hearts to fulfil His will, it is His governmental act upon the corrupt religious system, false to the name of Christ, and which has been spued out of His mouth. She receives her doom at their hands, although it is the judgment of God. It is then that this Satan incarnate, in conjunction with the Roman imperial head (for it is the culminating point of the first man's sinful history under Satanic control), assumes the position and character foretold in 2 Thessalonians ii. 3, 4, 9, 10. A remarkable type of this confederacy is found in the fact of Pilate and Herod shaking hands on the day when the true Messiah was cut off. It is then that the zenith of his career is reached, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. He sets up the "abomination of desolation" in the holy place, and becomes for the time being, with his confederate, a wing of protection to all who bow to it. This, we presume, takes place in the midst of the week ; and under the evil rule of this confederacy, the covenant made by the Roman prince with the Jews being "broken," the faithful remnant whose eyes will be open to the "delusion," refusing to bow, like the three Hebrew captives in the beginning of the Gentile supremacy (see Dan. iii.), are subjected to unprecedented tribulation, described by Jeremiah in chapter xxx. 5-7. The period is marked in Revelation xi. ; the court of the temple and the holy city, given to the Gentiles, is trodden under

foot forty and two months (ver. 2). The Lord points His disciples to this period of the great tribulation in Matthew xxiv. 15-22, and gives instructions which will be useful to the remnant of those days. Some will be slain ; others, . . . protected by divine providence and intervention, will be delivered from the power of Antichrist and the Roman beast ("wild beast") by the coming of the true Messiah from heaven (see Rev. xix. 11 to end). Satan is then taken, shut up in the abyss, and the universal sway of the Son of man commences. We would remark that this generation of apostate Jews, headed by the false prophet, the Antichrist, is clearly set forth in the gospels, both by the Lord's own teaching, and the personal treatment He received from those who rejected Him. The Psalms, too, clearly point to them.*

So ends the short but evil career of the second beast ("wild beast") of Revelation xiii., the Antichrist, and his confederate, the first beast, the Roman imperial head. Daniel ix. 26, 27, forecasts the latter ; chapter xi. 36-39, the former.

Let it be repeated that the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy has to do with the career of these two men. As to the three and a half years of Christ's personal ministry being a fulfilment of the first half of the week, to accord with

* A solemn sequel to their acceptance of Cæsar as their king before Pilate, at the mock trial of Jesus (John xix. 15).

the last half specially noted in Revelation, Scripture is silent upon it ; it may form a kind of moral link in the chain, but prophetic chronology is clear.

H. L.

“Take no Thought for the Morrow.”

WHO knows? God knows : and what He knows
Is well and best.
The darkness hideth not from Him, but glows
Clear as the morning or the evening rose
Of east or west.

Wherefore man's strength is to sit still :
Not wasting care
To antedate to-morrow's good or ill ;
Yet watching meekly, watching with good will,
Watching to prayer.

Some rising or some setting ray
From east or west,
If not to-day, why then another day,
Will light each dove upon the homeward way
Safe to her nest.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

Correspondence.

Inquiry as to Authorship of “Notes on the Apocalypse.”

YES, the book is J. N. D.'s. They are notes taken at some of his first lectures on the subject, about 1848. They were given in French, before

194 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

he was thoroughly at home in the language, which accounts for their somewhat fragmentary style.

Most valuable they are, but in later years his thoughts became clearer, and upon this point I have a note taken at the Torquay Conference in 1868.

In the footnote to page 53, he leads you to think that the two witnesses prophesied during the first half of the week. But my notes (twenty-eight years afterwards) say, "Forty-two months is only half a week; also, the third verse would have to come before the second if it were a whole week. The first half-week he flatters, &c. —*for us*, the half-week has passed with Christ, His ministry—Antichrist will make out that it has not. In the first half-week the remnant received Christ, and the nation didn't—in the spurious half-week the nation will receive Antichrist, and the remnant won't."

This seems clear, and says all that need or can be said on the point.

Meetings for Prayer.

It is with unfeigned joy that we received from America a printed appeal for earnest and united prayer sent forth by some gatherings of the Lord's people. We give a few extracts from our correspondent's letter which accompanied

this printed notice:—"We are holding two special prayer meetings each week besides our regular meeting—one on Lord's Day evenings before the reading meeting, and one on Monday evening at the homes of the saints—for special prayer to God. We realise that God is our only resource, and surely an effectual resource. We have no gift here in C——, but, *thank God, it needs no gift to pray.* The earnest yearning of our hearts is that God in His mighty power would visit this dark land, completely given up as it is to money-making and pleasure, and do a work worthy of Himself. We crave your prayers . . . for us in our need."

The reading of the printed notice at several prayer meetings on this side has awakened a great spirit of intercession and fellowship. May the Lord increase it a thousandfold! ED.



Fragments.

WHAT we find written in the Psalms is primarily connected with the Jews or the Lord Jesus Himself, and particularly as Messiah. They have a special reference to the godly remnant in the latter day. Many of their expressions wholly belong to the Jews, and cannot be used by the Church. Hence the true solution of

those passages which have been such a terrible stumbling to Christians not seeing this.

The saints of the present dispensation cannot rightly be looking for the destruction of their enemies as a way of escape from their sorrows. But in the time of trouble, such as never has been, that is to come, it will be quite proper for the suffering Jews to look for judgment as a way of deliverance. They are God's promises, and *what their hope rests upon*. But the Church looks to be caught up, and escape from sorrow by being with the Lord in the heavens, whilst it is quite true that she has His sympathy in her sorrow down here. The Psalms are chiefly occupied with the suffering of the soul, and the sorrows of the godly Jewish remnant, and God coming in judgment as their deliverer, by the execution of vengeance on all their foes.

I DON'T know what there is to my soul to find in every point to which the Spirit of God brings me, if it is not the Lord Jesus Christ which is the first thought. It is only when the heart has been brought under the yoke with Him that one gets full of confidence in His love ; and only as far as He fills the first place that we have the thoughts of the Spirit of God in anything.

G. V. W.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 197

Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

CHAP. I.—THE COUNSELS OF GOD.

IN considering this epistle it is well to observe that the first fourteen verses of chapter i. set before us the counsels of God regarding the saints; then, after a prayer for their spiritual knowledge of Christ, the apostle states the quickening and creative work of God for the effectuating of these counsels. This is continued in chapter ii. 10. The remainder of chapter ii. speaks of the same accomplishment of counsel, but now viewed as that which is done by Christ. The Spirit's especial part, as the power of access to the Father, and of building the saints together for a habitation of God, concludes the passage. It is the Genesis of the new creation.

Chapter iii. opens with Paul's declaration of his share in the work, inasmuch as an administration had been committed to him of the mystery of Christ. He was commissioned to call out the nations to participate in this joint heirship and body. As Moses led the exodus of Israel from Egypt, so the apostle announces his divine credentials and mission for a heavenly exodus, according to God's eternal purpose (vers. 1-11).

XLIV.

However, as yet it is but the administration of the mystery revealed to the apostle, and made known by him to us. We await the day of display ; nevertheless we already have boldness and access to God, not merely priestly, as Aaron's was, but according to the purpose of the ages, and in Christ Jesus our Lord (ver. 12). This is our Leviticus.

But if we draw near in such intimacy and grace, it has its answer in tribulation in the world (ver. 13). Such is the invariable and necessary history of Christian walk, and forms the new-creation book of Numbers.

The rest of chapter iii. gives the apostle's survey, like Moses' from the top of Pisgah, of the whole heavenly glory and inheritance, as seen by the heart of Christ for all His saints, to be realised for the glory of God. It is our Deuteronomy, and completes the new-creation Pentateuch.

In chapter iv. 1-16 we have our "Joshua," and see the Captain of the Lord's host in the glory of His victory. But not alone is Christ personally supreme ; the body is part of Himself, and derives all absolutely from Him ; being, moreover, one with Him, in the unity of association, as His bride (vers. 23-33).

Finally, in chapter vi. 10-19 the responsibility is insisted on of putting on the panoply of God, in order to withstand the spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies. This corresponds with

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 199

Israel's conflict with the Canaanites, and in the history of the Church has often found a counterpart in "Judges."

Let us now return to look at chapter i. more minutely. The apostle addresses the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus in his customary way, wishing them grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, but is immediately rapt by the spirit of worship into heavenly scenes and spiritual and eternal things. As in inditing 2 Corinthians and Colossians, he is filled, like Peter in his first epistle, with the sense of the preciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ to His God and Father. That we should know Him as *our* Father is blessed indeed, but it is incomparably so to apprehend in any measure of communion what His own Son is to Him. Nor is this too high and glorious for us to share, but on the contrary is necessary to the proper understanding of this epistle; for it is "in Him" we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.

As before remarked, the subject here is the new creation, and, in contrast with the six days' work, it begins with the man of the eternal counsel. In the first creation the man came last, the heavens and the earth being first created and formed. But in the new creation the man is first formed, while the proper scene of his existence, the new heavens and the new earth, have afterwards to be introduced.

So here the character of the man takes precedence of all else in the mind of the Spirit. It is that of Christ Himself, and of us also as chosen in Him before the world's foundation, that we should not merely exist as Adam did, by virtue of creative power, but be holy and blameless before Him in love. This is His own personal perfection of manhood which made the sacrifice of Himself ineffably acceptable (Heb. ix. 14) as well as efficacious (1 Pet. i. 19), a character foreknown before the foundation of the world ; and as we share the character (cf. Col. i. 22 ; Jude 24 ; Eph. v. 27), so are we before the Father in His love of complacency in it. He sees in manhood before Him that which answers perfectly to Himself in moral character and nature, and is according to the standard set up in His beloved Son become man.

The man's relationship to Himself now follows as of all importance. This also was not simply that of a creature with the Creator, though we ever remain creatures, but He marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself. It was not formed, nor could it be, by creation, but eternally sonship existed in the Son, through whom we are brought into it. Only in Him could the Father see what was according to the good pleasure of His will ; and in Him, the Beloved, has He taken us into favour.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 201

A third subject, for the man is greater than his property, is now presented to us, namely, the inheritance. The grace that bestows it is the same that forgives us our offences—a redemption through His blood which takes its character from the Beloved, in whom we have it. Redemption therefore forms the link of the Heir with the inheritance. The mystery of the Father's will, according to His good pleasure, was to head up all things in the Christ through redemption. The Heir was not to possess only an unfallen world, and certainly not a sinful and corrupt one, nor in His own personal title as Creator and Son merely, but all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, were to be gathered under His headship through redemption; so that we also might obtain an inheritance in Him, as wide as the universe, established abidingly in blessing. Infernal beings (Phil. ii. 10) are not in question here.

Then shall we be to the *praise* of His glory, whether Jewish or Gentile believers, even as it is to the *praise* of the glory of His grace that He has marked us out for adoption. Redemption (here forgiveness) is according to the riches of His grace, because it is already accomplished and for our hearts to value, whereas sonship and the inheritance are particularly in view of the day of display yet future, when all shall redound to His praise, though sonship is also

of grace as a present fact, He having already taken us into favour in the Beloved.

To complete the statement of these counsels of grace and glory, the Holy Spirit of promise is declared to be the sealing of the person and the earnest of the inheritance ; thus connecting us already in divine power with the Man and His possession, as existing in the thoughts of God, though we await the moment of its redemption to enjoy that realm of glory which already is acquired.

All that relates to this new-creation Man is fully realised on our behalf now in the blessed person of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and the apostle therefore prays that his God, the Father of glory, would so give us to know Him, that we might understand the hope in which God has called us. Of His inheritance, too, though not yet entered on, our souls may joyfully anticipate the riches of the glory, for "in us" He will possess it.

But more, the needed power to perform His purpose is in exercise towards us in surpassing greatness, so that it is no longer a question of counsel merely but of effectuation. But this power has already been exerted in the Christ, so as to include and ensure the perfected results according to purpose in the case of every one who believes. For He has raised Christ from among the dead ; and He set Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

supreme in the universe, both now and hereafter, putting all things under His feet. But in setting Him thus in headship over all things it is not without His body, the Assembly, which is the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

Here, then, opens a fresh subject, namely, the actual work of God in this new creation, as distinct from counsels merely, as well as from the inaugurating act in Christ, the great Exemplar and Head to the Assembly. Of this the following chapter treats.



"My Servant."



WHEN we read in Revelation iv. 11 that God created all things, and that for His pleasure they are and were created, we can but feel, as we look around and see indifference to God and His claims—man living to please and gratify himself, if not in open hatred and rebellion against God—how in all ways man has failed to answer to the purpose for which he was created. From the fall to the present day, when God looks down on man, what does He see? In the words of Romans iii. 11, 12: "There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable."

Was then God's purpose in the creation of man for His pleasure to fail of its accomplishment? Blessed be God! no. There was One, who in coming into this world said, "Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God " (Ps. xl. 7, 8).

In Him God was "well pleased"; words spoken of Him by God at the beginning of His ministry when baptized of John (Mark i. 11), and again towards the close of that blessed pathway of obedience on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5).

But God's delight in Jesus and His service in perfect obedience is so infinite, that He cannot, as it were, refrain from telling us, who know Him, of it; and in His amazing grace calling us to share with Him in that delight. Turn to Isaiah xlii., and let our hearts dwell on the blessed Object of God's good pleasure, "Behold My Servant." Had we become servants to sin and Satan instead of to God? Alas! yes. "All gone out of the way ;" and so for God's purpose in man to be accomplished His Son takes man's place—the servant's place.

What a contrast to the first man is this perfect Second Man! Of Him God says, "Behold My Servant." There is One to whom God can point our hearts, because He has found satisfaction—infinite satisfaction—in Him. Not one flaw in the pathway of perfect obedience, but always saying and doing what pleased God, "I do

always those things that please Him" (John viii. 29). And mark that all this blessed service was in perfect acquaintance with, and subjection to, the will of God. His ears were opened (Ps. xl. 6). This verse is speaking of Christ becoming incarnate (not as having his ear bored to the door, which was done when He was crucified, and became a servant for ever) for Hebrews x. 5 interprets it, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." But the opening of His ears was also a daily thing throughout His pathway: "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learner." What alertness in learning the will of His God! What perfect subjection in carrying it out at all cost to Himself! "The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (Isa. l. 5, 6).

What a lesson to us all this is! How often in our desire to serve God we do what we think is pleasing to Him and serving Him, when it is only our own will. Oh! for the opened ear morning by morning to learn His will for us, and for the obedience of Christ in carrying it out. We have been sanctified unto the "obedience . . . of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2). Let us, then, beloved fellow-believers, have the Lord Jesus Himself before us, for He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Let our service,

and by this I do not mean only ministry, whether to the saints or in the gospel, but the daily service of our lives, be it in small things or in great, as men speak—I say, let our service flow from a knowledge of our Father's will gained by the ear opened to hear it, and from a heart that delights in doing that will by reason of its being engaged with, and knit to the One who found in it His meat and drink. God would have it thus with us, and so presents Christ to our eyes saying, "Behold My Servant whom I uphold: Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth." If, then, our eye be single for Christ, our whole body shall be full of light, and we shall understand what the will of the Lord is. Can we indeed behold God's chosen One, the whole delight of His soul, without being knit to Him? How beautiful to hear this telling out of the delight of God in His Servant that you and I might find our delight in Him too.

John's heart was engaged in rapture with Him when He said, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John i. 36). It was with no thought of preaching or even of testimony there, I believe, but the expression of a satisfied heart; nevertheless it was a blessed testimony, and the effect of it was seen in that the two disciples which heard John speak "followed Jesus."

In Isaiah xlii., God, after giving expression to His soul's joy in His servant, goes on to speak of His service, a service not calculated to make

a stir in the world in one sense. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." It was not a service to catch the popular fancy, but a service carried out in grace and tenderness, and yet with unflinching steadfastness and power. A bruised reed He would not break, nor quench the smoking flax, but He "shall bring forth judgment unto truth." Till everything contrary to the mind of God is judged and set aside, till "all things" are reconciled to God by Him (Col. i. 20), there could be no possibility of failure nor turning back.

Of "My Servant" God could say with unhesitating certainty, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." No, not even the rejection of His Person and ministry by His own, who received Him not, turned Him back or discouraged Him. Look at Jesus in Matthew xi., where He has to upbraid the cities wherein His mighty works had been done. Does He give all up and leave Israel and the world sunk in all their wretchedness and sin? No, He "*at that time*" said, "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." Thank God, there were, yea, there are, the babes to whom these things could be revealed. But how could the Lord thank the Father at such a time of apparent failure of His ministry? "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." It was good in the Father's sight, and

that was enough for the subject Servant, whose only delight was in what pleased the Father.

But, I repeat, does He give up, and ask that the "gates of righteousness" might be opened to Him to go back, as He might have done, alone into the glory which He had before the world was, leaving man in his helplessness and sin? Ah! no. His obedience did not stop short of death itself, for "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Having taken upon Him "the form of a Servant," He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." His obedience being perfected in death, as risen from among the dead He can now say, "Open to Me the gates of righteousness . . . this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous (or righteous ones) shall enter" (Ps. cxviii. 19, 20). Again, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii. 4).

What blessed and abundant fruits of the service of Christ and the travail of His soul! A company of righteous ones sanctified according to the will of God, and fitted for His presence; and if we glance into the future, we see all things reconciled to God by Him.

Nor is this all. Christ's service does not even end at the cross. Having finished on earth the work God gave Him to do, He might have gone out free; but in the words of Exodus xxi. 5, He

"MY SERVANT."

209

said, "I love My Master, My wife, and My children ; I will not go out free." The perfect Servant did not find His Master's service irksome ; it was His delight—His meat and His drink. He loved His Master, and so at the cross His ear was bored, and He became a Servant "for ever."

But just as the accomplishing the will of God in His service on earth had as a part of that will the sanctification of a people to God, so His present and His eternal service to God takes account of those whom He has thus sanctified.

In John xiii. with what infinite tenderness and grace do we find Jesus serving His people, washing their feet soiled in the pathway through this defiling scene, and so fitting them for communion and worship to the glory of God and the joy of His heart.

In Luke xii. 37 we get the service of Jesus in eternity, ever ministering to the joy and satisfaction of His people, making known to them all the fatness and pleasures of the Father's house, and the fulness of the Father's love, thus causing ceaseless songs of adoration and worship to ascend to the glory of His God for ever and ever.

Well indeed may our hearts then dwell on the words, "Behold My Servant whom I uphold : Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth."


"O fix our earnest gaze,
So wholly, Lord, on Thee,
That with Thy beauty occupied,
We elsewhere none may see."

W. H. S. F.

Sons of your Father.

II.—THY FATHER WILL REWARD THEE.

(Read Matthew vi. 1-18.)

 LMS, prayer, and fasting form the three-fold cord of a Christian's hidden life.

Alms, manward; prayer, Godward; fasting, selfward—all under the Father's eye, the Father's ear; and all when done according to the Son's teaching receive the Father's reward. They must be done for Him "in secret," not for man to see and applaud. Whose approbation do we seek, beloved? Then again, if the Father's approval be our delight, we shall not be discouraged by the conduct of others, for the mainspring of our life will be Christ, and the Father's reward will encourage us.

In Titus ii. 12, also, Christian life faces three ways,—the grace of God teaches believers how to live, viz., "soberly," as concerning one's self; "righteously," toward men; and "godly," toward God.

Like three strains of a cord they are twisted together, by "the grace of God that has appeared," and by "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Alms.—Men are the recipients, but alms should not be done merely for the sake of men

who need them. "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices *God* is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16). Compare Philippians iv. 18 and 1 John iii. 17, where the spring of brotherly help must be the love of God. Note also Galatians vi. 10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Neither the public subscription list, nor attaching the founder's name to a so-called work or cause, or to a building or institution, can rank among alms given *in secret*, so that the left hand knows not what the right hand does. Beware lest the Lord should say of any of us, "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

"How much to give," can only be settled by each one before the Lord. The Scripture gives various rules and examples, some of which apply to all believers, others more especially to the rich or to the poor. Let us turn to a few passages. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). Not merely once a year or once a month, but as each "first day of the week" finds us still on earth, our privilege is to set apart for communication to others, as God has made us to prosper.* Unex-

* It is well to observe that this passage refers to a special collection for the needs of the poor saints at Jerusalem. The Apostle did not wish that there should

pected economies, salaries and receipts of all natures, go to make up the total. We should not wait to see if we have anything left over at the end of the week before we give, but as Israel began by setting apart the tithes for the Levites, so we should begin the week by "alms." "The willing mind" (2 Cor. viii. 12) is what God specially appreciates, while the Lord Jesus Himself, "who for our sakes became poor," is the wondrous model proposed to us by the Holy Spirit (verse 9 of same).

Rich believers have their own special exhortation in 1 Timothy vi. 17-19.

Poor saints have a precious example in the widow who cast two mites into God's treasury (Luke xxi. 1-4). She had the Lord's approval.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," are the words of the Lord Jesus. They teach us to labour—not only for our own needs, but also—to support the weak (Acts xx. 35).

Dependence and waiting upon God for wisdom are necessary so that the giver be guided aright in his gifts. Unless such be the case, needs may be overlooked because unknown, and

be a sudden or hasty gathering when he himself visited Corinth, but that rather there should be a continued exercise of heart on the part of these Gentile believers on the behalf of their Jewish brethren. No means better suited to keep up this Christian sympathy, and no day more fitting than the first of the week, when the hearts of the saints overflow with thanksgiving in the sense of the Lord's goodness to them.—ED.

sometimes certain needs may be met in such a way as to damage or hinder the soul of the receiver. Believers, alas! at times fall into the habits of men and leave God out, or nearly so, when human knowledge and wisdom seem to suffice.

How different that is to the teaching of Christ in these verses, how continually He links all with the Father. "Thy Father which seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly."

Prayer.—In the prayer the Lord Jesus here teaches His disciples, we have (it is needless to say) a prayer perfectly suitable for them at the time and very full of precious teaching for us. Only *sons* could pray in such terms, for the prayer is addressed to the *Father*. It is short, simple, and full, if we bear in mind that redemption was not yet accomplished when the Lord Jesus gave it. God's glory is the subject of the first three petitions, and the believer's needs come afterwards. Christ who ever sought the Father's glory, ascribes the kingdom to the Father, though He Himself will reign in it on the Father's behalf.

Let us take up each petition shortly.

"*Our Father which art in heaven.*" Though it be an individual prayer for the privacy of the closet (see vers. 5 and 6), the plural form "our" is used; it links all the other sons with the one who prays. "Father" is the precious relationship name which the *Son* alone could declare,

and which the disciples at that time could grasp little if at all. "Which art in heaven" leads the heart away from this scene to the Father's place on high, which the Son had left for a while that He might do the Father's will on earth.

"Hallowed be Thy name." Perhaps the first commandment of the law given by Moses—"I am the LORD thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. xx. 3)—may help us to understand the import of this petition. God alone acknowledged, served, glorified; no other name allowed beside His.

"Thy kingdom come." Compare chapter xiii. 43. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Also chapter xxvi. 29, "When I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." It is the coming time when Christ will have His disciples with Him; and when He will reign in glory and all be subdued unto Him.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This, like the first petition, is partially verified now in the hearts of the children (sons) of the kingdom (see chap. xiii. 38); it will be verified on a larger scale during Christ's glorious reign, and will be fulfilled when "God is all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 25-28).

"Give us this day our daily bread." Daily dependence for daily food is the lesson taught here. We are not to desire stores and reserves for future needs, but only the necessary provision

for each day. God will give the suitable answer. He will bestow whatever He finds fitting for each, and He will encourage us to trust Him daily till our pilgrimage is over.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." This conditional forgiveness is clearly laid down by the Lord in the verses which immediately follow the prayer. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." I hear some one asking: "How is this? I thought our forgiveness depended on Christ's blood 'shed for many for the remission of sins'" (chap. xxvi. 28). That is so indeed; yet (it is needless to say) both statements are true, for both are Scripture, both indeed from the Lord's own mouth. There is no contradiction in them. Our petition is based on God's governmental dealings with His sons, and is stated in terms suited to a time when redemption was not yet accomplished. Certain parables of the kingdom of heaven present this governmental side of God's ways, as in chapter xviii. 23-25. We need to bear this in mind, for God disciplines His sons (Heb. xii. 7), to make them partakers of His holiness. In Ephesians iv. 32 we read, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us." Doubtless you find this exhortation more suitable for those who have believed

216 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

the "gospel of the grace of God." Let us profit by it, beloved brethren, and we shall not fall under the edge of God's government in this respect. Some of the Corinthians were weak and sickly, and some had been put to sleep; the object of the Lord's chastening always is, "that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 30-32).

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." If we are humble-minded, distrustful of ourselves, we shall desire to be kept from trial, to be sheltered and delivered from the onsets of the devil and from any or all the evil which surrounds us. Self-confidence was the cause of Peter's fall (chap. xxvi. 33-35). When God sees fit to allow temptation (1 Cor. x. 13), He remains ever faithful; He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The Church at Philadelphia had little strength, but there was faithfulness, so the Lord promised to keep it from the coming hour of temptation (Rev. iii. 8, 10). Let us imitate that Church.

Then follows a beautiful doxology, which mistaken piety seems to have added in a few old MSS., but it did not form part of the prayer that the Lord taught His disciples.

Our private prayers may be long, if we have many persons and matters at heart, but each petition will be short if we remember that "your

Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him" (ver. 8). The object of prayer is not to give information to God, but rather to wait upon Him in childlike confidence and formulate our desires and needs according to the teaching of the Word.

We might add that believers pray by the Holy Spirit (Jude 20), but our purpose is not to give a full exposition of this precious subject; we desire only to draw attention to some of the lessons the Lord Jesus teaches in these verses.

Fasting.—While the Lord Jesus was with them the disciples did not fast, but said He, "when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast" (chap. ix. 14, 15). Fasting is therefore suitable for the time of Christ's absence, or the present dispensation of the kingdom of heaven.

Fasting lessens bodily strength for a while, and thus weakens a prop on which self-confidence easily leans. If practised without prayer, spiritual pride might result from it; but in the Word prayer is joined with it. Compare Matthew xvii. 21; Acts xiii. 1-3, &c. Self-judgment, soberness, and keeping the body under, are all helped by occasional fasting accompanied by prayer. In the two passages of Scripture referred to, fasting and prayer are in connection with the Lord's service.

Fasting is entire, or even partial, abstinence from food for a while, and should be done in

moderation, not for one's own glory or advantage, but with a single eye to the Lord's glory. "And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." We should therefore have at heart to please God in it. That is the key or secret to fasting properly.*

F. M. H.

Ahab, Obadiah, Elijah.

(1 Kings xvi. 28-xviii.)

HOW striking is the difference in the characters of these three men! How deep, too, are the lessons to be learned in the history God has been pleased to give us of each of them!

* Do not all Christians who seek to serve the Lord, whether in the gospel, or in the edification one of another, fast to a certain extent? In the world the heaviest meal is reserved to the close of the day, and is often a time for self-indulgence; but amongst Christians who are actively engaged in the Lord's interests this is not so, for who could freely preach or pray when rising from a heavy meal. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things" (1 Cor. ix. 25).

Then, too, faithfulness to the Lord in this evil world has often led to fasting, not as a voluntary exercise, but as a matter of compulsion through persecution or abounding zeal for Christ's glory. This was pre-eminently seen in the case of the apostles (2 Cor. vi. 5, xi. 27), also in the history of the martyrs, as well as in more recent times, as some now alive can testify.—ED.

The first has the unenviable testimony attached to him that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him." Furthermore it is stated, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did *sell himself* to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up" (1 Kings xxi. 25).

Reckless disobedience to the expressed will of God is marked in this King of Israel. Deliberately to marry so pronounced an unbeliever when the Lord had commanded, "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them," &c. (Deut. vii. 3), reveals an apostate condition. The things of God had but a small place in Ahab's heart. Worldly things occupied him. To fare sumptuously every day was his aim, and Naboth's vineyard must come into his covetous hand even at the cost of the faithful one's life. It was here that his wife Jezebel gained so great a power for evil in Israel. Think for a moment of the wife of a King of Israel spreading a table at which 850 false prophets were continually fed! Prophets who worshipped an idol and taught the people of God to do so! Here is to be discovered a striking resemblance to Popery (and "these things were written for our learning"):

Jezebel the religious power controlling the civil power (Rev. iii., xvii.).

What Popery has been, still is, and will be cannot be gainsaid, and that which is determined upon will be accomplished as shown in Revelation xvii. 3: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy." Just as a rider controls a horse upon which he sits, so Popery will, as might be expected, get the upper hand later on of the civil power.

But the wickedness then rampant in Israel could not be allowed to continue without God's voice being heard. Who can He use to warn and to rebuke Ahab? It is serious to reflect that not a stone is left unturned by our common enemy to make us unfit for the service of God, to place us on the retired list. Noah's drunkenness doubtless unfitted him for service that he might have rendered during the period which followed the Deluge.

How is it possible to admonish others if in ourselves we are allowing the very things which we might be called upon to condemn in our hearers. This comes out in the case of

OBADIAH.

He is in the house of Ahab, holding the position of "governor" (steward, perhaps), and too

much afraid to speak to the king of his terrible defection—very much afraid, too, of losing his own life, as comes out at his meeting with Elijah: “And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am: go, and tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.” To this Obadiah replies: “As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee. . . . And now thou sayest, Go, tell my lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me; but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did?” (1 Kings xviii. 7-12).

No doubt in some things Obadiah is not without his good qualities, but certain it is that in view of the apostate state of things by which he was surrounded, he is like the salt that has lost its savour, or as is the case with many others, the light is useless because under a bushel. Between Obadiah and Elijah is a moral distance and no fellowship. How could there be joys in common? Neither does it help to raise Obadiah in one's esteem that he recounts his good deeds. Depend upon it, this is no good sign. “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own

mouth ; a stranger, and not thine own lips " (Prov. xxvii. 2).

How different was it in Elijah's case—with Moses, too, who, after being with God in the mount, "*wist not* that the skin of his face shone while He talked with him " (Exod. xxxiv. 29). If called upon to spend some time with God, let our object rather be that other people's faces should shine ; should ours do so too, we should be unconscious of it.

Moreover, what superiority is seen in Elijah's ways with Obadiah, who, notwithstanding his position in the king's house, "fell on his face" on seeing the hunted and outwardly poor prophet entertained as he had just been by a widow whose only provision consisted of "a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse," and whose previous meals had been supplied by ravens? In the things of God merely worldly position counts for little. God looks elsewhere. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word " (Isa. lxvi. 2).

ELIJAH

being free in spirit from the power of the shocking state of things existing in Israel, is the man God uses to meet the reckless and wicked king ; and if Obadiah stood before *him*, Elijah *stands before the Lord*, as he says, " And Elijah said, As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand,

I will show myself unto him (Ahab) to-day." When we stand before the Lord and are assured of His help, we are fearless and superior even to the wickedest men, but otherwise we are often cowards.

There is doubtless some meaning in Elijah being spoken of "as a man subject to like passions as we are" (James v. 17). In any case he was remarkable for his dependence upon God. He prayed and prayed earnestly, and this is why he was so powerful and bold for God before others. From James we learn that it was through an answer to prayer that he was able with such boldness to say to the king, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word" (1 Kings xvii. 1). When after those three terrible years rain once more descends upon the land, it is his prayers that bring it. He announces to Ahab its speedy approach. Can anything be a greater contrast on that occasion than the conduct of the sensual king and the God-fearing and prayerful prophet? "So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth" in prayer.

The reader will do well to ponder the last six verses of 1 Kings xviii. To him it will be very plain that the distinguished service God required of Elijah must be the outcome of prayer. In Mark i. 35 Elijah's Lord is seen in prayer before

saying (ver. 38), "Let us go into the next towns that I may *preach* there also." He is our perfect and blessed pattern.

W. R. C.

FRAGMENT.

IF you are to be happy it must be *with God*. In Christ, I get all my sins brought out in the day of grace, in the presence of divine perfect love that came about them. The perfectness of the love that is in Christ makes me glad to be in the light that shows me all that I am; it gives truth in the inward parts. God says, You are the vilest sinner, you are labouring and heavy laden, now you may come to Me and trust Me, it will be all right. Ah! it is a blessed thing to see truth in the inward parts, and to have confidence in a divine love that is above all the evil.

I've had all my sins entirely out before God and better known than I know them. I've had Christ confessing my sins as His own in the presence of a God of judgment. There is divine competency to bear our sins. We are in the dust as to ourselves, but we look up to God in the consciousness and certainty that He loves us as He loves Jesus Himself. That is the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Have you that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to know that God looks at you as white as snow? Does the light of God's holiness make you happy or uncomfortable?

Epistle to the Romans.

THE distinct teaching of the epistle and the exhortations based thereon terminate at verse 7 of chapter xv. The remainder of this chapter contains certain details as to the circumstances of the apostle, which are most interesting and instructive.

He again shows with what admirable consistency the Scriptures reconcile the admission of the Gentiles to blessing with the distinct promises made to the fathers (vers. 8-13). "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm" these promises. The Jewish nation, it is true, filled with unbelief, rejected Him and put Him to death, but none the less was it true that He came unto His own (John i. 11), and the Gospel of Matthew describes the presentation of Christ to the nation as their Messiah. Not, however, until they had definitely rejected Him did mercy flow out to the Gentiles. Direct quotations then follow from each of the divisions of the Old Testament, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, amply sufficient to disarm Jewish prejudice.

These prophetic utterances no doubt will receive a special fulfilment by-and-by during the millennium; they are used to show that the blessing of the Gentiles on the ground, not of pro-

mise, but of mercy, was not foreign to the thoughts of God. The last of them—"in Him shall the Gentiles hope (trust)"—suggests to the apostle the desire on behalf of the believers at Rome, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost," a beautiful description of what should ever characterise the child of God in this world, and indeed will, when he walks in the power of an ungrieved Spirit.

The apostle then, in the most delicate and touching manner, introduces the subject of his own ministry with reference to the saints at Rome. How far removed from the pretentious claims of the one who blasphemously assumes to be the Vicar of Christ is this self-effacing allusion to himself. He takes for granted that all was prospering in their midst, and that in a spirit of love, and according to divine knowledge they were able to admonish one another.

Nevertheless, special grace had been given to him of God; and if Jesus Christ had been a minister of the circumcision to confirm God's promises to the fathers, Paul was a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. The gospel of the circumcision had been committed to Paul (see Gal. ii.), and in fulfilment of this he now writes to the Romans. How strange that the Church of Rome to-day should so utterly disregard this plain teaching of the Word of God, and put

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

227

Peter where God as decidedly has left him out. The fact is that no apostle had to do with the establishment of the Church at Rome, the great centre of Latin Christianity. It is most improbable that Peter ever was at Rome, and Paul never was there except as a prisoner. That there were Christians at Rome before Paul ever got there, is clear from the last chapter.

The Roman world came within the sphere of Paul's official service. He was the chosen instrument to minister *to* the Gentiles the gospel of God, and, on the other hand, like Aaron of old (Num. viii. 11), to present them as an offering to God, acceptable, not on the ground of natural birth or external rites, but through sanctification of the Holy Ghost. Well might he glory in this work of vital and eternal grace! (vers. 15-18).

Was he satisfied with any mere outward profession, such as the emissaries of papal Rome who have sought to make nominal Christians of heathen races by baptism and the sword? Nay, he would not dare to speak of anything that Christ had not wrought by him by word and deed. The obedience of the Gentiles, that submission to God of heart, mind, will, and conscience, was alone of any value; for this he laboured, and in this he could glory, for not Paul, but "the power of the Spirit of God" brought it about through "mighty signs and wonders" (vers. 18, 19).

Nevertheless God wrought through human means, and what indefatigable energy we see in the case of Paul! "From Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." What this entailed in the way of bodily suffering we learn a little of from 2 Corinthians vi. 1-11, xi. 23-33, for Paul was often single-handed in the conflict of the gospel. Not where Christ was already named did he go; that would have been a far easier path, but it would have been a building upon other men's foundations, and less in accordance with that blessed Word of God, by which he desired that all his ways should be directed. What an encouragement to every child of God to search the Scriptures diligently and read them with prayerful attention! How often will an Old Testament passage throw light upon our own pathway, and find a present application before the day comes for its full accomplishment; this is seen here in the use made by the Spirit of Isaiah lii. 15.

But this diligent zeal in evangelising the Grecian world had hindered the apostle from reaching to Rome, though for many years he had had a great desire so to do. There had been much ground to be covered, but now in those parts his work was finished. There is a touch of sadness in the way in which Paul writes, "but now having no more place in these parts" (ver. 23). How closely he followed in the foot-

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

229

steps of his blessed Master has often been observed; rejection and apparent outward failure marked the close of his ministry. After years of incessant toil and indefatigable labour in the gospel, and amongst the saints in Asia, the Spirit records, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (1 Tim. i. 15).

But now his thoughts turn towards the West: "Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you" (ver. 24). We have no record in Scripture that he ever reached Spain, and so far as Rome was concerned he was there only as a prisoner, and that in cruel iron chains, not the scarlet and gold of the pretended prisoner of the Vatican, who reigns after the fashion of the most worldly of earthly potentates.

But first Paul must go to Jerusalem. It is not for us to question whether in this he had the mind of the Lord. At any rate "all things work together for good to them that love God," and had he not, he might never have found the leisure required for writing the Epistles to Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, which he did when sent a prisoner from Jerusalem to Rome.

It mattered not to Paul what the service might be that he engaged in, whether preaching here and there and founding assemblies of God's people, or the less showy deacon's work as the bearer of the gift which the grace of God had caused to abound on the part of Macedonia and

Achaia toward the poor saints at Jerusalem (read 2 Cor. viii., ix.). He loved to identify himself with this fruit of the Spirit; nor was it the first time that he had done so (see Acts xi. 27-30). A fleshly spirit of retaliation might have led the Gentile believers to shut up the bowels of compassion towards their Jewish brethren who had manifested some little hostility against them at the start; pride on the other hand might have rejected help from those whom religious prejudice was wont to despise. But where grace, the grace of God, is at work, every difficulty is removed, and it was a duty which was owed to the Lord that those who partook of spiritual things should themselves minister in carnal things to His people—and God loves a cheerful giver.

When this act of service on Paul's part should be completed, he hoped to see his brethren at Rome, and it would be not a mere social visit, though surely a time of deep spiritual joy and happiness ("if first I be somewhat filled with your company")—"I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

Nevertheless the apostle realises the dangers that he incurred at the hands of the unbelieving Jews at Jerusalem. This casts him upon God, and he earnestly desires the prayers of the saints at Rome on his behalf. He takes no superior place—"that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." How many a time throughout his arduous life he had already proved

AN ALL-SATISFYING OBJECT. 231

the delivering hand of God! Had he not stood in jeopardy every hour? But, as he writes to the Corinthians, God "delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver; ye also helping together by prayer for us" (2 Cor. i. 10, 11).

Yet all must be in accordance with God's will (Rom. xv. 32); what beautiful activities of the divine nature! Fellowship with the saints for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and the love of the Spirit; earnest and united supplications; happy submission to the will of God, and whatever that will may entail for himself of persecution and even death; ardent desires for the peace and blessing of those whom he had never yet seen, but whom he loved in the Lord!

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

An All-Satisfying Object.

THE only influence we should covet, as to service or as to anything else, should be the result of attachment to Christ alone, and dependence upon Him. Affection for Him is *the one* thing. There will be plenty of trial and difficulty where this exists, but *there will be no thwarted affections* when He is the object. We shall never find in Him what does not

232 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

satisfy. This is happiness. There may be plenty in us needing to be subdued, and this will give us trouble, and 'tis often, alas! to keep the heart up to a sense of His love; but that single word "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," is quite enough for us; for was there ever an affection wanting in Christ towards us? Never! Never shall we find defect in the object of our affections, though we shall find defect in the affection in ourselves, lack of ability to enjoy the fulness of our position.

A true sense of the abiding love of Jesus to us is that which gives perfect peace to the heart that is looking to Jesus. One source of our failure in realising the love of Jesus is, that our hearts, though enlarged by the Holy Ghost, are too little to answer to it. Herein lies the marked difference between the book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. In Ecclesiastes it is said, "What can the man do that cometh after the king, who hath gathered to himself peculiar treasure of all the sons of men?" But the larger his heart was in its intelligence and in his desires, the less there was to fill it, so that everything issued in "vanity and vexation of spirit." But what was wanting in the Song of Solomon—primarily applicable, no doubt, to the Jewish remnant—was a heart large enough to take in the *all*-satisfying object of its love. And oh! what a thing it is, that Jesus and all the glory He has received is ours! as He says, "the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them."

J. N. D.

Sons of your Father.

No. 3.—THE FATHER'S CARE.

(Read Matthew vi. 19 to end.)

WHY is it that we who are sons of the Father so often want to lay by treasure and store on earth for the future? Do we confide in the Father's care over His children? It is not for me to say that any believer should spend or give away all that he has or earns. Each must needs be exercised about that before God, and then act according to the measure of faith and of grace that God gives. Neither reasoning about it, nor the calculations of human prudence, will teach us to obey the Word. Light comes from God alone who is Light; if the eye of the heart be set upon Christ—and remember that He is in heaven—we shall be enlightened. "The light (*lit.* lamp) of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Light will enter by the eye as through a lamp, and our whole being will have the true Light shining into every part or member of it. Then by contrast we may learn how deep the darkness is if the Light ceases to shine in. It is so naturally, if you suddenly extinguish the lamp in a room, the darkness is bewildering in its intensity.

234 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

What is mammon? "Mammon is riches, every one knows that," some one replies, and perhaps he will add, "As I am poor, mammon does not concern me, it concerns my rich neighbour." Truly, mammon is riches, but it is any and every kind of riches, whether the quantity be great or small. It comprises the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the house we dwell in; things necessary, comforts, and luxuries are all mammon. Just as we are told to use the world and not abuse it (1 Cor. vii. 31)—note that the apostle adds, "But I would have you without carefulness"—so though we all use we should not *serve* mammon. "No man can serve two masters," whether at home or at business, whether on land or at sea. We have each and all our various duties in life to fulfil, we are taught to "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17), but whom do we *serve* in doing this, God or mammon?

The Lord would have us heart-free to serve God; therefore He said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And again, "Take no thought for your life; take no thought for the morrow." He reminds us that our heavenly Father feeds the birds and clothes the lilies of the field. Ah! some one will say, "Are Christians not to work, not to be employed in temporal matters?" The Lord does not say that at all. His teaching deals with the heart, the spring of all our actions. He tells us to

“seek first” (not our own advantage, nor our own interests, but) “the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” And again, “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” Could anything be more certain, more comforting to the sons of the Father, “your heavenly Father knoweth.” The heart thus taught can confide in the Father’s care.

“What is this kingdom of God?” do you say? “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink”—though, as we see, God gives these to His sons—“but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. xiv. 17). Obedience to God and zeal for His glory characterise His kingdom now. Obedience to God comprises the fulfilment of every duty in life that God has put on us, with help from Him indeed, and these duties vary with each believer.

In what men call the “struggle for life,” much reliance is placed on human energy, to the extent, even among Christians, of forgetting the Father’s care. “Your heavenly Father knoweth” is a word which encourages the heart. “Ask, and it shall be given you,” warrants us to make our needs known to God. He will give, not indeed always what we wish for or think necessary, but as Christ says, “. . . how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give *good things* to them that ask Him?” (Matt. vii. 7-11). So again we read in Romans viii. 32, “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?"

Whenever we are discouraged and tempted to look down, or within, or around us, let us call to mind these and similar scriptures, and we shall learn to trust our Father, and behave as His sons are taught to behave.

F. M. H.

Notes of an Address on 1 John i.

CHRIST is the eternal life, and if we have Christ we have eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

We have also an object for the heart as well as life, as in Galatians ii. 20, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." We have the same affections and feelings as Christ—the same delights, because the same nature—however poor and feeble they may be; thus we have fellowship. Divine life is always itself through all modifications of circumstances, it is not affected by them, but walks above them.

We are called to walk not merely *according to* but *in* the light; we are brought to the essential holiness and purity of God—not to walk as in law. God was hid in law, did not reveal

Himself there. The rent veil introduces us into light as He has revealed Himself in Christ. We are called to the glory in which He is. There is no hiding here of the essential holiness of God, and we must walk in this. The law is the rule of what man ought to be, not *what God is*: it curses a man who attempts to stand before it.

The light makes manifest everything that we are before God. So Adam in the presence of this light hid himself among the trees. We are fitted for this light by God Himself. He acts for Himself and from Himself. Our fitness is a question of His washing, not of our conduct. Christ washes well; what He does, He does perfectly. Men have a way of talking of great and little sins, but there is no real difference, we need all to be washed to fit us for God. The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. We are made white as snow. We have thus the conscience clear.

We may try as the prodigal did to be better; and the nearer we get we may become the more anxious. We cling in hope, but are not sure of our reception. He, though a picture of one converted, had not got to God in conscience, though God had got to him; he was hoping for something short of perfect grace; he went to God not knowing what He would think; he knows when he gets there what He does think—he is met by the resources of His own grace. May we all thus know God as He has revealed

Himself in grace, have our consciences at peace, and know the ways of God in doing it.

Ver. 9. "If we confess our sins"—not alone in a general way, the flesh as sin, but what the flesh has produced, all the sinful thoughts, words, and actions, as well as weightier trespasses which the sinful nature produces, there is more here than the confession of our sinful nature—"He is faithful and just" (not speaking of mercy) "to forgive us our sins." There are two points here—we want forgiveness for the heart as well as cleansing for the conscience.

Take the case of a young man and his father—a spendthrift. The father pays his debts, but this does not satisfy the heart, he wants forgiveness. God can't have sin in His sight, and therefore it says, "cleanseth," and this cleansing comes according to God Himself by the cleansing of the blood of Christ.

We have a third thing—our daily weakness with all its practical details and results. We fail for want of watchfulness. This does not alter my standing ground or my righteousness. Christ is this, both the one and the other, and He cannot alter. I may alter; and again God cannot excuse a fault or a failure, but He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Am I then set under law in failure? No: here the advocacy of Christ comes in. He is first my righteousness, and second the propitiation for my sins. May we then go on in sin that grace

may abound? God forbid that we should find pleasure where Christ has found pain, and that we should love what cost Him agony and death. This makes sin infinitely more hateful. Christ makes me feel this as He did to Peter. He *looks* upon me as He did upon him. He detected the root and dealt with him about the very thing that brought him into sin. Peter had boasted of his love and of the strength of his love, and Jesus detected all and exercised his heart about this in the question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?"

We may have a proud nature, it must be broken down. There is no imputation of the sin; but if I do not judge myself—He will. He exercises the heart about it; because the sin is not imputed. He brings the heart into true contact with light and holiness, and it is well to have the heart thoroughly exercised daily before God.

"Without *shedding* of blood is no remission," not *sprinkling*. There is no other Christ to die. If the putting away of sin is not finished, a finished and perfect work, when is it to be so? The sins are put away for ever, there is no more blood to be shed.

And now we have the advocacy of Christ for the daily cleansing of our walk from the defilement we pick up in our contact with the world. We are exercised by the Holy Ghost as to the discovery of what we are, that we may judge ourselves and confess our sins, and "He is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," so that communion may be restored. But there is no other atonement, we have only the washing of the feet. "Ye are clean every whit." "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." Thus we have peace and fellowship. Christ has for ever sat down, and is now the propitiation of our sins. May our hearts know this!

J. N. D.

Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians—No. 3.

CHAP. II.—NEW CREATION, GENESIS, OR POWER EFFECTUATING COUNSEL.

WE have already seen (chap. i.) the eternal purpose of God respecting the man and his possessions accomplished in power as far as regards the person of Christ, seated in supremacy and headship at God's right hand. The second chapter shows us the same power acting towards the saints, and in their case with surpassing greatness. For not only were we spiritually dead as regards God, but were active only in connection with a world away from God, and in subjection to that spirit who is the source of all disobedience. Whether

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 241

Gentiles or Jews, we were alike sons of disobedience and children of wrath.

The new-creation work of God therefore takes a double character in our case. Because of His great love He quickens us with the Christ dead in grace, we being dead in sins, raising up Jew and Gentile together, and making us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. This He does in order that He may display in the coming ages the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. His love is peculiarly displayed towards those who were, except to Him, the impossible objects of it; and the coming ages (not this one) are the scene proper to the public manifestation of this surpassing grace. Grace is the source of this salvation which through faith is ours already.

The second great character of this work of God as such, is the creating in Christ Jesus; not quickening a dead man but creating a new one. Here power creates for good works, as previously it was love quickening the dead so as the more gloriously to express itself. Now, however, it is a work of power in new creation with the object to display in us suitable and corresponding works.

As before noticed, the man alone is in question here; and it is God acting simply as such who creates him in Christ Jesus, to effectuate His counsels in Christ. From chap. ii. 11 this effectuation is viewed in connection with the Lord Jesus

Christ and His especial work to this end. Just as in Genesis i., the first creation is attributed simply to God (Elohim), but in chap. ii. to Jehovah Elohim, the relationships of the creature with the Creator and with each other being in question; so in the first part of Ephesians ii. (vers. 1-10) we have the new creation presented as God's work, but in the second portion (vers. 11-22) as Christ's work, the subject being the relationships of the new man mutually as well as towards God.

Here too, as in Genesis ii. 7, the materials from whence the man is formed are first before the mind of the Spirit. Nations in the flesh, of the uncircumcision, without Christ, aliens and strangers, without hope and without God in the world, how thoroughly were we in the dust of death morally, ceremonially, and spiritually! Now we are become nigh by the blood of Christ. Once as Gentiles we were ceremonially afar off, and the Jew was near; but both are now made one in Him by Christ, our peace, who has broken down the middle wall of enclosure; which made the difference between the privileged Jew and the profane Gentile, having annulled by His death that law of commandments in ordinances which was an occasion of pride to the one and of hatred in the other. He has thus annulled the enmity which existed between them, as men in the flesh, in order to form the two into one new man. In the old creation Jehovah Elohim

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 243

formed man out of dust of the ground (Gen. ii. 7), and God created man in His image (i. 27). In the new creation the Christ takes up Jew and Gentile and forms them in Himself into one new man. It was no mere act of creative power, for the divine Archetype and great living Exemplar, as well as the sustaining Source of the new man, was the Christ who formed him in Himself.

Remark, too, that the cross, not the perfection of the new-creation work, is the cause of their reconciliation to God. The believing Jew and Gentile alike enjoy this grace, but it is in one recognised and divinely formed company they do so, the cross having slain the natural enmity to God which was in the heart, perhaps unknowingly, of each.

The new man being thus formed in Christ after the character of His glorified life and relationship, and moral qualities, the apostle proceeds to declare the means of the effectual communication to the soul of this immense blessing. It is not by breathing into the nostrils of inanimate man the breath of life. Thus Adam became a living soul, but to apostate and ruined men, whether afar off or nigh, Christ comes and preaches, in effectual life-giving power, the glad tidings of peace. It is this, and this alone, that introduces through redemption into new-creation blessing. For the first creation the breath of Jehovah Elohim sufficed; but for the new man the word of a redeeming Christ alone avails.

The remainder of Ephesians ii. from verse 18 sets forth the varied relationships in which the new man is set. Not now a pleasant garden with all that could charm the natural tastes, and where the sources lay of fruitfulness and refreshment for the earth, involving a charge which the natural man could well fulfil in a relationship of obedience to Jehovah Elohim, and, alas! could fail in it. Instead of this we are placed in relationship with the Father, to whom we have access through Him whom the gospel of peace reveals, who sustained the glory of God in the very place of His judgment against sin, where every question of good and evil was settled for ever. We have access, not as the innocent man who was tried and failed, but through Him who in love and obedience took the place of the sinful man upon the cross, and has brought us thereby into His own relationship and blessing with the Father. Moreover, the power for this intercourse in grace is not the flesh, but the one Spirit. The former, even in its innocence, was weighted with the sad possibility of death; the latter is God Himself, the living and eternal One.

But more, we of the Gentiles are not only placed in relationship with the Father, to whom we have access, but also with our brethren from among the Jews. No longer strangers and foreigners, we are fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God.

In this new scene there is no tie, as in the old,

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 245

like marriage (Gen. ii. 24), which separates and appropriates the individual ; but instead there is a spiritual commonwealth of which all are fellow-citizens, and a household, which is the scene of divine affections, where each one is related immediately with God and one another through Jesus Christ, ministered by the inspired word of the apostles and prophets.

But this introduces another divine thought which is now in process of accomplishment. God would not only have a household but a habitation—indeed a holy temple in the Lord. The conscience of man aroused perceives the propriety of this, and seeks to answer to it as Jacob did in a fleshly way (Gen. xxviii. 22). Under law God condescended to meet man's conscience, and commanded a tabernacle to be built as the representation and shadow of heavenly things. All was of this old creation and made with hand ; but now we have to do with the better and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hand. Or rather the saints are built together in Christ already for a habitation of God in the Spirit ; and in Him, too, the building fitted together, increases to a holy temple in the Lord.

What this will be when gloriously displayed is set forth in Revelation xxi. 9-27, xxii. 1-5, the first eight verses of chapter xxi. describing the character of it in eternity. There we learn that God will then have His rest and residence

with man, and they shall be His people, not as Jews, for eternity obliterates all national distinctions. Moreover, He will have His family, sons and heirs (ver. 7), such as have overcome. Ephesians ii. 19-22, declares the present realisation of this in divine grace and for faith. We are fellow-citizens of the saints, and thus of His people; of His household, and thus His sons; built together a habitation of God in the Spirit, and increasing to a holy temple in the Lord.

These last are two phases of one great and eternal counsel of God, namely, to dwell with men, with whom His delights ever were in purpose; among whom indeed He came in the flesh, though to tabernacle only, but in dying to lay the divine enduring foundation for its accomplishment in an eternal scene and a new creation. Meanwhile it is realised in the Spirit and is said precisely to be "in Christ" (Eph. ii. 21, 22), and therefore is the peculiar privilege special to the assembly alone gathered from Jew and Gentile in the day of Christ's rejection, while He is hidden in the heavens.

This closes the revelation of the present divine and effectual work for the accomplishment of the eternal counsels made known in chapter i. It is the formation of the new man in and after Christ, setting him in divine and eternal relationships according to life out of death and new creation power. The work is seen to be purely divine, and creature agency is entirely out of the

account; even the preaching peace is viewed simply as the work of Christ glorified. In fact, we have in this chapter ii. the Genesis of the new creation. The body is just introduced at the end of chapter i. as the complement of the Head exalted in universal supremacy, in which it shares.

The house, which is the other corporate character in which the saints are seen, is shown at the close of chapter ii.

Chapter iii. will set before us the means employed, and the man, the divinely inspired vessel, appointed to bring souls out into the enjoyment of this condition of eternal blessing.

Correspondence.

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS.

DEAR BROTHER,—I have read with interest W. J. C.'s paper on the last week of Daniel's seventy. . . . However, it seems very hazardous to affirm, when chronologists differ, that the Lord's ministry lasted just three and a half years. Some writers limit the time to one year and a few months; others to two and a half years; and others again reckon it to have commenced with one passover, and finished with the fourth, thus making it to extend over a period of three years. Eusebius, who lived in the fourth century, ex-

pressed his agreement with this view, and in modern times the dissertations of Greswell are said to have established it with a high degree of probability. Still, this is not certainty. Besides, three years are not three and a half years, under any circumstances. Therefore the conditions required for the submerged half-week do not seem to be fully met, since a theory built upon conjecture is not safe, and is not what we are taught to rely upon either.

The prophecy of the seventy weeks is not conjecture, however, but the *inspired* word of the Living God. And is, therefore, that upon which our souls can rest, and to which our hearts must bow as the infallible word of truth.

Such being the case, we must be guided in the exposition of the prophecy by what it declares. There we are informed that seventy weeks were appointed unto Daniel's people (the Jews) and his holy city (Jerusalem) to accomplish certain matters, a summary of which is then given.

Next we have the seventy weeks divided into three parts, viz., seven weeks, threescore and two, and one week. Then follow the special features that characterise each division. The seven weeks are devoted to building the walls of Jerusalem, the sixty-two weeks introduce the Messiah and His being cut off, and the last week is occupied with the Roman prince and his dealings with the Jews of the last days. This prince—who is the “little horn” of Daniel vii.,

the first "beast" of Revelation xiii., and the beast who with the "false prophet" (or Anti-christ) will be cast into the "lake of fire" (Rev. xix.)—at the beginning of the week will make a covenant with the Jewish people for seven years. The half-week will see the covenant broken, and the faithful Jews subjected to the most cruel persecutions, which will last until the Lord comes in person to deliver His people and destroy His and their enemies. Hence, perhaps, the reason why so much greater prominence is given to the last half-week in the prophetic word.

But, however this may be, there seems ample evidence that the whole week is taken up by the Roman prince and his doings. If this be the case there seems no room given for supposing that half the last week was fulfilled in the Lord's ministry, and that it will be fulfilled a second time after the Church is gone. Such a notion is not apparent in the prophecy at any rate.

Further, much is made of the word "after," as if it must mean a long period subsequent to the sixty-two weeks. This is not necessarily the case, however. For the Hebrew word "*achar*" *may* mean "at the end" of a period or event, as immediately following it, and not as implying an interval. Thus, "at the end of the sixty-two weeks," that is "when they are accomplished." Compare Genesis xli. 29, 30, with verses 53, 54, for the use of this word.

Again, the word "unto" comes in for its share

of indefiniteness. It becomes, therefore, an important question as to what part of our Lord's earthly sojourn the reference is made. The word is, "unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks ;" *unto* must refer then to the end of the sixty-nine weeks nearly. And this is further strengthened by the fact that the Lord Jesus is here called the Prince, which seems to mean much more than His mere birth-title "King of the Jews." It probably refers rather to the only time that the Lord presented Himself to Jerusalem as her King, when He came thither on the ass's colt (Matt. xxi.). This was six days before He suffered as King of the Jews. "It is worthy of remark," says one, "that the decree of Artaxerxes was issued in the month Nisan, the very month in which the passover was kept, and in which our Lord both rode into Jerusalem and was crucified." It was also the first month of the Jews' religious year.

In conclusion, it seems evident that nothing need be introduced into the prophecy to elucidate more fully its meaning. Its divisions are few, and their landmarks plain and positive ; and its numbers are definite and complete with reference to the sum total. Such being the case, does it not become us to leave the seventy weeks as they are, and seek to mould and regulate our thoughts and theories by what is written, instead of what is *written* by our thoughts and theories? —Yours, &c.

W. J. H.

F. M. H. writes :—It seems to me that one great difficulty in considering Napoleon Bonaparte to have been the “seventh head” (Rev. xvii. 10) of the Roman Empire is that he did not make a seven years’ covenant with the Jews, &c.

I DON’T see the difficulty as to the “seventh head.” In Daniel nothing is said about seven heads, and we are not told anywhere that the seventh head is to make a seven years’ covenant. “The prince that shall come” (Dan. ix. 26) will do so, and this prince will be the chief of the Roman Empire of that time. Clearly he will be the *last* chief of the resuscitated Roman Empire. (Might this not be the *eighth* of Revelation xvii. 11?—“and the beast that was, and is not, even he is *an eighth*,” &c.)

Now when this Roman Empire revives, it is seen to arise out of the sea (Rev. xiii.) as a beast with seven heads and ten horns. What these heads and horns represent we learn from Revelation xvii. “The seven heads are seven mountains” (ver. 9). This clearly, as we know, points to Rome geographically—the city of seven hills. In passing, does not this dispose of the view that not a few hold to-day, that there is to be a literal Babylon rebuilt in the land of Shinar? The Roman capital built on its seven hills will be the seat of the beast in its last phase, dominated by the corrupt religious system of Babylon the Great.

But not only do the seven heads stand for

seven mountains, they have a double signification—"and they are seven kings." I understand this to refer, not so much to individual rulers as to different forms of government which from time to time have characterised the "fourth beast." The one that existed when John wrote was the *imperial*—this was the "sixth." Possibly this was the head "wounded to death" of Revelation xiii., which reviving became the "seventh."

I do not affirm that Napoleon was this seventh head, but his brief and extraordinary career was most suggestive, and bears a striking analogy to what is said in Revelation xvii. 10. However this may be, there is to be "an eighth"—not definitely called a "head," for, in fact, this eighth stands for the beast itself. It is difficult, however, to distinguish too precisely between the beast as such, and its chief. But what we do see clearly from the prophetic Word is that (1) the Roman Empire is to revive; (2) that it will have a prince over it in its last form; and (3) that this prince, whoever he may be, will make a covenant with the apostate Jewish nation for "one week."—ED.

People say, How few opportunities we have for serving the Lord! Few opportunities! Why, your life is your opportunity! No matter what your circumstances are, every act of your life brings you an opportunity to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

G. V. W.

Epistle to the Romans.

THE salutations which follow (chap. xvi.) are of the deepest interest, and at the same time most instructive. If Paul had never yet visited Rome, he was nevertheless well acquainted with many who resided there at the time this epistle was written (A.D. 60). Not one of these is forgotten, each holds a place in the apostle's affections, a place of honour, too, according to that which grace had wrought in the life of each in connection with Christ and His interests on the earth.

"Phœbe our sister" is the first one mentioned with special commendation. Locally connected with the assembly at Cenchrea, a seaport near Corinth, circumstances possibly of a private nature took her to Rome. At Cenchrea she occupied a more or less official position in connection with the assembly of which she was a minister—not, it is needless to add, a minister of the Word. As a deaconess, for this is the word here used by the Spirit of God, she filled a much-needed post in reference to the assembly; for it can easily be seen that there might be many circumstances where a sister would be more suitable than any one else to act, especially in a country where great laxity in morals was notorious. The saints at Rome were to receive her in the Lord with all

readiness of mind, and to assist her in whatever way they could. She was entitled to this consideration on their part, for many had been helped by her, the apostle himself amongst the number.

Two other familiar names follow, Priscilla and Aquila, with whom the apostle had had close ties of friendship and fellowship in the work of the Lord. They were Jews originally, and had been obliged to leave Rome at the command of Claudius (Acts xviii. 2); now, six years later, we find them back again, but this time as Christians, and indeed with a Christian assembly in their house. It is beautiful to see how times of persecution awaken the love of saints one towards another; these "helpers in Christ Jesus" had risked their very lives for Paul; they had earned not only his thanks, but that of all the Gentile assemblies.

Then the well-beloved Epenætus is greeted, recalling the apostle's early labours in Asia, of which he was the first-fruits—for Asia it should be and not Achaia, of which latter place Stephanas had been the first-fruits (1 Cor. xvi. 15).

Others then are mentioned, both men and women, amongst whom we find Paul's own kinsmen in the flesh, Andronicus and Junia; these had shared imprisonment for Christ's sake with the apostle; they were of note, not in the eyes of the corrupt and dissolute world, but amongst the apostles, and, it is added, were "in Christ"

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

255

before God had called Saul of Tarsus and revealed in him His Son.

Amongst the many names that follow, each one with special and differing recognition, we find that of Rufus, whose father, Simon the Cyrenian, had borne the cross after Jesus (Mark xv. 21). What widening circles of divine grace! Simon the father, Rufus the son, and his mother, too, who had moreover acted a mother's part to Paul. Yet if God acted in mercy, He was sovereign in mercy, for Rufus was "chosen in the Lord," and there is no word here of Alexander his brother.

Besides those whose names are given there were others, brethren in Christ and saints of God; these are also saluted, *all* of them (vers. 14, 15), for though there may be, and rightly so, special links in the family of God, especially in connection with the Lord's service, yet love in the Spirit should flow out to all saints, for "every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John v. 1).

How unlike is the ecclesiastical Rome of to-day from that which existed in apostolic times! It seems incredible that the pomp, grandeur, and worldliness of the Vatican could ever have grown out of this divinely beautiful and simple beginning. But evil was already at work in the apostle's day, and against this he now earnestly exhorts the saints at Rome.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them

which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them," &c. (Rom. xvi. 17).

There is nothing which Satan so delights in as to introduce subjects of discord amongst the people of God. Wherever the spirit of division exists, everything in connection with the true service of God is hindered, if not completely paralysed. Wherever an ungrieved Spirit is working the saints are rooted, built up, and established (Col. ii. 7); but wherever Satan has been allowed to work, discord, distrust, and division abound.

But how sad to see that the greatest dangers to the peace and prosperity of the people of God come from within. Not the attacks of a persecuting world outside, but the self-seeking and ambitions of teachers within are the chief causes of division and stumbling of the people of God. *The saints are here exhorted to be vigilant and to turn away from these creators of division.* Evidently the great danger lay in the introduction of religious novelties. This made much of the teacher, and might be accompanied with an apparent earnestness and zeal which would deceive the unwary ; for it is a sad feature of this kind of evil that far more energy is oftentimes displayed in the dissemination of evil doctrines, than in the spread of the truth. But however specious the teaching, and however devout the teacher may appear to be, of this we

are assured, that "they that are such"—that is, they that cause divisions contrary to the doctrine already learned of God—"serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." Thus is the vail torn from these false teachers; their words may be good and their speeches fair, but in reality they are deceivers of the hearts of the simple.

In view of the evil doctrines that abound in the present day, a very simple test is here given, namely, "the doctrine which ye have learned." If an awful responsibility rests upon the teacher, the taught likewise are in need of watchfulness; for it pleases the flesh to dabble in speculative theories, especially when the truth once enjoyed has lost its freshness and charm for the soul. That there should always be progress is admitted; that there should be growth in the knowledge of the truth, and in acquaintance with the mind of God as revealed in Scripture, no spiritual person would deny; but *never* should this be at the expense of truth already learnt from God. Of this we may be assured, that God would never call upon us to give up to-day what we learnt from Him yesterday.

It was a comfort to the apostle's heart to know that a subject spirit was found amongst the saints at Rome; yet he would have them occupied more with the good than the evil. The time was soon to be when all the workings of Satan both within and without should cease, and

meanwhile the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient. Amen.

Salutations then follow from Paul's companions to the saints at Rome, and with these salutations it is beautiful to see that Tertius hastens to identify himself (ver. 22). It was Paul's habit to employ an amanuensis, and to sign each letter or epistle with his own hand (2 Thess. iii. 17). Once only, because of the serious nature of the subject in hand, did he depart from this rule. The whole principle of the gospel was at stake in the erroneous teaching that was coming in at Galatia, and with the energy of anxious affection he writes the whole epistle with his own hand (Gal. v. 11).

It may not be that Gaius had any particular gift in preaching or teaching, but he held an honoured place in the assembly of God for his hospitality, extended not only to Paul but to the whole Church. The flesh might have found its pleasure in ministering to an apostle, but grace alone could lead one to place his means at the disposal of "the whole assembly." What unselfish interest in others flows from a knowledge of the true grace of God!

The epistle closes in the form of a doxology containing an allusion to Paul's special ministry of the gospel, and of the mystery of the Church. This latter is not here unfolded as it is in the Ephesians, for the object of the epistle to the Romans is more the individual relation of the

soul to God. But nevertheless Paul's gospel cannot be separated from the revelation of the mystery, for the great truth of the union of the Church with Christ was made known to him when grace first called him in those marvellous words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"—the persecuted saints on earth were one with Christ in glory. This mystery which had been kept secret since the world began was now by prophetic writings made manifest, and, through the special instrumentality of Paul, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

How sad that in our day saints are found who readily accept so much of the gospel as will give peace to the conscience, and yet in their ecclesiastical associations reject all obedience to what God has revealed in regard to the Church.

A. H. B.



Misunderstood, but Divinely Defended.

PHILANTHROPY and devotedness to our Lord Jesus Christ ought not to be confounded, and it is well to discern between them. Not only so, mere philanthropy may even hinder that peculiar service which would exalt Christ personally.

XLVI, 2

Mary of Bethany is led of God in view of her Saviour's burial to anoint Him. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John xii. 3). Mary evidently did not think anything too costly to be spent on her beloved Lord. But how sadly strange that this should have been considered "waste" by the disciples. They had indignation, saying, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor" (Matt. xxvi.). The calculating brain reckons the money value of the ointment, but love to Christ is not affected by the rules of arithmetic. Consideration for the poor may be philanthropic, and on this occasion sounded unselfish, but we know that the leader of this burst of indignation was none other than Judas Iscariot, "the traitor"! (John xii.). One covetous man's influence affected the other eleven true-hearted disciples of the Lord; and as the Scriptures say, "one sinner destroyeth much good" (Eccles. ix. 18).

And further: God, who searches the hearts of all, and discerns beneath this plausible pleading for the poor, informs us that it was not for the sake of the poor after all, but because Judas was "a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." When that which is done to exalt the person of Christ is accounted "waste," our

suspicions may indeed be aroused. Here Mary of Bethany was again misunderstood, but it exalted Christ when this spiritual woman took the place of a learner at the feet of Jesus, though by her sister this was considered waste of time. Martha is the elder sister, and has heart enough to receive the Lord into her house, but, like too many more, she was occupied with her "much serving," "careful and troubled about many things," considering that nothing was so important as the work *she* was occupied in, and that the time which was not spent in helping *her* in her work was wasted.

"Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left *me* to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help *me*" (Luke x. 40). It is a bad thing to be overweeningly absorbed in one's own service. In this case, for instance, it brings out a spirit of reproachfulness to the Lord Jesus Himself. "Dost Thou not care?" He rebukes Martha for this interference with her sister, who had chosen "that good part": this is not conversion, it is communion. There is some truth in the couplet:—

"Little is much if God be in it,
Man's busiest day's not worth God's minute."

That service, which busy people may think so important, nay, indispensable, may be differently regarded by the Lord.

Should this not exercise us to pray in the

spirit and language of the apostle Paul, and say, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?"—not what shall I do? The same apostle prays for others (the Colossians), and says, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it" (their love in the Spirit), "do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might" (or in order that ye might) "walk worthy of the Lord" (Col. i. 8-10). Mary of Bethany was misunderstood, and that, as we have said, by her own sister, though it must have been a sufficient reward to her that the Lord understood her, and that she had His approval.

There was once a railway ticket collector, who, in performing his duty, caused annoyance to some passengers whose tickets he insisted on seeing before passing the gate. This raised a storm of angry words, and led a gentleman to remark to the collector that his post could not be one of the pleasantest.

"Look," said the ticket collector, "do you see that official looking out of the window there?"

"Yes," replied the gentleman, "I see him."

"Well, I am accountable to him, and so long as I please him, I don't trouble much as to what others may think or say," said the servant.

Enoch "had this testimony that he *pleased* God" (Heb. xi. 5). This may suggest that his walking with God did not provoke the pleasure

MISUNDERSTOOD.

263

of those he lived amongst. May we dare to be an Enoch, as well as "dare to be a Daniel."

Service which springs from nearness to Christ, work which flows from communion with Him, is intelligent service. It is not indiscriminate. The disciple who is a learner at the feet of Jesus knows what he is about, nor will he be wanting in heart for the poor and suffering. There is such a thing as making very little of Christ while affecting to make much of the poor. Indeed, a philanthropist (so called) may be an infidel, with an antipathy to the name of Jesus, but everything will fall into its proper place with one whose heart is in communion with Christ, and it will not matter much to him if by many he be misunderstood. This is a great principle, and encourages the Christian to surmount the difficulties which he meets with in this world, while seeking the Lord's "well done," and not the approval of men. To be a servant of Christ, and to give pleasure to men, are a contradiction according to the inspired apostle Paul: "For if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10).

It is joy and comfort to be assured that the Lord never misunderstands. He knows the heart and perceives the motives which actuate us.


"From various cares my heart retires,
Though deep and boundless its desires,
I've now to please but One :

Him before whom each knee shall bow,
With Him is all my business now,
And those that are His own."

W. R. C.

Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians—No. 4.

CHAP. III. — THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MYSTERY, OR THE CALLING OUT AND THE GOING IN.

NE might have thought that nothing could be added to the revelation given in the first two chapters, the one declaring the counsels of God and the other their divine effectuation. Indeed it would seem that the apostle in chapter iii. I was about to begin exhorting the saints, as in chapter iv. I, but breaks off to introduce the subject of his ministry, or the administration of the grace of God of which he was the divinely appointed servant. For in the wisdom of God the glory of the new creation consists not in bringing matter out of non-existence, but in bringing out of what was morally and spiritually antagonistic to Himself that which is perfectly conformed to Himself in nature and character. The creature as such indeed already existed, but, in man, fallen and apostate.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 265

His word, ever that by which He works in life and power, is here addressed to that in which moral death and darkness is realised and centred, namely, to the heart and conscience. For this reason Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the nations. He had carried the Word of God directly to the Gentiles, as, equally with the Jew, needing and brought under the eye of the Father for blessing (ver. 14), entirely apart from the special place and privilege of the Jew, and the promises made to the fathers. This exposed him to the implacable hatred of the Jew, and even to suspicion from those of the circumcision who believed; and at length occasioned the murderous assault upon him by the Jews in the temple, and his imprisonment in Rome as a malefactor. For this reason too he prayed that where once death and darkness reigned alike in Jew and Gentile, there now by His Spirit Christ might dwell through faith (vers. 4-16).

But to this end the administration of the grace of God had been given to him, especially towards the Gentiles; for the mystery, hitherto unknown to the sons of men, was this, that the nations should be joint-heirs and a joint body and joint partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. It is no longer that in which the Jew had any prior right or special place. By the grace of God they needed to be called out of all that was peculiar to Jehovah's people; even as the Gentile by the same grace was brought

out of his distance. It was an Exodus for both alike, which needed faith, and left behind entirely and for ever both Jewish privilege and Gentile disabilities.

The heirship was a joint one, in which Christ's rights alone availed ; the body likewise was not a national one, nor formed by ordinance. No prior link with God gave precedence in it, or right to enter it. All there were brought in equally by the grace of God and set in it without preference.

The promise also was "in Christ"; not that made to Abraham, that he should be heir of the world ; in which indeed the saints share as his spiritual seed (Rom. iv. 13-18). Nor was it the promise confirmed by covenant to the one seed of Abraham, that is Christ. Though in this too the saints as "of Christ" participate, and are thus Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. iii. 29). The promise in Christ relates to far higher and eternal things, an inheritance according to the counsel of His own will, embracing the heavens and the earth, the whole domain of the universe. In it all who believe are joint-partakers, equally without right in themselves, and equally by grace.

The unsearchable riches of Christ were thus announced among the nations, as that in which by faith they were individually and corporately possessors, and that jointly in a common, if an infinite sphere, and upon a common principle.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 267

This was the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, but which was now administered among men on earth in order that *now*, to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies, might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God.

It is true we are not ourselves actually brought in yet to possess the inheritance; but we are already in Christ; and this fully suffices to display to the heavenly intelligences that wisdom which, in passing by angels, has taken up the lowest intelligent creature, sunken, moreover, in the lowest depths of ignorance and hatred of God, to manifest most gloriously His highest moral attributes, and this according to His purpose. Nor this only, but to set them in the highest place and the nearest relationships of life with Himself, after a pattern and character to be found only in the Person of Christ Jesus our Lord. But as Israel, called out of Egypt and not yet come to the land, were nevertheless permitted to approach to the tabernacle of Jehovah, so, in Christ Jesus, we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. All is characterised for us by the glorious place and ineffable acceptability of the blessed Lord Himself. We draw near to the Father without doubt or difficulty. None can say us nay; and our welcome is assured. The simplicity of our Leviticus flows from the intimacy of our relationship and place in Christ.

The apostle speaks of what is the privilege and portion of every believer, and associates himself with them in it ; but, when the question is of the practical results down here of this heavenly place, he refers only to his own personal path, but seeks to encourage them as sympathising with him in it. For the principle of the Christian path is unalterable, however circumstances may vary. It is one of tribulation. The apostle was experiencing this ; and at any time the assembly generally may be called upon to do so. He was suffering, moreover, particularly, because of insisting on the equality for the Gentiles of the blessing and privilege in Christ, as that which was prior to and beyond all worldly dispensation or promise. It was their glory ; and ever calls out the enmity and opposition especially of the religious world. Those who draw near in Christ must expect tribulations of this kind in the world. It is the true character of the Christian journey onward to the inheritance.

Yet, when realising our nearness to the Father, we are brought already in spirit to the end of our sojourn ; for the riches of the Father's glory are for faith fully displayed in the glorified Christ. In Him is seen the full setting forth of the Man of the Father's good pleasure and of God's purpose.

The position of the apostle, as he bows his knees, not now to the God, as in chapter i. 17, but

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 269

to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has a moral similarity to that of Moses in Deuteronomy xxxiv., yet how great the contrast ! The vast extent of the promise in Christ unrolls before his eyes. It is not an earthly scene that transports his soul, nor does the solemn barrier of death, the judgment of God on man in the flesh, prohibit his entering in. On the contrary, strengthened by His (God's) Spirit in the inner man, Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The Christ in all the glory in which the Father has set Him reigns equally supreme in the heart that by faith apprehends the Father's counsels concerning Him. He dwells there, the heart being thus rooted and grounded in love, taking in therefore to the full the objects of Christ's love, and looking forth in anticipation upon the illimitable scene of glory which that love, which surpasses knowledge, designs to bestow upon its objects. Thus are we filled even to all the fulness of God ; for He has no other, no higher, no fuller thought than to glorify Christ, whether personally at the right hand or in His saints.

But of all the fulness of God, the riches of His glory is realised in the glory of Christ, which His love participates with all His saints, and faith, apprehending this, is filled to the fulness of God ; it is equally true that according to the power that works in us there is also glory to God in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the ages of ages. It is the perfect,

eternal and divine response of love between God and man in the Person of His own Son. And into this the assembly is brought, to be filled on the one hand to all the fulness of God, and on the other to be the vessel and perfect mouth-piece by the Spirit of the praises of Christ.

From this, death does not separate us, as a thing yet to be encountered. For Moses it was an inseparable bar to entering the land; but the Christ in glory who was raised from among the dead dwelling in our heart by faith, we are filled to the fulness of God; and there is glory to God in the assembly even now and for ever.

As yet, however, all is to the view of faith, and according to the power that worketh in us, not according to the power of the things around us in the body. As in it in spirit but not in body we see all from the top of a heavenly Pisgah; as in the Spirit, from the "top of the rocks" (Num. xxiii. 14), where the people, stiff-necked and disobedient, from the time Moses knew them hitherto, are viewed as blessed without iniquity or perverseness. It is the crowning scene of our new-creation Deuteronomy, and completes its Pentateuch.

As a type it is remarkable that Moses at the point of death, and Balaam speaking the word which Jehovah put into his mouth, both take their view from the top of Pisgah, and see the thoughts of God about the people of His choice. Thus also the apostle, and so we,

according to the power that works in us, of Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.



Sons of your Father.

NO. 4.—TESTIMONY FOR CHRIST.

(Read Matthew x.)

IF we read this chapter carefully we shall notice that the instructions the Lord Jesus gave His twelve apostles do not apply solely to the round He sent them on that occasion. The end (ver. 22), the coming of the Son of man (ver. 23), is the goal in view. The mission to Israel is specially the subject of the chapter; the commission in Matthew xxviii. 18-20 extends it to the Gentiles.

Our purpose is not to take up all the details of the chapter, but to note some practical lessons for ourselves concerning sonship in service. Twice in His instructions to the twelve, Christ refers to their relationship with the Father. The first time is in connection with their ability to testify of Him, and secondly as to the danger incurred in so doing.

The ability to testify of Christ.

“For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (ver. 20). In calling the Holy Spirit (compare Luke xii.

12), "the Spirit of *your Father*," Christ lays stress on the relationship of sons in which His disciples stand to the Father. The same truth concerning their relationship is given by inspiration in John i. 11-13: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (*or* the right or privilege) to become the sons (*lit.* children) of God, even to them that believe on His name." The passage goes on to speak of their birth, whereas Matthew presents the relationship which flows from birth.

After His resurrection He tells them to "wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me ; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts i. 4, 5). The Holy Spirit is "the promise of the Father." Compare John xiv. 26, xv. 26, 27, xvi. 8-10, &c. Now that He is come, every believer receives Him, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6).

Acts iv. 8, vi. 10, xiii. 9, 10, are examples of testimony rendered in the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you think these are exceptional instances? All ministry, all testimony not rendered in the power of the Spirit of God, is worthless and harmful. Compare Rom. xv. 18, 19 ; 1 Cor. ii. 13, xii. 12 ; 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6, and other passages.

We make no claim for inspiration on behalf of believers nowadays, in the sense that anything they testify has the value of Scripture, and we do not admit any such claim from any one. But the Spirit of God always furnishes suitable words to believers who are subject to His power and who testify of Christ. This is our confidence and joy, and a source of boldness and power in testimony. Compare 1 Peter iv. 2. The Word always remains the subject matter of testimony. "*What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house-tops*" (ver. 27).

Christ is the object of testimony: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xv. 26, 27). So in our chapter, "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings *for My sake*" (ver. 18). "Ye shall be hated of all men for *My name's sake*" (ver. 22). Whosoever shall *confess Me* before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (vers. 32, 33). "He that loveth father or mother, . . . son or daughter more than *Me*, is not worthy of *Me*" (vers. 37, 38). "He that receiveth you, *receiveth Me*; and he that receiveth *Me* receiveth Him that sent *Me*" (ver. 40).

The apostles were to preach, "The kingdom

of heaven is at hand" (ver. 7), and what could they say of the kingdom without speaking of Christ continually. They were to heal the sick and work other miracles, and each time they wrought in Christ's name (see Luke x. 17). Thus Christ was the one and continual theme of their preaching, and men were summoned to prepare for His coming and admit all God's claims on their hearts and consciences. Knowing what the Scriptures teach as to man's wicked and rebellious nature (Rom. iii. 10-20), we cannot be surprised to find Christ's messengers ill-treated. And that brings us to our second subject.

The danger incurred in testifying of Christ.

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." They would be delivered up, scourged, and put to death. Their nearest relatives would hate and betray them. But in the midst of these dangers, they were not to fear men, for they were the objects of their Father's care, even to the smallest detail of their lives. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without *your Father*. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows" (vers. 29-31). They might even lose their life for Christ's sake, but they would find it again (ver. 39), even in resurrection, so that the utmost peril cannot separate from Christ, for He was martyred

and was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father."

Rare indeed is it in this country at the present day that any faithful witness is called on to die for Christ, but each of us will meet with persecution and rejection in various ways if we faithfully testify of Him. And let us not forget that quite recently in China many a believer has been put to death for Christ's sake.

If we practise Matthew v. 44-48, we may verify 1 Peter iii. 13, "And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that (*or* of Him) which is good?" But be assured that faithful testimony for Christ will ever have the same result of being rejected as His was rejected, and of persecution, too, for the witnesses in various ways. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for *My sake*. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (chap. v. 11, 12).

"He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me" (ver. 38). Some people talk of this or that trial or difficulty in their daily life as being their "cross." Such a trial is rather a part of the discipline that God uses toward His sons. The figure of the "cross" applies to violent and ignoble death in martyrdom, just as Christ carried His cross on the way to Calvary. While you and I may never have

to suffer martyrdom, the Lord would have us ever ready to lay down our lives in following Him. He would have us ready to lose our life for His sake (ver. 39). Compare 2 Corinthians v. 7 to end, specially verse 11.

What a privilege, beloved brothers and sisters, to be the objects of our Father's care in testifying for Christ, with the assurance in serving Christ of soon being with Him where He is! "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John xii. 26).

F. M. H.

Correspondence.

AN unknown correspondent at the Antipodes asks help, fearful of rejecting truth, whilst resisting error. With all our heart we wish we could help all such in this day of difficulty. A sample of the teaching is given in our correspondent's letter:—

"To enter the Sanctuary or Holiest, the bread must first be broken to bring about that condition of soul which permits entrance there, the Lord making Himself known, and leading the praises in the midst. This is reached whilst in ecstasy or outside this scene altogether—here, too, eternal life is touched. It can only take place at stated times—Lord's Day morning—and only by those in a fit spiritual state."

It is not difficult to trace the source of all this mysticism, which is but a small part of a vast system of error promulgated and propagated of late years with amazing zeal.

This evil system has been ably, soberly, and fully exposed on both sides of the Atlantic in two pamphlets which are now on sale, and which contain a calm but unsparing examination of its leading features in the light of the Word of God. Our publisher will supply them to any who write to him for them, and we do not further describe them, wishing to keep our pages as free as possible from unhealthy topics of controversy.

But our correspondent asks for help on Hebrews x. 19-22 :—

“What is the Holiest? When is it entered, and how?”

It is sad indeed that after all the clear light enjoyed on this most important doctrine for the past fifty years such questions need to be asked, not by anxious souls seeking the true peace of the gospel and groping their way out of the darkness of a legal system into the true light of Christianity, but by bewildered souls who have long enjoyed, and that without question, the simple truth of the rent veil and access to God with boldness, now harassed and perplexed by grievous wolves, fearful lest after all the light they rejoiced in were thick darkness.

Must it once more be insisted on that the plain teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews

on this point is that the veil is rent and that believers now have boldness to enter into the very presence of God without fear?

But these teachers tell us that there is no rent veil in Hebrews! Do we then enter through an unrent one? In Judaism, while the first tabernacle was yet standing, the veil was unrent, and the Holy Ghost signified thereby that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest (Heb. ix. 8). But now since the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in all its divine perfection, a new and living way has been consecrated for us Christians through the veil. Again, we ask, do Christians enter through an unrent veil? Let the reader forgive the absurdity of the question.

But how do we enter? Scripture answers, "by the blood of Jesus." These teachers tell us, regardless of this plain scripture, that the breaking of bread is the way of entrance into the assembly or the sanctuary, confounding two totally different lines of truth. In Corinthians, where the doctrine of the assembly is unfolded, nothing is said about the sanctuary; in Hebrews only twice is the assembly mentioned (chap. ii. 12, xii. 23), and that in no connection whatever with the holiest of all.

Believers, all believers, not merely some few extra-spiritual ones, have full liberty of access at all times into the holiest, and not merely at stated intervals of time, such as on Lord's Day

morning. The value of the work of Christ is such that we are perfected for ever (that is, perpetually or continuously), and the holiest of all is our abiding place of access. We are brought to God, not now and again, but once for all.

And what a slight is put upon that touching institution of the Lord's Supper! To them it is merely an entrance into the assembly, to be left behind as soon as possible. In Scripture we find it was to be the very object itself for which the saints were to come together (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi.).

And what is meant by "touching eternal life"? That believers *have* eternal life is clear from John iii. 36, and many similar passages. But this they have from the first moment of believing, and never lose. This unscriptural expression of *touching* eternal life seems to have taken deep root in this metaphysical system, and has, alas! deprived many of its adherents of the blessed truth, once so simply believed on the authority of God's Word, that *all* believers, from the youngest to the eldest, have now, while on this earth, eternal life. Let no sophistry of man rob the reader of this all-important truth!

"What is the difference between Worship and Communion?"

Communion is that attitude of soul in which the Christian should *always* be. To walk

worthy of the Lord in all the circumstances of daily life we need to be in communion. To serve the Lord in the gospel we need to be in communion. To serve the Lord in the ministry of the Word we need to be in communion. To worship and adore we need to be in communion.


But this system teaches that communion is a sort of ecstatic condition only reached when gathered together or abstracted from the circumstances of daily life—not even preaching the gospel are you in communion, they say; and actually the blasphemous point was reached that the Lord Himself was not always in communion, as in speaking to the woman at Sychar's well—but this is horrible.

May the Lord deliver a multitude of His people from these and similar soul-withering speculations!—ED.

“The believer is admitted into God's own presence by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; he has constant access to God, immediate access to the place where He is in the light. What complete salvation, what blessedness, what security! . . . We go in perfect liberty to God, where His holiness dwells, and where nothing that is contrary to Him can be admitted. . . . This is our position in the presence of God through the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary. . . . For us the veil is rent, and that which rent the veil in order to admit us has likewise put away the sin which shut us out.”

J. N. D.

Various Aspects of the Gospel.

ONSIDERING the gospel a little, a few points present themselves :—

I. "The gospel of God."

God is its blessed *source* in which His righteousness is revealed putting a ROCK under our feet.

II. "The gospel of Christ."

He is the subject of it, ousting law (Gal. iv.).

III. "The gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xv.).

God's love asserting itself above man's evil and alienation from Him.

IV. "The glad tidings of Jesus" (Acts viii. 35, New Translation).

That blessed One in the lowest humiliation—"His life is taken from the earth"—refused by Jerusalem the religious centre, but "the glad tidings of Jesus" widening out to Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth, a sample of this being seen in the conversion of the Ethiopian, one of Ham's cursed race, whose heart received the glad tidings of Jesus and so was won—going on his way rejoicing. God thus caring for the humiliation glory of His Son, the proud Jew having no discernment of this, or having no felt need of Him come in this way.

XLVII.

V. "The gospel of the glory of Christ"
illustrated in Acts ix.

Man exalted and glorified consequent on his having glorified God here on the earth. In this aspect of the gospel we see in Him, Man gone up in *righteousness*. In the third and fourth points we see in Him God come down in love, He having fully expressed God to man, He having also fully expressed man to God.

No wonder in 1 Thessalonians the effect of "our gospel" is, How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, Jesus our Deliverer from the coming wrath.

W. J. C.

Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians—No. 5.

CHAPS. IV.-V. 21.—CHRIST THE VICTORIOUS
CAPTAIN OF GOD'S HOST, AND HEAD OF
HIS BODY.

HAVING surveyed in the Spirit the whole new-creation blessing, affording as it does the knowledge of the unknowable love of Christ which delights to share with its objects these infinite glories—a love which not only gave all *for* the saints, but also gives every-

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 283

thing *to* them — the apostle again turns his thoughts, as in chap. iii. 1, to exhorting the believers to walk worthy of their calling. This calling we have already considered, as, according to the counsels of God before the worlds, effectuated by His divine and immediate power which wrought in raising from among the dead and setting down His beloved Son at His right hand, the object of His ineffable delight—the perfect manifestation in manhood of all His heart had designed to have, and that answers to His own nature. But inasmuch as we are included in these counsels, the administration to usward is committed to the apostle in the gospel.

A walk in consonance with this calling is therefore of the deepest importance, as realising in a practical manner already in the creature, *i.e.*, responsibly in man morally and spiritually, that which is manifested in divine perfection in a risen and glorified Christ. The glory, as well as the eternal state, is thereby anticipated in a moral way.

The apostle then proceeds in chap. iv. to unfold this highest expression of the Christian walk in its appropriate manner, sphere, and nature. It is well to observe at the outset that power is not in question here. Christ is viewed as having vanquished every opposing power wholly and for ever. To us, therefore, not power but grace is given according to the measure of His gift. He is for us what the captain of the

284 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

Lord's host was for Joshua and Israel, differing, however, in that for them the victory had yet to be won.

But as to the manner of our walk, in view of the powerful accomplishment, in a heavenly Christ, of God's purposes respecting us, we clearly discern the qualities which marked the rejected Christ on earth (ver. 2)—lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, love, peace. The sphere in which these qualities are expressed is the unity of the Spirit, which is to be kept with diligence.

Now this sphere embracing the operations of the one Spirit is developed in three distinct forms, as to which every saint needs to be instructed, for his walk bears a relation to each. The closest or most intimate is that of the one body, purely spiritual, as it is the one Spirit alone forming and energising it, as well as accomplishing in power the one hope of the calling. Until this is recognised, and the saint is conscious of the consequent relations common to the members, there is failure to enter so far into the mind of the Head, and corresponding defect in the walk of the Christian. Individually he may be most devoted and irreproachable, but yet lack the intelligence of the Spirit in his associations corporately.

The second great circle formed by the Spirit's power for Christian walk is connected with and characterised by the Lordship of Christ—not

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 285

here His headship. Headship necessarily implies a divinely powerful and living organisation in the body, which depends wholly on the Head, in whom its perfection resides, and by whom it is uninterruptedly maintained. But "one faith, one baptism," though due to the grace and energy of the Spirit, forms a sphere of privilege and authority, in which the matter is man's responsibility to the Lord, whom the faith reveals, and who gave the ordinance. We must walk in recognition of the Lord's authority, together with all those who profess His name. It is not the body here, and life and union by the Spirit, but the far wider if less intimate relation of the rights of Christ over all those who confess His name.

The third and last form in which the unity of the Spirit must be kept is connected with the universe which He has created. The saint has in this his place, which, while in one sense common to all, is his in a special and peculiarly precious way. The one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all, is "*in us all*." He is in us by the indwelling Spirit no doubt, but the effect here is not that of the sealing or anointing or the earnest which refer to different relations, but of the God and Father of all being in us, placing us amid His universe as the vessel morally of His thoughts who is its Creator and Sustainer. Each believing heart should well weigh the practical consequences of this far-

reaching truth, for a walk corresponding to and worthy of these divine facts is the especial point of these exhortations. We are in nature and, indeed, a part of it, but the *God of nature is in us.*

In view of the Christian walk characterised in this threefold way, there are two great capacitating provisions, namely, grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and His gifts to men after having led captivity captive. The first forms the true Christian state of soul which benefits by the ministry of the latter, who are not merely spiritual powers but gifted persons. They are the fruits of Christ's victory, His gifts of love to the Church or assembly, in order that the saints may fully participate in its results now.

The victory indeed is absolute and perfect, but the saints individually need perfecting, and the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ must still be carried on. For this the gifts are necessary, and Christ provides them until all is accomplished—that is, until all saints recognise by the Spirit the great facts of Christian doctrine in their proper and mutual relations, and until their knowledge of the Blessed One, to whom these facts refer, be according to His divine relationship and character as the Son of God. This is to be the full-grown man; this is the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ; for what He is with

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 287

God must comprehend all, leaving nothing else beyond. It is perfection—Christian perfection, objective and subjective; and Christ's ministry, by means of the gifts, secures it. Then do we intelligently by the Spirit grow up to Him in all things who is the Head, the Christ, and the whole body drawing, as it necessarily does, its character and constitution from Him, works, in the measure of each part, the increase of the body to its self-building up in love.

Thus do we realise as a present thing our association with that victorious Christ in a walk which excludes the thought of any opposing power from without, and is filled with love, that pure nature of God alone.

Having thus considered the manner and the sphere of Christian responsibility, let us now finally note the nature of it. This develops itself in two forms, namely, according as the truth is in Jesus and according to God, being created in righteousness and holiness of truth. In a word, having put off the old man, it is the new man put on, the spirit of our mind being thus renewed unfailingly in communion with its divine source. The motives for the new man are therefore drawn from the living membership of love expressed in the body and from the activities of grace. The powerful Source of that grace, God's Holy Spirit, who seals us in view of the day when all that grieves shall cease for ever, must control every expression of our life,

producing towards each other the same exercise of grace which in Christ God has shown to us.

To be imitators of God, therefore, sums up the whole responsibility of the saints in its principle, He being light and love, and Christ the full, perfect expression of this in manhood. Of this divine love in relation to man, Christ is the one divine example in delivering Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. In us, therefore, all selfishness and lust of having, which is the opposite of self-surrender in love, is to be absolutely denied.

We are not love, which is sovereign in God, and absolutely free, but we are to walk in it obediently as beloved children. On the other hand, we are light in the Lord, and are to walk as children of it, proving what is agreeable to the Lord, and reproving what is exposed by it. Christ alone indeed is the active source of light, and where a soul is asleep among the dead it must be aroused to benefit by the beams of it and understand the will of the Lord. Moreover, filled with the Spirit, the heart pours itself out in praise and thanksgiving to God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, being alone subject to the claims of love and the fear of Christ, and free from every foe as well as the motives of the flesh. In this way it is that membership of the body and full practical association in walk with our ascended and

“THE DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN.” 289

victorious Christ, heavenly and supreme, and who fills all things, is now manifested in the saints, while we yet await the glorious display of this association.

In conclusion, let us note that the one body, the truth of which penetrates all the teaching of this epistle, is not understood intellectually; but, to the spiritual apprehension, is of the simplest, as seen by faith in an exalted Christ. Paul himself seized this glorious and living fact in the vision of that Blessed One, who, speaking in heavenly glory, identified Himself as one with His persecuted saints on earth. What was true of them is true of us, and Paul learned it by vision and revelation to teach it us that we might know it.

Who are “the Dearly Beloved Brethren”?

DEAR EDITOR,—The spiritual overseer of one of the parishes of England recently asked me to speak from his reading desk, but my arrangements for that Lord's Day had been made, and so he gave me a general invitation for a future time.

Some articles have also appeared in the *British Weekly* which I have read, and they

have now come out in book form, and are called a "History of Brethren,"* by the son of one who is known for his activities as a servant of Christ.

I should like to indicate from Scripture why one company is too large and the other too small to meet the requirements of apostolic language about the brotherhood.

The Established Church of this island teaches that this brotherhood is formed *by baptism*—"Wherein I was made a child of God" is the expression.

A few years ago, on the other side of the Channel, I was boxed up in a *diligence* with a Jesuit priest, whose teaching on this point was the same. "A very strange God," I said to him, "must be the One you are acquainted with, if those who murdered the Archbishop of Paris and others were His children, for all of them were baptized." God had attached His name as Father to the nation of the Jews, and yet when some of them claimed this relationship our Lord said to them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do" (John viii. 44).

I quite believe that all who live in the countries that speak of *the year of our Lord* are of the Christian and not of the Mohammedan or any other faith, and I believe that baptism

* Commonly called "Plymouth Brethren," because of a conflict that took place there between Truth and Error many years ago.

“THE DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN.” 291.

unto the death of Christ separates unto Him the Jews and heathen who profess faith in Christ—but this only adds emphasis to the apostle's words, “For ye are all the children (*sons*) of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26). When the Jews asked the Lord, “What must we do that we might work the works of God?” the reply was, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (John vi. 28, 29). There is therefore a revelation to the soul by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The necessity for this revelation may have been concealed from the soul by the presumption of the Churches. They have changed a word which fell from our Lord's lips to Nicodemus. He said: “Except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit.” The Churches are in error when they say, *Water means baptism; and further, therefore baptism is the instrument of new birth.*

Against such teaching we have the witness and statements of *three apostles*:—

First, Peter.—“Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God*” (1 Pet. i. 23).

Second, James.—“Of His own will *begat* He us with the *word of truth*” (ch. i. 18).

Third, Paul.—“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have *begotten* you *through the gospel*” (1 Cor. iv. 15).

A saying of Moody's in New York was scrip-

tural: "If I thought that baptism and not the Word could reach your souls, I should not be preaching to you here, but I should be in the street, throwing buckets of water over those I thought needed a change of soul."

With evidence such as that quoted from the apostles, and remembering "that no lie is of the truth," surely no one would condone the Church's error, nor be indifferent to the truth of God.

The apostle John gives as evidence that we have "passed from death unto life," "*because* we love the brethren" (John iii. 14). This would be meaningless if all men were the brotherhood. Peter, too, says, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood" (ch. ii. 17).

But we must go to the only begotten Son of God to have this mystery explained. He says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24).

"Life lay hid in folds of death."

On the resurrection morn, from the lips of the Holy One who was not allowed to see corruption are heard the words, "Go to *My brethren*" (for the first time did He use this expression) "and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John xx. 17). He becomes now the first-born of many brethren. This is a new creation.

The history of these brethren God has caused

“THE DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN.” 293

to be written for our learning in the Acts, and it is wisdom for us to be satisfied with this. Some who would add to the story, especially after so great a division amongst the brethren as Catholic and Protestant, will find how apt was C. H. Spurgeon's remark about such a history: “This history makes me think of one of those broad roads in America which as you travel west ends in a squirrel track.”

All of us, therefore, who are on “*the Church's one foundation*” would desire for our water-baptized companions that the words of a Christian poet may express their heartfelt aspirations:—

“To know the Christ of God,
The everlasting Son ;
To know what He on earth
For guilty man has done ;
This is the first and last of all that's true and wise,
The circle that includes all light beneath (above) the skies.
O God, unveil my heart, unseal my closed eyes,
Reveal Thy Christ to me.”

Again, in the prayer of Job, “That which I see not, teach Thou me” (ch. xxxiv. 32).

I would further admonish the would-be historians who are not satisfied with our Lord's prophetic history to live as the “sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life,” until the One who will sit on the throne of Jehovah in the place of His father David re-

wards in His kingdom those who serve Him in the time of His rejection.

And in the words of another poet :—

“Weary of all this wordy strife,
These notions, modes, and forms and names,
To Thee the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Whose love my simple heart inflames,
Divinely taught at length I fly,
With Thee and Thine to live and die.

Forth from the midst of Babel brought,
Parties and sects I cast behind ;
Enlarge my heart and free my thought
Where'er the latent truth I find,
The latent truth, with joy to own,
And bow to Jesu's name alone.

One with the little flock I rest,
The members sound who hold the head,
The chosen few with pardon blest,
And by the anointing Spirit led
Into the mind that was in Thee,
Into the depths of Deity.

My brethren, friends, and kinsmen these,
Who do my heavenly Father's will,
Who aim at perfect holiness,
And all Thy counsels to fulfil,
Athirst to be whate'er Thou art,
And love their God with all their heart.

From these, howe'er in flesh disjoined,
Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad ;
Unfeigned, unbounded love I find,
As constant as the life of God ;
Fountain of life from thence it sprang,
As pure, as even, and as strong.

Joined to the hidden Church unknown,
 In this sure bond of perfectness ;
 Obscurely safe I dwell alone,
 And glory in the uniting grace
 To me, to each believer given,
 To all Thy saints on earth in heaven."

"Therefore the world knoweth us not, because
 it knew Him not."—Yours, &c., H. T.

Village Evangelisation.

A PRINTED report of a year's work amongst the villages of Worcestershire lies before us. We are personally acquainted with the beloved fellow-labourer, and desire to commend him in his service for the Lord to the prayers of our Christian readers.

We would also suggest to all who take an interest in gospel work—and every true Christian should—that something might be done in the same way in all the counties of England, to say nothing of Scotland and Ireland.

The spiritual darkness of the villages is appalling. We recently spent two or three days in a village four miles from where our friend is now at work, and had opportunity to observe a little of what is the ordinary life of the place. From early morning till late at night, men, women, and even little children may be seen

drinking beer at the public-house—Sundays as well as week-days, in spite of legislation.

One of the saddest sights is to see parents holding the glass of ale to the lips of tiny mites of three and four years of age—alas! no uncommon sight. It makes the heart sicken to look forward into the future of those little children, thus early acquiring a taste for what will, but for the miracle of the grace of God, blight their lives and ruin their souls.

But is there no spiritual ministration in this village? Yes, there is the parish church. Returning rather earlier than usual on the Sunday night, we stood in the porch and heard the sermon. Not one word of Christ or the gospel from first to last. That sermon stirred one more even than the scenes witnessed near the village inn. The name of Christ was not mentioned, the atoning sacrifice of the cross was not alluded to. The text was good—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God," &c.—but the sermon! It was, in a nutshell, "How to avoid the little worries of life."

It was only too evident that the poor man in the pulpit had never experienced the converting power of God's grace. Not a word was said that was calculated to arouse the conscience of any of his audience; some were visibly asleep—all were asleep in a spiritual sense; and so they come and go week after week. It is difficult to believe that there is a single truly converted

member of that congregation ; surely the awful darkness of the pulpit would have stirred them up to some activity for the souls of the perishing people around them. In this village there is not even a Methodist Chapel or Mission Hall.

What can be done for the villages ?

First, let every Christian feel that he and she has a direct responsibility in the matter—a responsibility towards the God who has saved them, and a responsibility towards the world amongst whom they are bidden to shine as lights.

Secondly, let every Christian pray the young convert's prayer, " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? "

Thirdly, let every Christian do with all their heart what their Lord and Master bids them do. All are not preachers, but each one should be a fisher of men.

The friend to whom we have alluded has bought a movable wooden hall or tent, capable of seating about 150 people. It is now pitched in a village near the dark one we recently visited. It is refreshing to go round and hear what the Lord has done in that place, and of how He has saved souls.

Might not the like be attempted in many villages ? The initial cost of such a hall is not great, and young Christians could go round with gospel books from house to house, and gather sometimes the children, at other times their

parents, and simply tell forth the good news of the grace of God.

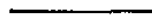
“Work for the night is coming.”

A hall of this description can be used in winter as well as in summer, and the winter is often the best time for such work. ED.



The Passover and the Red Sea.

(EXOD. xii.-xv.)



WE always find in the deliverance of God's people that God is also going to punish the world. He bears testimony against it, a universal testimony, without excepting anybody. Hence the gospel begins with treating the world as already condemned. God has made trial in every way of the human heart. The gospel supposes that this probation is closed, and declares all the world lost.

In Egypt God was content with the firstborn of each house as a manifestation of His judgment. Pharaoh would not let the people of God go. When God demanded as a right that they should serve Him, the world—Pharaoh, its prince—would not yield. Signs and plagues were then wrought to arrest their attention and enforce the rights of God, but Egypt would not listen. Pharaoh was hard, then hardened, and

THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA. 299

at last became a monument of judgment for the instruction of all men. So it was in the days of Noah, and so it is now that the world once more is warned of the approaching judgment of God. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and on them that obey not the gospel.

Meanwhile God demands a complete submission to His revealed will. He demands that the world should submit to Jesus; all those who will not shall be forced to do so when judgment comes, and then to their own confusion and endless sorrow.

To believe in the Son is eternal life, is salvation; to reject the Son of God is judgment. God will have a surrender of the heart to Jesus as Saviour and Lord—a surrender to His own grace in Him. Thus is the heart and everything else changed, and all question as to good works is set aside. All turns on receiving or rejecting Jesus. If Jesus is welcomed there is life; if Jesus is refused there must be vengeance by-and-by for those who do not submit. How happy for the poor convicted sinner that he has not to search in himself for something to present to God! If the heart is open to receive Christ, He is the perfection that is needed, and the moral effects soon and surely follow.

Still, the Word of God presents the certainty of judgment. The world will not obey the

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gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and yet hopes to escape judgment. But God holds to His rights, and nothing is well if Jesus be not received in faith.

In Jesus all that is perfect in God and man is presented to the conscience. The holiness of God is there, not condemning, but in perfect grace ; but God will have an entire submission to Jesus. Nobody that comes is cast out. He is God in all His goodness to attract hearts ; He is man in all His lowliness to exercise no will, no choice, but to receive every one that comes to Him, for such is the will of Him that sent Him ; but God desires submission to Jesus. If Jesus is rejected, this is the conclusive proof that the heart will not have God in any way that He takes in presenting Himself to man. It is the evidence of man's heart, of his pride, of his hardness, and his levity. Nothing like these can stand in the presence of God, and Jesus manifested His presence in love. Pride is ashamed of the cross. Vanity cannot go on before Jesus, despised and rejected of man.

God searches the heart in this way, and man does not like it. He is bound to own himself a sinner, to submit his conscience, and give up his will ; but he will not. It is the joy of Jesus to seek the wanderer ; but to return to his rags, to show his wretchedness, is most distasteful to man's nature ; grace alone can make him do so. The heart cannot endure to be laid completely

THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA. 301

bare ; but if man is to be blest, God must search the heart, and He saves the soul for ever. God acts according to what He is, not according to our thoughts. If man will not believe in Jesus, God will manifest what He is by judgment.

Egypt must be smitten. But first we have the security of such as submit to God, confiding in the sprinkled blood of the Lamb. Israel was well aware of the judgment about to be executed upon the land of Egypt. It should always be thus with renewed souls. They ought to consider the ways of God, when He will judge the world in righteousness.

When God reveals the judgment He reveals also the means of escaping it. The soul that has the fear of God keeps close to His word, and the question is raised between *God* and *Israel*. Could Israel stand if God came in in judgment? The Egyptians were sinners, and would surely be judged ; but if God came down to judge, what were the children of Israel? Where were *their* sins? God directs Moses that they should take of the blood of the slain lamb, and strike it on the two sideposts and on the upper doorpost of their houses. " And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are ; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt " (Exod. xii. 13). To the mind of man it was folly, but the sim-

302 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

plicity of faith knows the word of God, and acts upon it. The destroying angel of Jehovah passed through the land, and if there had been Israelites ever so honest, but without the blood on their doorposts, he must enter and slay (Heb. xi. 28). For God was under this sign judging sin, and sin levels all distinctions; and where the blood was not, there sin was in all its hatefulness to a holy God—sin unatoned for and unjudged.

So, now, it is Christ and salvation; or, no Christ and no salvation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). There is the utmost certainty for those within the blood-sprinkled doors. It is the Lord who executes the judgment by His angel. It is impossible for Him to be deceived, and impossible for man to escape; but He says, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." There cannot be a doubt, whatever the judgment.

It is not said, when *you* see the blood, but "when *I* see" it. The soul of an awakened person often rests, not on its own righteousness, but on the way in which it sees the blood. Now, precious as it is to have the heart impressed with it, this is not the ground of peace. Peace is founded on *God's* seeing it. He cannot fail to estimate it at its full and perfect value as putting away sin. It is He that abhors and has been offended by sin; He sees the value of the

THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA. 303

blood as putting it away. It may be said, But must I not have faith in its value? This is faith in its value, namely, to see that God looks at it as putting away sin. Your value for it looks at it as a question of the measure of your feelings. Faith looks at God's thoughts.

God, then, sees the blood : on that we rest to escape judgment, not upon our own view either of sin or of the blood of the Lamb. God Himself estimates the blood of His own Son, as He it is who fully hates our sin : we feel both most when we enter into this, and rest on it in faith. Faith lays hold of His judgment of sin, and feels the need of His value for the blood of Christ.

This is the first great question—a question between a holy God and a sinful people. God appears as judge. The expiatory blood of redemption bars to Him the way as judge, and secures the people infallibly ; but God does not enter within—its value is to secure from judgment.

The people, having eaten in haste with the bitter herbs of repentance, begin their journey ; but they do so in Egypt ; yet now God can be, and He is, with them. The more we know Christ, and enjoy His purity, the more gravely shall we feel our sins. It was then that the Israelites ate the lamb, but they ate it in security. It would have been sin to have thought that God could fail in His word or His deliverance ; and it is sin now to doubt that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.

Israel may be in Egypt, but they are no longer slaves there. Their loins are girded that night, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in hand. Such, too, is our position in the world. Israel began their journey with the question of sin settled. They had been secured, and they knew it, even in the midst of God's judgment of sin. When the revelation of God enters the heart, one cannot find peace till the revelation of His grace is as clear to us as that of His dealing with sin. The Christian finds his judgment fallen on Christ Himself; he begins with submitting to the righteousness of God, who condemns our nature and acts, root and branch, but shows us the condemnation borne by the Lord Jesus.

Have you submitted to Jesus? God demands it. He asks for no other offering nor sacrifice; He presents Jesus, and shows you what you are. The worst sinners in the world may be received in grace by Jesus. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 1).

When Israel went forth, the rage of Satan knew no bounds. Pharaoh made ready all the chariots of Egypt, and his horsemen, and his army, and pursued after. Never had Israel been so sad as they were on the eve of their new deliverance. But now that sin in their case was settled, it was a question solely between *God and the enemy*. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of

THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA. 305

the Lord, which He will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses."

It is well to distinguish the judgment of the first-born from that of the Red Sea. The one was the first-fruits of the other, and ought to have deterred Pharaoh from his rash pursuit. But the blood which kept the people from the judgment of God meant something far deeper and far more serious than even the Red Sea, though judgment was executed there too. What happened at the Red Sea was, it is true, the manifestation of the illustrious power of God, who destroyed, with the breath of His mouth, the enemy that stood in rebellion against Him. It was the final and destructive judgment which effected the deliverance of His people by His power. But the blood of the paschal Lamb signified the moral judgment of God, and the full and entire satisfaction of all that was in His

being. God, such as He was, in His justice, His holiness, and His truth, could not touch those who were sheltered by that blood. Was there sin? His love towards His people had found the means of satisfying the requirements of His justice; and at the sight of that blood, which answered everything that was perfect in His being, He passed over it consistently with His justice and even His truth. Nevertheless, God, even in passing over, is seen as Judge. Hence, likewise, so long as the soul is on this ground, its peace is uncertain, its way in Egypt, even though all the while truly converted; because God has still the character of Judge to it, and the power of the enemy is still there.

At the Red Sea, God acts in power according to the purposes of His love. Consequently the enemy, who was closely pursuing the people, is destroyed without resource. This is what will happen at the last day for the people, already, in reality—to the eye of God—sheltered through the blood. As to the moral type, the Red Sea is evidently the death and resurrection of Jesus and of His people *in Him*; God acting in it in order to bring them out of death, where He had brought them *in Christ*, and consequently beyond the possibility of being reached by the enemy. We are made partakers of it already through faith. Sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood, we are delivered by His power that acts for us from the power of Satan, the prince

THE PASSOVER AND THE RED SEA. 307

of this world. The blood screening us from the judgment of God was the beginning ; the power which raised us up with Christ made us free from the whole power of Satan who followed us, and from all his attacks and accusations.

The world which will follow that way is swallowed up in the waters. This is a solemn warning ; for the world which calls itself Christian does take the ground of a judgment to come, and the need of righteousness ; but not according to God. The Christian goes through it in Christ, knowing himself otherwise lost and hopeless—the worldling in his own strength, and is swallowed up. Israel saw the Red Sea in its strength, and thought escape was impossible. So an awakened conscience dreads death and judgment. But Christ has died and borne judgment for us, and we are secured and delivered by that which in itself we dreaded. The worldling, seeing this, adopts the truth in his own strength, as if there were no danger, and is lost in his false confidence. To the believer, what was the subject of his fear—death and judgment—gives him joy, now that he knows the results, in God's hand, of the death of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the standing witness that the Christian's judgment is past, and that the world's judgment is coming (Rom. iv. ; Acts xvii.). Christ is risen, and therefore we are justified in Him ; so is the world to be judged by Him. J. N. D.

An Old Hymn.

1850.

ROLL on, roll on, ye waves of sorrow, roll !
A Father's hand supports my fainting head ;
Each heavy tide brings nearer to the goal,
And known to God is every tear I shed.
Calmly on Jesus' bosom I recline—
All heaven and earth are mine.

Smile on, smile on, thou vain deceitful world !
Ah ! what to me is thine unhallowed mirth ?
I've seen the banner of *the cross* unfurled,
Weighed in *its* scales the precious things of earth.
Farewell, false world ! I love "the Crucified,"
And *here* He groaned and died.

Whirl on, whirl on, ye giddy, glittering rounds !
Wealth, honour, pleasure—what are you to me ?
Far beyond all that mortal vision bounds,
The "Lamb of God" upon the throne I see.
Ah ! to an eye lit up by glory's beams
Things *here* are fading dreams.

Frown on, frown on, thou bitter, bitter foe !
I do not fear thy power or hellish art :
Thou canst not break the oath of God ; ah no !
Nor canst thou tear me from a Saviour's heart.
Safe in His arms the "Shepherd" bears me home,
And I *must* overcome.

Glide on, glide on, ye days and months and years !
Father ! I ask but to be spent for Thee.
What though I sojourn in a vale of tears,
To live is Christ, to die is gain to me.
O God ! at what a price Thou purchasedst this
Full boundless cup of bliss !

Outline of the Epistle to the Ephesians—No. 6.

CHAP. V. 22—VI.—THE HEAVENLY BRIDE AND THE HEAVENLY WARFARE.

BEFORE speaking of the conflict with the heavenly principalities and authorities into which the saints are brought in their responsibility of faithfulness to Christ, in His place of supremacy, as against the spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies, the apostle takes occasion by the relationships of nature, and his exhortations as to these, to develop fully the doctrine of the assembly as the bride of Christ.

As previously remarked, Paul learnt, when Saul of Tarsus, the essential principle of Christ's heavenly relationship to the assembly in those striking words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" the first and last spoken from heaven by Jesus of Nazareth audibly to the ears of men on earth. Those poor trembling sufferers on earth whom Saul was haling to prison were one with that heavenly Man who was his Lord. This was the great substratum underlying all Paul's teaching, though only here and there coming to the surface. Twice already in this epistle it has been introduced—at the end of chapter i., where Christ in supremacy is head over all things to

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the assembly, which is His body ; and again in chapter iv. 16, where the body is seen to derive its nature and constitution from the Head, love and union by the Spirit, and divine beauty being produced in power by the harmonious working of the members (see vers. 4-12). In the passage now before us (vers. 22-32), while referring again to these two aspects, the apostle in his exhortations to the wives and husbands brings out the third form of that union of Christ and the assembly, namely the union of association, as of a man united to his wife.

The relationship of obedience is first before his mind. For the wives, as for the assembly, submission is the prime essential, since the Head is in supremacy. And if joined to him, as the assembly is to Christ, it is nevertheless in subordination (ver. 24). But the union is one of mutual responsibilities, to be fulfilled on the husband's part in love. In the case of Christ and the assembly, His love has been already absolutely shown in identifying Himself, by sacrifice, with us in all our sinful state, the judgment of which gave occasion to the expression in Him of all that was divinely fragrant and precious to God, as the answer morally in Man to all that He is in Himself. In love He delivered Himself up, but it was in order that He might sanctify the assembly, purifying it by the washing of water by the Word. The thought here is not the putting away of our sins, necessary as this

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 311

was, but the procuring of that which was in perfect consonance with Himself. The type of this we have in Eve, formed out of a rib taken from Adam's side while in a deep sleep, and brought to him, of whom he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

Accordingly the thought, not now of subordination, but of derivation of nature and constitution from the man is here in view. So the assembly is purified by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless, in perfect conformity with His own nature and character. This aspect of union to Christ is special to the body of which we are members (ver. 30), thus coming under His peculiar consideration and tender care (vers. 28, 29).

Another form of union, as a moral consequence of the preceding, is now introduced, namely, that of which the bride is the particular figure. The responsibility of the Man, in love and devotedness, is still the question; and the great fundamental principle of marriage, laid down at its original institution (Gen. ii. 25), is here insisted on. The man shall leave his primal condition in order to be united to his wife. This is the union of association, not now of subordination or derivation, true as these are. How divinely this has been accomplished in Christ need not be said, emptying Himself of the form of God,

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yet ever God Himself, to be a servant in manhood for love to His Father, and to possess us in the association of love, as one with Himself! It is the great mystery of Christ and the assembly.

Love on His part and the obedience of loving fear on ours are the morally divine qualities that give present, as well as the eternal, realisation of this unique relationship.

Obedience is the unchangeable and divine link with eternity in all the relationships of dependence, such as children and bondmen—obedience found now in a passing scene of time and nature, but continuing uninterruptedly till the new creation, when love, dependence, and obedience will alone abide. To these therefore, now the exhortations of the Spirit chiefly refer. Children in the flesh we are, or have been; and servants have masters now according to the flesh. By-and-by, when parents and masters exist no more, we shall still be children, but in relationship with God alone; and servants we shall remain, of Christ alone. But whether then or now, obedience abides as the one constant, enduring principle of good.

Having thus considered the Christian walk, both in connection with the unity of the Spirit as well as in the relationships of nature, together with the morally divine and heavenly qualities concerned in it, the apostle turns his thoughts finally towards the activities of spiritual evil and

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 313

the machinations of him who in subtilty opposes the purposes and thoughts of God. His teaching as to this and the warfare involved assumes a heavenly character, as indeed all the doctrine of the apostle does.

Here it is not grace and gift (cf. 2 Tim. i. 6, ii. 1), as in chap. iv., and every foe annihilated by another, but *we* are to be strong in the Lord and in the might of His strength. It is a warfare in which no grace can be shown, and no peace made with the enemy; and the panoply of God is needed to resist him. The struggle is in respect of his artifices, yet not with him as the serpent and his deceits, nor the adversary, Satan, and his practices (as the dragon he has not yet appeared). We have to meet him in the heavenly places and under the eye of God, as the accuser in whose person is centred all the activity of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies, set in dignity as they are, and exercising authority. As zealous for righteousness, and exposing, as a heavenly luminary, the character of what comes under his cognisance, he seeks by artifice, bringing accusation against those who are before God on behalf of the interests of Christ in His saints, to discomfit and baffle them, occupying them with their own state necessarily, as failing men, instead of with the service and glory of Christ. In a word, his aim is to prove them fit only for the confessional, but inefficient for the fight. Therefore the need for the panoply of God, for it is an evil day. Till

its close, we are responsible for the glory of Christ, and are placed at the source of all power in God to maintain it.

But on our part, as warriors on the side of the divine and heavenly Man, we must be invulnerable to the enemy's attacks. No chance of alleging inconsistency with our heavenly character must be given. The loins must be girt about with truth—all our motives and purposes kept within the compass of what suits an ascended Christ. If not, our state of soul would falsify our prayers for His glory in the saints. How quick to note it would the accuser be ; and quick the answer of the throne ! Confession, then, and not conflict, would become us.

The breastplate of righteousness must also be put on. This is the practical answer in walk to our place in Christ ; for if this were lacking, the enemy would surely bring a charge to our discomfiture. Not less so if our feet were not shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. For how could we consistently be engaged in the concerns of Christ if not perfectly at peace as to all that concerns ourselves, and in our ways with others ?

Moreover, as necessary to give effect to all the rest, there is the shield of faith—that perfect confidence in God in regard to His counsels for the glory of Christ and His saints. Without this, how could the Christian warrior stand unmoved amidst all the havoc wrought by satanic

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS. 315

mischief in the assembly? The saint knows God's purposes cannot fail; and however thick and fast the inflamed darts of the wicked one may fall, and great apparently his success, the certainty of Christ's triumph already known to faith nullifies the foe's attack, quenches his darts, and enables the heart to rest confidently in God, and continue in unceasing intercession for His saints. For himself the helmet of salvation removes all fear; and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word applied to govern his heart and ways, protects him, while it discovers and defeats the wicked one. The Word of God being the revelation of grace in Christ, detects the artifices of the enemy in his pretentious zeal for righteousness, as an angel of light. It is, moreover, a guard to us in leading the obedient heart by a divine path wherein the wicked one toucheth us not.

Thus equipped and armed, the warfare is waged in praying at all seasons with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. For if in answer to our prayers God intervene, the saints prevail; but if the devil's accusations are made good, then he prevails. And as Christ's glory is linked with all His saints, supplication must be made for all with perseverance, and watchfulness so as to apprehend their needs. Moreover in our prayers the preaching servant, as Paul was, must have a special place, that utterance with boldness in the mystery of the gospel may be given him, for

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Christ's interests are bound up with the affairs and state of such.

But no conflict can disturb or touch our relations with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom there is ever the uninterrupted outflow of peace to the brethren, and love with faith—a grace which is with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Secure in all things Godward, protected in all points against the devil—the spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies—the brethren can withstand in the evil day, bearing onward in prayer for all saints the glory of Christ until the end.

W. T. W.

Signs of the Times.

NO student of Scripture will be surprised at the state of things both in the Established Church of this country and the various Nonconformist bodies. All has been foretold. The views on Inspiration now current amongst the principal clergy, ministers, and professors of theology, are amongst the most serious signs of the times.

But every one will surely be pained at the outspoken infidelity of the Bishop of Wakefield in his recent address to the members of the

Leeds Branch of the Parents' National Education Union.

Let every Christian parent well weigh the result, so far as their children are concerned, of handing over the religious education of their little ones to such men or their deputies.

We hold that it is the parents' duty as well as privilege to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in nothing is their responsibility greater than in that which concerns the soul and the child's eternal interests.

Yet we have met with cases of culpable carelessness, children being sent to convent schools where they are trained in sacramentalism and sacerdotalism, and allowed to go to denominational Sunday schools, where, alas! the teachers are becoming familiarised with such views of the Bible as the Bishop of Wakefield unblushingly gave utterance to.

Dr Eden insinuates that the children are the ones in whose minds the questions as to the Bible originate. This is not by any means the case; almost invariably infidelity comes second-hand, and doubts are suggested to the minds of the young by those who have grown older in unbelief—a crime if ever there was one, a crime of darkest dye, a devilish crime, for Satan was the first one to ask, "Hath God said?"

"For centuries," we are told, "it was believed that every part of Scripture was equally inspired.

Even educated people had found it a great relief to be told such elementary truths as these :—The Bible is not infallible, the Bible is not necessarily literal and exact ; it is not a scientific text-book—he was glad they had at last realised that ; the books were not necessarily written by the authors whose names they bore ; these names had absolutely no authority except old traditions of the Jewish race. . . . Once they realised these facts, and understood the great purpose of inspiration, they would lose the paralysing and crippling fear of answering truthfully the direct questions of children. They would no longer be reduced to the pious impotence of harmonising contradictions, or accounting for absolutely impossible phenomena by unnatural miraculous power.”

The “questions of children” above alluded to, whenever there are such, are the results of listening to the unholy speculations of such theologians as the Bishop himself.

The trouble is that an immense number of preachers to-day no longer believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God ; this unbelief is found amongst the leading men of both Church and Dissent, who propagate their infidelity amongst the rising generation of preachers, so that the minds of the people are becoming saturated with religious doubts. Add to this the natural dislike to the plain truths of the Bible, and we can easily understand with what

“HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE.” 319

rapid strides Christendom is hurrying along to complete apostasy.

Is there a remedy? None. All this sorrowful state of things has been abundantly foretold in the Scriptures of truth. We are in the last days, and so far as Christendom is concerned there is no recovery, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. iii. 13).

But at any rate Christian parents should awake to their responsibilities and withdraw both themselves and their children from all danger of contamination with these “damnable heresies” (2 Pet. ii. 1).

ED.

“He Came and Preached Peace.”

EPH. ii. 11-17.

HOW blessed and full is the preaching of peace by Jesus Christ! He it is who by His cross has made peace, breaking down the enmity existing between Jew and Gentile, and making of twain one new man. He it is who, by that same cross, has for believers slain the enmity that existed in Jew and Gentile alike against God, reconciling “both unto God in one body.”

Further, He, who has wrought so won-

320 THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

drously in His death, is now, as the risen and glorified One, our Peace.

Now He who has made peace, has Himself preached peace; and if we turn to the twentieth of John, we get in His own blessed words a threefold presentation of peace for the present and eternal rest of our souls.

Before, however, we look at this, let us notice, for it is of paramount importance to do so, that Jesus had risen from the dead and declared to His brethren: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (ver. 17). Only on resurrection ground could such a message of peace, and such a revelation of the Father, be made; for "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. xv. 17).

But, blessed be God, He has raised Him up from among the dead, and on the first day of the week—the resurrection day—when His disciples were met together with shut doors for fear of the Jews, Jesus Himself comes into their midst and says, "Peace be unto you" (ver. 19), and then He showed unto them His hands and His side. There were the marks of His atoning sacrifice of Himself for them, in the nail-prints in His hands and the spear-thrust in His side.

Truly, "the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." He had been into death itself, to make peace with God for them; and the fact of His

“HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE.” 321

presence among them as alive from the dead, was God's proof to them of His perfect satisfaction with, and acceptance of, the atoning sacrifice He offered. Consequently, the Holy Spirit declares to us that “Jesus our Lord . . . was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace *with* God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. iv. 24-v. 1).

This first presentation of peace, then, by our blessed Saviour, was that of peace *with* God on the ground of an atonement made and accepted.

But in verse 21, the Lord again goes on to speak words of peace to His own, on sending them out for Himself into a world full of unrest and turmoil, a scene of Satan's power and opposition to all that is of God. “Peace be unto you : as My Father hath sent Me : even so send I you.” He, the Sent One of the Father, trod the pathway through this world, meeting in its fulness all the opposing forces of man and the devil, touched by the weary restlessness and sorrow that sin had brought in, turning the fair handiwork of God into a groaning creation. Yet through it all, and in spite of his having to all appearance “spent His strength for nought and in vain,” what perfect peace of soul was His! ever in communion with His Father and able to thank Him (see Matt. xi. 20-26).

Now He was departing out of this world and returning to the Father, and so He leaves them

here for Himself, but makes known to them His Father as their Father, so that in communion with their Father they, too, might have that peace which was His. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John xiv. 27). No, indeed! the world knows not that peace. When things go smoothly with it—well; but when circumstances are dark and sorrowful it has no peace. This peace that Jesus gives, depends not on changing circumstances, but is often known and enjoyed most when all around is darkest and exceedingly sorrowful—when perhaps some service the Lord has given to be done for Him, seems to have failed in its results, or when personal surroundings are painful and grievous. Then, as Jesus had, we have our resource and stay in God. "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6-17).

This second announcement of peace, then, would be that of the peace *of* God, known and enjoyed so perfectly by the One who has left us an example to follow His steps, sending us forth in service to God, even as He Himself was sent forth in service by His Father.

These first two announcements of peace, were made on the first day of the week, the third

“HE CAME AND PREACHE PEACE.” 323

(ver. 26) was on the eighth day, another Lord's Day, likewise bringing before us the thought of resurrection ; but here, I believe, not only the Lord's resurrection (that the first day does), but carrying us on to the time when His own will be also raised and taken to be with Him for eternity. “Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming” (1 Cor. xv. 23).

Here, then, the Lord salutes His loved ones with “Peace be unto you”—peace, perfect and unbroken for eternity.

Now “Thomas was with them.” Poor doubting Thomas, who would not believe till he had seen, had consequently during that time between the first day and the eighth day missed the joy of known peace, though the value of Christ's work for him in God's sight was just as great as for the other disciples, and though it was as true that God was his Father as theirs.* Now in the presence of his risen Saviour there could be no more doubts or fears, but perfect peace.

So with believers at the present time, how many are tortured with doubts and fears, not knowing settled peace with God (to say nothing of the peace of God), though it may be known as a present reality on the authority of God's own word already quoted in Romans v.

* Thomas may also be taken as representing the Jews of the coming day, who will believe only when they see Jesus.

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Thank God that in the glory there will be no doubting ones—all then will be brought into the full realisation of unruffled peace for ever.

But why should there be even now the unhappiness of peace not known, when Jesus Himself points to His hands and side in token of the sufferings of death that He endured to secure that peace for us, and God has raised Him from the dead, thus proving His perfect satisfaction with the work accomplished for the believer? Look again at those simple yet wonderful verses in Romans. Christ Jesus “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Now when faith rests simply on Christ as the once crucified One, and now risen One, what is the blessed result? “*Justified*,” and being justified, “*peace with God*.” Further still, the apostle then unfolds to us our present standing *in the grace or favour of God*, while we look forward—not doubting in fear and trembling, but with joy—to the “*glory of God*.”

Just one other point. See how much Thomas missed through not being “with them when Jesus came” (ver. 24). What a striking illustration of the need for the exhortation in Hebrews x. 25, “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Alas! that it should be the manner of some.

May God stir up our hearts increasingly as the day approaches, to make every effort to be found where the two or three are gathered in the

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS. 325

name of the Lord Jesus, not letting any trifle be a sufficient excuse to stop away. Do we really consider that just as really as "Jesus came" to those disciples assembled together with closed doors, and preached peace to them with His own loved voice, so really is Jesus always "in the midst" of those gathered in His name? (Matt. xviii. 20). But so it is; and just as really will He speak to our hearts by His written word made good to us by the Holy Spirit which He has given to us.

Let us then, beloved brethren, make the most of the privileges given to us on Lord's Days and week days, counting on our blessed Lord Himself to minister to our souls, thus filling them with peace and joy, causing them to overflow in praise and worship, and enabling us to walk worthy of Him to His own praise and glory!

W. H. S. F.



The Day of Small Things.



IN these days small things are considered of no account, and are despised by many in Christendom.

Such a thought too often gains an entrance into the minds of those who are the Lord's, and begets mourning over weakness and the apparent

lack of results of service. Is not this but another way of lamenting that we have no resources in ourselves? "My strength is made perfect in weakness," the Lord said. And mark the cheerful response from "a man in Christ": "Most *gladly* therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Paul took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; "for when I am weak, then am I strong," he says, and we also know this to be so (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). Let us therefore take pleasure in being made weak, in order that we may be sustained by the grace of God, and that the power of Christ may rest upon us. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, and despised things, and things which are not (1 Cor. i. 27-29), so "that no flesh should glory in His presence." *Christ* is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; "that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

Who thought anything of the Lord Jesus when a babe in the manger? It was surely *not* the religious leaders of Judea, nor their priests (except Zacharias, who was righteous before God), and it was not the distinguished Rabbis, who cared for Him. It was a small remnant of those who came from the Babylonish captivity, who were awaiting the Lord Jesus, and thought a great deal of Him then. They may have

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS. 327

appeared of no account in the sight of men, but they were highly honoured of God. An angel spoke to the humble shepherds, who were of that same company, on the plains of Bethlehem at night, of the birth of "Christ the Lord," and a multitude of the heavenly host, in their hearing, at the mention of the Lord's birth, suddenly praise God and say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke ii. 11-14). The Holy Ghost was moving John the Baptist, who was of that little remnant, to speak of Christ as the Light that shineth amid the moral and religious darkness. It was his joy to preach Christ, and he was honoured by seeing the heavens opened upon Jesus, and the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him, and hearing "a voice from heaven saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 16, 17).

Not many believed John's preaching, but the Lord said of him, "Among those that are born of women there is not a *greater* prophet than John the Baptist" (Luke vii. 28).

Anna, another of that little company, "gave thanks unto the Lord," and spoke of Him "to *all* them who looked for redemption in Jerusalem;" while just and devout Simeon, who was waiting for Christ, was ready and happy to depart at His coming. He was another of that godly remnant. Mary was pondering and treasuring in her heart the things concerning Christ, of which the Holy

Ghost testified, and Zacharias and Elisabeth, likewise of that remnant, were speaking of and rejoicing in Christ; and others, too, gave thanks and worshipped (Luke ii.). It was the brightest scene on earth—Jesus was there, and the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, was with them, however much despised they may have been by others.

This godly remnant did not despise a day of small things, and the Lord honoured them with His presence.

There may be something similar to this in these days, with a difference, however—the Lord Jesus, who was crucified, is risen from amongst the dead, glorified in heaven, and seated upon the Father's throne, and yet He is in the midst of those gathered to His name (Matt. xviii. 20), invisible to mortal eyes, but just as really present to faith as though visible. To such the Holy Spirit makes Christ precious, and to them the glory of His Person is sacred and dear; His Name is enough for them. He *alone* is worthy to be adored and followed. Such a company, although weak and small, could depend upon the Holy Spirit to make known to them the things concerning Christ from the written and inspired Word of God—the Holy Bible. And the Lord could take up and send forth any of that feeble few to labour for Him in faith, love, and patience of hope until He comes; and He would surely own such services in opening hearts,

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS. 329

if even a few, to receive and believe in Him. God will always bear testimony to His beloved Son, and carry on His work of gathering to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us then boldly preach and speak of the beloved Son of God, and esteem the reproaches of Christ of far greater riches than the treasures of this world.

Like Anna, let us continue to delight to speak of Christ to all those who are looking for Him to come; and like Simeon, let us be glad for Christ to come, for the joy of being with Him. May we ponder in our hearts the things concerning Christ, and seek to carry out in our daily walk the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures, which through grace we have been taught to love and revere, because they testify of Christ. The test of our love to Him is keeping His words and obeying them (John xiv. 15, 23, 24).

Are there any Christians who consider it a little thing to devote some time to prayer for all believers in Christ, that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, and that they may enter more into the love of Christ, and be filled with the fulness of God? There may be those who esteem it too small a service. Yet the Lord appreciates and commends such a labour of love, and it is a valuable and an important service to the Church of God. Epaphras, a dear servant of Christ, we are told, was "*labour-*

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ing fervently " in prayers always for the saints of God, that they " may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God " ; he had the Lord's approval (Col. iv. 12, 13).

May the Lord stir up the hearts of His own to excel more and more in this work of faith and labour of love.

Shepherding and feeding the flock of God may be a service little desired or thought of, but the Lord's words to Peter are, " Feed My lambs, feed My sheep, shepherd My sheep " (John xxi. 15-17). Comforting the sorrowing and tried, encouraging the weak, and bearing the burdens of the afflicted ; searching out the straying, gathering the scattered ; instructing those who oppose themselves ; speaking a word in season to the weary, and to those out of the way ; visiting the sick ; helping on all, and exhorting one another,—these are indeed services of love to the Lord. Oh what a wide field of labour for Him all this is !

The promise to such labourers is " a crown of glory that fadeth not away," to be given them at the appearing of " the Chief Shepherd." May we earnestly covet this pastoral gift ; let us encourage all who are engaged in this service, because the flock of God is very dear to Christ (1 Pet. v. 4). *A cup of cold water* may not seem to be of much account, but the Lord says, " And whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones *a cup of cold water* only, in the name of a disciple,

verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. x. 42).

"For who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zech. iv. 6-10).

W. E. S.

A Great Calm.

THE fourth chapter of the gospel by Mark contains, in vers. 26-29, a parable or similitude of the Kingdom not mentioned by the other evangelists. Following as it does upon the parable of the sower, and the Lord's exposition of it to His disciples, and bearing in mind that this gospel presents our Lord Jesus Christ as the Servant-Prophet, the Minister of the Word, we shall see that these verses serve, if one may so speak, to maintain the spiritual sequence of the first part of the chapter with the last scene upon the lake, concerning which it is upon my heart to say a few words.

We have, first, in the parable of the sower the new place the Lord takes consequent upon His rejection, viz., One *bringing* that which has life in it, instead of *seeking* fruit from men. The explanation follows, and then in the verses above cited there is an indication of what would succeed the time of seed-sowing by the Lord personally—that He would absent Himself from the scene of labour, and according to all appearance would

not only take no active part in tending the seed, but so far as could be observed, would take no interest in it. It is as if He "should *sleep and rise* night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how" (ver. 27). Let us observe in passing the expression "sleep and rise," for this thought seems to recur at the close of the chapter. The earth brings forth fruit of itself, but at harvest-time the Lord personally reasserts His place, and puts in the sickle. So will it be at the end of the age. The parable of the mustard-tree follows, which develops the thought of what Christendom would become in the world during Christ's absence. Springing from the smallest of seeds, having the most circumscribed commencement, it would become great; as it is said, "greater than all herbs, and shoot out great branches," so that the fowls of the air (the powers of evil, compare vers. 4, 15) may lodge under the shadow of it.

Now this is what we find true to-day. Christendom has become a worldly power, and for faith there is oftentimes the deep exercise, "Where is Christ in all this?" What a comfort that when they were alone "He expounded all things to His disciples." If we cultivated communion more with Christ *alone*, we should understand His things better. The slackness is with us, never with Him (compare Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17).

The evening has now drawn on the close of the day of toil, and one cannot forbear the com-

A GREAT CALM.

333

parison that the day of seed-sowing and salvation is rapidly drawing to an end. What has the heart of the disciple to steady it in a world like this, which becomes a foreign element to him when he knows Christ. Oh! these blessed words, "Let *us* pass over unto the other side" (ver. 35). What security they breathe! what joy! In spite of the fact that the world sees Him not, we see Him (John xiv. 19), and in all the confusion of the present moment, His word strengthens the feeble, and claims the allegiance of all. "Let *us* pass over *unto the other side*." What room for fear in the heart of the disciples if they had seen what the words implied? They meant that He charged Himself with their safety right over to the other shore. And yet they cry out in the presence of what appears danger with the unbelieving thought that He cared not if they perished!

Yes! but you may say He was asleep. Beloved reader, after that word, "Let us go," whatever happened, they were secure. It was only to sight and sense that He seemed to take no interest in their welfare, but neither the storms of life nor all the powers of evil, can engulf us if we confide in Him. He *slept*, but at their cry He *arose* (compare ver. 27), and rebuking the elements, the disciples see the power and love that was with them *all the time* though they knew it not. "And there was *a great calm*" (ver. 39). Is it too much to say that spiritually

such a juncture as this occurs in each history? The power of death affrights the soul, but acquaintance with Christ's Word and the knowledge of His presence quiets every fear for the journey. It is only in unbelief that He "cares not." And when our hearts know Him thus, with us "all the days, even till the end of the age," what fear can remain? Is there not "a great calm" in the soul.

Oh! dear reader, do you know it? In the midst of all the dangers, the heaving and tossing and threatening of the billows, do you know that voice, that speaks not only peace to the elements, but a great calm to the heart, by the same almighty power? The Lord give all His saints to know Him better in this way. F. L.

Rationalism.

I WANT a certainty of what God is, to answer the need of my soul. I know what He is by the revelation of Himself in Christ. There I find perfect love to me as a poor sinner, and thus have the possibility of truthfulness and honesty in a sin-conscious soul. There I find a love which is consistent with God's maintaining that absolute righteousness and hatred of sin which my soul has learnt He ought, and which my heart (now renewed in knowledge) desires

Him to maintain. In Christ I am (I will not say restored to Him, but) brought to know Him in perfect peace, as nothing else could make me know Him, love Him, walk with Him, as a known God who loves me.

Would I exchange this for the rationalist's aspirations and thoughts of God? Can he give me this? Doubts he can give me (this is easy work), difficulties in Scripture doubtless, uncertainty as to everything I supposed to be truth. Philosophers think they can prove that what has made my heart divinely happy, has made me bless God, because of a goodness I never dreamt of till I knew it in Him, that what has consecrated the lives and hearts of thousands, and changed, where the heart was not consecrated the whole condition of the world—they think, I say, that all this has been done by a fable, an imposture. Poor human nature!

But, perhaps, the age is enlightened. Be it so; though in philosophy and moral apprehension, it may perhaps be doubted. Millions in previous ages have believed in a revelation—in the revelation which the infidel rejects—enlightened men too, philosophers even, wearied with searching after a truth they never found. They are all wrong.

But why am I to think we are arrived, just in our day, at the perfection of the human mind, so that we are exactly right now? I am told that they were superstitious ages. The age in which

Christianity was introduced or made progress among the Gentiles, was very far otherwise. Witness the various forms of mind, the Philos, the Celsuses, the Porphyries, the Alexandrian School of the Neo-Platonists, the Lucians, and others, whose reputation is publicly known, to say nothing of earlier Grecian philosophy which led the way. But suppose it was superstition : what does that prove but this, that the theory that man's mind is the measure of revelation of what God ought to be, makes truth and error, and the very character which God ought to have, depend on the age a man lives in.

Men, and men of able intellectual minds, have received the revelation which the infidel rejects as being unworthy of God. They have thought it very worthy of Him—have adored the God revealed there as alone worthy of adoration, as supremely worthy. I am not now seeking to prove that they were right. But the fact cannot be denied. They had minds enlarged by stores of knowledge, they were of a philosophical turn of thought, they had considered all, or almost all, the objections of modern infidelity ; and, in spite of all, they have bowed before the God of the Bible as supremely good, supremely just and wise. The infidel, applying his mind as the measure of it, thinks it all utterly unworthy of of the God which his mind has pictured itself : for what other has he?

J. N. D.