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## Notes and Comments.

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***Jewish Massacres.*** The tidings that are constantly reaching us of the unspeakable persecutions now taking place in Russia may well turn our attention to the Scriptures, where we may learn why it is that such things are befalling the Jews. In Leviticus xxvi. 1-14, we get a beautiful description of the peace and blessing they might have enjoyed as a nation, had they known how to walk in obedience to the law of Moses. To the end of the chapter we are given an outline of what would befall them if they chose a path of disobedience. Added to this is their national crime of murdering their Messiah. "His blood be upon us and on our children," they cried, when handing Him over to the Romans for crucifixion. The "seven times" of punishment are passing over their guilty heads, and worse troubles await them in Palestine even than in Russia—that "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. xii. 1). Then, and not till then, will deliverance come. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return,

LXXIII.

and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. xxxv. 10).

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**"Peace and Safety."** A correspondent recently sent us a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* containing a leading article written in a most boastful spirit. Never, according to the writer, was England in a more prosperous condition, never further removed from all possibility of war, never more at peace with all her neighbours. This is the self-complacent spirit that, according to God's Word, will precede the worst and final disasters. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon them . . . and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 3).

At the same time every nation of the world, east and west, is increasing its armaments and weapons of war.

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**Revival in New Zealand.** News reaches us of a gracious work of God's Spirit in several parts of this colony. In one little mining township known to us, where, until recently, it was impossible to get the people together to hear the gospel, overflow meetings are being held, and every meeting is crowded with eager listeners. "The trouble now is not to get people to the meetings, but to get them away. . . . For the last fortnight meetings have been held every night, and every night the hall

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

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has been full, and every night there were fifteen or sixteen seeking conversion."

**This wave of blessing was preceded by months of praying.**

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***Awakening in Lincolnshire.*** A letter just received tells of a blessed work in a small village in this county. A few weeks ago the indifference was terrible—now prayer and praise resound, and every house is open for visiting for reading the Word and prayer.

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***China's Awakening.*** This is an awakening of a sadly different kind. Some distinguished young Chinamen have just arrived in Europe to learn the art of war. "Their Government has sent them to England to learn the making of guns, rifles, and ammunition." China, we are told, is "recruiting. Huge arsenals are to be built," &c. Things are moving rapidly towards the final crisis between East and West. The sure word of prophecy is a lamp in the dark place. Revelation xxii. 17 leads to the belief that along with the revival of the hope of the Lord's return, a special gospel energy will precede the coming of Christ. Is not this exactly what is now taking place? The interval between the rapture of the saints and their manifestation in glory with Christ when He comes for judgment, will be filled up by the

wars and rumours of wars for which all nations are now preparing. Thank God! Christians are not of this world. May we walk in separation from its course and ways!

---

***Awakening in  
Germany.***

News has just come to hand of great blessing attending the preaching of General Von V. at Barmen. About 4,000 persons have been gathered together in a large hall, the streets being crowded. Many conversions have taken place, and consciences have been reached. Our brother is known by name to many of our readers. Let us hold him up before God in prayer! The work is spreading.

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**A Conspiracy of Prophets.**

EZEKIEL XXII.

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THE importance of such a chapter as this cannot be overestimated at a time like the present, for never was there a greater danger than now, in the history of the professing Church, of a complete abandonment of the Word of God.

A darker picture could scarcely be painted of the awful condition of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's day. Violence, corruption, and idolatry abounded on every hand. That such things were common

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amongst the nations that knew not God was bad enough, but that they should be found "in the midst of thee" could only be because Jehovah had been forgotten (ver. 12), and His Word despised (ver. 8). Notice the reiteration of the expression "in thee" (vers. 7-13).

Was it a momentary fall? No, but the inevitable result of a persistent neglect of the Word of the Lord. Not an injunction of the law of the Lord given by Moses, but what the people had trampled under their feet! Let the reader compare the list of charges here brought by Ezekiel at the bidding of the Lord, with the line of conduct so clearly laid down in the law of Moses. How came it to pass that such utter disobedience had taken possession, not of Israel only but of Judah? Was it not that "the book of the law" had become a dead letter to them? Marvellous as it may seem to us, that book had even become lost, hidden away in some dark recess of "the house of the Lord" (2 Kings xxii. 8), the "princes of Israel" even becoming leaders in this shameful neglect.

And is not Christendom to-day in as great danger as Israel was then? Does not the infidelity of the days we live in emanate largely from those holding high positions as teachers of the people, both in church and dissent? And where is the honesty, to put it on the lowest ground, of men solemnly asserting that they "unfeignedly believe all the canonical Scrip-

tures of the Old and New Testaments" as the condition of their ordination, and then retaining the emoluments when they have ceased to believe? No one can force another to believe by law, but common honesty would lead a man to refuse the pay to which only the sincere believer is entitled. "Dishonest gain" this may well be called (ver. 13), but the days will come for Christendom, no less than they did for Israel, when "I shall deal with thee. I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it" (ver. 14).

Again (ver. 17) the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel to the same purport, though with increased force. What was to befall Jerusalem was the direct dealing of Jehovah, though He might use the Gentile power as His instrument: "I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath. . . . And ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out My fury upon you" (vers. 17-22). In the passage before us the fiery judgment looks no further than the earth; in the New Testament is revealed the far more terrible punishment that awaits the unrepentant sinner who dies rejecting Christ and refusing the salvation proclaimed in the gospel.

The chapter has three sections, each commencing with the words, "The word of the Lord came." Each section exposes the sin of the people, and announces the judgment of Jehovah.

In the first (vers. 1-16) Jerusalem, the city of blood, is specially in view; her guilt clearly

## THE WORK OF CHRIST.

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established, and scattering among the heathen the punishment inflicted.

In the second (vers. 17-22) the house of Israel comes up for judgment; here Jehovah gathers them into the midst of Jerusalem, and there melts them, as it were, in the furnace of His wrath.

In the third (vers. 23-31) the whole land is involved and every class, from the highest to the lowest—prophet, priests, princes, and people. Not a man was found who could stand in the gap. It is an awful picture of apostasy and guilt.

Desolation abounded throughout the whole land, deprived as it was of man's culture and of God's refreshing rain (ver. 24). It was the judgment of Jehovah, so presumptuously sinned against: "Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God."

A. H. B.



## The Work of Christ and its Consequences.

LUKE xv.

No. VI.—*Concluded.*

**I**T often happens that a soul is hindered from getting full peace and enjoyment of the results of the blessed finished work of Christ,

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because it clings to something which the heart taught of God condemns—something of the world. In such a case there are only two alternatives. One, the choice of the young ruler who “went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions”; the other, the choice of the chief of sinners: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of *Christ Jesus my Lord.*” Nothing but decision will bring such a heart to its only resting-place.

But nearly all other hindrances may be summed up in the words, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” and we have seen how the father met and silenced for ever that unworthy thought of the heart that had not learned God’s way of dealing—God’s grace.

When once the poor, weary, famished prodigal has left himself in the father’s arms, after uttering his heartfelt confession, “I have sinned,” the father does all the rest, and the son has nothing more to say. Volumes might be, and indeed have been, written upon this last wonderful scene. But we can only just gather the outline of what is unfolded in the way the father meets the prodigal’s need.

Note first that although *food* was what brought the prodigal home, it is the *last* thing that the father gives him. This is the order:—

1. **The Best Robe.**—The father knew best how to meet the prodigal’s need. Anything less than what satisfies God’s glory would never make



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us at home in His house, or fit to be there at all. So, first, the father makes the son fit to enter his house in a way *worthy of himself*. In the first parable we saw the shepherd carry home his sheep, and who dare challenge the right of the sheep to enter if it be borne on the shoulders of him who has sought and found it? But here we have the other side, the result of Christ's work presented to the heart of a trembling sinner by the Father Himself. Arrayed in Christ, a vile sinner becomes the righteousness of God. Not only is God just in justifying you as a believer in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26), but *God's righteousness is seen* in putting you in Christ, for Christ was made sin *by God for you* (2 Cor. v. 21). This is what the Father had in store. The best robe, or, as it is literally, "the *first* robe," God's first thought.

God always had Christ before Him, and when, throughout eternity, the Father's eye shall rest with delight upon each redeemed one blest for ever in His love, it is upon Christ that His eye will rest; it is Christ's perfection, clothing each, that will satisfy His heart. Now, you have not to wait till you get to heaven, you have the best robe *now*. It is the first thing the Father gives you. You may say, and rightly, "I am not worthy"; you are not, nor will you ever be. But the language that His grace puts into our hearts, when once *His way* of acting is understood and simply received is this—"Giving

thanks unto the Father *who hath made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." You are not worthy, but He has made you worthy, as worthy as Christ Himself, for *He* is your title, your meetness to be there. Can that ever change?

2. **The Ring.**—The robe was for all to see. No one could doubt the fitness of one so royally arrayed to enter the house. No servant wears such a dress. But the ring is for the son's own personal assurance; it seals him as a son. Nobody else might see or notice that he had a ring on his finger, although the robe was plain enough to see. But the son knew the ring was his, a link that could not be broken. The robe secures his place, the ring seals his relationship. The father puts them together and they cannot be separated, but the ring *follows* the robe. The Father *seals the work of Christ*, not your experiences. That is why we get in Ephesians i. 13, "In whom **after that ye believed** ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise"; and in Galatians iv. 6, "And **because ye are sons** God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son *into your hearts* crying Abba, Father."

It is by faith in Christ that we are justified, get a title to be in God's glory, and are made sons of God. It is the result of Christ's work, that the moment you rest by faith on it, accepting it for yourself, God sets the seal of the Spirit upon Christ's work, and you are sealed

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II

until the day of redemption (Eph. iv. 30). Christ's perfect work makes you His *for ever*, and Christ's perfect work enables you to know and enjoy God as *your* Father by the Holy Ghost. Can you say Abba, Father?

3. **The Shoes.**—These follow the ring in divine order. You have not only a son's place but a son's *inheritance*. In Ephesians i. 14 it continues, speaking of that same Spirit by which we have been sealed, "who is the earnest of *our inheritance* until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory." In the Old Testament the shoe is frequently used as a type of the title or claim to an inheritance. But the wonderful thing about our inheritance is that **it makes us pilgrims here**. Our inheritance is not on earth, not earthly blessing, but in heaven, to share Christ's glory. Hence its effect is to separate our hearts from this world. How can I desire a thread or a shoe-latchet from the world when Christ in His infinite love has given me a share in His glory; when the Father has made me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light? Poor fastening for such shoes indeed that would be! It is the heart that keeps the feet. Our portion in Christ and with Christ, known and loved, makes us strangers here, and we do not feel that we lose anything. All is loss that is not Christ, and Christ is not here, we are going to Him. Thus with robe and ring and shoes you are started on the journey.

The journey begins where the wanderings end. All your own wanderings and exercises will never cause you to progress on the way to the Father's house. You must start from Christ's work at the cross to tread, in the full and joyful assurance of the place and portion that is yours as a son of God, that blessed path that leads to the glory where Christ has entered for you already, making your place secure.

4. **The Fatted Calf.**—We come back to where we started from—to Christ. What a change from husks, the food of swine, to the fatted calf, the food of the father's table! But it comes last of all. You cannot enjoy Christ as the object of the Father's heart, the centre of the Father's counsels, the slain One who lives for evermore, until your heart is fully assured of the perfection of Christ's work and its results for God's glory and your eternal blessing.

5. **"They Began to be Merry."**—What a change again, from "he began to be in want" to "they began to be merry." This wonderful joy is the joy of Christ Himself in Acts ii. 26, "My heart is glad." It is in resurrection, beyond the power of sin and death to mar. We have seen how it is reached. Only *one* is left outside at the end of all. May the Father bring your heart to share it, and may no doubt of His love on the one hand, or foolish pride on the other, keep you from the full blessing which He would have you enjoy now and for ever. Amen. S. H. H.

## Jesus' Death and Burial.

JOHN xix. 25-42.

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THE loved Evangelist has displayed in this chapter hitherto the morally divine perfection of the Victim. He will now insist upon the solemn facts and glorious efficacy of His death and burial. The importance is made to lie in these facts, and the blessed person of Jesus. Not as in Matthew and Mark is He mocked as Son of God, suffering from man high and low, passers-by, priests, and dying felons, and from God when forsaken on the cross; nor, as in Luke, sneered at as the Christ, though one of the dying malefactors confesses Him upon the tree. John passes unnoticed all the agony of that moment, and the three hours of darkness, but shows that Jesus fulfils the Scriptures and His own word and finishes His work.

The closing moments are alone related, since they especially declare the peculiar glory of His person. Very man, His service being accomplished, He thinks of her who gave Him birth—who stood towards Him in the blessed but human relationship of mother. Departing from this world, He would leave her need supplied with all that a son could furnish and be to her. To her, "Woman, behold thy son," and to the disciple whom He loved, "Behold thy mother";

told of that perfect and personal humanity which was His, and of the truth of His natural affections which pertained to it.

This completed all He had to do, there remaining only the expression of His own personal need. Hitherto His thought had ever been of the need of others. (To the woman of Samaria He did not say, "I thirst.") Now, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled He says, "I thirst." Vinegar was there, and, filling a sponge, they put it to His mouth. In Matthew and Mark this is connected with the cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." Luke does not record it. John gives it in proof of His suffering humanity, and fulfilment of Scripture, and coupled with it, the exercise of His divine prerogative. For with the words, "It is finished," He bows His head and delivers up His Spirit. Luke tells us simply, He expired—the mere statement of death, and both Matthew and Mark have similar expressions. But here it is an act of sovereign power, the laying down of His life which none could take from Him, done however in obedience to His Father.

But was it really death in the full sense as men die? The Jews in their religious scrupulousness give occasion to the public and irrefragable testimony of it. So that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath then drawing on, the Jews begged of Pilate that their legs might be broken and they taken away.

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Accordingly the soldiers break the legs of the two thieves ; but coming to Jesus, they find Him already dead, and instead of breaking His legs one of the soldiers pierces His side with a spear, and immediately there pours forth blood and water.

This was not the cause of death, else it would not have been the offering of Himself according to His free competency to do so. He had already delivered up His Spirit, but the blood and water were the public testimony of death before God and man. John was divinely commissioned to bear witness to it, speaking as it does of the divinely righteous ground, and the way of acceptable approach to God, as well as of the spiritual cleansing of the soul which is ours through the death of Christ.

The blood and water flowing from the side of a dead Christ are descriptive of peculiarly Christian blessing. Whereas Old Testament Scripture had precisely declared that not a bone of Him should be broken ; and again, that they shall look on Him whom they pierced. The first refers to the Passover lamb, and has specially in view the simple but divinely important fact of redemption from the judgment of God. This is common to every saved soul irrespective of dispensation, and is the necessary and divine foundation of every true blessing, by reason of which God can deliver His people. It is the basis and introduction of blessing. On

the other hand, the looking on Him whom they pierced, marks the close of the present day of faith, and introduces the kingdom, and the millennial blessing in power. The present interval of faith and grace lies therefore between these two points, and consists in a more simply divine and eternal order of things, constituting the Christian revelation.

But the Spirit now presents to us another fact of weightiest moment, giving to Christian truth a peculiar character of its own. This is the fact of burial. Christ not only died, but was buried. In this Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus are especially concerned. The other Gospels do not mention Nicodemus, though all make careful reference to Joseph of Arimathæa. John most deeply penetrates into Joseph's state of soul and declares that through fear of the Jews he was but a secret disciple. Doubtless he was officially known to Nicodemus, who, like himself, appears to have been one of the rulers (vii. 48-50), or of the council (Luke xxiv. 50, 51). He was nevertheless good and just, and had not consented to their counsel and deed, even as Nicodemus himself. This moral similarity had, it appears, drawn these men together, and, in spite of his evident position in the world, for Joseph was both rich and honourable, he emboldens himself to request of Pilate permission to take the body of Jesus. His desire was granted, and, together with Nicodemus, who had brought a hundred pounds



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weight of myrrh and aloes, he binds up the body of Jesus with the spices for burial.

The importance of the fact of burial is emphasised in John's Gospel by its being established on the testimony of two distinguished men of irreproachable character; and, moreover, that the tomb was in a garden, near to the place of crucifixion. Without premeditation, and, it would appear, without other aid, they laid Jesus there, because the tomb was near, and the Jews' day of preparation was at hand. It was a new tomb hitherto unused.

All these points are of distinct importance. The burial of Jesus was not to be confounded with that of any other. The nearness of the tomb to the cross left no room for doubt that Jesus was laid there; for no corpse could be carried far, on account of the Jews' preparation. He was not buried with the robbers, but in a tomb, and that a new one. When, therefore, it was empty on the resurrection morn, it was clear presumptive proof that He was risen; for He had been laid there, as Joseph and Nicodemus could testify, and now *no trace* of death was found, and no corruption.

In the Synoptic Gospels it is the women who are the witnesses, with Joseph, of burial. In John, it is the two men, Joseph and Nicodemus; the women are passed over. In Matthew, we are told the tomb was Joseph's.

Thus two immense truths as to the person of

Jesus were to be substantiated in His burial. First, not only that He died, but that He was brought into the dust of death—that is, the grave. His death was as complete and real as that of mere mortal man. Secondly, that He saw no corruption. Of this the new but now empty tomb was proof, in which no one but He had ever been laid. John combines these two points—that the tomb was new and hitherto untenanted, but omits what the Synoptic Gospels all relate, that it was hewn in the rock—his object being to insist in the fullest way upon the reality and character of Jesus' death and burial.

W. T. W.



### Notes of Remarks at a Reading on I Thess. i.



**I** HAVE often thought that faith, hope, and love each had handmaids. Knowledge is the handmaid of love ; obedience, I think we may say, of faith ; and patience, of hope.

. . . . .

The evidences of Christianity in a saint are—to God, the heart ; to man, the works ; to myself, the Word. In the case of the Thessalonians, it was not the stony ground, truth received in joy, and laid down in sorrow ; but received in sorrow, therefore held in joy.

If we really walk with Christ, the keenest suffering is in the present day; then it was open persecution, now it is the suffering of heart.

It is not only, "They that will live godly shall suffer persecution," but "*in Christ Jesus*"—in their Christian character.

. . . . .

Romans viii. 26, 27.—As troubles press upon you, the Holy Ghost presses nearer to you, pouring in His consolations, not too quickly, as we enter into the universal sorrow around.

Mr Wigram observed, in the *Present Testimony*, "You see the corn in its greenness in the field, and your eye rests on it with pleasure, but it is not so fit for the bosom of the reaper as when it is browned by the sun and battered by the breeze"—a consolation to the battered veterans.

. . . . .

Mr Bellett said, "The Church will go to the Lord from dust and ashes, and the world will go to judgment from glory and beauty."

. . . . .

The word "Idol" has a special meaning in John's epistle, "Keep yourselves from idols"—don't have a false Christ.

. . . . .

Many serve who do not wait, but all who wait serve.

ROCHFORD HUNT.

## The Lord Our Shepherd.

PSALM xxiii. 3 ; JOHN x. 14.

---

THE Lord has made and does make Himself known to us in many ways, all precious to our souls, supplying our temporal and spiritual needs. He has made Himself known to us *first* of all as our *Saviour*, and the knowledge of His love to us, in that He died for our sins upon the cross, gave us much joy, and caused us to love Him. Those who believe in Him should be certain of having eternal life, of having the forgiveness of sins, of being complete and accepted in Him, and they may be sure of being with Christ for ever in glory (John x. 27-29 ; Eph. i. 6, 7).

This is a settled matter, and is now, and ever will be, our theme of praise. Besides this, it is blessed to know and to enjoy Him as our *Shepherd*, supplying from His fulness all our needs, and meeting us in all our varied states of soul. There are, at least, *two* things noticeable about the Lord as our Shepherd, and His ways with us, "the sheep of His hand."

*First.* The Shepherd's loving care for His sheep.

*Second.* The Shepherd's presence is with His sheep in all the circumstances of their whole journey through this world to their home with Him.

Perfect, gracious, and complete is the Shep-

herd's care. We are all loved by Him with an eternal love, and He calls us, "*My* sheep," and none but Himself can call us that, and He forgets not the least nor the feeblest; in fact, the weakest are the especial objects of His care, for He gathers them with His arm, carries them in His bosom, and *gently* leads them (Isa. xl. 11; John x. 27; 1 John iv. 10; Rom. viii. 28-39). What confidence in Him it gives us to be assured from His own lips that He knows our names, and goes ahead of us, meeting every danger and every trial along the way before we come up to it.

"He calleth His own sheep by name. . . . *He goeth before them*" (John x. 3, 4). Many a snare laid by the enemy of our souls to entrap us He has seen and thrust aside. Many a pitfall His watchful eye detects, and carefully He leads us safely over them. Many a bye-path, which would have taken us out of the way, He has conducted us past, and led us safely along "the straight and narrow way." Such is our Shepherd's loving and faithful care of us.

With such a Shepherd we shall not want. He tends His sheep; He does not leave them to a hireling. We are His flock, and *not* the flock of any man. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." These pastures are not an enclosure built on man's opinions and doctrines; and neither the intellect and natural mind, nor the pursuit of worldly pleasures and pastimes are green pastures.

The Lord our Shepherd makes us to lie down where we can feed upon His love, His grace, His goodness and glory, yea, upon "the things concerning Himself" from the Word of God, which the Holy Ghost delights to show unto us, because we are beloved of Him. It is important to heed the exhortations, inspired by the Holy Ghost, of the apostles Peter and Paul—"As newborn babes, **desire** the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby" (1 Peter ii. 2). "*Meditate* upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. **Take heed** unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. iv. 15, 16).

The place where the Shepherd guides His flock is "beside the still waters." The Lord would not have us to be unhappy and restless, He would have us enjoy His peace under all circumstances. "My peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," He has said (John xiv. 27). In these perilous times how much we need that word. What restfulness of spirit and what contentedness of mind it gives us to lean confidently upon His love and care. Nothing can separate us from His love. And if, because of the sorrows and roughness of the wilderness journey, or by reason of the rapid progress of infidelity and worldliness, our spirits have drooped in sadness,

## THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD.

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and we have become discouraged, let us cheer up, there is enough in Him to make the heart rejoice. He is the same all-powerful, loving, gracious, and tender Shepherd. His glory has not been tarnished a bit. He is the Brightness of Eternal Glory.

"He restoreth my soul," or rather, the meaning is, "He invigorates," or reviveth, "my soul"; it is like a good tonic to a person whose health is run down, it invigorates. The Lord can do this when we get discouraged, as He revived the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and restored their souls, *first*, by drawing out all that was on their heart, and then, in His love, removing their mistrust, and banishing their discouragements by ministering the Word and comforting them, causing their hearts to burn within them as He spake to them by the way (Luke xxiv.).

We have another instance of this when Paul was imprisoned in the castle, and in the stillness of night, "the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness of Me at Rome" (Acts xxiii. 11).

Occupation with our circumstances will not invigorate us, because they are variable, nor can we turn to ourselves, "for I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," and the heart, the Lord has told us, is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9). Although all things, even the founda-

tion of the earth and "the heavens shall perish and wax old as doth a garment," the Lord, our Shepherd, is the Eternal and Unchangeable God.

The *second* thing we notice is

### The Shepherd's Presence.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for **Thou art with me**; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me (Ps. xxiii. 4). Many believers, it is feared, do not come to that valley, in the which the conscious presence of the Lord is realised and enjoyed, until death; but we *should*, and if we go on in daily communion with the Lord, we *shall* find this world to be the valley of the shadow of death. Nothing can affect our standing in Christ, thank God! not even our state of soul can ever affect our standing; but we ought to live according to our standing. May we be more like Christ and less earthly-minded! It is often only when a saint has to depart from earth that the world is given up. It is a glorious *privilege*, as well as a blessed *responsibility*, as saints of God, to be counting ourselves, as we are in God's sight, dead with Christ; this would separate us from the world altogether, just as though we were dead to it, and it would then be to us the valley of the shadow of death. But we shall have His presence with us in it, and be able to say, "I will fear no evil." This is the confident expression



## "FAR ABOVE."

25

of one who realises the Shepherd's sustaining presence.

We are in God's sight dead and risen with Christ, just as though we had passed out of this world altogether, and are left to live here on earth as a heavenly people waiting to be taken up to heaven where Christ is. This world is like an inn to the believer to tarry in as a pilgrim and a stranger for a little while, at the expiration of which the Shepherd will take him to His home, which is our eternal dwelling-place. In the meantime we have His presence with us, for He will never leave nor forsake us, and we need not fear, and "goodness and mercy shall follow me *all* the days of my life."

W. E. S.

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"Far Above."

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**F**AR above the highest heaven,  
 We behold Him there,  
 Shining in effulgent glory,  
 Fairest of the fair.

Far above all thrones and every  
 Name that can be named,  
 Principalities and powers,  
 Lord of all proclaimed.

When He stooped to bear our burden  
 On the cross of shame,  
 Man despised Him and disowned Him,  
 Scorned His lowly name.

Crucified Him there in weakness,  
Laid Him with the dead,  
Like a lamb oppressed, afflicted,  
To the slaughter led.

Sorrow like no other sorrow  
Filled His lonely path,  
Deepened into bitter anguish,  
'Neath Jehovah's wrath.

'Twas for us He felt that darkness  
Round His holy Head ;  
'Tis for us He lives in glory,  
First-born from the dead.

Far above all might, dominion,  
In the highest place,  
Soon we shall with adoration  
See His blessed face.

C. A. W.

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## Bible Study.

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**I**N announcing the first subject for Study, with the first list of those who have hitherto sent in their names, we are very thankful to find how many have had the desire to study the Word of God in a more regular way. We believe that there is a manifest work of God among His people to-day, seen in an increased desire for His Word, for prayer, and *above all* for the blessing of others. God is working for *the glory of Christ*. May the study of His precious Word together fill our hearts more with God's thoughts of Christ, and with the love of Christ as the motive power of our lives. Nothing else can preserve us from a *selfish* Christian life. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear *much* fruit, so shall ye be *My* disciples."

## BIBLE STUDY.

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The following list contains the initials of those who are taking up the study of the Word in connection with the *Christian's Library*. The number opposite to each will be used in future for convenience in allotting the portion to be studied by each. We earnestly hope that those who take up this study will not do so in a casual way, but will send in the results of their study every month, even if they have not time to do it fully. The value of a combined study will depend upon the help contributed by each. Any suggestions will be gladly welcomed. The Editor of the *Christian's Library* will also be glad to hear from any who have personal difficulties. Questions to which the answers would be helpful to others will be inserted and answered (briefly) in the *C. L.*

## List of Contributors to Bible Study.

1. C. B.	21. C. C.	40. M. F.	59. F. W. P.	78. F.A.A.H.
2. G. M. B.	22. W. B.	41. A. E. H.	60. C. H. T.	79. E. E. G.
3. C. von V.	23. M. P. B.	42. E. M. S.	61. A. T. P.	80. M. J. P.
4. M. B. C.	24. J. H. B.	43. M. A. S.	62. A. S.	81. N. W.
5. A. L.	25. J. A.	44. T.W.A. S.	63. W. T.	82. D. R. C.
6. E. M.	26. F. H.	45. S. R.	64. C. K. T.	83. H. L. B.
7. L. R. (B.)	27. W. H.	46. E. J.	65. T. (E. L.)	84. B. C.
8. E. P.	28. M. H.	47. A. H. H.	66. S. „	85. M. C.
9. H. S.	29. H. M.	48. J. F. (H.)	67. K. „	86. M. A.
10. F. E. S.	30. E. F.	49. W. H. C.	68. J. S.	87. L. B.
11. C. L. W.	31. P. F.	50. E. M. C.	69. A. M.	88. L. R. (S.)
12. C. F. T.	32. J. F. (Br.)	51. G. C. B.	70. W. V. P.	89. W. J. F.
13. W. P.	33. J. M' C.	52. L. B. (S.)	71. C. M.	90. E. H. W.
14. G. H. L.	34. C. M' C.	53. —	72. L. (I. W.)	91. A. T. G.
15. B. K.	35. F. F.	54. A. L.	73. D. M.	92. E. W.
16. N. I.	36. G. E.	55. M. B.	74. T. I.	93. M. W.
17. S. G. H.	37. T. T.	56. A. W.	75. H. B. (S.)	94. F. W.
18. H. G.	38. A. R.	57. H. A. V.	76. H. B. (T.)	95. A. W.
19. G. L. E.	39. E. D.	58. E. S.	77. A. H. C.	96. E. W. (S.)
20. M. S. E.				

Any who wish to join may do so at any time by taking up a part of the subject announced, and sending in the notes of their study on it. Their contributions will be acknowledged, and a number assigned to them in the following No. of the *C. L.*

## Subject of Study for January.

## The Six Days of Creation—Gen. i. 3-31.

This chapter has been a “rock of offence” to many who have tried to measure it by their own thoughts. But

it is a wonderful chapter to those who are willing to read God's thoughts in it, preparing a place and a people for the glory of His own beloved Son. It is the A B C of the Bible ; everything in this chapter runs right through the Word of God, and ends in Christ. For instance, the first day has SEVEN THINGS which may be traced right through the Word of God, and all lead up to and find their explanation in connection with CHRIST. These seven things are—light and darkness, day and night, evening and morning, first day. We have only to think of John i. or 1 Thessalonians v. to be reminded how these lines of division run right through the Word of God. So we purpose, with the Lord's help, to try and trace out the lines of each day through the Word of God. The study should take the form of striking passages showing how the types, brought in by God on each of the six days, run right through the Word of God. The seventh day is not like the rest, it is not made up of "evening and morning," and may be taken up in a future study. The subject is divided as follows :—

**1st day** by 3, 4, 5, 6, 38, 39, 41, 54, 55, 56, 64, 65, 66, 67, 86, 89.

**2nd day** by 9, 10, 11, 12, 42, 43, 52, 57, 58, 68, 69, 70, 71, 87, 90.

**3rd day** by 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 44, 45, 51, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 83, 88, 91.

**4th day** by 21, 22, 23, 24, 46, 47, 59, 60, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85.

**5th day** by 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 48, 61, 62, 63, 77, 96, 1, 2.

**6th day** by 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 49, 50, 92, 93, 94, 95, 19, 20, 7, 8.

The latest date for sending up papers is the 30th of the month. We shall be glad to answer any questions about the subject, method of study, or any other matter connected with the study of the Word. May the prayers of the apostle Paul in Ephesians i. 16, 23, and iii. 14-21, be answered abundantly for us and for "all saints."

B. S. Ed.

## Notes and Comments.

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***The Gathering of the Kings of the Earth.*** Psalm ii. is prophetic of a yet future day, though up to a certain point fulfilled in the past, as Acts iv. 25-30 implies. Read Psalm ii. along with its application in Acts iv., and note the contrast. The kings of the earth *did* set themselves against Christ when He came in lowly grace; the rulers amongst the Jews did so too. But in Acts the Psalm is quoted no further than to show this hostility. The results in judgment are not touched on; no word about Jehovah having them in derision and vexing them in His sore displeasure. Christ was not placed as King in Zion; on the contrary, He was nailed to the cross. True, He has been placed higher than Zion, even in glory, and from thence His hand is stretched forth, not to "vex" in judgment, but to "heal" in grace. When this parenthetical period of grace is over, the gathering together against Christ of kings and rulers with apostate Israel will once more take place, to end in their complete discomfiture and destruction. ED.

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***Greeks in America.*** "I am deeply interested in the 300,000 Greeks who have, during the last few years, emigrated to America. Already I send tracts to many cities,

LXXIV.

and am acquainted with a few believers who formerly attended our meetings here. I have tried often to interest our brethren in these men. . . . It seems to me that providentially these men are removed from the priestly influence of their native land, and it seems to me a grand opportunity for believers to preach the gospel to them, as they all have in their hearts a desire to eventually return to Greece. What a grand thing it would be if they returned as believers in our Lord. How strange if, whilst living in a professed Christian country, they be left to die or return here in ignorance.

"I write you these thoughts in hopes that you may stir up some of our brethren there to their duty towards these poor men." H. D.



## **Cain: His World and His Worship.**



"Woe unto them : for they have gone in the way of Cain."—JUDE II.

**M**AN, having sinned against God, is turned out of Paradise ; and all Adam's children are born outside. In two of his children we have striking types of what exists around us to-day. Cain and Abel both had a religion. But the one did what he thought right and his duty, the other what God told him.

Cain slew his brother. And why? God

## CAIN : HIS WORLD AND HIS WORSHIP. 31

tells us : "Because his own *works* were evil, and his brother's righteous." And Cain, after the murder of his brother and God's sentence on him, "*went out* from the presence of the Lord, and he builded *a city*, and called the name of it after his son Enoch." He tries to make himself a place of rest and security. You may say, what harm in building a city? None, if he had not been a sinner, driven out of Paradise, then a murderer, and under the curse. But it is in this sad state that he acts as though nothing were the matter, and tries to make himself happy *without God*.

We find further, among the family of Cain, not only "the father of such as dwell in tents," and "of such as have cattle," but "the father of such as handle the harp and the organ, and the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" (Gen. iv. 20-22).

Now there is nothing wrong in the things themselves ; Christians are to profess honest trades for necessary uses, and we read of harpers in heaven. But what Cain was doing and what men are doing to-day, was seeking to make the world pleasant without God. Man has settled himself down in a world where judgment has placed him—in a world which has crucified the Lord of glory, forgetting that God who said to Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" will yet call them to account for the death of HIS OWN SON. If you saw a man who had com-

mitted some wicked crime against his father, the next day playing on musical instruments, would you say there was no harm in that? And is not Cain's world like your world? Is it a better world because Christ has been crucified in it? That has happened since the days of Cain. Where is the difference? They had their harps and organs, so have you. They had their workers in brass and iron, and so have you. It was Cain's world away from God, and it is Cain's world still. Man is doing all he can to keep God out of sight, to do without Him, lest He should touch his conscience and make him miserable.

But Cain also had a religion. He was a religious man, as religious as Abel. But he had no love to God; he had no faith. Cain was not an idolater, but he worshipped in his own way. He took some pains too. He did not offer what cost him nothing. He was "a tiller of the ground," and he "brought of the fruits of the ground an offering unto Jehovah." But he came in the way of nature, offering the fruit of his toil and labour, and you have done the same. This is ever the character of false worship. You may be sincere, so was Cain. But human sincerity means nothing; it is often the proof of the great darkness man is in. Saul of Tarsus was sincere when he was persecuting Jesus; he acted, moreover, on the advice of the religious leaders of that day. He was sincere



## CAIN : HIS WORLD AND HIS WORSHIP. 33

and zealous, but utterly blind as to God and Christ. Cain brought as his offering what he thought God ought to accept. But God did not accept it, because it made nothing of the fact that the ground he tilled was cursed.

God could not accept Cain's offering. Do you think He can accept yours? Will you think if you attend a place of worship, take the sacrament, give your alms, God must accept you? He will not, cannot, dear friend. But He is telling you of His Lamb, "foreordained before the foundation of the world, manifested in these last times for you." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. Abel's offering was "by faith." He had the word of God for it, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). God remonstrated with Cain, and told him that "a sin-offering lieth at the door," and He warns souls to-day of their sin, their danger, and tells of *His remedy*.

Cain's was human religion, will-worship, unbelief. Abel's was revealed religion, subjection to God, faith. Cain was rejected; his offering ignored his sin and God's holiness. Abel was accepted, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh. What does it say to you? "Without shedding of blood is no re-

mission" (Heb. ix. 22). "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31)—saved from sins, and sin and Satan, brought to God, to rejoice in Him as a true worshipper. "The Father *seeketh* such to worship Him" (John iv. 23).

J. N. D.

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## Man a Free Agent.

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**Y**ES, man was created a free agent, for God could not be satisfied with the service of a bondman, service to Him must flow from hearts in unison with Himself, as the God who delighted to bless. Love must be the mainspring, for nothing short of this could satisfy the heart of God.

Therefore man was created a free agent, that is, he had the power to choose if he would serve God or not. God meanwhile sought to attach man to Himself, by surrounding him with marks of His signal favour and love. He placed him in a beautiful, well-watered garden, full of trees (Gen. ii. 9) which were to provide him with food. And God gave him a companion to be with him to help him to dress, and keep, and enjoy this beautiful place. All creation was in harmony, and peace brooded over the scene. No trail of

the serpent had yet defiled it, and as God looked upon the work of His own hands, He could not fail to regard it with satisfaction, for everything was very good. It was a blessed time. Man was created in innocency, and surrounded by blessings from God's own hand, and it seemed as if there could be nothing to tempt his allegiance from such a merciful and kind Creator.

But there was a mighty spirit who desired allegiance, and who would seek to acquire it without question as to price or means. He had occupied a lofty position in the heavenly hierarchy, for he is spoken of as "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezek. xxviii. 14), but, alas! he too, like man, created a free agent, was overcome by the splendour and beauty of himself and his surroundings, and he fell. Now, as a fallen spirit, full of ambition and thirsting for dominion and power, he appears upon the scene at the creation of man, determined at all costs, and utterly regardless of consequences, to win man's allegiance to himself. There was one way in which he could do this, and with artful cunning he attacks the vulnerable spot. He approaches Eve, the weaker of the two, and the more easily beguiled, and offers her what he himself had acquired, the knowledge of evil as well as of good, possessing which, she and Adam would be as gods.

Alas! we know how successful he was, and how Eve lent a ready ear to his enticement, and

was then the means of her own and Adam's fall. Satan gained a signal victory over man, and apparently spoilt God's carefully laid plan for the prosperity and blessing of His earthly paradise; and the enemy could rejoice in being, as he may have thought, a god of superior intelligence, even though he lacked the power of the Creator. He little knew, however, that the Creator God had not been taken unawares; He knew full well how to meet Satan, and make him the instrument for the occasion of unfolding a most wonderful plan that God had in view for man's ultimate and eternal blessing. Yes, Satan had defeated himself, and now God could show in a way He could not have shown before, what His grace and love were capable of doing, and thus man was to hear of a love so extraordinary that it passed finding out (Eph. iii. 19).

Satan was proved a liar, for he had insinuated that God was holding something back that would be of great good to man, whereas God had blessing in store for man when the time arrived to make it known, that neither Satan nor man could ever have conceived of.

And what had man gained by listening to Satan?

As time showed, he was no longer a free agent (Rom. vii. 10 - 12), he had become the servant of sin; sin was his master, and he could not free himself from its yoke. He knew good and evil indeed, as Satan had promised, but how

## MAN A FREE AGENT.

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to perform the good and resist the evil, was the question, and he was soon to discover what an abject slave he was to the latter (Rom. vii. 19-24).

What could be done? Man was helpless, "sold under sin," and incapable of doing the right. His conscience was active, and told him he ought to obey God his Creator, but he found another principle within him, that prevented him obeying his conscience. How, therefore, could he fit himself for the presence of God? Truly his case was hopeless, as far as concerned himself.

Now it is time for God to act, for "man's extremity is God's opportunity," as has been rightly said, and when man finds he can do nothing, he is in the position or state to avail himself of the most wonderful offer that man has ever listened to, and which is far beyond anything he could ever have conceived of.

Let us close this paper by quoting in the sublime language of Scripture, *this most wonderful measure of God's grace to man.*

**"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

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

**"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John iii. 14-17).**

F. R.

## A Hidden Stream.

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“**T**HE foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

Wise man finds in the record of God's dealings with His people nothing but a medley of unlikely fables, half-forgotten legends, and half-remembered history, where the only guiding principle is the scissors and paste of unknown editors. A simple faith finds the most touching revelation of God Himself in the midst of moral darkness and ruin, and the guiding principle of God's wonderful purpose in Christ running through all, and appearing in the most striking and unexpected ways as a witness to the mind of God giving unity to the whole record—a unity not to be apprehended by learned Germans, and surely never produced by scissors and paste.

**Christ is the key.** From Genesis to Revelation God had nothing else before Him, in His ways and actings, in His prophetic communications, and His own blessed record of the whole story of man's history here, but Christ.

The course of Scripture presents two clear lines. The line of God's grace always connected with Christ, and the line of man's behaviour under that grace. These two lines sometimes run on together, and sometimes the first seems to disappear for a time, like some hidden stream making its way beneath the surface of the earth, only to break out again in some barren spot,

bringing life and refreshing in its train. The little book of Ruth is a beautiful example of this.

In the fifth verse of the 1st of Matthew we find mentioned side by side two alien women, Rahab a harlot, and Ruth a Moabitess. They form two wonderful links in that chain of God's ways of grace leading up to the coming of God Himself in grace as Immanuel, God with us, *Jesus*.

Between Rahab and Ruth comes the course of the whole history of the books of Joshua and Judges. To sum it up briefly, it begins with *one* man doing what was right in his own eyes (Joshua vii. 1), and ends with *every* man doing what was right in his own eyes (Judges xxi. 25). We need only read the closing chapters of Judges to see whether to be able to do exactly as we like is such unmixed happiness as poor foolish man thinks it to be.

But while God allows it all to go on, His own purpose, hidden indeed, but unchanging, goes on too, and in this little book He breaks in upon the dreary desolate scene of man's actings with the bright light of His own *grace* and His *purpose* in Christ, for the two are always found together. The plan of the book is, briefly, first of all a divine picture in a very few words of the whole course of man in self-will, and the sad end of that course seen in the light of God's own thoughts about it all. Then the vessel of God's grace taken up, brought into contact with the Man of His purpose, and blessed in a way worthy

of God Himself, whose heart can only rest in blessing us according to His own thoughts.

The Spirit of God in the book brings *four distinct places* or scenes of action before us. These we purpose looking into a little, with the Lord's help, to gather something of that wonderful grace of God, passing all praises, which He has bestowed upon us in Christ, dealing with us as He dealt with this poor outcast woman of Moab.

The great thing is to see that it is the bringing in of *Christ* into the wretched scene of man's misery that at once lights it up with God's workings of grace, and lets us see with delight that although man may do his will, and bring untold woe upon himself, God will nevertheless do *His will*, and bless man in spite of himself, with a blessing only measured by *Christ*. To see this as it is unfolded by the Spirit of God in these lovely pictures of olden times establishes our hearts in that grace, and fills us with praise. If we contrast the last word of Judges—*no king*, man doing his own will—with the last word of Ruth—*David*, "a man after *My own heart*, who shall fulfil all *My will*" (Acts xiii. 22), we shall see at once the object of the Spirit of God in giving us this record just at this particular point of Israel's history. We understand, too, a little more fully, the meaning of those two names brought side by side in Matthew i. 5. They show where the stream disappears, and where it reappears.



## JESUS' RESURRECTION.

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The four scenes in the Book of Ruth are :—

- i. **The Fields of Moab.**
- ii. **The Field of Boaz.**
- iii. **The Threshing-floor of Boaz.**
- iv. **The Gate of the City.**

With the Lord's help we will look a little next time at the outline of the sorrowful but instructive picture presented to us in "the fields of Moab."

S. H. H.



## Jesus' Resurrection from among the Dead.

(JOHN xx.)

THE Sabbath was past with its high ritual of observances, of which John takes no notice, except to say that it was a great day. Nor does he mention that the women, who prepared the spices for embalming Jesus, rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. He begins with Mary of Magdala's second visit to the tomb on the first day of the week in the early morn just before daybreak. It was still dark when she came to see the sepulchre, so anxious was she that no unholy hand should desecrate that tomb, or rob her of the dead.

Meanwhile the sun had risen (Mark xvi. 2); and she sees the stone taken away from the tomb. Preoccupied with her fears and sorrow

she proceeds no further, but runs to tell Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. Deeply moved by her tidings, the two disciples run at once to the sepulchre. The other disciple reaches it first, and sees the linen cloths lying in the empty tomb. He did not go in, but Peter, who followed, does so. Then the other also entered, and the linen cloths were seen to be disposed in orderly fashion, especially that which was about His head, it being rolled up separately from the others.

The men observe these evidences of resurrection and believe; for they had not yet known the scripture that He must rise from among the dead. The women, on the contrary, as we learn from the other Gospels, are far too perturbed in spirit to notice these minor details, but are arrested by a vision of angels. And John, too, relates that so overwhelmed was Mary of Magdala and absorbed with sorrow, that a glorious angelic vision passed unrecognised.

The two men went away again to their own home, but Mary remained weeping outside the tomb. As yet she had not looked into it, but now stooping down into it she sees two angels in white garments sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. Both speak to her as in surprise at her emotion, saying, "Woman, why weepest thou?"

The other Gospels connect the angelic vision with the testimony of resurrection. There were two angels, one outside (in Matthew), seated

## JESUS' RESURRECTION.

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upon the stone of the sepulchre; the other (in Mark) inside, sitting on the right. Both Luke and John mention two angels inside, in the one case standing; in the other, sitting. John, who is largely occupied with moral things, records the angels' question in order to show the power of a divine Object over the heart, even when utterly crushed. Unmoved by their glorious appearance, because possessed by one overmastering thought, Mary answers, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

But the One for whom her heart was desolate was standing by her. Moved by an irresistible impulse she turns and sees Him, but does not recognise Him. He repeats the angels' question, adding, "Whom seekest thou?" What need of weeping or of seeking? He was Himself there to gather; and the moment was one of unutterable joy to every intelligent being, especially to men, had they but known it.

Overwhelmed with grief and the sense of bereavement, she can think of nothing else, and taking Him for the gardener, says, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus says to her, "Mary."

This incident plainly shows that no feeling formed in our own hearts, even by the Spirit and consequent on faith, can be allowed to govern us without blinding our hearts to the

divine Object and to the purposes of God. But immediately that Jesus recalls her to Himself she cries, "Rabboni." We have not to seek a dead Christ, but instead, it is a living One who seeks us. Then at once He reveals to her man's heavenly and ascended place, in His own person with His Father, and forbidding the touch of earthly relationships, He confides to her the announcement of the heavenly place and relationship into which He was about to enter, in order that His brethren might be associated with Himself in them, according to the Father's thoughts of grace.

It was to a woman, but a thoroughly devoted heart, though utterly unintelligent, that the first communication of Christian truth, in its highest and most intimate character, was made by the risen Saviour. "I ascend"—these words reveal the heavenly place of man—"to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God;" here we are brought into His own relationships as man with God, and Son in manhood with the Father.

Mary brings word to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had given her this message for them. Scattered by the terrible power of evil, whose dark schemes had successfully issued in the death of Jesus, it cannot be doubted that Mary's message was the means of gathering them together again, but in a new way, and according to different principles al-

## TWO SIDES OF THE SEA OF GALILEE. 45

together. Before it had been a Jewish fold and Messiah present in the flesh as Shepherd—the Shepherd of Israel leading Joseph like a flock. Now, it was the Christian company gathered by testimony—the one flock into which the Gentiles also should be brought—and indeed one Shepherd, but not with them according to flesh.

**Two Sides of the Sea of Galilee.**

LUKE viii. 19-43.

**I**T is most instructive to notice the difference between the two sides of the Sea of Galilee on the occasion of our Lord's visit to the land of the Gadarenes.

On the one side the press of people thronging to see and hear Him was so great that His mother and brethren could not get at Him (ver. 19); on the other side the whole multitude besought Him to depart (ver. 37).

On the one side eager crowds anxious to hear; on the other, a whole population as anxious for Him to depart.

The servant of the Lord may take courage from this deeply interesting narrative. Let us never be disheartened in the work of the Lord, but rather let us be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

We can conceive the surprise of the disciples when they heard their Lord and Master say, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake" (ver. 22). What! leave all this crowd of anxious seekers. But His word was enough for them—"Let *us* go," what grace to associate them thus with Himself! To have started off *without* Him would have been folly, to have stayed behind when He went forward would have been to lose His blessed company. "Let us go," was the word of command; "they launched forth," was the immediate response of faith. This is beautiful! All that the disciple needs to know is just where His Lord would have him be and go, and then to tread his path with unquestioning faith and unhesitating obedience. Waiting upon God in prayer will make this plain and clear.

But, then, granted that we have been guided as to where to go in our blessed Master's service; granted, too, that we have His presence with us in our path, all is not even then plain sailing in the eyes of nature—"there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy" (ver. 23). Here was a test of their faith—"we perish," they cry, as though the waves could swallow up Him who created the universe and held all things in the hollow of His hand. At His word the storm becomes a calm.

Is it not often the case that we need to be challenged with the question, "Where is your

## TWO SIDES OF THE SEA OF GALILEE. 47

faith?" Disappointments may come, results may not be such as we expected, spheres of labour where all seemed success may have been left for what looks like failure. But had He not said, "Let us go?" Was it a mistake then to launch forth? And was He not with them in their dangers, as presently He would be in their disappointments?

On landing at the other side there met Him, not crowds, but *a certain man*, and he, so far as Luke's narrative goes, was the only one to benefit by the visit. But what a victory was wrought over all the power of Satan in his case! A well-known man he was; all that philanthropy and human effort could do had been expended on him in vain; the devil was in full control until Jesus met him and by His word set the prisoner free, and made him sit at His feet, clothed and in his right mind. Thereupon the whole multitude besought Jesus to depart. The loss of their swine was more than they could endure—"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36). Solemn, indeed, it is to see that Jesus takes them at their word. He returned to the side of the lake He had just left, and there "the people gladly received Him: for they were all waiting for Him" (ver. 40).

Had the time been lost? By no means. One man had been rescued from the power of Satan, and he became the honoured instrument of a

mighty movement in that place. "Return to thine own house," said Jesus, "and show how great things God hath done for thee" (ver. 39). Immediately he sets to work and "published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

Is not this a bright example of devotedness and love? Then see the results (read Matt. xiv. 34-36). A living witness for Christ had been left behind, who did his work so well, and bore his witness so powerfully, that soon after, when once more Jesus visited that place, instead of beseeching Him to leave, "they sent out into all the country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased, and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole."

"I'll live for Thee ! I'll live for Thee !  
And oh ! how glad my soul should be ;  
That Thou did'st give Thyself for me,  
My Saviour and my God !"

A. H. B.



## Correspondence.

### ***Perseverance in Prayer.***

We feel the importance of our correspondent's remarks on prayer, and feel that God would have us pass them on for the stirring up of our readers to more diligence in prayer, according to



the word : "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. iv. 2). Here are three things—praying, watching, thanksgiving.

"I have been very much edified by one of the articles in the *Christian's Library*, some time back, on the reason why we see so little of manifest answers to prayer. What you point out is, I believe, the true reason, illustrated by what we get in Ezekiel xx. And I have been for some time stirred up myself to persevere in crying to God by what it says in Ephesians vi. 18, 19, linking this verse 18 with what our Lord says to us about getting requests answered because of '**importunity**' (Luke xi.), and '**continual coming**' (Luke xviii.). And I have learnt that part of the Christian's armour is 'praying always, with all prayer and **supplication** in the Spirit. And watching thereunto with **all perseverance** and supplication (not for gathered brethren only, but) **for all saints.**' And for one carrying the gospel to souls. How I do long to see a spirit of prayer and supplication given to us gathered ones. We do not as assemblies seem to value, and gladly come together for, the privilege and service of helping together by prayer, others, as well as seeking God's face, 'His holy face, with our censer of praise and prayer,' for ourselves. Indeed, is it not a fact that when there is little heart for prayer—persevering prayer for all saints and the gospel—there is most likely very little prayer of any kind? And I should like to

see your remarks on prayer, and why we do not see God answering the little prayer that there is among us, in a booklet form, to give away among Christians. For I feel sure that those remarks are much needed. And saints need to understand these hindrances to answers being manifestly granted to our prayers, and to be stirred up to prayer more. What a blessed precious privilege it is to labour in prayer for souls. I remember in years gone by, when we used to spend a week, evening after evening, in prayer for souls around us. And when a wife's request for prayer for her unsaved husband was, I was told after, answered while we were praying, by God bringing that man to a point, alone in his office, and saving his soul there. And what a comfort to know that if from my own want of courage, or some hindrance that shuts me out from personally dealing with some precious soul that my heart longs for, yet I can get at that soul, as some one has said, '**by way of the Throne,**' by going to God for him or her. I notice that in Acts vi., the apostles say, 'But we will **give ourselves continually to prayer,** and to the ministry of the Word.' **Prayer comes first.**

"I believe we should see a great deal more manifest blessing to souls in our gospel meetings, if saints in gatherings as well as we preachers, came to the Gospel meeting, from our knees, from getting alone with God, about souls, before

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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they came, and really believed that the Holy Ghost, **God the Holy Ghost, is here**, and that **He compels souls to come in**, in answer to prayer. And that it is **God** that converts and saves, not the preachers, however gifted and eloquent. I do not wonder at God not giving us manifest blessing, more than He does—though blessed be His name He does give us some—for saints come to the gospel meeting to hear a good preaching themselves. And without prayer, before they come, or when there. So, if God were to give much manifest blessing, the preacher would get all, or mostly all of the praise, **not God**, and he and his gifts would be looked to more than God himself! I was much refreshed by Evan Roberts' answer to some Christians in London, who had written to him asking him to come and have revival meetings there, who had heard of the blessing in Wales. It is reported that he wrote back to them that he believed God had called him to go on where he was, for one thing. And then they were **making too much of him as an instrument** for another, &c. &c., or words to this effect. This was casting over upon God, which they evidently needed. Oh, for faith in a living, almighty, loving Saviour. God, who though He does use instruments, yet does all that is ever done at all in any soul or souls, by the working of His own Holy Spirit—the Holy Ghost, using the Word, the word of life, the gospel of His

grace in answer to prayer and supplication **which He Himself has led to**, by that same blessed Spirit. So that God gets what is due to Him—**all the praise**—when the blessing comes, both from the praying preacher and the praying saints, who don't preach, but help with their prayers. And thus all rejoice in the blessed, giving, Saviour God. And their eyes and hearts are up to Him, and not on instruments, however much used, and honoured by using them, of God. But I must close. We do not forget you in prayer some of us over here." J. D.

***The Use of the Lord's Prayer.***

"I did not (in preaching) say anything about not using the Lord's prayer. Mr —— jumped at that conclusion. I was illustrating 1 John i. 12: 'These things write I unto you, (little) children, because your sins ARE forgiven you for His name's sake.'

"I was showing from this and other passages that every true child of God is privileged to know that his sins *are* forgiven: 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake HATH forgiven you' (Eph. iv. 32).

"Now, Mr —— *drew the conclusion* as to the Lord's prayer, and I am not going to say that his conclusion was not a just one. The Lord's prayer was given to the disciples *before the cross*, that is, *before the work* of redemption *had been*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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*accomplished.* They were on *Jewish* ground, but we are on Christian ground, and as Christians we rejoice in a finished work of redemption, and can say—‘We HAVE redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins’ (Eph. i. 7).

“The difference is not an unimportant one—but I said nothing about the Lord’s prayer! The gospel I preached may have made him see the inconsistency of using *since* the cross, a form of prayer given to the disciples *before* the cross.”

ED.

***Old Letter to an Evangelist.***

“There is still one thing, dear brother, that has come upon my spirit. I suppose that you have continued relations with the Established Church; perhaps I am mistaken, but I discern the possibility that these relations may be enfeebled if you follow the call to evangelisation which you think you have received from God. If this come to pass, I hope with all my heart that you will not throw yourself, on the other hand, into narrowness. . . . It is my joy and my privilege to find myself in the midst of brethren who know one another in Christ, and to rejoice in the blessedness of brotherly communion in all the weakness in which it may be found at present; but I could not recognise an assembly that does not receive all the children of God, because I know that Christ receives them. I see the Church in ruins;

I follow my conscience according to the light that I have received from the Word, but I desire to bear with the weakness or lack of light that I may find in other Christians, and do all that I can to unite those that love the Lord.

“The liberty of your ministry, if God bless it, may be a means to this desirable result ; and I, according to the light that I have received, find it impossible to remain in nationalism, but I would rather remain alone and isolated—a position, I admit, not at all desirable—than to restrict the limits of the Church of Christ to some brethren, even though they may be more correct in their thoughts than others, and to enfeeble the action of the Spirit of God in uniting the Lord's sheep, scattered by our wretchedness and by our sins. . . . If you are able not entirely to give up your calling so much the better ; the workman is worthy of his hire, but it is my experience that in the existing circumstances of the Church, the more one is independent of men the better one is circumstanced.” J. N. D.

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## Bible Study.

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THE result of the study of the first chapter of Genesis will (D.V.) appear in the March issue of the *C. L.* The following list contains the initials and numbers of

## BIBLE STUDY.

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those who have sent in their names since the first list went to press :—

97. J. S.	104. G. H. M.	111. J. G.	118. J. L. W.
98. M. H.	105. K. H.	112. L. D.	119. E. B.
99. D. O. F. H.	106. A. W.	113. R. H. B.	120. M. A. R.
100. J. M. M.	107. F. W. O.	114. W. H. E. B.	121. M. B. D.
101. E. R. I.	108. E. L. H.	115. A. J. R.	122. L. G. C.
102. O. L. P.	109. J. R.	116. J. E. R.	123. E. C.
103. M. B. C.	110. G. I.	117. S. W.	124. C. S.

In answer to several inquiries it may be said that those who are studying together may, if they prefer, send one paper giving the result of their joint studies instead of separate papers.

We shall be most thankful for any suggestions whereby this study of God's Word may be made more helpful. Any suggestions of subjects or lines of study will be welcomed.

Will those who have already taken up this study make it known amongst other young Christians?

Those who take up the study of the Word in earnest soon find that a good concordance is a necessity. Cruden's is useful for general purposes, but for exact study a book of reference is needed which gives *all* the occurrences of any word, and enables the student to distinguish words which, although translated as the same in our English version, are yet represented by different words in the original.

The best is no doubt the "Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance," and its companion volume, the "Englishman's Greek Concordance to the New Testament." These, however, are rather expensive. A very useful concordance to both Old and New Testaments is "Young's Analytical Concordance," which may be obtained through Mr Jas. Carter for 15s. 9d., carriage extra. Any who wish to obtain a concordance to the New Testament only will find "Hudson's Critical Greek and English Concordance of the New Testament" most valuable. It is published by Bagster at 7s. 6d., and may be ordered through Mr Jas. Carter.

The subject selected for this month's study is somewhat different from last month's. We propose, with the Lord's help, to trace out the history of Joshua in the Word. In general, the Holy Ghost's record of the lives of the men of Old Testament times shows three lines :—

1. A direct type of Christ, suffering and glorified.
2. A type of the experiences of Israel, God's people.
3. An example of God's dealings with an individual saint.

Some of the histories of the saints of old give us all three aspects, *e.g.*, the history of Moses, and above all, of David ; while others seem to be confined chiefly to one aspect, *e.g.*, the lives of Isaac, Joseph, and Joshua, who are all remarkable types of Christ personally. Hence we have very little of their own experiences and sorrows and personal intercourse with God. Our study should seek to bring out the way in which Joshua stands as a type of Christ, illustrating by passages from the New Testament, giving the spiritual meaning of the different points of Joshua's history.

May the study help, by God's grace, to throw us more earnestly and prayerfully into the great conflict, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

The study for this month will not need to be divided into portions.

B. S. ED.

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### Young's Analytical Concordance.

As the Concordance mentioned in the current issue may be too expensive for some who would like to obtain one, a special offer of **twenty** copies of the **21s.** edition is made during the month of February at the reduced price of **11s. 8d., carriage paid** to any address in the United Kingdom.

Applications to be made to James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C., as early as possible. They will be attended to in the order in which they are received.

Remittance **must** accompany order.



## Notes and Comments.

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### ***Are the Dead Communicating.***

A tremendous impetus is now being given to spiritualistic research, and thousands of homes, both in this country and abroad, are daily endeavouring to hold communication with the spirit world. This proves that an uneasy feeling exists as to the future, a tacit acknowledgment that the "death-ends-all" theory of infidelity does not satisfy. The Bible alone gives us sure information as to the unseen and eternal world, and we urge all our readers to study the Bible increasingly with diligent prayer.

That spiritism is awfully real we have no question; that the spirits are demons, and not the spirits of the dead, we firmly believe, and have elsewhere\* sought to show, and we are glad to find that a warning voice has been raised in the public Press from one who speaks with twenty years' experience of the mental, moral, and physical shipwreck that follows in the train of this intercourse with the spirits.

The writer amongst other things points out that these spirits are **all bad**, and agree on one point only, namely, "the subversion of faith in Christ as a divine person"—at this the "messages

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\* "Spiritism: Is it Real?" James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C. Price 2d.

ultimately aim. The truth of this statement is fully established by the writings of the best of our modern spiritists. From personal letters which have reached me, it is evident that the writer had in each single instance lost his faith in Christianity, and was suffering the keenest grief and disappointment in consequence."

In our next we hope to give some of the salient points of the writer's interesting letter, but meanwhile emphasise the fact that the Person of Christ is the touchstone of all truth. Unsoundness there throws the door wide open for the assaults of Satan and the inroad of every form of vital error.

"We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, **keep yourselves from idols. Amen,**" (1 John v. 20, 21).  
ED.

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**Japan and England.** We do not here raise the question as to the right or wrong of an alliance between a heathen and a professedly Christian nation, but Japan's warning to England cannot fail to awaken serious reflections in the mind. England's army, according to a high Japanese authority, is not ready for war, and she hints that, as her ally, the

needed reforms should be made. War seems to be everywhere in the air, the ploughshares have to be beaten into swords (Joel iii. 10) for that great and final gathering together of the nations.

ED.

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## Man's Utter Ruin.

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THERE never was a time when it was more important than now that souls should clearly apprehend and simply believe the plain fundamental truths of the gospel. Every one will sooner or later have to face the solemn question of his ability to meet a holy God, for God and man must meet either in the day of grace or in the day of judgment.

Many there are who, while they admit the fact that there is a day of judgment to come, seem to completely ignore their true condition before God. Hence the importance of learning from Scripture how we stand, for God has there most clearly revealed the true state of matters.

In the first three chapters of Romans we are shown **man's utter ruin through sin**. The whole human family is involved in the disastrous consequences of Adam's fall:—

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that **all have sinned**” (Rom. v. 12).

It is not that Adam's race will be judged at the day of judgment for Adam's sin. Each one will then be judged for his own sin, and twice over in the Epistle to the Romans, the great gospel epistle, it is clearly stated that "**all have sinned**" (Rom. iii. 23, v. 12).

Man has inherited a sinful nature through Adam's fall, but when arraigned before God's judgment bar each one will have to give an account of himself to God, "who will render **to every man** according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 6).

The solemn fact, then, is that

**"all have sinned."**

First of all, the state of the heathen is gone into, and it is proved that **they are without excuse** (Rom. i. 20). Sunk as they are in the most awful corruption and degradation, they were not always so. There was a time when **they knew God** (ver. 21). Their present condition of revolting idolatry is ignorance of God, but at one time they had a knowledge of God handed down by tradition. The heathen races of the earth are not **steps forward** in the development and evolution of mankind, but a **fall backward** into degradation through idolatry.

They had a knowledge of God, but gave it up and "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man." Hence in God's governmental dealings

they in turn have been given up by God. Three times over in this chapter are we told that **God gave them up** (vers. 24, 26, 28).

But, further, they have the ever-present testimony of creation before their eyes. On every blade of grass, on every leaf of the tree, in every grain of sand, in every star of the heavens are indelibly impressed the evidence of God's eternal power and Godhead. No idol made with hands, that can neither see nor hear, could have called these things into existence.

And, besides this, ever since the Garden of Eden every man possesses a conscience which ever bears its witness, and "their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. ii. 15). \*

It is clear, therefore, that the guilt of the heathen is definitely established for resisting the three-fold testimony of creation (Rom. i. 19, 20), tradition (Rom. i. 21), and conscience (Rom. ii. 15). They will not be condemned for rejecting a Christ of whom they have never heard, as infidels foolishly assert, but for deliberately closing their ears to the voice of God as already shown. The solemn verdict of the Judge of all the earth is this—"they are without excuse" (Rom. i. 20).

But is the case of the Jews any better? Advantages certainly they have that the heathen do not possess (Rom. iii. 1), the chief of these being that to them were committed the oracles

of God. They had the Scriptures—of course, the Old Testament—but what did these Scriptures declare? The law spoke directly to those who were under the law, and what did it say? Listen—

“There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. iii. 10-12).

The whole case is thus summed up “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

Yes, all are guilty, for all have sinned. There is no difference, the whole world, Jew and Gentile, is brought in **guilty before God**. On what ground? This, that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” It matters not what the particular sins may be, the solemn fact is stated and clearly proved that all, without one single exception, are sinners; that all are unfit to stand before the glory of God.

But it is just here that God in His grace delights to meet us. The gospel contains the magnificent revelation of God's plan of salvation. Man's utter ruin is proved by God Himself, but then follows the glorious remedy which God Himself has devised to meet us just where we are, and just as we are.

There is Paul, that honoured servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle called by a glorified Christ, and separated unto the gospel of God (Rom. i. 1).

A blasphemer and a persecutor he had been, but now a captive in the Saviour's bonds of love, he lived for nothing else than to preach the gospel—he was separated unto it. Separated to what? **The gospel of God.** Ah, here we learn a wonderful secret. The good news has its source in the heart of God. God devised the matchless plan, and not man.

Reader, is it not wonderful? Is it not worthy of God? Look at those four words—"the gospel of God." Guilty, wretched, degraded, ruined man may be the object of God's saving grace, but the source, the spring, the motives, all were in the heart of God—"God so loved the world," &c. (John iii. 16).

Is there anything to be ashamed of in such a gospel? "No," says Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Man is guilty, and has no righteousness for God, but God has a righteousness for man. This He reveals in the gospel. No righteousness can man produce for God by deeds of law; but now, yes **NOW**, since Christ has died and risen again; **now**, since that precious blood has been shed that not only cleanses from all sin, but which has fully satisfied every claim of God's majesty, justice, and glory; yes, "**now** the righteousness of God without the law (*i.e.*, apart from the law) is manifested . . . even the

righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. i. 16, iii. 20-22).

So that whilst it is solemnly true that through sin all are lost, and all are guilty, yet through the gospel all may be saved, and all may be justified. The gospel is the power of God that stoops down into man's ruin, lifts him out of it, saves him, justifies him, and presently will glorify him with Christ on the simple ground of faith.

"Salvation unto every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

"The righteousness of God unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22).

A. H. B.

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## The Fields of Moab.

RUTH i.

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"**W**HERE sin abounded." That is the key to the first chapter of Ruth. The glory of God's grace shines out against the dark background of the ruin sin has brought in. The last verse of Judges tells us that "every man did what was right in his own eyes"; the first verse of Ruth gives us in the shortest, simplest way the double effect of man's will at work:—

1. "**There was a famine in the land.**" The first time man ever did his own will, it was in



trying to do better for himself than God had done for him, and instead of being a gainer he lost everything, and had to be turned out of the garden. In his pride, man thinks he can get on without God, but famine comes quickly, and, although man is very wise and has sought out many inventions, he has never invented anything to take the place of bread. When our wills are working, and God breaks the staff of bread, we may eat but cannot be satisfied (Lev. xxvi. 26). If I had the whole world at my will to do as I liked with, my heart would still be empty. Nothing in the world can satisfy the hunger of the famine that man's will has caused.

But the famine at first only drives man's heart farther away from God, and that is the next thing we have in the first verse of Ruth:—

**2. The fields of Moab.** The effect of the famine is to send Elimelech, his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, away from the house of bread, away from the land where God still dwelt, although forgotten by foolish man, right over the Jordan into the land of Moab, the land of lust (see the story of Moab's sad parentage, Gen. xix. 37).

When we first feel the misery and emptiness caused by sin, our hearts turn eagerly for relief to the lusts of sin, the pleasures of sin for a season, but the story of that sojourn is soon told. "When lust hath conceived it bringeth

forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*" (James i. 15).

First Elimelech, whose name means "God is King," dies, God's authority is gone, the link between Him, the only source of every good and perfect gift, and poor wilful man is broken. Then the two sons, whose names tell something of the bitter fruit of sin (Mahlon means "*sickness*," and Chilion "*pining*"), both die, and Naomi, her name ("*my pleasantness*") turned to emptiness and bitterness, is left alone. And so, in five verses, the Spirit of God gives us a picture of a scene where sin has abounded, such a scene as the earth must have presented when the waters of the flood first ebbed from it—a scene of barrenness, desolation, and death.

Such is the fruit of man's will, and how often have poor hearts in misery been brought to such a pass, from Naomi to Marah, pleasure to bitterness, and bitterness that knows no relief, nothing left—"the woman was *left*." Nothing could be more eloquent than that little word, of the state of soul that first brings us to a sense of our need of *God*.

She was *left* of everything but *God*—and He, always the same, causes the good news to reach the fields of Moab, and the ears of the desolate widow, that He had visited His people with bread. How blessed, God has *visited* His people, come Himself to meet the need that man's proud will had caused. That is the gospel. Man's

extremity is God's opportunity. God's delight is *to give*, but we are too proud to receive until so broken, "*left*" of everything, that the news of His grace touches the deep sense of need, and we come, to find that He has given *Christ* to meet the need of a poor empty heart that all the world could never satisfy.

But from this point the Spirit of God occupies us with the one who is to be the vessel of this grace. First showing us God's way of *emptying* in Naomi, He shows us God's way of *filling* in *Ruth*. In order that He may be fully glorified all that is of man must be set aside. Naomi had *some* claim, Ruth had *none*. So He passes over Naomi, and in order that all may be of Himself He draws the heart of a poor Moabitish maiden, who was by His own decree shut out for ever from the place where His presence dwelt in blessing among His people (Deut. xxiii. 3). We find then, as is always God's way, that His grace *superabounds*, He acts in a way wholly unexpected. . Instead of merely bringing Naomi back and blessing her, as He fully intended to do, and setting *that* before us as the picture of His grace, He picks out an alien without claim or title of any sort, brings her out of her fields of Moab, the only place she had ever known, and actually makes her the vessel of His grace, to reach out world-wide in *Christ*, to be the channel of blessing to Naomi and to me.

*That* is the kind of grace we have set out in

this wonderful little book. The first thing is *He does the drawing*; in spite of Naomi's wretched testimony, He draws Ruth *out of the fields of Moab*. But have you learnt what it is to be left?

S. H. H.

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### The Election.\*

"WHAT IS MAN?"

PSALM viii.

TO answer this question, may I ask your attention to a few scriptures? You will notice that when the work accomplished by our "Redeemer" is spoken of, that though *the death, the cross, the blood* of Jesus are used to express it, they are not confounded as synonymous, but are accurately employed by the Holy Spirit.

For instance, in Romans we read of our being "dead to sin," "dead to the law." Why? Because the death of Christ, followed, of course, by the resurrection, settles this question (see Rom. vi. 3, 8-11). If you desire to be acquainted with God's thought of being *in Christ*, read the words He has selected on this subject between chapters v. 11 and viii. 4. These, obeyed from the heart,

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\* This article has reference to an appeal recently sent forth regarding the grave crisis the nation has passed through—the General Election. This appeal for "United Prayer as it Becometh Saints," was addressed to "Bishops, Clergy, Ministers of the Free Churches, and Laity," and was largely responded to.—ED.

## THE ELECTION.

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will give you an intelligence of His ways that you have possibly lacked since you professed your faith in Jesus as your Saviour.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, where resurrection is only once mentioned, and that in the first verse, we find apostolic instructions with regard to "deliverance from this present evil world" (chap. i. 4), and note that in this epistle from beginning to end *the cross* is before us.

Now the cross, according to 1 Corinthians i., is the balance of the sanctuary whereby all things must be weighed by those who are waiting for the coming of our Lord, and who have been called by God into the fellowship of His Son. By it the wisdom and the strength of man are found to be vain; for it still pleases God, by the foolishness of the preaching of the cross, to show that the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God stronger than men. So that we may well inquire with the Psalmist, "What is man?" and recall the "cease ye from man" of Isaiah ii. 22.

An important challenge to the man "*in Christ*" is given by the writer of Galatians when he calls attention to the source of his authority, "Neither of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from among the dead."

The word "bewitched" in chapter iii. is another challenge to those who have had the cross brought before them in the simplicity and

extent of apostolic ministry, and then turned to the law.

In chapter iv. we are taken to the earthly metropolis, Jerusalem. We cannot forget that God's politics, as given through Daniel the prophet, will end in the judgment of the kingdoms of this age, but the present purpose of God, based upon the resurrection and ascension of Christ, is that we may be lifted up from the earthly to the *heavenly Jerusalem*, here said to be "our mother," and in contrast with which he shows us the bondage of the earthly under the system of the law given through Moses. Practical deliverance from this bondage is seen to be in the power of *the cross* (chaps. v. 11-24, vi. 14).

From history we know that when this epistle was written Jerusalem was soon to be destroyed by the Romans. As a fact, too, the Jewish nation had been subjected to the Gentiles ever since the day when Nebuchadnezzar burned the temple and carried the elect nation captive to Babylon; but we still await the accomplishment of this king's vision (Dan. ii.), when the stone cut out from the mountain without hands shall strike the feet of the image, and all the Gentile powers represented by it—Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman—shall come to destruction.

The Jew accentuated the motto of the Roman Empire when they chose Barabbas instead of Christ, and afterwards said, "We have no king but Cæsar."

## THE ELECTION.

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The city that refused and hated Christ who wept over her, "loves death" (Prov. viii. 36), as in effect they themselves declared—"His blood be on us and on our children." This city is last seen at its old practices in Revelation xi. 8-10, and lest we should by the lapse of time forget, it is added in verse 8, "Where our Lord was crucified."

The cross in this connection cannot be confined to what John Bunyan truly expresses as the experience of those who at the cross of Christ see no more than the bundle of their sins going into the grave of Jesus, for the Philippians are solemnly warned against being "enemies of the cross of Christ." This comes after the description of the experiences of one who has allowed himself there to be set aside, and has nothing, and seeks nothing, apart from Christ. How appropriate here is the expression, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20).

The apostle John says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." To one who deliberately chooses the world, it would be useless to address this paper, for "he who is convinced against his will, remains of the same opinion still," but for the household of God, their citizenship ought to be a simple matter; and if any of these be otherwise minded, may we not find comfort from the apostle's word in Philippians iii. 15, that "God will reveal even this unto them."

When the Spirit speaks through Peter, to whom our Lord had entrusted the keys of the kingdom of the heavens in its present "mysterious" form, we find he refers to *the blood*. On his nation's birthday the blood had been the separating line between those saved and those judged. The history given in Exodus xii. is surely a figure of what we now possess, as delivered from the cruel oppression of this world's taskmaster.

The apostle sets forth God's present ways in government, showing how we, who have to suffer now for righteousness' sake, as well as for Christ's name's sake, can pray in the Spirit for the "powers that be" and not content ourselves with prayers formed according to our varied wills. "The end of all things is at hand," he says: "be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (chap. iv. 7).

"Behold he prayeth" was a word understood by Ananias when our Lord spoke to him of one who had doubtless often said prayers after the manner of the scribes (Luke xxi. 42).

Let us not forget the apostolic injunction in 1 Timothy ii. 1-6, where we may learn how one of the household of God can prevail by prayer like Abraham, and accomplish more than he could by activity like that of just Lot, who, we are told, "was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."



THE DAY OF THE LORD.

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How is it with you, dear reader? Are you "in Adam" or "in Christ"?

"Stand fast *in Christ*, ah yet again  
He teacheth all the band;  
If human efforts are in vain,  
In Christ it is we stand."

Yours, in the holy brotherhood of which it is said that Jesus Christ was not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. ii. 11).

H. T.,  
Berthorpe, Compton, Guildford.

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**The Day of the Lord.**

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WE have seen that the only right attitude for the Christian at all times is that of waiting and watching for Christ. It is a mistake to suppose that the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written to correct the thought that the Lord might at any moment return to take His own away from earth to heaven. No, the error that needed correction was quite different from this.

False teachers had come in amongst the young converts of Thessalonica; they troubled them by their teachings, and upset their minds with reference to what in the simplicity of their faith they had at first believed.

Heretics are never over-scrupulous as to the methods they employ to spread their evil doctrines, and here we find they left no stone

unturned to gain the ear of these young converts, and to weaken their confidence in the apostle's instructions. They claimed spiritual revelation for their assertion that the Day of the Lord was actually present; and had not the apostle himself enjoined upon them not to quench the Spirit? (1 Thess. v. 19). We can readily understand how an argument of this nature must have appealed to the saints of that day, before the completion of the Word of God. Now, as we know, the whole of the truth has been revealed. We need the Spirit for the reception and right understanding of what has already been revealed, but no fresh or fuller light will be given than what has already been bestowed in the Scriptures. Therefore any pretended new light must be submitted to the test of Scripture, a duty that becomes increasingly imperative in view of the fact that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. iii. 13).

Furthermore, it was no use for these deceivers to claim for their own "word" the authority of the Word of God. When the apostle had spoken to the Thessalonians he had not spoken his own words merely but "the word of God," which had effectually wrought in them that had believed. That word had come to them "in power and in the Holy Ghost," they had received it too "with joy of the Holy Ghost," and had through it received assurance of salvation and

peace in view of the coming day of wrath. Was all this to be given up? What had the word of these deceivers given them in its stead? Nothing but trouble and confusion. This is ever the difference between true and false teaching. The truth of God brings peace and joy and true liberty of soul; heresy brings strife and trouble and every evil work.

But these deceivers went further with their evil deception, and produced a false letter—a letter that they pretended had come from Paul himself. How earnestly the apostle beseeches them not to be shaken in their minds by all these things, recalling their hearts to the comforting hope already unfolded in the First Epistle, “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him,” &c.

So far from rebuking them for their daily expectation of the return of their Lord, he beseeches them *on the ground* of this very hope not to be troubled. It was impossible that the Day of the Lord should be actually present as these deceivers asserted, for the gathering together of the saints to meet the Lord in the air had not yet taken place.

Furthermore, before the Day of the Lord should come, two solemn things must take place—the falling-away or apostasy must come and the antichrist must be revealed (ver. 3). These things must happen, *not* before the gathering

together of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, *but* before the Day of the Lord should come.

There is nothing to hinder the Lord from coming **at any moment** to take His saints away, but this hope when held in the soul in power exercises such a sanctifying effect that the enemy of Christ's glory would ever hinder the saints from embracing it with simple faith. The fixing of dates, quite apart from the lack of intelligence displayed by an attempt at any such thing, puts off to a future day what should be the daily and hourly expectation—"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour" (Matt. xxv. 13). "Let no man deceive you by any means."

A. H. B.

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### Divers Seeds.

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"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds : lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled. Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts as of woollen and linen together." —DEUT. xxii. 9-11.

**I**N these days of careless indifference to the claims of Christ, we do well to take heed to ourselves and remind one another of the precious and important lessons to be learned from the Old Testament as well as the New, for "these things . . . are written for our admonition, upon

whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11).

### **Divers Seeds.**

Life in this world, though short, is very real, and each day we sow seeds which produce eternal results.

*All sow*, whether believers or unbelievers ; and the solemn word in Galatians vi. 6, "*Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap*," applies to both classes.

Have you, my dear fellow-believer, fully considered the matter? Do you challenge your heart each day in the presence of the Lord, and inquire earnestly what the results will be? You *surely* sow by your

### **Words and Deeds,**

and the *harvest* will *surely* follow when "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12), and God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 6).

Let us then seek to walk daily in the light of His presence where everything is *now* fully manifest, and *then* we shall have praise of God. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke xii. 2).

All we come in contact with are influenced by us for good or for evil ; and we are often watched when we are little aware of it.

What momentous issues are at stake ! We may obey the apostle's word to Timothy, "Take

heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine ; continue in them ; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee " (1 Tim. iv. 16) ; or, like Naomi, we may turn aside from the path of faith because of the difficulties of the way, and spend ten years in Moab (the world), during which time we are not only robbed of everything sweet so that the Lord has to bring us home *empty*, but being out of communion with Him we may really hinder souls on the way and cause them to *turn back* (Ruth i. 14, 15).

### "The Seed is the Word of God"

(Luke viii. 11).

Are you a Sunday-school teacher ? Then see that you give the dear children the sincere milk of the Word. Are you a tract distributor ? Then distribute only those tracts which contain simple gospel *truths* making God's way of salvation plain, and those sound in doctrine to help and encourage believers. Thousands given away to-day contain love stories half true and half fiction, under the plea that the gospel must be toned down to make it palatable to the natural man. This, we believe, is obnoxious to God and to every sober-minded Christian. " Sound speech which cannot be condemned " is what the Scripture demands (Titus ii. 8).

Are you a preacher ? Then " preach the Word " (2 Tim. iv. 2). Tell of the joys of heaven and the horrors of hell, the blessing of

the redeemed and distress of the damned. Remember that your hearers possess precious and never-dying souls, and that eternal issues are at stake. Let the love of Christ kindle in your heart a holy love for sinners so that you may plead with them earnestly and persuade men to flee from the wrath to come. Many preach that the *sinner* is only half *lost* and the *saint* only half *saved*. This is a mixture of "divers seeds," and can but produce a harvest of disappointment and cause the hearers to "lie down in sorrow."

**The sinner** is utterly corrupt—rotten to the very core—"from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness" (Isa. i. 6).

**The saint** is perfectly saved by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that "whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it" (Eccles. iii. 14).

How solid then the foundation. The value of the Person gives efficacy to the work. Who can estimate His worth? Who can sound the fathomless depths of Calvary? Who can measure the infinite value of His person, or the blessing bestowed upon the feeblest believer who trusts *Him*? Our salvation stands with the *work* of *Christ* and the *Word* of God—the one is *unchangeable* and the other *unalterable*.

"Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

"Though the waters therefore roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High" (Ps. xlv. 2-4).

A. T. P.

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## Bible Study.

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**N**OW that the first subject has yielded its fruit, it is possible to see more clearly how we stand. Many papers have been sent in, all bearing witness to deep interest in the precious Word, and careful study of the subject chosen, while some show a more practised hand than others. First of all we would say to those to whom Bible study is at all new, do not be discouraged if the subject seems a little difficult, and you feel that you know nothing about it. That is what you will feel more deeply after many years of study of the blessed Word of God.

But you have the key—**Christ Himself**—and you have the guide—the **Holy Ghost**—so that depending on that guidance, and desiring that one thing, to have more of **Christ Himself** for your heart, you may set to work on untrodden ground, and dig just as a miner would attack his claim in search of gold. There is a difference between reading the Word of God quietly for communion, and the diligent searching of it to discover the treasures hidden in it. No child of God can do without either of these. Moreover, no study of the Word can be really blessed to our hearts without constant prayer.

Then, to those more accustomed to roast what they have taken in hunting, we can only express thankfulness for many helpful and interesting studies received, and wish there were space available to give some of them entire. If the number of those who wish to take up this study of



the Word together increases, it may be possible to give more space, both to the results of study, and to the answering of questions.

Meanwhile, will all those who have sent in questions be assured that they shall have an answer as early as possible?

The following are the numbers and initials of those who have sent in their names since the last issue :—

125. J. H. D.	128. E. B.	131.	134.
126. B. (Miss).	129. J. C. R.	132.	135.
127. N. P.	130. A. R. H.	133.	136.

**Brief Summary of the Results of January's Study.**—No doubt many will be disappointed that it is so short, but at present our space is limited. Besides, it is not what appears here that will prove of real value, but the actual work of studying, and the suggestions that may arise, leading to many new and fresh lines of search.

1. In Genesis i. we find at once that a number of **symbols**—that is, things which God has formed and put in this scene to convey His thoughts to us—are brought in, *e.g.*, light, darkness, heavens, earth, waters, grass, trees, birds, &c. We have also found from the study of each day, that these symbols run through the whole of the Word of God, and perhaps we have been puzzled at finding that the symbols sometimes have a good meaning, sometimes a bad. For example, **water** is used for death and for life; **birds** are used of the devil's agents (Matt. xiii. 19), and of the Holy Ghost (Luke iii. 22); a **lion** is used of man (Num. xxiv. 9), Satan (1 Pet. v. 8), Christ (Rev. v. 5). The reason for this is simple, and

when understood helps us to read aright these symbols as they occur in the Word. God put **man** as head of the whole scene when it was ordered and filled. Everything was put under him, and he was in God's image, after God's likeness. Man was the key to God's alphabet, so to speak. Then man fell, and everything fell with him, and we find the proof in the sad and changed meaning of the symbols, Satan lays hold of them and puts his meaning into them. But God had Christ as the hidden key in reserve. He comes to destroy the works of the devil, to redeem fallen man, and to take the place as **Head** according to the eighth Psalm, from which man had fallen, but in resurrection, beyond the power of sin and death to ruin in, so that God finally places all securely under Christ, and we find the blessed proof in the meaning these symbols take as soon as they are connected with Christ.

A symbol is like a word, whose meaning depends on the context. A type is a complete picture made up of symbols, hence its meaning does **not** change.

2. The key to all this is given us in Hebrews xi. 3, where we are told that faith lets us into the secret of what God was doing when He so framed the world as the place where His purposes were to be worked out, that everything placed by Him on the earth or in the heavens was not merely what it appeared to **the natural**

## BIBLE STUDY.

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**mind**, but was there to be a witness to what God had in **His mind**. So this verse enables us to read Genesis i. in the light that faith gives.

3. The Six Days' Work shows two lines of division; **by days**, and **by "God saw that it was good."**

The second line should be carefully noticed, as it may be easily missed.

4. Taking the days in their order we find:—

Day.	Symbols.	Day.	Symbols.
I.	Light. <b>Good.</b>	IV.	Light. <b>Good.</b>
II.	Heavens	V.	Creatures in Waters
III.	Earth		Creatures in Heavens
	Seas	VI.	Beast
	Grass		Cattle
	Herbs		Creeping thing
	Trees		<b>Man.</b>
<b>All—Very Good.</b>			

Thus looking rapidly over the whole, we see that the scene in which God begins to work is a scene of disorder—emptiness and darkness. He first brings in **Light**, what He is Himself, then He forms and puts in order **the scene** where His purposes are to be worked out, *i.e.*, heavens, earth, and seas. Then, as part of the scene God brings in three forms of **life**—grass, herbs, and trees. Light comes before lights, and life before living creatures.

Then in the second three days, which clearly

run parallel to the first three, God first sets **Lights** in the expanse to mark out the periods of time during which His purposes were to run on, as they were worked out in the scene prepared. Then He fills the seas and heavens with **living creatures**, and blesses them. Then He fills the earth with **living creatures**, and, lastly, puts on the top stone by placing **man** in His image after His likeness, to bear sway over all.

Then man is blessed, and God surveys **all** that He has made, and pronounces it **very good**.

In addition to this summary, we hope to give a series of short papers on each day in order, presenting more fully the details of each day and the results of the studies sent in.

**The Subject for March** (D.V.) will be the study of **all the Names** in the Word given **with a definite meaning**. Only those which have their meaning stated in Scripture are to be considered.

First, a list of the names should be given with their meanings and place where they occur. Then those which refer to Christ should be pointed out, with reference to the New Testament. Lastly, older students should, if possible, arrange the names according to the line of God's purpose seen in them.

The subject may be divided into two parts, **Names of Persons**, and **Names of Places**. Will all the even numbers take the first part of the subject, and the odd numbers the second part. May the study bring us each to know and enjoy more of God's thoughts about the blessed One to whom He has given **the Name** which is above every name.

B. S. ED.

## Notes and Comments.

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### ***Assembly Meetings.***

We were thankful to be present at a meeting recently held in London where this subject was raised. For long we have felt that a distinct loss was sustained by the giving up of this character of meeting, and it was with unfeigned pleasure that we learnt that many others were feeling the same.

An elder brother, who can speak from personal experience prior to 1848, reminded us that this was the habitual form of meeting at that time. Reading meetings were not so common as they are now, and were generally held in private houses. He added that as power diminished the assembly meetings lapsed and reading meetings seemed to take their place. This is a sorrowful consideration.

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### ***Reading Meetings.***

It was generally felt that reading meetings were most helpful when properly conducted, but that often they were rendered profitless by the discussion on the part of two or three brothers of points of little interest to those who were obliged to sit patiently by.

We felt the need of this word of rebuke and exhortation. Young people and sisters have often complained that they get little food at such

meetings, and if brothers would only remember the needs of the souls around them, and would be more anxious that these should be fed and helped on, than that their own particular views should be established, much more real good would follow from such meetings. If Bible readings were more frequently held in private houses, it would give a more family character to such meetings, and many would be free to ask questions or make remarks for whom it would be out of place to do so in a public meeting room.

***What is an  
Assembly  
Meeting?***

As we recently issued a little pamphlet\* with the desire of stirring up our brethren on this point, we shall not now further enlarge on it, but would urge all, old and young, brother and sister, to study carefully 1 Corinthians xii., xiii., and xiv.; in these chapters we get the principle, the power, and the practice of assembly meetings. We have got so accustomed to preachings, lectures, and meetings left entirely to the responsibility of one individual, that many are almost afraid to return to the simplicity of earlier days. We would by no means do away with preaching and lecturing, we should be finding fault with God's own institution if we did so. The usefulness of these is dependent upon the earnestness,

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\* "The Free Action of the Spirit." James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C. Price 2d. ; by post 2½d.

devotedness, and faith of the individual who may have received a gift from God.

An assembly meeting is one where each one should feel his responsibility to take part or to remain silent, according as the Spirit of God may guide.

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***Worship Meetings.*** Many brothers present recalled the weekly meetings that used to be held in some parts of London about thirty years ago under the title of "Worship Meetings," and it was felt that it would be for our joy and blessing to have them revived. We were reminded that these meetings were not convened for the exercise of any individual brother's gift, that much speaking at such meetings was rather to be deprecated, and that they should partake more of the character of worship and prayer.

For our own part we could not lay down any rules as to what particular form the meeting should take, for the very essence of an assembly meeting as described in 1 Corinthians xiv., is the perfect liberty of the Spirit of God to use one and another in speaking to edification, in thanksgiving, or in prayer. But the speakers of "five words" are specially commended (ver. 19).

Much more might be said on the subject, but for the moment we commend it to the prayerful consideration of our brethren everywhere. In Egypt our brethren seem more simple in their

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faith on this point. Almost every night in the year they come together in the way described in 1 Corinthians xiv., and have proved the blessing of it.

ED.

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These words are well known, ***The Holy Ghost and Fire.*** and in connection with recent revival work have been widely used. Yet it has occurred to me that if the striking contrast between Matthew iii. 11 and Acts i. 5 had been noted, much help might have been obtained on the subjects in question.

John was speaking to a mixed crowd, hence spoke of fire as well as the Holy Ghost. The following words clearly show what the results would be. On the one hand those who accepted the Christ of whom John spoke were to be gathered as His wheat into the garner, whilst those who refused Him would, as chaff, be consigned to unquenchable fire (Matt. iii. 12). In Acts i. Christ is addressing His disciples, and speaks *only* of the Holy Ghost. To them, fire (an emblem of judgment) had no application, in the above sense, hence is appropriately omitted.

It is well known that "fire" in Matthew iii. 12 has been understood to signify the Holy Ghost, but surely it would not be needed for this purpose, where He is also definitely mentioned.



FOUR LITTLE WISE THINGS.

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I write with no love for mere criticism, but with the earnest desire that the contrast between the above passages may be studied, and thus prove helpful to many.

C. W.

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**Four Little Wise Things.**

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

By the late H. M. HOOKE.

PROV. xxx. 24-31.

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THE Bible was not written for the information of scientists, but there has been no discovery of science which can overthrow the truths it contains. The Word of God stands alone ; it does not require the aid of science to establish its authority, or to add to it, for it is complete in itself. In this very chapter we read, "Every word of God is pure . . . **add** thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Take care and do not add science or any other thing to the Lord's word, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. In the present day we find people adding to the Lord's word on every side.

Jesus Himself says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me **hath** everlasting life." Yet we find people saying that nobody can know in this world that they **have** everlast-

ing life ; that they must wait until they die before they can know it ; and so they make Jesus a liar, for He says that the believer has life **now**. Is there one who is making Jesus a liar? To such a one I would say, Take care, lest He reprove you, and **you** be found a liar. It is you who are the liar and not Jesus ; every word of His is pure, He cannot lie. Come unto Him now, and believe in His word as it stands, without any addition of man, and you will get everlasting life ; you may now be the present possessor of everlasting life.

In the scripture at the head of this paper we read of four things which are little on the earth. Now, I am not going to give you a lecture on natural history ; if I were I could tell you all about the habits of the ants, conies, locusts, and spiders ; but what I want to do is to bring before you what is taught here, and to show you how each of these things spoken of brings before us different conditions. If the first four conditions be true of any, the last four follow as a consequence.

“**The ants** are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.” They do not find their food in their nest, they have to go outside for it. But God causes the food to grow near them ; it's there, and all they have to do is to go outside for it. Are there any whose condition is that of the ants? Are there any who are without strength? Well now, what does

## FOUR LITTLE WISE THINGS.

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Scripture say about those who are without strength? Turn to Romans v. 6, where we read, "For when we were yet **without strength**, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." If there be one without strength, ungodly, well, Christ died for you, poor sinner. The blessing is for you, but it is outside of yourself; you must look outside of yourself for salvation. God has sent His Son into the world to die for you, and now salvation is within your reach. You must give up trusting in your own works or feelings, and trust in Christ and in the work which He accomplished, and you will be saved just now, as you are, and where you are. The work by which you can be saved was done outside of you by the spotless Son of God, when He suffered on Calvary's cross.

"**The conies** are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." Now, how do the conies make their houses in the rocks, for they are unable to make a hole even in the ground? God sends the thunderbolt and rends the rocks, so that the conies may find a place of safety in the clefts. You often listen to the thunder and watch the lightning, all the time wondering why it has been sent. Well, I will tell you; God sends it in order to provide a place of security for the poor feeble conies. When the coney is hidden in the cleft of the rock she is quite safe from the lion (though she may tremble when she hears his roar), as the cleft, though large

enough for the coney, is not large enough for the lion to get in. Before the lion could touch one of the feeble conies which are hidden in the rock he would have to tear the rock to pieces, and this he could not do.

Now, beloved hearers, the thunderbolt of the wrath of God against sin has fallen upon Christ, when He suffered on Calvary, and the Rock of Ages has been cleft, as the hymn says—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Grace hath hid me **safe** in Thee.”

You wonder why I have changed the second line, and have not said—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Well, I will tell you why I did so. I **am** hidden in the cleft of the Rock of Ages, and I do not ask that I may be. Just think how strange it would be if I were to go into one of your houses for tea, and when sitting at your table, with the tea before me, I should begin to knock on the table. You would say, “What do you want?” And suppose I said, “I want you to let me into your house, and give me some tea ;” you would say, “But you are in already, and the tea is before you.” If I were to say, “Oh, but I must continue to knock,” you would think it very queer of me to go on that way instead of enjoying what was before me. And so it is with those who go on praying to God for what He has given them already instead of

## FOUR LITTLE WISE THINGS.

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enjoying it, and thanking and praising Him for it. Before I was converted I came to the Lord and said—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

But now I can say—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Grace **hath** hid me **safe** in Thee.”

and thank and praise Him for it. The feeblest believer is **safe** in Christ, safe in the cleft of the Rock of Ages ; and though Satan is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, you need not fear, for he **cannot** take you out of Christ. Before he can get a single believer out of Christ, he would have to tear the Rock of Ages to pieces. Poor feeble one, do not fear, you are safe for ever in the Rock of Ages ; safe in the cleft which was made when the thunderbolt of the wrath of God fell upon the Rock of Ages on Calvary's cross.

“**The locusts** have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands.” Here we get another thing. The locusts have no visible head, yet they keep in rank. This answers to the unity of the body of Christ. We have no head on earth, but we are all united to our Head in heaven, and to one another on earth by the Holy Ghost. There is one body on earth to which all Christians belong, with Christ the Head in heaven. We, who believe, have all been baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit, and we are

now to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. We should all keep rank as the locusts, and own no head on earth. The locusts form one band as they go forth, and they **never** break rank; they will allow themselves to be broken by the wheels of an approaching vehicle rather than break rank. It is sad to see Christians split up into so many sects instead of owning the one body, and expressing the unity of it here on earth! We should take a lesson from the locusts, who would rather let themselves be broken into pieces than separate.

“**The spider** taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces.” Now, what insect is more repulsive than the spider? And yet it is to be found in the king's palace. The spiders are to be found in the outhouses in the summer, but when the weather gets cold they find their way into the houses, and generally get to the highest places, where they remain undisturbed. They are to be found on the corners of the drawing-room ceiling, high up, and safe from the housemaid's broom. No doubt Solomon caught sight of one on the grand ceiling of the drawing-room of his palace, which led him to write about it. Now what position true of all believers, does this answer to? Well, we shall find it in Ephesians ii. 4-6. We were by nature loathsome as the spider, and at a distance from God, in the outhouse and in our sins: “but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved

## FOUR LITTLE WISE THINGS.

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us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us **sit together in heavenly places** in Christ." We have our place now in the king's palace.

In the ants we have an illustration of the **salvation** of all poor sinners who have no strength, but who have come outside of themselves to Christ and taken salvation as a gift from Him. In the conies is seen the **security** of all believers; in the locusts our **unity**, and in the spider our **place** now as seated in the heavenlies. Now when we know that we have salvation and security in Christ, we should seek to keep rank, seek to own the truth of the one body into which we have been baptized by the Holy Ghost, and then live in the enjoyment of our place in Christ. If we do so, the four last conditions will be true of us.

We shall be **bold** as lions, **swift** as greyhounds, **hardy** as goats, and as **dignified** as kings! There are three things which go well; yea, four are comely in going; a lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any! This is boldness. We should be bold as the lion in the service of the Lord, not to be turned aside by any one from following Him. In the "greyhound" we get swiftness. Well, we are to be swift to serve the Lord; swift to carry out His wishes. The "he-goat" gives us hardness. We

are to endure hardness in the Lord's service. "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "A king against whom there is no rising up." This gives us dignity. We are to go through the world in a manner in keeping with the place we are in. Just fancy the King of Italy coming to England and spending his time playing marbles with the boys on the streets. Would it be in keeping with his position as a king? Surely not; and so with us. We should not do anything unbecoming to our dignity as beloved children of God, and as those who are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. We need not go to theatres, flower shows, concerts, or boat races for enjoyment; it would be beneath our dignity; all our enjoyment is in Christ, and in living for Him. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."



## The Redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**WE** have called the Epistle to the Romans **the great gospel epistle**; and so it is, for in no other epistle are the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel so clearly developed.

The apostle Paul had never yet been to Rome; but inasmuch as he, and not Peter, was the specially chosen instrument in God's hands to



minister the gospel of God to the Gentiles (Rom. xv. 15-20), he writes the more boldly and fully to those who had not the opportunity that others had had of listening to his living voice. We are not to suppose that the truths he communicated to the Romans by letter did not also form a part of his testimony in other places. But in the providence of God to us Paul writes to the Romans, so that not only they, but we too, should have a clear and an inspired unfolding of God's way of salvation.

Man through sin is at a distance from God ; he stands convicted and guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19). Every privilege that God has surrounded him with has only increased his responsibility, and enhanced his guilt. The law, which required strength on the part of man to accomplish it, could not bridge the moral distance that separated man from God, nor justify the guilty sinner. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20). The law that brought home man's guilt to his conscience, could not pardon the sin, nor cleanse the guilty. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

What then must be done? God is a righteous God. In His righteousness He might justly visit man's sin upon his own guilty head in condemnation. But God is also a God of grace and love. To condemn the sinner would be justice, but it would not be love. Was there any way

whereby God's righteousness and His grace might both be displayed?

Here is where the blessed gospel of God shines forth in the midst of a world of guilty ruined sinners. Man, it has been proved, has no righteousness for God ; but God has a righteousness for man, a righteousness which extends to all, but benefits only those that believe.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested," that is to say, the righteousness which God provides in the gospel for the sinner who believes is not a righteousness on the principle of works, it is "without the law," that is, apart altogether from the law as the ground on which it can be obtained.

But it has been witnessed by the law and the prophets. In other words, both the Pentateuch and the prophetic writings of the Old Testament bore their witness to the fact that God's righteousness was to be revealed (Isa. xlv. 13, lvi. 1 ; Dan. ix. 24). **Testified beforehand** it had been, but **never revealed** until after Christ had died and was risen and glorified. Here, then, is the force of this word "NOW"—"but **now** the righteousness of God . . . is manifested." **Now**, since Christ has died and risen, God can save the vilest sinner consistently with His own righteousness.

But how is this made good to the sinner? In one way only—"by faith of Jesus Christ." And to whom does it extend? "**Unto all.**" Praise

## THE REDEMPTION.

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God! If man's ruin is universal, the remedy of God's grace is none the less so. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" but the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is "unto all, and upon all them that believe." The flood gates of redeeming love have been opened by the cross, and God's justifying grace bursts forth in its freeness and its fulness, "**through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**" (Rom. iii. 24).

A true mercy-seat has been found, yea, God Himself has set it forth: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation" (or more correctly, **a mercy-seat**). The mercy-seat of old, under the Mosaic economy, was God's appointed meeting-place between Himself and Moses, the representative of His people (Exod. xxv. 17-22). God in His majesty and glory was hidden behind the veil, and man in his sins dared not draw nigh. But there once every year (Lev. xvi.) the High Priest entered with the blood of propitiation, which he sprinkled before and on the mercy-seat, the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way in to the Holiest was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was standing.

After the work of the cross, the veil was rent, and the way was made manifest, though this is specially unfolded in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here in Romans the great point is the all-sufficient ground upon which the believer can stand before a God fully revealed in His righteous-

ness and glory ; it is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." On this ground, and on this ground alone—not by law, not by works, not by prayers and ceremonies, but "through faith in His blood," a righteous God and a guilty sinner can meet. To meet apart from that precious blood would be eternal condemnation and perdition ; to meet "through faith in His blood," means forgiveness, justification, salvation, and eternal glory.

But further, though it had not yet been shed, the precious blood of Christ had ever been the ground of God's forgiveness in all the ages that preceded the cross. Foreseen by God in all its infinite value, He had shown **His forbearance** in remitting the sins of His saints in past ages, for this is the meaning of Romans iii. 25 ; but now, since the cross, He declares "at this time" **His righteousness**, that He might be just and at the same time the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Eternal praise to His name ! All that God is has been revealed at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. His hatred of sin, His love to the sinner, His grace and His righteousness.

What a marvellous remedy His grace has devised for all the ruin that man's sin had brought in ! Where is boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law, or principle ? Of works ? Nay ! but by the principle of faith. To God alone be all the glory !

A. H. B,

## A PRAYER.

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**A Prayer.**

**M**ORE of Thyself, Lord Jesus,  
 More of Thyself for me ;  
 More of that close communion,  
 Whene'er I learn of Thee.

More of Thy heart, Lord Jesus,  
 Teach me its depth to know ;  
 That the love which passeth knowledge  
 May make my heart o'erflow.

More of Thy death, Lord Jesus,  
 Oh, may I daily bear  
 The dying of my Saviour,  
 And thus His sufferings share.

Gazing on Thee, Lord Jesus,  
 And of Thy love possessed ;  
 So in me, through me, by me,  
 Thy life be manifest.

More of Thy joy, Lord Jesus,  
 A calm and holy joy,  
 Found in the "Secret Presence,"  
 Which *nothing can destroy*.

To joy in God through Jesus,  
 To joy in what Thou art ;  
 To have *Thy* joy, O Saviour,  
 Fulfilled *now* in my heart.

Grant, Lord, as pressing onward,  
 This prayer Thou mad'st for me\*  
 May have a true fulfilment,  
 Reflecting *Thee* from me.

And now with heart uplifted,  
 I claim the answer mine,  
 And hear Thy voice, Lord Jesus,  
 "Child, draw from Me—'tis Thine."

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\* John xvii.

O Lord, soon in the glory,  
At home, at rest with Thee,  
All prayer will then be over,  
And I shall worship Thee.

\* \* \*

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## Jesus' Resurrection from Among the Dead.

JOHN xx.

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**I**T was evening on that first day of the week, and the disciples were gathered within closed doors through fear of the Jews, and without peace of conscience before God, or peace for their path before men; neither had they power or authority for the new service of grace to be confided to them.

Remark that first of all they receive instruction as to their new relationships, in association with Jesus. Then, when gathered, Jesus comes and stands in the midst and speaks peace to them in especial connection with the cross. He showed them His hands and His side. Not only had He really hung there, but the public testimony of propitiation made had been rendered before God, and in the sight of men. Thus they had peace of conscience through the Word of Jesus, and joy fills their heart in seeing Him.

A second time He says, "Peace be unto you!" but now it is in view of their commission—as

authoritative as His own was from the Father, and as absolutely of grace, both as to their path as well as the proclamation. To capacitate them for this, and that they might be livingly empowered as individuals for their divine relationships, He breathes into them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

This breathing into them was no doubt the inaugurating act of the new creation. The new man was thus set livingly in his place. It is not the coming of the Spirit, the Comforter, as at Pentecost, to take the place of an absent Christ, for Jesus was still in their midst, though risen; nor was it, therefore, to bear witness to Jesus on high, for He had not yet ascended; nor, of course, was it to constitute the body, the Church, the doctrine of which is not found in John's writings. It was the new man set in living power in relationship with Him who created him. At Pentecost the Spirit would baptize them into one body, members of Christ, and members one of another, making the body of each His temple, and dwelling in the house as a whole. But all this is foreign to John's teaching.

The passage undoubtedly sets before us the full Christian relationship and blessing, so far as regards the individual.

But John's doctrine, while connecting our life and relationships with the Son ascended in man-

hood on high, nevertheless invariably views the saints on earth, except in two or three passages, where Jesus returns for us, or prays that we may be with Him where He is. In consequence of this, the link of divine testimony is carried on in several instances, notably in the Revelation, to an order of things that will follow the Christian testimony and form a sort of transition between it and the millennial world to come.

In this passage also, the same thing occurs in connection with Thomas, who was absent from the apostolic company on the evening of that resurrection day. The other disciples tell him that they had seen the Lord; but he is incredulous, for death held sway in his heart as on a previous notable occasion, and he says, Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails, and put my fingers into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. He required ocular demonstration, and the testimony of his senses to the fact.

Jesus will condescend to his unbelief, but to believe on the evidence of one's senses is not in any sense the principle of Christian faith. It is the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn every family apart in true repentance (Zech. xii. 10). "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him" (Isa. xxv. 9). But the essence of Christian faith is the believing a divine testimony



## JESUS' RESURRECTION.

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as to One we have not seen ; and it is things unseen we look upon.

Eight days after, His disciples were again within and Thomas with them. The doors were shut ; for the world in which they were, was still unreconciled, and, when cognisant that the Spirit and testimony of Jesus were with this feeble company, would quickly prove it by a murderous persecution. But the risen Saviour cannot be shut out. With the same greetings of peace He comes and stands in their midst as before. Then addressing Thomas He says, "Bring thy finger here, and see My hands ; and bring thy hand and put it into My side ; and be not unbelieving but believing." Thomas answers, "My Lord and my God."

This appears to be the expression of the faith of the future remnant of Israel who shall enter into millennial blessing ; even as Nathanael's confession, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel, was that of the remnant brought subsequently into the Church. Well might Thomas have recalled those prophetic words, What are those wounds in Thy hands ? And He will say, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends ! The faith, the confession of Thomas was indeed beautiful and true, but the Lord clearly gives it an inferior place to the faith of those who have not seen and yet believe—a faith especially found among the Gentiles who believe in the day of His rejection

and absence. It is the proper character of Christian faith.

John has given us, out of the many signs which Jesus did, a few specially selected, so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life through His name. This was the great object of the gospel, and is the Christian blessing; but he adds a sort of appendix to give the link with what shall follow it, and the path on earth meanwhile, pending His return. But this is given in the next chapter.

W. T. W.

## Bible Study.

**A**LTHOUGH we have heard from many of the difficulty of the subject, and many have sent in no results at all, yet on the other hand many papers have shown a very profitable study of this wonderful type, and many students have expressed their joy and thankfulness for the fruit of their study of the Word.

Some seem to have got lost in going too minutely into detail. The broad outlines of Joshua's career were more the object aimed at.

We have to thank those who have sent suggestions for study. Some suggestions were most interesting and helpful, and will certainly be made use of.

As many students send in questions resulting from their study, and there is some danger of questions which are written in the matter of the study being overlooked, we shall be very thankful if those who ask questions will write them on a **separate sheet of paper** with their number

distinctly written on it. Questions will be answered as soon as possible, but there are many to be answered, and some delay is unavoidable.

We shall be glad to hear of more of God's children, especially the young, who wish to take up this study together, and again would ask for the prayers and fellowship of all who seek the blessing and building up of those who are Christ's wherever they may be found. Will those who are interested kindly make it known to others? All suggestions for study or for any means by which this study may be made more helpful and profitable to all, will be most welcome. Above all, may the study of the precious Word of God be continually accompanied by prayer, that we may increase, not in head knowledge, but in a true heart intimacy with Christ, and that the result may be increased energy and power for His service.

The most helpful way of following out the history of Joshua as recorded in the Word of God seems to be to take it in connection with the different stages of the journeys of the children of Israel, God's redeemed people, from Egypt to the final settlement in the Land of Promise. As one of our contributors remarks, the subject is a "vast" one, and it is impossible to go into details, but the broad outlines of Joshua's connection with the history of the redeemed people may be helpful for further study. The stages seem to be twelve in number :—

1. **Egypt to Sinai.**—This stage of the journey shows **seven** distinct steps, ending with the conflict with Amalek in the Valley of Rephidim. Here Joshua is mentioned for the first time.

It is long before his entrance upon public life, so to speak. He is a very young man, and this makes the type the more striking. After everything has been provided for the needs of the journey, manna every morning, and water from the rock, we are shown that the way of victory lies in the unceasing intercession of Moses on the top of the mountain, together with the leading of Joshua below in the valley. The special character of this conflict and its dangers are shown in Deuteronomy xxv. 17-19, in contrast with Psalm cv. 37. When God brought His people out of Egypt, "there was not one feeble person among their tribes," but when Amalek met them, there were already those who were "hindmost"—"all that were feeble behind thee"—and over these Amalek prevailed. When Satan's power over the believer has been broken by redemption, he tries fresh tactics, and since he can never get the believer back into his bondage, he tries to turn the heart of a believer back from pressing on to the glory where Christ is; he uses the difficulties of the way or the attractions of Egypt to make us lag behind and grow faint; then, when the eye is off Christ in glory, the flesh begins to work and Christ is dishonoured, Amalek prevails. But what keeps us from turning back or lagging wearily behind, and so falling into Amalek's hands, is **the intercession of Christ on high** for us, and **the presence of the Holy Ghost in us** bearing

witness to the glory of Christ, and occupying our hearts with the glory and with Christ Himself. This character of the Holy Ghost's indwelling is spoken of in Colossians i. 27 as "**Christ in you** the hope of glory," and gives the special point of the type here. Thus it is not the conflict of Romans vii., which is the experience of a renewed soul under law, and is indeed **bondage** rather than conflict. Exodus xvii. comes in **before** Sinai, that is, before the principle of law was introduced at all.

2. **Sinai.**—During the time of Israel's stay at Sinai, the time of the giving of the law, first pure law, and then law mixed with grace, Joshua goes up with Moses (Exod. xxiv. 13), comes down with him (Exod. xxxii. 17), and departs not out of the tent that Moses has pitched outside the camp and called the Tent of Meeting (Exod. xxxiii. 11). The constant association of Joshua with Moses is remarkable here. Acts i. 2 may bear upon the first two passages, and Matthew xviii. 20 on the third, but the typical meaning here is not easy to see, and offers food for study.

3. **Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea.**—Trial and failure of people under responsibility. Three steps are taken, first they despise the manna (Num. xi.), then they despise Moses (Num. xii.), and finally despise the pleasant land (Num. xiii.), and are turned back—under law they could not get in. Joshua only comes in once in this stage (Num.

xi. 28), where he is seen jealous for Moses' glory.

**4. Searching of the Land.**—This is the turning point. Here Joshua's name is changed from Hoshea ("salvation"), to Jehoshua or Joshua, the same as Jesus ("Jehovah the Saviour"), and faith at once **attaches itself** to him; that is the special point of the remarkable connection between Caleb and Joshua. Faith owns that everything depends upon Christ and receives the Spirit's witness to Him, and gets the blessing. All the rest fall in the wilderness (*cf.* 2 Tim. i. 12, and Phil. iii. 7-14). Note also the remarkable way in which Caleb by faith takes up God's promise (*cf.* Num. xiv. 30 with Josh. xiv. 6). Caleb says "me and thee" because God said "Caleb and Joshua."

**5. Thirty-eight years' wandering**—marked by **entire absence** of any mention of Joshua. This is reckoned from Kadesh-Barnea to the brook Zered (Deut. ii. 14). During the time of God's governmental dealings, His estrangement from them (Num. xiv. 34, New Tr.), manna remains and water from the rock, but there is no testimony to a glorified Christ. Caleb carries it in his heart through all. The remaining stages are simpler, and though there is much that is most interesting and profitable in them, we must pass rapidly over them as space limits are already exceeded.

**6. Plains of Moab.**—Preparation for entrance

## BIBLE STUDY.

III

into the land. Joshua appointed to succeed Moses. (Num. xxvii. 15, 23, xxxii. 28, xxxiv. 17; Deut. i. 36, 38, xxxi. 7, 23, xxxiv. 9). Compare the passages relating to the Spirit in John xiv.-xvi.

7. **Jordan.**—Joshua is **magnified** (Eph. i. 20, 21; Phil. i. 20). Joshua places the twelve stones in Jordan (Rom. vi. 6, 10).

8. **Gilgal.**—Joshua circumcises them; place of return after every victory (2 Cor. iv. 10).

9. **Jericho.**—True Christian warfare. Captain of the Lord's Host is there. Yet Joshua commands. No carnal weapons. No word is uttered till Joshua says "Shout." They attempt Ai without Joshua, and are defeated. Ebal marks the close of this first stage in the occupation of the land.

10. **Ebal to Shiloh.**—Conquest and inheritance in the energy of faith. Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Joshua conquers the whole land, and with Eleazar assigns the inheritance.

11. **Shiloh.**—Here, when the tabernacle has been set up, the seven backward tribes are stimulated to take their inheritance. Joshua sends three men for each tribe to describe the inheritance and write it in a book. Lastly, Joshua takes his inheritance. Cities of Refuge. Cities of Levites. Cf. Second Epistle of Peter.

12. **Shechem.**—Joshua lays all upon the stone of witness, and Joseph's bones are buried in Shechem, for after all, though Joshua in the energy of the Spirit might conquer the land and

allot it, all belongs to the one who was separated from his brethren, and whose only inheritance here is a grave. *Cf.* Epistle of Jude.

We trust that further study may fill out this meagre outline, and lead to rich feeding of heart upon Christ in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in Whom we too are complete.

The following are the numbers and initials of those who have sent in their names since the last list :—

131. L. M.	135. L. P.	139. M. L.	143. M.
132. L. A. P.	136. M. B.	140. R. L. P.	144. S. A. S.
133. W. W.	137. F. H.	141. M. P.	145. L. A. L.
134. E. S. T.	138. C. M. J.	142. A. B.	146. M. S. M.

**The Subject for April** will be (D.V.) **the Passover**. The special points to be searched out are—

1. The meaning of the details of the Passover as given in Exodus xii., showing how they answer to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus.

2. The number of Passovers actually recorded as kept in the Old Testament, giving the occasions and if possible the difference in meaning.

3. All references to the Passover in the Word of God. Students may take either a single one of these divisions of the subject, or all three, "according to his several ability," and we hope that the subject may be found easier for beginners, as well as giving a little harder work to older hands.

Further suggestions will be welcomed, and those received will be made use of shortly.

May the practical effect of "keeping the feast" according to 1 Corinthians v. 8 be seen in us for whom "**Christ, our Passover**, was sacrificed." B. S. ED.

*N.B.*—All communications connected with the **Bible Study** must be addressed as follows :—

B. S. EDITOR,

c/o James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row,  
LONDON, E.C.



## Notes and Comments.

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***Fellowship at the Lord's Table.*** The expression often heard, namely, "in fellowship," is apt to convey to many minds an altogether unscriptural idea. It is virtually tantamount to membership of a certain body of Christians. Scripture never so uses the term "fellowship." In days such as these, when the Church is in ruins, and the saints of God scattered, it is most important to avoid everything that tends to foster the sectarian spirit.

We feel there is a danger in some quarters of looseness, in others of narrowness. The Second and Third Epistles of John would correct both these errors. The key to the Second Epistle is found in verse 10—"receive him not"; whereas that of the Third Epistle is in verse 8—"we therefore ought to receive such." True, in neither epistle is it a question of ecclesiastical reception. In the Second Epistle a woman is exhorted not to receive a heretic into her house, still less should he be received at the Lord's table. In the Third Epistle a brother is commended for his faithfulness in welcoming a stranger brother, who came bringing the truth of God.

It is painful to hear sometimes of saints of

God, sound in the faith and consistent in conduct, being refused the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper because they are not "in fellowship," as it is called, or because they may be engaged in work for the Lord "outside of ourselves." What is this but sectarianism?

It may not be amiss to point out that not only is such narrowness altogether inconsistent with the truth of the Church, as taught in Scripture, but that it never was the custom of intelligent and spiritually-minded men amongst those who have sought to shape their course by the Scripture. All who had the privilege of knowing the late J. N. D., to whom, under God, we owe so much, are aware that while no one was more decided in the rejection of error especially where Christ's Person was concerned, on the other hand, no one had a larger heart for all the saints of God who sought, however feebly, to respond to the Lord's own request, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Personally we can vouch for this, having travelled with him in many countries, and been present when well-known Christians, not yet free from denominations, desired to take the Lord's Supper, and were gladly welcomed, and that not only in earlier days, but also the very year before his death.

In so writing we are not advocating looseness, but we are earnestly deprecating narrowness.

Ed.

## The First Day of Creation.

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**T**HE scene in which God began to work is described in Gen. i. 2 by three words—confusion, emptiness, darkness. Then God comes into the scene, and His first day's work is:—

1. **God said**—Let there be **Light**, and there was light.

2. **God saw**—the Light that it was good.

3. **God divided**—between the light and the darkness.

4. **God called**—the light **Day**, and the darkness He called **Night**. And the **evening** and the **morning** were **the first day**.

Tracing these symbols through the Old Testament we find—

1. **Light**.—Exod. x. 23: "The children of Israel had light **in their dwellings**." Exod. xiii. 21: "A pillar of fire to give them light." Exod. xxv. 37: "They shall light the lamps thereof that they may give light over against it." These are the three remarkable ways in which light is brought in before the historical books begin. Then the Book of Samuel begins by showing the lamp of God going out, 1 Sam. iii. 3, and closes with the One who is to be as the light of the morning, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, while a lamp is to be kept for David, Ps. cxxxii. 17. All through the historical books light is connected with the morning, "the morning light" occurs in 1 Sam.

xiv. 36, xxv. 22, 34, 36; 2 Sam. xvii. 22; 2 Kings vii. 9. Then come the books specially dealing with light and darkness, and which contain more passages relating to light and darkness than all the rest of the Old Testament together. These are Job, Psalms, and Isaiah.

**Job** has a lot to say about the difference between light and darkness, as seen in God's ways and man's experience, but God's question to him is, "Where is the way to where light dwelleth?" (Job xxxviii. 19), and he is brought to see himself in God's light, "Now mine eye seeth Thee" (chap. xlii. 5).

**Psalms** has for its key-note Num. vi. 25, quoted six times, viz., Ps. xxxi. 16, lxvii. 1, lxxx. 3, 7, 19, cxix. 135, also "the light of Thy countenance," Ps. iv. 6, xliv. 3, lxxxix. 15. Light depends here upon the relation of the soul to Jehovah. "In Thy light we shall see light," Ps. xxxvi. 9. Job is the discovery of self in the light of God, Psalms is the heart finding light only in the enjoyment of God, and so God's ways are seen in the light of His countenance.

Then **Isaiah** gives the dispensational side, the light comes **after** darkness, Isa. lx. 1, when the glory of the Lord is revealed. But Isa. xlv. 7 goes into the counsels of God, and shows what is only found here, "I **form** the light, and **create** darkness." The word "form" is that used of the potter, and points to the plan or design of Him who forms; while "create" is the word used in

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Gen. i. 1, and speaks of the sovereign will and power of Him who creates. So light is shown to be linked with God's purposes of grace and glory, while darkness gives no escape from responsibility to Him by whom and for whom are all things. "The day is Thine, the night also is Thine," Ps. lxxiv. 16. "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me; for the night shineth as the day: **the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee,**" Ps. cxxxix. 11.

Then the prophetic record closes with the wonderful word, "at evening time it shall be light," Zech. xiv. 7. Thus, indeed, God's day begins with **evening**; the passover lamb and the evening sacrifice are ever in God's thoughts, and the thought of faith turns thither in the time of darkness, 1 Kings xviii. 36; Ezra ix. 4, 5; Ps. cxli. 2; Dan. ix. 21.

The New Testament goes back to the beginning, and we learn why God brought in light first. "God is Light," but that is to be seen in Jesus. "The life was the light of men." True, darkness comprehended it not, showing the meaning of "God divided" the light from the darkness; it is not separation, but **difference of nature**. Man may put light for darkness and darkness for light, Isa. v. 20; but light and darkness can have no concord, 2 Cor. vi. 14, because they are already eternally different in nature. "God is **light**, and in Him is **no dark-**

**ness** at all," 1 John i. 5. But the result of God's commanding the light to shine out of darkness is that light has shined in our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6, and we are now "**light in the Lord**," Eph. v. 8; we have a nature that is of God, this is developed fully in the First Epistle of John. But we are also "**lights**," Phil. ii. 15, and there is responsibility to shine.

But just as the prophetic history in the Old Testament closes with the failure of everything depending on man's responsibility, and shows all resting upon Christ, so again the prophetic record in the New Testament closes with the failure of the Church, the last light set up in the world, Rev. ii. and iii., and shows all secured in Christ, the only faithful witness, and the book of God ends in eternal day, no night there, "the Lamb is the light thereof." God begins and ends with Christ.

B. S. ED.

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## Jealous of the World.

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**W**HILE visiting the other day in a little town where the Spirit of God had been working, I was much interested and not a little edified by the conversation of a bright young Christian. I had been speaking to a Christian woman, who was too ill to have the privilege of attending the gospel meetings then taking place, telling her

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something about the good times we were having, when a young woman sitting by diligently at work chimed in with a heart evidently overflowing with love to Christ.

She had told us that she had been early converted, and it was easy to be seen that she had made a whole-hearted choice of Christ for her life on earth, as well as for heaven hereafter. As she simply and naturally spoke of her Saviour, it seemed clear to me that she had chosen Him instead of the world, for it is impossible to walk in company with both.

Consequently, I was not a little surprised when she told us that she had gone to the theatre a few nights before. "I had never been to the theatre in my life before, but a few nights ago I went to the Hippodrome, and oh! I never felt so wretched, so miserable in all my life. I never want to be in such a place again. I felt as if I were in hell; and then to see those poor girls, little children, dancing on the stage before that crowd of godless men and women, I felt how awful to begin their young lives in such a hell. Oh! it was dreadful, I felt so ill, and wanted to get out. I was away in the back part of the stage. Somebody asked me if I was ill. I said, 'Yes, I never felt so ill before.'"

Somewhat taken aback by this unexpected outpour, I said, "Well, I am thankful that one dose has cured you, for I met a Christian only this very day who spoke approvingly of

LXXVII. 2.

Christians attending the theatre. But how came you to be there?"

"I am engaged to a young man who is an electrician," she explained, "and he had to do some work for his firm in connection with the lights. His aunt asked me if I would take him his tea. I said I did not want to go into a theatre. She said he was only working somewhere in the back part of the building; so I went, and not knowing where I was, I found myself in the back of the stage. Oh! it was terrible. I felt like being in hell."

Here, my reader, was the effect upon a young Christian, who loved her Saviour, of a glance at the world's efforts at pleasure apart from Christ. And I think we may fairly say that no Christian who loves Christ is likely to find much pleasure in such a scene.

She went on to describe the disastrous effect upon the spirituality of the young man of association with the world. "He's not what he was," she said with sorrow; "I said to him the other day, 'Oh! A——, how can I think well of you when you turn your back upon my best Friend.'"

From the theatre she hurried away to the little prayer meeting. "And oh! when I compared that little handful at the prayer meeting with that great crowd at the Hippodrome, I felt jealous of the world—I did indeed—I felt jealous for the kingdom of God."

It did my heart good to listen to her simple



testimony, and I felt that theatre-going Christians will rarely, if ever, be seen at prayer meetings, and praying Christians will never be seen at theatres.

Fellow-believer, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 15-17).

A. H. B.

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## The Field of Boaz.

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WHEN the Lord Jesus, at the close of that wonderful unfolding of the grace that had brought Him down to be the Bread of Life, asked His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" Peter answered, "Lord, *to whom* shall we go?"

When Paul had come to the end of his pathway of service, and saw dark clouds gathering round, and all his work here threatened with failure, he could say with unshaken confidence, "I know *whom* I have believed."

When the clouds that Paul saw on the horizon had gathered heavy and dark, and the threatened failure had already set in, John had still a message

for the worst day that can ever come—"And now, little children, *abide in Him.*"

That is the stamp of God's own work. When the Father draws, He draws to *Christ* and nowhere else. It is not a place, a creed, a belief, but a *Person*.

The heart that is restlessly wandering, beating against the bars of doubt, needs *the revelation of Christ* to satisfy the deep need that causes this misery and unrest. But this is always God's end, the purpose for which He draws souls out of the place where all their lives have been lived without Christ. So we find that as soon as God has drawn this Moabitish damsel out of her fields of Moab, the place of distance, famine, and death, He at once brings upon the scene the person through whom His grace can reach even an alien and an outcast.

It is *Boaz*, whose very name brings confidence, "*In Him is strength.*" "I have laid help upon One that is mighty," is God's word to the broken-hearted sinner, or to the doubting child of God, and in Boaz He presents a lovely picture of the one upon whom He has laid help. *Four things* are told us of Boaz, brought thus suddenly upon the scene because it is God's due time; even as that sudden burst of angelic song announced to shepherds of Bethlehem when God's due time had come that there lay in the manger of the inn a wondrous Stranger in this world of sin, a blessed Babe. God revealed in weakness, confounding

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the mighty things of the world, and uniting in His blessed Person the four things which we find in this plain, simple picture of Boaz.

1. *He was a kinsman* of Naomi's husband. The word kinsman means *friend* or *acquaintance*. He was one who knew all about poor Elimelech's sad history, and yet was his friend. "*Unto you*" were the first words of the angel's message. It was One who knew all the depth of man's need, ours, yea, *mine* and *yours*, and who knowing all, had yet come down in love to meet that need. What blessed words—"Unto *you*,"—the sinner has a friend.

2. "*He was a mighty man of wealth.*" It needed such a One to meet the full extent of our poverty. "For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, *though He was rich*, yet for your sakes *He became poor*, that ye through His poverty might be rich." All the riches of God are placed at the disposal of an empty sinner, *through Him*.

3. *He was of the family of Elimelech.* Not only was he one who knew Elimelech, he was of the same family, as Naomi says later on, he had *the right of redemption*. Still fuller the picture becomes of Jesus, the sinner's Friend, who "took not on Him angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." In order that He might accomplish our redemption, He came so near to us as to become a blessed *Man* amongst men. A Man of sorrows indeed, but bringing here the

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source of eternal joy. All joy had gone, death and ruin had followed sin, and there was no one else who was able to bring out what was in God's heart for man. No one else could glorify God and meet man's deep need. He became a man to do it, that God might be glorified in man, and that man might go in to the glory of God. What depths in these simple words!

4. *His name was Boaz.* All is summed up in the name. God utters, so to speak, in the ear of the one whom He has drawn, a name which in one word tells out all His heart.

The name of Him who knew our lost estate, who knew the hatred of our blinded hearts to Him, and who loved us in spite of all; the name of Him in whom all the fulness was pleased to dwell for the accomplishment of the blessed work on the cross; the name of Him who was born of a woman, in lowliness to walk this sinful world as a man, there to learn Himself, by entering into it all, the woe and misery of the place where we were—there is but one name which tells out all that, and infinitely more of preciousness to God—*Jesus*.

But here the question comes in, how was Ruth to be brought into contact with Boaz, knowing nothing of him, his very name unknown to her?

That is the next thing God does. First He draws Ruth out of the fields of Moab, after that sad place has told its tale of will and sin and death, then He shows us why He has taken the

trouble to draw out in this way one who had no title at all. It is because He has a person with whom His heart is satisfied, and in whom He wishes the stranger to find rest.

Now, having brought the person before us, God shows us the meeting between Boaz and Ruth, between the Saviour and the sinner. What a joy to know that there is a full Christ for empty sinners!

The meeting takes place in the portion of the field of Boaz. Have you met that blessed Saviour, and is His name precious to your heart? If you have, these simple words concerning Him will find a response in your heart. S. H. H.

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## From the Beginning.

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON I JOHN

i. 1-5, ii. 1, 2.)

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OUR attention has been drawn, beloved brethren, to what grace brings us into—the sovereign grace of God—and what it presents for our enjoyment. There is not only receiving and blessing us (the best robe was put on the prodigal), but what we are introduced into. The apostle speaks of what was “from the beginning,” not the same as “in the beginning” in Genesis. There was a beginning in God’s creative power, but what John takes up is

another thing—the beginning of a new history, the manifestation of Christ down here, life in the midst of death, a new order of things into which we are introduced. In general, we are more occupied with what we are brought out of than what we are introduced into. But when we are brought out, and when we are recipients of grace, there is that which grace brings us into that we may be happy, and enjoy communion with the Father and the Son. “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

We get, in the beginning of this chapter, Christ presented to us objectively ; it is heaven brought down to earth. Paul takes us up, and gives us a divine standing before God. But in John it is life, Christ personally. I suppose no one present will have any objection to its being said that Christ was personally the Life, the Eternal Life always with the Father ; then, the apostle says, “He was manifested, and we have seen, heard, and touched Him.”

“Whatsoever doth make manifest is light.” The Light was manifested and seen here, the expression of the thing in its entirety, because He was it. Then he goes on, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” He writes it that persons may be brought into the fellowship of what they had seen and heard.

In Psalm xxii. the Lord says, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the church I will sing praise unto Thee." In John xx. He says, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God"—as though He said, "I will introduce you into the very highest possible blessing into which a soul can be introduced"—"I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." And the apostle says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

What a marvellous thing it is! How feebly we have entered into this wonderful blessing which is ours! Suppose all the distance is removed, and we find the One with whom we had questions is in our favour. We are introduced into fellowship with the Father, and that in connection with the Person of Christ. The voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and this voice was heard. That is what the Father thinks about the Son. The Father, when the Son was on earth, had an object that could perfectly satisfy His heart; and that is the Son. He trod the path on this earth of obedience and dependence. He delighted to be in the pathway of testimony. He was set in on the earth, and delighting to do God's will. We have no other path to walk in. We have the revelation of God's mind and the Spirit, and He puts us down on this earth to enjoy fellowship with His

thoughts. He writes these things that our joy may be full, that is where we are found when we are simple, and the more simple the better. What greater happiness can we have in heaven? What is there to make us unhappy now? Only the allowance of sin.

I read the second chapter. We are introduced into the light, our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, and now, how is it sometimes we are not in the enjoyment of God, we are not happy? Sin has come in. I would say one thing, as there are young ones here, we have to learn, that having been introduced into the light, brought to God, accepted in the Beloved, if sin is allowed, it does not change our relationship with God at all. Our standing and relationship depend on what God is to us in grace. We are in the relationship of children, we have received the Holy Ghost, and this all stands unchanged. Have you sinned? "Yes," you say, "and being in the light I am not happy." Sin has come in. What is to be done? Christ cannot die again. Here is the provision of divine love, "These things I write unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin"—there is confession—"we have an Advocate with the Father." There is that blessed One who is our righteousness, our Advocate with the Father.

It is not to make light of sin. The One who is our Advocate by the Spirit and the Word, brings our consciences into the light to have



to do with Him. There is the application of the Word which gives us to see what sin is in God's sight, how sin reduced Christ to ashes. It is the red heifer (Numb. xix.); the sorrow produced in our souls. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." This is confession, and confession produced in the Christian is the effect of the advocacy of Christ. It leads to confession, and you never find an individual Christian or a company that has done wrong going on with God, unless there is full confession.

T. H. T.

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**“Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday,  
To-day, and for ever.”**

JOHN xxi.

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**I**N the previous chapter the Lord pronounces His blessing upon those especially who not seeing have believed. This is descriptive of the Christian position, and is connected with the manifestation of Jesus to the apostles for the purposes of their testimony. Subsequently there was a second manifestation to Thomas in order that seeing he might not be unbelieving but believing. The scene now changes from Jerusalem to the sea of Tiberias, and we see a third manifestation different in character from the others.

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Beside Judas, of whom John makes no mention after the betrayal in the garden, there were absent on this occasion only four of the original company of twelve — Thomas, the doubter, a tendency of all melancholy temperaments, was there ; Nathanael, an Israelite without guile ; the sons of Zebedee, one of whom was the loved disciple ; and lastly, impetuous Peter, besides two others unnamed. All are described according to their designations or associations in flesh.

Peter, ill at ease and evidently fretting at the slow development of the ways of God and, in the meanwhile, his own consequent inactivity, but as ever the moving spirit among the disciples, says to them, "I go to fish." Had he forgotten his call to preach and to serve his brethren, not to fish ? or did he fear that his commission had been revoked ? More probably he had not since his fall drawn sufficiently near his Master to feel that confidence had been restored.

He and they with him go on board, and that night take nothing. It was their old trade and their old fishing-grounds, but no success. Yet times of disappointment and peril, as often with us, had been fruitful of lessons and experiences for Peter.

With the dawn Jesus stood upon the shore, unrecognised by the disciples, and He says to them, "Children, have ye anything to eat ?" The energy of nature produces for the saint and

servant of God much labour and toil, but little fruit. They answer, "No." He directs them to cast the net at the right side of the ship, and having done so they are no longer able to draw it from the multitude of fishes.

A conscience really aroused recognises the divine presence, as Peter already knew by an earlier experience. The effect of this is often to feel that the Lord should be towards us according to what we have been for Him. But in this chapter it is a recognition of affection. John at once discerns the presence of the Lord.

What will be true in the history of the Jewish remnant of the coming day, as described in the Song of Songs, is here exhibited in principle. It is true also in the history of many souls, even where conscience is at rest, that spiritual affections often lie long dormant, and but very little exercised, until the Lord presents Himself in circumstances which bereave the heart of every prop, interest, or excitement of nature, expressing therein His sovereignty of grace and superiority to everything besides. Thus it is here.

John says to Peter, "It is the Lord." Forgetting his all-night fruitless toil, and the then present superabundant catch, Peter girds on his overcoat, and, reckless of the waves, casts himself into the sea. The others come in the small boat, dragging the net of fishes. On landing they see a fire of coals, and fish laid on it and bread. Jesus tells them to bring of the fishes

they had taken, and Peter draws the net to land.

It is noticeable that John is careful to give figures. In the feeding of the multitude he and Mark alone give the computation of two hundred pence as insufficient to provide bread for all. Similarly, when Mary anoints Jesus at the supper in Bethany, he and Mark name three hundred pence as the estimated value of the ointment. So here he states that they were some two hundred cubits from the shore, and that there were one hundred and fifty-three large fishes in the net, and yet it was not rent. There may be a mystical import in this latter number, as there is in other parts, and indeed in the greater part of this chapter; but the prominent point is that the net sufficed to land the fish and was not rent. For this it is the contrast to what happened when Peter's conscience was laid bare, and he became deeply convinced of his sinful state (Luke v. 6-8). In the present instance it is not the conscience so much as the heart that must be searched. In the former case Peter received his commission to preach the gospel, now he is commanded to feed the lambs and the sheep. It is true also that dispensationally the haul of fishes may represent the introduction of blessing in millennial power in which there is no failure, as there is in the gospel preaching to-day; neither is there any gathering of the good into vessels as in the

Christian dispensation. Here the disciples leave the fish to follow Jesus.

Though knowing Him, there was distance and reserve between the disciples and the Lord, very much as there must be between the coming Christ and His earthly saints in the future day. Grace, then as now, alone can remove it. Jesus invites them to dine, and comes and takes the bread and gives to them, and also the fish.

Moreover, the Spirit draws attention to this scene as being the third time that Jesus risen had manifested Himself to the disciples. It was a third, and a different character of manifestation from the preceding. The first conveyed the apostolic commission of grace to the world; the second, the inferior blessing to those who believe when they see: the last refers symbolically to the power of Christ which, when all else fails, brings universal blessing on earth in unstinted measure, involving, however, a certain reserve and distance on the part of those who shall enjoy it.

These manifestations seem to be in inverse order to the signs with which the Lord began His ministry. There we have first the changing the water into wine at the marriage feast at Cana, to which city Nathanael belonged. It cannot be doubted that this was emblematic of the kingdom joy. Following this, was the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum, who was sick unto death, also at Cana. Here the question

is raised, as with Thomas, of seeing in order to believing, the principle on which the Jewish remnant will be blessed (iv. 48). Then, thirdly, from chapter v. onward, the signs are especially connected with Christian truth.

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### Who is a Priest?

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**I**N the New Testament the Jewish priests are often mentioned, and their high and chief priests too. The priest of Jupiter is spoken of, who would have offered sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as gods; Melchisedek and his priesthood also. Christ Himself is spoken of as a priest in general and as high priest. All this is simple enough and needs no particular comment for our present purpose.

But others also, men on earth, are spoken of as priests and a priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9). The first passage says—

“Ye also as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

The latter—

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

These words are addressed, beyond all controversy, to the whole of the Christians to whom

Peter addresses his epistle, and whom he is instructing and encouraging in their trials. **All Christians, therefore, are a holy and royal priesthood.**

Again, in Rev. i. 5, 6, we find—

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and His Father.”

Here again all Christians are priests. This is in the introduction before the prophetic part of the book. In chapter v. 9 we read—

“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and has made us unto our God kings and priests.”

In chapter xx. 6 we read—

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

**These passages tell us that all Christians are priests to God.** Another verse, though the word is not used, alludes to it—

“By Him (Jesus) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. xiii. 15).

This calls on all Christians to exercise their priesthood, and shows how they are to do it. There is not in the New Testament one passage which speaks of, or alludes to, a priesthood upon earth, save that to which every Christian belongs, nor one that supposes the existence of a priesthood on

earth other than that of all Christians. No one on earth is ever called a priest, except the Jewish priests, and once a heathen one, save when Christians in general are called so. A distinct class of priests on earth amongst Christians is totally unknown to the New Testament. Our great High Priest is gone to heaven, and all Christians are priests in a spiritual and heavenly way for praises and intercessions under Him. The New Testament does not know or own a class of Christians on earth who are priests in a distinct office from other Christians. Such a thought is unscriptural and false in every way.

If it be asked, then, Who are priests under the Christian revelation? I reply (because the Word of God replies) Christ is the great High Priest, and all Christians are priests, and no other priesthood than this is owned among Christian men in the New Testament.

Next we may inquire, What is a priest? and more exactly, What are the principles on which earthly priesthood, where it is established amongst men, is founded? A high priest from among men is thus described in the Epistle to the Hebrews—

“Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.”

Other priests had the same office when priesthood was established upon earth. Certain functions belonged to the high priest only,



but gifts and sacrifices for sin were offered by all the priests. Hence when priests are officially established now there is always either the formal institution of a sacrifice, as that of the mass—which is quite consistent—or the hankering after one, and the effort on the part of those calling themselves priests to turn the Lord's Supper into one, from the sense of inconsistency and of what they ought to be about if they are really priests.

But this whole system denies the force and efficacious truth of Christianity altogether. The Epistle to the Hebrews carefully assures us that there remains no more sacrifice for sin now that Christianity is established, founded on **the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, whose value and efficacy are eternal**. But let the reader turn his attention to what the system of an earthly priesthood supposes, what it means, and he will readily see that the idea of a priesthood on earth acting for men in things pertaining to God is a denial of the whole truth of Christianity. I do not say every one that believes there are consecrated priests desires to do so, but the system he maintains does so.

The establishment of a class of priests to offer gifts or sacrifices or prayers is the public declaration that other worshippers cannot directly approach God with their gifts and sacrifices and prayers; they must stay at a distance and the more favoured class approach

for them. The character which God assumed in such an order of things was **distance from men**, shutting Himself up in a hidden sanctuary where none could approach freely. There was in the Jewish system one veil inside which the priests went to offer incense, then another inside which even the priests could not go, and where God's glory was enthroned between the cherubim. Into this the high priest alone went, **only once a year**, with the blood of propitiation to put upon the mercy-seat, and even then enveloping himself in a cloud of incense lest he should die. Thus God was hidden within the veil. "The Holy Ghost," the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, "this signifying that the way into the holiest was **not yet made manifest**, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." Even to the altar, which was outside the two veils, the worshipper could not approach to offer his gifts or sacrifices. The priest received the gifts or the victim's blood at his hand, and he offered them. All this system taught that men could not approach God: He dwelt in the thick darkness, and even those who were nearest to Him, His own priests, could not approach close to Him, they must remain without the veil.

**Christianity is the opposite of all this**, though beautiful figures of truths as to Christ are found in it. By it God has revealed Himself.

*(To be continued.)*

## Correspondence.

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**Query.**—What is the Difference between “Seer” and “Prophet”? Are they used interchangeably?

**Answer.**—1 Chron. xxix. 29 is a test passage for the three words used, and gives us the best guide to their use. It is a hint that we shall find the force of the words in those parts of David's history connected with Samuel, Nathan, and Gad respectively.

1. Samuel the *seer*, from the ordinary verb *to see*. “God *saw* the light,” &c., occurs thousands of times.

2. Nathan the *prophet*. The general word for one to whom the word of the Lord came. Prophets, as a line of God's testimony, begin from Samuel (Acts iii. 24). When everything is in its order the place of prophecy is subject. Moses, Aaron, and *Miriam*. Miriam is the first to die. Prophecy is God's witness to Jesus in the time of ruin. He always has Jesus in reserve.

3. Gad the *seer*. Another word, meaning one who sees *visions*. Used in Exodus xxiv. 11, “They saw (in vision) God,” where it removes a difficulty often raised. Gad, Heman, Iddo, Hanani, Asaph, and Jeduthun have this title. S. H. H.

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**Query.**—Did Christ die for all, or only for the Elect?

**Answer.**—It is ever Satan's aim to perplex anxious souls. His great effort is to keep us in

utter indifference, but when he cannot succeed in this, his next great effort is to rob us of joy and peace in believing.

One line of scripture is better than volumes of human theology, and one verse (2 Cor. v. 15) you have yourself quoted settles the question. The scripture says, "**He died for all.**" How dare any man say, No, He only died for the elect? Again, "Who gave Himself **a ransom for all**" (1 Tim. ii. 6). Again, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also **for the whole world**" (1 John ii. 2). Don't be troubled by the traditions of man. ED.

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**Query.—Should the Evangelist say, Come?**

**Answer.**—The Lord Jesus when on earth said, "Come, for all things are now ready" (Luke xiv. 17). From glory He now says, "Let him that is athirst come" (Rev. xxii. 17). Are these Calvinistic preachers wiser than our blessed Saviour and Lord? The views you mention wither up the soul, dry up all the springs of divine affection, and banish joy and gladness from the heart and life. ED.

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We regret that unavoidably the BIBLE STUDY has to stand over till next month. This will give all students an opportunity for extended searching of the scripture on last month's subject, which we hope they will largely avail themselves of. ED.

## Notes and Comments.

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**Unprofitable Meetings.** A correspondent writes :—" I remember, many years ago, a young sister coming to me and complaining that she never seemed to be able to get anything out of the meetings. I said to her, 'L——, do you, before you go to the meeting, kneel down and ask the Lord to Himself give you a portion for your soul at that meeting?' She said, no, she did not. I recommended her to try the plan. Some time after I again broached the subject, and asked how she was getting on. Her reply was that it had made all the difference to the meetings.

"I am convinced, dear brother, that this is a most important principle. One could almost go so far as to say that we each make our own meetings. At any rate, one thing we may be assured of, that if any or all of us go to a meeting with expectant hearts, counting upon the Lord Himself to give us a blessing, we shall not go away disappointed.

"May the Lord give us to see our own privilege *and responsibility* in these things, that our eyes may be up to Him, not only for our own blessing but for the blessing of every one present, and further still, for the blessing of His people everywhere."

L. W. R.

LXXVIII.

**Links of Grace.** The pride of Korah despised the grace that had established  
*Cf. Num. xvi. 26, a priesthood to maintain a sin-  
 xxvi. 11; 1 Chron. ful, needy people in communion  
 ix. 22; Ps. lxxxiv. 10.* with the God who desired in  
 grace to dwell among them. Judgment falls upon  
 his pride. God will not have Christ despised.

But the children of Korah died not. When the very priesthood that Korah had despised fails in the hands of man, Samuel, *the descendant of Korah*, is raised up as the first of the prophets to anoint the king of God's choice. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Samuel's grandson is the chief musician, Heman.

But more than this, Samuel and David together, *i.e., before* the time of David's glory, appoint the *Korahites* as the doorkeepers of the Lord's house, before the house is built. Lastly, in the 84th Psalm, uttered by the sons of Korah, led by the chief musician, we find the fruit of grace in the heart that chooses this blessed portion of being doorkeeper in the house of God rather than to dwell in those tents to which they naturally belonged.

Comparison of the passages will bring out more fully the wonderful way of God's grace peculiar to Himself.

S. II. II.

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WHAT a mercy it is to be kept from the vast and endless wanderings of thought with which

## THE UNEQUAL YOKE.

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Satan now seeks to bewilder the saints, or else shut them up in systematic ignorance! May you, knowing what it is to be complete in Him, and in all the rich depths in Him, be kept from going out in the profitless mazes of Satan!

J. N. D.

TIME spent alone with God is not time lost in the interests of Christ; it is then that the streams flow into our tiny souls.

G. V. W.



## The Unequal Yoke.

“Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.”—DEUT. xxii. 10.

**A**N important principle lies here, inattention to which has caused hundreds of children of God to go astray. The passage speaks of the unequal yoke. Leviticus xi. 3 teaches that an ox is a clean animal, and is thus a type of a true believer who is made clean through the precious Word (John xv. 3). The ass, being an unclean beast, typifies an unbeliever, as we read in Job xi. 12, “For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.” In Exodus xiii. 13, too, we find the firstborn son and the firstling of an ass must alike be redeemed with a lamb, for the unregenerate sinner is as stiff-necked, stubborn, and rebellious as this brute beast.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15).

The children of Israel had been separated from the nations by God. Four times Balaam sought to curse them, and when this failed he succeeded in getting them to mingle with the Moabites, and to join themselves to Baal-peor (see Num. xxii.-xxv.), and thus ruined the people who had been called out to be a living witness to the one true God.

Many Christians who once were bright, earnest, separated, and devoted children of God, have been ensnared by Satan, formed an unequal yoke, their testimony spoiled, and they are to-day total wrecks, and a danger to all who come near. Satan ever seeks to get the thin end of the wedge in first, and few see where it all leads until too late.

You, my true fellow-believer, have been marked off from the world, and bound with indissoluble ties to every child of God, but as surely separated from the unbeliever as Israel was from the nations. Christ has won your heart, and this world you can only know as the place where He was crucified. Grace has taught you that you no more belong to it than does your rejected Lord, and



to be a friend of the world is to be false to Christ. An unbeliever has taken his side with the world and against Christ, for "he that is not with Me is against Me;" he hates His name, despises His word, and tramples His blood under foot.

Of all evils the saddest consequences come from the unequal yoke. A young man or woman becomes engaged to an unconverted person, and often deceive themselves by the fact that they are very moral and upright, and thus seek to persuade themselves that they are not doing wrong; but the truth is, they are being joined to an enemy of God, a hater of Christ, and a child of wrath. There is no middle path, and bitterest sorrow is the only harvest that can be reaped, for **"can two walk together except they be agreed?"** Useful lives have been ruined, and much dishonour brought upon the name of the Lord Jesus through this unequal yoke. It is neither faithfulness to Christ, love to them, nor justice to yourself to continue for another moment such an unholy path. Oh, "ponder the paths of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy feet from evil" (Prov. iv. 26, 27).

The enemy may also allure the Christian by the cycle, football, cricket, and many other clubs where the unequal yoke is formed under the plea that (1) "Recreation is needed;" (2) "What harm is there in this?" (3) "May I not by joining be an influence for good?"

Let us openly and honestly face these queries.

(1.) Recreation is necessary, especially for the young, but is there none better than that which is in disobedience to the Word of God?

(2.) The "harm" lies, not in riding a cycle, or playing at football, &c., but in the unholy alliances with the world.

(3.) Are you really sincere in your plea that you may be an influence for good to others? Is this your real and sole object in joining? Do you seek to embrace every opportunity of speaking for Christ, or is it not true that you dare not introduce Him because you know He is not wanted? Oh, be real before God! These things are not the trifles they at first sight appear. Beware lest you so become one of the world that, like Lot, your testimony is not believed.

Then again, there are **religious associations** where believers and unbelievers are joined together, and some, alas! go so far as to include every parishioner—regardless of new birth—and oftentimes immoral persons are allowed to take the Sacrament professedly in remembrance of the Lord's death. This is the very worst kind of evil. How can they remember a Person they know not? God says to His own people who thus mix with what is so false, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive

you" (2 Cor. vi. 17). Again, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. xviii. 4).

Dear fellow-believer, ponder these things well. They are not small and insignificant matters. Not only your blessing, but the glory of Christ is at stake. The unequal yoke includes every association, religious, commercial, or otherwise, where believers and unbelievers are joined together by common ties. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 20).

A. T. P.

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## Who is a Priest?

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**G**OD does not now dwell in the thick darkness. "The darkness is past," says the apostle John, "and the true light now shineth." And for a blessed and simple reason. The Word has been made flesh and come among us. Perfect grace has been manifested to the chief of sinners. Instead of our not being able to approach God, **God has approached us.**

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

"In Him (Christ) was life, and the life was the light of men."

The record of God is, that—

LXXVIII. 2.

"God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

"He that hath the Son hath life."

"The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared."

The chief of sinners was welcome to the Lord Jesus. The leper, whose defiled state excluded him and every one that touched him from the camp of Israel (an image of sin), Jesus laid His hands on and touched. Gracious goodness has visited us. God has shown Himself "the Friend of publicans and sinners." But this is far from being all; for though God visited the sinner thus in grace, the sinner could not approach Him in His holy habitation uncleansed. Hence the blessed Jesus not only lived but died; and now mark the effect of His death.

The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom—that was the veil behind which God was previously hidden and unapproachable; but that which rent the veil (that is, the death of Christ) put away sin perfectly for every one who believes in Him. He has borne their sins. His blood cleanses them from all sin; and not only have they found that God in perfect love, has commended His love to them in that while they were yet sinners Christ died for them, but they have found, if they believe in the efficacy of that sacrifice, what has purged their sins, for it was "when He had by Himself purged our sins," and not till then, that "He sat

down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hence the blood of Christ purges the conscience, makes it perfect (Heb. ix., x.), and God remembers our sins and iniquities no more ; hence, also, "there remains no more sacrifice for sins," because they are remitted, and that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

The Epistle to the Hebrews, from which I quote these statements, gives two striking reasons why there could be no repetition of the sacrifice, nor any more sacrifice for sins. First, "without shedding of blood there is no remission," therefore Christ must have suffered often if there were any besides that accomplished on the cross. Further, it is added, the Jewish priests stood offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins ; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down, for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified. Such is the plain and blessed language of Scripture. God would show His goodness and grace towards us, but He could not bear sin, nor receive what was defiled and guilty into His presence in His holy habitation ; and hence gave His Son to put it away that we might draw nigh with full assurance of faith. But **this work is accomplished once for all**. We have, therefore (it is the conclusion drawn in Heb. x.), "boldness to enter into the holiest by a new

and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." There no priest could enter (save the high priest once a year, as we have said) when there was a special class of priests on earth; and now every Christian can enter with boldness under the great High Priest, who is over the house of God. Believers are that house. We are those priests, as I have already shown. No priest can go further than entering into the holiest; and there I do not want him, for I can go boldly myself. If I get him to go for me I am denying my own right and Christian character, and the efficacy of Christ's work. *He who sets up a priesthood on earth between the believer and God is denying the efficacy and truth of the work of Christ.* He has "died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God." If I am brought to God I do not want a priest to go to Him for me. If the veil is rent, and I am told by God to enter into the holiest through that new and living way, I do not want another to go there because I am not able to.

The essence of Christianity is to reveal God, and to bring us to God, to give us holy, happy liberty as children in His presence into which we can enter, as cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. The essence of a distinct human priesthood is to say we cannot but must get others to go into God's presence to offer our gifts and sacrifices for us. It is a denial of the

whole efficacy of Christianity, and the place in which all Christians are set ; who, if Christianity be true, are all God's priests on the earth, to offer up spiritual sacrifices—the fruit of their lips, giving praise to His name.

But, I add more :—It is false and useless. The veil is rent, God is manifested in His holiness, the light has gone forth, and you, my reader, must “walk in the light as He (God) is in the light,” or you can have nothing to say to Him. You cannot have a hidden God, as in Judaism, for a priest to go to who yet could not reach Him. The light shines, and you must walk in it yourself. There is no veil over the glory of God now ; there may be over your heart, but then, if so, you are an unbeliever, and no priest can represent you before God. You have to stand before God in the light yourself. If you have come through the blood of Christ, the light will only show so much the more that you are perfectly clean through it. But you cannot even be clean and another go into God's presence for you. If you are clean, you are a priest and have to draw nigh yourself.

The work of Christ is a perfect and divine work, but you cannot approach God by a proxy here below ; you cannot have another person clean or holy for you on the earth. If Christ has answered for you, all is well, go boldly to the throne of grace yourself ; if not, no one else can do it for you. Now that God has been re-

vealed, you must have to do directly with Him for yourself. No doubt that will be in condemnation, if you do not come to Him through Christ ; but you must come yourself: the state of your own conscience is in question directly between you and God. If you do come to God by Him, no human priest can interfere, nor do you want any.

I repeat, then, the establishment of a human priesthood, as a class distinct from all other Christians, is the denial of the truth and efficacy of Christianity.

All Christians are priests, according to the New Testament ; their offerings are spiritual offerings of praise to God's name.

J. N. D.

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## The Meeting in the Field of Boaz.

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“ **O**H that I knew where **I might find Him !**”  
 was Job's cry. “ When **He hath found it,**” was the blessed word of the Lord Jesus. And, truly, when the heart deeply feels its need, it is not far from meeting with Him whose joy it is to meet that need.

So with Ruth. They had heard in the distant fields of Moab that the Lord had visited His people with bread, they had returned to the house of bread, two poor desolate widows with no



## THE MEETING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ. 153

resource but God, and what was the next thing? The bread was there, but how were they to get it? The simple faith of the outcast Moabitess lays hold of her true place, and of the provision God had made in His Word for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Deut. xxiv. 19). She has only to take her place as one who is nothing and has nothing, in order to claim God's promise. And so she goes out in faith to cast herself upon the goodness of God, to glean after him in whose eyes she may find favour.

Acres upon acres of harvest field stretch before her, undivided by hedges or walls as with us, and perplexing the stranger's heart as to which little plot out of the whole belongs to the unknown friend in whose eyes she is to find favour.

How is she to choose? She leaves the choice to God, and, guided by His hand in that mysterious way which down here seems chance, she lights upon a little plot belonging to Elimelech's friend, Naomi's kinsman, that wealthy man, Boaz.

So in simple language, that the needy heart can understand, God points to Him in whose eyes the stranger and the outcast may find favour. **There is but One**, the One who was born in the manger in Bethlehem, who ate with publicans and sinners, who went to be guest with a man that was a sinner, who suffered a woman that was a sinner to weep out her tears of repentance over His blessed feet, who hung between

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two sinners on Calvary's cross, who took a sinner with Him into Paradise,—**Jesus, the friend of sinners.**

Boaz, then, comes from Bethlehem, the house of bread, to meet the outcast damsel who was seeking bread, and **his eye travels straight to her** as she stoops to glean in the heat of the day, humbly following behind the reapers, taking the stranger's place. Little rest has been hers as yet, says the steward, who knows his master's heart. The meeting has come; how will the wealthy man receive the poor outcast?

It is most beautiful, yet simple, to see how God's way of grace shines out in this meeting. First Boaz, calling her by the gentle name, "**my daughter,**" teaches her the first simple lesson: "**go not to glean in another field.**" There is only **one** place where the sinner's need can be met, there is only **one** person who can meet it.

Elimelech had wandered away to the fields of Moab, and there had found nothing but bitterness and death. Now God had drawn the outcast **from** the fields of Moab **to** the field of Boaz by a chain of love whose links Ruth could never know at the time, and the lesson is driven home, "go not to glean in another field."

Are there not some who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, but who, nevertheless, have not learnt the simple lesson?

Are you seeking satisfaction out of Christ? Are you trying to find something for your heart

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in the fields of Moab? There is only bitterness and emptiness there.

“Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to **Me** shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on **Me** shall never thirst” (John vi. 35). Thus the first lesson leads quickly to the second : “**When thou art athirst** go to the vessels and **drink** of what the young men have drawn.” The well is deep, as the poor woman of Samaria truly said, but the water of life has been drawn from the deep well of the heart of the Father, and now whosoever thirsts “let him come and take of the water of life **freely.**” **Jesus gives it**—“**He** would have given thee living water.” The thirsty soul, drawn from the dry plains of the Dead Sea, takes it, and thirsts no more.

Perhaps you will say, “This is all very simple, I know all this. That may be, but have you really learnt what it is to be drawn from the fields of Moab to find that there is One and only One who can satisfy your heart? Have you learnt what it is to come as an empty sinner, one who has nothing, not even a title to God’s goodness, to be met by all the fulness of God’s grace in His own beloved Son? If you have, you will certainly not grumble at these simple things, but will bow down, like Ruth, before Him in joyful worship. You will not want to leave the little plot of the field of Boaz.

S. H. H.

## “ Lovest thou Me ? ”

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**H**AVING denied the Lord, the heart of Peter must be searched out to the bottom. He had protested of his affection and his devotion, the details being fully related in the other Gospels. He had imagined a personal superiority to his brethren in these respects. He must now face facts, and answer in the presence of One who knows all things. It is a ray of light from the judgment seat of Christ.

Jesus, addressing him by his designation in nature, and omitting the name given in grace, says, “ Lovest thou Me more than these ? ” referring unquestionably to the other disciples. He replies, “ Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee.” Sincerity of heart and the searching light of the Spirit of Christ exclude all thought of others, compel him to refer everything to the divine knowledge of Christ, for, in view of his denial, others might well have doubted of the reality of his affection, and impel him to use a word that meant far less than what Jesus had said.

How gracious is the answer of Jesus, “ Feed My lambs ! ”

A second and a third time the same question is put, the last differing by the use of Peter's own word, “ Art thou attached to Me ? ” This cuts

Peter to the heart and sweeps away the flimsy veil which would have shrouded from his eyes the self-sufficiency and self-confidence that necessitated his fall. He was consciously in the presence of One who was omniscient, and who searched him thoroughly. And at once his heart takes refuge in the omniscience that searched him, and could take knowledge of an affection implanted by grace, but which his conduct had thoroughly belied. It is an affecting picture of Israel's sin, and of their repentance at the Lord's return.

The heart aroused, the Lord can then commit to him the care of His saints, His lambs and sheep, to feed the former, and shepherd as well as feed the latter. But this would need not only an aroused but a subject heart, a will entirely subservient to another, an obedience even unto death. In youth and strength, independence had characterised him. In age and weakness he should glorify God in subjection, even to death, contrary to his own will, but guided by the power of another.

Meanwhile, to follow Jesus must be his and our sole concern. But how soon, and perhaps involuntarily, our thoughts turn in a spirit of emulation from their true and divine Object. Peter, turning round, sees the loved disciple already following Jesus. He it was who leaned on His breast at supper, and was near enough to ask Him that solemn question as to the

betrayal. Impetuously Peter gives expression to his thoughts, saying, "And what of this man?"

His brethren ever held an imposing place naturally in Peter's heart. The desire to keep their esteem more than once brought their shadow between him and the glory of Christ. To do some great deed like David's worthies, or to be the greatest, was in question among the disciples on several occasions.

The Saviour as ever, rebukes the thought severely. It is not to follow Him. But His words are couched so as to convey a deep dispensational truth. He says, "If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee?" The brethren gathered from this saying the mistaken, and merely natural, idea that John was not to die. Not so; but his teaching was to bridge the gulf between the Christian blessing and God's renewed dealings with the earth in grace and manifested governmental power. The revelation of which he should be the vessel, should not only introduce the highest individual blessing of life and nature in relationship with the Father, as expressed in the beloved Son in manhood, but also should include the transitional time during which God should form anew the links of relationship with His people Israel. Indeed, while revealing the relationships of eternal life and Christian blessing as seen in the Son on high in manhood and the saints with

Him at His return, the doctrine of John carries on the truth up to, throughout, and beyond the millennial scene into that of the new heavens and new earth, the eternal and new creation.

The Gospel of John shows us the Son of God on earth, eternal life in Him, and the Father revealed in and by Him. Then Jesus going away to the Father, and the Comforter coming instead. The Epistles declare that eternal life is given to us, this life being in the Son, Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life. The Revelation furnishes the further links in the chain of testimony right onward to the eternal scene.

W. T. W.

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## The Apostasy.

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WE have seen that the real error that had crept in at Thessalonica was that the day of the Lord was actually *present*, and **not** that it was *at hand*.

The coming of the Lord for His saints, and their gathering together unto Him in the air was a truth so well known and so firmly believed amongst them that the apostle can actually use it as an argument to disprove the false view that "the day" was already come. The truth of the rapture of the saints had been **revealed** before, it is now used as an argument.

But now a sad and terrible disclosure is made —“Let no man deceive you by any means, for [that day shall not come] except there come the falling away first.” It is not merely “a falling away” as if it were some vague or abstract declension, but “the” apostasy, a definite and complete abandonment of the Christian faith.

It is an awful thing to contemplate, but Scripture leaves no room to doubt, that the final phase of the professing Church will be a universal giving up of faith. This apostasy will not be restricted to Christendom, for in the end both the Jew and those who at one time professed Christianity, will find themselves in open revolt against God and Christ under the leadership of the man of sin.

It is well that God-fearing men and women should look these matters fairly in the face. There has of late been a great movement amongst true Christians. A call to prayer and confession has been resounding far and wide. An impetus has been given to the work of the gospel in all lands, and thankfully do we acknowledge that God has abundantly answered His people's cry in saving multitudes of souls in all quarters of the globe. But we must not close our eyes to the solemn fact that the general state of things is growing worse and worse.

The condition of the so-called churches is deplorable in the extreme. In a large number of cases they are mere worldly institutions, with



which it is a marvel that any really converted person could be associated. An ever-increasing number of unconverted ministers occupy the pulpits of Christendom. The so-called "higher criticism" has taken possession of the schools of theology, and the young men educated amidst the poisoned atmosphere of this subtle form of infidelity are pouring into the towns and villages of the land, spreading unbelief from the pulpit and the Sunday-school platform. This, we believe, is rapidly bringing about the apostasy of which we read in 2 Thessalonians ii.

But it is not only in this passage that we are told of these things. No doubt 2 Thessalonians ii. describes the complete and general departure from the Christian faith which precedes the manifestation of Christ in judgment, and this state of things has not yet been fully reached, though the influences are now at work which are surely and rapidly hurrying it on.

But in 1 Timothy iv. 1 we read of what is now taking place. At the close of the previous chapter the assembly has been spoken of as "the pillar and support of the truth." The great mystery of godliness is that which the assembly of the living God is called upon to uphold before the world. Christ is the truth, and hence the solemn responsibility and the holy privilege of the assembly of God is to keep and maintain intact the great truth of the Person of Christ. The so-called churches are not the Church, or

assembly, of the living God. The churches of to-day, as we have said, are in many cases mere worldly institutions, composed largely of unconverted men who care not for Christ, and who have long since given up the belief in His deity, if ever they even outwardly held it.

The Church of the living God is composed of all the true believers on the face of the earth. In these days of ruin, instead of being all gathered together in one, as they ought to be, they are scattered and divided. But so long as the assembly of God is on earth, even in its scattered condition, it is the only witness for the truth that is anywhere to be found. Alas! that so many true Christians should give an uncertain sound as regards the Person of Christ. The great conflict of the present day is concerning this very truth. On the one hand the assembly, God's dwelling-place through the Spirit, is here to maintain and uphold it, while on the other, the approaching apostasy, energised by Satan, will completely abandon it. May every reader wake up to realise this, and take their stand for the truth of Christ's Person! The days are too serious to be fighting for mere parties, but yield not a hair's-breadth when the Person of Christ is involved.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." These latter times are upon us in fearful earnest. This passage is not speaking of Jews or heathen,

but of those who once held the Christian faith ; it is not describing the early phase of the Church, but that which was to take place at the close. The Spirit of God announced prophetically, nearly two thousand years ago, the very state of things now prevalent in Christendom.

Will matters improve? Will the Lord when He comes find faith on the earth? In the twinkling of an eye He will remove the assembly of the living God, which is the pillar and support of the truth, and the whole fabric of profession will crumble to the ground, leaving nothing behind but the apostasy.

A. H. B.

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## Bible Study.

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**T**HROUGH hindering circumstances the Bible Study was prevented from appearing last month. Hence we are only able to give a brief suggestion of the order in which those names whose meanings are given in Scripture are grouped :—

1. **Eve, Cain, Seth, Noah, Peleg.**—These names seem to give in their meanings the principles which begin to work through man's fall. Both man's will and God's grace and government are seen.

2. **Abraham, Sarah, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, Edom, Jacob.**—In the meanings of these we find God's calling, God's promise, and God's election, in contrast with the natural heirs according to the flesh.

3. **The Sons of Jacob**, from the first-born according to the flesh, **Reuben**, to the one who was separated from his

brethren, **Joseph**—he obtains the birthright (1 Chron. v. 2).—In their names we have the whole history of God's ways with man. (See Gen. xlix.)

4. **Moses, Eliezer, Gershom, Joshua.**—These four names bring out Christ in suffering and glory as the accomplisher of God's purposes of grace.

5. **Mara, Ichabod, Jabez, Beriah,** in contrast with **Jerubbaal, Samuel, Jedidiah, Solomon.**—Here we get four names expressing the failure and ruin of those whom God had put in the place of blessing and privilege, and four names showing God's way of coming in to establish the blessing in Christ.

6. Prophetic Names, **Emmanuel, Jezreel, Jehovah-tsidkenu, Shear-jashub, Maher-shalal-hashbaz, Loruhamah, Lo-ammi.**—These names come in after all is ruined, pointing, first, to **Jesus**, ever the object of God's thoughts, the One whom He had in reserve after all was ruined, and, second, to the state of Israel under judgment. They show that "the spirit of prophecy is **the witness of Jesus.**"

7. "**The Name which is above every Name.**"—Thus we find that these names whose meanings are given in Scripture serve as divine finger-posts pointing us on to the one name of **Jesus**, in whom God has fully revealed Himself.

The Lord gives names to three of His disciples, viz., Boanerges to James and John, and Cephas or Peter to Simon ; also the Holy Ghost records the meanings of two names in the Acts—Barnabas and Elymas.

The record closes with **Melchizedek**, Christ's name of millennial blessing.

We have not given meanings and references for the sake of space, but those who traced these out in the previous months will be able to follow for themselves the outline suggested.

**The Passover.**—Many have sent in papers

on this subject, and all seem to have found refreshment and food for their souls from it. We cannot do more than give a brief outline of the order of the passovers recorded as kept in the Old Testament.

1. **The Passover in Egypt** (Exod. xii.).—This is God's beginning. He dates everything from this passover. The only way by which God could deliver His people was *judgment*. But if God comes in to execute His judgment, what claim have the Israelites to escape, any more than the Egyptians? God's way of escape brings out the true state of everything. When He comes in there is no difference between Israelite and Egyptian.

But the blood of the lamb makes a difference which God recognises. In this first passover the central thing is, "**When I see the blood.**" The man who believes God and puts the blood on his door owns that he is a sinner before God. God sees the blood, telling of judgment already executed, the blood of One who perfectly satisfies His heart, and who has perfectly glorified Him on the cross. When God sees the blood He passes over. The foundation for redemption must be laid in *righteousness*, then God is free to act in power on behalf of the very people who deserved nothing but judgment.

So the believer starts on his journey with the question of judgment settled for ever. He feeds peacefully upon the Lamb, under the shelter of

the blood, knowing that God is perfectly satisfied with the precious blood of Christ. The believer does not rest upon his own value of the blood of Christ, but upon *God's value* of that infinitely precious blood. The lamb is roast with fire, and eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Christ, the object of God's unmingled and unsparing judgment, becomes the food of the believer. In Christ, judged and made sin for me, I learn God's judgment of sin in me, and I cannot feed my heart with Christ without *practically learning* the hatefulness of sin. Thus true self-judgment is produced, not by occupation with self, but with Christ.

But the lessons of this wonderful scene are endless. May God make them good in our hearts.

**2. The Passover in the Wilderness** (Num. ix.).—This brings in the provision of grace for those who were unclean or on a journey. They were to hold the passover with all its rites on the fourteenth day of the second month. Here the value God attaches to the passover is very strongly presented (Num. ix. 15)—a needed lesson for the wilderness.

**3. The Passover in Gilgal** (Josh. v.).—Not until Gilgal is reached is "*the reproach of Egypt*" rolled away. Here the redeemed people reach the full position that God had ever in His thoughts for them. Jordan crossed, twelve *new* stones set up in Gilgal in the place of the twelve

old stones left for ever in the bottom of the river, the reproach of Egypt rolled away—these things mark a people truly heavenly in character, and the passover introduces them to the warfare by which they must take possession of their inheritance.

Hence in these three passovers we find that they are God's starting-point from which He reckons His ways with His own. The first is the starting-point of redemption by power from the world and its prince. The second is the starting-point of the true wilderness journey (from Sinai) of failure, and experience of God's unfailing grace. The third is the starting-point of the warfare in the heavenlies to take possession of the inheritance. A wonderful lesson!

The other three are historical and, while affording most interesting lessons, must be passed over briefly.

4. **The Passover under Hezekiah** (2 Chron. xxx.).—This was a *remnant* passover, and was held on the fourteenth of the second month. It is connected with *a gospel testimony* (2 Chron. xxx. 6-9).

5. **The Passover under Josiah** (2 Chron. xxxv.).—This passover follows *the purging of the land and the house* (2 Chron. xxxiv. 8), and *the recovery of the law*. It is a *revival* passover.

6. **The Passover under Ezra** (Ezra vi. 19-22).—This passover closes the account of the return of the first band of exiles, who had "*separated*

*themselves* from the filthiness of the nations" (Ezra vi. 21). It follows the building of the altar, and dedication of the house. It is a *separation* passover.

Hence the last three, instead of being starting-points, seem to be closing-points.

**7. The Fulfilment of the Passover** (Matt. xxvi. 2).—It is only one of the many striking proofs of the *one purpose* running through Scripture, and of the one mind seen in it all, that these six passovers recorded by different authors, and all testifying of Christ, should close with the final seventh passover, "when the Son of man is delivered to be crucified." Matthew, the Gospel which specially gathers up the threads of Old Testament witness to Christ, mentions no other passover but this.

**Subject for July.**—Now that we have begun Exodus, the book of Redemption, so full of precious types of Christ, it would be profitable to go through it, taking up the various types.

The subject for July will be (D.V.) **The Passage of the Red Sea—references** to it in the Old Testament, and its **meaning** in the light of the New Testament.

The initials and numbers of those who have sent in their names since the last issue are—

147. J. L. E.	150. A. H. W. B.	153. J. C. D.
148. M. B.	151. L. H.	154. N. A.
149. E. T.	152. L. H. D. B.	155. F. C.
		156. D. L.

Many thanks are due for suggestions sent in. One or two correspondents have sent neither name nor number, so that we have no means of answering their questions.

B. S. ED.



## Notes and Comments.

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***Are the Dead Communicating?*** Spiritism, it would appear, is becoming popular. Scientists, who formerly were most sceptical, have, after a searching investigation, established two facts—first, that phenomena of an objective and tangible character do really take place; and secondly, that these are governed by certain intelligences. The whole question is, What is the nature of these intelligences? Are they human?

The writer of the article referred to recently proceeds to show that these intelligences are not what they pretend to be. That the phenomena take place is admitted; that communications are made is not denied, but that these come from the departed is absolutely false.

We have no doubt that Satanic agencies are at work in the spiritism of to-day, as they unquestionably will be in the coming period of Antichrist's presence (see 2 Thess. ii.).

1. "It is certain that the identity of the communicating intelligence has not been established. Although . . . in practically every instance the entities claim to be the spirits of departed men and women, it is certain that that claim has invariably broken down.

2. "It is a known and admitted characteristic of the intelligences that they attempt to personate

deceased individuals. . . . But we meet with . . . the most heartless deception that the imagination can conceive.

3. "The moral character of the manifesting intelligences is invariably of a low order . . . In numerous instances this moral depravity is not immediately apparent, . . . but it almost always discloses itself in the end.

4. "The general moral and physical effect of spiritistic practices upon the investigators is a disastrous one. . . . The frequent repetition of the process leads to complete physical prostration. . . . With but few exceptions the consequences of frequent sittings are fatal. . . . As far back as 1871 Dr Forbes Winslow wrote, 'Ten thousand unfortunate people are at the present time confined in lunatic asylums on account of having tampered with the supernatural.'

5. "The teaching imparted by the intelligences is wholly contradictory in character. . . . There is unanimity on one point only; . . . it is the subversion of faith in Christ as a divine Person that the spirit messages ultimately aim at. . . . From personal letters which have reached me it is evident that the writer had in each single instance lost his faith in Christianity, and was suffering the keenest grief and disappointment in consequence."

There can be no question that all that is real in spiritism is an energy of Satan. It will presently sweep apostate Christendom before it like

thistledown before the wind. Meanwhile the true Christian is safe only as he cleaves close to Christ, and yields implicit obedience to the Word of God. Let every young Christian study prayerfully 1 John iv. 1-7. We there find four things that will safeguard us in these last perilous days.

First, **the Person of Christ** (vers. 1, 2). Every doctrine and practice that assails His glory or attacks His person is of Satan, and must be utterly refused.

Second, **the possession of the divine nature**, "Ye are of God" (ver. 3). The one born of God has a nature that instinctively shrinks from evil.

Third, **the Spirit of God** indwelling the believer is a power greater than that of Satan (ver. 4.).

Fourth, **the Word of God** through the apostles (ver. 6). Submission to this is a true mark of the child of God. "Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

ED.

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## Eating the Flesh and Drinking the Blood.

(BRIEF REMARKS ON JOHN VI.)

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**I** WOULD start with a few general remarks. John's Gospel deals much with imagery—forcibly conveying thought, but which could

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not be taken literally. The varied figurative expressions in connection with the Lord's Person we are so well acquainted with, are given in this Gospel. "I am the Vine." "I am the Door." "I am the Shepherd of the sheep." We cannot take these literally; Christ was not a vine nor a door, neither are we sheep. This thought bears on the expressions in the sixth of John, sought to be made literal by Roman Catholics and Ritualists. But it is only *some* expressions here and there in the chapter which they so take, just as it suits the object they have in view, for it is remarkable that other figurative expressions in the same chapter, for instance, "I am the living *bread*," are passed by, which have an equal right, to be understood literally as those that they insist on.

Again, in the other Gospels where we have the institution of the Lord's Supper (see Matt. xxvi.), we have, if you take *all* the expressions literally (and why some and not the others?), a strange transubstantiating backwards and forwards. For instance, "Jesus took *bread* . . . and brake it, and said, This is My *body*. And He took the *cup* . . . saying, "This is My *blood* of the New Testament . . .," and directly after, "I will not drink henceforth of *this fruit of the vine*."

If we take it literally, the wine is transubstantiated into blood, which is *then* called "*this fruit of the vine*," and all sorts of nonsense could be argued, for I have as much right to take the

last expressions literally, and if so, I find *the blood* has re-become fruit of the vine, or that *it* never was ought else!

I dislike, and it is painful to me, to speak thus, to come down to such carnal thoughts, but to meet the carnal it may be allowable to show the vanity and folly, and worse than folly, of carnal thoughts, and what they would lead to.

Taken in its true sense all is perfectly simple, the wine never ceased to be wine, and was but a figure of that precious blood which was to be shed for the remission of sins—a *figure of the reality*. So likewise in 1 Corinthians xi., **after** the words of the institution have been quoted, it is added, “As often as ye eat **this bread** and drink **this cup**”—and so on, three times repeated. The literal sense is further precluded in the words of the institution, for whatever image the Lord employed it could not then be literally Himself, for His body was not yet broken, His blood not yet shed; the literal sense was untrue and impossible.

Another remarkable point is, that in all places where the Lord's Supper is the subject, there is no thought of *getting life* by partaking of it, *or of getting life at all*, as is the case when the Lord Himself is spoken of. I allude to the three Gospel narratives of the institution, and to 1 Corinthians xi. This is in contra-distinction to where the Lord *Himself* is spoken of, and faith directed to *Himself*. They have to go to the

sixth of John for this, on the false adaptation of which to the Supper instead of the Lord Himself, their whole system rests, and on which their whole theory is built.

And here a strong point at once meets you, namely, that the words in the sixth of John were spoken in the early part of the Lord's ministry, whereas the Supper was not given till the close—it does not come on till the time of chapter xiii.—hence, it is not too bold to say, even if all Christian doctrine did not make it certain, that the Supper can in no wise be the subject of the chapter. It is also known that even some Roman Catholic authorities, Bellarmine amongst others, do not consider the sixth of John to be the Supper, and would not every probability lie, even to human reason, on the side that the Lord spake in this discourse of **His death**, that mighty fact on which all was to be founded, and the new heavens and the new earth to subsist before Him, and not of the Supper which but figured it? To the heart taught of God, and who knows the value of that death, and has found its own deep need met by it, *it is a certainty*.

I now come to the chapter itself, and would open by a few general thoughts before taking up details and literalities. First, with the assertion that it does not speak of the Lord's Supper at all, but of Christ Himself and His death; that it speaks of the same thing that the Supper speaks of, but it does not speak of the Supper.

To make it the Supper, and attribute the virtues to *it* that are there spoken of as belonging to and flowing out from the reality known to faith, would be like trying to seize a person's shadow for themselves, and while grasping it the reality passes on and is lost to you. The attention is diverted from the reality to the shadow, which can never do anything for the soul, it is thrown on the symbol instead of the thing symbolised. •

Again, if the chapter speaks of the Supper and not of Christ Himself, and if expressions are to be taken literally, it must result in what the consciences of all are forced to own, **could not** be and **is not** true, namely, that not one of those who have once partaken of the Lord's Supper could be lost, whatever he might be; and that those who do partake of it would not only be blessed, but they would be eternally saved by having partaken of it, for verses 51, 54, and 56 say, "If *any man* eat of this bread he shall **live for ever.**" "*Whoso* eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood *hath* eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood *dwelleth in Me* and *I in him.*" Also, that none could be saved without partaking of it, for verse 53 says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Except* ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have *no life in you.*"

Now these words are as absolute as the rest. I own the absolute nature of all, but it is Christ

Himself and His death presented to and appropriated by faith, and not the memorial institution to which the literality applies; and except I, through grace and divine power, appropriate that death of Christ in all its efficacy for my soul, and thus eat His flesh and drink His blood (that is, make it my own), I have no life in me. Receiving Him once and for ever, thus, I have eternal life.

*Eating* is a common figure in Scripture for that which appropriates or takes into itself. For instance, "Thy words were found, and I did **eat them**"; so here they are indeed the words of eternal life to me. The Lord Himself tells me of His death, the *necessity* of it, and the value and efficacy of it. I receive His testimony (and now, the added testimony of the Holy Ghost to it), and *live*; the incorruptible seed has been sown by divine power in my heart, and I am born again (see 1 Peter i. 23); my heart has owned the truth of my lost condition—dead in trespasses and sins—of the need of atonement wrought by another. And what more does the Word tell me? That the Son of man *must* be lifted up on the cross; that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for this, "that **whosoever** believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God gave Him to die that I might live. I *believe it*, and live eternally.

But to return to literalities, the Lord in this



chapter says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." Am I called upon to believe that He was bread and not very man? or that He was transubstantiated into living bread? Why not? If I am to take the other expressions in the chapter literally, why not this? Why pick and choose thus? The words in one case are as positive and as plain as in the other. Those who did not understand Him and took His words carnally, went away and left Him; those who received His words, and understood that the flesh profited nothing, but that the Spirit quickeneth, and that His words were the words of eternal life, remained and confessed Him. And is it not so now? Those whom superstition holds, and who seek to ordinances for salvation and life, go away from Christ, and they have no peace, no assurance, none of the **absolute certainty** the Lord in this chapter links with believing on Him, and appropriating His death, while those who come **to Him—not to an ordinance**—can indeed tell of the virtues of His blood, and of all that they possess in Him.

The Lord twice in this chapter repels while correcting the idea of a physical change and a carnal eating—"the Spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing," and, "*not* as your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead."

In conclusion, I would say that I believe it to be **utterly false** that the sixth of John speaks of an ordinance at all. I believe, too, on other

grounds than I have entered upon here, the whole doctrine of transubstantiation and the whole superstructure built upon it of ordinances being the channel for the communication of life and of salvation, **to be false**, as also the assumption of a miracle contained in it, on which latter point I would just add a few words.

In every miracle God gave proof to man of the change ; the thing became what God said it was. Adam became a man ; he did not remain dust. Eve became a woman ; she did not remain a rib ; the blind saw ; the deaf heard ; the dead were raised up ; the water Christ turned into wine became wine, and so on. *Here* there is no proof of God's power. A wafer becomes the living God, but remains a wafer—(alas, “a deceived heart has turned this people aside, and they hold a lie in their right hand”!)—but besides this, *this* supposed miracle and the doctrines built upon it, are opposed to all God's actings, not only as regards miracles, but **His ways and dealings with men's souls**. Hence I must have His word divinely certain for it ere I believe that which is opposed to His ways, and which, furthermore, if true, falsifies the doctrine and teaching of the word He *has* given, and the facts.

J. N. D.

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THE Spirit of God judges sin in me, but He makes me know that I am not judged for it, because Christ has borne that judgment for me.

## Where is Boasting then ?

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**I**F there is one thing more than another that Christianity has clearly proved to be necessary, it is that God requires reality from man. Reality, and not formality, is essential in the soul's relations with God, now that the darkness is passing and that the true light is shining.

This is clearly brought out at the close of Romans ii. Whatever may have been the case before the cross, God deals with men now according to individual responsibility and not mere national privilege. The Jews as such were set apart from the nations, and were specially privileged by God ; they were not slow to recognise this and to make their boast of these privileges in a carnal way.

“ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

“ And knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law ;

“ And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

“ An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.”

But the gospel announces that a day is coming when God shall judge the secrets of men. Be they Jew or Gentile, it matters not, each one in that day will have to give account of himself and of his own individual actions, and before that tribunal there is no respect of persons. If a Jew

who has taught others in a self-righteous way, and has preached that this and that should not be done—if he, while boasting of the law, in fact broke the law, he dishonoured God. Indeed the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them.

“Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (ver. 13).

“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision” (ver. 25).

In presence of the full revelation that God has made of Himself in Christ, and in view of the day of judgment, it is no longer a question of external privilege and national relationship, but of that conduct which God requires at the hand of each individual man, woman, and child.

On the other hand, if the uncircumcision, *i.e.*, the Gentiles, keep the righteousness of the law, their uncircumcision would be counted for circumcision (ver. 26). The case is here supposed, it is not said that any such case was actually existing, for in truth “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (chap. iii. 20). From Romans viii. 4, we learn that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, but this can only be done by the Christian. A Christian has a far higher standard than the law, and his practical conduct should far exceed the righteousness of the law. But the close of Romans ii.

## WHERE IS BOASTING THEN?

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teaches us that not outward form but inward reality is acceptable with God.

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh:

“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God” (chap. ii. 28, 29).

How important is such a scripture in a day like this, when a religion of form and ceremony and external ritual is spreading itself through the world. God must have reality—reality in the soul's confession of sin, reality in the soul's faith in a personal Saviour, and reality in a consistent Christian conduct.

“What advantage then hath the Jew?” Much every way. God had communicated to them His living oracles.

“He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation” (Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20).

Was this a small matter? The Scriptures put the soul in living contact with God. There is a power in the Word of God when applied by the Spirit to awaken the sinner's conscience, and convert his soul. Does not Satan know this? Was he not the first one to attempt to rob man of God's Word by the infidel question, “**Hath God said?**” (Gen. iii. 1). And is it not Satan that to this day is seeking to undermine the authority of that Word by rationalism and

the attacks of "Higher Criticism" falsely so-called? Satan knows, even if man forgets, that the entrance of that Word gives light and understanding (Ps. cxix. 130).

But that Word, as we have seen, has proved that all are guilty, Jews no less than Gentiles. No salvation can be had on the ground of works. The heathen were sunk in the lowest depths of degradation and corruption; the Jews were condemned by the very law that they boasted they possessed. God's remedy through the gospel met man just there in his lost condition and proposed a way of justification exactly adapted to man's need, and altogether worthy of God. Christ Jesus was set forth by God as the meeting-place between these sinners and Himself—a crucified Christ. How humbling to the pride of man!

"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23).

What? Am I to put my faith and trust in a crucified Christ? "Where is boasting then?" (Rom. iii. 27). Ah, it is excluded. God will not have us to be boasting in ourselves. We may boast and glory in Christ—yes, the more the better—but in self, never. "By what law (or principle)?" What principle excludes boasting? Works? No, this would encourage boasting. What then excludes boasting? Why, the principle of faith—that very principle upon which the whole gospel rests:—

“ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law ” (Rom. iii. 28).

But this principle of faith throws the door wide open to all. God cannot be bound down to one nation only in the matter of showing grace. He is God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. The Jews on the ground of law were condemned. By works of law they could not be justified, for that law had brought them in guilty. Christ's precious blood was God's provision for all who would believe. The circumcision, then, must submit to being justified on the principle of faith, which scattered to the winds all his religious boasting. This truth once established opened the way for the uncircumcision as well. The same God that justified the Jew by (or on the principle of) faith, also justified the Gentile through his faith.

Did this make void the law ? By no means ; it established it. The law demanded righteousness from man ; man had none in himself for God ; but God has provided a perfect righteousness for man in Christ. As another has said : “ God does not efface the obligation of the law, according to which man is totally condemned ; but while recognising and affirming the justice of that condemnation, He glorifies Himself in grace by granting a divine righteousness to man when he had no human righteousness to present before God. . . . Nothing ever put divine sanction on the law like the death of Christ, who bore its

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curse, but did not leave us under it. Faith does not, then, annul law; it fully establishes its authority. It shows man righteously condemned under it, and maintains the authority of the law in that condemnation, for it holds all who are under it to be under the curse."      A. H. B.

### Evermore.

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

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

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

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

*From the French.*



## "It is Written."

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**I**T is particularly important to encourage Christians, especially those young in the faith, to a constant and prayerful study of Scripture. No amount of teaching in the assemblies of believers, good and valuable though it be in its place, can make up for private study and meditation on God's Word. Yet one has found by experience, and one has heard it remarked over and over again by others, how many things will absorb the time we should give to the reading of Scripture. Business, various duties and engagements, it may be even the reading of good books, a thousand and one things come in to turn the Lord's people aside from the reading of Scripture.

Now, even if the time which some who are very much occupied can give to Bible study be necessarily short, it is nevertheless a great encouragement to know that God can and does make up what such might miss, as compared with others who have more leisure. He can feed the soul from His Word, and He does in every case where there is diligence and earnestness. He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with good things. We need *daily* supplies; the manna must be gathered fresh every day—it must be sought for *early* before the work of the day comes on. We have to combat enemies, and we need to be strengthened and equipped.

To go forward in our own strength is sure to lead to failure, we want power and wisdom from above. What untold value there is in a little time spent in quiet meditation on the Word of God !

We have a most instructive example in the case of Joshua. He was just about to fight the battles of the Lord, and he was not only encouraged to be strong and of a good courage, but the book of the law was not to depart out of his mouth, and he was to meditate therein day and night.

Our blessed Lord Himself is the perfect example in this as in all else. We find Him using the little phrase "It is written" on some fourteen or fifteen different occasions. At the very outset of His ministry, when confronted with the power and subtlety of Satan, He met and overcame him with the simple word "It is written." This was enough for Him. He would not turn the stone into bread, although He had the power to do so—would not act without a command from God. No craft, no seductive power of the enemy could induce Him for one moment to leave the place of obedience to God and dependence on His will as expressed in the written Word. He answers Satan simply from the book of Deuteronomy, which contained the instructions given by God through Moses for the guidance of the godly man when he should have entered the land of promise. When Satan mis-

applied Scripture, our Lord answered him again by Scripture ; and Satan, failing to get any vantage-point against the One who was governed absolutely by the Word of God, departed from Him for a season. The Lord did not meet Satan by using His Godhead power, but by the written Word, and He is therefore a most precious example for us.

As we read through the Gospels, we find that the Lord Jesus put all honour on the Scriptures. He fully owned the divinely inspired character of the Old Testament. For example, when quoting Psalm cx., He introduced the quotation with the words, "David himself said by the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xii. 36). The Holy Spirit had inspired David many hundreds of years before to record the fact that the Messiah would be David's *Lord*, as well as David's son. The scribes were right in believing that He was David's son, but they were unable to understand how he could be also David's Lord, being ignorant of the glory of His Person as both God and man. But all this—so incomprehensible to man—had been revealed beforehand by inspiration in the Scriptures of truth.

Again, when quoting Psalm cxviii. 22,

"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."

The Lord introduced the quotation by asking if they had not "read in the Scriptures," &c.

(Matt. xxi. 42) ; or, to take the words given in the corresponding passage in Luke,

“He beheld them and said, What is this then that is written?”

They had the Scriptures, and they ought to have known what was so plainly taught in them.

*(To be continued.)*

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## Progress or Retrogression— No Alternative.

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**T**HE believer's acceptance in Christ by God the Father is perfect, nor can it be otherwise for this simple reason: he is “accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. i. 6).

If the Beloved has made atonement for us, borne our sins away, and by doing so glorified God the Father, who raised Him from the dead, and thus accepted Him, that acceptance, needless to say, is perfect. Yes, the believer is accepted. It is not the believer who is to accept Christ. **God has accepted Him**, and, we repeat, he who believes **is accepted** in Him. The believer, too, **is** reconciled (Col. i. 21); he “**is** saved” (Eph. ii. 8); he **is** made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21); he **has** “eternal life” given to him (1 John v. 11); he shall **never** come into judgment (John v. 24); he **is** “**passed** from death unto life.”

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He may and will meet with correction if walking in a careless way, but judged finally he never will be. He shall "not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). Yet notwithstanding the blessed and immutable truth of all this, the writer's present object is not so much to dwell upon it, as to draw attention to the fact that the enjoyment of these precious things which God has made true of His children, yea, the "making of them sure" in a practical way, and a negligent and backsliding walk cannot possibly exist together. We most seriously draw the readers' attention to this: a Christian cannot remain stationary! Onward, upward, and homeward he moves on (it may be feebly), otherwise retrograde **he must**.

It has been said, and we think with truth, that a Christian resembles a chicken. It belongs to the only order of animal which requires no nurse (we say not, no protection). From the beginning, the creature picks up for itself, and this is a sign of its health; let it fail in picking up, and we may conclude that health is defective. The Christian is exhorted to "add" to his faith, virtue (or courage), knowledge, temperance (self-restraint), endurance, godliness, brotherly love, and love.

We would notice in passing that doubtless there is a moral order in these; for instance, knowledge follows fortitude, or courage, in the order given, and it is easy to see that courage

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without knowledge might lead to rashness or to what is erratic, and so on.

Now we find with respect to these qualities, that if they be "in" us "**and abound**," we shall be neither barren (idle) nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we are solemnly instructed, that should these things be lacking, there is but one result, "He is blind," and however spiritual and discerning he may formerly have been, now he "cannot see afar off." Previously, he may have thought that there was one thing he never could forget, namely, his sins having been cleansed. Alas! now he **forgets** that he "was purged from his old sins."

This is most serious. Though the absolute blindness of the unconverted will never again be experienced, yet as to all practical perception, he is what the Scripture says of one who has **not** added to his faith—"blind." What an exemplification of this we have in Samson! See the results of the sleep upon the lap of Delilah, fit type of the world—blind and fettered. Yet remember that his name is written among the worthies "who obtained a good report!" But spiritual indolence and negligence lead often to disastrous results.

No Christian should entertain a question as to his calling and election being "sure" in the heart of God, where they cannot be made more sure; but they **can be made more sure in our own heart**, else why the grave injunction,—

## PROGRESS OR RETROGRESSION. 191

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, be **diligent** to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things ye shall never fail" (2 Pet. i. 10).

It is easy to perceive that believers in an unspiritual state would be likely to succumb to the assaults of the adversary, who would successfully attack one who had **forgotten that he was purged from his old sins**, and had lost enjoyment of eternal life. But if the believer is fruitful, and **growing** in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he would not be in so vulnerable a state. Serious issues are involved. Our God has connected spiritual discernment with spiritual progress and exercise. Maturity (full age) is not arrived at without this. Let a man carry his arm in a sling for six months, and the result would be that he would lose the use of it.

Remember, we cannot escape if neglect obtains. We need to go on, and to continue to go on, or we shall slip back. As we have already said it is impossible for the Christian to be more completely accepted than he is, but he may be more acceptable or agreeable to God (2 Cor. v. 9) It is encouraging to others also to observe your progress in the ways and work of the Lord.

"Meditate upon these things : give thyself wholly to them : that thy profiting may appear unto all" (1 Tim. iv. 15).

What is more saddening than to see a blight upon progress ! The scanty thought unenlarged, while perhaps those who ought to be teachers

need to be taught "again," scraping the surface instead of digging deeper into those things which are freely given to us of God.

"I am the Lord thy God who teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go."

May He give us to remember that it is by "reason of use" that our senses are exercised to discern both good and evil!

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things" (a new heaven and a new earth), "be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. iii. 14).

W. R. C.



## Bible Study.



THROUGH some mistake the subject for this month was printed as being the subject for July. Hence very few have sent in papers.

On the subject of the passover a correspondent asks: "How is it that the Word says, in 2 Kings xxiii. 22, 'There was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges . . . nor in all the days of the kings,' when under Hezekiah there had already been such a beautiful celebration of the passover?"

Careful comparison of the accounts given in the Word concerning the two passovers shows



several important differences. The following table shows the main differences:—

<i>Hezekiah</i> , 2 Chron. xxix.-xxxi.	<i>Josiah</i> , 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv.
Begins by purging the <i>temple</i> .	Begins by purging the <i>land</i> .
Hezekiah sends out messengers to the remnant escaped, calling them to the passover.	House is repaired. Discovery of <i>the</i> book of the law.
Passover held on 14th of <i>second</i> month.	A covenant made with Jehovah. Passover held on 14th of <i>first</i> month.
They ate the passover "otherwise than it was written."	Ark brought into its place. Passover held "as it is written in this book of the covenant" (2 Kings xxiii. 21).
Feast held "seven days and seven days" ( <i>cf.</i> 1 Kings viii. 65).	Passover held by far more people ( <i>cf.</i> 2 Chron. xxxv. 7-9, with 2 Chron. xxx. 24).
The priests bless the people and are heard ( <i>cf.</i> 1 Kings viii. 55, and ix. 3).	(Josiah had destroyed Jeroboam's high places, not removed in Hezekiah's time).
All Israel purge the land and return every man to his possession.	No such passover "from the days of <i>Samuel</i> ."
"Since the time of <i>Solomon</i> . . . there had not been the like."	

Hence the feast in Hezekiah's time suggests weakness and the true sense of it, and confidence in God. His righteousness is owned in the message sent out. But there is not such a complete restoration as in Josiah's time, where everything is the result of the recovery of the law—the Word of God. The ark is put in its place, and the passover is held in its proper time

and not in the second month as in Hezekiah's time. The second month was the provision for failure, according to Numbers ix. In Hezekiah's feast their hearts go back to the glory of the kingdom established in blessing under Solomon, and they keep a feast of double seven days as Solomon did, though not at the same time.

Josiah's passover, going back to Samuel and the lighting up of the lamp of prophecy, seems to bring in what is not found so fully in Hezekiah's passover with all its joy, viz., the blessed light of a prophetic witness to the full restoration of a day yet to come.

Hezekiah's passover and its circumstances seem to give a prophetic picture of the moral state of the people produced by the work of the Spirit of God, before the Assyrian comes up to find the city defended by the Holy One of Israel. "After these things and this faithfulness" (2 Chron. xxxii. 1). We shall be glad of any communication as to the contrast between these two passovers.

We have received the following remarks in connection with the Bible Study, which will be of profit and interest to students:—

"John, who really unfolds the subject of light, carefully *avoids* saying that Christians are light. That is said once by the Lord in Matthew v. and in Paul's Epistles. The nearest to it in John is 1 John ii. 8, but then he says 'darkness is *passing*,' not 'past.' And morally that is of deep moment to remember. The indiscriminate use of the concordance is always dangerous. We have to

seek rightly to 'divide.' It wants something better than a concordance for that, and it often takes a very long time in the school of God. . . . In the Old Testament revelation, or gradual unfolding of what God is, there is much about *fire* and little about *light*. In the New Testament the converse holds good. The lessons of the Old Testament are supposed to be known when you come to the New (Matt. xiii. 52), and must never be forgotten. The New, in principle, is God manifested in flesh. And that is 'piety' (1 Tim. iii. 16). But we cannot expect to profit *really* by the *light* unless we know the *fire*. Every 'sacrifice' must be salted with salt, but that comes after the universal truth of being salted with fire. Hebrews does not close without a reminder as to this—a solemn word, surely, for our consciences; and Isaiah xxiii. 14, gives the two sides, the saved and the unsaved, taken up by the Lord at the end of Mark ix."

The note of warning as to the "indiscriminate" use of concordances is timely, though it need not discourage any from using them rightly. One whose life-long labours were devoted to the bringing out of the "Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance" has said in reference to it: "The only cautionary remark I would add is this—that without faith, and the Spirit's aid (never withheld from the humble and prayerful Christian), and *a patient examination of the contexts*, no one can profit aright from this concordance."

Many have been led of late, with much blessing to their souls, to read through the books of the Bible in a more consecutive way, and we trust that the effect of any Bible Study appearing in

these columns may only be to lead more and more to read the Word of God as it stands patiently and steadily, looking for Christ there, and in no way discouraged if all difficulties do not immediately become clear. Light acts upon the conscience and heart, not upon the intellect. Hence a knowledge of God as revealed in the Word can only go with a quiet and humble walk with God down here. Such was the path learnt by the Son Himself in grace. May He give us each to know more of it!

The subject set for this month, but by an error allotted to July, will be dealt with next month, and we hope many will take up this deeply important and interesting subject.

As before, special attention should be given to the typical meaning of the crossing of the Red Sea, following upon the passover.

Those who are able may trace the use made of that wonderful event in the historical books, and especially the very remarkable way in which, after the record of failure is closed, faith takes up the event in the Psalms in its application to Christ. Then in the prophets it becomes the pledge of hope and confidence in God for full redemption by power. Note especially Habakkuk iii., and the effect of the vision upon the soul.

Accordingly the subject of the Red Sea will stand, as announced, for July, and those who send in papers for June will be able to continue their study of this wonderful subject.

The following are the numbers and initials of those who have sent in their names since last issue:—

156. J. J. | 157. | 158. .

One correspondent, who asked a question about the six days of creation, gave no address to which we could reply.

B. S. ED.

## Queries.

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1. Please explain variations in the names used in baptism. In Matthew xxviii. 19 it is "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; in Acts ii. 38 it is "in the name of Jesus Christ"; in Acts viii. 16 and xix. 5 it is "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; and in Acts x. 48 it is "in the name of the Lord." W. H. F.

1. In Matthew xxviii. 19 Christ as risen is giving the commission to the apostles to "disciple all the nations," and baptism is "**unto** the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; it is the full revelation of God in Christ, ministered by the Holy Ghost, carried by the apostles, and believed on in the world. Nothing less than this was preached, nothing less received, and to nothing less were those who received it baptized.

In Acts ii. 38, and also in x. 48 (where many editions read "Jesus Christ" instead of "the Lord") it is Peter who, by the Lord's previous ordering, opens the door of grace to Jews first, and then to Gentiles. Here stress is laid upon the fact that it is Jesus Christ who is Lord. For the Jews, if Jesus was the Christ, then they had crucified their Messiah, and if Jesus the crucified Messiah was Lord then God had raised Him, and they were lost unless a door of grace could be found. **His name** is that door, and so it is the **character** of the baptism that is brought out. Not "**to** the name," but "**in** the name."

LXXX.

(In Acts ii. 38 many editions read "on-the-ground-of the name," making it still stronger.) The same ground held good for the Gentile, and was ministered by the same apostle, although in the latter case the gift of the Holy Ghost came **before** baptism.

In Acts viii. 16 and xix. 5 we have Christianity established. There is a place where Jesus is owned as Lord, and this is what marks off Christianity from the place where Satan's authority is outwardly owned. Hence baptism, where Christianity already exists, is "**to** the name of the Lord Jesus." The three main points are that the Word of God connects baptism with—

i. **A fresh revelation** of God—"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

ii. **A fresh ground** of God's dealings — Sovereign grace to Jew and Gentile alike (Acts ii. 38, x. 48).

iii. **A fresh administration**—The authority of an absent Christ as Lord maintained by the presence of the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 16, xix. 8).

S. H. II.

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In John xvii. our Lord is speaking anticipatively, as verse 11 will prove. Hence we believe that whereas all through His life He glorified His Father, yet verse 4 has special reference to His work on the cross. ED.

## **Earth Slumbering—Heaven Stirred.**

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**I**T is striking and very humbling to notice the contrast between earth and heaven at that moment, the most intensely interesting in the annals of time and in the counsels of eternity. It was night, and the world was slumbering when Christ, the Lord, was born.

Nevertheless, all unconsciously to themselves, the council chambers of the earth had been set in motion to accomplish the word of prophecy which had gone forth seven hundred years before (see Micah v. 2).

Mary had returned to Nazareth (Luke i. 56) from the hill country whither she had gone to visit her cousin Elisabeth just before the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah. Her family was poor in Israel, proved by the fact that when the time of her purification, according to the law of Moses, had come (Luke ii. 22) she avails herself of the gracious provision of the Lord for His people (see Lev. xii. 8). But her very poverty would naturally have kept her at Nazareth at such a time; hence all the world is set in movement to bring it about that Christ shall be born at Bethlehem. The Roman emperor makes a decree that all the world shall be enrolled. This evidences on the one hand the low estate of Israel as subject to the Gentile power; on the other hand, the faithfulness of

God to His own word and promise, for it obliges Joseph to go up from Galilee to Judea "unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David), to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child" (Luke iii. 4, 5). This is intensely interesting—the whole world set in motion politically to accomplish prophecy.

But though this is true, yet how sad to see the utter unconcern not only of Gentiles, but of Jews as well. Bethlehem slumbered when Christ, the Lord, was born. A few humble shepherds were the only ones who were brought into proximity to the mind of Heaven at this stupendous moment in the history of the universe. How humbling to the pride of man—pride, that Satanic characteristic so hateful to God (Ezek. xxviii.).

While earth slept, all heaven was astir—"suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God," &c. (Luke ii. 13, 14). That moment revealed more than five hundred years before to Daniel (Dan. ix. 25-27) had come, the Messiah was born—"unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord."

The angels return to heaven, which seemed so near, and the shepherds go to Bethlehem where lay the holy Babe cradled in the manger, the emblem of that rejection at the hands of men which marked His entrance into a world which



## EARTH SLUMBERING—HEAVEN STIRRED. 201

soon was to give Him but a cross. Yet all the counsels of God were centred in that Babe. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

Another evidence of the indifference of the world to the birth ~~of~~ Christ is found in the fact that even Simeon and Anna do not seem to have been aware of it for a whole month, notwithstanding the close proximity of Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and the daily intercommunication between the two cities. Expecting it they were, and, doubtless, they looked for it at about that very time. Simeon had received a special revelation as to it (Luke ii. 26), and the godly remnant at Jerusalem were all looking for it (ii. 38), most probably from their acquaintance with Daniel's seventy weeks' prophecy; but so little had the birth of the Saviour affected the people of Bethlehem, that the news was not carried to Jerusalem. Had Simeon known that the Lord's Christ was already born, the short journey would undoubtedly have been taken to Bethlehem where the child Jesus was. Led by the Spirit into the temple at the very moment that Mary presented the child Jesus after the custom of the law, Simeon's lips are opened in praise to God: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." The godly remnant in Jerusalem knew one another, and soon through the instrumentality of Anna were speaking often to one another OF HIM (ii. 38).

A. H. B.

## “Make us a King.”

I Samuel viii.

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**I**SRAEL, like many others, knew not when they were well off.

This is made evident by their desire for a king. Samuel, the prophet and man of prayer had been the link between the Lord and His people. But now “all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel, unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways : now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (I Sam. viii.). Cold ingratitude marks this speech. There is no expression of thankfulness for what Samuel had done, and he had done much, and prayed much, for them.

True he had become old, but he had grown old in service for them. It was also a fact that his sons had not turned out well, but it is plain that this complaint was but an excuse to reject the Lord and to become like other nations in possessing a king.

Samuel felt this, but found his solace and strength in prayer. “And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.” He knew where, and to whom to look :

“ Ah, whither could we flee for aid  
When tempted, desolate, dismayed ?

Or how the hosts of hell defeat,  
Had suffering saints no mercy-seat?”

Jehovah was not unmindful of all this either. He says to His servant, “Hearken unto the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” (ver. 7). This leaven of independency had been working ever since leaving Egypt, and Israel had more or less been upon the downward grade.

Idolatry allowed must end in rejection of the Lord, though Israel, maybe, would not own to having rejected Him. It would have been better for them to have admitted it; but they had gone too far for that, as Jeremiah sadly says, “I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle” (Jer. viii. 6). Not only is God sinned against, but there is no repentance, no saying, “What have I done?” though He always meets the repentant with forgiveness. “Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?” (Jer. viii. 22).

Samuel explains and reasons. He tells them that a king would take from them more than he would give. His expostulation is, however, of no avail. These people had made up their minds, saying, “Nay! but *we will* have a king

over us, that we may also be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles." Here observe that the Lord permits that which He does not appoint, nor indeed approve; and elsewhere we learn that He "gave them what they requested, but sent leanness into their souls" (Ps. cvi. 15).

God in His wisdom often allows people to have what they in their self-will desire, but to their own sorrow and chastening. To one who knows this, there is an awful significance in the words, "*Hearken unto their voices*, and make them a king." Self-will is blinding, and it is a most serious matter when God allows a people or an individual to have his own way. What becomes of Ephraim when He says, "Ephraim is joined to idols, *let him alone*;" also, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. xiv. 12).

The truth is, Israel wanted to be like other nations, they did not appreciate being "a peculiar people, a holy nation, a chosen generation." "Why should there be such a distinction?" says the devil. "Separation from evil brings reproach," and Christians sometimes like to avoid singularity. Where is the salt of the earth? where the light of the world? Too often the light is placed beneath the bushel (business) or beneath the couch (self-indulgence), and the salt loses its savour.

This desire on the part of Israel to be like

other nations, shows distance from Him, and no appreciation of their privileged position as His chosen people.

Had not God made Balaam prophesy, "The people shall  *dwell alone*, and shall not be reckoned  *among the nations*" ? (Num. xxiii. 9).

Jehovah too has said, "You  *only have I known* of all the families of the earth " (Amos iii. 2).

And well indeed might He say, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me."

Israel's power, dignity, and superiority were attached to their being  *unlike* the nations surrounding them. How often had the Lord appeared for their deliverance! had thundered upon their foes, and that too in answer to Samuel's prayer—he whom they were now treating so meanly. (See 1 Sam. vii.)

Their faith had waned—in fine, they had rejected the Lord !

W. R. C.



## "It is Written."



THE following passage will prove that the ground which our Lord took with the scribes, Pharisees, &c., was that they should have known what was revealed in the Scriptures. When quoting Exodus iii. 6,

“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,”

He first says,

“Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,” &c. (Matt. xxii, 32).

“Have ye not read?” he asks. Alas, might not the same be often said to us? When some difficulty or testing time comes, have we read and understood? Have we the light from God's Word which will guide us aright?

Our Lord quoted Hosea vi. 6,

“I will have mercy and not sacrifice,”

on two occasions (Matt. ix. 13 and Matt. xii. 7), and on both He told the Pharisees that they ought to have known the meaning of the words. They had the *letter* of Scripture, but they did not comprehend its meaning or application. This is a most practical and important consideration for us. For, while we would strongly maintain the value of the *very words* of Scripture, being inspired, and therefore a divine and unimpeachable foundation for faith, yet, on the other hand, we may have an intellectual acquaintance with the *letter*, and not understand the meaning or application. To have a true intelligence in Scripture we must be “taught of God” and instructed by the Holy Spirit, who is given to the believer in order that he may understand the things which are freely

given to him of God. "When thine eye is single," says our Lord, "thy whole body also is full of light." Christ, not self, must be our object. "If any man desires to do His (God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine;" God's will, not our own, must be the motive spring. Thus, when there is simplicity and a true desire to learn, God gives the wisdom and understanding needed, and the Scripture becomes daily more precious, for it ever reveals Christ to the soul.

Christ Himself is, in truth, the centre round which all circles, from the beginning of Genesis to the last chapter of the Old Testament; and, therefore, we read that He expounded, from these very Scriptures, "the things *concerning Himself*." Sometimes He was the subject of distinct prophetic testimony, which referred to Him and to no other; sometimes the communication from God through the inspired witnesses of old took the form of types and shadows, of which He was the antitype and substance. But not one jot or tittle of the law could fail, all must come to pass. Christ was Himself the filling up of the outline traced by the sacred writers of old. He says Himself, "I *came* . . . to fulfil." Some one has remarked that the word here translated "fulfil" signifies that "He came to make good the whole scope of the law and the prophets. . . . He came as the revealed completeness of God's mind, whatever the law and the prophets had pointed out."

Thus our blessed Lord, after the close of His ministry on earth, when risen from the dead, referred His disciples to the words He had spoken, that—

“All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me” (Luke xxiv. 44).

This was the threefold division of the Old Testament well known to the Jews—Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. All that was written concerning Him “*must be* fulfilled,” for thus “it is written.”

Mark, the Lord did not instruct these two disciples on the road to Emmaus simply from His own divine knowledge, apart from the written Word: on the contrary, He made use of the Scriptures, and taught them “from the Scriptures”; leading them over a wide range, beginning at Moses and *all* the prophets, He expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. What honour He placed on the Scriptures! Then, as we find a little later on, He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. The opened understanding, the divinely given intelligence, was just as necessary as the possession of the Scripture itself; and this *we* have, as already remarked, by the Holy Spirit, who came down on the day of Pentecost. Further, Christ said to them—



"Thus *it is written*, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

Here He places side by side the *prophetic testimony* pointing to His death, and what was suitable, as well as absolutely necessary for the remission of sins, for God's glory and the eternal blessing both of His Church and of Israel.

Turning again to the references made by our Lord to the Old Testament, we find that when quoting Exodus xxi. 17, He commences by saying, "For God commanded Moses saying," &c. (Matt. xv. 4), and when quoting Genesis ii. 24, He introduces the quotation with the words, "Have ye not read," &c. "God commanded," and "Have ye not read:" how emphatically this might be repeated in Christendom at the present day! Why all the false doctrine and confusion that exists? Is it not due to inattention to God's Word? Why the present confusion amongst the Lord's people? Is not this to be attributed, in a large measure, to a want of subjection, in heart and soul, to the teaching and guidance of Holy Scripture?

But the Bible is a God-given oracle, carrying His authority, perfectly adapted to every need, every circumstance, and every period of the Church's history. "Do ye not therefore err?" He says to the unbelieving Sadducees. And why did they err?—because they "*knew not the Scriptures*, neither the power of God." Herein was the fault, they knew not the Scriptures.

Man, when left to the petty reasonings of his own mind, gets into all kinds of folly: he falls into superstition on the one hand, or infidelity on the other. But both these extremes agree in shutting out God's Word. It has been Satan's object in all ages to cut out the Word of God; or, if he cannot do so, to render it null and void. Sometimes he accomplishes this by insinuating doubts, raising the question, "Is it even so, that God has said?"—in our own day this takes the form of "higher criticism." Sometimes he displaces the Scripture by tradition and the teachings and doctrines of men.

Our Lord Himself answered all such suggestions. He met Satan in person by the all-sufficient word, "It is written." He met the Sadducees, whom we may call the "higher critics" of that day, as He also met the Pharisees and scribes—these tradition-mongers of old—by the simple word "God said," "Have ye not read in the Scriptures?" "What is this then that is written?" &c. He used the written Word to silence every objection and to refute every form of error: and surely if He thus accredited the Scripture, this is enough for all who have a reverence for Him.

The Word of God is "living" and "abiding." It has ever an unchanged freshness and living power for the heart of the Christian. This must be so, for it reveals God in all His infiniteness, His love, His grace, His near and blessed

relationship as Father. It gives us, by inspiration, the life, the very words of Jesus Himself; who, as the living Word, tabernacled amongst men, full of grace and truth.

The "*Scripture cannot be broken*," says the Lord Jesus. Again, He says—

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 46, 47).

Here the Lord binds together the writings of Moses (the Scriptures) and His own words; and He ascribes an authority as great, if not greater, to the written Word than to the spoken Word. So it is said in another place—

"They believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John ii. 22).

Even when the dark shadows of the cross were falling on His path, He still used the written Word as that which had marked all out beforehand. In quoting Isaiah liii. 12, concerning Himself—"And He was reckoned among the transgressors"—the Lord introduces the quotation with the words, "This that is written must yet be accomplished in Me." Again, in referring to Zechariah xiii. 7, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," He commences by saying, "For it is written." For Him the Word was everything. It was given by God, it was inspired by the Holy Ghost, it was the guide and resource at all times; it was that of which no part could remain unfulfilled.

May God, by His Holy Spirit, deepen in all our souls the value of Holy Scripture, and daily increase our relish for it ! Not merely for certain favourite portions, but for *all Scripture*. We cannot afford to leave aside any portion without loss to the soul. And may He grant to every reader that Spirit-taught subjection of heart and soul which is the true way to possess intelligence in His mind as revealed to us in the inspired volume !

What would thousands of devoted men of old—the early Christians, the Reformers, and many others amongst the persecuted saints of God in by-gone days—have given to possess an open Bible, and the full liberty to read it, which is ours ? Let us see to it, then, that we do not lightly value our privileges, but let us seek grace and power from God to make a good use of what He has so freely given us.

There is one subject in particular, expressed in various ways it is true, but running through the whole of Scripture, more perhaps than we think—that is, the coming of the Lord. The study of Scripture, under the guidance of the Spirit, is sure to make Christ more precious to the soul, and His coming more prominent. It will then be a more bright and living reality before the heart, as well as a more powerful motive in the daily life of the believer, while waiting for the Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

F. G. B.

## The Septuagint.

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A QUESTION has been sent to us with regard to the respective merits of the Authorised Version and the Septuagint. Some, it would appear, are in favour of taking the Septuagint as the only reliable authority.

We deprecate everything that would tend to weaken in the mind the truth of the inspiration of the Scriptures, which seems to be the main effort of Satan to-day. The wish is father to the thought, for the Scripture addresses itself to man's conscience, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

But in spite of all that Jews, heathen, and apostate Christians have sought to do to upset the Bible, there it remains, and almost every day fresh discoveries are being made in the realms of science and archæology which go to establish its accuracy. There can be no serious doubt that our Authorised Version is more trustworthy as a translation than the Septuagint. Of course our readers are aware that the Septuagint was a translation into Greek from the Hebrew text made between two and three hundred years before Christ. It was a **translation**, and not the inspired original. Where the original is no man can say. In God's wisdom we have copies, but not the original. And yet it is an entire mistake to say that "the Hebrew

texts are untrustworthy." To the Jews had been committed the oracles of God, and they watched over this so carefully, and with such veneration, that serious errors in transcription were well-nigh impossible.

It is true that our Lord and the apostles quote from the Septuagint; **sometimes**, and by no means invariably. But this does not give divine sanction to the Septuagint as a whole. Paul quotes from a heathen poet (Titus i. 12). Does this sanction all that the poet wrote? In a magazine such as this we cannot enlarge upon the subject, nor enter into details of comparison of texts in the Hebrew and Septuagint; this has been done by others.\* We would just add that in many places the Septuagint translation is erroneous; in many places additions are made to the text, in others portions are left out. The quotation from the Septuagint in the New Testament cannot be a divine sanction of these mistakes.

We must remember that Christianity was introduced in countries where the Greek language was in common use, and where none but the learned could have understood the Hebrew. The apostles and evangelists in quoting from the Old Testament must either have translated direct from the Hebrew to the Greek, or used a translation already in existence. As a matter of fact

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\* "The Greek Septuagint, its use in the New Testament, examined." By the late C. E. Stuart, 1859.

they generally did the latter ; they were inspired of God to do so. This does not prove that the Septuagint was inspired, but that those particular texts quoted conveyed the mind of the Spirit for the object that He had in view.

The Septuagint was the work of pious men no doubt, but it was a human translation. The same is true of our Authorised Version. This does not touch the question of the inspiration of Scripture. Whilst the translations were the work of men, watched over and helped, no doubt, by God, the original was inspired not only in so far as its subject-matter was concerned, but the very **words** in which it was given (1 Cor. ii. 13). ED.

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## Bible Study.

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**I**T is interesting to compare the main circumstances of the Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the crossing of the Jordan.

1. At the passover **God was outside**, kept outside as a Judge by that **blood** which told of all His claims righteously met. The people **inside** fed in peace upon the lamb.

2. At the crossing of the Red Sea God was with the people in **the pillar of cloud**. The cloud divided the Israelites from the Egyptians ; to the Israelites it was a light of fire all the night, but to the Egyptians it was a cloud and darkness.

3. At the crossing of the Jordan the priests bearing **the ark** entered the river first, and the ark remained in the bed of the river all the time that the people were passing over.

First, in the Passover, comes the foundation of everything—the blood of the Lamb. That blood is the proof and witness that God has been glorified at the cross. It is the blood of a perfectly holy Victim who has borne God's judgment in all its fulness against sin. God is satisfied by that which His own love gave, and in righteousness passes over the sinner who is under the shelter of the blood of the Lamb.

Now God, instead of being against us, is **for us**. This is what comes out at the Red Sea. His character was made good in judgment against sin, now He will be glorified in Pharaoh and all his host, and redeem His people to Himself. The ground of all God's acting in power on behalf of His people is the blood of the Lamb. This has always to be remembered.

So we see **God's glory** in the Red Sea, and the consequences for the believer of the death of Christ.

Not only has God been glorified at the cross about sin, but Christ has borne death, the wages of sin in this world, and has completely broken the power of Satan by dying. Thus death, the penalty of sin by God's just government on earth, becomes through the death of Christ the very means of my deliverance from the whole



power of Satan and from the world as the place where he rules, for that is Egypt.

So everything that was against me, the rod, the cloud, the fire, the waters of death itself, all become the means of my deliverance because **God is for me.**

So it is not a question here of *my learning practically* what the death of Christ means for me, but God's way of setting forth what Christ's death and resurrection have actually done for me; the actual results of the death and resurrection of Christ for the believer. God's power has wrought "to usward who believe" in raising Christ from the dead and putting Him in glory. So I see that—

1. The blood of Christ has for ever settled every question of sin between my conscience and a holy God.

2. The death of Christ has broken Satan's power over me for ever, and revealed God acting in power for me.

3. The resurrection of Christ has brought me to God. Henceforth, although it is a wilderness journey, the whole character of it is that I have to do with **God** and no one else. The result is experience of myself as well as of God. The need, learnt through this bringing out of what I am, is met at Jordan, where there are no enemies pressing behind at all. Instead there is the ark, Christ in all the perfection of His person and work, seen entering into Jordan, and

remaining there while all the people pass over. There is no haste, all is calm and peaceful. Twelve stones, representing those twelve rebellious tribes who had been so fully proved in the wilderness, are left in the bed of Jordan **where the ark rested**, while twelve new stones which had never seen the light of day before are brought up from the same spot and placed on the farther side of Jordan. Then the ark too comes out of Jordan, and the waters roll back over the twelve stones left in the bed of the river.

So in Jordan, instead of deliverance from the world and the power of Satan, we have deliverance from what has been proved by forty years' trial in the wilderness to be hopelessly bad. Once more putting the broad results side by side we see that—

1. **In the passover** there is deliverance from the judgment of God against us as sinners, by the blood of the Lamb. But God is outside, and we are seen still in Egypt, although at peace, sheltered, feeding on the Lamb, and ready to go out.

2. **In the crossing of the Red Sea** there is deliverance by the death and resurrection of Christ from the world as the place of bondage and Satan's kingdom, from death as the power of Satan and the penalty of sin, and from the whole power of Satan himself. In whatever form Satan may present himself again to attack,

beguile, or accuse us, he can never again assert his power over us as his slaves. Then God is **for us**, His glory and His power are displayed in the resurrection of Christ, and we are **brought to God** in the wilderness. Christ personally is not so much seen in the Red Sea as the full results of His work for us.

3. **In the crossing of the Jordan** there is deliverance from "the old man," that "I" in whom we learn by experience that no good dwells. It is not a question of joy at deliverance from the terrible pressure of the enemies' power, but of steady passing over to the position which was always in God's mind for us, of appropriating for ourselves by faith the consequences of Christ's death and resurrection. We cease to be occupied with ourselves in the way of looking for improvement, and accept God's judgment of the old man in the death of Christ. This brings us into Canaan, the heavenly places, into our true position in Christ as those who have the right to be there, because Christ is there.

Thus in Jordan Christ personally is more brought before us. We see what death and resurrection mean for **Him**. He has died to sin once for all, and now lives to God. We, too, identified with Him by faith, learn that this is true of us **because it is true of Him**, and not because we experience it. In Gilgal, afterwards, there is the application of the death of Christ to the flesh, and this is a very real experience ; but

the moment it is a question of experience we have "bearing about the dying," or "putting to death of Jesus"; that is, it depends on what has already been learnt by faith.

The apostle says to the Ephesians, "But ye have not so **learned Christ**; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, **as the truth is in Jesus**; (namely) your having put off . . . the old man . . . and your having put on the new man," &c. (Eph. iv. 20-24, New Trans.). The truth of having put off the old man, and of having put on the new, and all the happy and blessed consequences, are thus **only learnt in Him. It is only truth in Him**, and was accomplished at the cross when He died, and by His death ended the trial of man in flesh. When He died, I died.

Thus the Red Sea and Jordan are both Christ's work at the cross, but seen in two different aspects which are not learnt at the same time, although the work was all done there, and **is never a matter of attainment**. Jordan does not mean progress or advance on the Red Sea, not for a moment. All is perfect when we are brought to God, but much has to go on in our own souls. What we learn in type at the Jordan is only another aspect of that blessed work which brought us to God according to His own glory and perfectly.

**Subject for August**—Exodus xv.—"The Song of Redemption." Younger students will find it interesting to

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trace out the connection of "singing" in the Old Testament, especially the various places where we have "a new song."

Older students can seek to trace out the thought of God brought out in this song, concerning **His dwelling with His people**, and **His kingdom**, both mentioned here for the first time.

B. S. ED.

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## The Knowledge of the Father.

(Read John xvii. 25 and 26.)

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OUR blessed Lord all through John's Gospel is bringing before His disciples the name of the Father, so as to put them in the same place with Himself before God and before the world.

In John xiv. we find our Lord speaking to the disciples of the Father's house and the place He was going to prepare there for them, so that they might be there where He would be; and then tells them where He was going and on what ground they too would be there in the knowledge of the Father, through the knowledge of Himself as the way, the truth, and the life—the Revealer of the Father.

This leads to Philip's question—"Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us;" and in reply He tells them—that in all that He did and said, in all His works, He was showing them the Father.

"Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

Our blessed Lord passed through this world ever telling out of the Father's love and goodness, and care in all the details and activities of His life of love before His disciples. He says—

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world;"

"I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me," and He prays for them as those whom the Father had given to Him—

"For they are Thine; . . . while I was in the world I kept them in Thy name; . . . I have given them Thy word; . . . I have declared unto them Thy name."

Walking as He did here in the unclouded joy of His Father's love and presence with Him, He told out in every action, in every word, in all His ways what His Father was to Him, and how He was here but to manifest Him (John vi. 57 and iv. 34): and the purpose of all this was "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them"; that they might know the Father and all His love as they had seen it manifested in the Son of His love.

The disciples saw and should have understood (as I believe they did later on when their understanding was opened by the Lord, and the Holy Ghost was come) that all this display was the result of the love wherewith He was loved by

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His Father (John xvii. 23), and that He had, as He says (John xvii. 12), kept them in the name of the Father, as those who were the Father's: He had acted towards them as in that *name*, which the Father had given Him to make known, so as to bring them into this conscious relationship as children before Him, and that they might know and enjoy His Fatherly love and care, and all that His heart is towards them—that “they might be one as we are one.” All the life of our blessed Lord here below was the answer back of the enjoyment of this love of the Father to Him (John xv. 9-11).

But all this is disclosed that the disciples may enter into it, that that love and the love with which Thou hast loved me may be in them—the same character of love—producing in them the full confiding response of love to Him, the Father—

“I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it.”

Not only was that name made known by our blessed Lord in His pathway through this world, but again, on that morning of resurrection, when He sent Mary of Magdala to announce to His disciples that—

“I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God” (John xx. 17),

linking them up in the same bundle of life with Himself, and putting them in such a place before

the Father that He could say, "I and the children which God hath given Me" (Heb. ii. 13).

Into what a place of relationship and favour has He not brought us, and set us in the Son of His love; for it is only through Him that this is our place, as our Lord says (John xiv. 20),

"At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."

What two effective causes to work in, and exercise our hearts and draw them forth in loving, living service—the Father's love in all its watchful, ministering care, and Christ's love in all its constraining power over us; as the apostle Paul puts it in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians—

"Who loved me and gave Himself for me,"  
and again—

"The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14).

I in them, "The power to tell forth that love of His—to be light bearers here, holding forth the word of life."

Why is it we know so little of the Father's love, which it was our Lord's intention we should know, and that it should be in us? Because we do not take our place as children; as simply entering into what He has said and then by the Spirit through the Word occupying our hearts, with and meditating upon, the pathway and acting of our blessed Lord, and thus learning the Father and His love.

C. H. C.



## Notes and Comments.

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LETTERS reaching us from all parts of the world tend to show that the times we are living in are of surpassing interest.

They are not, however, without their dangers, which in the long run, if the Lord delays His return, may not be without serious results.

We therefore earnestly invite our readers to watch and pray, and above all to cleave closely to the inspired Word of God. We cannot safely depart from the Word, however desirable the end to be accomplished.

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The revival movement in the *Revival in India.* Khasia Hills still continues, and meetings of a remarkable character are being held, similar to those of the Welsh Revival. Many backsliders have been restored; not a few of the heathen have professed faith in Christ; and the hearts of those labouring for long amidst many discouragements have been cheered and filled with praise. The power of Satan is a very real and terrible factor in connection with the work in heathen lands, as all readers of the life of Pastor Hsi are aware. It is the privilege of all Christians to pray that these remarkable movements may be given a right direction by a close adherence to the Word of God on the part of His people.

LXXXI.

***Clerical  
Intolerance.***

Here in England the spirit of persecution and intolerance is busily at work, as any one may have seen who walked down Paternoster Row a few weeks ago. The Bishop of London's bailiff was in possession of J. A. Kensit's book store, and the whole of the stock was carted away to the extent of £3,000 to pay the costs of the recent appeal in connection with the ordinations at St Paul's of some members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, an advanced Romanising society. Whatever may be thought of Kensit's methods, it is evident that they are considerably injurious to the Romeward party or such violent efforts would not need to be made to stamp it out.

Let every effort be put forth to spread the simple gospel and impart plain Bible teaching to old and young, for the days seem fast approaching when an organised ecclesiastical attack will be made upon all such work.

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***Open-air  
Preaching.***

A correspondent asks what we think of open-air work. Open-air preaching in the villages and towns is an admirable method of reaching the people. But no form of work needs greater wisdom and tact. It is easy to speak inside a hall compared to out of doors. Then, too, the poor open-air preacher is often left to go

forth alone with little sympathy from fellow-Christians. It is always well to get a band of several interested in this special work who will pray together about it, and go out together, each taking a little share. A few words spoken by several is more suitable than a long address by one. Get a good stand, not too close to noisy traffic, but where people congregate or are constantly passing.

Preach the Word — be instant in prayer — grieve not the Spirit, for He is the only power for service, and if we grieve Him we lose our power.

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***Morals of the Theatre.*** The sermon preached by the Bishop of London to “an overflowing congregation of actors and actresses” makes one realise the awful blindness that has taken possession of the leaders of Christendom. “‘I play to Jesus Christ,’ should be the motto taken by every member of the profession,” said the Bishop. “. . . I know many young actors and actresses who go to holy communion on Sunday morning\* before leaving for the journey to the next town. . . . Whenever a young man returns from a theatre cheered by hearty laughter and good healthy fun, then the kingdom of heaven is advanced in our midst.” Comment is needless. A correspondent remarks, “The theatre is Satan’s church, and the world’s place of worship.”

ED.

## How do you Know that the Bible is the Word of God?

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“THIS question has been put to me twice in my life, both times by Roman Catholics—one, Mr B—— of A——; the other, Monsignor Capel, at Pau.

“I leave the fact without comment—it speaks for itself. The answer given by the ‘Catechism of Christian doctrine, approved for the use of the faithful in all the dioceses of England and Wales,’ signed by Cardinal Wiseman and all the bishops, is as follows:—

“‘By the testimony and authority of the Catholic Church.’”

The writer of the above passed on the question to another, whose reply we append. The question lies at the root of the whole matter of the claims of the Church of Rome, and hence its importance at this time.

ED.

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“It is evident that faith must be founded on the testimony of God, otherwise it is not God who is believed. Further, it must be founded on His testimony alone. I must believe, because God Himself has spoken, or I do not believe God. ‘Whoso,’ says John the Baptist of the blessed Lord—‘Whoso has received His testimony, has set to his seal that God is true.’ So

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Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness—faith was in the testimony of God. Such then practically is faith. It is the soul's reception, by Divine power, of the testimony of God ; who is thus known by it, as He has revealed Himself, and in whose presence consequently it walks ; God having graciously revealed Himself as a Saviour, so that it is in peace in the presence of the Holy One, and in communion with Him.

He who does not admit the authority of God's inspired Word is an infidel. An R. C. tells me I cannot know it is the Bible or the Word of God without the authority of the Church. Now mark that. For if God has written a book, and addressed it to men in general, or to those called Christians, His doing so puts them under the responsibility of receiving and submitting to what He has so addressed. What God has so addressed to them obliges their conscience. If not, He has failed in the object He proposed.

He was not able to put those He addressed under the responsibility of receiving what He had said, if, as the R. C. says, the ordinary Christian cannot know that it is the Word of God, and is not able to receive it as such.

Of two things one is true—either he who says so denies it himself to be the revealed Word ; or he asserts that God's Word is not by itself binding on those to whom it is sent ; that God has failed in so writing it as to render it obligatory

on the conscience of the reader to receive it as such. Now either of these is infidelity and the common ground taken by infidels; yet this is the ground always taken by the R. C., and it is clearly infidel ground. For mark this, if the authority of the Church is requisite in order to a man's believing the Scripture and receiving it as God's Word, then God has not spoken so as to bind the conscience and make faith obligatory without some one adding to His authority so as to make it to be received.

What kind of Church it can be, which can give to God's Word an authority over the conscience, and oblige men to believe it, which that Word had not, though God spoke it, I leave a man who reverences God to consider.

It must be more competent, its authority more obligatory than that of God Himself, for it says such a book is God's Word and you must receive it as such; and yet, though it be God's Word, it could not have that authority over the conscience before.

I am not speaking of a greater competency to instruct—a greater knowledge of its meaning where all own it as divine—but of what gives it a divine authority over the soul. It has not this (though it be God's Word), according to the R. C., without receiving it from the testimony of the Church.

The Church—that is, certain men—have told me certain things, and I am bound to believe them;

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Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, &c., have told me certain things as inspired men, and I cannot tell whether I am to believe them or not! If so, then the apostles have not the same claim over my conscience and faith as the former men. It is in vain to tell me the former compose the Church, and that it has God's authority. Had not the inspired apostles God's authority? Did not what they say bind the conscience? It is not a question of interpreting. The question is, Has what they say authority over my conscience, so that I am bound to receive it as God's Word and believe it? Paul writes an epistle to the Church, say at Corinth. Were they bound to receive it as God's Word? If so, am I? If I am not, they were not; and note, **they were the Church**; that is the Church has to receive the word of the apostle, not to pronounce on it. Woe be to them if they did not. Woe be to me if I do not.

This, then, is the simple, yet solemn assertion of the believer in the truth and wisdom and glory of God—that if God gives a testimony of Himself man is bound to believe it. If not, he is guilty of despising the testimony of God; and the day of judgment will merely show that it is not God who has failed in giving the testimony so as to bind the conscience and oblige to faith, but that the man's sinful heart has deceived him.

Look at the creation. There is a testimony

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God has given of Himself. Man is guilty if he does not see God in it. There are many difficulties, many things he cannot explain ; but the testimony is sufficient to condemn those who do not believe in God the Creator.

When the blessed Lord appeared, many cavils might be and were raised by infidel hearts ; but He could say, 'If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.'

So, too, with reference to the testimony of God through the gospel in general—'He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.' Such an one was guilty—guilty of infidelity.

J. N. D."

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## The King Chosen.

(I SAM. ix.)

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**I**F the people have rejected God, He does not reject them (that is the last thing He will do). If they will not be guided by His eye, they must not be left without restraint, but be held in with bit and bridle (Ps. xxxii.), and meanwhile behind the scenes God is at work to provide a king.

How true it is that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23).

"Saul the son of Kish" little realised what



was before him during his journey in search of the lost asses! So let us learn to do the thing set before us, however small it may be, if only it be in the path of obedience, for God cannot honour us in a path of disobedience.

Saul is a man that men who judge according to appearance would choose for a leader. It is said of him that he was "a choice young man, and a goodly, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people." This and his modesty caused him to be the more esteemed and sought after.

To Samuel who anointed him, he with humility said, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore speakest thou so to me?"

Possibly there are but few young men in existence who, after the events which had taken place, would have acted with such circumspection as Saul did at this time, though assured that on him was "all the desire of Israel." Then when the Spirit of God came upon him he prophesied, and when his uncle inquired what the prophet had said he showed great wisdom, while there was an absence of the elation which might have been expected.

Upon the prophet Samuel calling the people together to the Lord in Mispah, that Saul

might be publicly presented to them, he is nowhere to be found. But He whose eye sees all answers, "Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff." Ah! these were the days when Saul was "little in his own eyes," as it is said later on when no longer true of him. However, at that time his self-effacement commends itself to the people, giving room, too, in a way for God to act as He did, for always hath He respect unto the humble.

Connected with the anointing of Saul as King of Israel, there are signs which are doubtless full of meaning. The intelligent believer will not think the mention of Rachel's tomb, of Mispah, and of Gilgal, without significance.

The people shout "God save the king"; those who refuse to own him are termed "sons of Belial," and Saul is blessed with the company of "a band of men whose heart the Lord hath touched."

W. R. C.



## Remarks on Infidelity.



MY DEAR ———, — J. N. D. once said in answer to all these infidel reasonings as to God, something like this: — "There are too many evidences of wisdom, power, and design for any reasonable being to suppose that things came into existence without a God; on the other hand,

there are too many evidences of misery and evil for any one to imagine that a God of power and love could have created things as they now are."

While it is perfectly true that the mind of fallen man is naturally infidel, yet, on the other hand, man's mind is so constituted that it cannot conceive of anything coming into existence without a cause.

Let anybody seriously consider, and he is driven to the conclusion that there *must be* a God. The first question that arises in the mind as we look at anything is, Who made that? Let it be a terrestrial globe, we say, Who made it? A man would be looked upon as a fool who would reply, Nobody made it. If we cannot conceive of that globe coming into existence without a maker, how much less this earth of which it is but an insignificant representation?

Yes, the mind of man cannot conceive of anything in existence that has not had a maker—such a thing would be unthinkable. There *must be* a cause for every effect. I ask, Who made that table? You reply, The carpenter. Then I ask, Who made the carpenter? Somebody must have made him; and so you get back to the first original cause, and that is God. Hence the first of Genesis opens, sublime in its grandeur and simplicity—"In the beginning God created." This commends itself to every man's reason; he knows there must be a God. Yet no uninspired

man would have written that first chapter of Genesis as it stands.

What gropings in the dark have we in the philosophy of the ancients, and the scientific hypotheses of moderns! What voluminous treatises on cosmogony! What changing theories as fresh light breaks in exposing the fallacy of earlier conclusions!

But God's Word never changes. Though not intended as a handbook of science, it nevertheless alludes to scientific subjects, and in a miraculous manner is **always right**. Take such a chapter as Genesis i., written between three and four thousand years ago, at a time when the science of geology was unknown, treating of a vast subject, viz., the creation, doing so in the briefest manner possible, and yet invariably correct—how could this be accounted for apart from inspiration?

I merely give this as one evidence of inspiration, not by any means the greatest, but still there it is.

Now I quite admit that honest reason must bring a person to believe that there is a God, *but* mere reason can teach us nothing whatever about that God. The same process of reasoning that leads me to the conclusion that there *must be* a God, also proves to me that I cannot understand Him, or know anything about Him unless He is pleased to give me a revelation. For I cannot conceive of anything that has not had a

cause, and yet who caused God? He was the great cause of all things, but had no cause Himself.

We have reached, then, two conclusions: First, there must be a God; and second, He must reveal Himself if I am to know anything about Him.

But the Bible is this revelation. Shakespeare does not pretend to be a revelation from God; it has no authority upon any man, nor is it a guide to conduct.

The Bible is the only book that gives me certain information as to God, as to the creation, as to how man comes to be in the state of sin and misery in which he is found to-day. It is the only book that makes known to me God's remedy for sin—a remedy which no man could ever have invented or dared to propose, but which nevertheless the whole moral being recognises as altogether worthy of God.

But what is man to say, "The only God I would accept is a God of love, and not a God of vengeance"?

Imagine a prisoner at the Old Bailey saying in open court, "The only judge I will accept," &c. &c. Such an one would very soon learn that government has authority and power. And is God, the source of all supreme power, to be dictated to by His creatures. It is absurd. "Power belongeth unto God" (Ps. lxii. 11).

"We know Him that hath said, Vengeance

belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord." And again: "The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 30, 31).

But the fact is that God is a God of love—He *is* love, and has so loved the world as to give His Son. And what has man done? Spat in His face and crucified Him, mocking Him as He died. Is this a small sin? But people to-day may say, We did not do that. Yet each one has taken sides either for Christ or against Him.

The proudest will must bow. It is no use to kick against the pricks.

No one need be lost in hell, for God has provided a Saviour for all. Only man *must* bow, repent, and believe the gospel. Saul of Tarsus had to yield and own that he was the chief of sinners, though outwardly his was a blameless life.

The only place we can adequately measure sin is at the cross of Christ. By comparing ourselves with one another we get very poor ideas of what sin is. The greatest crime that could be committed was the murder of the Son of God, and we must remember that we belong each one of us to a world that has cast God out of it when He came in grace and love.

All the human reasoning as to the inconsistency between a few years of sin and everlasting punishment is folly. The fact is, **men love sin and hate Christ more than they fear hell,**

Man's mind is a poor and finite thing. The moment we have to do with God we have to do with the Infinite. And so (1) the *enormity* of sin in God's sight, (2) the *infinite value* of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, (3) the *immortality* of the soul, (4) the *eternity* of glory for the redeemed, and (5) of punishment for the despisers of Christ's sacrifice and God's grace—these are all things which far exceed all power of man's mind to understand. "By *faith* we understand."

Mr S—— H—— told me the other day of a young friend of his belonging to a good Scotch family. He had been taught the Bible as a boy, but gave it up, as he saw it did not fit in with the world, and he wanted the world more than he wanted Christ. At a ball one night, his partner, a worldly and unconverted girl, said something about the Bible, adding, "Of course you read it." No, he did not. She seemed horrified, and made him promise he would read some of it that night. He laughingly agreed to do so. On returning from the ball, tired out, he was just about to jump into bed, when he remembered his promise. So, taking the Bible rather unwillingly into his hands, it dropped open at Hebrews xi. 1, "Now faith is the *substance*." "Substance," said he, "if I thought that, I should have it."

It was the Spirit of God awakening his soul. He was soon converted and out and out, and is now a missionary in China,

"The wind bloweth where it listeth." This, and not reasoning upon God and sin and eternity, is what we want more of.

The worst feature of the times is that professed ministers of the gospel are the ones who spread infidelity; and also novel-writers of the Marie Corelli stamp; and until the conscience is aroused in view of judgment to come and the holiness of God, men and women prefer novels to the Bible.

A. H. B.

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## Complete in Christ.

(COL. ii.)

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THE Lord can bring good to His people out of any evil. These Christians at Colosse were in danger of not "holding the Head," that is, of slipping away from the consciousness of being in Christ, through getting beguiled into subjection to ordinances. To meet this the apostle urges them back, showing them how the believer has everything in Christ, and nothing out of Christ.

In result we get much precious teaching as to the fulness of the Head for the body, as well as solemn warning against practical separation from our standing of union with the Head, through the allowance of religiousness in the flesh. Everything is based on union with Christ



risen and glorified. But then, if here, as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we get this great truth as a basis, the Colossians are addressed on somewhat lower ground than the Ephesians, who were standing fast in the faith of it, and could profit by teaching which unfolded to them the whole extent of the Church's privileges, inasmuch as they have to be got up to the point from which the Christian's thoughts and feelings should ever flow—his standing and privileges in Christ. The epistle to each is perfect in its place.\* The steadfastness of the one, and the failure of the other, have both been made to subserve the blessing of the Church in all ages.

The moment we look to ordinances, as it regards position before God, we are slipping away from Christ: something is brought in between us and the Head. God's thought of completeness is Christ: if, therefore, I have the thought of not having already all perfection, everything I need in Him, I am leaving Christ.

“Ye are (it is not said, ye shall be) complete in Him” (ver. 10).

If there is anything for me to obtain, there comes in at once the thought of some means of obtaining

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\* A great part of New Testament Scripture had, as the occasion for its being written, mischief done by Satan in the Church. The Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians are examples of this. Man gets humbled in it, but God overrules it for greater blessings.

it. If the body is united to the Head, or (which, in respect of the individual, is the same thing) if I am one with Christ, I have in Him all I need. I may have to be taught about it, and to seek grace to manifest it, but the moment I think I have to obtain what is in Christ, a subtle form of self-righteousness is at work—I **must do something**. No matter what shape this may assume, prayer, or works, or anything else, I am not “holding the Head.” One in possession of an estate may have to see about that estate, but were he to say, I must get possession of it, he would be all wrong. Christ is revealed to the humble soul. Intellectual attainment is not in question here, it is no matter of great learning or of philosophy.

“Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (1 Cor. i. 20).

“The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. ii. 12).

The most transcendent mind could never discover the ways of God; we may get effort, but never success in attaining to that which the simplest Christian knows—things “hidden from the wise and prudent,” but “revealed unto babes.” How painful the efforts of man in arriving at darkness! “What is truth?” asked Pilate, and crucified Christ. Christ is the truth, and the humble,

simple soul of a poor sinner, taught of God, has it perfectly ; he may not have realised it, but he has it all there, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" in the mystery. Christ is the righteous One, and we are made "the righteousness of God in Him." Do we need life? In Him is life, and He is "our life." As to all that is divine and eternal, there is nothing out of Christ.

At the commencement of the chapter, the apostle speaks of the great conflict he had had on behalf of these saints that their

"hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God [and of the Father, and of Christ]."

For, as we know, God is about to gather together all things in Christ (Eph. i. 8-10), and the Church is associated with Him who is the centre.

"And this, I say," he continues, "Lest any man should beguile you with enticing words [pretending to bring you a mass of wisdom and knowledge in all manner of things that are not Christ] ; for though I be absent in the body, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (vers. 4, 5).

It is all well to have Christ for Christianity, a man may come and say, but is there to be nothing else besides Christ? No, nothing. We cannot deal with the plants of this earth without dealing with that which belongs to Christ ; and if we deal with them without Christ,

we sin. We are exiled from Paradise, and have forfeited everything.

Forgetfulness of all that had taken place, thorough blinding of heart and hardening of conscience, marked the way of Cain, till at last, when driven out from the presence of the Lord, he sought to make that world, into which God had sent him forth a fugitive and a vagabond, as agreeable an abode as practicable apart from God—the very name of the place in which he dwelt, “the land of Nod,” means “the land of a vagabond.” And all that man is now doing to inherit the earth without Christ, he is doing according to Cain, settling himself down as a poor sinner in a world like this. The Christian acknowledges that he has forfeited everything; he cannot talk about “my rights”; in using anything for himself, he would be using it as a poor guilty rebel. He “trusts in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy”; he “eats his meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God”; whatever he does, “in word or in deed, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.” To him there is nothing outside Christ, all belongs to Christ, and it is, as a Christian, that he enjoys it. Let us not suppose that this “mystery of God” is some great knowledge. Where the soul has so owned itself a sinner, and everything to be in Christ, it has owned Christ as centre of all; it has

received Him for forgiveness, and it has all in Him.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (vers. 6, 7).

Everything I have I get from God's love.

“Beware lest any man spoil you”—*i.e.*, despoil or cheat you of your blessing—“through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

*(To be continued.)*

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## Meetings.

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MEETINGS are a great feature of the intercourse between men to-day. Only a few months since was witnessed a huge demonstration in Hyde Park against the Education Bill, while many other meetings have been held in that famous rendezvous for the furtherance of Temperance Reform, the discussion of fiscal and other problems, and for the airing of various grievances which seem to be part of men's life-programme. As to-day, so in past ages. Reference to God's Word will show us that modern methods are not far removed in character from those of early times, as for instance

in 1 Samuel xxii. 2 it is recorded that "every one that was in distress . . . and every one that was discontented gathered themselves unto him."

Reader, you can learn therein a lesson ; to say the least, the choice of leader in their case was a very wise one, for David was a man after God's own heart, and seeing that those who banded themselves with him had Jehovah as their supreme leader, theirs could have been the confident challenge : " If God be for us, who can be against us ? "

As some of the circumstances of to-day are in a state of upheaval, we feel constrained to ask if you are dissatisfied with your present lot ? Have you a craving after material or spiritual things which up to the present has not been satisfied ? What are you doing to ameliorate your condition, or imbibing to assuage your thirst ? Nowadays, one no sooner enters the domain of labour than efforts are made to obtain a recruit to trades unionism, whilst any expressed desire to learn of things eternal is immediately damped by the laughter of scorn and derision. Men are loudly shouting, Educate ! Organise !! Agitate !!! Friend, we beseech you not to be drawn into the vortex. Listen to Jesus by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist ; go to the Fountain Head for the solution of your difficulties. He is saying, " Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Surely that is a loving invitation eminently suit-

able to the distressed, the discontented—to the worker, and to him who wants a foundation.

But possibly the struggle after the things of this life has not yet been seriously forced upon you ; the necessity to go out into the world has not in your case arisen, yet in spite of this, you still have a yearning, a restlessness, which all your searchings cannot relieve. Some in this condition have been known to explore in many directions—spiritualistic, secular, and religious—but all to no purpose ; if such be your case, we would invite you to one of God's meetings. In Acts x. 27 the Spirit thus describes the scene : “ He (Peter) went in and found many that were come together.” They were assembled too for *one* purpose, and if in earnest, yours should be as definite. Cornelius declares (ver. 33), “ Now therefore are we all here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.”

Are you before God ? If so, follow Peter's address, which told how that “ Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” Jesus, whom wicked men slew and hanged on a tree, God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly ; and even after such cruel rejection, Jesus commanded that Peter should preach unto the people through His name : “ Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

This is God's remedy ; there is no need to study the sciences for rest. Enrol yourself in

the band of "whosoever," and peace will be yours :—

"Joy and peace it is to know Him,  
Think, oh think ! how much you owe Him."

Another gathering spoken of in Scripture is to be found in Acts xix. 32 : "Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused ; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." Truly a picture which faithfully portrays the world of to-day. The worship of mammon in this day of millionaires, the keen attention to sport evinced by a crowd of sixty thousand assembling to witness a leathern ball kicked about on the turf, and the discussions of sciences so-called, • are but part of the seething cauldron in which the devil would engulf men if he could.

There is yet one other assembly which we would ask you to consider, a meeting the like of which the universe has never seen—stupendous in its magnitude, awful, almost too awful to contemplate. The curtain is drawn aside (Rev. xx. 12), and John, by the Spirit, describes the scene :—

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Are you discontented or distressed ? Then



come to Jesus, who says, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money : come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?"

Would you hear words whereby you may be saved? Listen to Jesus, for of Him it was said even by men of the world, "Never man spake like this man."

Would you seek to find rest? Then turn from the world's turmoil to our God, who is not the author of confusion, but of peace. We implore you not any longer to run the risk of being found in that company described in the last great gathering, but rather now to take advantage of God's offer : "Let him that is athirst come ; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

H. J. F.

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## Bible Study.

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ALTHOUGH many have been prevented by holidays and other causes from sending in any results of study, yet we are glad to find that many continue to take an interest in the subjects suggested. Several questions have been raised in connection with the subject of the Red Sea. It is not an easy subject, and our space last

month was devoted more to an outline of the main character of the Passover, the Red Sea, and the Jordan, as compared with one another, than to an actual study of the subject of the Red Sea. However, we were glad to find that many had taken the trouble to trace out the passages in which the crossing of the Red Sea is mentioned.

One correspondent asks :

“ Is I Corinthians x. 6, 11, sufficient warrant for finding types in the Old Testament? J. N. D. translates ‘types’ by ‘ensamples’ in these verses.”

While these two scriptures do state plainly that Israel's history is a type of our own, and that the principles of God's grace and government do not change, yet we are shown by many other passages how the Spirit of God applies the events recorded in the Old Testament in a typical way. For instance, the Lord Himself applies the type of the brazen serpent in John iii. 15 ; Paul applies the justification of Abraham, the mercy-seat, and others in Romans as types of God's present ways of grace ; the Passover and unleavened bread in 1 Corinthians v. ; Hagar in Galatians iv., and so forth. The New Testament itself is the guide to the application of the types of the Old, and the only way to avoid fanciful interpretation is to carefully trace out the way in which the Lord Himself and the apostles by the Holy Ghost make use of the Old Testament.

A correspondent says :

“Colossians i. 13 and iii. 2 seem to take us over the Jordan.”

A careful reading of Colossians brings out clearly that the believer is there shown as one who has died with Christ, and therefore has done with the principles regulating the world's ways (rudiments of the world), and has risen with Christ, and therefore has his life and interests in heaven.

The believer is not seen in the heavenlies, but as a man dead and risen, living here on the earth with a new life that owes nothing to, and needs nothing from, the world with its philosophy and religion. “Christ is all and in all.”

So Colossians cannot exactly be said to bring us over Jordan as to the type.

We hope (D.V.) to publish the results of the study of the fifteenth of Exodus in next month's issue. Will any who wish to take up the subjects suggested from month to month kindly do so without waiting to send in name and address first and to receive a number? Numbers will not be given in future, and we shall be thankful for communications from any children of God on the subjects suggested.

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For September the subject will be (D.V.) **The Journey from the Red Sea to Sinai** (Exod. xvi.-xviii.). The difference between this part of the wilderness journey and the other parts of it should be sought out ; also the different

steps in it, and the meanings of them. May the Lord give us by the study of His Word "to increase in the knowledge of His will," with the blessed practical results accompanying that knowledge (Phil. i. 9-11, and Col. i. 9-11).

B.S. ED.



## "The Lord is at hand: be Careful for Nothing."

**T**HOUGH rough be our passage from tempest and storm,

As fierce billows wrestle, and thunderclouds form,  
Though darkness be blotting out sea, sky, and land,  
Be careful for *nothing*, "the Lord is at hand!"

Not now from the mountain's top views He His own,  
As high on the storm-wave their frail bark is thrown,  
But there from the glory, the darkness above,  
He ceaselessly watches His objects of love.

Our weakness and danger e'er call forth His aid;  
He bids us take courage, and not be afraid,  
For soon shall we touch on that bright golden shore  
Where wild waves and tempests can threaten no more.

The waves in their foaming but bear us along  
To heaven, the home of the ransomed one's song;  
The storm sweeps us on to its welcoming strand  
In safety through all, for "the Lord is at hand!"

"The Lord is at hand!" Soon His voice will be heard,  
When each lab'ring craft in response to His word  
Will battle no more with the tempest-swept tide,  
But anchor for ever in peace by His side.

Oh! what are the perils which hover around  
Compared with the rapture which there will be found?  
When safe in our haven His praises we sing,  
Whilst heaven with echoes of triumph will ring.

U. U.

## Notes and Comments.

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### ***Prayer for Russia.***

Christians in all parts of the world are agreeing together to make special supplication to God during this month on behalf of this distracted land. There is a danger in these days of getting into a routine in prayer, tabulating certain subjects for each day, but Acts xii. 5 clearly encourages us to agree to cry to God for a definite matter of special and urgent importance. We may well, both in public and private, make mention of Russia in our prayers. The Lord has many of His own in that dark and desperate country; they are exposed to hourly danger of death; the country, too, is opening for the gospel. We have much to pray for, and can mingle praise with prayer.

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### ***The Jews and Palestine.***

Owing to the awful persecutions and massacres of the Jews in Russia, large numbers of these are returning to Palestine. We are informed that from Odessa alone about ten thousand have gone back during this year.

“O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

“Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto

LXXXII.

Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously ; so will we render the calves of our lips" (Hosea xiv. 1, 2).

A return to Palestine is one thing, but a return unto the Lord is quite another. Scripture shows that first of all there will be a return in unbelief, and this it is which seems now to be taking place.

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***Unrest in  
Egypt.***

A correspondent suggests prayer for Christians in Egypt, owing to the increasing ferment amongst the Mohammedan population.

"I think the position of our dear brethren in Egypt is very serious ; so much so, that I think a notification in *Christian's Library* for prayer on their behalf would be well. But no doubt you have similar thoughts."

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***The Free Action  
of the Spirit.***

A correspondent inquires whether in pages 4 and 5 of our pamphlet entitled "The Free Action of the Spirit," we intend to teach the doctrine of independency or congregationalism.

By no means. No one who recognises the teaching of Scripture with reference to the Church of God as the one body could maintain such an attitude as that of independent gatherings. What we deprecate is the spirit of ecclesi-

asticism, which is in danger of interposing itself between the soul and Christ. Where saints have already been gathered and are breaking bread together simply as members of the body of Christ, it is right and proper and scriptural that this gracious work of God should be recognised by those who would seek to walk in a similar path. It would be independency to refuse so to do.

On the other hand, we have known, in more cases than one, of saints residing where no such gathering is found, but who nevertheless desire to break bread in accordance with their Lord's will that they should "do this" in remembrance of Him; who desire, moreover, to do it, not in independency, but in fellowship with those elsewhere similarly gathered. We have known such threatened with non-recognition unless they came and presented themselves at an already formed assembly. This is ecclesiasticism unknown in apostolic days, and still more out of place in days of ruin and confusion such as these. It hinders the blessed work of gathering the distracted saints of God, and makes the confusion still more confounded. What we sought to advocate in the afore-mentioned pamphlet was that readiness of mind to recognise what the Spirit of God may have done here and there in His own sovereign way. "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7).  
ED.

## Saul Confirmed in the Kingdom.

(1 SAM. xi.)

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**S**AUL is now King of Israel. The distress of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead reaches his ear. Nahash the Ammonite had encamped against this place, and the people were willing to yield submission to Nahash, but not unreasonably hesitated to go the length of having their right eyes put out, which indeed would have proved a great reproach to Israel. (The enemies of the Lord's people ever aim at depriving them of their eyesight, and this has a voice to us. See Judges xvi. 21 ; Jer. lii. 11 ; Rev. iii. 18.)

When Saul hears of the distress of the men of Jabesh at the terms imposed by Nahash, the Spirit of the Lord moves him, and taking a yoke of oxen, he hews them in pieces, sending messengers throughout the coasts of Israel, warning them that if they failed to follow the king and Samuel their cattle should be likewise cut in pieces. This threat had the desired effect. Saul is victorious, the Ammonites being completely conquered, so much so, that "two of them were not left together." The king acts prudently in not taking credit to himself, for when the people would have put to death those who had previously treated him contemptuously, he will not sanction it, saying, "To-day **the Lord** hath wrought salvation in Israel." And notice



## SAUL CONFIRMED IN THE KINGDOM. 257

that giving the Lord His place, in acting simply for His honour and the deliverance of His people, leads to rejoicing, for "all the people went to Gilgal, and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" (1 Sam. xi. 15).

The history of "Saul, the son of Kish," however, only proves that which is always true—that whenever man is set in a place of responsibility he always fails, sooner or later, more often sooner than later.

Two short years of Saul's reign provide the proof of this, and how he, like others, when weighed in the balances, is found wanting. "Tekel, Tekel," is written upon the wall over against the candlestick.

As a feather will show which way the wind is blowing, so sometimes a little sentence reveals where people are. This is seen in Saul's case. Jonathan (who, it appears to us, had more faith than his father, and acted upon that principle) had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and Saul takes the credit of it, blowing a trumpet and saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." For the Philistines to call God's people "Hebrews" was all well, for they did not understand the relationship existing between God and His people, yea, moreover, He Himself calls some of the people "Hebrews" when they fell away to the Philistines (1 Sam. xiv. 21), but for Saul to use

the expression, "Let the Hebrews hear," tells a tale. Depend upon it, Jonathan would not have used any such expression (see 1 Sam. xiv. 12). No, if Jonathan is a man of faith, his father is a man of sight, even if King of Israel. Jonathan in faith acts above mere forms. Saul acts in a casually formal way. He is checking here, restricting there, and by his merely religious interference constantly hindering the work of God. The flesh, even if religious, is quickly manifested, and no sooner is the kingdom established than it is practically taken away from Saul.

What does the flesh know of waiting upon God? The king should have waited till Samuel came to Gilgal, as he had been instructed to do by the prophet.

It tests us to **wait**. Saul was tested, and failed. Notice, too, the admission he makes in his excuse: "I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself, therefore, and offered a burnt offering." Exactly. Religious flesh may display considerable activity, but truthfully to say with the Psalmist, "My soul, wait thou **only** upon God," is unknown to it. Saul could not wait, and consequently loses the kingdom. Like the first man he is set aside, and another king is sought by the Lord, "a man after His own heart."

We will just notice the difference between the actions of Jonathan and Saul. The former is simple and untrammelled; taking his armour-

## SAUL CONFIRMED IN THE KINGDOM. 259

bearer, he fearlessly faces the Philistines, and by a narrow way ascends a difficult path.

The faith of Jonathan expresses itself thus: "It may be the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

Jonathan's action might appear to the Philistines presumptuous or audacious, and in the ease of false security, the men of the garrison say, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing." However, this boastfulness was but a sign to the man of faith that the Lord had delivered the enemy into his hands. When Jonathan and his armour-bearer appear, a panic ensues, and the Philistines begin to kill one another. The Hebrews (as they are called because of having taken their place with the enemy, but really never one with them—how could they be?) turned to be with the Israelites.

Jonathan, apparently, had not even heard of the curse which Saul had pronounced against those who should eat any food till the evening. To us it seems an absurd and uncalled-for restriction. Jonathan "had wrought with God," and Saul was hindering by his religious interference. There are joys given by God to His servants who work for and with Him, of which a carnal religion knows nothing.

Saul manifests mere formality. He builds an altar, his first to the Lord, proposing to go down by night and spoil the Philistines (taking credit

to himself for the quiet but effective work done by his more faithful son). The priest properly suggests the propriety of the mind of the Lord being known. His mind is not made known, evidently there is far too much unbelief in the way. He that asks of God should ask in faith, and waver not (James i. 5-7). There is great need for exercise of conscience, and for heart-searching when our prayers are not answered. We often ask, but ask amiss. While if iniquity is regarded **in our hearts**, the Lord **will not hear** us (Ps. lxvi. 18-20). In all that follows we see how heartless is the religious formalist, and the want of affection and proper feeling displayed by Saul, who would have stood by and seen his own son put to death, which indeed would have taken place but for the interference of the people.

W. R. C.

## The Unspeakable Gift.

**I**F we were to attempt to enumerate all the blessings which God has bestowed upon man, we should find it to be an impossible task. This also was the experience of the Psalmist:

“Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered” (Ps. xl. 5).

The prophet Jeremiah, too, adds his testimony:

“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning : great is Thy faithfulness ” (Lam. iii. 22, 23).

From the cradle to the grave, man is the recipient of boundless mercies. Every blessing we enjoy comes to us from God’s bountiful hand, as the apostle James says — “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” But great as are the gifts of God, there is one which stands out infinitely beyond them all. Well may it be spoken of as the “unspeakable gift.” No language can set it forth so sweetly as the Saviour’s own words :—

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ” (John iii. 16).

Age after age has this blessed story been told out, but still it is as fresh as ever. It is a perennial fountain, whose living waters have been flowing onwards through the long course of time, refreshing the weary sons of men. We often learn to know the value of things best by comparison, but no comparison can be made between this and other gifts. It stands pre-eminently alone.

Among the shining ranks of angels not one was found who could undertake the mighty work of man’s redemption—no power save that which

is divine could have recovered him from his lost estate. Hence we see the superlative value of God's "unspeakable gift."

In what glowing terms does the prophet Isaiah speak of this wondrous gift:—

"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. ix. 6).

A multitude of the heavenly host heralded His birth ; at His baptism a voice from heaven spake, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Again, at His transfiguration there was a manifestation of His glory, whilst at His death the heavens were shrouded in darkness. Then He was

"declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4).

And finally, when He ascended into heaven, He was hailed as the Mighty Conqueror, and took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Well may we sing

"Worthy of homage and of praise,  
Worthy by all to be adored ;  
Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays  
Thou, thou art worthy, Jesus Lord."

My dear reader, the above is but a feeble expression of the worthiness of Jesus. No mortal tongue can adequately set it forth on earth.

## THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

263

“He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: 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 that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. ii. 8-11).

My dear reader, this wondrous gift, this unspeakable gift is for a guilty world.

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John i. 11, 12).

Have you listened to the call of God? Do you own yourself guilty before Him? Then know upon the authority of the Word of God that this gift is for you. The great question of sin was divinely settled on the cross, all God's righteous claims were fully met there, so that now salvation is free to all who in humble penitence thankfully accept it.

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. vi. 23).

“Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,  
Thou Giver of all good,  
Not heaven itself a richer knows,  
Than the Redeemer's blood.

Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,  
From that same love we gain;  
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,  
The gift had been in vain.

We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,  
 To Thee our all we owe ;  
 The precious Saviour, and the power  
 That makes Him precious too."

J. H.

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### “Now I See.”

(JOHN ix.)

**O** LORD, to Thee my heart would raise a song,  
 Worship and praise to Thee, O Lord, belong,  
 For oh, what love, what grace to me Thou'st shown,  
 In making all the Father's glory known  
 To one who once in nature's darkness lay,  
 Blind, yea, thrice blind, without one cheering ray  
 Of love's blest light to chase my soul's deep gloom  
 (For yet more dark the inmates of the tomb),  
 Who in deep solitudes of darkness dwelt,  
 Yet by myself the darkness ne'er was felt  
 Until Thy voice, that voice which wakes the dead,  
 My conscience roused, and filled my soul with dread—  
 Dread of the yet unseen, the dark unknown,  
 The chilly grave, the awful judgment throne ;  
 Until again that still, small voice I heard,  
 And then no more I death or judgment feared.  
 Open mine eyes—the light of life supreme  
 Burst on my soul with its effulgent beam,  
 And Thou—Thyself the Son of God, disclosed,  
 The darkness all dispelled, my fears composed ;  
 My heart, lit up with the bright glory beam,  
 Nor yet repelled by its refulgent gleam,  
 Nay, in that light doth find its rest, its home,  
 Nor from this centre may it ever roam,  
 But so enthralled by its surpassing light,  
 With steady gaze behold the glorious sight,  
 Until transformed to Thy blest image, Lord,  
 Performed in me that precious, glorious word,



LESSONS OF THE FIELD OF BOAZ. 265

Conformèd to this image of His Son,  
And so in me the Father's will be done ;  
Yea, even now my spirit longs to know  
The mighty power of that transforming glow,  
That so my path be that which Thou hast trod,  
The path that leads to glory and to God.

W. E.



## Lessons of the Field of Boaz.

RUTH did not forget the first lesson learnt in the field of Boaz, "Go not to glean in another field," for we find in Ruth ii. 23—

"So she **kept fast** by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest ; and dwelt with her mother-in-law."

She had taken her right place as an outcast, she had owned she was not like one of the handmaids of Boaz, and she found this to be the way of true blessing. In the field of Boaz, during the months between barley and wheat harvest, many happy and blessed lessons were learnt.

She learnt to keep her eyes on the field that was being reaped. She learnt where to find refreshment for her thirst. She learnt the meal-times of the reapers, and found that Boaz was there to reach her a portion of parched corn more than enough to satisfy her own needs.

She learnt to glean patiently after the reapers, and to beat out patiently what she had gleaned.

Lastly, she learnt the name of Boaz, and the value of his word (verses 19, 21).

These are simple but blessed lessons that flow from the work of grace when the soul has met with Jesus.

Instead of the restless wandering and seeking for some object to satisfy, the heart finds a place where full satisfaction is known.

Instead of a thirst that cannot be quenched at the broken cisterns of the world, the heart finds abiding refreshment and joy in Christ enjoyed by the Holy Ghost, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

Then the joy is learnt of gathering with the children of God in God's way, according to the Word, to find that the Lord is always in the midst of His own, to feed His sheep, and fill the heart with His preciousness.

The value of patient study of the Word, and the need of beating out with diligence and prayer the portion gathered. These are real things that the young Christian learns in the field of Boaz, nor does the older Christian ever cease to need them.

But above and beyond all, and indeed through all, the great lesson is **the knowledge of the Person** of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and that **His word** must be **everything** to the soul.

**"The man's name is Boaz," "He said unto me."** These are the words that show what Ruth had learnt, though the ephah beaten out

bore witness to her labour, and the portion reserved bore witness to the gracious care of Boaz.

Hence the closing words of the second chapter, coming in after Naomi's witness to the character of Boaz, show that a further lesson has to be learnt, another aspect to be discovered of the grace that first met the outcast in the field of Boaz. "She dwelt with her mother-in-law"; but this would not do to close the story, it is not **rest**, so we are carried by the Spirit of God into another scene in the next chapter, and in **the threshing floor of Boaz** we find another lesson. But may the Lord give us each to learn in reality what **it** is to take our true place before Him, and to find out His sufficiency, His grace to meet our needs, Himself as the only object of our hearts.

S. H. H.

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## Complete in Christ.

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**T**HE tradition of men is never faith; whether it be truth or error, it is never faith; it is natural, and belongs to man. Faith is the reception of a divine testimony by the soul, so that God Himself is believed; and, further, it is founded on His testimony alone. Man may be the instrument of leading me into truth—a signpost shows me the way—but I cannot believe

man, that is, I cannot believe because man says it ; I believe God. We have believed Satan when we were enjoying God's blessings ; now God calls upon us to believe Himself. Herein is the real return of the soul to God. If I believe because "the Church" has put its authority or its sanction on that which I believe, I am just simply saying that I do not believe God.

The Bible is the word of God. God has given a testimony carrying His authority with it, which testimony I am bound to believe ; otherwise I despise God's testimony. To believe because man says it is true, or because "the Church" says it is true, is to make God a liar ; for when I had only what God said, I did not believe. It is well to look this distinctly and definitely in the face.

There are two things : (1) that which I believe—the fulness, riches, and perfection of Christ ; and (2) the ground on which I believe it. Now as to the latter, if a person were to tell me something, in order really to believe that person's testimony I must receive what he said, because he said it.

If I cannot believe God, why is it ? My eyes are holden, I cannot believe when God speaks. He has not failed in giving the testimony. The only righteousness in regard of this is to believe what God says, because He says it ; in other words, to believe God. To tell a person, "I will believe what you say when I get it sanctioned

by another," is to distrust him. To require "the Church's" testimony to accredit God's word is to disbelieve—to dishonour—God. In doing this, I am, as it respects moral position, infidel in regard to God.

But more: Christ is a heavenly Christ, He is not of this world. He was from heaven, and He has gone back to heaven. Hence all that is "after the rudiments of the world," beautifully suited though it be to human nature, and calculated to make man pious,\* is not "after Christ." That which has not been in heaven can only tell about heaven at second hand; all that is not simply Christ's revelation of Himself does not belong to heaven. He says, "No man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down

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\* The religion of the flesh is altogether as evil as its lusts; for after all, it is but one of them, though covered up with the veil of works and of holiness. It can be occupied much in good works, be without reproach as to conduct, have much of self-denial, much of piety, plenty of humility, be much occupied with the love of God, but while pretending, perhaps, to found it upon His love (which is infinite), it will be that love which is in the heart—our love to Him. One may ask, But if all these things can exist in a person and be nothing but the flesh, how can we discern the true circumcision? It rejoices in Christ Jesus. Nothing is easier than to judge these things, if Christ is our all. The fact that He is so makes us feel, without hesitancy, that all this is flesh, and yields its help to that which destroys Christianity from its foundations. The flesh is very pious when it acts the pious, for it always rejoices in itself.

from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven"—who else could? And therefore, no matter what man tells me, or what men have said about heaven—be it what the ancients have said or what "the Church" has said, I cannot believe it. That which is "after the rudiments of the world," is exactly opposed to heaven. The moment we get what is suited to the flesh, or makes a fair show in the flesh, it belongs to the world, it is not "after Christ."

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (ver. 9).

There is here something exceedingly blessed. It is not a Pilate's "What is truth?" nor yet a "seeking after God, if haply we might feel after Him, and find Him" (Paul's expression in regard to the heathen), but, as John speaks—

"That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (1 John i. 1).

That which is brought home to the senses of men. In place of working up the feelings to seek after something, God has come down to us, poor wretched creatures that we are. But God is there. He has come down to us in our sins and miseries bodily. I do not get a heap of stories, patched up nobody knows how, to act on my senses, and work on my imagination; it is the God who saves me. But He will be always God. There is not a trouble, there is not a distress, there is not a feeling in the heart

of man that is not met in Christ (and, after all, we do want something to fill the heart, we are men, and we want what man wants), not as a doctrine merely, but bodily. . We find in Him that which is to be found nowhere else. Let it be the most loving person possible, he has not loved me and died for me. But then I have not simply the love of a gracious person ; there is in Him "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." All flights of the imagination are checked, for I meet it in the Holy One, though I meet it in all my wants.

"And ye are complete in Him" (ver. 10).

Not only have I all I want, but I am all I need to be in Christ. I must appear before God, and have to say to God as a responsible being ; looked at as what I am in myself, I am lost ; in Christ, I am complete, as complete as Christ is, for I am complete in Him. There are these two sides ; if God is manifested to us, we must also be manifested before God. Blessed be God ! I have not anything to seek out of Christ as to completeness. And mark, it is not merely what there is, but what *we have* in Christ. Our hearts are so deceitful and treacherous, they do like to get in a little bit of their own. But let it be humility, or what else it may, there is no room found here for anything of self. In us, that is, in our flesh, dwells no good thing. There is neither righteousness nor holiness, nor humility out of Christ.

The Jews were looking to a variety of forms ; we have all in Christ. A person talks to me about getting "absolution from a priest." I do not want it ; I had it years ago in Christ. Another says, "You will receive the Holy Ghost in this or that particular way." I have received the Holy Ghost already. So, in regard to what the apostle speaks of here—

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (ver. 11).

We have done with sin, we are dead to it in Christ. He goes on to show how—

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead" (ver. 12).

In Christ we have done with the flesh ; it is not an effort to have done with it, we *are* dead. He does not say, "Die to the flesh" (neither does Scripture speak anywhere thus), nor yet "Die to sin." Such an expression is in itself a clear proof that he who uses it does not know the gospel simply. But we do find it said—

"Mortify your members which are upon the earth," &c. (chap. iii. 1-5).

This supposes us to be dead, and to have our life hid with Christ in God.

Elsewhere the apostle says—

"I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live . . . and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the



faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 19, 20).

All that Christ is, and all that Christ has done, is mine in Him. It is all ascribed by God to me, as though it had happened to myself. Has He been put to death? so have I. Is He risen again? so am I; therefore I am able to "mortify," &c. We cannot mix these two things (in our minds we often do, and hence confusion).\* Christ having died unto sin for me is my power for being dead practically to sin.

To make this clearer, if need be, see the argument of Romans vi.—

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? . . . In that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body," &c.

The moment the eye rests on Him, faith says, I am dead to sin. And mark how this is brought in. The faith is not in my being risen, but in Christ's having been raised. This distinction is far from unimportant. Many a sincere soul is

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\* The true mortification of the flesh is accomplished through grace, in the consciousness of grace. Without this, there is only the effort of a soul under law, and in that case, a bad conscience and no strength. This is what sincere monks attempted, but their efforts were not made in the power of grace, of Christ, and His strength. If there was sincerity, there was also the deepest spiritual misery.

continually turning in upon itself to know if it be risen, but this is not "the faith of the operation of God." Peter says—

"You, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. i. 21).

So Paul,

"To whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," &c.

My soul, knowing that all that is flesh is condemned, that there is no good thing in it, has given up seeking good from it; God has found plenty of evil, and I have done so too—He may have allowed me to struggle on in the hopeless endeavour to better it—but I look out of myself, and I see that God has raised Christ from the dead.

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 1-3).

My confidence is in this, that God has raised Christ from the dead, when He was there for me. But then, if this sets aside everything that I am in myself before God, it sets all aside for acceptance also. Am I saying, there is no good at all in my flesh, it must die, I cannot mend it? **It is dead**, the whole old thing **gone**; I am in heaven in Him, who has been raised from the dead, and now I have to "mortify," &c.

"And you who were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (ver. 13).

Here comes in another blessed truth. Instead of its being a question as to the flesh getting better, not only is it condemned already, but we have been quickened together with Christ. This is no mere doctrine: Christ is our life. I am in this new man before God. And what has become of all my sins? They are gone. He has quickened me out of Christ's grave, and they are left behind. Christ went down with my sins into the grave. They were put away on the cross—"He bore our sins in His own body on the tree," and the grave is the expression of this. When He rose again they were all gone. What can give me such a sense of the heinousness, the hatefulness of my sins, as seeing Christ bearing them! But they are gone.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (ver. 14).

*(To be concluded.)*

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## Bible Study.

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**I**T is encouraging to find that there are many who have not grown weary of the study commenced nine months ago. "In all labour there is profit," and no labour brings richer and more abiding fruit to the toiler than the patient, prayerful study of the Word of God.

Some, perhaps, have been led into other lines of study through the subjects suggested here, and so have ceased to contribute. Some, we know, have long been diligent

students of the Word, and for their help whenever it is available, we are always thankful. But if any have discontinued entirely the practice of systematic and regular searching of the Word, we pray earnestly that the Lord Himself will give them grace and purpose of heart to begin again and continue patiently this most important part of a Christian's exercise. It matters nothing whether the study suggested monthly here be followed, or whether any other line be taken up, so long as **Christ is the Object** in it all, and the desire be present for the full equipment of the man of God to-day.

We have to thank several for their kind and encouraging letters, and thank God for blessing the study of His Word to any.

Before starting on the subject for the month, it must be said that after some perplexity as to the most profitable use to make of the necessarily limited space so kindly given us by the Editor, we have decided to go through some portion of the Word consecutively; and, while leaving all free to follow up any line of study that may be suggested by the monthly portion, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to give the main line traced out.

**Exodus xv.**—Taking this wonderful song together with the twelfth of Exodus, we find two great principles plainly brought together for the first time—the **righteousness of God**, and the **salvation of God**—and along with these we find the two sides of redemption brought out—redemption **by blood**, and redemption **by power**.

In the sprinkling of the blood in Egypt, as we have already noticed, God's righteousness is brought out, sin is judged, and the blood witnesses that God has dealt with sin righteously.

Thus all hindrance is removed, and God is

able to reveal Himself in power on behalf of those whose need He has met by the blood.

His own character, having been made good by the sprinkled blood, now requires that He should act in power on behalf of those who have come under its shelter. Thus **righteousness and salvation** are brought together in the character of God, and the keynote of the song is struck in the second verse, "My strength and song is Jah, **He is become my salvation.**" God Himself, known to the soul by a new name of triumphant power, is rejoiced in. *God is known as He has revealed Himself on the ground of the shed blood.* This is far more than a sense of safety. God Himself fills the whole song, and the outcome of the salvation, so wonderfully learnt, is unfolded in this, the first song recorded in the Word of God. Only the redeemed can sing, God Himself is the source of their joy, and His goodness and glory the theme of the song. The broad lines opened out in this song will be found running through Scripture in a remarkable way, especially in the Psalms. Three great subjects stand out clearly for the first time here.

1. **A Redeemed People** (ver. 13).—God has now a people, He has a redemption-right over them, and His counsels in Christ concerning them, and His ways in grace and government with them, form the great subject of Scripture.

2. **The Dwelling-place of God** (ver. 17).—Having redeemed His people, God would dwell

among them, even though they were a rebellious people (Ps. lxxviii. 18).

The tracing out of the failure of man under responsibility in building this house for God, and the accomplishment of God's purpose of grace in Christ—the Son who builds the house and the way God's people are brought to rest in this blessed accomplishment of everything in Christ and by Christ (Ps. xc.) is one of the most deeply interesting and instructive lines of truth in the Word of God.

3. **The Kingdom** (ver. 18).—The redeemed people are not only the objects of God's grace, so that the goodness of His heart seeks its satisfaction in dwelling with them, they are also the objects of His government and sole authority. The remarkable refrain, "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever," repeated in Psalm cxlvi. 10, and Micah iv. 7, introduces the kingdom. This kingdom, its failure in the hands of man, and its final establishment in blessing in Christ, forms a second line running through both the Old and New Testaments.

While the subject of the Church as the body of Christ is only unfolded in the New Testament, the house and the kingdom run on from the Old to the New, and must be carefully traced out from their first unfolding in this song of salvation, right on through the story of God's ways with Israel, if their meaning in the New Testament is to be understood. But Christ is

the only key, in the Old and New Testaments, to a right understanding of these wonderful thoughts of God. Redemption, the dwelling-place of God, the kingdom, are accomplished in and by Him alone. He only can declare rightly the righteousness and salvation of Jehovah, and He is the One, who, in a path of lowly grace, learns by suffering what obedience is, and is able to declare the loving-kindness and faithfulness of Jehovah—faithfulness during the night of failure and ruin, loving-kindness in the morning of joy and established blessing (Ps. xcii. 2).

It may also be noticed that the keynote of the song in verse 2 is heard again twice:—

1. Psalm cxviii. 14.—In the day that Jehovah has made, the day of Christ's power, where His people are made willing, He strikes the keynote.

2. Isaiah xii. 2.—“**In that day thou shalt say.**” Here the redeemed people take up the refrain led by the Spirit.

As to the subject of the “New Song,” mentioned in last month's issue, we find it mentioned seven times in the Old Testament, and in each passage the principles of redemption underlie the meaning of the “New Song” mentioned.

The six passages in the Psalms clearly go in pairs:—

1. Ps. xxxiii. 3 and Ps. xl. 3.—Righteousness in Ps. xxxii.; **People Chosen** in Ps. xxxiii.; Messiah declares righteousness and salvation in Ps. xl., He becomes the centre of the people who wait on Jehovah.

2. Ps. xcvi. 1 and Ps. xcviii. 1. —*cf.* 1 Chron. xvi. 23-33. The ark is brought into **Jehovah's Dwelling-place.** Heb.

i. 6 shows that the subject of these psalms is the bringing of the first-begotten into the world, and the progress to His dwelling-place in Zion (Ps. xcix.). In xcvi. 1 Jehovah has made known openly His salvation and His righteousness, not as in Ps. xl., but in power.

3. Ps. cxliv. 9 and Ps. cxlix. 1.—In these psalms we have **the kingdom** established and celebrated (*cf.* Ps. cxlv. 11-13 and cxlvi. 10).

So in the six passages the three great principles of Exodus xv. seem to give the keynote, while Christ is seen in humiliation and glory as the accomplisher of all that concerns these thoughts of God.

These rough hints may serve as suggestions for further study. May the Lord guide our hearts in subjection to get Christ as the precious portion in all study.

**Subject for October : Lessons of Sinai,** Exodus xix.-xxxiv.—As already mentioned, students are free to follow out any line of study suggested by the reading of this portion, but the great thing is to seek to learn what is unfolded of God Himself at Sinai. B. S. ED.

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THAT same Spirit which reveals the Lord, who bore my sins, as having purged them, at the right hand of God, and who therefore gives me perfect assurance of their being put away, and the infiniteness of my acceptance in Him—that same Spirit, I say, judges the sin by virtue of its character, as seen in the light of that very glory ; and when this is not done, the Father, into whose hands the Son has committed those whom the Father has given Him to keep, as a Holy Father chastises, and corrects, and purges—as a husbandman the branches.—J. N. D.



## Complete in Christ.

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**G**OD is not setting men to obtain righteousness through that which quickens sin and works condemnation, that is, the law. Am I saying, I have not done this, or, I have not done that? Where there is the obligation of some act, and it is not fulfilled, there is condemnation. If I take up the Lord's Supper—that sweet, and blessed, and holy memorial\* of Christ's death, the joy of my heart—so as to put it between myself and Christ, I am not “holding the Head.” Christ has taken ordinances out of the way, it is the flesh that does them: let it be penance, it is the flesh that does it—but the flesh is dead; the same thing that dealt with sin put away ordinances; the man who had the sin and was to do the ordinances is dead, because Christ has died. I am alive in Christ, who is alive again from the dead: He is my life. I do not need to obtain a standing before God through any ordinance. Had I to perform the smallest act, as that through which I needed to get completeness before God, it would be a denial of the perfectness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But more, those “principalities and powers”

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\* The Passover was the memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt for Israel. The Supper is the memorial not only of our deliverance, but of the love of Him who has delivered us.

with whom we have to contend (Eph. vi. 12) have been "spoiled"; He has "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (ver. 15). Does Satan come and accuse me? It is all true, but my sins are gone. God has said He will remember them no more. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Why flee? Because of having already met Christ. Is it temptation through the agreeable things of the world, or the sorrows and trials of life, or the power of death? He has been "spoiled," his power is gone for faith (Heb ii. 14). Death, to the believer, is but a departing to be with Christ; all that it could be from Satan, or from the wrath of God, Christ has gone through for him; but He has gone through it, and He is now with God. Dead and risen with Christ, yet here in a dying body; if I put it off, "absent from the body," I shall be "present with the Lord."

And now, having shown us how we have everything in Christ, and not anything out of Him—completeness in the presence of God, and perfect deliverance from all that we are in ourselves, as also from all that is, or could be used, against us, he goes on to say—

"Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ" (vers. 16, 17).

What perfect liberty! We need see that we use it holily, but it is a perfect liberty.

A "holy-day" (it is well to call it so, as indicative of its meaning) was one God had made to be esteemed above another. This and other things, the meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances of Judaism, had their time and use. "The body is of Christ." In Him we have that which they were designed to typify. If I take them up now, I take up the shadow and not the substance. It is a mere shadow, but in setting it up again, I make it substantive, and deny Christ. This may be done through ignorance, still it ought to be treated as a thorough infirmity. The soul has not the knowledge of what it is in Christ. Whilst ignorance has to be borne with, the saint is beguiled of his reward.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind, and not holding the head" (ver. 18).

I may talk much about "saints and angels in heaven," their glories and the like, and call this humility, but it is not so ; it, in reality, is the very opposite, a being vainly puffed up in my fleshly mind.

What do I know about them? Have I been in heaven? Whilst thus intruding into things I have not seen, I am losing knowledge needed by all saints. The weakest believer is as much one with Christ as an apostle, and as complete in Him. It might seem more humble to say I am

this, that, or the other thing ; but can we do without Christ? Do you reply, I have not arrived at such a position? Then you are expecting to attain it? That is presumption. It is because we are lost, poor, and blind : we are miserable, naked, and have nothing in ourselves—we have this all in Christ.

The moment he has brought them there, left nothing between them and Christ. “Now,” he says (ver. 19), “there is that which flows down from the Head—that which has to be manifested in the members.” We have not a single grace, or thought of grace, until we are complete. We must be united to the Head. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we have to do it all to the glory of God.

In Christ I am not “living in the world,” I am “dead with Him to the rudiments of the world” (vers. 20-23). If this be so, I cannot be looking to ordinances to get the flesh bettered. But the tendency of our hearts is ever to this. And God has met that tendency. If the flesh must be laboured to see if any good could be got out of it, He has taken it up and proved that, after all that has been done for it that could be done, there was no good in it—God could get no good from it. Still, here is our danger ; religiousness in the flesh is that against which there is this special warning. And with all its specious appearance what does the apostle call it? “Will-worship.” It may have a great

character for humility, but it is the most positive and terrible pride before God. It does not look like this, it looks like mortifying\* the flesh and putting it down. The only thing that will deliver from it is the knowledge of our completeness, and a walking in the power of a dead and risen Christ.

Here there is rest for the heart (there will be conflict still, we have not in that sense rest yet), my eye turned from myself, I rest in Christ; there I can delight, and there God delights. I have a common feeling with God. All that I see in Christ is mine, all that perfection that my soul delights in, my perfection before God.

There are these two truths: all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ, and we are complete in Him. My need is met. God has come down to me in Christ. Am I troubled about my sins? Where shall I find any as gracious to me as Christ? I can tell to Him what I dare not to another. Brethren may be

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\* The tendency of bodily austerities, as shown by the apostle here, instead of being really to subdue and mortify the flesh, is to satisfy and exalt it. We are thus taught a most important truth—the difference between “the body” and “the flesh.” The very neglecting and afflicting of the former and not yielding it any honour or respect, may contribute to the inflation of the latter. The body may be sanctified to God—may be nourished and used for God—may glorify God; the flesh never. The body may be the servant of the Spirit, not so the flesh, for it is essentially opposed to God (Rom. viii. 7, 8).

kind and sympathising, but I can tell out my heart to Christ as to no one else. Well, it is to God, and He does not reproach me. All the infinitude of love is brought down to display itself in kindness to a poor sinner. I meet it by my wants, my sorrows, my failures, my sins. The poor woman of the city had not a mouth to tell it out. She was weeping at His feet about her sins, but she had found One who could so meet her in them as to give confidence to her heart, whilst conscience was awakened in the very deepest way. I never add to that fulness, all the majesty of God is there. On the other hand, conscience is awakened; God is a holy God, and how shall I appear before Him? The same Christ who is God towards man, is Man before God for us. He has come down to meet me in my sins, and He has gone up to be my righteousness before God.

If we desire to manifest Him—the life of Christ in daily walk and conduct, it must flow out from Him; and for this our members have to be mortified and Satan resisted.

“We are not our own, we are bought with a price; let us therefore glorify God with our bodies and spirits which are His.”

In doing anything for myself, I am a dishonest person; He bought me when I was the slave of Satan.

Christian, is your soul honouring God by resting thus in the completeness of Christ? or

are you seeking to honour self in ekeing out a righteousness—it matters not how—by doings or by feelings? A child ought to have right feelings for its parent; but if that child is making a merit of its feelings, it is destroying the whole thing. Looking for feelings to make out righteousness (while feelings are right) is just as bad as looking to works.

The Lord give us to know that we are complete in Christ, that we may have blessed and happy liberty, loving and serving Him in love, because He has given us all we need, loved us, and saved us, and made us complete.

J. N. D.

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## The Man of Sin.

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EVERY thoughtful person must admit that we are living in very serious times. The apostasy foretold in 2 Thessalonians ii. 3 would seem to be near at hand. We are now in the latter times of which the Spirit speaketh expressly (1 Tim. iv. 1).

Men are abandoning the Christian faith, and large numbers, rapidly increasing, are giving up all real belief in Christ.

What is to be the end of it all? Will Christianity survive when robbed of every Christian doctrine? If Christ, the true Christ of God, be abandoned, who will take His place?

When Jesus was on earth He said to the unbelieving Jews, "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). And why did they not receive Him? Was it from lack of evidence as to who He was? Not at all. The most ample testimony had been borne to Him, so that they were without excuse. Four unimpeachable witnesses declared that He was the Son of God, viz.—

John	-	-	-	verse 33
Christ's own works	-	-	-	" 36
The Father Himself	-	-	-	" 37
The Scriptures	-	-	-	" 39

And yet, notwithstanding all this accumulated evidence, Jesus has sorrowfully to declare, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (ver. 40).

Ah! here lay the secret of the whole matter. Man's will was astray from God, and, further, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another" (ver. 44)?

Two great principles therefore hinder faith and produce unbelief, and these are (1) a will at enmity against God, and (2) the fear of man, and the desire to stand well with his fellow. These principles are at work to-day distancing men from Christ.

But "If another shall come in his own name," says the Lord, "him ye will receive" (ver. 43). It is not here distinctly asserted that another will



come—other parts of Scripture show us this—but the sorrowful declaration of the Son of God here is, that if another should come and boastfully assert himself, such was the heart of man that he would receive him, while he rejected Him who was meek and lowly.

We propose examining some portions of God's Word that speak of the coming of this "other one"; but we would do so in the fear of the Lord, deeply convinced that we are bordering on the very times when all these things may take place.

As we have seen, false teachers had crept in amongst the young converts at Thessalonica, they had been troubled by the thought that "the day of the Lord was present" (ver. 2).\*

These evil men had tried to shake their faith by persuading them that the day of the Lord was actually come. This second epistle was written to correct this mistake, and not, as some suppose, to reprove them for waiting for the Lord as though He might come at any moment. They were right in waiting for His coming in the air, but wrong in thinking that the day of the Lord was already come. For before the day of the Lord shall come, three things must take place:—

First, the Rapture (ver. 1).

Secondly, the Apostasy (ver. 3).

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\* The proper rendering of this verse should be, "That ye be not soon shaken in mind . . . as that the day of the Lord is present (*not* 'at hand')."

Thirdly, the Revelation of the man of sin. At present we confine our attention to the last of these three.

A man is yet to appear upon this earth who is called by the Spirit of God—"that man of sin, the son of perdition." Awful words!

It is a solemn fact that all men are sinners. Both writer and reader are included in that well-known, though much-forgotten, statement of Scripture—"All have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23). But the distinguishing feature of this man will be that he is "the man of sin."

He will in every detail be the direct opposite of Christ. Hence he is called **the Antichrist**.

Christ was "the Holy One and the Just" (Acts ii. 27, iii. 14, vii. 52, xxii. 14, 1 Peter iii. 18). Antichrist will be "the man of sin." Just as holiness and righteousness characterised the One, so will sin, iniquity, and lawlessness characterise the other.

But Jesus was the meek and lowly one (Matt. xi. 29); He made Himself of no reputation; He humbled Himself (Phil. ii. 5-10). Antichrist will be the very opposite of all this, for he will assert himself in every shape and form; he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thess. ii. 4).

Jesus, though perfectly a Man, was, nevertheless, God. He was the eternal Son of the eternal God, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6).

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ut Antichrist, who will be a mere man—a man, o, of such an awful character as we have before ascribed—will take the place of God, “so that e, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing mself that he is God” (2 Thess. ii. 4).

The language of this verse has led many to imagine that the Antichrist is none other than e Pope of Rome, or, at any rate, the Papacy. his we do not for one moment believe. We ok with no favour on the Pope, nor do we mpathise with his blasphemous assumption of eing the infallible vicar of Christ. We regard s claim to “holiness,” in the light of the hard cts of history, to be more akin to sarcasm an to truth. That the Papacy is marked by rogance, assumption, and idolatry we fully lmit; but for all that there are weighty reasons hy we are not able to believe that the Antichrist id the Papacy are identical. These reasons e proceed to lay before the reader.

There is much in verse 4 that suggests to the ind the idolatrous assumption of the Pope. ithout doubt he assumes the place of God, id causes men to bow down before him as ough he were God. But does he sit in “the mple of God”? Can St Peter’s at Rome be lled “the temple of God”? Surely not.

The temple is yet to be rebuilt. It will be built, not at Rome, but at Jerusalem. The osque of Omar is not to stand for ever upon ount Moriah, nor will the Turk always hold

possession of Jerusalem. The prophetic Word most clearly affirms\* that the temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and that Israel and the Jews will once more be restored to their own land. But they will return in unbelief, and have yet to pass through the time of great tribulation, compared to which all their troubles of the past are as nothing.

No doubt our readers are aware that a movement of some importance has been taking place of late in reference to Palestine and the Jews. Large numbers of Jews have recently returned to their own land, but these for the most part hate Christ and Christianity with a bitter hatred. Such would readily fall under the deceptions of Antichrist, and it will be at Jerusalem, and over apostate Jews, that Antichrist will reign as king.

But, furthermore, whatever may be the errors of the Papacy, and they are neither few nor slight, the denial of the Father and the Son is not one of them; and yet this is a great distinguishing characteristic of the Antichrist. "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John ii. 22). The Antichrist, therefore, will form a connecting link between apostate Jews

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\* For a full discussion of this subject the reader is strongly recommended to procure a work entitled "Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects," by the late W. Trotter. Price 4s. 6d. To be had of James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

and apostate Christendom, for he will deny "that Jesus is the Christ" (Jewish infidelity), and he will deny the Father and the Son, or the special doctrine of Christianity (1 John ii. 22).

Reader, awful as it is to contemplate, these solemn times are near at hand! Infidelity is the order of the day; the denial of the Deity of the Son is widespread; the apostasy is rapidly rising to a head.

Another reason may yet be given why we cannot regard the Antichrist and the Papacy as identical. Few students of Scripture have failed to see in Babylon the Great of Revelation xvii. an awful description of a vast ecclesiastical system which has had no parallel in the past outside of the Church of Rome. What religious organisation has ever yet held such sway? Kings have bowed down at her footstool; empires have risen or fallen at her will. She has before now controlled the destinies of nations. She is aptly portrayed in the woman sitting upon the scarlet coloured beast. We cannot here enlarge upon the many points which go to identify Babylon the Great with Rome, only let the reader observe that she is destined to be judged; but by whom?

In Revelation xvii. 16 we read that "the ten horns which thou sawest **and** [not "upon"] the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." The tyranny of her ecclesiastical oppression will at last be such that

the Roman Empire (the beast), and the various European nations that will compose it in its last and resuscitated form, will rise in revolt and crush her completely. She who has burnt at the stake multitudes of the unresisting followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is described by the Spirit of God as "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (ver. 6), is destined herself to meet her well-earned doom at the hands of the beast and the ten kings ; whereas these latter are reserved to a later, though not far-distant, period for their complete defeat and overthrow at the hands of the Lamb, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings (ver. 14).

But when and how will the Antichrist meet his awful judgment? Let 2 Thessalonians ii. answer the question. The Lord shall consume him "with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming."

Let us for a moment recapitulate our reasons for not identifying the Antichrist with the Papacy.

1. The Antichrist will reign in "the temple of God" at Jerusalem, and not in Rome.

2. The Antichrist will deny that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, and also will deny the Father and the Son ; and neither of these is done by the Papacy.

3. The Antichrist will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's appearing when He comes

in judgment, whereas the Papacy is doomed to an earlier fate.

But if the Pope be not Antichrist, shall we look elsewhere to find him? We believe the search would be in vain. But is he not alive? To that we reply, He may be. We call the reader's most serious attention to this point.

*(To be continued.)*

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## Saul and Agag.

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I SAM. XV.

“**O**H that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways” (Ps. lxxx. 13), saith the Lord. It is He alone who knows the loss incurred by the disobedience of His people.

Saul has proved a failure. There is something pathetic in the way the Lord addresses Samuel: “It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments.”

There was nothing ambiguous in the commandment given to the king about his dealings with the Amalekites. He was to “utterly destroy” them and their possessions. Many years before Jehovah had said that the remembrance of Amalek was to be blotted out from under heaven (Deut. xxv.). Although Jehovah

is slow to execute judgment, enters this place with reluctant step, the time is now come. The cup is full. Saul, instead of doing as he is commanded, spares Agag, the Amalekite king, also spares "the best of the sheep and oxen, and of the fatlings and the lambs, and all that was good, and **would not utterly destroy** them." Disobedience pure and simple. It is in vain for him to assure Samuel that he has "performed the commandment of the Lord," the bleating of the sheep gives the lie to the statement. "And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (1 Sam. xv.).

If in another day the dumb ass spake and forbad the madness of the prophet, so at this time the poor sheep in their innocent bleating convict the disobedient king, who, instead of judging himself, makes excuses, and meanly blames the people. This is useless, for the Spirit of God says, "But **Saul and the people** spared Agag and the best of the sheep," &c. The falling king pleads that these latter had been spared to sacrifice unto the Lord. A lame excuse, and he is assured in solemn tones by the prophet, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of lambs."

Saul is here plainly shown to be a complete failure, utterly coming short in laying hold of the mind of the Lord. He has been weighed and found wanting. If previously he fails as to



prayer, he now completely fails as to the commandment of the Lord. The prophet reminds him of the time when he was "little in his own eyes," clearly indicating he was so no longer. His magnanimity, as he supposed, might be shown in the sparing of Agag. It, however, ought not to take us long to decide what grave results must follow magnanimity being shown to the devil. Moreover, the Lord wants His people's obedience more than their property.

With Saul there is no self-judgment. He is a great contrast to his successor. When David was in a strait he said, "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man" (1 Chron. xxi. 13). There is nothing in this about King David. Nothing! Let Saul have but the approval of the people, and little care has He for the approval of the Lord. This is only too plainly seen in the desire he expresses, "Honour **me** now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people."

Saul, however, is allowed to continue for some time, as many others are. But the link is broken, the die cast, the tree has fallen. Rejected of the Lord, and forsaken of Samuel, he gradually sinks lower and lower. It is possible that some readers may find difficulty in the saying of the Lord that it **had repented Him** that he had set up Saul to be king, especially when put beside the statement used elsewhere (ver. 29).

"The strength of Israel will not lie **nor repent**: for He is not a man that He should repent." Neither indeed does He, that is to say, He never repents of **His original purpose**. When man's responsibility is in question then the matter is different and easily understood.

God knows everything, but His knowledge does not clash with the responsibilities of men. For instance, God sends the prophet Jonah to Nineveh to cry to the people of that city, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The Ninevites repent, judgment is averted, and the Ninevites spared. Saul sparing Amalek means that they only live to plunder and destroy later on (see 1 Sam. xxx.). So much for the result of his magnanimity!

W. R. C.



## The Threshing-Floor of Boaz.



**I**N the second chapter of Ruth Boaz appears in the beautiful character of poor Elimelech's friend and kinsman, a man of great resources, and, moreover, as the one who meets the outcast and stranger with that grace and favour which she in faith had gone out to seek, taking her right place as an alien. We see him meeting her with words of peace, satisfying all her needs, and giving her a place among his handmaids.

## THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF BOAZ. 299

It is a beautiful picture of what God has shown Himself to be in Christ for the empty sinner.

But in it all we have little of Boaz personally, and Ruth still dwells with her mother-in-law. Hence, after Naomi has spoken of Boaz's **right of redemption**, a point of the greatest importance, and as yet unmentioned, we are brought into a fresh scene, the threshing-floor of Boaz, where Boaz appears in a new light.

It is one thing for the soul to receive grace—God's grace in Christ, and to rejoice in it, but it is another and a deeper thing to learn that Christ Himself is to have fruit of His work. This is seen in the first seven verses of the first chapter of Ephesians as contrasted with the second seven verses. In verses 1-7 of Ephesians i. we find a full and marvellous unfolding of the way in which the grace of God has wrought towards us in Christ; they set forth our place in Christ, its blessed source in the Father's purpose, and its sure foundation in the Son's person and work; but, not stopping there, the following passage (8-14) goes on to unfold the place that Christ has in God's purposes, how He is the Centre and Accomplisher of them, how all is to be headed up in Him, and then our place with Him appears in a new light, even the light of His own glorious place and inheritance.

Now this contrast is found in a measure in the two chapters of Ruth before us. Ruth ii. shows Ruth's need met by Boaz in the only place

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where he in his character as blesser could meet her in her character of an empty outcast having no hope but in the mercy of God.

In Ruth iii. Boaz is seen in his threshing-floor. He has been winnowing his barley. He rejoices in the fruit of his labour, and lies down at the end of the heap of corn which bears witness to his toil completed.

It is here that Ruth comes to seek rest, and all that passes between Boaz and Ruth is in the secret of the threshing-floor at night, not in the publicity of the open field at midday. It is to Boaz in his fresh character of one whose work is completed, and who rejoices in it, that Ruth comes. But not as she came before, a poor outcast beggar. She comes washed, anointed, clothed, as one blessed by his favour. Nor is her answer to his challenge, "Who art thou?" such as she gave when he first met her in the field. There she says, taking her true place, "I am not like one of thine handmaids"; now, in the confidence begotten by his grace, she says, "I am Ruth thy handmaid."

She now takes her stand upon the grace which he had shown to her, and her request brings out a fresh aspect of God's work in the soul, the sense of another need, which only he who had filled her heart with his favour could meet.

"She dwelt with her mother-in-law." What does that mean? It was a continual reminder of her widowed state, of her days of bitterness,

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of the old life in the fields of Moab. It was a continual reminder, too, of her position as an outcast amongst the people of Jehovah, the God under whose wings she had come to trust.

Could she find rest in such a position? And with the ever-increasing sense of her need, heightened by the contrast with the maidens of Boaz, in whose company her days were spent, where could she turn? who could meet such an extreme case? For as long as she was Ruth the Moabite she could never have a title to stand amongst the people of God. She was by birth an enemy, not merely a foreigner, but one of whom the law said, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord: even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever" (Deut. xxiii. 3). Hence it was no ordinary case. Boaz might be a man of immense wealth and goodness, but wealth and goodness could not meet her case.

Here comes in the force of Naomi's words to Ruth, "The man is near of kin to us, one of those **who have the right of redemption**" (Ruth ii. 20, New Trans.).

This is what Ruth lays hold of in faith, when she lies down at the feet of Boaz after he had finished his work. She wishes to be known no more as Ruth the Moabite—"Spread, therefore, thy skirt over thine handmaid; for **thou hast the right of redemption**" (chap. iii. 9, New

Trans.). This is the boldness of faith. It is the first part of the lesson of the threshing-floor. Ruth seeks a new character and position, not now to have her needs met as when she came an outcast to the field of Boaz, but to disappear behind Boaz, to have him for her title to enter among the people of God and into the assembly of God. But many important issues are raised by such boldness, nevertheless she has found one who is **able** to bring the matter to completion. He will take the whole matter up and settle every question for her. He knows better than she does all that is involved in her request. But his word to her is, "**Lie down until the morning.**" She has found the right place, she has found the right person, and she can lie down in peace trusting in his word.

What is involved in this right of redemption, and how it is made good are brought out in the last of the four scenes into which the Spirit of God brings us, even in the place of judgment, the gate of the city. But it is worthy of note that from the moment Boaz undertakes everything for her we hear no more of Ruth's progress and exercises of heart. Henceforth it is entirely a question of Boaz. It is the difference between having our needs met, and learning the end of ourselves before God, that is shadowed out in these two beautiful scenes in the field of Boaz and in the threshing-floor. But what comes out so beautifully is the way the desire is

produced in the soul, learning itself, through grace, that it should be, "**not** I, but **Christ**." It is one thing to have the doctrine of the end of the old man clear in our heads, but a very different thing to lay hold practically by faith of the result of Christ's work for our souls, to find no rest in anything short of the blessed experience of Galatians ii. 20—"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

S. H. H.

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## Bible Study.

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**T**HE journeyings of the children of Israel are very clearly divided into several stages, each having different lessons. The periods are :—

1. **From Egypt to Sinai**, a journey of about three months (Ex. xix. 1).—Here God brought out all that He was for the people on the ground of redemption, wholly apart from their behaviour. The passover, the Red Sea, Marah, Elim, manna, water from the rock, and victory by intercession, are the stages of this wonderful journey. Before the question is ever raised of what God's people ought to be for Him God unfolds fully what He is for them on the ground of redemp-

tion. This is ever His way. In Nehemiah ix. 15 and Psalm lxxviii. 15, 16, 23-25, this part of the journey is expressly contrasted with the behaviour of the people towards God, while Psalm cv. 39-41 gives only this part of the journey, the record of grace, and leaves the other parts to be recalled in the following Psalm, the record of sin. Isaiah xlviii. 21 also recalls the character of God seen in this part of the journey in remarkable contrast with the history of the people, Isaiah xlviii. 17, 18.

2. **The Stay at Sinai**, lasting almost a year (Num. x. 11).—Here the people take the ground of obedience as the condition of blessing, and break down at once. The intercession of Moses avails, God reveals His name and character, and the people are left to continue their journey on the ground of law and grace intermingled. In grace God goes with them, and the tabernacle is prepared, but He visits their transgression upon them. This stage and the references to it will be more fully traced out next month.

3. **The Journey from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea**, only occupying eleven days (Deut. i. 2, 19).—Its record is found in Numbers xi., xii., xiii. 1. The people were no better and no worse than before, but now on the ground of law their utter failure comes out, and judgment from God. First, there is lust and the manna despised ; then Moses is despised and Miriam shut out of the camp as a leper. What ministry or communica-



tion of the mind of God can there be when Christ is despised?

4. **The Stay at Kadesh-barnea**, occupying "many days" (Deut. i. 19, 46). Here the final breakdown occurs, "they despised the pleasant land"; man under the law cannot enter into the blessing, but grace is found in Joshua, whose name is the witness to God's resource of grace (Num. xiii. 16), and in Caleb; the little ones are to enter in. Grace, too, is found in the priestly intercession of Aaron as chosen by God (Num. xvi. 48, and xvii.).

5. **The Journey from Kadesh-barnea to the torrent Zered**, occupying thirty-eight years (Deut. ii. 14).—This was the time of Jehovah's "estrangement" (Num. xiv. 34), a solemn time; we find its echo in Psalm xc. 7-12. The reality of that government declared at Sinai must come out, even if grace be there; the ark was with them through it all, but Miriam and Aaron die.

6. **The Stay in the Plains of Moab**.—Here the righteousness of Jehovah is declared (Micah vi. 5). Grace does not frustrate government, but God will make good what He had revealed Himself to be at the beginning. The people are as bad as ever, but God does not change, and Satan's attempt to keep them out of the land by appealing to God's character had already been met by the blood in Egypt. God had seen the blood, and He could see no iniquity in Jacob.

This period is the time covered by Deuteronomy, the retracing by Moses of the whole history.

7. **Jordan** closes the wilderness history. The twelve rebellious tribes are left in the bed of Jordan in figure, and the twelve new ones come up, brought in by Joshua himself, to commence a fresh history in the land of promise.

These stages and their meaning, and the references to them in the Word of God, will be taken up in our study in order, but they are given briefly in outline to suggest further study, and to show the bearing of the different parts of the wilderness journey. The meanings of the stages of the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai are simple:—

1. **The Passover.**—Redemption by blood, righteousness, God's starting-point.

2. **The Red Sea**, redemption by power—salvation.

3. **Marah**, practical exercise of soul and the experience of death bring bitterness, but the cross reveals God's way of blessing, and makes the bitter sweet, then obedience is health to the soul.

4. **Elim**, a picture of full blessing resulting from redemption, when wilderness experiences are past (*cf.* Is. xi. and xii.).—The joy of salvation is known in peace under Christ's blessed government—really a millennial picture. These first four seem complete, and then follow the resources of grace for the wilderness, already

well known to all students, but God give us to learn their value practically, Christ humbled, the Spirit given, and the intercession of Christ on high while the Spirit leads here below to victory.

The following weighty words from a well-known servant of Christ have a message not to be neglected :—

“I say to you with all solemnity and all carefulness and earnestness, if you will find me man or woman or little child who neglects the study of the Word of God, I will show you arrest of spiritual development. Nothing can take its place. You can no more develop Christian character by service without study of the Word and prayer than you can make the thundering locomotive run along the track unless you feed its fires. You cannot live by work in the physical realm unless you have proper food and air. This—hear me now, and God help me to say it kindly, even though it be a word of criticism—has been the crying failure of the Christian Church. Christian men and women in this age of busy fussiness have been, and still are, attempting to develop Christian growth by the things they do, while they neglect the culture of the life in the study of, and answer of the will to the Word of God. Dear young Christian, let me put the thing simply. I beseech you to be a student of the Word.”

We can surely say from our hearts “Amen,” and the more so as we recall a voice—**the voice**

that has paramount authority over us—the voice of the blessed Lord and Master, saying, “**If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you**, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear **much** fruit, so shall ye be **My** disciples.”

The subject for November will be the detailed study of Exodus xxxiv. Will all students try to send in a complete list of all the passages in which Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7 is either quoted or referred to? It is the great ground text of the Old Testament.

B. S. ED.

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### What is the Difference between Propitiation and Substitution?

These are two great aspects of Christ's atoning work, illustrated by the two goats in Leviticus xvi.

1. **Propitiation** Godward—seen in the goat that was slain, whose blood was carried within the veil, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat. This is a type of the value of the blood of Christ in God's sight, as meeting all His just and holy claims, so that He can righteously receive and pardon any and every sinner who comes to Him pleading the value of Christ's precious blood.

2. **Substitution** manward—seen in the live goat, upon whose head the sins of the people were confessed, illustrating faith laying its hand on Christ, and thus appropriating to itself the value of His sacrifice.

## Notes and Comments.

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### *Preface to Luke's Gospel.*

There is nothing here inconsistent with the thought of inspiration in the full sense of the word (Luke i. 1-4). Infidels have asserted that for the record of matters of history and biography inspiration was not required. In a general sense this may be true, but inspiration ensures **perfect accuracy** in the record, which no unaided historian can afford. But it has been asserted that Luke admits his own non-inspiration. He does nothing of the kind. In these verses we find three sources of information whereby we may know those things that concern the life of our blessed Lord and Saviour.

First and foremost there were those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses"; these were the apostles, who narrated the facts of our Lord's life, death, resurrection, and ascension, not merely as intelligent men, but as "ministers of the Word." In other words, "**their oral testimony was inspired.**"

In the second place, there were those who undertook to set down in writing the things communicated to them by these inspired apostles—things which were received amongst the Christians with full certainty ("surely believed").

These many writers, while pious in their motives, were nevertheless not inspired writers.

The apostolic oral testimony of verse 2 had given to the many writers of verse 1, and to the whole Christian company of that time, a sure ground of belief. But for the good of the whole Church in all ages something further was needed, and this we have in the four inspired gospels.

Hence we have in the third place **the written testimony of Luke** (verses 3, 4), who *contrasts* himself with the writers of verse 1, and *compares* himself with the inspired apostles of verse 2. His motive was not only a pious one, but was divinely directed in its execution, so that believers in all ages might "**know the certainty of those things.**" Luke had what the writers of verse 1 had not, namely, "**perfect** understanding of **all** things from the very first." Luke, therefore, did not need what the others did before he could write; he did not require to be told the facts by the apostles; he himself had a perfect understanding of every detail from the very commencement. This was a claim to **absolute accuracy**, which could only be by divine inspiration.

ED.

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**The Lord's Table.** We would draw special attention to the letter on the Lord's table in our current number, filled as it is with most important principles of truth. Not infrequently have we heard the expression "table of devils" applied to the commemoration of the Lord's death by companies of

Christians not assembling along with the individual who thus speaks. To say nothing of the ignorance displayed, it would be impossible to find words strong enough to condemn this outrage upon Christ and His people.

But it is dangerous in these days of the Church's ruin to apply in an exclusive sense the expression "the Lord's table" to any section of Christians. 1 Corinthians x. is the only New Testament passage where the expression occurs, and here it is easy to see it is put in contrast to "the altar" in Israel, and "the table of demons" amongst the heathen. The present broken and divided state of the Church is not contemplated in the passage, and for a right understanding of it we must not drag in what is not there. For any company of saints in these days of confusion to claim the title of "the Lord's table" in an exclusive sense is a pretension which is unbecoming, and we feel persuaded displeasing to God.

The Lord's table is that which distinguishes the Church of God in contrast to the Jews and the Gentile or heathen (ver. 32). The Jew who ate of the sacrifice was identified with the altar on which the sacrifice was offered; the heathen who partook of that which was sacrificed to idols was identified with the demon represented by the idol. On the other hand, Christians partook of the Lord's table, and thus were identified with the Lord—"We (Christians) being many,

are one bread, one body ; for we (Christians) are all partakers of that one bread." As we have said, we must not introduce into the passage what is not there ; the confusion of Christendom is not contemplated in 1 Corinthians x., though the truth there taught helps to direct our path in the midst of the confusion. Sectarian celebrations of the Lord's Supper are in flat contradiction to the truth of verse 17, which teaches the oneness of the body of Christ. Care is needed in these days of laxity in doctrine, but wherever Christians sound in faith and pious in life are refused, those so acting, it seems to us, are sectarian in their principles. We should be glad to hear what others have to say on the subject.

ED.

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***Revival Records.*** A correspondent from Canada has sent us the following interesting recollections of what took place amongst the boys at the school he attended in 1859:—

"I have been much interested in reading the revival records of the great revival in 1859, which commenced in Ireland, and spread over a great part of England, Scotland, and Wales. I was a pupil at a private school of between thirty and forty boys situated on Rodborough Common, near Stroud, in that year, and the wave of blessing passed over us, in answer, no



doubt, to the prayers of our schoolmaster, Mr Jabez Horne, who was an earnest and devoted man of God, as much, or more interested in our spiritual than in our general knowledge.

“Most, if not all the boys were affected, and instead of passing our recreation hours in play as formerly, we met together in a shed where some wagons belonging to a farmer named Melsom were kept, and which was in a quiet spot not far from our playground, and within hearing of the school bell. We usually filled one or two wagons, and there we spent all our play hours in praise, reading, and prayer. I often think of that gracious work of the Lord, and how we were stirred up to seek Him with one accord, for the conversions were rapid, and to find our joy and delight in singing praises to Him, reading the Word, and offering up simple but earnest prayers from hearts His love had reached and won. Mr Horne wisely, I think, kept away from our meetings, though no doubt pleading for us in private prayer. We were not aware at the time that anything of the kind was going on elsewhere, as we knew little of what was taking place outside of us. On one occasion Melsom came with his horses to the shed to take away a wagon, but when he saw how we were occupied he quietly went away, saying his (Mr Horne's) lads were quite welcome to the use of his wagons.”

J. C. E.

## Letter on Reception at the Lord's Table.

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THE question is as to reception of saints to partake of the Table of our Lord with us, whether any can be admitted who are not formally and regularly with us? It is not whether we exclude persons unsound in faith, or ungodly in practice, nor whether we, deliberately walking with those who are unsound and ungodly, are not in the same guilt—not clear in the matter? The first is unquestioned; the last, brethren have insisted on—and I among them—at very painful cost to ourselves. There may be subtle pleas to get evil allowed, but we have always been firm, and God, I believe, has fully owned it.

The question is not there: but, Suppose a person, known to be godly and sound in faith, who has not left some ecclesiastical system, nay, thinks Scripture favours an ordained ministry, but is glad when the occasion occurs: suppose we alone are in the place, or he is not in connection with any other body in the place—staying with a brother or the like—is he to be excluded because he is of some system as to which his conscience is not enlightened, nay, which he may think more right? He is a godly member of the body, known such; is he to be shut out? If so, the degree of light is title to

## RECEPTION AT THE LORD'S TABLE. 315

communion, and the unity of the body is denied by the assembly which refuses him. The principle of meeting as members of Christ walking in godliness is given up, agreement with us is made the rule, and the assembly becomes a sect with its members like any other. They meet on their principles, Baptist or other, you on yours; and if they do not belong to you formally as such, you do not let them in. The principle of brethren's meeting is gone, and another sect is made, say with more light and that is all. . . . The path is not of God.

I have heard (and I partly believe it, for I have heard some rash and violent people say it elsewhere) that the various sectarian celebrations of the Supper are called "tables of devils." But this proves only the unbrokenness and ignorance of him who says it. The heathen altars are called tables of devils because, and expressly because, what they offered, they offered, according to Deuteronomy xxxii. 17, to devils and not to God. But to call Christian assemblies by profession (ignorant of ecclesiastical truth, and hence meeting wrongly) tables of devils is simply monstrous nonsense, and shows the bad state of him who so talks. No sober man, no honest man can deny that Scripture means something totally different. . . .

May the Lord guide you! Remember you are acting as representing the whole Church of God, and if you depart from a right path as to

the principle of meeting, you are separating yourselves from it to be a local sect on your own principles. In all that concerns faithfulness, God is my witness, I seek no looseness; but Satan is busy, seeking to lead us one side or the other—to destroy the largeness of the unity of the body, or to make it mean looseness in practice and doctrine. We must not fall into one in avoiding the other. Reception of all true saints is what gives its force to the exclusion of those walking loosely. If I exclude all who walk godlily as well, who do not follow with us, it loses its power, for those who are godly are shut out too.

There is no membership of brethren. Membership of *an* assembly is unknown in Scripture. It is members of Christ's body. If people must be all of you, it is practically membership of your body. The Lord keep you from it; it is simply dissenting ground.

J: N. D.

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## The Antichrist.

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THE march of events has of late been rapid. Some sixty years ago a long-lost truth was revived for the blessing of the Church of God. A movement then took place in the professing Church as far-reaching in its results, and, we believe, as distinctly of God, as was the great

work of the Reformation in the days of Luther. All unconsciously to themselves Christians to the ends of the earth are reaping the fruits and enjoying the benefits of that great revival of long-lost verities. We cannot now stop to point out in detail what these were. Suffice it to say that the precious gospel truths of assurance of salvation, present forgiveness of sins, complete acceptance in Christ, death and resurrection with Christ, the righteousness of God, the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down at Pentecost in witness of Christ's entrance as Man into the glory of God; these and many others were revived in power, and have since been preached far and wide to the deliverance and emancipation of untold multitudes of the poor captives of sin and Satan.

But at the same time the Lord gave His people clearer views on prophetic truth, and revived the long-lost hope of the Church, viz., the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would descend into the air to translate her to glory in the twinkling of an eye.

At first this all-important truth was looked upon as almost a fancy of a disordered mind. It was so different from all that had been held, or that was commonly taught on the subject. And though many received it, and confessed to the deep practical blessing that such a hope afforded, yet many more as absolutely refused even to look into it, still less to receive it.

But just of late a fresh interest has been taken in the subject. Multitudes who before rejected the truth are now having their eyes opened to see it, nay, more, their very hearts are flooded with a light to which hitherto they had been strangers. Conferences are being convened to consider it, and in many and varied ways God is pressing home upon the attention of His people the truth, most precious for the Church, but as awful for the world, that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

By various means God is so bringing it about that well-nigh all classes of society throughout all English-speaking countries are having their attention drawn to the matter. The same solemn theme has of late penetrated to Egypt, Japan, Greece, Turkey, and many parts of the East, to say nothing of countries nearer to our doors in Europe, and mighty have been the results both in the conversion of sinners and the rousing up of God's people.

And why all this stir? Without doubt the hand of God is in it. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and He is awakening attention to the fact for the simple reason, we believe, that "the time is near." Reader, the Lord is coming quickly. Are you ready? He will translate His own to glory in the twinkling of an eye. Will He take you, or leave you behind? Do not, we beseech of you, shirk this question. If you are not Christ's, come to Him at once, and

by simple faith, accept Him as your Saviour. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

Doubtless, and we notice it with deep sorrow and regret, many are preaching the coming of the Lord in a most unscriptural manner, and in conjunction with views and doctrines of the most heterodox nature. With the Baxterite movement and its fixing of dates, so plainly condemned by the Word of God (Matt. xxiv. 36, and elsewhere), we have no sympathy whatever; nor have we any with the Catholic Apostolic (so-called) and its unsound views as to the Person of our adorable Lord.\* But in spite of all this, the fact remains that a most remarkable and unprecedented awakening is taking place all around us on the subject of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Side by side with this, we notice the fact that the gospel message is going forth by all sorts of ways and means, some more questionable than another, but which nevertheless God in His sovereign mercy is using in the conversion of souls. We rejoice that Christ is preached, and that souls are saved, no matter what the instrumentality may be, and we see in this another evidence of the fact that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; for He

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\* The reader should procure and carefully read a pamphlet entitled "Irvingism: Its root-principle examined in the Light of Scripture." Price 2d., post free, 3d. James Carter.

who awakens the Bride to cry "Come!" to her returning Lord, does not forget the Christless sinner, but sends him a last and pressing invitation, for the time is short, "Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Reader, if you have hitherto listened to the gospel call unmoved, we beg of you, if you value your soul's eternal happiness, close at once with God's gracious offer of a present and eternal forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ.

Things have developed rapidly in the world of late. The disregard of God and His Word which recently have grown apace are producing direful fruit in the shape of anarchy and socialism. The bonds of society are being loosened to an alarming extent, and infidelity has taken hold of large masses of the people. This state of things has been going forward the last few years by leaps and bounds, and we believe that the recent controversy on the inspiration of Scripture that has shaken Christendom to its centre, has laid a broad and roomy foundation upon which the apostasy will rest (2 Thess. ii. 3).

The Antichrist will soon be revealed. But there is a power that for the moment withholds or restrains. Once that power is removed, there will be nothing to hinder, and "the mystery of lawlessness" (this is the proper rendering) which had already begun to work in the Apostle's



days will burst forth in all its terrible hideousness.

Again, we repeat, the Antichrist may be alive at this very moment, though he cannot be revealed until the hindering (or letting) power is removed. Once that power is taken away, that Wicked \* (or, Lawless One) will be revealed.

We learn, then, that the Antichrist, or Man of sin, cannot be revealed until "He who now letteth . . . be taken out of the way" (ver. 7). Who is this? Some have thought that this referred to the Roman Empire, but this cannot be, for the Beast, or revived Roman Empire, will meet its judgment at the same time as the Antichrist, and by the same means, namely, at the appearing of the Lord from heaven when He comes to execute judgment. (Read carefully 2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 11-21.) Clearly, then, if they both are judged together, the one cannot be removed before the other is revealed.

Others have had the still stranger thought that Satan is the one who hinders. But how could Satan hinder the progress of evil? Would he not rather promote it?

We are convinced that the one who lets † (or

\* In ver. 7 read, "the mystery of lawlessness," and in ver. 8, "that Lawless One."

† "Let" is an old English word, and means "to restrain, or hinder" (*cf.* Rom. i. 13).

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hinders) is none other than the Divine Person of God the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the Church, and who will be taken "out of the way" at the coming of the Lord, when the Church, His habitation, is "caught up." So long, therefore, as the Church is on earth, Antichrist cannot be revealed. He may at this very moment be alive, but he cannot be revealed before the "Rapture" has taken place.

Reader, consider for one moment what will be the state of these lands, so highly favoured with God's greatest privileges; the true Church removed, the Holy Ghost taken out of the way, belief in the Scriptures abandoned, all restraint thrown off, lawlessness fully developed. Out of this moral chaos a man will suddenly arise, a man of overpowering will, indomitable energy, and indued with satanic power (ver. 8). He will work wonders, perform miracles, and display a superhuman power\* (ver. 9). After the first staggering effects of the removal of the people of God from this earth have begun to subside, apostate Christendom, given over of God, will come under the influence of his deceptions.

Reader, this is awful to contemplate! Masses

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\* It is a solemn thing to observe that the same three words are here used for the signs performed by Antichrist, as for those that accompanied the ministry of the true Christ of God (see Acts ii. 22), only in the latter case wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the former by the working of Satan.

of people around us to-day are refusing the truth of the gospel; salvation is within their reach, but they reject it. We cannot close our eyes to the fact that multitudes even of those who throng the fashionable places of worship (so-called) have never come as lost and guilty sinners to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not love the truth of God that tells them plainly of their lost and ruined condition, nor do they love the truth that presents to them a present and eternal salvation, to be had only through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. In short, they love the world, and do not want Christ. Alas! alas! that it should be so. And because of this, "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved . . . for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned [or judged] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 10-12). The people around to-day who are despising the gospel may yet with their very eyes behold the Antichrist, witness his miraculous wonders, and fall under his iniquitous deceptions. Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (not annihilation, but perdition) will be their portion for eternity. Reader, we beseech you, do not trifle with these solemn declarations of the Word of God.

But Antichrist himself, what doom awaits him?  
"The Lord shall consume him with the Spirit

of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming" (ii. 8). That is to say, that when the Lord appears from heaven accompanied by all His glorified saints, and the angels of His power, "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 8); then will this "Man of sin," this "Son of perdition," the "Lawless One," be overthrown, and judged. But where will this take place?

*(To be continued.)*

## **Saul not a Pupil in God's School.**

I SAM. XXVIII.

**I**T is significant that King Saul, unlike most or all of those who have become eminent in the Lord's service, enters upon his kingdom without that training which these are called to pass through.

It is to the lack of this that we are inclined to trace the lack of control, the jealousy, the self-consciousness, and the disobedience Saul manifests. One thinks of Moses at "the backside of the desert," of Elijah at the brook Cherith, of John the Baptist in the wilderness, and with great reverence, be it added, the greater part of our blessed Lord's life was spent in private.

We may depend upon it that time spent in

## SAUL NOT A PUPIL IN GOD'S SCHOOL. 325

private with God is not wasted. Far from it. David, too, previous to slaying Goliath in the valley of Elah, had slain the lion and the bear in the wilderness, and we know how great and varied were the trials and experiences he passed through previous to his occupation of the throne.

A great loss now comes upon Israel. Samuel, that man of prayer, dies (chap. xxv. 1). The people possibly but little realise how great their loss was, and we are disposed to think that **we** do not know how much we owe to the prayers of others. But to speak of Saul. He had in his zeal "put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land." Yet now we find him, inconsistently enough, seeking a woman with a familiar spirit of whom he may make inquiries.

Think of the state of his heart at this time. Think of the serious position he stands in, for we read "that the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by vision, nor by prophets." He called, and receiving no answer, humiliation should have been produced, and heart-searching before the Lord. But no, he resorts to dealing with evil spirits.

Samuel appears to him by the permission of the Lord. The witch of Endor realises a power superior to her own, and fear seizes her. This woman did not expect to see Samuel.

As might have been expected under the circumstances, Saul receives no comfort from

Samuel, who asks the unhappy king why he consults him, seeing that the Lord had **departed from him**. How solemn all this part of Saul's history is!

Samuel refers to the king's flagrant disobedience. He is now but a derelict upon a restless and troubled sea, left miserably without light or guide. What a lesson! Darkness has come upon him, and we behold him stumbling upon the dark mountains, and while looking for light it is turned into the shadow of death, and made gross darkness (see Jer. xi. 16).

It is enough to make one weep; to behold such a spectacle, such a fall of one who had begun so well. That God is gracious is perfectly true, but He cannot be disobeyed with impunity or mocked, and whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

W. R. C.



## Gleanings from J. N. D.



THE body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Ghost. He acts on the soul and on the heart. It is His temple and, therefore, it is to be used accordingly. A great deal of mischief springs from not recognising this. The body is only in its right place when it is a vessel which I am just using for God.

The body of the Christian is a member of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15), because he is His, and I am this, and my body is part of Him. It is a temple of God because the Holy Ghost dwells there (1 Cor. vi. 19). My body is His temple; it is a simple statement, but the Holy Ghost is to guide me. "Ye are not your own." We have the two great leading principles of Christian condition: the body the temple; and, I am bought with a price; and for both reasons we must glorify God bodily, because it is purchased, and is possessed by the Holy Ghost dwelling in it. This gives a great distinctness to the reality of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost. Too often people talk about the Spirit working in their hearts with the thought only of a mere influence. Even that does produce a certain state of heart in such, it is true, but that my body is His temple gives reality and personality clearly and in power.

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Well, then, I am not to go and abuse the temple of God. This is peculiar to saints since redemption. "He that is joined to the Lord" is a real thing. If I am joined to the Lord I get all the fulness of Him that dwells in me, which shows the great difference between life and union. People say we are united by "faith," and again by "life," but neither is true; we are united *in* life, but the union is *by* the Holy Ghost. The Old Testament saints might be united in heart

and spirit, but this was no union as in the New Testament saints.

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Persons dwelling together is not a body. There could not be a body until Christ was at the right hand of God, and you must get the head before you get the body. You have a divine Son, the Son of God, quickening whom He will, but no *body* formed until the Holy Ghost is given. A person cannot be said to be a member of Christ until he be sealed.

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The saints were not the body of Christ till the day of Pentecost. There may be souls in that state now, quickened but not having received the gospel of their salvation, and so doubting and fearing. But we should not judge of souls because they say "I doubt" and "I do not know"; so many think it is presumption to say, "I am a child of God." They will tell you, "I am afraid to talk in that way. I have a humble hope things will be all right, and sometimes I feel happy." Now, suppose I hear at their prayers one saying "Father" when speaking to God, and another saying, "Be merciful to me a sinner," then I learn the difference.

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It is far happier for a soul to see clearly; but when a soul cries, "Abba, Father," he has just the same title to the Lord's Table as I have. The principle is very simple. The Lord's Supper



has the character of the one body, insomuch as "ye are partakers of that one loaf." If one calls God "Father" he is a member of Christ, being sealed with the Holy Ghost. We are not always judges, but the principle is simple. The man that is sealed with the Holy Ghost is a member of the body of Christ, and the Lord's Supper is a sign of the unity of the body. As a member of the body that is his place.

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Intelligence is not the test of communion. I do not bring any degree of knowledge of what I have, but I come because I am a member of Christ, and if another comes, of course it is the same thing. The consciousness that God is his Father is upon the testimony of the Holy Ghost. He must have faith in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely in His person; he receives the Holy Ghost and is, of course, member of the body of Christ.

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The great truth and essence of Christianity is that it takes the heart out of this world and fixes it on Christ, making us live by Christ and on Christ and to Christ. You can't live in this world without an object before you, and so Paul says, I live by the faith of the Son of God. How far can we say we live by the faith of the Son of God? Whatsoever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. That will be the faith of the Son of God.

J. N. D.

## Bible Study.

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**P**ERHAPS those who do the monthly study may prefer to retain for their own use the papers and notes which they have written. If so, we should be glad to have a card from those who do the study, just to keep in touch with one another, and so that we may know whether the study as carried on at present does really meet any need amongst the children of God, either young or old ; also, any questions can be sent in. Of course those who like to send in their papers are quite free to do so, and any who would like to have their papers returned with remarks or questions answered can have them returned if they will kindly mention it when writing.

**Exodus xix.-xxxiv.**—Most of our correspondents have gathered the main lessons of Sinai, but a good many have not noticed the whole of the events that took place during the eleven months of the stay at Sinai. The following is a brief outline, without commentary, of what actually took place : God's ways with His people, and their ways with Him, as they came out at Sinai. References are added to other passages in the Scriptures which throw light on the different points :—

**I. Moses goes up the First Time.**—God begins His proving of the people (Exod. xx. 20) by declaring what He had done for them, and promising that they should be His people on the condition of obedience. They accept, instead

of falling back, as Moses does in Exodus xxxiii. ("consider that this nation *is* Thy people"), upon God's grace (*cf.* Jer. vii. 22, 23).

2. **Moses goes up the Second Time**, and receives the message that the people and mountain are to be hallowed against Jehovah's coming down on the third day.

3. Jehovah descends in fire. Moses brings the people out of the camp to meet with God. **Moses goes up the Third Time** to be told that the people are not to come near. God speaks the ten words (Deut. v. 22). The people are afraid to draw near (Deut. v. 5), and desire not to hear the voice any more (Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 25; Heb. xii. 19).

4. **Moses goes up the Fourth Time** (Exod. xx. 21; Deut. v. 31), and receives the judgments and ordinances.—Exodus xxiv. 1, 2 shows the standing of the people on this ground; they are to worship *afar off*. But they undertake *a second time* to do all Jehovah's words (Exod. xxiv. 3). Then Moses writes the words of Jehovah in the book of covenant, the twelve pillars bear witness to the standing formally taken up by the people as a whole, and the blood bears witness to the solemn character of their act—it is sprinkled on the altar, the people, and (letting in the light of better things) on the book (Heb. ix. 19, 20). A *third time* they say, "All that Jehovah has said will we do and obey" (contrast Jer. xxxii. 23),

and then their representatives go up according to Exodus xxiv. 1, 2, and see God's feet. Moses saw God's ways, His "back-parts" (Exod. xxxiii. 23), but we see Him in Christ, face to face, without a veil (2 Cor. iii. 18). The sapphire may suggest righteousness displayed in government, declared by the heavens (Ps. l. 6). *Cf.* Isaiah liv. 11, also the description of the vision in Ezekiel i. and x.

But there was no change of nature in them. Moses, when with God, neither ate nor drank, but they remain earthly, they eat and drink, just as they do before their calf.

**5. Moses goes up the Fifth Time** to receive the pattern of heavenly things, and remains forty days and nights. God intends to dwell among His people in a sanctuary built of their free gifts (*cf.* Ps. lxviii. 18). Then he receives the two tables, God's work and God's writing, and is sent down because *his* people have transgressed. He breaks the tables, and the people eat of the fruit of their own doings (Exod. xxxii. 20; Prov. i. 31; Jer. xxxii. 19).

The principle of separation, and judgment of evil at all cost, comes in, shown in the action of the tribe of Levi. God's estimate of this is seen in Deut. xxxiii. 9.

**6. Moses goes up the Sixth Time** to intercede (forty days and nights). Their position is lost, their life is forfeited, they stand in the

position of Reuben in Deut. xxxiii. 6, condemned to die, but reprieved on intercession (Deut. ix. 19, x. 10).

Moses desires to do more, to make atonement, but this could not be. God declares that while accepting mediation for the people as a whole (Ps. cvi. 23), He will exercise judgment according to the sin of individuals.

The tent is pitched outside the camp, and there the fullest intimacy of Jehovah with Moses is seen. Every one that sought Jehovah went out of the camp.

**7. Moses goes up the Seventh Time** (forty days and nights). — God declares His name Himself, and His character in grace and government, which was henceforth to be the resource of faith, and the basis of all God's ways with His people. This will be traced out in more detail next month (D.V.).

The law is put into the ark prepared by Moses, (Deut. x. 1-5). Henceforth law and grace can be traced in the history of Israel, mingled in a wonderful way.

**8. The Tabernacle is then built** and hallowed, and God dwells in it.

**9. The Whole of the Book of Leviticus** concerning the order of approach to God is then given.

**10. Then comes the Numbering of the**

**People**, setting them in individual responsibility before God, and the order of the camp as the place where God has His dwelling. This completes the remarkable unfolding of God's ways at Sinai, showing His resources, not against external difficulties as in the first stage, but in face of the complete breakdown of man as an object of blessing. How beautiful in it all to see that where all is failure on man's side, the Spirit of God, though of need recording the failure for our admonition, dwells with far greater fulness on the thoughts of God in Christ, in all the precious types of the tabernacle and offerings. May the Lord lead us into the instruction furnished by these things.

*For December* students are asked to trace out *the contrasts* brought out in Scripture between **Sinai and Zion**. As we have not space for questions this time, we will endeavour to answer those which have been sent in by next issue. Some, however, are not suitable for answering in this way, but will be answered by letter as soon as possible.

B. S. ED.

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## “ Lovest Thou Me ? ”

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**D**O I love Thee Who for me died ?  
 Ah ! Saviour at Thy piercé side  
 My heart shall answer Thee :  
 As searched by Thine all-seeing eye,  
 Its inmost thoughts there open lie  
 In nude simplicity.

"LOVEST THOU ME?"

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Thou knowest all things, and my love  
For Thee, blest Lord, all lords above,  
    Though feeble, yet is true :  
To love Thee, Lord, how can I fail ?  
My hope, my joy in this dark vale,  
    So sombre with death's hue.

Thine agony my peace secured,  
God's wrath for me Thou hast endured,  
    My sins were laid on Thee :  
And yet my wayward heart has quailed,  
Distrust o'er faith almost prevailed  
    When trouble tested me.

My failure, Lord, has been confessed  
When pillowed on Thy loving breast,  
    Drawn thither by Thy voice :  
Not to rebuke, ah ! no, my Lord,  
Restoring grace Thou didst afford,  
    Which made my soul rejoice.

Yet changeless is Thy love for me :  
An ocean boundless, full, and free,  
    Whose tide no ebb can know :  
It passeth knowledge, yet its power  
Is that which cheers each fleeting hour  
    Whilst wait I here below.

These hours of hope speed on their way,  
Each nearer brings that longed for day  
    When I shall dwell above !  
Till then, my Lord, each thought subdue  
Which veils Thy changeless love from view,  
    That I may dwell in love !

U. U.

## Four Characteristic Features of a Christian.

**D**EAR Brother,—I have been interested just lately by what is written in Eph. iv. 30, v. 1-3, and send you a few thoughts on it.

A Christian in apostolic days was **sealed by the Holy Spirit of God**, and he knew it.

He was **forgiven of God**, and he was conscious of it.

He **shared in the love of Christ**, and was sensible of it.

He was **a saint of God**, and was reminded of it.

Very great were these favours, and for the most part very wonderful; yet each of them could furnish ground on which to base most practical exhortations for every-day life.

**Sealed** by the Holy Spirit of God, the Christian was not to grieve Him.

**Forgiven** of God in Christ, they were to forgive one another.

**Loved** by Christ, they were to walk in love.

**As saints**, they were to refrain even from the naming among themselves of those unclean ways by which men are so often defiled.

Their being thus exhorted showed into what, unless watchful, they might fall. The terms, however, in which they were addressed, proved that they never could be lost. For God had forgiven them, and they were sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption.

*(From B. W. & R.)*