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The Christian's Library.



Notes and Comments.



“One cannot but be thankful to the Lord that there is such a *Mission to Poor Children* work (*Finsbury Park Mission*) as this going on in this district, and especially to the poor children, which in turn reaches the hearts of the parents. Only last Lord's Day afternoon, in their open-air work in Finsbury Park, we had an evidence of the miracles of God's grace, when father and mother with their five children before them gave glory to God by their testimony of the wonderful work that had been wrought in their hearts and in their home.

“Only a year or two ago that home was a drunkard's, one of perpetual quarrelling and fighting, children neglected and starving, until through the mercy of God, the children were led to the Mission, and by this means God brought the parents there, and thus by His Word in the power of the Holy Ghost they were led to the

Lord Jesus Christ, resulting in a marvellous change, for now all were singing and praising God. It was indeed touching when one of the little ones, barely six, in her little way, thanked God for what He had done for her, in giving her now a loving father and mother." J. A.

A well-known Christian man

Sunday in writes:—
London Parks. "Here is what I found in Brockwell Park on a recent Sunday afternoon, in addition to the Sunday band—eight different meetings in simultaneous progress, attended in the aggregate by many hundreds of people, and of the eight nearly all were either entirely secular or openly anti-Christian. . . . Thank God, on Sunday **evenings** the truth is proclaimed amid this babel of error . . . but how few are the gospel witnesses amid the giant evil which thus lifts high its head!"

Alas! they are oftentimes found engaged in internecine war. It was refreshing to be present recently at an annual tea given to a crowd of children and their parents drawn from one of the worst districts of London, a haunt of every form of vice, and to see what God had wrought in conversion through the gospel of His grace. This blessed and now prosperous work had its start eight years ago in Finsbury Park. A father, mother, and their four children—aged about eight to fourteen—stood together and

sang a gospel hymn ; ragged children gathered around, and the work has gone on ever since. "That day" will alone declare its full result.

A writer in the *Times* has

Christianity given it as his conviction that
in Japan. Christianity will not make many converts in Japan, but that the Japanese will utilise Christian ideas and ideals. What these are we are not told. What is needed is true conversion to God by faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning work on the cross, and this is as much needed in England as in the Far East. It is painful to be told by a missionary resident in Japan :—

"I never knew anything like the state of the Japanese Christian (?) magazines and papers. There are ten leading ones ; of these the four best edited and supported are very extreme in their rationalistic teaching. I quote from the chief one : 'What tells is earnestness and ability ; doctrinal views do not matter. . . . We may as well say at once that we are no believers in (then follows an enumeration of all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel).' Our students are continually seeing all this stuff, as well as hearing it in sermons and addresses, and as they are to be the future evangelical (?) clergy of Japan, you can see the danger."

Yes, and it is always the danger when a clergy usurps the place of the Spirit of God, whether in Europe or the East. We are thankful to remember that scattered all through Japan there are now companies of Japanese Christians

gathered on scriptural principles, teaching and preaching the simple truth of the gospel. May this blessed work continue and enlarge! There seems room over there for a monthly magazine devoted to sound gospel teaching. Shall we not all pray that God may guide our brethren there in this matter.

It appears that—

“the ruling classes of Japan are very largely agnostic. Christianity is certainly winning its way among the lower and middle classes to a very remarkable degree. . . . It was the common people, not the rulers, who heard our Lord gladly in Palestine, and so it is to-day in Japan and elsewhere.”

True Christians are waiting for
Waiting Christ, and more and more is this
for the blessed hope being revived, and His
Antichrist. return as an immediate expectation
 being looked for. Along with this,
 it is an awful thing to find how the rapidly
 developing apostasy is waiting for Antichrist
 (see 2 Thess. ii.). Rarely has this been so
 boldly asserted as in the City Temple when
 Mr Donald Fraser (Bristol) gave an address to
 young people (alas!) on “The New Man.” The
 speaker said :—

“We have had new scientific methods, new facts (!) and new theology. But the supreme need was a new man, a new idea of man, a new human conception. . . . A man was wanted who would startle history, and shake

the foundations of our false complacency. . . . Christianity of to-day demanded a new type of man . . . one possessed of supreme, divine inspiration. . . . We had exhausted all our tricks . . . the man who would have to come was a man without fear, either of man or God, life or death," &c.

Terrible as it is to think, **this man is coming**. He will be the man of sin who will sit in the temple of God and exalt himself above all that is called God. He will be the lawless one who will fear neither man nor God. But he will be destroyed at Christ's glorious appearing with all His saints, when all those who have despised and rejected the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction from His presence, and from the glory of His power. Poor young people of the City Temple, may a miracle of God's grace and power be wrought on your behalf! May He pluck you out of that swirling eddy of apostasy!

We have received a letter
Reverence of thanks for the short article
during Prayer. on "Public Reading" in our
 October issue. Many have for
 long felt a danger of much irreverence when
 assembled together in the presence of the Lord.
 Whispering during prayer, staring about, and
 lolling on the seats are distressing to those who
 realise the solemnity of Christian worship and

prayer; but what must they be to the Lord Himself? Such conduct would not be tolerated in the presence of an earthly sovereign, yet He who is Maker and Monarch of all is present in the midst of His people. Let the young especially cultivate a reverent attitude, and especially kneel in prayer.



Christ's Constraining Love.

(ADDRESS ON JOHN xiii. 1.)

“Now, before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”



I WISH to say a few words on the love of Christ. It is a great thing to have these things objectively before us, and not to be too much occupied with our state subjectively, for though state is very important in these days, that is the way to be right subjectively. His love is unchangeable. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

Let us turn to Ephesians iii. 19—

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

It seems a contradiction, to know that which cannot be known, but it is because it is infinite ; yet we know it. "That ye may be able to apprehend" (not "comprehend," for who could comprehend it?) "with all saints ;"—we should have the whole Church before us, "Christ loved the Church"—"what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height"—of what? It does not say what, but we know what it is, though we can hardly express it—the whole domain of glory ; but next to that comes what we know, "The love of Christ." It is impossible for a saint to know this 19th verse until he has passed through the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." It is far more than any service to Him ; God values that Christ should dwell in your heart. Often our hearts are full of cares and troubles, the fogs of nature. How are we to keep them out? By Christ dwelling in our hearts. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit" is preparatory to that. How am I to be strengthened? By patient study of the Word of God.

Let us turn to 2 Corinthians v. 14, for one word, "For the love of Christ **constraineth** us." What is the force of that? It is a grand word. "Constrained" means, moved by an irresistible force outside ourselves. There are lines we often sing that express it. There is silence in the courts of heaven—

“Till from a heart divinely prest
 Bursts forth at length the loud exclaim,
 ‘Praise the Lamb.’”

That's it, “A heart divinely prest.” There is no effort, no forcing, oh never, never, **never!** It is to be abhorred, it is Judaism, it is legalism! The love of Christ **constrains** us. E. P. C.



Notes on the Temple—No. 8.*

WHEN the Lord Jesus ascended up on high, He gave the gifts and the supply of the Spirit for preparing a spiritual house for God; so looking at the type in 1 Kings v.—

“Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work” (ver. 15).

Solomon had “threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens.” So among the workmen employed by the Lord Jesus there were those who “look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others,” who are prepared to “bear one another's burdens.” Then “fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains.” Do they not at once suggest to our minds the work of the evangelists?

* This article follows on from page 317 of Vol. XI.

“ Beside the chief of Solomon’s officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work ” (ver. 16).

There are those that rule—called upon for continual diligence to take the oversight, a most important sphere of service as well as the others.

These are Solomon’s workpeople. Now let us look at their work.

“ The king commanded and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house ” (ver. 17).

These great stones were for laying the foundation, *i.e.*, for providing a substantial and extensive platform on which the Temple, its courts, and several other buildings were to stand ; an enlargement of the narrow crest on which the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite stood.

“ And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers ; so they prepared timber and stones to build the house ” (ver. 18).

These stones were for the house itself. Strikingly typical of those living stones of which the spiritual house, the Temple of God, is built.

In the description of the stones we have represented, first, what the soul is in itself ; secondly, what it has cost in its redemption ; and, thirdly, the labour bestowed upon it.

Looked at as the creation of God, it is a “ great stone ”—a soul outweighing the world in value ; looked at as the purchase of the blood of

Christ, it is a "costly stone"; but looked at as the workmanship of the Spirit of God, it is a "hewed stone."

There is labour bestowed upon it. It is not only intrinsically valuable—not only is it purchased at great price; but there has been labour—it is wrought, it is hewed, it is prepared. It is being prepared: that is the work that is going on now. There are hewers in the mountains, there are quarrymen employed in the quarry, and, not only that, there are the stone-squarers, as we read here—"builders and stone-squarers."

Solomon had his workshop or his workyard; he had his quarrymen, and his men employed in the mountains among the cedar trees to cut them down. He had workmen employed in the quarries to get those stones up, he had workmen employed in the yards to square them, to fit them, and to prepare them for their place in the Temple. The present scene is just that. This world may be looked at as the workyard of Solomon. "All things are full of labour." The true Solomon, to whom all authority is given in heaven and in earth, has His workmen busily engaged.

David employed strangers in the land of Israel for this work, and it may be Solomon employed them too.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

There are strange workmen in some of the

Lord's workshops, but oh, "let us not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us as though some strange thing happened unto us." Those workmen come with strange faces and often with strange machinery to accomplish the true Solomon's work, but they are all under the superintendence of One to whom not only all authority is given, but who is the wisdom as well as the power of God.

It is important to take this view of it, whether we are undergoing the chiselling process, or whether we are undergoing the first, or quarrying process. Ah! that is strange work to the soul that is undergoing it. That detaching, that loosening from that in which it was embedded, that cutting away or cutting around or cutting under, is strange work.

The lofty cedar in Lebanon must be felled by the axe of the hewer in the mountain. A tree as it was growing in the forest of Lebanon would not do for the work until it was cut down. Souls do not like that. They would rather be growing in the forest of nature than be cut down, even though it were to be a beam or a pillar in the Temple. However lofty it may be, however slightly in proportion, down the tree must come if it is to form a part of the Temple of God.

And that great stone down there in the quarry: it must be detached, it must be separated from the parent mass, it must be brought up out

of that pit—out from that dark dungeon where it is excavated—into the light, and when it is there it must be brought into Solomon's work-yard, and there undergo the hewing, and the cutting, and the polishing, and the shaping, and the preparing which is requisite to its taking its place in the Temple of God.

That is the process which is going on. We are in Solomon's workyard. Oh, those hammers strike hard! Oh, those axes cut deep! If the stone had a voice it would say to that rough workman by its side, "What are you about? What do you knock me about like that for? What do you cut me like that for?" And we in our folly often cry out in the same way, "If it be so, why am I thus?" Ah, there is a mind of infinite wisdom superintending all! All things are full of labour, and all things are working together for good. They are all under the superintending eye, and the almighty hand, and the tender heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seeking for Peace.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division."—LUKE xii. 51.

THIS was a wonderful pronouncement from One who was King of Peace (Heb. v. 10, vii. 2), and whose birth had been heralded by

angelic messengers as the One who had come to give peace on earth.

But that was postponed for a time, and left to a future day for fulfilment; for although He had truly come in the fulness of the times, as the long-promised Messiah of Israel, His own people, yet the Pharisees had ascribed His miracles to Satanic power, and others desired Him to show a sign from heaven as His credential of being what He professed to be—the Christ. And so He began to prepare His disciples for the greater work He had come to accomplish outside the narrow boundaries of Judaism—the world-wide message of salvation, to all who had an ear to hear and a heart to receive it. It was no longer to be His mission to proclaim a universal peace upon earth; peace was now only to be found by those who accepted Him as the King of Peace.

One of the most striking signs in the present day is that men are seeking for peace, and yet preparing for war. They want peace, and yet at the same time are conscious of being unable to secure it. They have their peace conferences; but scarcely had the door closed upon the delegates attending the late Hague Conference, than the nations they represented were found nervously preparing against the eventuality of war.

Thus Europe and other parts of the world today are arming themselves with feverish haste to

be ready against any threatened outbreak of war. Civilised man is no better than his barbaric brother. He is more polished and cleverer in the manufacture of instruments of destruction. They are the same in heart, however; only their methods vary. Civilised man has his vaunted Dreadnoughts, his torpedo boats and submarines, his floating mines and airships, and all the fearful category of death-dealing apparatus, and with pride exhibits these things as evidence of his readiness to resist any would-be aggressor. Barbaric man is simpler in his engines of war, and depends more upon his own personal valour and strategy, but like his civilised brother, will do his best to kill his enemy. Such is man civilised or barbaric; their hearts are the same but their methods differ, and of both it can be said, "the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. iii. 17).

Thus man unwittingly testifies to the truth of Scripture: He seeks for peace, but peace flies from him; it is the same with every department of life, whether it be in the social, commercial, national, or religious sphere, it is strife or division all along the line, for instead of peace it is now division (Luke xii. 57). Man cannot understand it, and he turns from one scheme to another in his vain search after peace, if haply he can cheat the fate that pursues him. His latest endeavours include Socialism and unions in various directions, both religious, secular, and national. Huge

combines which, like some mighty Tower of Babel, may give him a name and a centre for mutual help and strength :—

“ And they said, Go to, and let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven ” (Gen. xi. 4).

Man would strengthen himself against God, and in spite of Him, as it were, secure that for which he so earnestly longs. He has his big fleets, his Dreadnoughts, his immense armies, and his treaties with other nations to gain the end he so desires—peace and plenty.

Alas ! for poor man, how one line of Scripture exposes the fallacy of all his endeavours. “ The way of peace have they not known.”

Now in one direction men fondly imagine it is impossible for them to err, viz., by securing religious unity among those professing the Christian religion. Men are beginning to remove the barriers they had erected between themselves. But when these barriers are removed what will be the result? Will it be peace on earth? What do the Scriptures say?

“ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls. . . . And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration ” (Rev. xvii. 4-6).

So vastly magnificent and imposing was the sight that the prophet could not help expressing his admiration, but peace did not dwell there

—“she was drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” As we look around us in the present day, how we see everything heading up to a great crisis, and even that which was divine in its origin, not only a failure under the hand of man, but going on to judgment, the last message from God to this human confederacy is, “**I will spue thee out of my mouth.**”

Alas! how the enemy of all truth has succeeded in his fell design in corrupting the truth, firstly by dividing up the Church of God, and afterwards, when the opportunity suits, bringing it together again in an unholy compact.

Things are now preparing for the final consummation. Men are giving up long-cherished truths in a way that is appalling—men and women who were once sound in the faith, and of whom we should have felt fully confident of being so firmly rooted in the truth that there was not the slightest danger of their ever leaving it.

Reader, as you look around in the present day and note the unrest of the world, have you ever seriously asked yourself the reason of it all? and if so, have you been able to get a satisfactory answer to your question? The Scriptures furnish the answer and the only true answer. They tell us that this earth is but the theatre of the display of active unseen spiritual forces (Eph. vi. 12), and that you and I are the objects of the conflict

being waged between these powers of good and evil. Satan is in deadly earnest striving for a set purpose, and God is in earnest, working out His designs in accordance with His own sovereign will. Will you not be in earnest also, and come to that life-giving fountain, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men? He is King of Peace

F. R.

A Retrospect.

YOUR little book asking where collective testimony is to be found to-day, has been sent me. My own impression is that the boast of this from the first has been the worm at the root, of what once was so pleasing to God, and of such blessing to His people. How many little "nobodies" have we seen so rapidly growing up into "giants," ruling and commanding the Lord's people to the confusion of all.

My first impression of meeting with the Lord's people in the early sixties is fresh in my mind to-day. The feeling of reverence and honour due to that great and holy name never can be described, it seemed to control all that was done, both in service and worship.

As they spoke to one another in songs of praise, grace seemed ever to be filling the heart.

The love one to the other, according to the teaching and doctrine of Christ, was manifested among them. The Holy Spirit seemed to knit their hearts together in love, so much so that it was clear to all that God was owned as their Father, Christ as their Saviour, and they all as brethren through their love one towards another.

As I look back on those days, I feel convinced that this testimony was not of man nor raised by men, but in very deed the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the all-sufficiency of Christ for His own, flowing as it did at that time through honoured and gifted vessels God was then using, opening up afresh the precious truth concerning the Church of God and the coming of the Lord for His own.

Thus having Christ before them, as God's centre for His people, their souls were enriched with heavenly blessings, as together they felt the real blessedness of being gathered as "brethren," with Jesus their own Lord and Master in their midst—all so fresh to their souls—that the more of His fulness they received, the more His goodness seemed extended towards them; thus with Himself for them, and in spirit with them here, they, in anticipation of soon meeting their Lord from heaven, moved joyfully on, holding forth the word of life to all around.

It was evident that the holy and blessed name of Jesus was what attracted them, and was what

God owned as an attraction to others. For many who had been separated by various names were continually finding their place in thankfulness around the precious name of Jesus to the joy of all. In those days there were no barriers nor tests to be passed through by those who loved the Lord. But then it was only those in whose hearts the Spirit of God had been working, who sought to be at the Lord's Table, and to such a hearty welcome into the blessings the Master's presence afforded was always given. Those who, like the two disciples of old, could leave their John's for Jesus, found in Him that abiding fulness—available at all times for those who seek—there seemed to be no limit as to what they felt and learned in the Master's presence.

In those days, friends and relations were urged to come to the meetings where the Lord's presence was so manifest. But now—what is it now? Since so many masters having raised so many testimonies, causing such divisions, those who speak loudly of what they call "the testimony" are themselves ashamed of it before their friends; and no wonder, for being as we are, do we not feel that the very precepts and teaching of Christ are being made void as regards our position before others? For surely the Lord's own words must be the foundation of all that is true, and if through the devotedness of others to any principle that leads away from the teaching of Christ, what can follow but confusion?

“This is My commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to the other.”

In looking back to the time when the cry went forth so fresh—

“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,”

who can tell what the gathering together to the holy and precious name of Jesus meant to the Lord's people then? What fellowship in the Spirit! What a meeting-place, where all who loved the Lord Jesus had free access! So simple, so real, such love one to the other, with Jesus in their midst!

The name of “brethren” was never owned, save as given by the Lord to **all His own**. But the Holy Spirit was free then to bring home to their hearts that Christ in heaven and His people on earth were ONE. Those who had never seen it in print, only as it was shown them in the Bible, knew the blessedness of being members of that one body of which Christ is the head, one spirit with the Lord, and the precepts of Christ in their measure were seen in them.

What have we before us to-day? With all our wonderful writings of such wonderful and gifted men, honoured and God-fearing men, who have so fully expounded the Bible for our profit, with such God-given ability from cover to cover—and yet with all this, what strife, what divi-

sions, what contradiction to the first principles manifested by brethren "dwelling together in unity."

There is a cause.

Have other names, however honoured, displaced in any way the only name that God can own? Of David, His devoted ones could say, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us." Can it be that other names have dimmed the vision of our sight from beholding the value of the name of Jesus, and the blessing connected with this name? Is this the cause of divisions so multiplying among the Lord's people? To talk of a collective testimony in the midst of such confusion only can be looked upon as empty words. There is One that is holy, One that is true, and in making our confession of what is true of our own state, as J. N. D. told us at first, that "we are nothing, but simply Christians," and clinging to Christ as our all, *there may still be hope in Him for us all.*—Your brother in the Lord,

E. T.

The Bible Class.

Pergamos (Rev. ii. 12-17).

A VERY different state of things presents itself to us here from what we found in Smyrna. There, *persecution* was prominent,

persecution from a heathen world ; here, *corruption*, a more subtle form of evil, is seen at work. Satan's persecutions drive the soul nearer to God, whereas his seductions and corruptions draw the the heart away from Him.

“ And to the angel of the assembly in Pergamos write : These things says He that has the sharp two-edged sword ” (ver. 12).

The world had grown weary of persecuting, and Satan, ever on the watch to ruin the testimony of God, and to injure those who ought to uphold it, had now devised means better calculated to gain his ends. The reference to Balaam naturally carries our thoughts back to the days of Israel's journeying to Canaan, when Balak, the king of Moab, sought to keep them out of their inheritance by force. This, however, he could not do, for God had made promises which no power of the enemy could reverse. God was not a man that He should lie ; He had spoken and would make it good. This is, indeed, a comfort to faith amidst the darkest days. God will not cast away His people. But so far as outward testimony is concerned, the corruption of worldliness succeeds in spoiling it where persecution fails. Balaam wanted to curse the people but he could not, for God had given a commandment to bless, but his evil counsel brought about that trespass against the Lord, which drew forth the chastisement of His hand (Num. xxxi. 16)

It is to this that allusion is made by the "doctrine of Balaam."

A changed state of the professing Church necessitates a different attitude on the part of the Lord. The sword hitherto had been in the hands of a persecuting world, it is now seen transferred to the One who walks amidst the candlesticks. The time is coming when that sword will be used in the judgment of the world. After the rapture of the saints, and just before the millennial reign of Christ, the heavens will open and forth will come the **King of Kings and Lord of Lords**, attended by the armies of heaven—the glorified saints. The Word which now is speaking life to every one that heareth and believeth (John v. 24), will then sweep down in judgment all His proud and rebellious foes. But before the day of this world's judgment, the Lord deals with the Church. He will not judge the saints by-and-by with the world, lest they be condemned (1 Cor. xi. 32), so He deals with them now in chastisement.

"I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in the days in which Antipas, My faithful witness, was, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells" (ver. 13).

It will be noticed that the words of our Authorised Version, "I know thy works," are omitted. Neither at Smyrna nor at Pergamos is any allusion made to works, but for very

different reasons. Days of persecution, as in Smyrna, were not days of activity in work, and days of worldliness were not such as to produce devoted service.

If Smyrna takes us back to days of Diocletian persecution, Pergamos describes prophetically what we now know took place historically in the days of Constantine the Great.

“I know where thou dwellest”—are these words of reproof for unfaithfulness? or are they anxious solicitation on the part of One who can gauge the dangers of His weak though faithful people. The echoes of persecution had not died away. Individual faithfulness, even unto death, had been seen in one at least. How stirring the words—“my faithful witness!” Here was one who had not counted his own life dear unto him, and had sealed his faith with his blood. And the Lord loves to own all that was good in Pergamos as a whole; they had held fast His name, and not denied His faith. Nevertheless they dwelt where Satan's throne was. It was there, where he was prince, that their life of responsible testimony had to be lived. Satan is the prince of this world; he was proved to be such at the cross, where he led the world against Christ. And it is in this world, which has rejected Christ, that the Church is responsible to witness for Him.

“But I have a few things against thee, that thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught

Balac to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat idols' sacrifices, and commit fornication" (ver. 14).

As we have said, the world had grown weary of persecuting, indeed the futility of such methods was apparent, for the more they persecuted, the more vigorous became the life and testimony of the Church. The gospel was making its way in the world, and those in high places were coming in contact with it; even the Emperor Constantine began to listen and be influenced. This in itself, though a signal mercy to those in exalted positions, presented dangers of a special character to the Church. Here, in Revelation, God is not giving us an account of the progress and triumph of the gospel, such as He does in the Acts; no, He is here describing prophetically the declension of the Church. So that the Spirit of God here brings before us the snares and pitfalls which the great adversary would lay at the feet of the saints, resulting even from what God in His mercy was doing for the eternal salvation of souls.

All this, as we have pointed out, is here given *prophetically*, but we know what took place *historically* in the days of Constantine. Persecution ceased by order of the emperor, and all the most important offices of the empire were thrown open to the Christians. Here lay the danger. How difficult to maintain the Church's position, as a body that was not of this world, when that very world was opening its arms to receive them! Now was Satan's opportunity,

and *from amongst themselves* he raised up men to teach the doctrine of association and amalgamation with the world. Balaam's doctrine succeeded where the sword of persecution had failed.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, too, became a snare. What was this? Many different explanations have been attempted, but as this chapter (ver. 6 and 15) is the only one that makes any allusion to these people, it is difficult and dangerous to be too dogmatic. One thing at any rate we may learn, and that is that the downward course was being rapidly pursued. Nicolaitanism, whatever it was, was hateful to the heart of Christ. In Ephesus the Church shared that hatred, and absolutely refused the *deeds*, whereas in Pergamos toleration was given to the *doctrine* that produced those deeds. Some have thought that there is an allusion to the introduction of the clerical system—from the derivation of the word, which implies “conquering the people.” Certain it is that a *clergy* finds no countenance in Scripture, and that no tyranny has been more awful right down the ages. The fierce flames of martyrdom were lit and fanned by an intolerant clergy.

“Repent therefore ; but if not, I will come unto thee quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of My mouth.”

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

The call sounds out clear as a trumpet.

Repentance is the only remedy—to *judge and forsake*. If too late for the Church as a whole, at any rate the individual may take heed, and overcome in the energy of faith.

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith.

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John v. 4, 5).

But at any rate the sword is in the hand of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire—“I will fight against *them*,” He says, not against *thee*. The time had not yet come for visiting upon the Church as a whole the displeasure of the Lord. He has long patience, and indeed the assembly as a body still held fast His name, and refused to deny His faith. But there were teachers there leading them astray, and *against these teachers* the Lord would fight.

“To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna ; and I will give to him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it” (ver. 17).

How the reward here meets the very condition of things that formed the special danger of the church of Pergamos. What encouragement for those who as individuals were striving to overcome the enemy’s wiles, and to walk well pleasingly to the Lord.

The hidden manna—association with Christ in His rejection here by the world, will in yonder

glory lead to special communion with Himself in the remembrance of His blessed pathway of lowly grace, while walking as the humbled Man—the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

“There on the hidden bread
Of Christ—once humbled here—
God's treasured store—for ever fed,
His love my soul shall cheer.”

A white stone—this was the mark of approval, a well-understood symbol in those times, a means of recording votes in favour of candidates to certain offices. How precious the thought that faithfulness here will meet with Christ's approval by-and-by.

A new name written—a special intimacy between the individual overcomer and his Lord ; an assurance that encourages the heart while battling here amidst discouragements, disappointments, and misunderstandings, and yet with true desire to be well pleasing to the Lord, that in *that* day we shall know from His own blessed lips what He thought of “leaving all to follow Him.”

Hence, besides that fulness of joy which will be the common portion of all the redeemed, there will be special intimacies between the individual saint and Christ, which cheer the pilgrim here by the very anticipation of their delight.

Notes and Comments.

Television. It might well be said of man to-day — “And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (Gen. xi. 6). The telegraph and the telephone were wonders in their day, but what are these to the latest development? To talk to a person hundreds of miles away is marvellous indeed, but to be able to see them too—— But with all this feverish and almost uncanny invention, man’s heart is further from God than ever, God is not in all his thoughts. The time is not far off when God will once again write “confusion” across all his works. Judgment is near at hand.

War in the Air. The dangers arising from the latest developments of aerial navigation seem sufficiently real to arouse the guardians of national defence. A “vigorous warning” was recently given by Lord Roberts and others as to the possibilities of aerial warfare. Of course to the eyes of men the critical nature of the times in which we live is becoming daily more apparent. Nation rising up against nation, and wars, and rumours of wars, are beginning to fill the mind with apprehension and fear as to what is coming

in the near future. But the greatest conflict of all may take place in the air, when heaven opens and the armies of heaven—not of Germany, or Russia, or England, or France—no, but the armies of heaven will follow Him who comes forth in righteousness to judge and make war. Of very few wars, if any, can it be claimed that they have been waged in righteousness. It may truly be said of many of the strifes both in the Church and in the world.

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members” (Jas. iv. 1).

But in a day, which is rapidly approaching, a day for which the nations of Europe are unwittingly preparing their armaments, these very nations will be found, not fighting one against the other, but all united together against Christ. The confederacy of ten kings in Europe will—

“receive power as kings one hour with the Beast.

“These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast.

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them,” &c. (Rev. xvii. 12-14).

While walking along a country road in Shropshire recently I fell in with a young man from a neighbouring village with whom I had a little conversation upon spiritual matters. Inquiring what was being done in his village for

Religious Intolerance.

the spread of the gospel, he told me that there was nothing now but an extremely High Church. There had been a little Mission Hall where the gospel was simply preached, but the owner grew too old to carry on the work. The clergyman rented the hall for five shillings a year "to keep the dissenters out," the pulpit was broken up, and the place is now used as a dancing room. Villages like this may be reached by distribution of gospel literature. I have promised to send this young man a parcel of *Echoes of Mercy* each month, and he has undertaken to get them well circulated. *Pray for this village.*

**Action in
Discipline.**

MATT. xviii.

Several having expressed a wish to come together to quietly and prayerfully look into this subject in the fear of God, it is proposed to have a meeting for the purpose. Any brethren who may wish to attend will kindly send their names and addresses to the Editor, who will inform them as soon as date and place of meeting are decided upon.

The Reproach of Christ.

THE question is, Is there still such a thing as the experience of the reproach of Christ? Or, Has the name of Christ become so popular

that to make profession is to meet with increased respect? Christ is not reigning yet as man over the inhabited earth in the way that God has said He shall reign. The kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord—the kingdoms of God's Christ. Daniel foresees and foretells a time when the Ancient of Days gives to the Son of man dominion and glory that all people, nations, and languages should serve him (Dan. vii. 13, 14). The possession of this kingdom by the Son of man is consequent on His coming "with the clouds of heaven." Now this coming has not yet taken place, and suffering for the name of Christ will not cease until He come. The knowledge of the Lord, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, shall fill the earth then, but not before.

We are still in the apostolic dispensation, a characteristic of which is the living hope of the Lord's return. This period began with the descent of the Holy Spirit, and ends with the translation of the Church, which is Christ's body, to meet Him in the air. By the apostles, too, is meant, not the apostles as they were before their Master died, but what they are as gifts to the Church of the ascended Christ (Eph. iv. 8-11). Of the disciples at Pentecost it is written that—

"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

To the extent that the doctrine of all true believers is right, their doctrine is still the apostles' doctrine. The fellowship of all true believers is still the apostles' fellowship. Their prayers are ours, we pray as they prayed, and their prayers for the first generation of Christians are equally answered for the Christians of to-day. The faith and hope and love that filled their hearts and the hearts of those who were united with them must also possess ours. Thus baptism and the Lord's Supper are still the same ; and whatever we find in Christian profession contrary to the apostolic Scriptures is by those Scriptures to be judged. But to be thus associated, united, and blessed with saints and apostles (and we are not members of Christ otherwise), is to be associated with those who suffered, and still suffer, reproach for the name of Christ, though it may take different forms. It is still the case that—

“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Persecution is to be expected if we are faithful. Some of the writers who profess to give historical accounts of the early Christian centuries are inclined to blame the Christians of those days, who met with death under heathen emperors, for the sufferings they brought upon themselves through their lack of wisdom. It is not denied that Christians have failed in this way. But, as to those early Christians, they were faithful unto

death, and they will receive a crown of life. It was the devil, not their lack of wisdom, that cast them into prison. They were determined to live godly, and they suffered persecution. It would be easier for many a child of God to get along if he could only compromise. If he will only sacrifice principle, he may save himself from much opposition. But is he prepared to do it? Surely not, if he reflect a little.

Now, the type of our Christianity will show whether we are reproached for the name of Christ or not. In John vii. 7, we find our Lord telling His brethren that the world cannot hate them. They were His brethren after the flesh. They had asked Him to show Himself openly to the world. These brethren were not unlike those Judaisers who wanted Christians to be circumcised, that they might glory in their flesh. Men who, while they professed to believe in Christ, were trying by worldly conformity to smooth the Christian path, and so to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ (Gal. vi. 12). The world cannot hate such, "But Me it hateth," said our Lord, "because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

The difficulties of the Christian life in relation to this subject are not to be overcome by rushing from one situation to another, or to no situation at all, in order to get out of the world. The Christian is different to His Lord in this, that whereas Christ is no more in the world, the

Christian is there, and Christ has prayed, not that we may be taken out of the world, but that we may be kept from the evil. He needs His witnesses in all kinds of places. The assembly at Pergamos is not blamed for dwelling where Satan's throne is, but for allowing what was not truly Christian and right in that position (Rev. ii. 14). Many a Christian might desire to leave what is in itself an honest calling because his Christianity involves him in persecution. If a right eye or a right hand causes us to sin, plainly, however painful the operation, the right eye and the right hand must be sacrificed. If one, however, can abide in his calling *with God*, let him stay there, and humbly, yet boldly, brave all for Christ. But our principles rather than our places are important, and in practice Christian principle is sure to encounter the hatred of the world, without cause, as we see in the example of Christ. The Christian is called to this:—

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore *the world hateth you*” (John xv. 19, 20).

This scripture follows our Lord's teaching as to the vine and the branches. It is acting in communion with Him that often arouses the hatred of the world. It should be noted that while our Lord told His kinsmen that the world could not hate them, as we have seen in John

vii., He here assures His true followers that hatred from the world is to be expected. What a difference between those brethren and His disciples! But this hatred is encountered as we maintain in the world, in our various callings, by our conduct and testimony, the disciples' unworldly position. It is to this end the Father sanctifies us in answer to the prayer of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is come to make what is taught good.

The apostle's doctrine is, that by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ the world is crucified to us, and we are crucified to the world. Its whole spirit and pleasure are not ours. We have to face the enmity of Satan and those in whom the evil spirit works. But we have something far better than the world to occupy our hearts. Christ is our life. His love is ours. We are already one spirit with Him.

Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Paul counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. It is far better to be with Christ in the very worst circumstances that the confession of His name can bring us into, than to enjoy the richest of the world's treasures without Him.

"Treasures in Egypt," indeed! What are they? Do we not read something of what is very similar to them in Revelation xviii.? Babylon and its wealth, what does it all come to?

“Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought” (Rev. xviii. 16, 17).

This is what the wealth of Babylon comes to. It *comes to nought*, and in one hour! Some saints are being sorely tried now by trade being bad. But let them take heart. What will men do then, when “no man buyeth their merchandise any more”? It is the apostate part of the professing Church that “glorifies herself and lives deliciously.” When that false profession is gone, where will the trade be? Who can *desire* to be rich or to get honour and worldly glory after reading a chapter like this? What will shares and Consols be worth then? What will dividends come to in that day? But we are all more or less in danger of being hardened now through the deceitfulness of sin. A chapter like this ought to probe our hearts very deeply. God gives us to look on to the end of things.

So in the case of Moses we read:—

“When he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: *for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward*” (Heb. xi. 24, 25).

When he was “come to years” this was his choice. Is there not such a thing as coming to years, or, in other words, being full grown in the

Christian sense? It is a right, a sober estimate of the present compared with the future state of things in the light of all that God teaches us that is needed. No doubt there are present compensations for what the Christian forsakes for Christ. In this life there is a hundredfold of joy. There are the new associations of beloved ones in Christ, which are better and more enduring than the old. But what would Christianity be apart from the hope of the Lord's coming? Moses had respect unto the recompense of the reward. It was by this he was able rightly to appreciate what the Holy Spirit calls nothing less than the reproach of Christ, even in his case. His was the same Master as ours. Paul had present compensations for the reproach he so fully endured. But much of the present compensation is the hope of the future which fills our hearts.

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable,”

for the Christian has many trials. Things happen which sorely grieve his heart. But what occupied Moses, we gather, was not the present but the future as he learned to endure. Israel was always murmuring; they were for turning back. They spake of stoning him and his brother and others who had the faith to act for God. There were times when the enemy seemed to triumph, but he did not have respect to these things. Even in the case of Christ it was

“for the joy that was set before Him, (that He) endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. xii. 2).

Let us ponder the joy that is set before us through His grace, for His joy will not be complete until those given to Him by the Father be with Him where He is.

T. H.

Eyes as a Flame of Fire.

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass.”
—REV. ii. 18.

IT is no longer, as in Pergamos, “ He that hath the sharp sword with two edges.” The sword is the Word of God as the word of penetrating judgment ; for “ the word that I have spoken,” says the Lord, “ the same shall judge at the last day ” (John xii. 48). And so, in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation, men are slain with the sword proceeding out of His mouth.

But in the meanwhile the Word precedes and anticipates this judgment, and in Pergamos it is still there to appeal to, to warn of coming wrath, to separate between joints and marrow, and soul and spirit, and bring men into the presence of Him with whom we have to do, before whom all things are naked and opened. Plenty of perverters of the Word there are too in Pergamos ;

but the Word is also there witnessing for itself against them. In Thyatira it **remains no longer**: we hear of Jezebel's doctrine, and the word of the living prophets, clearer and more decisive, as her followers claim, has superseded practically the Scriptures. With the Church's word men may be more safely trusted than with the Word of God!

Thus it is no more, "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges," but "the Son of God," who has to assert His authority as a Divine Being over the Church, rising into a sphere where she dare not pretend to be. With Him alone are the "eyes as a flame of fire," the really infallible and holy insight, which the "feet like fine brass" accompany with irresistible judgment.

And He needs to assert His claim, for she who claims to be His bride, in her own self-assertion, is doing what she can to lower it. She has taken the grace of His incarnation to subject Him to His human mother; or if she remember His divine title, it is to raise Mary into the "Mother of God." Systematically Rome degrades Him amid a crowd of saintly mediators and intercessors with God, all more accessible than Himself, foremost of whom is this "queen of heaven" with her woman's heart, more tender than His!

Here, then, He speaks as Son of God to those who would confound the Church's authority with His. Has she His eyes of fire? Has she His feet of brass? If that which she binds on earth

is bound in heaven, will she bind with her decrees the throne of God itself?

To all asserters of Church authority alike, the Lord here maintains His distinctive place. *He* alone is the "*Son of God*," in a place unapproachable by His people, and His glory will He not give to another. He alone is the governing Head; the Church His body, in a wondrous relationship to Him as that, but perfectly distinct and wholly subject.

As "*Son of God*," also, He now sits upon the throne—His Father's throne—that of pure deity, which no creature could possibly share. His words to Laodicea afterward bring out the force of the assertion here:—

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

As Son of man, the apostle has seen Him in the vision with which the book commences; as Son of man He will presently take a throne which He can share with men, His redeemed. Till then, they are in the field of conflict, to overcome as He overcame, and this is the manifest answer to the dream of authority in the world which, in Thyatira, the false Church possesses. Rome would reign before Christ reigns, or reign upon the throne of God with Him. Thus His claim to be the Son of God is here of the greatest possible significance.

This is as to authority over the *world*, and in

this way, of course, "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" cannot possibly apply. The passage in Matthew connects it with the maintenance of discipline among the saints, with care for the holiness which His people are to exhibit. It is not founded on relationship to Him, save as disciples to a Master, and then of obedience to Him which they are under responsibility to enforce. In the fulfilment of this responsibility He is surely with them: what they bind He binds; but apart from His Word they bind nothing, nor are they even the authorised exponents of it. Themselves subject to that Word, He is for them in all true subjection. It is the Word that has authority, not they; and let it be shown that the Word has not guided them, then Christ cannot bind upon His people *in subjection to His Word*: it would be to be a party to His own dishonour.

And all claim of ecclesiastical authority other than this is real rebellion against Christ Himself. Here, as elsewhere, "no man can serve two masters." The conscience is to be before God alone, and this is a first principle of all holiness, all morality. Swerve from it by a hair's breadth, right is no longer right, nor wrong, wrong; all lines are blurred; the unsteady tremulousness of the soul warns but too surely of the approach of spiritual paralysis.

Yes, the "eyes of fire" are still with the "Son of God" alone.

GRANT.

The Love of God.

“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.

THERE are some verses of Holy Scripture that contain wrapped up in the small compass of a line or two, lengths, breadths, and depths of infinite and important truth. It is so with the one we have placed at the head of this paper.

We may say, without fear of contradiction, that John iii. 16 is the best known verse of the whole Bible. If the reader is unable to quote correctly any other, we may well believe that this one at any rate is as familiar to him as the ABC.

I. The Fact of God's Love.—Yes, it is indeed a fact that *God is love*. Man's heart was filled with enmity against God, but God's heart was filled with love towards man. In the garden of Eden Satan had instilled into man's heart doubt and suspicion about God. The serpent argued that if God withheld the fruit, the eating of which would enable man to know good and evil, that therefore God was not man's friend. Man opened his ear to the serpent's lie, put forth his hand to take the forbidden fruit, disobeyed God, and fell. By this act **sin entered the world**, and ever since man has been at a distance from God, and has harboured thoughts of suspicion and fear.

But *God is love*. Four thousand years of sin

and enmity of heart on man's part did not alter the marvellous fact. We do not read that the world loved God ; no, but "**God so loved the world.**"

2. **The Extent of God's Love.**—What blessed emphasis we may lay on that little word "*so*" ! This tells us how far the heart of God has gone in proving His love. If we be asked how much does God love, we reply, "Look at yonder manger at Bethlehem ; follow the blessed footsteps of the Son of God through all the stages of His gracious life from Bethlehem to Gethsemane and Calvary ; stand at Calvary's cross and hear that cry of anguish, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

Yes, God *so loved* the world that **He gave His only begotten Son.**

3. **The Object of His Love.**—God so loved *the world*. The world that hated Him, that hated Him so much as to fling back in His face that stupendous gift of His love, His only begotten and well-beloved Son—yes, God so loved the world. He did not wait until man showed some better or improved condition. Far from this, man's state was ever developing in guilt and enmity—further and further from God was man going, blacker and blacker was becoming his guilt, deeper and deeper his ruin through sin. God did not wait for any improvement, but He so loved the world that He gave His Son.

But the world added this greatest sin to all its long dark category of guilt: they hated Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, they rejected Him, and finally they crucified Him.

The world is now lying under condemnation. Its trial is over, its probation at an end. "**Now is the judgment of this world**" was the solemn utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the cross stood up before Him—the cross, that culminating point of human guilt, and that crowning evidence of divine love.

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

Is it not amazing pity, is it not a love divine? God commends His own love to us. He might in righteousness have swept the whole world with the besom of destruction; He might have hurled the whole human family to perdition; but instead, He sends forth the proclamation of His grace, mercy, and love to all mankind.

Whosoever.—God loved the *world*, not only the Jew, but the Gentile. It was this that might well have staggered the proud heart of a Pharisee such as Nicodemus, had not divine grace wrought in his soul. This world-wide love of God silences the theological limitations of Calvinism. That infinite and eternal love of God pent up within His own heart, found vent for itself at Calvary, and in a mighty torrent burst forth and poured along the righteous channel that Christ's atoning sacrifice had formed,

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark xvi. 15).

But alas! the world as a whole rejects that love; nevertheless, a multitude of individual souls believe; a multitude rapidly and constantly swelling in numbers till it shall become a company that defies all possibility of counting; a multitude composed of *whosoEVERS*—those whose hearts and consciences have been touched by the power of the Holy Ghost.

4. **The Effect of that Love.**—Two things are here said about every one who believes in the Son of God. First, they shall not perish. Some in these days of shallow infidelity would have us understand by this word “perish,” nothing more nor worse than annihilation. But perishing is not ceasing to exist. How often we see on parcels sent by post or rail the one word “perishable.” What does it mean? Does it mean that the flowers or fruit inside the parcel are in danger of being annihilated? No child would be so foolish as to imagine any such thing. The faded flower or bruised fruit is still there, but *perished*.

To know the awful meaning of the word *perish* in John iii. 16, we need to go to other scriptures, but of one thing we may be certain that it does not mean annihilation. The same root-word is found in Luke xix. 10. The “perish” of John iii. 16, and the “lost” of Luke xix. 10, imply the *existence* of the persons spoken of. The Son of

man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*—how senseless to say He came to save that which was *annihilated!*

But a second result of believing on the Son is this, that every such believer receives eternal life; he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Those who seek to destroy the meaning of the word “perish” are always endeavouring to explain away the expression “eternal life.” To them eternal life means nothing more than *eternal existence*. But while it is true that every one will *live for ever*, whether believer or unbeliever, those only who believe on the Son of God possess *eternal life*. Every believer possesses eternal life here and now. And, moreover, once that divine life is received into the soul, it never can be lost.

“I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John x. 28).

God is love.

A. H. B.

Notes on the Temple—No. 9.

(Read 1 Kings vi.)

NOW we come to the 6th chapter—the building of the house itself—

“And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land

of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."

As the antitype to this: There is a certain work—a building work—going on now. "Ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building" (1 Cor. iii. 9). "In whom," as we read in the Ephesians, "all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." The preparing work begins here on earth. The real erection of the building is reserved to the time when the Lord comes.

"The house which King Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was threescore cubits."

That comprises the holy and the most holy place; the internal measurement, 40 and 20 = 60.

"And the breadth thereof twenty cubits and the height thereof thirty cubits. And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house. And for the house he made windows of narrow lights."

The real magnificence of Solomon's Temple consisted not so much in its size. It was its perfection, its having God for its architect, its significancy in every particular, and the costly materials employed in it, that gave to it its surpassing glory, excellence, and beauty.

We will begin at the porch. There is a porch

in front; and that porch is said to be twenty cubits by ten cubits before the house. You will remember that that was the exact size of the holy place of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Then the holy place is forty by twenty. The holy place in the Tabernacle was twenty by ten. The most holy place was twenty cubits square, whereas the most holy place of the Tabernacle was ten cubits square. Then as to the height. The height thirty cubits, which was just the length of the holy place and the most holy place of the Tabernacle put together.

“Against the wall of the house he built chambers (or floors, or stories), on either side, against the walls of the house on either side, both of the temple and of the oracle. And he made side chambers on either side.”

I quote from the Hebrew. Those side chambers are described in Ezekiel. It is only by putting the three accounts together—that in Kings, Chronicles, and Ezekiel—that we get at the full description. Those side chambers were in three stories. There were fifteen in each story—forty-five on one side, forty-five on the other side—ninety in all.

“The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad; and the middle was six cubits broad; and the third was seven cubits broad; for without, in the wall of the house, he made narrowed rests, on either side, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.”

These walls at the foundation are six cubits (see Ezek. xli. 5-9, and compare with 1 Kings

vi. 6). There is a rebatement of one cubit for the floor to rest on, which leaves the width of the wall, the lower part five cubits; then there is a rebatement of one cubit more for the second floor, and a rebatement in the wall of another cubit for the third story; so that the first floor is five cubits, the second six cubits, and the third seven cubits.

“The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.”

Then in the 10th verse—

“He built the floors against all the house five cubits high. And they rested on the house with timbers of cedar.”

The 9th verse—

“So he built the house, and finished it, and covered it with vault beams (*i.e.*, semicircular beams), and ceiling boards of cedar.”

We now return to the 7th verse, the actual building—

“And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.”

Such was the type. And what in reality is going on now? There is plenty of noise in the workyard, plenty of workmen. Some stones have passed away from the workyard as completed, “the spirits of just men made perfect.”*

* We doubt the application here given of these words from Hebrews xii. 23, which in the passage are put in con-

They are just waiting to be built up. There are others—ourselves among the number, if we are believers—who are still in the workyard undergoing the fitting, preparing, and, it may be, the polishing process. All this preparation is going on now ; we have not come to the actual building—stone laid upon stone until the topstone is brought forth with shoutings of “Grace, grace unto it!” When that time comes all this preparatory work will be over. All will be completed, every living stone made perfect before it is brought thither, so as not to need a single blow of the hammer, a single stroke of the chisel, or a single polishing act to be added. “Made perfect.” And then noiselessly, happily, peacefully, is stone laid on stone. No more discipline, no more trial, no more affliction !

“ There shall we bathe our weary souls
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not one wave of trouble roll
Across the peaceful breast.”

“The house when it was in building was built of stone made ready (or made perfect) before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.”

We may comfort one another with these words—

tradistinction to the Church. The inspired writer is here enumerating the distinct and varied spheres and links in the chain of Christian blessing under grace in contrast to the law. “The spirits of just men” refers to the Old Testament saints.—ED.

“ Though painful at present
’Twill cease before long.”

“ These light afflictions which are but for a moment work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;” they are fitting stones of untold value—stones purchased at no less a price than the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, and undergoing the workmanship of the eternal Spirit of God. All this preparatory work is to fit these redeemed souls for a place in the temple of the glory of God. There is a direct analogy between suffering here and glory there—between pre-eminence in suffering on earth and pre-eminence of glory in eternity. There will not be a single stone there that has not been previously fitted for its place here. The Temple was built of stone “made ready”—literally “made perfect”—before it was put in its place.

Let us look at these side chambers. First of all, their number. There is the idea conveyed of a large number. They are ninety in all. The Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples :—

“ Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God : believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you.”

The word “mansions” means abiding places. Take this in connection with the Temple as a type of heaven itself—the Father’s house. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” The 28th chapter of the 1st of Chronicles, from the

11th verse, will throw light upon this portion of the Temple.

“Then David gave to Solomon, his son, the pattern of the porch and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat. And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit.”

First, there is the under row on either side—the lower story. It would appear that these are the treasuries of the house of God. Then there are the two upper stories; and there are also the innermost chambers or parlours. These side chambers go from one end to another, so that the door is in the front—one door into the side chambers on each side, on the three stories, and then chamber opening into chamber, until you come to the innermost parlour or chamber of all. These chambers rise higher and higher, one story after another—first, second, and third. These chambers become larger and larger—five cubits, six cubits, seven cubits. They go from chamber to chamber, deeper and deeper, and towards the holiest where the glory dwells—to the innermost chamber of all. I believe these things are suggestive of most precious truth. These side chambers in their three stories, rising step by step, going from story to story, what idea do they convey naturally to the mind? Is it not that of rising higher and higher? But then not only is it rising higher and higher, but expanding as you rise. It is

growing larger and larger; the capacity is expanded. But that is not all: there is a going deeper and deeper till you get to the innermost chamber of all.

I have heard it said that so little is revealed of heaven in Scripture. It must be a very superficial reader, indeed, to make that complaint. It is from want of apprehending how God reveals the future. It is not ordinarily in express language. It is more frequently in figurative. If God were to tell us in the language of heaven what heaven is, we could not understand it. He has condescended, therefore, to tell us about these heavenly, eternal, divine verities in figurative language; the Bible is full of descriptions of heavenly blessedness and glory, but we must read them as God has written them.

These chambers rise higher and higher. The lower chamber may be treasuries of precious things, but still there is a rising higher; there is a height beyond to be obtained—a going from the first story to the second—from the second to the third. And not only is there a rising higher, but there is an expansion. Our faculty of knowing God, of enjoying God, of serving God, will expand. We shall be prepared to take in more and more. Every fresh accession of love will prepare for a larger growth in the affections of our souls. Every addition to our knowledge, going on

“Long as eternal ages roll,”

will prepare us to take in a deeper, fuller knowledge of God. All service of God will fit us for further service, all enjoyment of God will fit us for further and larger enjoyment of God.

Do you think that when we have been in heaven hundreds of thousands of millions of years we shall be less happy than when we first get there? Will there be no growth of the soul in eternity—no rising higher and higher? Oh, yes, I believe there will be an expanding more and more.

And then to take the other figure. From the east on to the west where the glory dwells, getting deeper and deeper towards the secret place of the Most High, it is :—

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee,”

all through the scene. And the soul as it gets higher goes on increasing and increasing in capacity. What a blessed idea!—getting deeper and deeper into the secrets of God—having more and more fellowship with God—more and more capacity to serve God.

In Ezekiel's Temple and in Solomon's the progression is always from east to west. The east is described particularly in Scripture as the place of the sun rising. Ah, what a thought that is! There is a door in the east, there are gates on the east, but no gates on the west. What an idea that gives us of a morning without

clouds deepening into a

“sacred, high, eternal noon,”

without an evening and without a night. There is progress from east to west, and no going out on the west. Oh, what a day, when that glorious morning dawns—a day of ever-deepening, heightening noon, without the prospect of shadow or eventide!

On the other hand: oh, when the unredeemed soul wakes up in that world, what will it find? It will find it evening-tide, and the shadows of evening deepening and darkening into the blackness of darkness for ever. It is an evening of ever-deepening midnight, without a day dawn and without a morn. Now contrast it, again, on the other hand—an awakening in that morning without clouds, awaking up in the likeness of Christ, with a prospect of an everlasting unclouded day before us, wherein the noontide is ever increasing and there is no prospect of a change. This is the perpetuity of bliss. That which will give the intensity, on the one hand, to the judgment is, that it is the wrath *to come*; and it will give the intensity, on the other hand, to the joys and the glories of heaven; they are the joys *to come*, the glories *to come*, the blessings *to come*. We want to realise this.

Blessed be God for giving us, so to speak, a tangible shape and form to these thoughts as He has done here!

Notes and Comments.

We want to draw special notice
Missionary Depot. to the new phase in our publishing work.

All the profits from the sale of the **Echoes of Mercy** and the **Christian's Library**, and all the other publications of the **Missionary Depot**, will be devoted to the Mission field—hence the title, **The Missionary Depot**.

All communications to be addressed to

The MANAGER,

5 St Martin's, Leicester.

Flocking Back to Palestine. Our readers will be interested in reading the following letter. When in Palestine about twenty years ago, the number of Jews in Jerusalem was estimated at 30,000 only :—

“JERUSALEM, 6th January 1910.

“The proclamation of the Constitution in Turkey has thrown open the doors of Palestine to the incoming of Jews from all parts of the world. In Jerusalem alone four-fifths of the population (100,000) now belong to the Jewish faith, while at Jaffa, Tiberias, Safed, and

Haifa (Mount Carmel) Jews are reckoned by tens of thousands.

“Almost the whole of the extensive plain of Esdraelon has been bought up by them. Their prosperous colonies spread from Dan to Beersheba, and even farther south to the outskirts of Egypt. Thousands are escaping from Persia to find shelter and protection in the Holy Land, while every ship from Odessa carries hundreds of them.

“The Jordan Valley, once the property of the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid, is being eagerly sought after by Jewish capitalists and syndicates. The Zionists, whose agents are distributed all over the land, are buying up the rich properties of the Mohammedan Effendis, whose incomes since the revolution have considerably lessened.

“The whole city is essentially a Jewish town. Banking, as well as trade and commerce, is monopolised by Jews. The Government has found it necessary to organise a company of Jewish gendarmes. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are annually sent from Europe and America to enable the colonists to build homes, hospitals, schools, and invalid homes. Over one hundred Jewish schools already exist in Jerusalem alone. Synagogues are rising up everywhere.

“The value of land has risen fourfold. The ignorant and poverty-stricken fellaheen (peasants) are being ousted from their homes and villages by the sharp European Jew settler, whose modern agricultural implements and methods have made the land produce harvests never before dreamed of by the natives. The Anglo-Palestine Company, a Zionist banking and commercial enterprise, is pushing the cause of Israel with splendid determination.

“The racial exclusiveness of the Jews and their clan-nish proclivities are arousing the opposition of Ottomans. The Turkish Constitutional régime has in this question one of the greatest problems that have ever faced a new and patriotic government.”

**The
Teutonic
Ideal.**

In an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, Herr Charles Tuchmann makes some interesting remarks as to the expansion of the German Empire. With her population of seventy millions, increasing annually by one million, he likens her to a boiler on the point of bursting, and then speculates as to the most probable outlet for her surplus population. He says—

“Let me express a candid opinion : the day is not far distant when Asia Minor will fall, figuratively, to pieces. It would be a *contretemps* to the liking of Germany. Who could prevent annexation in that direction, when Germany would have only to walk through Austria in order to plant her flag on the desired spot ?”

We have long thought that Russia and Germany may in the end be found together occupying the territory and power of the King of the North.—ED.

The Cost of Redemption.

“She (Mary Magdalene) stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.”—JOHN XX. 13.

WHY, think you, should those heavenly visitors keep vigil in the vacated tomb? He who had occupied it for so short a time had

gone: He had left behind all the trappings of death—the shroud was there, the napkin was there, and the tomb still remained to house the dead; but the Lord of Life had arisen, for death had no claim upon Him. The Lord had remained in that guarded tomb sufficiently long to declare plainly to all that He had really died—the debt had been paid, and when the fact had been made manifestly true, an angelic messenger had been sent to roll back the stone, that He who had become the conqueror over sin and death might come forth.

Why was the stone rolled back? It was no impediment to Him who was none other than the Son of God. It has been thought that it was to allow those outside to see that the tomb was empty—the captive gone; but there was possibly another reason. On the cross He had with His dying breath committed His spirit into His Father's keeping; He had said—

“Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.”

His body He had given up as a sacrifice for sin, and upon that He had no claim, but His spirit He was free to give back to the Father. We may then well look for some answer to His beloved Son's precious trust, and we are not disappointed; it comes at the very earliest moment.

The first streak of dawn had only just shot

across the eastern sky on that third day when a heavenly messenger arrived and rolled back the stone from the tomb and sat upon it ("his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow"), that He who was inside might come forth. This was the Father's answer: His beloved Son had committed His spirit into His hands, and now, spirit and body united, He summoned Him forth as an assurance, not only that He had accepted His trust, but that He came forth as the Victor over sin and death: as conqueror over all the power of the enemy: as having fulfilled all that former types and shadows had shadowed forth: that He had maintained God's honour and glory in a scene where it had been treated as of little account; that God's righteous claims against sin had been met, and God could now receive sinners into His favour, not merely for time, but for all eternity, without sacrificing His character as God of truth and holiness.

Small wonder, therefore, to find it recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark that the women when they appeared before the tomb were invited by the angels to gaze upon the spot where the Lord had lain in death—a death fraught with such stupendous results. It was the wondrous answer of God to Satan's workings to secure dominion over man, and God had secured the victory by allowing Satan to outwit himself. Satan had put the Lord Jesus Christ

to death, but in doing so, he enabled God to perfect His plan of grace for fallen creation.

Can we wonder then to find those two angels lingering over so hallowed a spot as that where the precious body of their Lord had lain in death?

Mary Magdalene paid two visits to the tomb; on the first occasion she appears to have seen one angel only, and the second time two were revealed to her. But what one gathers from the different accounts, which vary somewhat, is that the angels were lingering around the spot loath to leave; their minds filled with the events that had taken place, and recounting to each other the wonders of redemption's work. Only a few hours before they had seen the Lord suffering all the terrible agonies of death by crucifixion; and yet He was the One who was Jehovah's fellow (Zech. xiii. 7). He was the One, too, over whom they had had a special charge given them of God, to keep Him in all His ways, that they might bear Him up in their hands, lest at any time He might dash His foot against a stone (see Ps. xci.). But now they were helpless to aid Him; they could do nothing for their beloved Lord; He must die the death. At length the noonday sun had become darkened; an unnatural gloom overspread the sky; the ground had begun to quake, as though in the throes of an unspeakable agony; the rocks were

rent, and even many of the dead were awakened to life—all nature was horrified at the sight of the Creator of the universe suffering upon a cross as a sinbearer. And what of the angels? They with averted faces had to leave Him to His fate, for God had forsaken Him—He had become sin (2 Cor. v. 21). As Moses in the wilderness had made a serpent of brass, as an image or representation of what the bitten Israelites were suffering from, so God in His infinite wisdom had made Him, who was His beloved Son, to represent that (sin) which had come in between Himself and man, and kept man at a distance from Him, that He might be enabled to receive men into His favour, and that not for time only, but for all eternity.

Thus this wondrous scheme of redemption, as it is called, was accomplished, and at such an infinite cost.

The angels could take no part in it; He alone, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the One who carried it out, and He did so to the bitter end. He went to that cross and down into that grave. And so we find the angels pondering over this matter, so interesting to them, and yet in which they had no part, and they linger over the spot where their beloved Lord had lain in death.

Reader, have you ever lingered over that spot, and asked yourself the question as to whether *you* have any part or lot in the matter? Time

is short, and it behoves you to seek with all diligence to get the question settled as to whether this one sacrifice has atoned for you as a sinner or not.

“ I hear the words of love,
I gaze upon the blood,
I see the mighty sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

'Tis everlasting peace !
Sure as Jehovah's name ;
'Tis stable as His stedfast throne.
For evermore the same.”

F. R.



The Friend of God.

AS our purpose is not to take up the details of Abraham's life, but to get an outline of God's ways with him, specially in connection with righteousness, a large part of his life must now be passed over very rapidly, in order to get a comprehensive view of the beginning and end of the righteousness which is by faith. Only the salient points, as they throw light on the development of this righteousness, will be noticed.

We saw the beginning of this righteousness in the fifteenth chapter. If Scripture had not indicated this point of Abraham's life so clearly

as the moment when "he believed Jehovah, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness," we might have placed it ten years or so earlier, when by faith he obeyed the call of an unknown God.

But Scripture is plain, and we recognise the need of the preparatory stages, just as we recognise the need of the Lord's patient training of His disciples before the first sign of the Father's work, like the first young blade of harvest, could be seen in Peter's confession in Matthew xvi. Abraham had passed through thirteen years of quiet experience, from this beginning of his life as a righteous man, before God spoke to him again. The care and training of Ishmael had occupied him, and we know from xvii. 18 that it was a real exercise of heart to him. Such quiet stages are of extreme importance in the righteous life. Too often there is no time to grow, especially in such a day of ceaseless activity. We have noticed the failure in chapter xvi., when Abraham stepped off the ground of living by faith, and sought to bring about the purpose of God before its time by natural means. Perhaps it took thirteen years to regain the lost ground, and in any case the consequences of the step remained as a permanent source of weakness. But after thirteen years God takes up the link of chapter xv. as if only a day had passed, and to the man who had learned the secret of the Most High He reveals Himself as the Almighty, and as the Almighty

God He presents Himself for the first time as Abraham's God (xvii. 7). This marks a distinct advance. When God is not ashamed to be called **his God**, we may know that God recognises and acknowledges His own work, that growth in character and likeness to God which comes of intercourse with God. There is great encouragement in this. Abraham could now abide under the shadow of the Almighty. His God was an Almighty God. Although we are blessed with the revelation of the Father's name, this is just as much a lesson for our souls, a stage of growth in the knowledge of God, a stage not to be outgrown or left behind, but an abiding resting-place for the soul, yea, the Son Himself dwelt there.

Those who know that they have an **Almighty God** will not be in haste to carry out His purpose for Him, they know that He can do that best Himself. They know, too, that in doing what He has told them to do they have the power of an Almighty God behind them, and before them the great mountain must become a plain.

But the fresh revelation is a call to fresh advance. "Walk before My face, and be perfect." Abraham is called to walk in the full knowledge that God **is his God**; and in the knowledge of the character of his God, in order that the same character may be formed in him, he is to go on unto perfection.

So, leaving this chapter with all that it holds of interest and profit, we must pass on to trace the development of this perfection, the object of God's ways with Abraham.

In chapter xviii. God Himself bears witness to the progress of Abraham's soul. After visiting him in human form, and partaking of refreshment from his hand, marks of increasing intimacy and closeness of intercourse, God makes known to him what He is about to do. It is not now a question of His purposes of blessing for Abraham, but of ways in which He takes Abraham's interest for granted, ways not directly connected with Abraham at all. The reason given for this special mark of intimacy is, "**for I know him.**" "If any man love God, he is known of Him." God knows the result of His own work in Abraham's soul, a solid and abiding result. Not only has Abraham learnt obedience for himself, but he will teach it to his children and his household after him, and they, too, will be found walking in God's way and doing *righteousness* and judgment (xviii. 19).

Accordingly we find God communicating to Abraham what He is about to do, and in the marvellous intercourse that follows the announcement, we find the evidence of a wonderful growth in the knowledge of God.

Abraham knows that the Judge of all the earth will do right, he knows that "the Lord loveth the righteous"; according to God's own

character he discerns between the righteous and the wicked (*cf.* Mal. iii. 17, 18), and, moreover, he knows that God delights in mercy, in mercy that will spare Sodom for even ten righteous men found there.

Thus, the whole chapter is a picture of such close intercourse with God, and tells of a deep knowledge of God, and gives in the very intercourse a fuller revelation of God's character.

Scripture adds that, although there were not found ten righteous men in Sodom, yet when God executed His judgment upon the city,

"God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow" (xix. 29).

He did not forget Lot, but Scripture would remind us of God's appreciation of such intercourse, "He **remembered Abraham.**"

In chapter xx. we find another step backward. Here is a remarkable case of failure to discern what is of God. Abraham goes to sojourn in Gerar, and decides that there is no fear of God there, forgets that his God is an Almighty God, and consequently again disowns his wife. As a matter of fact the fear of God was there to a remarkable degree, and one who had known God in such a way as Abraham had, ought to have recognised it. God Himself bears witness to Abimelech's integrity of heart, and kept him from the error to which Abraham had exposed him. Abraham, a righteous man in the midst

of "a **righteous** nation" (xx. 4), was yet unable to discern anything of God there. God says of him to Abimelech, "He is a prophet and will pray for thee," showing how he had slipped away from his place of intercession and knowledge of God in the eighteenth chapter. It is a delicate and tender rebuke under very humbling circumstances. But these things go to the making of saints.

In chapter xxi. we have various exercises, the birth of the son of promise; the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael, a sore grief to Abraham; the bringing home to Abraham of certain consequences of his failure in Gerar. All these things are working together to bring before Abraham's soul the reality of God's government. This realisation of God's faithfulness to His promise, together with the recognition of His hand in the consequences of past failure as to Hagar, Ishmael, and Abimelech, so deeply impress Abraham's soul that he plants a grove in Beersheba and calls on God by the new name of the "**everlasting God**" (xxi. 33). He has found God always the same in all his changing experiences, and this name is the record of a further and most blessed stage in the knowledge of God.

But it is "**after these things**" (*cf.* xv. 1), just at this ripe point of Abraham's experience of God, that God chooses to present the final test of His own work (xxii. 1).

There is no need to go over the detail of the moving story. I want to turn to the divine comment on the precise point in God's ways which the story reveals. This is in James ii. 21-23:

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith was working with his works, and by the works the faith **was perfected** and **the Scripture was fulfilled** which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,’ and he was called ‘**God’s friend.**’”

There are three great things here.

First, The faith which was counted to him for righteousness in chapter xv. is **perfected** in chapter xxii., about forty years after he first entered the land of promise, and about thirty years after the beginning of his righteous life. Faith, the true subjection of heart to God, had been quietly growing, working with his works, during these years of intercourse with God, and is now said to have reached maturity, it is **perfected**.

Second, “The scripture was fulfilled.” Genesis xv. 6 is fulfilled in Genesis xxii. 10. This is very important. It does not mean that when the Lord counted Abraham's faith to him for righteousness he was not really justified. He was justified. God justified him. But it shows us that Scripture does not present righteousness in the rigid theological forms with which it has sometimes been clothed. The righteousness of

xxii. 10 is the same as that of xv. 6, only it is the ripened fruit of what is seen in xv. 6 as the first blade appearing above the soil. It is not good to separate what God has joined. Paul concentrates upon the immense importance of the **beginning**, the first complete act of surrender to God. "God be thanked ye have obeyed from the heart" (Rom. vi. 17). It is the starting point of righteousness, but it is the starting point of **a righteous life**, as he shows by quoting Habakkuk ii. 4 at the very outset of Romans. The first eight chapters of Romans, indeed the whole letter, read in the light of this great fact, show how deeply Paul entered into this divine reality. On the other hand, James turns to the **end**, the perfecting of the faith, that very *δικαίωσιν ζωῆς*, "**justifying of life**," which Paul speaks of in Romans iv. 25, and v. 18.

Third, He was called "**God's friend**." This finally, and yet in the simplest way, brings out the full significance of this righteousness whose development, under the hand of God, we have been tracing. Faith does not question but obeys. The vast issues of obedience are only known to God. Faith is God's *ἔλεγχος* to an unbelieving world. God's "irrefutable proof of things not seen." Abraham little knew what he was demonstrating to angels, principalities, and powers, when in simple obedience he trod that dolorous way whose steps must have been numbered in the pulsations of his very life. There, all uncon-

sciously, he showed the full character of God, developed in his soul through exercise and sorrow in obedience of daily life, the full character of the Father giving the Son of His love. Thus he was called God's friend. God had moulded him into His own likeness, through the obedience of faith he had become like God. This is the nature of the righteousness that God sets forth in Abraham's life. God seeks character ; He is patiently working to produce it in us. It seems that He is now pressing home this fact upon His people.

S. H. H.

Notes on the Temple—No. 10.

(Read 1 Kings vi. 11-22, 29, 30.)

“So Solómon built the house and finished it.”—1 KINGS vi. 14.

WE have seen on former occasions the divine purpose unfolded in connection with David's first thoughts, God taking the opportunity to bring out the secret thought of His own heart on the occasion of David's uttering his thoughts before God. We have seen the site fixed on, on the ground of the sacrifice—the accepted offering. We have seen the stones brought out from the quarry, typical of sinners dead in trespasses and sins, through faith in

Jesus constituted living stones for God's spiritual house.

We further considered the building of the house, every stone being fully prepared by discipline ended, by trial over—no stroke or finishing touch remaining to be given. We have seen these stones noiselessly put in their allotted places, forming the temple, the dwelling-place of God.

Now let us proceed a step further in our meditations. You say, "Is not that enough—souls redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, brought safe home to glory, builded together for a habitation of God, a holy temple in the Lord, to go no more out for ever? Is there anything more?" Yes, we go a step further than that, as set forth by the type before us.

"So Solomon built the house and finished it. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, from the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling : and he covered them upon the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir" (ver. 15, margin).

What is the truth suggested by this? You see every stone put into its place, these stones representing precious souls, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, brought home to glory. What is the next thing? "*Clothed upon.*" The whole house, as you will see, on turning to the verses which we have been reading, was covered with cedar or cypress, the larger house being covered on the inside, or wainscotted with boards

of cedar from the floor up to the ceiling. The ceiling itself, as we read in verse 9 (margin), is of cedar. The floor is covered with fir, or more correctly, perhaps, according to the best authorities, cypress wood—not an inferior wood, as our fir or deal, but something with equal value with cedar, though more durable. The holy place was covered within entirely of boards of cedar, and the greater house on the outside with fir or cypress. See 2 Chronicles iii. 5 :—

“The greater house he ceiled” (or more literally, covered externally) “with fir tree or cypress.”

The porch is also covered with cedar, and as to the holiest of all, we read—

“He built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place” (1 Kings vi. 16).

The 18th verse :—

“And the cedar of the house within” (or rather, “the cedar of the inner house,” *i.e.*, the holiest of all) “was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar, there was no stone seen.”

All the stone of the most holy place was covered with cedar, no stone being seen. Then with regard to the posts and the doors. In the 31st verse we read—

“For the entering of the oracle” (*i.e.*, the door entering into the most holy place), “he made doors of olive tree” (or, literally, oily tree), “the lintel and side posts were a

fifth part of the wall. The two doors also were of olive tree."

Then in the 33rd verse:—

"He made also for the door of the temple" (the front) "posts of olive tree" (oily wood) "a fourth part of the wall. And the two doors were of fir tree."

Now, I think it is plain that the statement there was "no stone seen" will apply to the whole. There is either the cedar or the fir covering the whole, and there is the oily wood in the doors and lintels of the holy and most holy place.

We now come to the spiritual signification of this. Let us turn to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the fifth chapter:—

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed,"

which is simply death, that is, laying off this frail tabernacle in death. "Not that we would be unclothed"—though "to depart and be with Christ is far better." The real earnest desire of the soul led by the Spirit of God is rather for resurrection than for death.

Cedar wood, I believe, is the type of resurrection incorruptibility. Shittim wood, of which the tabernacle in the wilderness was composed

is the type of humanity in its enduring and indestructible character.

At the coming of the Lord we which are alive and remain, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shall be changed; then it is that that word shall be accomplished, "mortality is swallowed up of life." You all know this character of cedar—that it is firm and incorruptible. The Septuagint, therefore, wherever it occurs, renders it "incorruptible wood." It is an illustration in type of the truth of 1 Corinthians xv. relating to the resurrection body:—

"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption."

The spirits of the redeemed brought home to glory will be clothed upon with a resurrection body, "the house from heaven." Then with regard to the fir, or cypress, there is the same thought connected with that, with this addition. You will see from the places which it occupies—for instance, the floor and the roof and the external door—that it is evidently chosen not because it is more frail, but more enduring. Cypress wood was used by the Egyptians for mummy cases, and it is stated as a fact that the doors of St Peter's were made originally of cypress and lasted three hundred years, continuing in a state of perfect preservation, till they were superseded by gates of brass. Now, if cedar gives the idea of resurrection **incorruptibility** the fir or cypress gives the idea of resurrection

strength, thus reminding us of that word in 1 Corinthians xv. :—

“It is sown in weakness : it is raised in power.”

Thus the stones are brought out of the quarry, chiselled, formed, put into their places and then encased in cedar or cypress.

But you will ask me, “What does the olive or the oily tree represent?” That is, I believe, the type of another truth in this same chapter :—

“It is sown a natural body : it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul : the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

The cedar sets forth resurrection incorruptibility. The fir or cypress gives the idea of resurrection strength. And the oily wood, oil being in Scripture the type of the Spirit, gives the idea of a spiritual body.

“It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body.”



The Bible Class.

Thyatira (Rev. ii. 18-29).

THE history of declension of the Church *prophetically given* advances rapidly. We have seen in Ephesus departure from first love and threatened removal of the candlestick ; in

Smyrna, a temporary brightening up of the general state through persecution ; in Pergamos, danger through the snare of worldliness, and Balaam teachers breaking down the barrier between the Church and the world.

In Thyatira changes of the most instructive nature take place. In the first three addresses more or less passing phases are seen, here and in the last three a more permanent state of things is contemplated. In the last four Churches we are carried right down to the end ; in them the coming of the Lord is introduced. Furthermore, a remarkable change takes place in the position given to the sevenfold repeated formula, "He that hath ears to hear," &c. In the first three this *precedes* the address to the overcomer, whereas in the last four it *follows*. Why is this? Is it not that evil of the corporate system has so advanced that the hearing ear at last can only be found amongst the overcomers?

"And to the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write These things saith the Son of God, He that hath His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass" (ver. 18).

If in Pergamos we see historically the time of Constantine, in Thyatira we find the dark Middle Ages of the Church, characterised by the idolatry and corruption of the papacy. How blessed to see the way in which the Lord reveals Himself

during this long period of evil—"The Son of God." In this the faithful and persecuted remnant of His people found abundant consolation. Those were the days when the Church was wielding the sword of persecution. No longer persecuted by the world, her Balaam teachers had so brought about an unholy union with that world, that now, for the first time, a remnant of faithful souls was recognised—"the rest (remnant) in Thyatira"; such were the Waldenses and others hidden here and there, and many of them martyred by that which claimed to be "the Church." How dear to the hearts of these persecuted saints was Jesus, the blessed Son of God! For His sake they braved the horrors of the Inquisition and the tortures of the stake. His eyes were like a flame of fire, discerning everything by that searching scrutiny, and His feet were like fine brass, irresistible in executing judgment. The time may seem long, but it surely comes when cruel and corrupt ecclesiastics will receive at the hands of the Son of God the reward of their vile and sinful deeds and their shameful and heartless persecutions. If power was given to Jesus the Son of God, that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him, so likewise power and authority are given to Him that He should execute judgment upon all who despise His name and reject His word. All that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall

come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life—here surely are included the martyrs of the dark ages of the Church—and, solemn words! **“they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”**—yes, be they popes or cardinals, whose guilty dust may lie beneath alabaster slabs or in marble vaults.

“I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith and thine endurance, and thy last works (to be) more than the first” (ver. 19).

The very evil that marked the Thyatira stage had reached such a height that it developed an energy of faith not previously seen in exercise. In the words of another:—

“The effect of the condition of the professing Church was to drive saints into a kind of energy they had not before known. So, indeed, has it ever been in the history of the Church in what has been called the ‘dark ages.’ We find the most faithful testimony, such a measure of devotedness (which I am sure I shall be glad to see now in any way) unknown at other times, men hazarding their lives to witness for God; but how little of this in this our day of ease and slothfulness.”

“But I have against thee that thou permittest the woman Jezebel, she who calls herself prophetess, and she teaches and leads astray My servants to commit fornication and eat of idol sacrifices (ver. 20).

In this verse we get the salient points of

Thyatira, and it is easy to perceive the connection with Rome ecclesiastical.

1. It is the "woman" that **teaches** here; the woman, in Scripture, is the well-known symbol of the Church, both the true and the false. The true Church, the Bride of Christ, is subject to Him; but the false usurps a place of authority, issuing her decrees, and teaching her doctrines, enforcing submission under the most terrific threats. Where is this better exhibited than in the Romish Church?

2. Jezebel was an **idolatrous** queen; and where is idolatry more plainly manifested in so-called Christian countries than where Rome holds sway?

3. Jezebel was a **persecutor** of God's servants. This, too, we see illustrated in the history of ecclesiastical Rome. Not only in the past at such spots as Smithfield, and amidst such horrors as the Spanish Inquisition, but even to-day in every land where Rome has the power the spirit of persecution is rampant.

It does not follow that there were no really converted souls in those dark ages; there were those the Lord could speak of as "My servants" (ii. 20); but so great was the power of evil that the professing Church, which should have maintained herself unspotted from the world, had now seduced these very servants of the Lord to commit fornication therewith—this word is, of course, used here in a spiritual sense, and implies

the unholy alliance and intercourse of the Lord's people with the world. Has Christendom ever recovered from this? Let the whist drives, the theatricals, the card parties, and the dances now so commonly found in connection with the Churches answer this question.

“And I gave her time that she should repent, and she will not repent of her fornication. Behold, I cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her (not, *their*) works.”

“And her children will I kill with death; and all the assemblies shall know that I am He that searches the reins and the hearts; and I will give to you each according to your works” (verses 21-23).

Great principles are here unfolded. In the first place God is very patient in the execution of judgment. He gives time for repentance. Even so has it been with the papacy; but the hour of retribution draws near, when the great corruptress of the earth, and persecutor of the saints shall be rewarded double according to her works (Rev. xvii., xviii.).

Next, while there are varying degrees of punishment, yet all associated with Jezebel in the end come under the hand of God in judgment. Those only are exempt who, despised and persecuted, have resisted her doctrines and her practices. The true children of God (**My servants**) may get entangled in her skirts, for it is marvellous how fascinating the thought of

“the authority of the Church” becomes to hearts that have allowed anything to come in between the soul and Christ.

Another has written: “It is a very solemn thought, but a true one, that God having taught the saints that they are one with Christ, he who puts anything whatever between them and the Head virtually denies Christianity. It was the great truth given to the Apostle Paul to unfold; it was what he received specially from the Lord: ‘I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.’ Therefore it was that it puts Paul’s mind into an agony, whatever it might be, whether works of the law, priesthood, or anything else, which coming in between the soul and Christ, denied the great truth he had learned, the very truth that he was converted to, that the Church was one with Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. This blessed truth held in the simplicity of faith, gives power to the soul, and sweeps everything else away; and it also sweeps through the whole course of the Christian’s daily life if he has anything between his soul and Christ.”

In Thyatira, Jezebel is the great outstanding feature. She seduces the true servants of the Lord; this she has done through all the ages since the days of Constantine, but all who tamper with her principles will be cast into great tribulation, and that wherever those principles are found at work, whether in the vast Romish

system, or the most insignificant little sect of Christendom — trouble, persecution, intolerance, “except they repent of her deeds”; *her* deeds, for it is Jezebel's deeds that are here reprimanded.

But this evil system produces *children*, and for these a worse judgment is reserved. Think for one moment of the vast army of unregenerate souls that have been united to the great “mother of harlots”! Made drunk with the wine of her fornication, they have oftentimes become the guilty instruments of her intolerance and persecution, heaping the faggots on her victims, and gloating over the tortures of “the martyrs of Jesus.”

The assemblies are invited to take heed and observe the judgment that a righteous God will mete out to those whom this evil ecclesiastical system has produced, “her children,” but not the children of God. He who searches the hearts of all, His own people not excepted, warns not only the angel of the church of Thyatira, but all the assemblies, and each individual member thereof, that judgment according to our works will surely be given. Is not this of present-day importance? Do we not need to, and shall we not, take heed and repent? Rome, its pretensions and its persecutions, and all such-like are abhorrent to a God of holiness and love.

Notes and Comments.

Euphrates Valley Railway. Great activity seems taking place in the Near East, directed to the development of the countries round about Palestine. Sir William Willcock has been surveying the Euphrates Valley for the Turkish Government. The work he proposes will enormously increase the fertility of the land of Mesopotamia; and to provide an outlet for this, Sir William strongly urges an immediate construction of a railway from Baghdad to the Mediterranean. We cannot but feel how near we are to the fulfilment of Apocalyptic prophecy which speaks of "the way of the kings of the east" being prepared (Rev. xvi. 12), and much else which will immediately follow upon the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord.

"Behold, I come quickly."

Israel and Islam. It is most significant of the times in which we are living to note the common cause that is being made between Israel in its apostasy and the Moslem religion. Both deny the deity of Jesus. Christendom has not continued in the goodness of God, and because of its sins is soon to be cut off (Rom. xi. 22). The Sheikh-ul-Islâm, who is the great head of the Ottoman

Moslems, quite recently addressed the chief Rabbi of Turkey in the following words :—

“The principles of our religion coincide with yours. I wish that no barrier should any longer exist between Mussulman and Jew, and I am anxious that they should love and help one another like brothers. You may rely upon my co-operation.”

It is not sufficiently understood *The Spread of Islam.* that the Moslem religion is making enormous and alarming strides.

In India within ten years it has increased by 30 per cent., whilst in Central Africa it is raging through the population like a vast prairie fire. A missionary writes :—

“When I came out (to Northern Nigeria, a province of about ten million souls) there were few Mohammedans to be seen ; now, at the present time of progress, there will scarcely be a heathen village uncaptured by Islam by 1910.”

Again :—

“Islam is the only one of the great religions to come after Christianity ; the only one that definitely claims to correct, complete, and supersede Christianity ; the only one that categorically denies the truth of Christianity ; the only one that has in the past signally defeated Christianity ; the only one that seriously disputes the world with Christianity ; the only one which, in several parts of the world, is to-day forestalling and gaining on Christianity.”

These are startling words, and may well appeal to the hearts and consciences of all

Christians, old and young. While men have slept, the enemy has sown tares amongst the wheat. Whilst Christians have been idle, the enemy has been active. Would to God that the weeks, months, and years that Christians have often spent in useless controversy and needless conflict with one another had been devoted to the spread of the life-giving Word in heathen lands. It has been calculated that every subject of strife in the Church of God runs into four figures for printing and postage. But the day is coming when every man's work will be tried of what sort it is. The need is great in all parts of the earth. Young and zealous Christians with hearts set on pleasing their Saviour and Lord, and all aglow with love for perishing souls, may find doors open everywhere.

***New
Theology
in India.***

A Christian who is travelling through India writes sadly of the inroads that evil doctrine, touching the deity of our Lord, is making among professed believers in parts as far distant as Darjeeling and Travancore, while every town has societies for the propagation of a reformed Hinduism, a mixture of Buddhism and ethical Christianity, with a basis of pagan philosophy, not at all unlike the "new theology." In the train he fell into conversation with a young man, once an earnest Christian worker, now a Christa-

delphian. Mr Bird writes: "We were in a crowded carriage, and I felt it was no use to reason, so simply gave him my testimony and the gospel. When he began to pour out more questions in five minutes than Solomon could have answered in a day, a young man in the corner spoke up and told him that a year ago he had been a Buddhist and a vile sinner, but that the Lord Jesus had met and saved him, which his theories could not do. This silenced our questioner, but left him still hardened in unbelief."



Correspondence.

No. 1.—Public Reading

DEAR MR EDITOR,

Having been struck by your recently published list of texts on public reading, prayer and singing, you will perhaps permit a few remarks thereon.

We have become so accustomed to regard our meetings as those wherein we are led of the Spirit to take part, that we have perhaps somewhat forgotten the human or practical side, which is, after all, to be found in Scripture.

"God is not the author of confusion."

"We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you."

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

"Joying and beholding your order."

Clearly this shows that we are liable to *dis*-orders.

Take Public Reading.—Those who "stand up for to read" should remember that the words are the words of God, and should expect them to be carried by the power of the Holy Ghost to the hearts of hearers ("faith cometh by *hearing*"), whereas they are sometimes like an unknown

tongue by reason of the inaudible voice of the reader, or because they are hurried over as a perfunctory service—yet if the same voice begin to expound, care is generally taken that the words are well heard.

Every word of Holy Writ is a living word, like a good seed in the hand of him who sows it. “Hearing” comes “by the word of God,” which makes good reading important.

Read carefully Nehemiah viii. Ezra and the Levites read before men and women and all who could understand “distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

This is a subject well worth our attention.

X. X.

The Missionary Depot.

A CHRISTIAN FRIEND writes :—

“I have noticed the departure in publication of *Echoes of Mercy*; the object to devote sale of same to missionary work seems one that should appeal to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I sincerely trust every one will do their part so that its circulation may be doubled. May the Lord encourage and bless you in this service.”

“Step by Step until He Come,” &c.

These letters, entitled “Step by Step,” were not written with the object of establishing charges against any of the Lord’s beloved people, but rather to acknowledge whatever is of God, and to suggest the practical application of His Word, in simplicity and faith, to present circumstances. They are commended to the earnest consideration of those who “pray for the peace” of God’s assembly upon earth, and who desire a “way of peace” that shall be according to His Word, and wherein they can walk in righteousness “till He come.”

Serious Times.

TIME goes on and waits for no one. It is impossible to put a brake on the wheel. It rolls on without interruption. Every beat of the pulse brings us nearer to the hour when, whether we like it or not, whether we are ready or not, we shall have to quit the theatre of this world with all its restless activity, and pass into eternity.

This is serious and at the same time profoundly humiliating. Man with all the advantages and energy of which he boasts, with his mind and intelligence, his knowledge and power, is forced to yield in presence of death. He cannot stand before this hard and implacable enemy. At the close of his life, be it long or short, he finds a narrow bed under the sods.

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. vi. 23).

“Man dieth and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?” (Job xiv. 10).

Yes, where is he ? The moment when he must quit this earth, is constantly approaching ; and what will then transpire ? Others will take his place and continue his work. The wheel of time will not cease turning, and the world will continue its business, absolutely as if the one who is dead had never lived. For a short time his memory may remain, and then will be clean

forgotten. But where is his **soul**? In **heaven** or in **hell**?

When we hear of frightful railway accidents, or terrible explosions in mines, we are horror-struck. And when we come in contact with all the harrowing details of these accidents, our hearts are filled with sympathy not only for the victims but also for the relatives of these poor sufferers.

But there is worse misery than this—misery, too, which we see around us perpetually, but to which, alas! little attention is paid. I allude to the vast multitude of men and women, youths, girls, and children who disappear from the world through illness and want, as a consequence of the horrible plague of **sin**. They pass away; time carries them off, and often alas! without God and without Christ, without repentance, without faith in the gospel, rendered senseless by sin; they are hasting onwards to the tribunal of a holy God, to an eternal hell, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched! What a frightful reality, to think of men hurrying on to eternal perdition, and not only those who are sunk in moral corruption, but also upright, honourable people who have allowed themselves to be carried away by the press of business or the whirlpool of pleasure.

Men, deceived by Satan, mock now at these terrible realities; they reject with disdain all warnings as to their danger, and refuse to flee

from "**the wrath to come.**" This is one of the sorrows of the Christian, and should there be one such mocker who reads this paper, may God in grace cause the light to shine into his heart so that he may repent ere it be too late.

One thing is true, "**God is not mocked, and whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap**" (Gal. vi. 7). God does not forget any sin committed against Him. With what rapidity the jeer of the sinner on this earth could be changed into a cry of everlasting distress. How swiftly lust and pleasure could be exchanged for eternal suffering and despair. Our hearts bleed in thinking of it, and we pray God to have pity on these multitudes of poor creatures, and to deliver their guilty souls from perdition, lest they suffer the eternal consequences of their folly and sins.

But we may look at the unconverted from yet another point of view. How much they lose in this world, and how, even apart from their danger, they are to be pitied! The love and sympathy of Jesus are foreign to them. They are ignorant of the forgiveness of their sins, and consequently of peace and true joy. They go through life with its many difficulties unaided by the love of God, and when care spreads its heavy mantle over them, they are unacquainted with the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Their hearts and hands are empty. They grope in darkness, blind to every snare, while "**the path of the**

just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. iv. 18).

Christian reader, let us remember our responsibility towards the unsaved. The time is short. Very soon our beloved Lord will come to take His own to be with Himself. How many then will be left behind for judgment who might have been saved had they not always said there was time enough yet. How many there are who have perhaps rarely been warned, and might say with reason, “No one troubled themselves about my soul.”

May God give us to think more of their lot, and may we live more in view of these realities! In these last days there are, alas! Christians who have become lukewarm and indifferent, instead of redoubling their energy, zeal, and activity for the Lord. May He revive us, so that we may no longer be contented with our own salvation and indifferent to that of our neighbour! May we be aroused to think not only of all the grace and love which is ours, but also of our responsibility, and that time lost in this world is lost for ever! Let us learn to know somewhat more of the love for poor lost souls which led our Saviour down to death, and which caused His faithful servant Paul, the apostle, to say—

“I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

The Association of Saints.

SUFFERING develops what is real in us, and what is of God. But it also binds together the saints of God, and unites them in a practical way, according to the truth of their unity by the Spirit of God. And **sorrow**, also, has its sanctifying effect in drawing together the Lord's people in unfeigned sympathy and love, as it sets them free from many hindrances to active association and godly care, due so often to coldness and hardness of heart.

And in the providence and goodness of God the Thessalonian saints, who were in the freshness and brightness of God's illumination (Heb. x. 32), were allowed to pass through much suffering and sorrow, in order, doubtless, that they might be made brighter still, as the refining process went on, and the image of the Divine Refiner became reflected in their

“work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, **in the sight** of God and our Father” (1 Thess. i. 3).

And that such a work of refining was carried on by the Spirit of God to an issue in which God was being glorified, we need only to refer to a passage in the second epistle.

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all toward each other

aboundeth, so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure" (2 Thess. i. 3, 4).

But as the Lord continued to fulfil in them "all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power" (2 Thess. i. 11),

the effect was seen in a living and practical association with one another, and in this association the Apostle Paul, in his words of exhortation, was led to encourage them. And therefore it is deeply interesting to observe in what connection he used the word "**together**," in its present application, and also in its future fulfilment in the comfort of hope.

I. **Together in the Assembly on Earth.**

"Wherefore comfort yourselves **together**, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (1 Thess. v. 11).

It was the custom of these beloved Thessalonian saints "to come together in the church," and exercise themselves in the ministry of prophecy, which, according to the Spirit, was productive of the greatest profit and blessing to all (1 Cor. xi. 18, xiv.). And happy indeed it was for them that their hearts were so filled with thoughts of love for one another, that their coming together formed the occasion for their seeking to comfort one another, and to build one another up in their most holy faith (Jude 20). And yet Paul greatly encouraged such

assembling or associating of themselves together, as he was wont to enjoin upon all believers of that time the importance of exhorting one another more and more, because of the hardening of sin's deceitfulness, and also in view of the dawning of Christ's day (Heb. iii. 13, x. 25 ; 2 Pet. i. 19). And how incumbent, therefore, is such an exhortation upon all the Lord's beloved people of our own time, when sin and apostasy, with overwhelming force, are accomplishing their deadly work in corrupting the earth ! But in opposition to all this Satanic energy, the Spirit of God is raising up a standard, founded upon the immovable and imperishable rock of truth, by which truth believers are sanctified unto the coming of the Lord (John xvii. 17 ; Eph. v. 26).

However, in the meetings of believers generally, do we find that they come together in this simple, unaffected way, to wait, not upon some appointed minister in charge, or upon some special gift, but on the sovereign acting of the Holy Ghost, who divides in the distribution of His gifts, to **every** man severally as He will, and gives liberty to **all** the men in the Church to prophesy, that all may learn and all may be comforted (1 Cor. xii. 1-11, xiv. 31-40).

Such is God's way, and such is the scriptural way, and, therefore, such must be the **best** way for the saints of God to come together in the twentieth century as well as during the first, and

for the reason that God had no better way, else He would have made it known long ago. Yet if, in some measure, it be true that we have sought to thus meet with fellow-saints of the household of God, in this the Spirit's **way**, have we had always before us the Spirit's **object** when thus together? Has He, the Spirit of Christ, so filled and possessed our hearts as to turn them to one another, with a real "desire to prophesy" (1 Cor. xiv. 1-39). To comfort, encourage, and build up the saints appears to be the Spirit's object; while dwelling among them, He continues to lead

"home to the Lamb, His Bride."

And His desire and object should doubtless be ours. If, however, it is our high privilege to thus have fellowship with the Spirit, it should be with all attentiveness to two important and abiding rules, which He has laid down.

"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40);

and,

"Let all things be done with love" (1 Cor. xvi. 14).

And chapter xiii. may be said to define for us the **love** of the Spirit, while chapter xiv. sets forth His **order** and **power**.

2. Together in the Resurrection Meeting.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up **together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 17, 18).

In these words we have the "comfort of love," as well as the comfort of hope (Phil. ii. 1). And how the Spirit, in "these words," appears to delight in using that word "**together**"! As a fact, loved ones had died and were buried, but as a hope the Lord was coming in person in the air, and then all loved ones who had believed in Jesus in life, and who were, therefore, sleeping in Him in death, would be reunited, "in the power of an endless life," with those who were still alive at the coming of the Lord. And not only those believers who were united in this world by natural ties, but more especially those who, by the Spirit, had become united in "the love of the Spirit," would be united again, as they **together** arose to meet the Lord in the air.

But mark well, dear reader, it was not the meeting of departed loved ones in the air, or even in heaven, that formed the "exceeding great and precious promise" of such a hope. Together they would be caught up, but oh, the thought of **meeting the Lord** in the air was what so thrilled and animated the heart. For was there any saint on earth, or any beloved departed one in heaven, so dear or so longed for as the Lord Himself? Then may our own hearts answer the question back to Himself, and say—

"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20).

To-day the Lord's people come together, and "the Comforter" leads out their hearts in His

love, to comfort and edify one another, but **to-morrow** they may have been "caught up" together in the clouds, to see and meet the Lord. And while it is a precious thought that then they shall never more be separated, still even more precious is the thought of their inseparable association with the Lord for ever, expressed by the Spirit in these words of comfort—

"And so shall we **ever be with the Lord.**"

"Oh, with what joy ascending,
We'll **meet Him** in the air,
To dwell **with Him** in glory,
And His blest image bear."

3. Together in the "Glorious Church" (Eph. v. 27).

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering **together** unto Him," &c. (2 Thess. ii. 1-3).

In his second epistle Paul sought to free the Thessalonians from the belief that "the day of Christ was present." For if that day were really come, then their hope, both for themselves and for those who had died, was in vain, and their "patience of hope" was also in vain, since the coming of the Lord for His saints would necessarily usher in "the day of the Lord," which is "the great day of His wrath" (1 Thess. v. 1-3; Rev. vi. 16, 17). And if the Lord had come, they certainly were left behind to pass through the unparalleled trial and sufferings of the "great tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 21; Rev. xii. 12).

But happily this persuasion was only a piece of deception from the enemy, who ever seeks to deny, or pervert, or mystify the fact of the Lord's personal return for all His own, whether dead or living. And therefore the universal gathering together of all the redeemed **unto Christ**, when He came, was announced, and by this announcement the perturbed state of mind and spirit was relieved. And it was the truth here, as ever, that set free from error, and established in the truth those who, for the time, had been misled, in order that they might no longer be

“carried about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. iv. 14 ; Heb. xiii. 9).

But how the thought of thus going up and gathering together unto Christ in a heavenly sphere must even now set our hearts aglow, and give them a glory and fulness of joy peculiar to “the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”! (2 Cor. i. 22). And if it is now ours to be “gathered together unto His name,” as by faith we seek to own His presence “in the midst,” which He promised according to His word (Matt. xviii. 20), what will it be then, when we shall gather no longer unto His worthy name, but unto His own matchless and glorious Person?—when He will gather us unto Himself in the air, to enter with Him into that prepared, heavenly, and glorious abode—when “we shall see Him as He is,” and “He shall see of the

travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. liii. 11 ; John xiv. 1-3 ; 1 John iii. 2).

And, beloved, with Him "in the midst" of the eternal throne, and all the redeemed and glorified ones gathered about Him (Rev. v. 6).

"What a gathering
Of the ransomed that will be !"

And may we not add : what a song of triumph and praise will go forth from this "ransomed gathering," as they together acclaim the worthiness of the One who redeemed them !

"Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood. . . ." (Rev. v. 9-14).

4. Together in "the Life to Come."

"Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live **together** with Him" (1 Tim. iv. 8 ; 2 Thess. v. 10).

Here we have one of the great and unfailing results of Christ's death for every one who believes in Him. The true believer lives **unto Christ** in this world, as a result of His death (2 Cor. v. 15), but in the world to come he shall live **with Him**, in the abiding fulness of that joy which His presence ever affords. And as Christ is the eternal life, He is the present life which the believer in Him now possesses in this world, for we **have** eternal life through His name, if we believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (John iii. 36, xx. 31).

But to live with Christ, who is now in God's glory beyond death and its power, and to live

with Him according to the **promise** of eternal life (Titus i. 2 ; 1 John ii. 25), this is not limited to any experience we have in this world, nor yet to the experience of the intermediate state, should we depart to be with Jesus and thus fall asleep in Him. But it clearly points on to the full resurrection state of every child of God, when "the life of Jesus" shall no longer be manifest in a mortal body, but when His life and glory shall be displayed in a body changed and glorified (Rom. viii. 17, 30 ; 2 Cor. iv. 10 ; Phil. iii. 20, 21).

And if by the death of Jesus we have been reconciled to God ; if by that death we have redemption through His blood—the forgiveness of sins—much more shall we be saved by His life, which is now beyond death, and victorious over him who had the power of death (Rom. v. 10 ; Col. i. 14 ; Heb. ii. 14).

Therefore we shall be with Him and live with Him then just as truly as He is in us and lives in us now (Gal. ii. 20 ; Col. i. 27).

And if it is sweet, even in this scene, to live in the company of those who are "alive from among the dead" and who "live unto God," how ineffably sweet will it be to "live **together**" with these in that scene, where nothing can disturb or annoy heaven's blissful repose of endless love.

"Where nature cannot find a home,
Nor flesh an entrance dare"

Have any of us bid farewell to a near and beloved one in this "valley of the shadow of death," as they departed from us to be with Christ in paradise? With them we shall be "**caught up together**" then. With them we shall "**gather together**" then. With them we shall "**live together**" then.

But, oh, beloved Christian reader, remember "these words" of exceeding comfort, which the Holy Ghost has left for our deepest joy and fullest consolation. Then we shall **meet the Lord** in the air. Then we shall gather **unto the Lord**, as we together rise to meet Him. Then we shall live **with Him**, and shall ever be **with Him** "unto the ages of ages." It was Himself who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and He must be our portion here and in eternity.

"The Lord Himself, e'en Jesus,
Amid the ransomed throng,
Its glory, joy, and beauty,
Its never ending song."

And such is the grace of God, that He should be the portion of every one whose name is now in the Lamb's book of life, even as it is written—

"**Thou** art my portion, O Lord" (Ps. cxix. 57).

May both the reader and the writer be enabled through grace to so "rejoice in their portion" that it shall lead to the giving the Lord's household "their portion of meat in due season" before the present "little while" is spent (Isa. lxi. 7 ;

Luke xii. 42; Heb. x. 37). Then he that soweth and he that reapeth, he that planteth and he that watereth, as they gather fruit unto eternal life, shall "**rejoice together**" with their Lord (John iv. 36; 1 Cor. iii. 5-8).

G. B. E.

Notes on the Temple—No. 11.

(Read 1 Kings vi.)

WE pass on to another fact stated in verse 29:

"And he carved all the walls of the house all round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers within and without."

This cedar was not left plain but was all elaborately carved within and without. "Carved with carved figures." The two Hebrew words here employed give the idea first of the figures being brought out in strong relief, and then engraved. Figures of cherubims, palm trees, open flowers, chains—made to stand clearly out, and then engraved, touched up and figured, that is throughout the whole. There you will see the difference between the shittim wood of the tabernacle and the cedar of the temple. The boards of the tabernacle were left in their plain form—no carving mentioned at all. But with regard to these, setting forth, as we say, the resurrection body, we find all the woodwork

everywhere elaborately carved, within and without. What thought does that give us ?

“The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly ” (1 Cor. xv. 47-49).

This beautiful carved work, into the details of which we shall go directly, conveys first this thought, further stated in 1 John iii. :

“Beloved, now are we the sons (or, children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Again :—

“He shall change this body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii. 21).

We shall appear in His own likeness, conformed to His image. That is the thought conveyed to us.

The reason why I conclude the carving represents conformity to Christ, is because we find similar carvings on the doors of the temple—the door into the holy place, and the door into the holiest of all. These two doors, I believe, represent Christ. He Himself says, “I am the way”—“I am the door.” He is the way into the holy ; He is the way into the holiest of all. These figures which were engraved and carved

upon every part of the building, we find also upon the doors. We read in the 31st verse—

“And for the entering of the oracle”—the way into the holiest of all—“he made doors of olive tree, . . . and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers.”

What do these things represent ?

First, **the cherubim**.—We first meet with the cherubim on the fall of man, guarding the way to the tree of life—there evidently angelic ministry. Then on the mercy-seat of the ark. We next read of them in the oracle of the temple. Then in Ezekiel. We find them again in Revelation—“the four living creatures.” They represent, I believe, the different forms and capacities, as well as instruments, for divinely appointed service. These cherubim are engraved on all the walls of the house—the capacities for the service of God, and for the execution and accomplishment of His will. It is a blessed thought that the redeemed will serve God for ever and ever in heaven (Rev. xxii.).

Then, the **palm tree**; we find this figure again running through Scripture. We read in the fifteenth of Exodus of the threescore and ten palm trees with their refreshing shade. We find them in the feast of tabernacles :

“Ye shall take branches of palm tree.”

In the Psalms they are often referred to. You will find them also in the Book of Revelation in

the well-known description of the innumerable multitude :

“Clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands.”

They set forth peace, repose, refreshment, victory, triumph. We read :—

“Upright as a palm tree,”

and so on. Here is the idea of stateliness and excellence :

“Excellent is the palm tree.”

“GREAT sermons lead the people to praise the preacher. Good preaching leads the people to praise the Saviour.” (FINNEY.)

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead . . . preach the Word” (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2).

The Bible Class.

Thyatira—continued.

“But to you I say, the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not their doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I do not cast upon you any other burden ; but what ye have hold fast till I shall come” (Rev. ii. 24).

IN Thyatira we have *prophetically given* that period of the Church which existed during the Middle Ages ; in other words, Rome before the Reformation. In the whole history of the world it would be impossible to find depths of

more abominable wickedness and vile corruption in morals than that which was found in the ecclesiastical system which claimed to be the true Church—"the depths of Satan," it is here called. There are several important features to be noticed in Thyatira:—

1. **There is no Call to Repentance.**—Space had been given for repentance, but she had not repented; it was now too late. The evil principles that we have seen at work in the three earlier assemblies had developed to such an extent that all recovery for the body general was hopeless.

2. **It Goes on to the End.**—Here for the first time the Lord's coming is introduced. Doubtless this is a hope that encourages the faithful soul amidst the wreck and ruin of the professing Church, but it is also an indication that what is specially in the Spirit's mind in Thyatira will go on to the end. Other phases of the Church follow no doubt in Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; but Thyatira continues to the end. Rome does not cease when Protestantism (Sardis) comes upon the scene. Rome is not the prominent thing in the Spirit's thoughts in the phases that follow, but nevertheless it is still there; and in the end it will pass on into Babylon the Great.

3. **A Remnant found for the First Time.**—This is of importance to note. The remnant is distinguished from the mass of profession—

“unto you I say, the rest in Thyatira.” But here we need to tread with caution. It has been the tendency to speak of the remnant as a specially faithful set of Christians amongst other Christians of a more worldly type. But we believe the remnant consists of the whole company of the truly converted in the midst of the mass of profession.

If we speak of Thyatira now *historically*, this remnant was no doubt to be seen in such faithful and persecuted companies as the Waldensians, Albigenses, and others. These simple and true-hearted people, while still forming part of the Roman communion, outwardly at any rate, for there was at that time nothing else, nevertheless utterly rejected the evil doctrine by which others had been seduced into that spiritual fornication with the world; they refused to eat that which was sacrificed unto idols, and suffered persecution and martyrdom in consequence. To them all these things were the depths of Satan, and faithfully did they bear their testimony against the blasphemous and idolatrous fables of the mass, even if they had to burn for it, as large numbers of them did. All honour to the memory of those martyrs of Jesus!

It may be that there was not the intelligence that is found to-day, but devotedness there was of no ordinary kind. There were not then Mildmay Conferences, Keswick Conventions, and the numberless schools for Bible Study;

but there were hearts that beat true to Christ. And in that day when all the hideous doings of the Inquisition, and the tortures inflicted by cruel clerics pass in review before Him whose eyes are like unto a flame of fire, and whose feet are like unto fine brass, all this will come out, and a special crown will adorn the overcomer's brow.

"I will put upon you none other burden," says the Lord. It is enough to have stood firm in danger's hour. Intelligence will follow at a later stage, but love to Christ and devotedness are here, and in His sight are of great price.

"What ye have, hold fast till I shall come."—What tenderness breathes in these words! no chiding, no crushing criticism, but everything to cheer and comfort. Through chosen and honoured instruments the light of the gospel was beginning to penetrate into the darkness of ecclesiasticism; wherever this gospel truth wrought, however feebly, it undermined the whole idolatrous fabric of Rome, and stirred up the bitter animosity of the hierarchical system. Recant! recant! was the cry, or the faggots of Smithfield would be heaped upon men, women, and children. "Hold fast . . . till I come," that is all, no other burden.

"And he that overcomes, and he that keeps unto the end My works, to him will I give authority over the nations, and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod; as vessels of pottery are they broken in pieces, as I also have

received from My Father ; and I will give to him the Morning Star" (ver. 26-28).

" He that overcomes."—How easy it is for us to write and read these words, but, oh! what must it have meant to those beloved saints of God who trod their heavenward way in those days of ecclesiastical tyranny. What honour belongs to them, and what special dignity awaits them. The so-called Church, that corrupt, idolatrous and persecuting system of religion that had her chief seat at Rome, extended her sway over the nations of Europe. Kings knelt at the footstool of her legates, and parliaments were meekly submissive to her will. Whilst she committed fornication with earthly potentates, she hounded to death the saints of God.

" He that keeps unto the end My works."—It was not yet the time to rule the nations ; it was the time to overcome and suffer. This seems beautifully suggested by the words, " my works." The path of Christ was one of suffering ; He did not come to take His great power, and reign ; that day is not yet, but it is surely coming ; then, according to Psalm ii., He will ask for the heathen as His inheritance. His works were works of grace and not of judgment—" My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"—" I came not to judge the world but to save the world"—but soon He will sit upon the judgment-seat, and judge in righteousness.

But power over the nations is not all ; it is

not even the best thing—"I will give to him the Morning Star." This is the Church's special portion, the coming of the Lord before the dawn of the millennial day. What grace it is on the part of Christ, and how beautifully consistent with His love to His own, that He should encourage the hearts of His tried and persecuted saints with the thought of His own return. How many of those who were martyred during those dark ages just before the Reformation broke out, must have longed and looked for their heavenly portion in association with Christ? Can we not well believe that to them the Morning Star shone with a clearer brightness than to us to-day who understand so much better the plan of prophetic truth?

The change is worthy of note that in Thyatira for the first time the appeal to hear what the Spirit says to the churches *follows* the address to the overcomers. The reason is evident. Not in the public body of the Church but in the remnant are found those who will take heed to the Spirit's voice.

Thyatira, then, describes prophetically what we now know historically as the state of Christendom before the Reformation when Rome held full sway. Romanism will continue until the Lord comes, though it has ceased to be the prominent feature in connection with God's present interests on the earth.

Notes and Comments.

We are glad to welcome a monthly *A Welsh Magazine* in Welsh, edited by our friend and fellow-labourer W. M. Roberts. Our readers would not be a bit the wiser if we gave its Welsh title! And we do not know sufficient of the language to be able to read the imprint nor the price. But we have no doubt that the Lord has led our brother to this much-needed service. It is the only magazine of this nature circulating in the Principality, and we believe will be the means of immense blessing amongst the converts of the recent revival, as well as others. Therefore we invite the prayers and sympathy of all our readers in this new venture.

We have received a most interesting letter from our well-known and *The Work in Greece*. loved brother labouring in that land. For wisdom's sake we mention no names, but commend this new development of the work to the prayers of all our brethren. A few extracts are herewith given :—

“God brought to our meetings a man who occupies a high position, a man say sixty years old. From the beginning God seemed to lay hold of this man. At the close of his first visit he exclaimed aloud, ‘The truth I

have heard to-night is what my country needs.' By-and-bye he brought others of like rank in life. Last Lord's Day there were some ten of these men at our meeting, and they also come to our week-night meetings. They begin to speak about bringing their wives and children. I suppose the youngest of these men is fifty years old, and all are men of known position. They say now, We will bring five hundred of our friends, you will need to have a large room in a prominent position, &c."

Several details follow of exceeding interest, and our brother continues:—

"I merely give you these particulars to show that some great movement seems near, and I want earnest prayer to go up for me, not to go before, but boldly to follow where God may lead. Our very meetings lately partake of what is called revival power. How strange this all seems when we remember 1 Corinthians i. 26, 27, but I cannot shut my eyes to what is clearly going on before us. I have lately issued an appeal to the Greeks to search the Scriptures, and have adopted a house-to-house distribution. I know we are the subject of talk in many high quarters—certainly I never sought prominence and was content to work silently, but somehow it has lately been forced on me that my marching orders are Jeremiah i. 17-19.

"The object of this letter will be gained if much prayer is made for us."

"With the alleged power to turn *Rome in* a piece of bread into the body and *Many Lands.* blood of Christ is a curious development of recent years, to which some importance must be attached, from the reference to it in a letter (virtually) from the Pope to

the late congress. In that letter, the whole of which is proud and pretentious, there occurs this statement: 'The Divine Prisoner of our Tabernacle yearns to melt the icy hearts of those who are still deaf to His voice, by the fire of His boundless love.' Many would wonder to what this refers, but it recalls a passage in a book on '*Rome in Many Lands*,' which explains it: 'We now get to the last and most awful consequence of these developed doctrines, viz., that the Son Himself is really and actually present in the Host; that when the Mass is finished, when the priest has left the altar, and the congregation has departed from the church, the Son of God Himself is left, shut up under lock and key in the box upon the altar, called the Tabernacle, and is there held *as a Prisoner*, until such time as the priest comes to open the door and release the Prisoner by consuming the Host' (page 264). People are actually encouraged to worship the contents of this box, making a daily visit for the purpose, by a perversion of the words of Matthew xxv. 36, 'I was in prison, and ye visited Me'!"

(BENNET.)

“ Make peace if you will with Popery ; receive it into your senate ; shrine it in your churches ; plant it in your hearts. But be ye certain—as certain as there is a heaven above you and a God over you—that the Popery thus honoured

and embraced is the very Popery that was loathed by the holiest of your fathers ; the same in haughtiness, the same in intolerance, which lorded it over kings, assumed the prerogative of Deity, crushed human liberty, and slew the saints of God.

(MELVILLE.)

“ The reproach lies in the humbling fact that the Crescent *The Reproach of Islam.* has displaced the Cross. Among all the religions of the world Islam alone came after Christ. All other religions, though non-Christian, are not in one sense anti-Christian, for if their sacred books be consulted they will be found absolutely silent in regard to Christ and His claims, for they were all written prior to His advent. Not so with Islam, which followed Christ, for the Koran definitely denies His claim to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

“ Further, though there be many non-Christian shrines and temples in heathen lands, they are not churches dedicated to the worship of Christ and now prostituted to the denial of His divinity and atonement. Yet this is the case with Islam, for many mosques are actually old Christian churches perverted to an impious use, and many lands and cities, once the centres of Christian agencies, are now wholly given over to a faith which is not only non-Christian but actively and hostilely anti-Christian.

“As the birth of Ishmael proclaims the failure of Abraham, the rise and progress of Islam declares the failure of the Christian Church, for the creed of Mohammed proves that he only came in contact with a debased Christianity, and the history of Islam relates how Christian churches, weakened and split by heresy and schism, actually welcomed Eastern rule.”—*China's Millions*.

Public Prayer—No. 2.

MORE than 1870 years ago our Lord ascended to glory. During the ten days that elapsed before Pentecost, they obeyed His command, and assembled at Jerusalem in an upper room to the number of one hundred and twenty. There were eleven apostles mentioned by name, and “these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, WITH THE WOMEN,* and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren” (Acts i.). Have you noticed the presence of the women on this memorable occasion?

The first *act* of this company, with Peter as spokesman, seems to have been to choose a

* God has preserved for us two prayers of Hannah's (of which one is rather worship), and the prophesying of Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary.

twelfth apostle, and the women were present! Then we have the only *recorded* prayer between the departure of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit. How short and to the point! (v. 24). The first recorded prayer in Holy Ghost days is equally remarkable, and receives a direct answer (Acts iv. 24).

The longest prayers in the Bible are probably Solomon's, Nehemiah's, and Daniel's, yet either could be read in less than ten minutes, and, after all, Nehemiah's savoured more of worship than prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is a remarkable example of brevity and comprehensiveness, relationship, worship, and five definite requests. Surely we might safely model our public prayers after such a pattern! Our Lord said, "*After this manner* pray ye," and if you study the Gospels you will find that His own life and words beautifully carry out this prayer, with the exception of one petition impossible to Him.

Among none of the prayers uttered by our Lord (excluding John xvii.), nor revealed in Holy Ghost days, do we find a long one. Think of Stephen's two petitions, and imagine "the prayers of saints" offered by Christ to God (Rev. viii.). May we learn better how to make request to God in public, however long (and rightly so) our private prayers may be.

"Pray without ceasing."

Declension and Restoration.

(Translated from the German by J. L. W.)

THERE are three great enemies which continually beset the Christian's path. They are these: The world, the flesh, and the devil. In proportion as we yield to any of them, we depart from God. All three we find united in the history of Peter, given in the 22nd chapter of Luke. In verses 45, 50, Peter was led astray by the *flesh*—when he should have watched he fell asleep, and when he should have made no resistance he drew the sword. In verses 54, 55 he fails through fear of the *world*. At first he *only ventures to follow the Lord afar off*, then he draws nearer and makes common cause with the enemies of Jesus. Finally, in verses 57, 58, 60, we see him three times seduced by *Satan*. He denies Christ, he curses and swears, and then denies Him again.

We may find the path which Peter trod, already described for us in the opening verses of the first Psalm. The "counsel of the ungodly," or the promptings of fleshly reason, tempted Peter to draw the sword; the "standing in the way of sinners," we see in his standing at the fire to warm himself; whilst the "sitting in the seat of the scorner" is found in verse 55.

The path of a Christian who thus departs from

God is an infinitely painful and sorrowful one. Yes, I might almost affirm that in the whole wide world there is no man so unhappy as a believer who has turned aside from the holy joy of obedience to the path of selfishness and sin. What discontent and emptiness then fill the heart, instead of peace and happiness! The soul has "left its first love," and bartered "joy in the Lord" for the favour and pleasures of the world. "My people have committed two evils," complains the Lord through His servant Jeremiah; "Me, the fountain of living waters, have they forsaken, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer. ii. 13). How rightly does He designate Himself the "fountain of living waters," the spring and source of every blessing! And what a solemn yet true description of the experiences of a soul that has turned aside from Him lies in the expression, "broken cisterns which can hold no water"!

Ah, it is often only through veritable waves of trouble that we are brought to recognise that the springs to which we have turned aside are, in very deed, "broken cisterns that can hold no water." That our departure from God only results in an aching void within, and a troubled, discontented heart—a condition of soul which had not its like in the unhappiest hours of our unconverted days. Oh, how often the smiling countenance and cheerful remark conceal the aching heart which

seeks in this fashion to delude itself about the emptiness which its departure from God has occasioned! Such a soul will not find peace again until it thoroughly recognises that the love wherewith it is loved is an everlasting love, a love which could bend its gaze upon a poor, fallen Peter with calm and reproachful glance, indeed, but yet with an expression which announced the fullest forgiveness.

Dear reader, have you turned your back on the Lord for the things of the **world**? Then the words addressed to the assembly at Ephesus in Revelation ii. apply also to you: "**Thou** hast left thy first love." Do you not feel the truth of these words? Call to mind the time when the Bible was your dearest book, and the gatherings of believers your dearest place of resort; when you were happy in service for the Lord. You may, indeed, still call yourself the Lord's, and even read His Word now and then as of old, but all the time you hear His voice, "Thou hast left thy first love." Gradually you withdrew yourself from the things you once loved, and turned back to those things which for Christ's sake you gave up at your conversion. Perhaps unprofitable and dangerous novel-reading has captured your heart and mind, and robs you of a great deal of your time; or the pleasures of this world bind you in yet stronger fetters; or the continual search after social position and honour among men has laid hold

of you and turned away your heart from the simplicity of Christ.

Many are the devious paths into which the Christian may slip. But is he happy therein? Perhaps you take the greatest pains to be so, but it is not possible. You envy the spiritually dead around you, because of their insensibility. **They** feel no prickings of conscience; the pleasures of the world, even though unable to make their hearts happy, have not, as yet, **for them** the hidden sting which they have for **you**. They are the unconverted who have never known or loved the Lord from whom you have turned aside. The voice of conscience does not incessantly cry to them: "You are doing wrong; you are sinning against the light which you have received, and grieving the Lord who loved you so unboundedly!" Oh, let us be on our guard, lest we be snared in Satan's toils, as so many have been who once walked with us happy in the Lord! We need continual vigilance as to this. "Watch and pray," says the Lord; "Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer," says the Apostle Peter.

The beginnings of spiritual decline are often very insignificant and barely perceptible. One does not exactly commence by throwing aside the Bible for some bad book, or by exchanging the meeting for the theatre or concert hall. No, the beginning is **a very gradual neglect of prayer and reading the Word**. The heart

becomes colder, interest in the things of God declines, and the devil takes advantage of this to whisper to the soul: "Give up your vain endeavours to be pious. An empty form has no value. Just wait until your heart has become warm again!" The crafty deceiver well knows that by this means he will the more certainly shut out the soul from warmth and light. Should indifference to the Word of God and prayer continue, then the downward course proceeds with giant strides. Therefore "take heed to yourselves" and "stablish your hearts." The Lord keep us watchful and true, and help us to "ponder the paths of our feet" (Prov. iv. 26).

Let me just briefly relate how a soul that had once wandered far away, was through God's mercy restored. Perchance the history of this soul may help some other that is bound in similar fashion.

A servant of the Lord who preached the gospel in a certain town, was requested to visit a lady who was formerly known to be a child of God, but who then had completely fallen away. On visiting her he found that the world and the things of the world had entirely ousted the love of God from her heart. How sad a change! Lovingly he pointed out to her the truth so solemnly expressed in the Epistle of James, that all who will be the friends of the world show themselves **the enemies of God.**

“The soul that loves the world,” he went on to say, “takes up, according to the Word of God, a position of deliberate and open enmity against the living God. What a position for a poor worm of the dust, and more especially after all the love you have experienced !”

However, the words of this faithful man seemed to make no impression on his hearer. At length he took his leave, and the next day wrote her a long letter in which he once more drew her attention to her sad condition and its consequences, and urgently besought her still to turn back. To this letter he received the following reply a few days later :—

“DEAR MR —,—I have received your friendly letter, and return you many thanks for same. I believe all that you say about eternal things, and wish that I could say from the bottom of my heart that I was willing to live as dead to the world. **But that I cannot do.** I wish I might be a child of God, **and at the same time a friend of the world.** But both do not go together. I am (and I fully recognise it) led captive by the Evil One, as you say in your letter, and it seems to me as if I had fallen completely under his power, for, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, I seem to become more and more estranged from God. I have, in fact, made the bitter experience that, as Jeremiah says, ‘it is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake God.’ **But I cannot turn back.** My Christian friends and acquaintances have earnestly warned me, and still do so, though I fear they will soon give me up. I will now conclude, again thanking you for the friendly interest you have taken in me.”

Before going further might I call attention

to a point overlooked by many believers? In the daily life of the Christian, failure or defilement arises as a consequence of the condition in which we find ourselves down here. Not that we have any excuse if we do fail in thought, word, or deed—in no wise. But such lapses or defilements are possible, and in view of them, we need the daily washing, the cleansing of our feet. Without this, we can have no part with Jesus (John xiii.).

But we are not now concerned with defilement, but backsliding, for the healing of which not only is cleansing necessary, but also a deep, veritable restoration—a genuine “turning-round.” For the Israelites under the law, the mere accidental contact with a dead body meant defilement; and so with us every spiritual contact with the world and the wickedness therein is defiling. But, as we have said, we have no excuse for this, since we are admonished “to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.” Accordingly if we do get besmirched through indifference or lack of watchfulness, we have only ourselves to blame. At the same time these blemishes are quite a different thing from that gradual turning away from the living God, that spiritual declension of which we are speaking; but they are a hindrance to communion with the Father and the Son, and may, on that account, if not solemnly confessed and judged, easily lead on to an actual backsliding.

As long as a soul remains in communion with Christ, no backsliding is possible. Before backsliding can set in, communion, which is maintained through the Word and prayer, must have ceased, or, at any rate, have been seriously impaired. Restoration or turning-round is thus nothing else than the return into communion with the Father and the Son. But what a long time does this return often take! Therefore, let us guard ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and of the mind, from every contact with evil. And should we in any wise have soiled our feet let us not neglect the washing through the Word of Christ! As "Servant for ever" (Exod. xxi. 6), who loves His wife (believers in their entirety—Eph. v.), and the children whom God has given Him (believers individually—Heb. ii.), He cleanses us by the washing of water through the Word, as we see in the lovely scene in John xiii.

The newly begun work of restoration of a soul is, however, not the first that the Lord does for it. It is preceded by another service. It appears from Revelation xii. 10 and other passages that Satan has access into the outer courts of the presence of God, and with malignant activity he occupies himself in accusing us before God day and night. But, God be praised, it stands written—

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the righteous."

He is there to answer every accusation and undertake our affairs. His service as Advocate may long precede this work of restoration in the soul which goes on to confession according to 1 John i. 9. The one He does in heaven for us, the other He effects in us down here, whilst He leads us to true self-judgment. Every true restoration is therefore accompanied by two things: by a deeper abhorrence of sin, and everything that would come in as a hindrance to communion with Christ, and by a deeper appreciation of His unchangeable love.

So it was with the lady of whom we have been speaking. Her first letter was followed by many others which clearly showed the progressive work going on within. The second was as follows:—

“DEAR MR —,—You perhaps have thought that you would not receive any answer to your last letter. But I could not write sooner, for I knew that you expected the answer from me **that I was free**. Now, unto God, who has been ‘pleased to reveal His Son in me,’ be praise and thanksgiving! **I am free!** Satan, indeed, had me firmly in his power, but the Lord Jesus has proved Himself stronger than he. I shall be eternally thankful to God that He sent you to me. Your words pursued me wherever I went. ‘You are an enemy of God’ continually sounded in my ears. In that condition I wrote you my first letter. You very properly answered that I was beginning at the wrong end. I fell into great distress about my soul. I was in anxiety and fear before God; I saw no love in Him for me. I could only think of Him as the righteous God who hates sin. In this

state I remained for a long time, till at length I again took up your letter and read it through once more. My eye dropped on that part where you speak of the Father's heart longing for the prodigal's return. Then there fell, as it were, scales from my eyes, and to-day I can again rejoice in God my Saviour."

Eight years later :

"DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—I can find no words wherewith to praise the marvellous mercy which has kept me all these years upon the road, and enabled me, at least in some small measure, to appreciate the value of the Well-Beloved, He who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

These extracts clearly show how that God's mercy can not only restore but also preserve and lead on further. Should these lines fall into the hands of any one who once confessed Christ, but subsequently chose his own way, whose heart has now become apparently cold and dead—I say **apparently dead**—if on reading these lines feelings are aroused—a longing to return to Christ from whom you have wandered further and further away, so that the distance which separates you from Him, seems so great that return seems impossible. Oh, should it be thus with you, dear reader, then do not abandon hope, and tarry no longer to follow in the footsteps of Divine Love!

You may to-day, **at this moment**, be restored. Nothing else is necessary than that you should turn back from your perverse course to the Father, and unreservedly confess to Him all that

you have done. He will not keep you waiting for an answer for weeks, months, or years. No, if you make a true, genuine confession, He is faithful and just to forgive you, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.



Breaking the Ice.

POINTING to one we both knew, Mr G—— said to me once, “That’s the man who put me into the ministry,” and spoke of the encouragement and kindness he had shown him when a young believer. His saying came vividly to mind last week when I met again in London, after the lapse of some years, one of my oldest Christian friends. The meeting revived memories of the days of my conversion to God.

This friend, in those days, was a shop-assistant, but is now occupying with credit one of the highest commercial posts in the City of London. He was an earnest seeker for souls, and constantly on Sunday nights he would sally forth into those haunts and dens of darkness which at that time lay around Golden Lane. His great object was to win their denizens for Christ.

“Come along with me,” were the persuasive words, which led many a young convert—myself amongst them—to witness in his company for the first time many unfamiliar scenes—scenes of

sin and gloom, but scenes which stamped deeper than ever on our hearts God's mercy which had kept *us* from plunging into like depths.

Here many a young Christian for the first time opened his mouth to witness for his Saviour. One night in a common lodging-house our faithful friend had spoken. His audience was a mixed one indeed. Militiamen in their red coats, street hawkers, hardened beggars, pickpockets, card-sharpers, ticket-of-leave men, and many on whom, alas! life's battle had heavily pressed, made up the company. There was power in "the old, old story," and, worn and tired though they were, it gripped their interest.

He finished suddenly, and as he did so, put his hand on my shoulder and said to them, "My young friend will now speak to you." To have this occur *now* would set one wondering "whether it were of the Lord? whether he had not erred? what warrant had *he* for doing this?" &c. *Then* none of these questions agitated one, but, rather the timidity and nervousness of youth and inexperience, which would welcome a hole in the floor to fall through out of sight. However, the thought came to one, "Tell them of the Saviour you have found." And in halting words, the "young friend" found himself telling them how religious he had been, how religious observances failed to give him rest of conscience, how he had felt himself lost and on the brink of destruction, how infidelity and doubt refused to

satisfy him, how that Christ had died for him, how the blood of Calvary had spoken peace to his soul, how he had received eternal life by simple faith in the Son of God, and finished by pressing them to come to the same Saviour so that they might get the same blessing.

That was a night never to be forgotten, because of the joy of confessing Christ, with which it filled the new-born soul. If my Christian reader has never yet confessed Christ publicly before others, let me exhort him to lose no time in doing so, and he will then know what I mean.

Often did we have times of refreshing in those lodging-houses. One night especially while the Militia were up, the Holy Spirit greatly blessed the word preached. The message was on the importance of not being ashamed of confessing Christ, and was something as follows:—"You men, when you had enlisted and received the Queen's shilling, what would people think of you if you were ashamed of the Queen's uniform? Such cowards are not the men to fight their country's battles. What would you think of that policeman, meaning to join the Force but shunning to don its garb? Would you trust your goods in the care of such a man? No! no! To *know* the privileges and joys of a soldier's or a constable's life all shame of the conditions and consequences must be thrown to the wind. Just so must it be to become a

Christian. To know Christ is a grand thing. Think what you are *saved from*, a guilty conscience, an aching heart, and the wrath to come. The world is full of disappointments, it cheats you when you need help most; but here, see what you are *saved to*. Peace with God, a heart at rest and filled with joy, a power to look the world and eternity in the face. How and why?

“Why, because Jesus has died. His atoning blood has been shed, and of those who believe Him, God declares, **“Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more”** (Heb. x. 17). The barrier and distance which kept man from God, and God from man in his sin and darkness has been removed.

“‘Thy love unknown,
Has broken every barrier down.’

“Christ as our Saviour, Shepherd, and Friend is a reality. Who is going to receive Him and confess Him as his own Saviour to-night? The world is against you, your friends are against you, and your own heart says, ‘Not to-night.’ To this the demons of hell say, ‘Amen.’ But are you going to be ashamed? Are you going to let the devil rob you of Christ and His joys? You scorn the idea of having a soldier or a policeman ashamed of his uniform. What about you and Christ Jesus? There must be a simple trust in Christ as Saviour, and a putting on, so to

speak, of His uniform, for thus saith the scripture, that—

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. x. 9).

The word went home. It rejoices our hearts to believe fully that many of those Militiamen “passed from death unto life” that night.

W. M. R.

The Bible Class.

Sardis—Rev. iii. 1-6.

IT is very evident that we are on totally different ground here from what has preceded. Thyatira, as we have seen, continues to the end. Not that it is the special object of the Spirit's thoughts down to the end, but it **exists** inasmuch as Rome will continue till the Lord comes, spite of all the strenuous efforts of earnest and well-meaning Protestants.

But a mighty work of the Spirit of God took place at the time of the Reformation, and since then Rome has ceased to be the prominent feature in God's Church history. If Thyatira depicts Rome, Sardis as truly answers to Protestantism. It is well to observe that we do not find here God judging His own work, for that

He could not do ; what He judges is the result of that work in man's hands. The Reformation was God's own work, Protestantism is the result as entrusted to man's responsibility.

In the Reformation God was, so to speak, making a fresh start. This is to a certain extent true in every revival. There had been a breach in the outward unity of the Church at the time of the separation between East and West. The Eastern portion continued in the state described under Pergamos, dwelling where Satan's throne was. The Western portion soon descended to deeper depths of Satan's influence ; but *catholicity* there was none from the days of the scission between the Greek and Roman communions.

At the Reformation there was, as we have said, a fresh start, to be followed, alas ! by failure and decline. What we see in Sardis is orthodox Protestantism, but a total lack of spiritual power, an absence even of life itself. And is this to be wondered at when we consider the formation of *national* churches, not by living faith, but by water baptism ?

But we cannot ignore the wonderful revival brought about through the instrumentality of the great Reformers. The vile corruption of the Romish hierarchy—popes, cardinals, prelates, and priests—had shocked the natural conscience of Europe,—the iniquitous sale of indulgences to commit sin, whereby every sin, and any sin was given its money equivalent, was the last

straw—then God in His grace caused the light of His Word to shine, and everywhere souls became emancipated from the darkness and tyranny of ecclesiasticism. But soon decline set in, and this it is that passes in review in Sardis—"a name to live." Nevertheless all fulness of grace and blessing resided in Christ.

"And to the angel of the assembly in Sardis write : These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" (Rev. iii. 1).

The Sardis state of things runs on collaterally with Thyatira. We have noticed that there has been an apparently fresh start, and this we can easily understand the Reformation to have been. Hence there is a similarity to Ephesus, though at the same time a contrast in the way the Lord announces Himself. In Ephesus the outward professing Church is seen in its undivided condition. Here is what might be called the *catholic* Church, for denominationalism had not come in. There is much more of the ecclesiastical character in Ephesus ; Christ there holds the seven stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Here in Sardis whilst still owning the assembly, it is not strictly ecclesiastical order which is prominent. We can well understand the propriety of this. The Reformation was not the reconstruction of the Church in its order, but rather a testimony from God to the individual conscience, and the recovery of truth

which set the individual saint at liberty before Him. The Church, pretentious and persecuting, had usurped the place of God and His Word, to which the elders of Ephesus had been commended (Acts xx.), and the clergy and the sacraments had been put where the Spirit of God and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone should have stood.

But in Sardis we find that, notwithstanding all, fulness of power and perfection of blessing reside in Christ. The outward assembly may have grown cold (Ephesus), worldly (Pergamos), and corrupt (Thyatira); reconstruction of correct ecclesiastical order may be impossible—all this is the result of man's failure. But in Christ there is no failure; the fulness of the Spirit's power is with Him. It will be seen presently in His government of the earth, for the seven spirits seem specially connected with God's throne of government, with His dealings with the earth, and more particularly with the land of Palestine (*cf.* Zech. iii. 9; Rev. i. 4, iv. 5, v. 6). But he who has ears to hear may reap the blessing now that is in Christ's hands presently to display.

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die, for I have not found thy works complete before My God.”

How quickly a recovery of truth becomes a mere creed; for this it takes but a generation or

two, and then the great danger is that what began in the full energy of a living faith deteriorates into a lifeless, even though orthodox profession. Such Protestantism became—"a name that thou livest, and art dead." Oh that every soul may take heed to these warnings so graciously and faithfully given by our God!

"Be watchful," or, as the meaning of the original Greek would imply, "**become** watchful." We can understand how easily the mixture of dead and living, unconverted and converted, followed upon the Spirit's work at the time of the Reformation. No sooner was the first impetus of this blessed movement over than Satan sought to undo all its real good. The Scriptures, freely opened and read, released men from bondage; some it brought into the liberty of grace in the knowledge of justification and salvation; others it merely relieved from a yoke of ecclesiasticism and clerisy which had proved intolerable tyranny. Even unconverted men groaned under this awful yoke, and gladly availed themselves of freedom, which soon they began to use for merely political purposes. Still none can deny that Protestantism with all its failure is infinitely better than Rome. It were better to live under Sardis than under Thyatira. An open Bible, a more or less clear gospel, and consequent emancipation of heart, mind, and conscience from the tyranny of Church and clergy, are some of the blessings introduced at

the Reformation, and not entirely lost in Sardis, which as we see continues collaterally with Thyatira right down to the end.

“Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and keep (it) and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come (upon thee) as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I shall come upon thee.”

We see here again a similarity and yet a contrast to Ephesus. Both are called upon to **remember**—Ephesus, a *position* from whence she had fallen; Sardis, a *testimony* which she had received. There is no question here in Sardis of the candlestick being removed. The line of separation between the Church as a public body and the world had become completely obliterated. It is this that largely and sorrowfully characterises Protestantism. As another has written: “A breach with Rome, a restoration of the Word of God, a fresh revival of truth, ending, however, in a system or systems characterised by a fatal defect of spiritual power, and churches with an unconverted membership, God's saints being scattered through the mass—living themselves, but unable to vitalise it: such are the characteristics, easily to be read, of the *national Churches* which sprang out of the Protestant Reformation” (Grant).

Under Protestantism, especially in State religions, the union is not that of the truly converted to one another, and to Christ the Head, but the union of Church and State—

bishops appointed by the Crown, who may be rationalists, or ritualists—converted or unconverted; and these in their turn consecrating as priests men who pass certain standards of education, but whether they are themselves converted men is apparently of no great importance to the system! **REPENT, repent**, is the Spirit's warning cry; and then follows the threat of Christ's coming as a thief in the night, which is precisely what true Christians are promised He will never do to them (1 Thess. v. 4), Christ's coming as a thief is judgment for the world; it is not so He will come for His people, but the Church and the world have become so closely identified that the mass is looked at here as the world, and a few names only as those who truly belong to Christ.

“But thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, because they are worthy.”

Here again we find a remnant, but let us once more point out that the remnant consists of *all* who are truly converted in the midst of the mass of profession.

“He that overcomes, he shall be clothed in white garment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”

The remnant in Sardis are overcomers. It is not that some true Christians are overcomers, and some not; but *all* the truly converted are overcomers, for all in that day will be seen

clothed in white, and walking with Christ. Our hearts may indeed be bowed in wonder and praise as we contemplate the amazing grace of our God. How often here our garments are spotted, and how often we stray away from the side of our blessed Lord. But *then*, how near to His side!

May the thought of our responsibility on the one hand, and of His ineffable grace on the other lead us to vigilant care that we may keep our garments now unspotted from the world, and walk with Him in daily communion! "**He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.**"

A. H. B.

“Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.”

THE everlasting arms
 Are underneath me in their might,
 Controlling all with sovereign right,
 Supporting in the deadly fight,
 Sustaining through the weary night:
 And should my spirit wing its way
 To join the saints in bright array,
 Those arms, which here have been my stay,
 Will lift me up to endless day—
 Blest everlasting arms!

C. A. W.

Correspondence.

Public Singing—III.

DEAR MR EDITOR,—In face of all that is written in the Bible about singing, is it not strange that its *quality* is so little considered among us?

Some one quoted recently: "But now bring me a minstrel." This (2 Kings iii. 15) and other cognate scriptures (2 Chron. xx. 21, 22; 1 Sam. x. 5, 6; xvi. 23), passages worth looking up, tend to show that music had a certain God-sent influence, and surely it has not lost it! Who cannot remember on some occasion or other a whole assembly moved by the singing of a suitable hymn in the Spirit!

Probably no one is now alive who can recollect one of the first conventions or conferences held by "Brethren" at Leamington in the early thirties, when during a pause some one suddenly started a chorus which was taken up by every voice, and sung magnificently and overpoweringly, it is related.

" We're bound for the Kingdom,
 Let us hasten on to glory,
 And sing Hallelujah !
 Sing glory, Hallelujah !
 We're bound for the Kingdom,
 Will you come with us to glory
 And sing Hallelujah
 To God and the Lamb."

Then, again, think of the hushed voices that sang "an hymn" in that "large upper room," and of what the glad chorus will be like when, around that same Lamb slain on the Passover night, we shall acclaim Him "worthy," and He Himself will lead our praises to God one day!

Moses indited the first song, and (leaving aside Cain's family) Miriam consecrated the first instrument by using it in the chorus to her brother's song. Then Deborah, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and the Psalm writers (known and unknown), Isaiah, and many more holy men and women have given us divine songs.

Furthermore, we learn that the Old Testament singers sang "by course" (Ezra iii. 11); that there was a "chief singer" (Hab. iii. 19); some noted singers and families of singers, "the master of the song" (1 Chron. xv. 27), sometimes with musical instruments, sometimes without—there were some who "taught" (2 Chron. xxiii. 13) and some who learnt. Music and singing were a recognised and important part of worship, and though our worship is now of a different order, it is interesting to notice that songs, singing, or singers are mentioned in about twenty-five out of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. Besides this, music is spoken of in eight.

In the New Testament six of the inspired writers speak of singing, while ten of the twenty-seven books mention the subject, and one more music (Luke). We are given directions about

psalms (sung with an instrument*), hymns, and spiritual songs, and we learn that in heaven there will be music and singing.

Does singing receive enough reverent attention? "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing *with the understanding also*." Why should our singing be obnoxious to a trained ear? Though God accepts as sweet incense what is offered from the heart in the name of Jesus, why should not *voices* praise Him worthily?

In general, the one who starts a tune should be allowed to lead throughout; but the most important point to remember is that the tunes should suit the words. A solemn hymn should have a good solemn tune, though slow singing should generally be avoided. Moreover, all references to the Lord's sufferings and death should be sung *very softly*. In the same way, when we are confessing our own feebleness or low estate, we should sing softly. The praises of God would give scope for a more "joyful noise." All this would call attention to the *words*. To sing Watt's beautiful verse—

"My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear"—

at the pitch of the voice, shows that,

"For all *my* guilt was there,"

is feebly realised.

* From Young's Concordance. Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; Psalms, ψαλμός. A song of praise on an instrument; James v. 13; Psalms, ψάλλω.

One more point: Why should every hymn given out be *read* right through before *singing* it? Surely it is rather a waste of time!

* * *

“FROM Constantine’s day to the present, world and Church have been united in Christendom at large; and wherever this is found, there in truth is Babylon, though Rome be the head of Babylon, as indeed she is.

“There are certain systems which mix up the Church and the world in the most thorough way possible. All forms of ritualism do,—forms wherein a person is made by baptism ‘a member of Christ, and a child of God.’ Where that is asserted separation is impossible; for no amount of charity, and no extravagance of theological fiction, can make the mass of these baptized people other than the world.

“All national churches in the same way mix them up by the very fact that they are national churches. You cannot by the force of will or Act of Parliament make a nation Christian. You can give them a name to live while they are dead, you can make them formalists and hypocrites, but nothing more. You can do your best to hide from them their true condition, and leave them under an awful delusion, from which eternity alone may wake them up.

“All systems Jewish in character mix them up of necessity. All systems in which the Church

is made a means to salvation, instead of the company of the saved, necessarily do so. When people join churches in order to be saved, as is the terrible fashion of the day, these churches become of course the common receptacle of sinners and saints alike. And wherever assurance of salvation is not maintained, the same thing must needs result." [GRANT.]

NOT to the foremost warriors in the throng
 Do all the honours of Faith's fight belong,
 For those at lonely posts, who hardness bear,
 Will, at its close, a gracious portion share
 When Christ rewards His own.

Then let the tried and lonely courage take,
 And hardness bear in patience for His sake :
 Depending on His grace, from day to day,
 Who, though unseen, will be their strength and stay,
 As trust in Him is shown. U. U.

Notes on the Temple—No. 12.

(Read 1 Kings vi.)

WE have often repeated that thought—have we not?—

“Grace is glory in the bud ; glory is grace in the flower.”

“Open flowers” (ver. 18), or as the margin reads, “Opening of flowers.” I believe this type sets

forth the resurrection condition of the redeemed in glory, indicating that those graces of the Spirit which were checked and chilled in this cold, unfavourable, uncongenial clime, will there unfold themselves to the full. These graces of the Spirit, whatever they are—oh, what an unfavourable soil, what an uncongenial air, what nipping frost here below! Our hearts want to go out in love to all, but oh, how much there is to keep them back. How much the manifestation of these various graces of the Spirit is hindered here! But there, in that balmy atmosphere, beneath the genial sunshine of God's perpetual smile, beneath those unclouded skies, how these graces will expand—nothing to impede their development—nothing to prevent their full and glorious manifestation—"Openings of flowers."

But there is another thing mentioned. You find that in the 18th verse:—

"The cedar of the house within (or, the inner house) was carved with knops."

The margin has it "gourds," and it is so rendered in another place. And what is **the Gourd**? It is the seed vessel. Whether it be in the seed or germ or whether it be in the unfolding, there is not and there will not be a grace or affection in the Lord Jesus Christ, if I may so express it, but what in germ will be in each one of the redeemed. The seeds are there,

and there will be the unfoldings also. Just as on earth, in the infant, wrapt up in that tiny seed vessel, there are all the seeds and germs of the future man. There is not a propensity which is not there in seed—though not in open manifestation. The affections are there; the inalienable traits are there. They are all there. And so with regard to the child of God. Rough may be the exterior, but if he is a child of God you can reckon upon every grace of the Spirit. There is the Grace in the seed vessel. It needs to be brought out—needs to be quickened and expanded; but there it is: we can reckon upon it. That is a precious thought. Oh, if we knew how to take one another by the hand, instead of keeping one another at a distance—oh, if we knew how to reckon upon the graces of the Spirit in every believer! And that is the secret of discipline. If it is a child of God there is something that will respond: it is like those gourds: it is in seed, but there it is.

On that bright morn of the resurrection day, when we are conformed to the image of our risen Lord, there will be the gourds, if I may so express it, as well as the open flowers. There will be there those principles, those affections, those powers, those capacities—seeds in themselves, so to speak, which will go on in their exercise and manifestation “long as eternal ages roll.”

Further, in 2 Chronicles iii. 5, we read:—

“And the greater house he ceiled with fir tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm trees and chains.”

What!—chains in glory?—chains in perfection and resurrection? Yes, chains there. Heaven is not a republic. It is not every one doing his own will there: there is but one will in heaven: there is a “throne” set in the midst. There are chains there; but they are chains of glory: they are ornaments of grace.

“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace about thy head, and chains about thy neck.”

Ah, yes: in subjection to the divine will, captives in the chains of love: that is what we shall be throughout all eternity. When Daniel interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, what did Nebuchadnezzar do? Put a chain of gold about his neck. And, in every vision that we shall have interpreted in the light of the realisation of eternal resurrection glory, that is what God will do—put the chains of constraining love about each neck. But they are chains of glory.

We first get the whole encased in wood of cedar or of cypress, and all that wood elaborately carved. Now we go a step further. We turn back to 1 Kings vi. 21, 22:—

“So Solomon overlaid the house within” (or, literally, the inner house, that is, the most holy place) “with pure

gold; and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle, and he overlaid it with gold."

The whole house he overlaid with gold:—

"And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house."

Then the 30th verse:—

"The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without—for there were floors within and floors without" (see Ezek. xli. 16).

We have already considered the contribution of gold. You might ask, What was all this provision for? We computed then the value of the gold as more than £800,000,000 sterling. And the weight of the gold contributed by David and his princes is computed at 5,496 tons. Thus, when Solomon says, "It must be exceedingly magnificent," we understand wherein that magnificence consisted—its value and its glory. True, the stones of which the walls were composed were precious stones—most likely Parian marble, for we find that David contributed such, as the Hebrew word implies. No doubt the cedars were goodly cedars, and the carvings beautifully executed, but the whole—the galleries, the floors within and without, the porch and the most holy place, and all the walls within and without, were covered with pure gold, covered—not gilded—but solid gold fitted upon the carved work, and so fitted as not to obliterate the carvings. This is expressed in 1 Kings vi. 35:—

“And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.”

This abundance of gold gives one an idea of the glory. We must remember that these 5,496 tons were only a part. That was provided by David in his poverty. “And,” he said to Solomon, “thou mayest add thereto.” All was enshrined in solid, pure, and massive gold. What does this fact suggest? What is gold a type of? Gold is the emblem of that which is divine—divinely excellent, in righteousness and glory. Ah, but how can you apply that to the saints in the resurrection? Look at that holy city descending: what is the first thing connected with it? We read in the Revelation about that which represents the Church in glory descending: what does it say? “Having the glory of God.” Listen to the words of the true David, the Lord Jesus, in the seventeenth of John:—

“Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do, and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”

What then?—

“And the glory which Thou hast given Me **I have given them.**”

The same gold, so to speak, that was spread over the doors, covers the whole house within and without.

“It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.”

Oh, what a thought this gives us! The bodies of the raised saints are not simply resurrection bodies, conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, but resplendent with divine glory—

“Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you; . . . for our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

That gives the idea—what a weight of glory!—these 5496 tons of gold resting there. The reason given in 1 Chronicles xxix. 4, for David's contribution of silver was “to overlay (literally, to plaster) the walls of the houses withal” Thus, not only was the *woodwork* covered with gold, but the walls of the houses were plastered with silver.

The stones of the temple before they were encased in cedar and covered with gold, had been plastered with silver. So the many sons brought home to glory had been redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ—God beautifies the meek with salvation before He glorifies them with divine glory. David contributed an hundred thousand talents of gold, precious indeed in value, and weighty exceedingly. But he, moreover, contributed a thousand thousand talents of silver—in weight far more exceeding.

And so, not only will glory given to the redeemed press upon their spirits, constraining to gratitude and prayer, but redemption wrought for them will press with a still weightier obligation.

Oh, for more of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for in eternity, to bring the pressure of these obligations to bear on our hearts in time!



Profession and Reality.

“They are not all Israel which are of Israel.”—ROM. ix. 6.

THE apostle is here led to distinguish between the natural and the spiritual Israelite. This distinction holds good not only for Paul's day, but also throughout the whole scriptural period of Israel's history. The beginning of this nation's history was no doubt the time of its greatest purity. It is to that particular day the prophet refers when he writes:—

“Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase” (Jer. ii. 3).

God's people were more free from evil than in later days, but this is not to say the nation was at the beginning entirely free from evil men. It is rather a comparison with later days. Scripture shows that there were not a

few who provoked the Lord to anger from the first. A mixed multitude was soon found lusting for the flesh-pots of Egypt, and these, by their unbelief, corrupted those who might have been better disposed. It is clear that from the first there were Israelites, not a few, who, while they stood in national relationship with the good things of Israel, yet by their **lack of faith** stood disqualified from the abiding spiritual blessing of Israel's God.

Let us examine a scripture in the light of these facts. It is written :—

“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel” (Num. xxiii. 21).

These are precious words to the faith of all justified persons, but it would be a mistake to make them apply to every natural Israelite. As another has said,* “It is only on the ground of the grace which justifies, that God could call them according to that which was not, seeing them even now what He would make them to be through the Saviour.” Such a justification, therefore, could not be applied to those who in due time became objects of eternal judgment, but only to those who through God's grace repented of their sins, believed in God, and were not only the natural but also the spiritual seed of Abraham. It is true that this utterance, of

* W. Kelly, “Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch,” p. 394.

God's not beholding iniquity in Jacob, of not seeing perverseness in Israel, is spoken of Jacob and Israel as a whole; but words spoken to and of Israel as a nation are often found to strictly apply only to a remnant. That is to say, the remnant is representative of the nation, as when we read, for instance, "A remnant shall return." Is not Isaiah vi. 13 to be understood in this way?

"In it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak whose substance is in them, *when they cast their leaves*; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof."

The substance of Israel is seen in the holy seed, not in each unit of the whole nation of natural Israel, irrespective of their moral and spiritual condition—multitudes of these were and will be as the falling leaves of the oak and the teil tree, or as chaff before the wind. It is the elect remnant which is the substance—Jews born again, or destined to this, and through grace repentant and believing God.

In Old Testament times there were men who, while they were dispensationally under law, were individually through faith under grace. An Old Testament prophet gives utterance to the principle on which they lived in these words:—

"The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. ii. 4).

Yet many Israelites were unjust and were without faith. Psalm xxxii. gives us the blessed-

ness and something of the experience of the godly, but many in Israel were not godly; on the contrary they occupied the seat of the scornful, stood in the way of sinners, while others, though perhaps not giving wicked counsel, were themselves deceived and ruined by that which came from the lips of bad men. Alas! The Jewish people have supplied the world with some of that which is worst, as well as being the chosen channel for giving us what is best. Many of the utterances of vengeance found in the Psalms and in the prophets apply to Jews no less than to Gentiles. And this is all in keeping with the words in Romans ii. 28, 29:—

“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.”

Nathaniel (John i. 47) was a Jew of this class—a spiritual Israelite. “An Israelite indeed.” He was without guile. He possessed not only a Jewish nature, he was also born of God, a partaker of the divine nature, and therefore, as all such are, destined to enjoy everlasting life in heaven. But there were those who, as Jews outwardly, claimed to be the children of Abraham, yet sought to kill Christ, and were truly guilty of His death. Our Lord’s solemn messages of coming judgment were addressed to unsaved Jews. A kind of outward relation to promises

and covenants, on account of their being Jews, did not prevent these men from being abandoned to the blackness of darkness for ever. As John the Baptist plainly told his countrymen—

“Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”

It was to Jews that Jesus said—

“Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.”

And—

“As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Rom. ii. 12-16).

These considerations concerning what is reality, and what is merely outward and Jewish according to the flesh, apply in principle, and have their own force of application to the Christian profession. Real Christianity is heart work. As we have seen concerning the spiritual Israelite, true Christianity is of *the heart, in the spirit*, and not in the letter. No one is free of eternal judgment because he is associated with what bears the name of Christ, it may be in the most orthodox way, but because he believes in his heart that Jesus is the Christ, and is therefore born of God. All such believers are

“turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”

They are in Christ, and Christ is in them. Though their feebleness in apprehending what

belongs to them in Christ may be extreme and their footsteps very faltering, yet wherever unfeigned faith exists, reality is there. These are God's elect, and nothing, absolutely *nothing*, through the infinite value of their Redeemer's blood, can ever be laid to their charge. These words are as true for the Christian as for the elect of Israel:—

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace” (Rom. xi. 6).

But the heart of these redeemed persons has been purified through faith (Acts xv. 9), and being joined to the Lord they are one spirit with Him.

Now, when we come to look into the teachings of Christ and His apostles, how full they are of this distinction between profession and reality. Out of ten virgins which go forth to meet the bridegroom five of them are found in the end to have been foolish. The reality, which the oil may be taken to represent, is lacking. The Lord of all does not know them, and yet they had lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

The different kinds of hearers, brought before us in the Parable of the Sower, may be taken to illustrate professors. At least they were not persecutors. Here three out of the four kinds are found lacking reality. The good ground is taken by our Lord to illustrate the “good and

honest heart." But in a world where "the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"; where "there is none righteous, no, not one"; where "the carnal mind is enmity against God, . . . not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," the good and honest heart only exists as the result of a new creation, and is a sovereign gift through the love and mercy and infinite grace of God. But this is reality, and it is "not of works, lest any man should boast." Where this reality is not, sooner or later, whatever their profession, men make shipwreck of themselves. It is not possible to permanently exercise faith apart from a good conscience. Where men mind earthly things, when they make their God their belly, and glory in their shame, their end proves itself to be destruction.

Sometimes the question is put to a person in kindest, longing love—"Are you a Christian?" The one addressed is grieved, or perhaps offended. "Of course," says such an one, "I am a Christian; we are all Christians." Yes, such persons are Christians by *profession*; but the question is meant to cut deeper—"are they so in reality?" Have they access into this grace of God wherein we stand? Are they staying themselves upon a crucified and now risen Saviour? There may be much earnestness in going to church, of giving one's goods to feed the poor, yet, at the same time, all confidence is

placed in self, and none in Christ. This is not reality. Overcoming by the blood is reality.

“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith is counted for righteousness.*”

His “faith,” to many professors, may seem Antinomian. They may despise him, they may be on excellent terms with themselves, and seem to have a good store of good works laid up for the time to come, yet all such seeming righteousness will melt into nothingness in the day that is coming. But the man that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

“Jesus, the Lord, our righteousness,
Our beauty Thou, our glorious dress ;
'Midst flaming worlds, in this arrayed,
With joy shall we lift up the head.”

“Let us,” says the apostle, “hold fast (not the *profession*, but) the *confession* of our faith without wavering.” The *confession* of our faith will help ourselves and help others. What a blessed *confession* it is! The utterance of it ought to illuminate our faces as we tell it out. It is a confession of divine love to lost and unworthy sinners ; it is a confession of a divine Person who became a man, became poor, became sin, became dead that we might be saved with an everlasting salvation. If we are not making this confession, our profession is not worth much. Those who hold their peace and are ashamed to

confess Christ now may find themselves disowned of Him in the day that is coming.

May our lips be full of His praise, and our hearts overflowing continually with His love, and may our tongues, according to our measure, tell out the tidings of this grace divine.

T. H.

The Bible Class.

Philadelphia—Rev. iii. 7-13.

“And unto the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write : These things saith the Holy, the True ; He that has the key of David, He who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open.”

WE cannot but feel that we are here treading on ground of the deepest interest. The history of the Church on earth is reaching its close. The blessed revival of the Reformation period, as we have seen in Sardis, had passed on into the sad spectacle of lifeless profession ; with a few names, it is true, that did not defile their garments. But the ecclesiastical system was just simply the world—a name to live, but that was all. Such was Protestantism, especially as seen in its *national Churches*.

We fully admit that times of revival and great spiritual energy followed after the Reformation period—the days of the Wesleys, for instance, and other similar, though lesser, movements.

Each of these contained, more or less, the elements of Philadelphia. But though every movement of the Spirit of God, throughout the history of the Church, every movement accompanied by devotedness to Christ, and the faithful preaching of the Word, is Philadelphian in character, yet Philadelphia itself is, we believe, something different and more definite.

Philadelphia follows Sardis, and immediately precedes Laodicea. Before attempting, even if it were wise or desirable so to do, any more precise definition of Philadelphia, let us briefly dwell upon the characteristic features of this phase of Church history.

1. **There is nothing to condemn.**—There may be but little externally to commend ; there is but little strength ; the great days of Pauline energy were over. Still there were works, works that the Lord Himself knew, though others might despise and ignore them. In Philadelphia there is no reproof from the Lord.

2. **Moral Character is everything.**—In the Lord's presentation of Himself, there is no allusion here to any of the features described in chapter i. Ecclesiastical organisation was a mass of corruption, as seen in Thyatira ; it had become a worldly system, as seen in Sardis. In Philadelphia something more than a mere outward ecclesiastical association and assumption is before us. Association with Christ is the great feature—not a system but a Person is before the

soul. Christ is the Holy and the True, and holiness and truth are essential in those who are in association with Him. The government is on His shoulders, the key of David in His hand. Church history is nearing its close, the kingdom is about to be set up, the thread of David's royal line is once more to be taken up; all power and all authority is in the hands of Christ.

We cannot refrain from quoting the following :—

“Christ is known as the Holy One. Then outward ecclesiastical associations or pretensions will not do. There must be what suits His nature, and faithful consistency with that Word which He will certainly make good. With this He has the administration; and opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. See what His path was on earth: only then graciously dependent, as we are. He was holy and true, to man's view had a little strength, kept the Word, lived by every word that proceeded out of God's lips, waited patiently for the Lord, and to Him the porter opened. He lived in the last days of a dispensation, the holy and true One, rejected, and, to human eye, failing in success with those who said they were Jews, but were the synagogue of Satan. So the saints here: they walk in a place like His; they keep His Word, have a little strength, are not marked by a Pauline energy of the Spirit, but do not deny His name. This is the character and motive of all their conduct. It is openly confessed, the Word kept, the name not denied. It seems little; but in universal decline, much pretension and ecclesiastical claim, and many falling away to man's reasonings, keeping the Word of Him that is holy and true, and not denying His name, is everything” (Darby).

And this, we are persuaded, is the essential thing to cultivate in ourselves and to seek for in others. Too often Philadelphia has been interpreted as an *ecclesiastical position*, but it is quite possible to have all this, or, at any rate, to pretend thereto, and yet the moral character and personal fidelity and individual piety that Christ commended to be sadly lacking.

“I know thy works : behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou hast a little power, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My name.”

How admirably does the Spirit of God here describe what is within the reach of any and every saint of God at the close of the dispensation ! Surely it should characterise every Christian, and not one of us should be contented with anything short of it. But can any lay claim to have attained ? Should we not remember that it is Christ Himself who walks in the midst of the candlesticks ? And is it not for Him alone to say who conforms practically to that which He here commends ? For us each it should surely be the standard we set before us ; but let us beware of the deadly spiritual pride that arrogates to itself the credit of having attained.

The “little strength” of the close of the dispensation stands in marked contrast to the Pentecostal power of its commencement. But in Philadelphia though there is but little strength,

yet the feeblest saint may hold as firmly to Christ's word and name as a Peter or a Paul.

“Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee.”

3. **The Synagogue of Satan.**—Here at the close we find a revival of what wrought such havoc in the early days of the Church. Strong words these are, “the synagogue of Satan,” and in these days of sickly sentimentality they might be called *uncharitable* by those who prefer to please men rather than to be the servants of Christ (Gal. i.). But they are used by the Lord Himself, and therefore it behoves us to diligently inquire what it is that meets with His so great displeasure. It is all the more striking to find such words in Philadelphia where all is commendation. To quote again:—

“Here we get those who have an opposite character, and the Lord speaks very plainly; He does not spare them a bit. They are the synagogue of Satan. What did these Jews pretend to? All that which externally gave them a religious title to govern, to command in the truth, antiquity and ordinances established of God, as they really had been in the case of the Jews, and the proof that they were the true and only people of God, the priesthood instituted of God. They had the pretension to be God's competent administrators of His blessings, which none else were, &c.” (Darby).

To come now to the place that Philadelphia holds in the outline of Church history propheti-

cally given in these chapters. Can we discern any definite movement since the Reformation, any movement that has specially influenced the whole Church of God, that has distinctly occupied the mind of God's Spirit and met with the approval of the heart of Christ?

Let us remember the salient points: Little strength, the word of Christ kept and acted out at all cost, the name of Christ exalted above all other names, an opened door for service—a door that man would oftentimes have shut; side by side with all this, a revival of ritualism, and high-church claims, with pretensions to which a persecuting spirit always attaches. Let us weigh all this, and we cannot prevent the picture rising before our minds of that marvellous revival in the second half of the last century. We do not hesitate to say that the movement which some who are still alive witnessed in its early beginnings is as clearly portrayed in Philadelphia as Rome is in Thyatira, or Protestantism in Sardis. But if *that* was Philadelphia, who are Philadelphians to-day? To quote yet another:—

“If we look at the history of the movement which has been for years going on, we shall find that along with revived study of the Word, and energetic evangelising, and the drawing of Christians to one another, there has been an undoubted revival of ritualism also, and that not in Rome where it never had slept, but in Protestantism. . . . The fruits of many a revival and separations from the Church Establishments of Protestantism have been blighted by a spirit of conformity to that which had been

left. The chapels have become churches, the ministry a priesthood . . . and the desire for Christian union has been perverted into a desire for *denominational* union. . . . Even for those most widely removed (as it might seem) from all this, the same influences are at work, and should be no less dreaded. Ecclesiasticism, clerisy, the substitution of corporate for individual conscience—these are all elements of a return movement, the ebb of the tide which once seemed as if it could not so soon fail" (Grant).

The moment Philadelphia becomes a *system* to which outwardly we can attach ourselves it is on the high road to Laodicea.

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly: Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown."

It is not to be wondered at that Satan should seek to overthrow whatever is of God in such a movement as Philadelphia. Where the Word of God has full sway over the individual conscience; where the name of Christ, the Holy and True, is paramount in the soul's affection—then Satan is powerless to effect his object. He may set up a counteracting movement, a counterfeit of what God by His Spirit is seeking to do for the glory of Christ, and the blessing of His people. True and earnest souls, believing souls, may be entangled in this; and against this counterfeit movement we are warned by the stern denunciation—"the synagogue of Satan." But there is

no encouragement to enter into war with those who make these high pretentious claims to Church position and established authority. Refuse all association with it, and pass on in quietness of soul, content with the approbation of Christ Himself. The time will come when that approbation which now sustains the heart in the midst of isolation, opposition, and misrepresentation will be made public, and all shall know that "**I have loved thee.**"

Now is the time for patience. Even Christ Himself is not enforcing His righteous claims; that day is coming, even when He Himself shall come.

The world may boast now, but their day of trial is at hand. *All the world* will suffer at that day. This goes wider than "the day of Jacob's trouble." But Philadelphia is given the promise that it shall be kept **out of** that day altogether—not merely preserved through it, but kept out of it.

"He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from My God, and My new name."

What cheering words are these to the overcomer! To be fully identified with Christ in the day of His power and glory is amply sufficient for all the shame and contempt of associa-

tion with Him in the day of weakness and rejection. This is not the time to boast of ecclesiastical power and order, but to seek above all things a walk in personal communion with Him who is holy and true. Let us beware of the boastful spirit of the synagogue of Satan. To keep Christ's word, to be true to His name, to wait patiently for Him, these are the essentials for every Christian who desires to enter into the spirit of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia is not an ecclesiastical position which some Christians may adopt in separation from other Christians; this, however sincere the desire may be at the start to be true and faithful, will in the end come perilously near to the pretensions of them which "say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." It is rather the true and real in contrast with the mere professing body. Every true Christian will be kept out of the hour of trial that is coming on the whole habitable world, and every mere professor, alive at the coming of the Lord, will assuredly have to pass through that awful time. Caught up to heaven, will be the portion of Philadelphia; unparalleled judgment here below will overwhelm Christless christendom, the true **dwellers upon earth**. Later on we shall see how this expression, "them that dwell on the earth," is characteristic of that special class, who having had the offer of heaven, deliberately make choice of the earth.

Notes and Comments.

**Non-
Eternity
Mission.** AN active propaganda is being carried on by the preachers of non-eternity doctrines. One of the London dailies, referring to the recent Albert Hall meetings, gives the following striking comment:—

“No collections are necessary when a man preaches against the existence of a hell. Money rolls in voluntarily from people all over the world to help the propagation of such glad tidings. Such has been the experience of — who has been conducting a series of ‘No hell’ meetings at the Royal Albert Hall.”

Man in his unregenerate and unconverted state has no desire to go to heaven; there is nothing there that he loves, and all the holiness of that place is distasteful to him. Take away the fear of hell, and with absolute indifference and utter unconcern he will pursue his journey to eternity.

Can we conceive what a state of corruption and crime would be found in London in twenty-four hours if all belief in police courts and prison cells were reasoned away!

But man loves sin more than he loves heaven, and more than he dreads hell. Nevertheless the day is surely approaching when those who have died rejecting Christ will be raised to stand before the Great White Throne, there to be judged **according to their works.**

It is sad to find those who at one time made profession of real faith turning aside to infidelity. It will almost invariably be found that the first step in apostasy is sin in the life. The best argument against the truth of the Bible is a life of sin.

At a time when the Coronation *The King's Declaration.* Oath is once again being brought to the front through the lamented death of King Edward VII., it may be of interest to compare the King's Declaration with the Romish "Excommunication and cursing of Protestants," taken from the Preface to the Bull "Cœna Domini," which is a part of the Canon Law of the Church of Rome. We give them in parallel columns:—

**The Protestant
King's
Declaration.**

I, George, do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there is not any Transubstantiation of the elements of Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, at or after the consecration thereof, by any person whatsoever; and that the

**The Roman
Excommunication
and Curse.**

"We excommunicate and curse, on the part of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; by the authority also of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul; and by our own, all Hussites, Wicklephists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Huguenots, Anabaptists, Trinitarians, and apostates whatsoever from the Christian faith"

Invocation or Adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saint, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this declaration and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any Evasion, Equivocation, or mental Reservation whatsoever, and without any Dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope, or any other authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this Declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning."

(*i.e.* from the Popish faith!)
 "and all and singular other heretics, under whatsoever name they may be classed, and of whatsoever sect they may be; and those who believe, receive or favour them; and all those who defend them in general, whatsoever they be, and all those who, without our authority, and that of the Apostolic See, knowingly read or keep, print, or in any way whatsoever, from any cause, publicly or privately, upon any pretence or colour whatsoever, defend their books which contain heresy, or treat of religion; also schismatics, and those who pertinaciously withdraw themselves, or secede from their obedience to us, and to the Roman Pontiff for the time being."

It seems difficult to understand that those who display such sensitiveness with respect to the words "idolatrous and superstitious," should at the same time calmly hand over to perdition all who read, print, or keep any evangelical

literature! It is still within the memory of us all that a Protestant Princess purchased a throne at the cost of hurling the curse of God at our late Most Gracious Queen Victoria, and all who refused to bow the knee to the Baal of Popery. But we are sure that multitudes of Romanists are as ignorant of these things as the large bulk of so-called Protestants. The ecclesiastical authorities know them right well, and at the same time make the boast that Rome is *semper eadem*.

A. H. B.

We are asked to state that the ***The Welsh Magazine.*** title of this magazine is *Y Ffon an Ffynon*, which means, "The Staff and the Well." It may be had of Messrs Davies & Co., Publishers, High Street, Merthyr Tydvil; or of W. M. Roberts, Ceredigion, Long Buckby, Rugby. Price 1d.

A friend has sent us the following:—

"During the last twenty years or so, the so-called '*Catholic Truth Society*' has circulated some twenty millions of Romish publications throughout England, partly by sale, and partly by free distribution, whilst various sects, such as the *Seventh Day Adventists*, the *Millennial Dawnists*, *Christadelphians*, *Mormons*, *Christian Scientists* and others are most assiduous in propagating their heresies far and wide.

"Were the people of God only awake as they should be to the mighty power of the printing press, for either good or evil, surely far more would be done in using this potent instrument in the cause of the gospel."

**“If Any Man will Come after Me,
Let Him Deny Himself.”**

O SAVIOUR ! daily give me grace
Self truly to deny,
As lowly I pursue the race
To reach the goal on high !

Oh ! draw me with the cords of love
To follow after Thee,
With mind e'er set “on things above,”
Till I Thy face shall see.

Do Thou subdue my restive will,
That I may patient be,
And all the claims of Grace fulfil
In true humility.

I would be meek, and gentle too,
As Thou wert when below,
And ever seek Thy will to do,
As I in knowledge grow.

With love my wayward heart constrain
Thy precepts to obey,
And thus a righteous course maintain
Whilst haste I on my way.

From ev'ry taint of self-conceit,
O Saviour ! set me free,
As trampling pride beneath my feet,
I seek to copy Thee.

I would show grace to all Thine own,
Avoiding wordy strife,
And ever let my love be known
As one with them in life.

Thus yearns my heart, O gracious Lord!
 Self truly to deny,
 Do Thou all needed aid afford,
 Till ends my course on high! U. U.

“MINISTERS generally avoid preaching what the people before them will understand as addressed particularly to them. They often preach about sinners instead of preaching to them. They studiously avoid being personal, in the sense of making the impression on any one present that he is the man. Now, I have thought it my duty to pursue a different course, and I always have pursued a different course. I have often said, ‘Do not think I am talking about anybody else; but I mean you, and you, and you.’”

[FINNEY.]

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 —————

Correspondence.

WE have recently received this most interesting letter from Greece. May it stir all hearts to praise and earnest prayer:—

30th May 1910.

You know how afraid I am to venture upon statistics or probabilities, especially in dealing with Easterns, but I am sure you will be glad to know that God is now working in a special manner in Athens, or, shall I say, the Lord is manifesting His presence and power in a special manner.

For example, our meetings are crowded with, apparently, earnest listeners. Certainly, if last Lord's Day attendance continues it will necessitate a larger room.

Further, we have usually suspended preaching during the summer heat, whereas, now they ask that meetings be continued during the summer. Certainly, if God keeps me in health, I should not dare to close them when I see the work going on as it is at present.

As far as I dare say it, four of those men of position have accepted the salvation of God, and they openly declare themselves new creatures. I was drawing attention to these men after our meeting last night when a man of education replied, "I can see it in their faces."

Be this as it may, God is clearly working mightily in these men.

We have been expecting much from the Lord for some time, and at all our prayer meetings have specially asked God to show us His glory and grace by saving these men, so we must not be surprised at what we see. "According to your faith," is God's way of showing us His salvation (John xi. 40).

I have also news from Cyprus, where a man of position has openly declared his faith and assurance of salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ, and they are expecting many others, whom they believe to be believers, to publicly follow this example. [H. D.]

HSIN-HUA,
CHINA, 15th May 1910.

This is the Lord's Day evening. We are just in from a crowded gospel meeting, our only trouble being that we had nowhere to seat the listeners. They *did* listen.

Yesterday, I baptized six persons. To-day they remembered the Lord together with us at the breaking of bread. We have not been acting hastily. These are some of those I have given intimation of from time to time. They have all been under our instruction for a year, and in most of the cases longer. Two rose at the breaking of bread this morning, though it was their first

communion, and thanked the Lord naturally and spontaneously for His grace. Why not? It is out of the mouths of babes and sucklings that God *perfects praise*. Babes and sucklings have their eyes full of wonder and gladness at the One who is everything to them. They do not think about themselves. This is perfection. I know you will join us in thanking God for this fruit, and for His grace to these, and also you will be praying for the more that are to follow. [H. T.]



The Counsel of Jethro.

IN Exodus xvii. and xviii. we have a lovely picture of Christ "as a Son over His own house," and also as "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. ii. 17, iii. 6).

The children of Israel had been drinking of water from the smitten rock, which spiritually is to be interpreted as meaning Christ (1 Cor. x. 4). And the result of their drinking this water was strength or energy of life in fighting the enemy in the wilderness, which in a spiritual sense speaks to us of the strength which Christ, by His Word and Spirit, imparts to His own in resisting the enemy and in overcoming this present evil world. But the secret of Israel's success in defeating Amalek did not lie altogether in this their indwelling strength. More than this was needed, and also provided by

God to ensure victory to the people. Moses, therefore, goes to the top of the hill, and, with the rod of God in his hand, stands before Him in behalf of those who are in deadly conflict. It was mediatorial intercession, and pointed to the future priesthood of Christ, now exercised by Him at God's right hand for us. The rod was emblematical of God's power and authority, even as Christ is now the full expression of these as seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

At first the rock was smitten by the rod that water might flow out, and after the rock was once rent, it never was to be smitten again. In Isaiah liii. we read of Christ as being "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"; also that "He was wounded for our transgressions." So at the crucifixion His side was pierced after His death, and from it water, as well as blood, came forth (John xix. 34). And the Apostle John in his epistle seconds this fact with special emphasis, because the subject of which he treats largely in his writings is **life** (1 John v. 6).

The blood expiates and washes away sins, while the water purifies the soul, flooding it with "newness of life," the abundant life of Christ Jesus our Lord.

But again we see this same rod in Moses' hand as he stands on the top of the hill, with uplifted hands for the triumph of Israel. Thus the rod lifted up on the mount speaks of God's

power in blessing for men through Christ, the Mediator. But when seen lifted up over the rock to smite it, that is God's power in judgment against Christ, when He became a curse, on account of sin, upon the cross.

The child of God in this world is subject to weakness and defeat. He therefore must ever go to Christ and drink of His spirit and fulness. He only needs **speak** to the Rock, and the water of life flows into and through his soul (Num. xx. 8). For though every true believer has life in him, this life can never be detached from its source, which is Christ. But he also has a living Christ at God's right hand, who ever lives to make intercession for us, and who is able, therefore, to save unto the uttermost (Heb. vii. 25). And as all power is invested in this glorified Christ, it is communicated to His own in their weakness while pressing on to victory and the victor's crown in this present scene. So we come into present possession of God's mighty power working in us, both by the presence of Christ in us, and by His presence at God's right hand (Rom. viii. 10, 34). Yet we would remark the difference between Christ being in us, in a doctrinal sense, and His living in us in a practical and real sense.

If Christ is to **live** in me, must I not be able, in some measure at least, to say with Paul: "For to me to live is Christ?" And must I not experience a yielding of myself to God, and

also present my body unto Him as a living sacrifice? (Rom. vi. 13, xii. 1).

As we pass on to Exodus xviii., we behold Moses in the new position of judging the people, or rather of judging between the people and their causes. On another occasion when he did seek to enter into judgment with the people, and therefore used the rod of God out of its true place, it was to incur the severe displeasure of Jehovah (Num. xx.). We know that the law had to say to this kind of judgment upon disobedience and wickedness (John viii. 5). But when Israel failed, and the law also failed in their hands, Jehovah Himself would act directly in judgment against them, according as it is written,

“The Lord shall judge His people” (Deut. xxxii. 36).

But Moses in the seat of judgment here gives us a view of Christ, as upholding and administering God’s government among His people, or as acting in the capacity of “Son over His own house.” Here it is power in **government**, while in chapter xvii. it was power in **grace**.

Here Moses “sits” as judge among the people, in order that righteousness and peace might be maintained **within**, while before he “stood” on the hill, in the presence of God for the people, that power and victory might be secured to them while in the deadly conflict **without**.

But Moses is moved by the counsel of Jethro, his father-in-law, to share the exercise of this judgment with able and worthy men from among the people. And this counsel, we believe, was according to the wisdom of the Spirit, to whose leading Jethro, for the time, appears to have been subject. For what better evidence were needed to commend it to us as being of God, than to see the lack of authority or positivism on Jethro's part, while, with the greatest care he submits it to the will of God :—

“ If thou shalt do this thing, and **God command thee so,**” &c. (Exod. xviii. 23).

But if, as some suppose, it were failure on the part of Moses to adopt such counsel, still in God's own way this very weakness gave rise to a picture portraying the government of God's house in a future day, as exercised in the name and authority of Christ by apostles, whom He chose, and finally committed to the assembly of God on earth in which He dwells.

And, moreover, we see how the Spirit of God ever considers the weakness of the Lord's people most tenderly, and provides for it most thoughtfully. So Moses was enabled to endure by the assistance of Aaron and Hur on the mount of intercession, and by the counsel of Jethro in the seat of judgment. And yet how important to remember that this counsel would serve, not only to relieve the burden of Moses, but also that—

“All this people might go to their place in peace”
(ver. 23).

And we may be quite sure that whatever obtained in that day for making and following after peace, among the Lord's people, was of Him. And the counsel of Jethro was redolent with the wisdom, righteousness, and peace of Jehovah. There was nothing radical or extreme in the measure it advocated. But it afforded a holy and gracious provision in meeting the difficulties and exigencies of the hour. And in pursuing it, **God would be with Moses**, as practically everything depended upon the presence of Jehovah for power and blessing (ver. 19).

We do not enlarge here upon what this counsel propounded. The reader may examine for himself the details of it with much profit. It is quite evident, however, that, as owned and blessed of God, it was quite pronounced in its demand for righteousness and peace. For these, with the joy of the Holy Ghost, define for us what the kingdom of God ever is (Rom. xiv. 17).

But if God's outward order of government, as established among His people by Himself, should break down, as it ever has, what, we may ask, remains for the individual who would walk faithfully with Him? The reply is, that the same principles ever remain, and may be followed by the individual who would overcome at a time when corporate testimony, whether in Israel or the Church, is hardly to be discerned. And in

proof of this the prophetic words of Zacharias may be quoted, which were based upon the presence and works of Christ as coming unto His people, the Jews.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation . . . that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and **righteousness**, . . . and . . . to guide our feet into the way of **peace**” (Luke i. 68-80).

And in keeping with this, the aged Simeon takes the “Prince of Peace” up in his arms before he is allowed to see death, and then exclaims—

“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word” (Luke ii. 25-32).

But for us perhaps Paul's last words to Timothy may have a still more direct application. In his first letter to Timothy the order of God's government in His house is established, and for a time, by the energy of grace and the Holy Ghost, a corporate testimony was maintained in greater or less purity. But in his second letter, when all outward, general testimony was fast settling down to a level of hopeless ruin, **the individual is called upon to govern himself and to keep himself in order.** And so we have this word of counsel:

“Follow **righteousness**, faith, love, **peace** . . .” (2 Tim. ii. 22).

And here, let us observe, we have, besides

righteousness and peace, the “faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. i. 13; see also 1 Tim. i. 14).

If to-day the Lord’s people will begin with righteousness and end with peace, they will find that between these **their faith has been working by love** (Gal. v. 6).

The Lord in His great mercy give us an understanding and obedient heart, as we come to learn more and more that it is only as we follow these things that Paul’s closing desire for Timothy may be ours, when he said, “**The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit**” (2 Tim. iv. 22).

G. B. E.

“The Things which Are.”

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be after these.”—REV. i. 19.

THESE words give us the division of the book. “The things which are” must needs apply to the seven assemblies and their state; “The things which shall be after these”—not “hereafter,” which is too vague—to the things which follow from the fourth chapter on. This is evident, whatever view we take of the interpretation of these sections. With the first of these only have we to do here—“the things which are,” or **present** things.

Present, then, in what sense? present at that time merely, and now long past? or, as many now consider, present still? Do the addresses to the churches give only such lessons for us here to-day as must necessarily be found in what is said to Christian gatherings of bygone days by One who, with perfect wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and love, speaks to just such as we are? Or is there, besides all this, as many believe, a more precious, designed correspondence between these seven Asiatic assemblies and as many successive periods in the history of the Church at large, a prophetic teaching for all time until the Lord come, and our path here is ended? Let us look briefly at what has been urged as to this latter view.

Against it has been urged that the addresses are not given as a prophecy of the future, but simply *as* to churches then existing, now long passed away. This is undoubtedly the most forcible objection that has been made; for imagination is unholy licence in the things of God, and the addresses have not the general style of prophecy, as must be admitted. We do right, then, to be watchful here.

But answer has been made to this: in the first place, that at the very beginning of the book, we have the whole of it called a prophecy:

“Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the book of this *prophecy*, and keep the things that are written therein.”

It seems, therefore, that we have distinct warrant for holding the addresses to be prophetic, and that we should rather require it for refusing them this place.

Besides this, the disguise which confessedly they assume may be accounted for. The Christian's privilege and duty are, to be always expecting his Lord. He who says in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, is a "wicked servant." There was to be left room for this expectancy, as the best help against discouragement, the most effectual remedy against settling down in the world, the best means of fixing the eyes upon Christ and things above. This was not to beget false hope or encourage mistake, for the time of the Lord's return they were assured they did *not* know :

"Watch, *for* ye know not when the time is."

But thus to put before men a prophecy of a long earthly history for the Church would be to destroy what was to be a main characteristic of Christians, to take out of their hands the lamp of testimony to the world itself, the virgin's lamp lighted to go forth to meet her Lord.

And it is blessed to see that now, if, in the end of the days, the full meaning is being revealed, and we are shown how much of the road we have actually travelled, the effect is, after all the long delay, to *encourage* expectation, not to damp it. That we are nearing the end is sure ;

that any part of the road remains before us to be trodden we have no assurance. The very thing which to past generations would have been an evil too fully to disclose is now for us as great and manifest a gain.

For the prophetic view is further urged the constant emphatic appeal to our attention with which every one of these addresses ends. Was it only for men of that day and place that it is written—

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches?”

No part of Scripture is so emphasised beside. Again, are there no candlesticks amid which Christ walks except those of these Asiatic churches? The very number, seven, is characteristic of this book, as it is significant of completeness also. As the seven Spirits speak of the complete energy of the one blessed Spirit, do not the seven churches stand for the varied aspects of the one Church of God on earth? And to them as representatives of this one Church is the whole book committed,—not for their own use merely, but for ours. As John is the representative servant, so the churches are representative of the Church.

But the great proof of the correctness of the prophetic view is the real correspondence between the pictures given of the seven churches and the well-known history of the professing

Church. We have the successive steps of its decline,—first hidden, then external; the judaising process by which it was transformed from a company of saved and heavenly people into a mixed multitude uncertain of heaven, clinging to the certainties of earth, away from God, and committing the sacred things, for which they are too unclean, to an official class of go-betweens. Then open union with the world, once persecuting, now friendly, Balaam-teachers for hire promoting and celebrating it. Then the reign of Jezebel, inspired and infallible, her cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Then Protestantism, soon forgetting the things which it had heard, sunk into its grave of rationalism, though with a separate remnant, as ever, dear to God. Then an era of revival and blessing, the Spirit of God working freely, outside of sectarian boundary lines, uniting to Christ and to one another. Then, alas! collapse and threats of removal, Christ rejected and outside, the lukewarmness of water ready to be spued out of His mouth.

Such is the picture: does it appeal to us? In the midst of all this, in the central Church, the centre of the darkness, **at midnight** surely, there begins a cry, faint though at first, but gathering strength as the time goes on, "**Go ye out to meet Him!**" In Thyatira first, "Hold fast till I come!" To Sardis, "I will come on thee as a thief." To Philadelphia,—more as in

haste now,—“ I come **quickly.**” Then Laodicea, and the end!

Does this appeal to us? What follows then? Briefly, a scene in heaven, and a redemption-song before the throne; a Lamb slain, who as Judah's lion unseals the seven-sealed book; churches no more on earth, but once more Jews and Gentiles; and out of these, a multitude who come out of the great tribulation; until, after the marriage of the Lamb has taken place in heaven, its gates unclose, and the white horse and Rider and His armies come out to the judgment of the earth.

This to many even yet may read as strange as any fiction. I cannot, of course, enter on it now. But there are those who object that by this view the relative importance of events is quite inverted. Two chapters give us the whole course of Christendom. The largest part of the book by far is taken up with the details of some seven years after the Church is removed to heaven. Why so rapid a survey of what so immediately concerns us, so lengthy a relation of what will not take place till after the saints of the present time have passed from the scene?

But how often are we mistaken in the relative importance of things! God seeth not as man seeth, and the common view which appropriates seal after seal to the successions of Roman emperors, trumpet after trumpet to the inroads of Goths and Vandals, vial after vial to the

French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, has surely missed His estimate of importance. But more: the events which fill so many chapters have indeed for us the very greatest significance. The time is that "end of the age" which is the harvest of the world; it is the judgment for which all around is ripening, and in which everything comes out as He who judges sees it. Is it not for us of the greatest possible moment to see that final, conclusive end of what is now often so pretentious and delusive? Here we may merely gather, if we will, lessons of sanctification of the most practical nature. Indeed, we are sanctified by the truth, and whatever is of the truth will sanctify. [GRANT.]



The Bible Class.

Philadelphia—*continued.*

THERE is such a peculiar fascination about the address to the assembly in Philadelphia that before passing on to Laodicea we feel compelled to add a few words.

We cannot but feel that we are drawing near to the close of the Christian dispensation. The Church as an outward system is in ruins, and it is hopeless to look for any restoration. But Christ remains in spite of all our failure. He is not seen here wielding power in outward display,

but in connection with His moral character, the safeguard of the true Christian, as the last days with its special dangers close in—"He that is holy, He that is true." In this we have a test by which everything may be judged. And how characteristic are these two things of the writings of John, who was inspired of God to supply the individual saints with full equipment for the conflict special to the closing days of the dispensation, when the outward body of ecclesiastical testimony would be hopelessly ruined.

How frequently in John's Gospel we find the Spirit of God spoken of as the "Holy Spirit" and the "Spirit of truth"! In days like these when so many are rising up and drawing away disciples after them the test of holiness and truth becomes increasingly the sheet-anchor of our souls. A man may be to all outward appearance consistent in life and holy in walk, but if his teaching is not according to the truth of God's Word and Christ's person, then from such turn away! It is often urged that unitarians lead most exemplary lives; but they deny the true Christ of God as revealed in the Scriptures of truth. The same may be said of the numberless new sects that are springing up like poisonous fungi in the fields of the apostasy. "He that is holy, He that is true,"—in this the youngest and weakest saint has an unfailing resource.

The truth of Christ's person is the great touchstone for these times of apostasy and false doctrine. Many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not Jesus Christ come in flesh (2 John vii.). The point here is that they do not confess Him as so come, that is, they do not confess who and what He is as come in flesh; they deny His true and essential deity. "this (or, He) is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20); it is of Christ that these words are spoken. Many deceivers are abroad to-day, even as in John's day; many antichrists, too, even now are to be found, whereby we know that it is already the last time. But *the* antichrist will not be manifested until the Lord has taken the Church to glory.

If a man does not bring the doctrine of Christ he must be refused all spiritual and social intercourse—"receive him not into your house" is the injunction to the elect lady and her children (see 2 John). But when any are found who, in the midst of the confusion and apostasy of the days are cleaving simply to Christ, and seeking to serve Him, not for filthy lucre's sake, but out of love and devotedness, "we therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers of the truth" (see 3 John). "He that is holy, He that is true" is then a test whereby deceivers must be tried and refused, and *simple saints received and welcomed*. And these are days when hearts

grow faint and weary, days when discouragements are apt to cast us down. But they are days when fellowship with Christ are sweet.

How analogous are the days of Philadelphia to those when Christ was here on earth. He found Himself at the close of a dispensation. There was no ark, no Urim and Thummim, no Shechinah glory—all was in ruins; even so is it now. But to Him the porter opened, although all the power of the world and Satan sought to close and shut the door. What consolation is it to the despised and, it may be, persecuted saints that Christ has opened a door which neither man nor devil can close. But in this He is sovereign; He has the key, and if He opens, no man can shut, but if He closes, no man can open. In days like these, when saints are oftentimes found in quarrelsome conflict, it is well to remember that persecution may at any moment burst forth, and though we have to-day an open door for service, and liberty for worship and gathering together, it may not always be so.

“The testimony of this dispensation in its public power is gone, never to be recovered,” but the Word remains; and though nothing but weakness characterises the people of God at the close of the dispensation, yet what security for the soul is found in this—“thou . . . hast kept my word,” **the written Word of God!** It is not the Church's word, as though the Church has authority, but the Word of Christ Himself. “It

is by the word of Christ that I must judge everything about the Church." The special need at all times, and never more so than the times in which our lot is cast, is to keep close to Christ and His word, and to let nothing come in as authority between the individual conscience and Himself. "Our safeguard is in this, each soul individually for itself, holding fast the written word of Christ, and not denying His name."

The synagogue of Satan may boast and rage ; but "individual faithfulness in a secret walk with God" is of more value in His sight than clinging to outward form without the power. Even now the believer has the assurance of his Lord's approval, but the day is coming when all the haughty pride of religious man will be humbled. Men may be very religious and yet reject Christ. When He was here on earth, those, not only who said they were Jews, but who were Jews indeed, rejected and murdered Him, and the more Jewish so-called Christians to-day become in their religiousness, the more do they persecute and despise what is really of God. There is a time coming when what God approves will be publicly acknowledged.

The Christian does not need to wait till that day to have the assurance of the Father's love and of Christ's approval, but the world will then know that the Father loved us even as He loved His Son (John xvii.). Here in Philadelphia it is

Christ's love to His own publicly acknowledged. "We know it *now*, not as deserving it, indeed, for it is all of grace; but we have the present enjoyment of it." This is the privilege of all true Christians, however feebly any of us enter into it.

But the identification with Christ is complete, "because thou hast kept the word of *My* patience." It is not merely that we patiently wait for the glory that shall be revealed, but Christ is waiting, seated on the Father's throne; and we wait in sympathy with Him. Thus there is communion between the heart of Christ and His people. The coming of the Lord is not a mere doctrine, but a living hope. Having completed the work by which He presents us before God, He has taken His seat on high; He is expecting till His foes are made His footstool (Ps. cx.). We are not His foes, we are His friends; and first of all He will come into the air and gather His friends together into the Father's house, before He comes to the earth to execute judgment on His foes. Christ is waiting, and we are waiting, hence it is "the word of *My* patience."

But more—"I also will keep thee." There is a time—not an hour of sixty minutes, but a period—of trial coming upon the whole habitable earth; no country will be exempt, no corner of the earth excluded. It is coming after the Church period. is over, after the things which

are. "The hour of temptation" will cover a larger surface than the "great tribulation" of Revelation vii., and a still larger than the "time of trouble" that shall overtake the Jewish people (Dan. xii. ; Matt. xxiv.). Wherever men dwell, wherever they may attempt to hide, "the hour of temptation" will find them out. This period appears to be the time immediately following the rapture (Rev. vi.). What uneasiness and fearfulness will take hold of men as judgment after judgment begins to be poured upon the earth. From all this the true saints of God will be kept. It is not that they will be preserved amidst it, but they shall not even pass through—"I will keep thee *out of* the hour," &c.

The saints of God are not dwellers on earth ; their citizenship is in heaven, and before this time of trial they will be caught up to heaven, their true and proper home. This will be true of all believers, not only the specially faithful ones. But how gracious of the Lord here to link the present keeping of the word of His patience on their part, with their being kept on His part out of that hour !

"I come quickly"—the word "behold" should not be there, for in truth the Philadelphian is supposed to be already looking for the Lord. The hope of His return is here supposed to have been revived, not in terror, as for Sardis—"a thief in the night,"—but as the true hope of the heart's affection.

In view of this, "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." If it be the cross and contempt now, it will be the crown then. And how completely all will be changed! They who were characterised by weakness here will occupy a place of power there—"a pillar in the temple of my God."

It is of exceeding interest, too, to note the place that "the name" holds in the promises to the overcomer. The Lord had before marked His approval of them in the words, "thou hast not denied My name." They had clung to His person and found their delight in the revelation of Himself to their souls. Others might despise them for this, for was not He despised and rejected of men? But in the coming day the Lord will not be ashamed to associate Himself with them, and to link up all the glories of heaven with those whose only title to be there is His precious blood.

"I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from My God, and My new name."

Oh, that the anticipated joys of that glorious scene, and the ineffable delights of the love of Him who is quickly coming to translate us to those courts of praise from whence we shall go no more out, might spur us on to more whole-hearted consecration to Him while we wait here on earth!

A. H. B.

Notes and Comments.

ONCE again we hear of a *The European Confederacy.* federation of the European Powers. Whether the Kaiser is aware that he is but suggesting what Scripture plainly tells us will be the political situation of the last days we cannot say. But it is of exceeding interest to the student of prophecy to see how rapidly things are shaping themselves. Worldly men think it all chimerical and utterly impossible of realisation, in view of the increasing armaments and conflicting interests of the different European Powers. But they leave God out in this as in all things. The time is surely coming when it will be true of the ten kings of the Roman Empire that—

“These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast. . . . For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (Rev. xvii. 13-17).

Along with the rumours now *Russo-Japanese Treaty.* so frequently heard of a United States of Europe, the incipient idea of the resuscitated Roman Empire, comes the news of a new agreement

between Russia and Japan. The results, disastrous to Russia, of the recent Russo-Japanese War, led some to question whether after all the view taken in "*Russia's Destiny*" was not somewhat overdrawn. But we wrote that pamphlet in the light of Scripture, and not of the passing incidents of the day. We as firmly believe as ever that Russia has yet a most important part to play in the closing drama of this poor world. It may interest our readers to know what is taking place in the political world :—

“ST PETERSBURG, 5th July 1910.

“The new agreement between Russia and Japan with regard to Manchuria has been signed by M. Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Baron Motono, the Japanese Ambassador. This treaty sets the seal to a succession of agreements, and while guaranteeing the *status quo* in Manchuria, pledges the Governments of Russia and Japan to concert measures for the defence of their respective interests in China.

“The agreement is welcomed in Russia on the ground that it puts an end to all danger of complications in the Far East, and enables the Government of the Czar to resume its proper rôle in European politics.

“Russia and Japan have now concluded agreements with regard to the East China and South Manchuria railways, and have added to these a general agreement pledging each to maintain and to assist the other in maintaining friendly and neighbourly relations in the Far East.”

“Take heed to yourselves . . . lest that day come upon you unawares”—Luke xxi. 34.

Christ's Changeless Love.

O LORD ! Thy love is peerless,
Transcending human thought,
Without it all were cheerless
To those Thy love has bought :
It moves our hearts to gladness,
And songs of holy mirth,
Amidst the gloom and sadness
Which mark our path on earth.

It speaks of that bright morrow
When we shall dwell with Thee ;
'Tis solace in all sorrow,
Whate'er its weight may be.
Like rays of sunshine streaming
Through rifts which rend a cloud,
Thy changeless love comes beaming,
And pierces sorrow's shroud.

The "little while" is wasting,
Which pass we here below,
And daily are we hasting
Love's fullest joy to know,
In that eternal dwelling
Prepared by Thee above,
Where we shall e'er be telling
The wonders of Thy love.

E'en now our voices raising,
Of love divine we sing ;
The gracious Saviour praising
Who did'st its message bring.
We bow in heart before Thee,
And willing homage give ;
We worship and adore Thee
In whom by grace we live.

“Christian Science.”

A WORD OF WARNING TO ALL.

A CURIOUS cult called “Christian Science” has been spreading for years among professing Christians, and of late years its progress has been amazing, and its success immense. Temples costing millions have been erected, and thousands have received its teachings. In one sense it has its martyrs too, for some have died in faithfulness to it, whom the timely visit of a doctor might have saved. Many say they have been healed, and by tongue and pen are sounding the praises of “Christian Science.” And now it is established everywhere, and very many are falling under its influence and power.

But just lately something very important and ominous has happened that may well make every thinking person pause. God has allowed another side of the thing to manifest itself.

A great controversy has risen among Scientists in New York, and the leader of the cult in that vast city has been deposed for practising “Malicious Animal Magnetism” and “Attempted Mental Assassination.” That is: Christian Scientists believe that an adept can quietly direct his thought batteries against a distant enemy and do him harm, even so far,

perhaps, as to kill him! Well, why not? Are there not two sides to everything? If you can think a person at a distance into health, can you not think him into sickness too?

My reader, has the Word of God authority over your soul? Shall we turn humbly and reverently to it for light? 1 Timothy iv. 1 tells us that—

“in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.”

Now do not “Malicious Animal Magnetism” and “Mental Assassination” look to you like “doctrines of devils”? The *New York Tribune* calls it “The New Witchcraft,” and the *Literary Digest* calls it “The Diabolism of Christian Science.” God has allowed the enemy to manifest himself. Shall we give heed?

Let us go back a little and see what Christian Science has always been. In its great textbook, “Science and Health,” the idea of a Saviour’s blood having power to wash away sins is ridiculed. The whole range of truth as to atonement or Christ dying for others is totally denied. In fact Mrs Eddy denies that He died at all! There is no cross in Christian Science,—no acknowledgment of man’s lost and ruined condition,—no conviction for sin,—no repentance,—no faith in a Saviour’s blood. Oh, reader! in the Book of Revelation there are some happy ones who say—

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Will Mrs Eddy be in that company? Shall you? Not if you follow her!

In Christianity, Christ is the central object.— A living, mighty Saviour, in the place of authority and power, with the Father on His throne. Our hearts are filled with Him who died for us, and we are looking for Him to come again, and between Him and you there is no intermediary, human, angelic, nor divine! Go straight to Him yourself. Tell Him everything.

In Christian Science, Mrs Eddy is the central object. She is adored by the vast mass of her followers. Her word is law to them. She occupies the place in their hearts that only Christ should have. And to-day she sits among them as the only person who can open to them the truth! Reader, do you believe in that sort of thing?

Look again at the terrific controversy among them in New York: the very leader, Mrs Stetson, ousted for the practice of witchcraft! She had wealth, influence, and power, and, it was thought, aimed at being the chief and only leader. The struggle was terrible. Policemen were on hand in numbers to watch the tumultuous meetings. God has allowed it to come out, doubtless for information and guidance of simple souls.

Now, if the leader of the Scientists in New York was guilty of witchcraft, are we to suppose that she is the only one, or the last? May we not well pause and ask ourselves whether we want to go with a people where such things are done or can be done? What has happened is only the reverse side of “Christian Science.” The juggler has shown us the other side of his penny, and it proves a bad one!

Do you want it?

“It is **The Blood** that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. xvii. 2).

“**The Blood** of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John i. 7).

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so **Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many**; and unto them that look for Him, shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 27, 28).

THE WORD OF GOD.

“**Science and Health.**”

(Edition 1902.)

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. i. 1).

God never created matter (page 335).

God created man (Gen. i. 27).

Man co-exists with God and the universe (page 266).

Abhor that which is evil (Rom. xii. 9).

In reality there is no evil (page 311).

What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Matt. xvi. 26).

It is the sense of sin, and not the sinful soul, which must be lost (page 311).

To depart and be with Christ, which is far better (Phil. i. 23).

Many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did (John ii. 23).

In that same hour He cured many evil spirits. (Luke vii. 21).

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God (Heb. x. 12).

Christ both died and rose (Rom. xiv. 9).

Death is not a stepping-stone to life, immortality, and bliss (page 203).

Miracles are impossible in science (page 83).

The supposition that there are good and evil spirits is a mistake. Evil has no reality (pages 70 and 71).

One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin (page 23).

Jesus' students, not sufficiently advanced to understand their Master's triumph, did not perform any wonderful works until they saw Him after His crucifixion, and learned that He had not died (page 45).

Reader, do these two books agree?

If not, one or the other must fall. Will it be Mrs Eddy's or the one that has stood like an eternal rock for two thousand years?

Which shall guide your life? "Science and Health," or the Word of God?

Who shall be the object before your soul? Mrs Eddy, or the Eternal Son of God?

“**Unto Him** that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. . . . **To Him** be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

W. D. C.

Notes on the Temple—No. 13.

(Read 1 Kings vi.)

THE PRECIOUS STONES.

DAVID provided for the house of his God—

“Onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones. . . . And they with whom precious stones were found gave them for the treasure of the house of the Lord” (1 Chron. xxix. 2, 8).

And Solomon

“Garnished the house with precious stones for beauty” (2 Chron. iii. 6).

These precious stones, set in gold, glistening with light, and of various colours, aptly set forth those spiritual excellencies and perfections which will be conspicuous in the redeemed in glory—the workmanship of the Eternal Spirit.

One thought more in connection with this chapter (1 Kings vi. 12, 13):—

“The word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying, concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in My statutes, and execute My judgments, and keep all My commandments, to walk in them, then will I perform My word with thee, which I spake unto David thy

father : and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

You know the end of that. Man put under a responsibility to God always fails. Solomon after all departed most flagrantly from God. He not only built the temple of Jehovah upon Mount Moriah, but he built houses to the abominations of the Gentiles over against it. But a greater than Solomon bears up the pillars of the true and spiritual temple of God. He never fails, and hence its eternal security. In the glory everything rests on the Lord Jesus Christ. As He bore on the cross all our sins as poor, lost, ruined sinners, and met all the claims of divine justice there, so as saved sinners—as saints redeemed by His precious blood—He secures the eternal blessings of the glorified.

Whereas in this temple the responsibility was thrown upon Solomon, in the temple in glory the security rests upon the Son of God. Hence these joys, these glories, this blessedness, this bliss, secured for ever—all headed up in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"God having made known unto us the mystery of His will . . . that in the dispensation of the fulness of time He might gather together (or head up together) in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth ; even in Him" (Eph. i. 9, 10).

"Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. iii. 21).

Now let us just go over these few particulars. First, the purpose of God in eternity brought

out in connection with David's first thought. Then the foundation fixed on. Then, dead sinners made living stones by faith in Jesus: the quarry and the quarrymen: saints prepared for glory: the stone squarers and builders. Then, "clothed upon" with our resurrection bodies, the cedar and the fir, the stone covered with wood. Then, conformity to Christ in His glory: the carvings on the wood: participation in the divine glory: the covering with gold: and all this for ever, since the responsibility has been borne by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Oh, what a walk is alone compatible with such a prospect! And surely, if our hearts were more familiar with this far exceeding and eternal weight of glory, with these bright prospects of heaven and eternity, the poor perishing objects of this present world would cease to have an undue influence over these hearts of ours. Is there a soul that has no present interest in these prospects? Is there a soul that has neither part nor lot in the matter? To such what shall I say? Others, perhaps, may have urged you to flee from the wrath to come by showing "the blackness of darkness for ever," and just the very opposites of these things, when the body will be raised, indeed, but with a capacity for eternal suffering—when, instead of being conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have the image of your own father, the devil, indelibly stamped upon those resurrection bodies

of yours,—when, instead of these seed vessels of graces to be expanded for ever, those seed vessels of vices, of malignant passions, will be expanding for ever,—when, instead of this “far exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” it will be a far more exceeding and eternal weight of woe pressing you deeper and deeper and deeper!

But why have I mentioned these things to you? I would rather urge you by these prospects of eternal blessings. I would not simply say, “Flee from the wrath to come,” but I would say, “Lay hold on eternal life!” Do not rest; give neither sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, voluntarily, until you are able to say, “These prospects of glory are the hope of my soul.”

“**Lay hold on eternal life!**” “How?” you will say; “that is beyond my grasp.” Ah, there is One near enough: lay hold on Christ, and eternal life is yours. Take up the cross of Christ, and these glories are thine for ever. Follow Him here: He will take you to be with Him there. If you are not daunted by the misery of the damned, have you no regret at the prospect of being banished for ever from the glory of the Lord’s paradise? If you will not be urged to “flee from the wrath to come,” and feel determined to brave it out, oh, let me entreat you not to lose, in the rejection of Christ, this glorious future of the redeemed of God. These are faint figures, blessed though

they are, perfect as they are, glorious as they are. Oh,—

“eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

Let me urge you, entreat you, to lay hold on Christ! Receive Him as God's gift. Reject not so great salvation. Lay hold, by the receiving of Christ, on eternal life. Rest not satisfied until you are able to say, “That is my home: those are my prospects: those are shadows of good things which God in His infinite mercy and boundless love, through the finished work of His Son, hath reserved for me.”



The Scriptures as God's Word.

WHY the attempt to deny that the Scriptures are God's Word, if it be not an attack of him who would fain destroy Him who is the believer's life, and of whom the Scriptures testify? And Satan, never resourceless, but ever versatile in his mode of attack, if he fail to accomplish his great design, will, with untempered zeal and fury, array his wrath against that which is nearest and dearest to Christ, whether it be God's Word, God's people, or the faith of God's elect.

What wonder, then, that God's Word should be subjected to a similar reproach and onslaught

as was endured by a suffering Christ when the enemies of our Lord and His Christ wrest and tear the Scriptures to their own destruction? And because of this, what an urgent call to any who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, for an earnest and unceasing contending for the faith, which the enemy would destroy (Gal. i. 23; Jude 3). Only for our comfort let it be remembered that, if the Word of God has shielded and preserved to us the unity of the Person of Jesus, as "the doctrine of the Christ" (2 John ix.), this same Christ will, in turn, through the power of His Holy Spirit, shield and preserve to us the indestructible and eternal Word.

But is there not a danger, while seeking to meet error, of falling into it ourselves, by failing to fairly weigh and compare the Scriptures in their own light? So that, if we depart from the "straight line" (2 Tim. ii. 15, N.T.) in our *intelligent* use of their statements—to say nothing of the all-importance of their *spiritual* use—a door is opened for the enemy to come in, and annoy, if not perplex, the faithful and confound the simple.

Now, one believes that the Word of God is the Word of God whether spoken by Him directly to man as to Adam in the beginning, or through the prophets of old, or by Jesus Himself when upon earth, or again through the New Testament apostles and prophets.

We know that God's most ordinary way of

speaking in time past was through the prophets, or it might be as "the word spoken by angels," which was said to be "steadfast" (Heb. i. 1-2, ii. 1-2). But to-day He is speaking to us, and also to the world, through His Son, and the gospels are but the *recorded* Word of God as spoken and lived by the Son of God, brought to the remembrance of the apostles by the Holy Ghost, who has written them down for us (John xiv. 26).

The source of this written Word was God, and was divine; the power of it was the Spirit, and was also divine. But the One who gave living expression to it was both human and divine. And, therefore, Christ both spoke and commanded by the Holy Ghost as a man, though, being God, He was never subject to human error (Mark vii. 37; Acts i. 1, 2). Moses and the prophets, Paul and the other apostles of the New Testament were only men, and were, therefore, only human; but they were saved from human error in their writings by the power and leading of the Spirit.

And so, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." God is the giver of it, and He is the source. But more—the way in which it was communicated and written down preserved it from human error and corruption. For it was both God-given and God-inspired. And mark, the entire canon of Scripture is included in "all scripture," which the apostle designates as "the

holy scriptures" (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16). And the reference here, as is clearly evident, was more particularly to the Old Testament writings.

There was, we know, the "human element" in the men who wrote these Scriptures; but why, then, are they called holy or sacred Scriptures, if there was anything faulty in the words that were written? And we know still further, that this acknowledged "human element" could in no wise give rise to the exercise of man's will, his passions, or even to the human elements of exaggeration, partiality, or prejudice, in writing the Scriptures, for when God chose men to write His Word, He committed the service to "*holy men*," who only spoke as moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21). Further, in considering the possibility of error or mistakes in the written Word of God, we must be careful to distinguish between the *writers* and the *translators* of Scripture, for the latter were not inspired, and were, therefore, subject to error in their translations.

"Every word of God is *pure*." But it is the human or impure mind of man that sees or imagines these mistakes and impurity in the words and expressions of the holy Scriptures. And "blessed are the pure in heart," for they "see God" in every line of holy Scripture.

But from this purity of expression the human mind will quickly shift to the question of exactness of expression, ever forgetting that, apart from purity, there can be no exactness or harmony

according to God. And the heart, which governs the reason, if it remain in unbelief, and, therefore, be impure, the mind must also remain unenlightened and unrenewed, and so is quite as unable to judge of divine exactness as it is of divine purity.

God's Word, as His truth, is calculated to deal with the conscience in convicting it, and bringing it into the light, in order that the heart may be reached, and that by the heart man may believe unto righteousness (Rom. x. 10). But His Word has not been written simply to minister to the mind or intellect. It has been both spoken and written that *men may be saved* (John v. 34; xx. 31). Yet, apart from "an honest and good heart" (Luke viii. 15), where the truth of God must ever dwell, men utterly fail in their mental reasoning according to God. But where there is honesty of heart with God, there can be no real difficulties with His Word. Why? Because in the honest heart there is a disposition to *believe*, not to *judge* God and His Word.

It is only by the fallen and, therefore, deranged reason that God is always judged as being at fault. And why, then, should His Word escape this unrighteous judgment? Yet how awfully solemn to hear Christ say—

"If any man hear My words and **believe not** . . . the words that I have spoken, the same shall **judge him** in the last day" (John xii. 47, 48).

He who believes God has set to his seal that

God is *true*, and he has confidence in Him, so that, if "God spake unto Moses," as the Pharisees would admit (John ix. 29), and if Moses wrote of Christ, as He Himself affirmed, (John v. 46), then the believer fully credits that what Moses wrote was the truth of God, that it was the Word of God, addressed to man for his obedience and blessing.

We repeat, the honest heart has no honest difficulties with God's Word. But there may be deficiency in *understanding* it, even where the heart is honest. It is man's judgment, his dishonest heart, and his perverted reason, that creates difficulty; but God will open the understanding of any man who will submit to Him, that he may understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45). And, if this opening of the understanding is really essential to the understanding of the Scriptures, how can we doubt, then, that *the Scriptures are the Word of God*? Do men write books, which, in order to apprehend them, there must be a divine opening of the understanding?

How, then, shall "the natural man" understand God and the Scriptures, when he refuses to believe Him, or to obey Him from the heart? To know and understand the Scriptures one must know their divine Author, and in order to have understanding granted unto us, we must submit ourselves and give heed to what is written.

"Then shall we know, if we . . . know the Lord" (Hos. vi. 3).

"Consider what I say, for *the Lord shall give thee understanding* in all things" (2 Tim. ii. 7, N.T.).

"For **what saith the scripture?**" (Rom. iv. 3) is complete and divine testimony, including that of both the Old and the New Testament writers, and their collected writings form the present Scriptures, which is the Bible, or Word of God (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16).

But if the Scriptures are the Word of God, in what sense could that Word be said to be contained *in the Scriptures*? Only, we believe, in the sense that, in Ezekiel's vision, a wheel might be said to be in the midst of a wheel (Ezek. i. 16; x. 10). Or, just as of Jesus it could be said, that "in Him was life," although we know that He was in Himself the Life, even the Eternal Life, which from all eternity was with the Father (John i. 4; v. 26; xiv. 6; 1 John i. 1, 2). So, likewise, the Scriptures are the Word of God, while we may speak of that Word as being in the Scriptures. And though we must ever meet in the world the enemy's everlasting taunt, "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. iii. 1), still it would be but yielding to his temptation to question or doubt that the Scriptures are God's living Word.

This Word, taken in its limited or restricted meaning, may be inclusive of what was revealed by God as expressing His will for man in every

age or dispensation. Or it may refer to a distinct line of testimony concerning Christ since the beginning of the world, and fulfilled or completed in the preaching of the mystery by Paul (Col. i. 25, 26). And this we may speak of as the Word of God in its *particular expression*, commanding, as it does, our faith and obedience (1 Pet. ii. 6). While, on the other hand, the entire canon of Scripture, much of which has been written for our *learning* and *admonition*, rather than for our obedience, we may, we judge without the slightest irreverence or depreciation, speak of and hold as the Word of God in its *general expression* (Rom. xv. 4; 1. Cor. x. 11). But it is, nevertheless, the Word of God as given by Him, and written down "for the generations to come," through the operation of His Holy Spirit in men. It is neither of the Jew nor of the Gentile, but being of a new and divine creation it is all of God.

Yet, if we find what appear to be inaccuracies and discrepancies in Scripture, we must not tear the Book of God to pieces, or judge it, and thus display a wicked state of heart towards its Author and Creator.

"We must not tear apart the close shut leaves,
God will reveal their calyces of gold."

If we know the Author, we grow more and more to know the Book He has written, and, therefore, we take our stand in judging that God is true, and that the Scriptures, as His

Word, are true, in the face of whatever judgment man may bring against either Him or what has been written by His authorised and indued servants.

G. B. E.



The Bible Class.

Laodicea—Rev. iii. 14-22.

“And to the angel of the assembly in Laodicea write : These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

WE come now to the last message from the Lord to the assembly, and bearing in mind its character, how solemn to think it follows immediately upon that to Philadelphia. *There*, all was praise; *here*, all is rebuke. In the one, though there was but little strength, humility and fidelity were found; in the other, boastfulness and utter indifference to the claims of Christ.

We have noticed that there is an historical succession in all the seven assemblies. Each one gives place to the preceding, while not absorbing those that go before. Especially is this the case with the last four, which, as has often been said, run side by side down to the end.

Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea all continue to the end, though each gives place to the one that follows, in so far as being the

special subject of the Spirit's dealings for the time.

Few who give any serious attention to the subject fail to see that in Thyatira we have the Church of the Middle Ages, Rome before the Reformation, and in Sardis the Protestantism that followed the Reformation before the havoc wrought by infidelity and free thought—there is a name to live, but death, orthodoxy without life.

In Philadelphia we see times of most wonderful revival that followed upon the stagnation that succeeded the glorious work of the Reformation. Here we find ourselves specially in the last century amidst the various and somewhat frequent awakenings that took place, brought about invariably through the preaching of the Word. We do not hesitate to say that the days of the Wesleys and George Whitfield, and other such devoted servants of the Lord, were thoroughly Philadelphian in character. But at the same time we believe that the movement of God's Spirit, about the middle of last century, restoring the gospel in its clearness, reviving the hope of Christ's return, and recalling the people of God to the all-sufficiency of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as the gathering centre, the Holy Spirit as the controlling power, and the Word of God as the directing light to our path—this movement we believe was foretold by the Spirit in Phila-

delphia. As the result sinners were saved, anxious souls brought into peace and liberty, and the Lord's people drawn together for prayer, edification, service, and worship. They were days of holy joy and spiritual power.

As a movement it has affected the whole world, and influenced the spiritual life of the whole Church. But as a movement that forms the special subject of the Spirit's attention, we believe that *Philadelphia is passed never to return*. We may try and derive comfort to ourselves by the thought that "Philadelphia goes on to the end," and in a sense this is blessedly true. Philadelphians there may be after the Philadelphian period is over, even as there were doubtless those who bore that character before that movement arose.

But, taking the view that is now generally accepted by those who have given much attention to the subject, that these seven assemblies present to us seven distinct phases of the professing Church in historic succession, Philadelphia must cease to give place to Laodicea. Laodicea is terrible, but it *must* come before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the true Church to glory; and in this sense there is something thrilling to the soul when we become assured that Laodicea is upon us. We are in the closing pages of Church history, we stand at the very end of the dispensation, we are on the brink of that blissful moment, which baffles all power of

language to describe, which transcends our utmost efforts to conceive—the coming of Christ and the removal of the saints to glory is at hand!

“These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

We have noticed the special prominence given in Philadelphia to the blessed hope of the coming of Christ: there is nothing about this in Laodicea. Of course, it is as true in Laodicean days as in those of Philadelphia, but it is not the special thing in hand. The Lord is speaking in Laodicea of what He is about to do in judgment, and it is the Church itself—the professing Church, of course—which He is about to judge, and spue out of His mouth.

The professing Church has taken the place of testimony for God on this earth. She has lamentably failed therein, but she is held responsible to be this, and she will be judged accordingly. She will thus be in the position of the unfaithful servant that knew His Lord's will and did it not—beaten with many stripes, and, like Capernaum of old, exalted to heaven with privilege, cast down to hell in judgment.

But if the professing Church has failed, the Lord introduces Himself as the strength and support of His people; nevertheless all is now intensely individual. The Lord is outside appealing to “any man” who will hear His voice. But Christ is the Amen; He is the One in whom

all the promises of God shall be confirmed and fulfilled, for He is the only One who abides perfectly faithful and true—and yet, amazing grace! when He will come forth in righteousness to make war with the armies of the Beast, those that come with Him are said to be “called, and chosen and faithful” (Rev. xvii. 14).

Furthermore, He is the beginning of the creation of God. All connected with the old creation is ruined by sin. If any man be in Christ, this is a new creation—not merely a new creature (see 2 Cor. v. 17)—and Christ risen from the dead is the beginning of that creation. All true Christians are a part of the new creation, and possess the life of Him who is its beginning and head. But the professing Church to-day contains a mass of unconverted people—people who have no divine life in them at all, and many who are even apostatising from all formal belief in Christianity. They are utterly lukewarm as to all that concerns the Lord Jesus Christ; Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha, or Christ—it is all one and the same to them, what does it matter so long as we are sincere and live an outwardly decent life?

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. Thus because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spue thee out of My mouth.”

No true Christian will be thus dealt with. To all such the blessed Saviour's words apply:—

“I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand” (John x. 28).

Neither is the Church of the living God dealt with, that which is called the body and the bride of Christ, thus. It is the professing Church in its last phase, consisting of utterly unconverted people, that will be spued out of Christ's mouth as a thing nauseous and intolerable to Him that is Faithful and True—all that is left behind in so-called Christian lands, after the Lord has taken His saints to heaven at His coming.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and am grown rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art the wretched, and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

Lukewarmness and indifference as regards Christ, self-complacent satisfaction with themselves—this is the great feature of Laodicea ; and is not this the widespread plague of the professing Church to-day? Are not even true Christians in danger of imbibing its spirit?

And let us remember that all this follows immediately upon the blessed and marvellous revival of Philadelphia. Who can deny that the Lord has indeed blessed His people with every spiritual blessing ; but is this a reason for settling down contentedly with the proud boast “I am rich, and have need of nothing?”

“ I counsel thee to buy of Me gold purified by fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white garments that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest ; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.”

While true Christians, and none more so than those who have been blessed with *Philadelphian* privileges, are in danger of being injuriously affected with the *Laodicean* boastfulness of spirit, yet language such as this is evidence that unconverted professors are mainly in view.

Three things were lacking: “gold,” that emblem of divine righteousness in which the believer stands before God; “white linen,” or the practical righteousness of the saints, that life of faith lived out before men; and “eye-salve,” the well-known type in both Old and New Testaments of the Holy Spirit, the anointing that even the babes (1 John ii.) in God’s family possess—all these marks of the true Christian were lacking, and *Laodicea* knows it not. The need of conversion is not felt, and when pressed is even denied and resisted, and that in so-called churches.

“ I rebuke and discipline as many as I love ; be zealous therefore and repent.”

The Lord has long patience and will not abandon His people. He could not, in another dispensation, destroy *Sodom* if ten righteous

were found therein. He stands at the door and knocks.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hear My voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with Me.”

There are so-called churches in Christendom in which it is hard to think a single truly converted person is found. Apostates from the faith occupy many pulpits to-day, men who do not believe the Bible to be any more inspired than Shakespeare, men who deny the deity of Christ, and His atoning sacrifice at Calvary. And what about the people to whom such ministry is attractive and acceptable? Given up to pleasure, dancing, theatre-going, racing, card-playing, and every form of frivolity,—but Christ, where is He? Outside.

This is the last phase of the history of the professing Church. Is it not an exact description of the very days in which we live? And Christ is still knocking, but are not those who hear becoming fewer and fewer? When the last one responds, then the shout in the heavens, the catching up in the clouds, the translation to glory of the true Church. Laodicea will have ripened to its final judgment; the professing Church, every true Christian being removed, will be finally and absolutely rejected by the Lord as His witness, spued out of His mouth. What becomes of it we shall see in our after-study of this marvellous book.

A. H. B.

Notes and Comments.

We are thankful to note the *Problems of exercise of heart and conscience the Times.* now being manifested amongst Christians far and wide at the low state of things in the professing Church. The state of many of the so-called churches is simply appalling through the ravages of "higher criticism," and the destructive influences of worldliness. The sense of sin is lacking, the need of conversion lost out of an immense number of pulpits, and, consequently, personal faith in the Saviour, and a sense of love and obligation to Him are rapidly disappearing. Along with this intense worldliness of professing Christians, love of pleasure more than love of God has transformed what used to be the prayer meeting and the Bible class into concerts and comedies.

Those who have read the Word of God with attention know right well that worse is in store, even the complete apostasy; but we are thankful that earnest Christians are at length waking up to the seriousness of the times we live in.

We feel that much might be done in many places if a few earnest and God-fearing people could get together for prayer independently of all sectarian and party position, and open halls on neutral ground, where a faithful gospel would

be preached. Preachers specially qualified for the work would be needed, who will preach out of love and not for pay. The Editor would be glad to hear from any who have suggestions to make along this line.

Much was said at the *Missionary Conference on the Chinese Converts' Desire for Union*, subject of Christian unity, and the hindrance that the divisions of the Church prove in influencing the minds of the heathen. We are told that—

“There is a great movement among the Chinese converts for union, a desire for the essentials of Christianity as distinct from the differences started and developed in other countries. If the influence of such differences were removed, Chinese Christians would probably coalesce in one body, under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the living God, and led by His guiding Spirit.”

It is humbling to us in Western lands to think how far removed we are from that practical unity for which our blessed Lord prayed in John xvii. At the same time we cannot forget that many of the divisions in the Church have been brought about through the inroads of false doctrine, which forced the people of God to separation for the glory of Christ and the protection of His people from its leavening defilement. When divisions have been brought

about and perpetuated on insufficient grounds we feel the appropriateness of the rebuke:—

“Penitence is felt to be due for the arrogance of the past, and for the lack of sympathy and of insight by which all of us have helped to create and perpetuate a situation that retards so seriously the advancement of Christ’s kingdom. Most of all do we need to lament that we carry about with us so small a sense of the harm that is wrought by our divisions, and so little pain for our lack of charity.”

It may not be generally known ***Leaving for China.*** that a little band purpose leaving in the autumn to join our friends already stationed in China. God willing, Miss von P—— will be returning for the second time. Besides this Mr and Mrs L—— have heard the Lord’s call on behalf of the perishing millions in that vast empire; then, too, a young German brother purposes going out at the same time; and possibly another from Holland. We need hardly say that all this should lead us at home to think of them in prayer and other ways. It is purposed to have a meeting to commend them to the Lord before they sail, and this will be an opportunity to become personally acquainted with our brethren and sisters, and thus lead to more definite interest in them and their work for the Lord. Any who wish to be present may send their names to the Editor, 20 Veronica Road, Bedford Hill, London, S.W.

Let us not forget this work lying *The Work* nearer to our doors, nor our beloved *in Greece*. brother labouring there these many years. The door is wide open there just now. Who then is willing? Might we suggest to some young Christian to take up Greek, not so much with the idea of becoming critical students, but to carry the gospel of salvation to the Greeks should God so direct?

“And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray.”—MARK vi. 46.

“**C**OME to a desert place apart,
 And rest a little while ;”
 So spake the Christ, when limbs and heart
 Waxed faint and sick through toil.
 High communings with God He sought,
 But, where He sought them, found
 The restless crowd together brought,
 And labour's weary round.
 Then, not a thought to self was given,
 Nor breathed a word of blame ;
 He fed their souls with bread from heaven,
 Then stayed their sinking frame.
 Turned He, when that long task was done,
 To sleep fatigue away ?
 When on the desert sank the sun,
 The Saviour waked to pray.
 O perfect Pattern from above,
 So strengthen us, that ne'er
 Prayer keep us back from works of love,
 Nor works of love from prayer.

JOSEPH ANSTICE.

Preparation for the Work.

SOME very suggestive remarks were made at the recent Missionary Conference with reference to the training for this special work.

First and foremost, it was pointed out that the essential thing is the soul to be drawn out of itself to find its all in God—"Love for Him, its central principle; faith in Him, the present basis of all Christian work; hope in Him, the end of all activity." Thus God rather than self becomes the centre of life. No act of will can produce this, and no mere training can give it. But prayer and feeding on the Word of God lead to the discovery of things that hinder, and help in the development of Christian character.

All this is true and helpful whether we are called to the foreign field or to glorify God at home. To live unto God should ever be the desire of the Christian heart, and can be brought about only by the practical carrying out of such scriptures as 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."

"There are, besides, special considerations which have to be taken into account in the spiritual training of a missionary. He has to

be ready in case of necessity to face the tremendous spiritual dangers of isolation among heathen surroundings. He must know how to face great strain and heavy responsibility without the support of visible Christian fellowship, and to maintain a high level of spiritual life without the continual renewing which is supplied under normal conditions by the ordinances of common worship.

“Even if the call should not be to the work of a solitary pioneer, the life of a mission station has spiritual temptations of its own. The circumstances of the work are such as to constitute a heavy tax on nerves and health, while the seriousness of the issues in which all are engaged allows self-importance to invest every occasion of petty friction or personal difference of opinion with the fictitious importance of solemn principles.

“The Bible must by a blessed necessity occupy the dominant place in his whole life and thought. In a true, and by no means narrowing, sense the missionary is bound to be ‘a man of one book,’ and that book the Bible. It is not only the one authoritative standard by reference to which he would wish his Christian congregations to test every part of his teaching. It is in the hands of intelligent heathens everywhere. Whatever else, then, he has to remain ignorant of, he cannot afford to be ignorant of his Bible.

“He will also find himself on the field in peculiarly favourable conditions for proving its inexhaustible freshness and power. The obvious impossibility of transplanting, exactly as they stand, Western Confessions of Faith formulated to meet conditions of thought in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the consequent obligation laid upon him to go back to the Fountain-head to discern the Christian answer to the questions raised by wholly different classes of mind, must force him to realise, as less fortunately situated students at home cannot, the inexhaustible riches of wisdom and knowledge that are stored in Christ, and keep him ever on the watch for the ‘fresh light’ that, to meet Bishop Butler’s most true anticipation, is ‘ever ready to break out’ from the written Word.”



The Love of God.

(Being Unrevised Notes of an Address by J. N. D.)

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”—I JOHN iv. 15.

THERE are many of those called Christians you will find that if you tell them that God dwells in them, will say it is some strange fanaticism ; yet there it is in this verse as plain as possible. Many, even sincere Chris-

tians, are completely ignorant of it and know nothing about it. Other passages suggest the same thought :—

“ Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ? ” (1 Cor. vi. 19).

How little this is believed ! Again :—

“ If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His ” (Rom. viii. 9).

It seems strange how such passages do not arrest the mind, even of persons who read the Scriptures and are exercised about them. Then, some are unhappy and miserable because they cannot see that this is theirs—there is uncertainty and vagueness in the mind as to this. But the truth, as given by God, is what is calculated to dispel this uncertainty, because the soul is taken off its *own* estimate of self, and given God's revelation of Christ. This estimate of self is very useful in its place to bring us down and make us feel our need of Christ—that *we* have no place at all—but then we learn that Christ takes the place of self and our estimate of what we ought to be.

The more the groans of Israel in Egypt went up to God the better ; it brought God down ; but it was not the same thing as being out of Egypt. What is revealed to us in God's Word will produce groaning and repentance ; but it does a great deal more, it meets that by the revelation of what God is, and it brings a person right up

to the Red Sea, where I can get no further, and then He says :—

“Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord” (Exod. xiv. 13).

And then they get deliverance, they are no more groaning in Egypt. Now Christianity, the testimony of the gospel, does produce distress, but it also brings us out, and in the simplest way gives us to know we are clean out of Egypt, figuratively speaking. It is not God's mind to keep us unhappy and ignorant, or in a state of uncertainty; that is not the gospel.

God is love, beloved friends, and would have us happy with Himself, walking in the consciousness of His favour. Do you think a child would be right to say, “Well, I do not know whether my father loves me or not”? I say, you are a very wicked child, you ought not to rest so. It is a bad and unscriptural state of feeling.

“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us” (1 John iv. 16).

Is that the true condition of your soul? Watching one's ways is quite right *when you are a child*; but if God is to judge me according to my state, it is condemnation. Nor is it from any estimate I can form of the fruits of the work of the Spirit *in* me that I can find peace—my peace does not depend upon that, but on the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Christ came down and manifested eternal life,

and what makes the writings of John so attractive is that he sets forth, not so much the standing of man before God, as the relation of God to man. Paul gives us man brought to God, and John gives us God brought to man. We get the general character in the beginning of the epistle, "the life was manifested," and we get the nature of this life—love to the brethren, obedience and dependence—it was all seen in Christ. He did love His brethren and was obedient to His Father in all things. You may say, "I trust I love the brethren, but my heart is so cold!" It is all very well to judge yourself, and yet it is true you cannot understand a nature but by having it. You do not know the feelings of an angel, for you have not got the nature of an angel; you know what a man is, because you are one. If you have God's nature you love God; you know what God is. If you love, you know what God is, for God is love; and in that sense every one that loveth is born of God.

Some one may say, "I see that the believer is a partaker of the divine nature, but it is so weak in me." This is a common state, and one that must be if I am looking to myself. Some think it humility to say, "Make me as one of Thy hired servants," but it is not really so. I am putting myself on the ground of being judged according to what *I am*. But the Word says:—

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us," &c.

Now I get something else, not of myself; that in which God has shown Himself towards me—not what I am for God, but what He is for me. Where am I to look for this manifestation of His love? Am I going to look into my own heart? I might, if I wanted to find out if *I* loved *Him*. But you will find that what gives peace and happiness is that *God* has thought of everything about us in love, from the time we were sinners away from Him—and not only in love, but in righteousness too—right on to the day of judgment. All love in God is love in exercise, manifested love, perfected love.

He takes three cases—the sinner, the saint, and the day of judgment. The whole condition of a man is looked at and provided for; from the time he was a sinner to the day of judgment; there is no cloud left upon any part. God takes us up as sinners in our utter ruin—He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Why so? Because we were dead, and nothing could be got out of the life of the flesh. Then another thing, I am guilty, and God provides a propitiation for my sins. Now, how am I to learn God's love? By His acts.

“In this was manifested the love of God.”

He sent His Son. Some one may say, “But I see so much sin in me still.” But when you were dead in sin—when there was nothing but

sin in you—He manifested His love. It is perfectly right to judge your ways when you are a Christian to see if you act as you ought ; but it is quite wrong to call in question God's love. What did you deserve when Christ died for you? You deserved what He took—death and judgment. If you find out your guilt so much the better, you have no good in you ; but God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Perhaps you say, "I do not love Him." That is law. Now law requires you to love God ; but God sent His Son.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us."

You say, "How could He love us in our sins!" Oh, I see, you want to be righteous. Then do not have anything to say to Christ, for there is nothing for the righteous there ; He did not die for the righteous, but for sinners. It is not that we loved God, but that He loved us—thus the mouth is stopped. A setting up of something in the heart that we ought to have towards God, is not the right thing at all—for when I was wretched and defiled He gave the Son of His love from His bosom to save me. When I find a person is really a Christian, **then** exhortation to walk as a Christian has its full place.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John iv. 12).

It is His love perfected **in** us ; not here **towards** us—that was when we were sinners.

“Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.”

The blood having cleansed us from sin, the Holy Ghost can make our bodies His temple. We find there the true and blessed condition of the saint. “No man hath seen God at any time.” How can I love a person I never saw? Just turn now to first chapter of John’s Gospel, verse 18, there you find the great fact of the gospel—“the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” Now that was His revelation in this world—He was the One in whom the love of God centred; but the world would not have Him. If I was to tell you what my father was in all his excellence, I must tell you what I myself find him as his son—Christ declares the Father **as He knows Him**: He Himself the Son which is in the bosom of the Father.

Here, then, we read :—

“If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.”

We know that we dwell in Him, &c. Paul says the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We know Him thus, and not only so, but we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus I am reconciled to God, washed; I know God, not in providence or the wonders of creation, but by Christ. He says :—

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” (John xiv. 9).

I see in Him a holiness that could not be sullied, carrying God into a world where there was nothing that was not sullied. He could touch the leper and not be defiled; there was in Him a holiness that nothing could enfeeble and a love that nothing could fathom. Look at Him sitting on the well at Samaria. The woman is astonished, knowing what she was—and think what **He** was, true God and perfect man. Suppose I met the carpenter's son and wondered at the gracious words He spoke; then suppose my eyes were opened and I found I had been talking with God, I could say, I know Him now, I was a poor wretched thing and He told me all that I was.

This is the true knowledge of God. Christ has washed us from our sins in His own blood; the Holy Ghost dwells in us, God has given us of His Spirit; we know it. Do you all know it, beloved friends? Do you know that you dwell in God and God in you? One is astonished it does not arrest people's hearts. Some one may say, “I could not speak in that way.” Well, I understand, but do you confess that Jesus is the Son of God? Here, then, is God's testimony:—

“God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

He does not ask what you think about Him—

does not let you off with passing an opinion of yourself, any more than of Himself. He tells you *a fact*. What a testimony as to what a Christian is, to comfort the humble, lowly soul! Oh, how can I say such a thing? I do not know how to lift up my head if I think of myself; but *He* says it. He does not ask you to think; He tells you what He knows—He tells you that God dwells in you. How do you treat God? How much have you been thinking of Him to-day? How do you treat such a guest? If you had the Queen in your house could you be forgetful or indifferent to her presence? Would not everything give way to her? If God dwells in you, do you think of Him? Nothing so tells upon the conscience; while it lifts up the humble soul, it touches the conscience of the careless Christian. The Word says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God": whatever grieves Him who is dwelling in us is not fit for a Christian. Then he speaks of boldness in the day of judgment. It is a very solemn thing, but the apostle says:—

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6).

Death is our portion as belonging to the first Adam; in the Second, all things are yours, whether life or death, or things present or things to come. But I cannot speak of judgment in that way—I cannot say judgment is ours.

When the apostle comes to speak of judgment he says, "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord." It is quite right to maintain the terrible-ness of it; but does he say, "I tremble"? No, not a bit, but "we persuade men." It made him think of others, because he was at peace with God—he had rest in his own soul. But, then, all true believers are not at rest. Some will tell you, "I am a poor sinner, and the cross just suits me. I am at the foot of the cross." Yes, but you ought to have gone by the cross *to God*. Are you always going to stay as a sinner at the foot of the cross, or are you coming to God, not as a sinner but as a saint?

We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The Jew was outside because the way into the holiest was not made manifest; a Christian comes in through the rent veil. There is such a thing as the day of judgment; then look it in the face now. Could you be happy with judgment staring you in the face? Does God want me to be always in the spirit of fear and uncertainty as to whether He is for me or against me? Never! That is not the spirit or power of love in God. He has thought of us as to that; and what has He given us? Boldness in the day of judgment. Every one has passed through the doubts and fears. I understand the vacillation; seeing goodness in God and sin in ourselves. Then if God enters into judgment with me, I cannot be justified.

If I look at judgment in itself, it is always condemnation. That is the very reason why Christ came to take it on Himself; and He has done so. If I talk of judgment in itself, I do not talk of hope.

“In Thy sight no flesh can be justified.”

There I write my own condemnation, but I write it before the day of judgment at all. God has interfered in another way, as we read:—

“Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment—”

Then comes in the gospel:—

“so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Not unto judgment! He Himself bore that judgment and put away sin for the believer; so that when He comes it will not be about the question of sin, but unto salvation, and we look for Him to receive us to Himself. Strange as it may seem, the moment the apostle talks of judgment, he talks of “boldness”—it is the scriptural way of putting it. In the ordinary case of death, we shall be raised to go before the judgment seat; but believers will be glorified before they get there, as we read, “it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory.” When is this judgment? It is at His appearing and His kingdom. Then again:—

“We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 2).

No wonder I have boldness if I am like the Judge. When we are brought up, as we all shall be, He will have come first and changed our vile bodies; and we shall be made like His own body of glory. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son; and, as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. Then he says:—

“Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world.”

It does not say “as He *was*,” but “as He *is*.” I am right to fear sin every moment, and to have on the whole armour of God. But remark this, “as He is, so are we *in this world*”; that is, God has revealed it fully and calls us to believe it simply. We know it *now* by faith; and this is the portion of all believers. It is not a question of progress—progress there ought to be; the growing up to Him in all things. This is all right and important to press upon saints; but here it is—as He is, so are we, as to judgment.

God has visited us as sinners and thought of everything right on to the day of judgment. When I was dead spiritually, He gave Christ to be my life; when I was guilty, He gave His blood; when I was passing through this world, His love is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost; and when I come to judgment, I can

say, As He is, so am I! God's thoughts are not our thoughts. As long as we look at ourselves, there is uncertainty, even as to hope; but it is Christ who is my righteousness before God. Ought I to hesitate as to receiving that? Am I to wait till the day of judgment to know if Christ is sufficient righteousness for me? Surely I should know it *now*. There is no fear in love—God is love. Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. God does not want us to have torment, and so His perfect love casts fear out of the heart. Then he adds:—

“We love Him, because He first loved us.”

It does not say we *ought* to love Him; but we *do*. Of course we ought to watch and see that the world does not get in. If I am a child I have to watch that I am not a naughty child; but I cannot be a naughty child unless I am a child. It is when God has put us in the place and relationship that the claims begin to be felt. We are bound to walk as children, because we are upon the ground of children, as it says:—

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”

As regards our own state with God—the love of God is complete with us, what we *were*, He has died for, and what we *are*, is in Him in the presence of God. It is all grace, and it is a blessed thought that the love of God looked upon us when we were far away from Him; and having taken us up, He has provided for all.

The Lord give you to know the love of God! Grace reigns through righteousness; but in Christ all that God is, is glorified; and God has been perfectly glorified by what He has done. The Lord give you, in all simplicity, to know and realise what His love is!



The Bible Class.

Revelation iv.

IT is important to remember that when written the whole of the Book of Revelation was prophetic; it was given to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass, and the time was near.

The division of the book into three sections we have already pointed out—(1) “the things which thou hast seen,” (2) “the things which are,” and (3) “the things which shall be after these things” (chap. i. 19).

We have been considering the second of these unfolded in chapters ii. and iii. We come now to the third (chap. iv. to the end).

“The things which are” cover a period of time which has already lasted nearly nineteen hundred years. It is that period during which the Church is on earth. It began soon after the days of the Church’s birthday at Pentecost; it will end when the Lord will catch up His

people to glory, and utterly reject the mass of unconverted profession.

We are more and more convinced that the time of His coming is near at hand. Church history is about to close ; **the dispensation is nearing its end.**

Every dispensation has its commencement, it continues for a certain time, and then closes. Moreover, every dispensation ends with the complete failure of those who are the subjects of God's dealing during its course. It was so in the case of Israel of old ; it will be so in the case of the Church during the continuance of "the things which are." The present dispensation began with the descent of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost ; it will end by the coming of Christ into the air, and the removal of the true Church in the twinkling of an eye. From that point onward there is nothing upon earth which Christ recognises as His assembly, nor to which the Spirit can address Himself as the assembly of this place or that.

That there will be a vast religious system on earth after the true Church is removed is clear. Laodicea with all its boasting will merge into Babylon the Great. The whole of Europe will come under the tyrannical control of this system, until the oppression becomes so intolerable that the kings of the earth will combine to rid themselves of her. Not Protestantism, but infidelity, will deal the death blow to the Papacy. Moreover, this will take place, not during the

period of "the things which are," but during that which follows after (Rev. xvii.).

"After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will shew thee the things which must take place after these things" (chap. iv. 1).

Twice over in this verse we get the expression "after these things." It is exactly the same as the one we have already noticed in chapter i. 19; it marks the commencement in this book of the third section, which begins when the present Church dispensation comes to an end.

A door is opened in heaven, and the Seer is about to be transported in vision from earth to heaven. The Spirit had been occupying him with varying phases of the Church upon *earth*. Now, the voice that he had first heard (i. 10) calls upon him to enter the heavenly precincts, that he may become familiar with the sights, surroundings, and inhabitants of the glory land.

"Immediately I became in the Spirit; and behold, a throne stood in the heaven, and upon the throne One sitting, and He that was sitting like in appearance to a stone of jasper and a sardine, and a rainbow round the throne like in appearance to an emerald."

Once again the prophet comes under the controlling influence of the inspiring Spirit. In chapter i. the great voice had called behind him, and thus made John look back and review the history of the professing Church; but now, that history being closed, he is to look on to see and

write the terrible judgments that are to introduce the last of God's dispensations, the dispensation of the fulness of the times (Eph. i. 10), otherwise called the millennium (Rev. xx.), when all things shall be headed up in Christ, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."

And first he sees a throne in heaven. As in Ezekiel, the throne above the firmament controlled all the movements of the living creatures on earth that were carrying out the mandates of Jehovah in connection with His earthly people Israel, so in Revelation when the events are to take place on earth that are to introduce the kingdom of the Son of man we are shown how the throne of God is the centre of all authority, and all moves in harmony with its decrees. Much of the imagery of the book of Revelation is borrowed from the Old Testament. This does not make it any less inspired than all other portions of the book of God, but it will help us much in the understanding of Revelation to make ourselves familiar with Ezekiel and Daniel.

"And round the throne twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones twenty-four elders sitting clothed with white garments; and on their heads golden crowns."

The word "seats" in our A.V. does not give the true meaning; these twenty-four elders were sitting on thrones, they were a reigning company of kings. They were priests as well, for they are here seen clothed with priestly garments—clothed in white and crowned with

gold. They were kings and priests. Does not this remind us of Revelation i. 6? And does it not help us to an understanding of who these twenty-four elders represent? Clearly it is a symbolic number which suggests a comparison with I Chronicles xxiv., where we are given twenty-four courses of the Aaronic priests. Just as there were the earthly priests under the Levitical law, divided into twenty-four courses, so there will be the heavenly priests in glory. But who are included in the twenty-four elders? All the saints raised and changed at the coming of the Lord for His own, Old Testament saints as well as the Church or the saints of this dispensation.

“And out of the throne go forth lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne as a glass sea, like crystal.”

All heaven is here seen preparing for the outpouring of the terrible judgments of the last days, but amidst this awe-inspiring scene the twenty-four elders sit unmoved at perfect peace, and without fear. Even here on earth we know the perfect love of God through Jesus Christ that casts out all fear from our hearts. And by-and-by when the judgment day begins, “peace, perfect peace” through the blood of Jesus will be the enjoyed portion of our souls. The fulness of the Spirit will then be seen in judgment—seven lamps of fire—even as now known for the

proclamation of grace. When the time comes for the Rod out of the stem of Jesse to do its "strange work" of judgment,

"The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

"And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears:

"But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isa. xi. 1-4).

This sevenfold presentation of the Spirit does not militate against the truth that there is but "one Spirit." The thought here is the fulness of the Spirit's discernment and power in judgment.

Further, before the throne is the sea of crystal. There will be no more need then for the washing away of defilement, for in those glorious courts there will be none to contract. In the scene here described it is not a question of how we are to approach the throne. The twenty-four elders are already seated around the throne. No altar of sacrifice is there found, and no brazen laver wherein to wash. The elders are the blood-washed throng of chapter i. 5. But they are a holy priesthood, and this the crystal sea bears witness to. Without holiness no man can see the Lord, and in that day holiness will be a fixed condition.

The throne is there seen as a throne of judg-

ment, and not of grace, and all its accompaniments speak of power and majesty—lightning and thundering and voices. And yet these do not signify any special acts of judgments, but rather the broad fact that the dispensation of grace has closed, and the throne of judgment has been set. The special acts of judgment which will take place on the earth commence to be described in chapter vi., but here we are face to face with the fact that the day of grace is ended. A multitude will nevertheless after this be saved (Rev. vii.), but of this we shall treat later on.

Besides the elders we are now introduced to another symbolic company.

“And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind.”

The expression “living creature” is here used instead of “beast” as the A.V. gives it, for it is important to distinguish them from the four beasts of Daniel vii. and the two beasts of Revelation xiii. The “beasts” of Daniel’s vision were wild beasts—a fitting symbol to describe the Gentile powers that owned no moral relationship with God. But these living creatures, like those in Ezekiel, are in close relationship with the throne; they are in the midst and round about the throne. Their every movement is connected with the throne of God’s government and judgment. They are full of eyes, too, before, behind, and within, expressive

of the full ("before and behind") intelligence and moral ("within") perception with which the government of God will be executed. It will then no longer be a riddle to explain God's acts in government, for each one will be seen to be in direct connection with His character. These living creatures present the double characteristics of the cherubim and the seraphim. The subject is a large one, and a deeply interesting one to pursue in all its connections in the Scriptures; we cannot do more here than state the net result that the cherubim present the idea of government, and the seraphim that of the nature of God with special reference to holiness (*cf.* Isa. vi. with Rev. iv. 8). This government, too, was carried out with perception (eyes), with swiftness (wings), with strength (lion), with endurance (calf), with knowledge (man), and with bold celerity (eagle).

All this is symbolic, and it would be impossible to conceive of anything in nature bearing any resemblance thereto; but grouping all the ideas together we can see a marvellous picture of what God's government of the earth will be during the short period that follows the Church dispensation, leading up to the millennium, and beyond this to the eternal state.

Who, then, are these living creatures? We have raised the question in order to suggest that the question itself is inappropriate. We see in the living creatures the characteristics of

God's government, and *not* the agents of it. These latter may vary at different times. They may be angelic, as in the Old Testament; they may be unseen principalities and powers; they may be the glorified saints (1 Cor. vi. 3); it may be the Lord Himself (Heb. ii.), and in this connection we are reminded that the veil of the tabernacle, representing, as it did, the "flesh" of Christ, contained cherubim woven into it.

In the chapter now before us the living creatures celebrate the holiness of the unchanging God, who "was, and is, and is to come"; they celebrate Him according to His Old Testament names of Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai. That God is our Father, but He is not here revealed in that character, nor anywhere else throughout this book.

Another noticeable point is this, the elders, here and all through the book, are able to give the reason for intelligent praise; they worship with understanding. If even here on earth the Spirit gives to the saints divine intelligence in worship, how much more so when all that grieves Him will have passed away!

The living creatures celebrate God's holiness; the elders *fall down* and worship, ascribing glory to Him that liveth for ever and ever, giving here the reason for it, not redemption as in chapter v., but creation.

Perpetual worship rising up to God the source of all blessing in perpetual power and freshness.

Notes and Comments.

Infidelity and Suicide.

The alarming increase of suicides may be traced to the utter unbelief as to a future state. Jeremy Bentham rightly said that "the fear of punishment is the greatest deterrent to crime." It is so between man and man; it is so also between man and God. God has appointed the day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness. He has also ordained the Judge, even Christ, risen from the dead. But the youth of the present day are growing up in absolute ignorance of the Bible and entire disbelief of a future state, as was evidenced in the case of a boy of fifteen in West London lately who had attempted suicide. The magistrate asked him sympathetically, "Why do you want to go out of the world to another place?" "I don't know that there is another place; I think not."

Belief in Miracles.

The infidelity of the present day has been largely derived from the theological professors, who have sent forth an army of young and self-confident ministers into the pulpits of Christendom, who repeat parrot-like the silly speculations of their teachers. All belief in miracles has long since been abandoned by a large number of ministers of *religion*. It is

not a little remarkable, however, to hear a learned professor of *science* lecturing before the Victoria Institute and stating :—

“Did the Bible miracles actually occur? A very important feature in these miracles was that they explained what was otherwise inexplicable. The Exodus of the Israelites became unintelligible if the miracles said to have attended it did not really take place, and no explanation was in such case possible of the memorial feast of the Passover.

“To the inquiry—were the Bible miracles probable? science answered in the affirmative. To the further inquiry—did they actually occur? the answer of science was again, and very emphatically, in the affirmative.”

We often hear modern infidels comparing Christianity with Mohammedanism, running down the former and crying up the latter. May it not be on the principle of the African who embraced Mohammedanism because it was such a roomy religion, there was room in it not only for himself but for all his sins! In Christianity **there is no room for sin.** The Bible exposes sin; it makes no allowance for sin; it does not excuse sin; but it states what is the only remedy for sin. Mohammedanism tolerates sin; it encourages sin; it presents no remedy for sin, for it teaches no need of a remedy.

“Be sure **your sin** will find **you** out.”

The Word "given" in John xvii.

THE fact that this word occurs about sixteen times in this chapter is worthy of our attention. In six different verses Christ speaks of His own as those given Him by the Father. Now this is a very blessed truth for our souls to contemplate. Not only are they of infinite value as those for whom He died; but they are additionally precious as being the gift of the Father.

First, we find Him here as the giver of eternal life—a life of which He is Himself the source and the object; but to whom does He give it?—to those given Him by the Father. Then, He manifests the Father's name: that name speaking of grace and of the relationship in which He Himself stood when on earth; but to whom does He manifest it? Was it not to the men given Him by the Father out of the world?

Again, He prays—not for the world, but for whom?—for those given to Him. Here we find a wonderful truth: because, though given, He could still say, "They are Thine." Such was the perfect mutuality and oneness between the Father and the Son, that it could be said,

"All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine."

Thus the divine Persons are bound together—we say it reverently—in the blessing of those given to the Son, and yet belonging to the Father.

Now, He was about to leave the world and

He commits to the keeping of a Holy Father—whom? “Those whom Thou hast given Me,” He says. He could no longer guard them by His personal care as being with them on earth; but what a claim on the Father's affections thus to be the subjects of the outpouring of the heart of the Son in prayer on their behalf! Lastly, He expresses His positive will—“I will,” He says; but concerning whom is His will so emphatically expressed? It is concerning “They also whom Thou hast given Me.” And what is this His closing request for them?—that they may “be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.” Wondrous privilege! It is characteristic of divine love never to be satisfied short of having those who are its objects *with* the One who loves; and then it is that they may behold *“My glory.”*

The inhabitants of the millennial earth shall indeed be spectators of a glory; but here it is something far different: it is His own essentially divine and personal glory, which it shall be our unspeakable privilege to behold, but not to share.

All through John's Gospel the Lord takes the position of the Servant and sent One of the Father: though the divine glory of His person as the “I am” shines out from beginning to end: hence, in chapter xvii., He takes everything as *given* by the Father. First, we have power over all flesh—not Jews merely, but Gentiles also—

given to Him; but with what object, as thus presented here? It is that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him. Then, as to the work of redemption—it was “The work which Thou *gavest* Me to do.” Then we find “the words,” or divine communications, which He passed on, so to speak, to His own, were those which the Father *gave* to Him. So, too, with “Thy word”—it was the word in testimony, of which Jesus Himself was the living witness. Again, “the glory which Thou *gavest* Me”: all that He had acquired by the work of redemption—His glory as man—this He shares with us. What a wonderful place of favour to be brought into! He takes all as *given*. He says to the Father—

“Glorify *Me*, *Thou* Father, along with Thyself, with the glory which I had along with Thee before the world was.”

In a past eternity He was ever in the same glory with the Father: *now* He had become man, and He is about to re-enter that glory, not simply in His divine nature; but, as man, He will retain His humanity for ever.

This is a precious truth for our souls: there is on the Father’s throne a perfect man, perfect God too, but still a perfect man; and One who will share with His own that glory which He has acquired as man. Are our hearts affected and made captive by such grace; that *we*, such as we were by nature and by practice, should

be even now the objects of the love of the Father and the Son, and destined to such a place in the ages to come? May we appreciate it better from day to day!

F. G. B.

The Blank Bible.

A CERTAIN author in one of his books relates a very significant dream, which he very powerfully uses to enforce certain truths. Whether it be the day-dream of an imaginative writer or the dream of a sleeper, matters little to our purpose here. It is rich in suggestion, and if pondered, cannot but be very effective in the discipline of thought without which nothing really great will be attained by us.

The dream is as follows:—Coming down one morning he entered his study and took up his Bible. To his utter astonishment he found that it was quite blank. The outer form of the book was untouched, but the really valuable part—the Book—was gone. Every page was a piece of blank paper. While he was musing on the strangeness of this fact, his servant entered, saying that some one had taken away her Bible, and left her a book which was similar to it in form and binding, but was quite blank. The coincidence of her experience and his own made him very anxious, and he turned to his Hebrew Bible in the hope that there he might find the

familiar writings, but the same loss was experienced here also; it was a *blank* Bible. It seemed as though some malignant spirit had been able to blot out the writings which had sustained his soul for so many years, and he felt himself insufferably poor in consequence. Having no Bible now, in English or any other language, he thought, "I still have my books which have been written to explain the Scriptures; I will turn to them, they will be inexpressibly dear to me now, as the nearest approach to my Bible." But here again was disappointment. Every passage from the Scriptures in any book he possessed had been blotted out, and his books were a mass of meaningless typography.

The world does not know, and I am afraid comparatively few Christians know, that some day there is going to be a **famine of the Word of God.**

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a *famine* in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it" (Amos viii. 11).

This is not a dream but "the sure word of prophecy." And in view of the profane criticism of the present day on the infallible Word, the Lord might allow the famine to come on the world and Christendom sooner than they would like.

F. I. H.

Paul unto the Churches.

THE Church of God is a company of people called out by God in a separated place unto Himself, and may be considered in both a general and restricted way. In general, all Christians may be viewed as the Church or assembly of the living God (1 Tim. iii. 15); but in a more restricted sense, all those Christians who live in a certain place, or within a certain locality, are to be regarded as His Church or assembly. And thus the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles to certain assemblies of believers, which were to be found in various places where he and others had preached the gospel.

At Corinth, God had "much people" (Acts xviii. 10), and it was these people the apostle owned as God's assembly at that place. And they were His assembly, whether they were actually assembled together or not. The Holy Ghost, and not man, formed this assembly at Corinth, and their coming together did not make them an assembly. They came together simply as led by the Spirit, to enjoy the Spirit's ministrations from an exalted Christ. And thus we read,

"If therefore the whole church be come together into one place" (1 Cor. xiv. 23).

Therefore, when they came together into one place, it could be said that the Church was in assembly, or had assembled together. But there

is another scripture (1 Cor. xi. 18) which refers to them as coming together *in the church*, which might wrongly appear to mean the place or building where they might meet together. And thus the sense would be that the Church came together in the church, which would indeed fail to convey any right sense or meaning. The Church was the *people*, and when they came together as an assembly it was simply the Church of God *in assembly*, whether it were to act in discipline, to remember the Lord in breaking bread, or to edify and comfort one another (1 Cor. v., xi., xiv.).

The apostle did not always address the Churches as such. The Corinthians, the Thessalonians, and the Galatians only were addressed in this way. His other general epistles were addressed to saints, or to all the Christians in any stated place. Thus when he wrote to the Roman saints, he said, "To all that be in Rome" (Rom. i. 7). And all these together would form the Church of God at Rome. But there may have been several meeting-places in the city where the saints came together, owing not to separations consequent on division, but rather to the distance between them locally. Thus we read of a church or assembly in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. xvi. 5). And this assembly, meeting, as it did, at a private house, though ever so small, even to two or three in number, had connected with it all the privileges

and responsibilities of God's assembly, as fully as the one large gathering at Corinth.

But in this chapter (Rom. xvi.), we observe that the "assemblies of Christ" send their greetings to the Roman saints (ver. 16). And these assemblies may have included the larger one at Corinth where the apostle was labouring at the time, and also the smaller ones round about that city. For we know that there was a church at Cenchrea, a town adjacent to Corinth (ver. 1).

These assemblies, as well as all Christian assemblies, were "the churches *of Christ*," and were inclusive of all who in every place called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. i. 2).

An assembly of Christ is one made up of *true* Christians, even those who, by believing, have called on the name of the Lord and have thus been *saved* (Rom. x. 13, 14). Its members belong to Christ, and as such compose His assembly.

If such an assembly did not act *truly* to Christ, it would not mean that it was not Christ's assembly, or that it was not gathered unto His name. But it is the *duty*, as well as the privilege, of all Christ's assemblies to act truly to Him, and in obedience to His word, for the reason that they are His assemblies. They would be *manifestly* His assemblies just in proportion as they acted according to His word and Spirit. But wrong conduct could not in itself unchristianise an assembly any more than it could the individual believer.

Both the assembly and individual are God's temple, and He dwells in both. Therefore responsibility is the same with the assembly as with the individual (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, vi. 19, xiv. 25; 2 Cor. vi. 16). The assembly of Christ is also the assembly of God, and if God dwells in it, Christ is also in its midst.

Christ is in the midst of His assembly when gathered together. And His assembly can only be of those who are His, for only such can gather unto His name (Matt. xviii. 20).

When men believe in the name, they are saved, they are sealed by the Spirit, and become Christ's. These then are Christians, and as such should gather together unto Christ's name. They thus have the name of Christ in a collective as well as in an individual way to honour and glorify. If disobedience should be found there by Christ, there is a call to repentance, which, if unheeded by the assembly, would, as in the case with an individual, eventually bring God's hand upon it for chastening (Rev. ii., iii.). A wrong spirit and course of action would render any assembly or individual liable to the present judgment of God (Num. xx. 10, 12, 24; Ps. cvi. 33).

To-day the assembly of God and of Christ in any one place or locality must include all true believers in Christ, however divided they may be, or by whatever other name they may be called besides the name of Christ. And there

may be no more exalted service or labour of love towards Christ than to seek to show, by one's own course and conduct, how wrong divisions are among Christ's members, and how all-sufficient is the name of Jesus.

When the apostle addresses an assembly as at Corinth, we need not be surprised to see how their responsibility, *as an assembly*, is kept in view. When all the saints are addressed, as at Rome, the *individual* blessing or responsibility is more in evidence, as every one is looked at as accountable to God *for himself* (Rom. xiv. 12). When "the saints and *faithful* in Christ Jesus" are addressed, as at Ephesus, we may be prepared to expect the unfolding of the highest truth ever made known to the sons of men, which was for "all the saints," but which could only be received and walked in according to the *faith* of God's elect, into the unity of which all the saints must eventually come (Eph. i. 1-15, iv. 13).

G. B. E.

The Prophetic History of the Last Days and the Songs of Degrees.

I N any attempt to unfold a particular portion of any of the books of the Bible, it becomes necessary to connect it with the book as a whole, at least by means of a few remarks. Were this

omitted general readers might be puzzled unless they were better instructed than is usually the case.

And this is all the more necessary when the prophetic meaning of the Psalms is the subject in hand. It is imperative that the *circumstances* to which they refer should be apprehended, as well as the bearing of each of the five books into which they are divided, not to mention their subdivisions. Therein lies the difficulty of this feeble attempt, the result, however, of years of study, and the writer will be amply repaid can he succeed in communicating to his brethren a little of the interest awakened in his own breast.

The Psalms are a **prophetical** book of quite an exceptional character. No doubt, as with all God's Word, they have a practical end in view, and contain treasures of experimental and moral teaching which succeeding generations of believers have found inexhaustible; but in the Psalms the prophetic **events** which relate to Israel, being at the root of all their experiences, are ever to be borne in mind and traced out. To forget these might lead to a misapplication of the Psalms to the present time, for the feelings produced in the heart of Israel by prophetic events are often diametrically opposed to those which grace produces in the Christian.

It is important to notice that in order to

understand these events we must not confine ourselves to the Psalms, which are not themselves the **account** of them, but that we must be at home in the prophets, properly so called.

These last unfold to us things concerning the person of the Messiah. His work for Israel in the first place, but also for the nations. His sufferings and glory, and with them the pre-eminent glory of the future kingdom which He will establish down here. They also reveal to us the judgments to be executed by Christ before this kingdom can be set up, the state of the people and nations which render them necessary ; the Satanic powers at work in opposition to the establishment of His supremacy and the restoration of Israel, and their final destruction ; the formation of a pious Jewish remnant amidst the final apostasy, the terrible tribulation its faithfulness will cause it to undergo before its entrance into the peace and glory of the reign of Christ ; lastly, the conversion of a great multitude of nations through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom.

There will be numerous instruments of evil in the last days. First of all **Satan** ; he will inspire the hearts of men with all his own hostility to Christ and His people (the Jewish remnant of the last days) and kingdom, but his principal agents will be (1) the **false prophet** or **Anti-christ**, the "wicked" (sing.), recognised by the unbelieving people as their king ; (2) **apostate**

Jews, the “wicked” (plur.), who hate, as in the time of Jesus, all who own and obey the true King; (3) the Roman imperial power, the first Beast of Revelation, whose agent and representative at Jerusalem will be Antichrist; (4) the Assyrian, who will be the adversary of all the foregoing powers and for a moment will survive the destruction of the Beast and Antichrist at the revelation of the Lord from heaven with His armies. The books of Daniel and Revelation treat largely of these wicked powers for evil, the former in regard to the Jews, the latter as to apostate Christendom.

As the circumstances surrounding the Psalms of degrees are in great measure connected with the enterprises of *the Assyrian* he is necessarily our special subject here; he is the great enemy of Israel brought before us in Isaiah, and will be, in the last days, a continuation of the Assyrian spoken of there and in the historical books as the oppressor of the people of God. Ezekiel, Daniel, and other prophets often mention him as one of the powerful enemies of the future.

Besides the Assyrian there will be the *nations* who are under his *protection* like the ten kings will be under that of the Beast—head of the revived Roman empire. Other nations—Babylonia, Media, Javan, Egypt, &c., play their part in prophecy, besides the countless hordes who follow the Assyrian, such as Rosh, Meshec and Tubal, Persia, Cush, Phut, Gomer, Togarmah,

and all the kings of the north comprised in Magog (Ezek. xxxviii. ; Jer. xxv. 26). But here we only refer to those *nations round about Palestine* who seek help from the Assyrian, a subject to be treated of presently.

As we have said, all these prophetic personages and the events in which they figure are, so to speak, *taken for granted* in the Psalms. If it be a question of the power of evil, they form as it were the plot of the book, into which are woven the experiences, faith, sufferings, hopes, fears, prayers, exercises of soul and conscience, repentances, cries to God against their enemies, and finally the thanksgiving and hallelujahs of the Remnant, actuated by their deliverance. Amongst these exercises of soul, the once rejected Messiah occupies the first place, for He is now their only resource. Hence the many Messianic songs, serving here and there as a pivot for other psalms. It is in these songs that we find among other subjects that which is of supreme interest, the revelation of the heart and feelings of Christ, what He was to God and His beloved ones (the faithful Remnant), what He was in presence of an ungodly people and exposed to the oppression of the enemy, what He was on the cross—the revelation of the perfection of the motives which governed His whole life, and finally the work He has accomplished for His own. During the great tribulation the Remnant will learn by degrees

that in everything under the governmental wrath of God, and in presence of the contradiction of sinners, the Messiah took their place as Substitute to drink their cup, but also to sympathise with their infirmities. We say the *Remnant*, because it is they, so constantly mentioned in the prophets, who are the speakers throughout the Psalms, whether the Remnant of Judah in the first two books, or the Remnant of Israel in the third, or lastly, in the fifth, Judah reunited to the ten tribes to form henceforth but one nation, the new Israel.

We find, then, in the Psalms (to say nothing of their moral application which is for all times) feelings mostly belonging to the future, expressed about future prophetic events, and put for days to come into the lips of the faithful yet to be born. But this in no wise means that the Spirit does not connect them with the circumstances and experiences of those who were inspired to compose them. The Psalms are the outcome of the experiences and circumstances of a David and a Solomon, of an Asaph or a son of Korah, &c., but—and this is important—their bearing *always* goes beyond the past events which called them forth, “for no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Moreover the Spirit of God alone can link future revelations with present events. Imagine what the feelings of the Remnant will be when, during the “great tribulation,” they find in this book their circum-

stances described and their feelings expressed, their experiences passed through and their sufferings felt by others, but above all, undergone in love by a Messiah whom they have disowned, for "in *all* their affliction He was afflicted"—what will be their thoughts, I repeat, when they shall find a perfect utterance given to their cry or their praise by the Spirit of the same Christ who died to save them, and who beforehand bore their griefs and carried their sorrows?

Having set forth these general statements, before we introduce our subject of the Psalms of degrees we will give a short synopsis of the *circumstances* which form the basis of the five books of Psalms and especially of the fifth. This will be followed by a few words on *the Assyrian* of prophecy, for his presence in conjunction with the assembling of the *nations* is taken for granted in this fifth book (occasionally also in the others) of which the Psalms of degrees form a part. Here, too, the believing people are brought before us, recovering at Jerusalem their national unity and centre after the Lord's destruction of the Assyrian, their last enemy.

In the **first book** of Psalms we see the Remnant of Judah; we may liken them to the disciples who surrounded the Messiah before the cross, and who, as it were, join hands with them

across the Church dispensation. The Remnant is formed at Jerusalem, and extends throughout Judea. They go up with the rest of the people to the newly built temple and are thus in public relationship with the God of Israel. They dwell in the city and the land, but amidst an unbelieving people and under the rule of the "Wicked one," *i.e.*, of Antichrist, just as the Jews in our Lord's time were governed by Herod and were under the yoke of the Roman Cæsar. This book frequently alludes to the Wicked and wicked ones, his people. Besides this, it is full of the exercises of soul of the Remnant under the weight of their sins and the wrath of God.

In the **second book**, which begins with the Psalms of the sons of Korah and ends with those of David, this same Remnant of Judah is obliged to fly from Judea (see Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, and Mark xiii. 14) when the "abomination of desolation" is set up in the temple. This expression, quoted from Daniel xii. 11 (not from Daniel xi. 31, which relates to Antiochus Epiphanes), means "the idolatry which shall be the cause of the desolation" by the Assyrian, who will be sent as a judgment from God upon the people. Many of the Remnant will be left behind at Jerusalem, and will continue to dwell there until Messiah's return according to Zephaniah iii. 12. The whole of the corresponding passage in Luke (xxi. 20-23), where it is a question for the disciples of fleeing from the

midst of Jerusalem, is in connection with the overthrow of the city by the Roman army, and not with the time of the end. The Remnant will take refuge among the nations—though who these nations are does not seem very plain, but we shall return to this subject later on. It is certain, however, that the “woman,” the Remnant out of Judea, will flee quickly (see Rev. xii. 6, 14) to the “wilderness,” “a place prepared of God,” where she is “nourished” during the last half week of Daniel. The poor Remnant appear to lose the sense of their relationship with Jehovah the God of Israel, but put their trust in *God*—hence the word *Elohim* which is found one hundred and eighty-two times in this book. It is the beginning of “Jacob’s trouble” spoken of by Jeremiah (xxx. 7), a tribulation which is continually mentioned in the Psalms and prophets. This “trouble” will still go on after the return to the land of this same Remnant, and will only terminate at the appearing of Christ for the deliverance of His people.

In the **third book** we find no longer the remnant of *Judah* and the Psalms of Korah and David, but the Remnant of *Israel* (the ten tribes) and the Psalms of Asaph. This remnant, which since their carrying away captive by Assyria has been scattered among many nations, not being itself guilty of the death of the Messiah, will be brought back to their land after the

destruction of the Assyrian, Israel's last enemy, and when Messiah's glory shall have been displayed in Zion. Hence the expression in Psalm lxxiii. 24, which is the introduction to this book, "*After the glory* Thou wilt receive me," and "*After the glory* hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you" (Zech. ii. 8). This third book speaks more of grace than of Christ personally.

The **fourth book** is special. Here prophetic circumstances are less defined. Its subject is Israel, placed by a Creator-God as central point of His creation, the object of His counsels, His Providence, and His government. But Israel, unfaithful and lawless, becomes the subject of divine anger (Ps. xc.). Then Messiah Himself replaces Israel and takes the central place (Ps. xci.). To deliver the people He becomes a Substitute under the wrath of God (Ps. cii.). Resurrection and millennial glory are His reward. This book treats of the people *as a whole*, and at the end we learn how the earth shares in the blessing under the care of a Creator-God (Ps. civ.).

Finally in the **fifth book** we find the Remnant of Judah, which in the second book had fled, brought back to the land, where they pass through the last trials of the great tribulation, but brought back to be united to the ten tribes and to form henceforth one nation. The subjugation of all the nations surrounding the land of Israel who have been in league with the

Assyrian will be the result of this return (Ps. cviii.; *cf.* Ps. lx.). This recovered unity of *Israel* (the two and ten tribes) is one of the features of the book, but the sufferings spoken of are those of the Remnant of Judah. At their return the Remnant find the Assyrian still in possession of the land (Ps. cvii. 39, 40), though the destruction of Antichrist and the Roman Beast by the Lord coming out of heaven with His armies is imminent, or has just taken place.

(*To be continued.*)

H. R.

In Me . . . in Him.

“**In me** (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing”
(Rom. vii. 18).

“**In Him** dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”
(Col. ii. 9).

“Looking off unto Jesus” (Heb. xii. 2).

SAVIOUR, from ourselves with loathing,
Now we turn to gaze on Thee—
Ours the sin, the shame and sorrow,
For *we* nailed Thee to the tree!
'Twas *our* sin, Thou blest Redeemer,
Pierced Thy hands, and feet and side,
Whence in answer for our healing
Flowed that precious crimson tide.

And e'en now, though washed, forgiven,
Ransomed, Saviour, by Thy blood,
Naught have we wherein to glory,
Naught of self to bring to God.

Naught are we but utter vileness,
 Jesus ! Thou art perfect good ;
 'Tis Thyself we would delight in,
 Man may feast on "angels' food."

"Bread of God" art Thou, Lord Jesus,
 Object of the Father's heart,
 And *our* hearts, of self so weary,
 Share His joy in all Thou art—
 Feeding on thee in Thy dying,
 As the patient, suffering one,
 Feeding on Thee, in the glory,
 Whither, Saviour, Thou art gone.

Abba, Father ! low in worship
 All our inmost soul would bow.
 All things are of Thee, and gladly
 Of Thine own we bring Thee now.
 'Tis *Thy* Christ to Thee we offer—
 Christ, Thy peerless gift so free,
 And from these poor hearts, O Father,
 'Tis *Thy* love flows back to Thee.

C. H. VON P.

The Bible Class.

Revelation v.

THE two chapters we are now considering (chaps. iv., v.) hold a most important place in the Book of Revelation, unfolding the glory of Christ before the judgments commence to be poured forth upon the earth. Chapter iv. brings clearly before us the rights of God's throne in creation ; chapter v. the rights of the Lamb in redemption.

God has been pleased to reveal Himself as one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Throughout the whole eternity of the past these personal distinctions of the Godhead existed, though it was only in New Testament times that this full revelation of the Godhead was made known. In chapter iv. these distinctions of person are not brought out; it is God, as such, that is the subject. True, the seven Spirits before the throne are noticed, and this unquestionably refers to the third Person of the Trinity. But He is not seen here in the unity of His person, but in the complete variety of His activity in connection with the government of the earth. However, in a certain sense the Spirit is seen distinct from the other Persons of the Trinity, and so we may infer that the glorious vision of Him that sits upon the throne includes the Father and the Son.

Nevertheless, it is not according to this New Testament revelation that God is here presented to us. We have the names by which God has revealed Himself in all the dispensations of the past—Jehovah, God Almighty, and Eternal—for thus the living creatures celebrate Him (iv. 8-10). But the name of *Father*, that by which the redeemed since the death and resurrection of Christ know Him, does not occur, neither here nor in any part of the Revelation. Nor is the millennial name of *Most High* included. It is God as He revealed Himself in Old Testament times.

But in chapter v. a notable change takes place. The Lamb is brought definitely before us as the One about to claim the possession of His purchased inheritance. The throne in all its majesty and glory is still before us. The One sitting thereon now holds in the right hand of His power a seven-sealed book, written within and on the back side. A mighty angel proclaims throughout the vaults of high heaven a challenge—

“Who is worthy to open the book, and to break its seals?”

There is no haste, for judgment is God's strange work, and the opening of those seals portends acts of judgment of fearful and increasing terror for this Christ-rejecting world. Sufficient time is given to prove the utter impotence of all in heaven, earth, or hell to break those seals. Countless multitudes of those glorified saints had proclaimed while here on earth the glad tidings of salvation, coupled with solemn warnings of judgments on those who despised God's grace and preferred the paths of wilfulness and sin. Yet not one of these dare step up to open that book, nay, not even to look thereon.

The challenge sounds not only amidst the celestial throng of saints and angels, it rings throughout the earth—who there was worthy, who there had power to unlock those seals? Not one.

Then must God's counsels for this earth remain for ever sealed up? Can no means be found to bring about the inheritance of Him who has been set over all the works of God's hand? Must the usurper for ever hold possession, and He whose right it is be excluded? The thought was too sad for the prophet, and heaven itself would be filled with sorrow if earth remained for ever the sporting ground of sin and Satan. But this could not be. The challenge, "Who is worthy?" is about to be taken up, and John is bidden to dry up his tears, awful as the means may be to bring about the kingdom of the Son of man.

"And one of the elders says to me, Do not weep. Behold, the Lion which is of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, has overcome [so as] to open the book, and its seven seals."

The prophetic announcement made by Jacob long centuries before (Gen. xlix.) is now about to be fulfilled.

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days."

The last days are here in full view, and the saints in glory have divine intelligence of that which Jacob foretold by the Spirit. The time of long-suffering and patience is over, the Lion is now seen couched for the prey, and the sceptre is in the hands of the One who was here despised and rejected of men. Little did Jacob foresee that Judah's lion would be a slain lamb! But

• this it was that gave Him title to open the seals. All heaven acclaims Him as the only worthy One.

“And they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because Thou hast been slain.”

The ground of His worthiness lies in the very fact of His abasement and humiliation. He became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross, a death of such ignominy and shame, but a death by which God has been glorified, and poor guilty sinners who put their trust in the Lord Jesus redeemed. *Wherefore* God hath highly exalted Him (Phil. ii. 9). Never in heaven amidst those scenes of glory and light will it be forgotten that the Lamb was slain.

The Lamb once slain is now seen possessed with fulness of power (seven horns) and perfect intelligence (seven eyes). He alone is worthy to break those seals; the inheritance is His, and the right of redemption belongs to Him (read Jer. xxxii.). The time for which believers are now waiting is here seen about to be inaugurated. They have received the earnest of the Spirit, and they are Christ's co-heirs. He purchased the possession, which had been alienated by sin. He created it by His power, and purchased it by His blood. He bought the field (this world) for the sake of the treasure (His people) that was in it (see Matt. xiii.). Angelic hosts subscribed, as it were, the evidence; all heaven attests

the payment on Calvary of that mighty price; the evidence of that purchase has remained sealed for nineteen hundred years, but the time has now arrived for the redemption of that purchased possession. All heaven is astir with praise—the glorified just caught up to their heavenly home and countless myriads of angels, a holy, happy throng. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” they cry.

In the words of another:—

“Before the tribunal of God a great trial is in progress. The cause awaiting settlement is, to whom shall this world belong? Christ and Satan are the litigants. ‘The world is mine,’ says he who is called its prince: ‘Man has sinned and fallen, and the soul that sinneth it shall die.’ ‘The world is mine,’ replies the Lamb of God: ‘Man has sinned and fallen; but I have died.’ Jehovah gives decree; the world is Christ’s. And so with the fresh marks of His passion in hands, and feet, and side, our Lord who had passed through the creature ranks, took the book *out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne*. The world by deed of gift and right of purchase belongs to Emmanuel. This poor, tired, sinning, maddened earth of ours is lying in a hand that was pierced at Calvary.”

But judgment must first take its course on earth, and this the following chapters will unfold. In heaven, throughout this whole period, all is peace and rest, interrupted only by the activity of worship.

A. H. B.

Notes and Comments.

Amidst scenes of gorgeous display, and to the swelling strains of *The Church Congress.* processional music and a splendid overture, marched hundreds of robed bishops and surpliced clergy. All the banners of previous Church Congresses added to the scenic effect—"the earlier banners were less ornate than those of later years," we are significantly told! One wonders what Paul would have thought of these banners "embroidered with coats of arms" and "embellished with heraldic devices." Paul wrote with no approval of those who "desire to make a fair show in the flesh." The cross to him was no golden and bejewelled ornament to be carried aloft in glittering processions; it was a stern and rugged reality whereby "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

An Establishment, or a Living Society.

Of course the subject in hand was the Church in its limited sense of the National Church of England. As such, then, it is a purely sectarian position, even as the Church of Rome, though boasting of its *catholicity*, is but a sect amongst sects. The Archbishop of York drew a distinction, not without importance, between a mere establish-

ment and a living society. The first is nothing but a worldly and human institution in which certainly may be found a multitude of living members of Christ's body, the true Church of God. Laodicea is such an institution, and will be spued out of Christ's mouth in judgment. The true Church is indeed a "living society," that is to say, it is composed of all those who have spiritual life through faith in the Son of God, and are united to one another and to Christ in heaven by the Holy Ghost.

For the former there is nothing
A Clouded but a dark future, for the latter a
Horizon. morning without clouds. Dr Lang seems to fear a separation between Church and State. Of course in this he has before him only the "established institution." Thank God! there can be no separation of the living members from Christ who is their life. It is quite possible, nay almost probable, that there will be a separation for a time between Church and State in this land. But after the Church as a "living society" has been taken to heaven at the coming of the Lord, there will be a union of Church and State as Revelation xvii. describes—the woman riding on the Beast. Those will be days not of State control, but of Church control; and days of persecution and tyranny they will be. Banners more ornate than ever will then be seen! A display of worldliness and

magnificence that will put Papal Rome and Romanising Canterbury entirely in the shade. But that will have its end amidst the lamentations of a world made rich by Babylon's merchandise (Rev. xviii.).

“I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy last works more than the first’ (Rev. ii. 19).

“There is not one throb of the heart that beats true to Himself, in the midst of abounding iniquity, that passes unheeded by Him; and this is what sustains the heart in the midst of untoward circumstances. And happy it is for us to know (in the simplicity of faith) and realise in power in our souls, the full meaning of those two little words—“**I know,**” thus walking in the happy consciousness that the eye of God is upon our walk and ways.” [DARBY.]

The Prophetic History of the Last Days and the Songs of Degrees.

LET us add a few words as to *the Assyrian* of the end. It is of the very essence of prophecy that the personages and prophetic events are linked with the historical ones, carrying them on, so to speak. We see this

constantly in all the prophetic books, and to be convinced of this transition we have only to read Isaiah vii. and viii. and Daniel xi. In fact, the great majority of predicted events do not permit of merely a past interpretation. This is important in view of modern infidelity.

The Assyrian of the end is a power occupying the land of ancient Assyria. Only the geographical limits of this country have varied so much throughout the course of its long history, what with insurrections, wars, and conquests, that one would find it more difficult to define its historical frontiers than those of the Roman Empire. The Asiatic limits of the present Turkish Empire might correspond in a certain measure. As a matter of fact the Assyrian of prophecy is of wider extent than the Assyrian of history, or even than the Turkish Empire of to-day. Moreover, its names are divers, but not identical. The most familiar is Gog (Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.). It is of Gog, according to Ezekiel, that the prophets of Israel spoke. Now, as a matter of fact, they spoke of the Assyrian (Ezek. xxxviii. 17). He is also called "**the King of the North.**" This term implies a kingdom situated to the north of Palestine, that is, Asia Minor, which belonged in part to the changing domain of the Assyrian, and passed subsequently to Seleucus, one of Alexander's four generals, and to his successors, bearing the name of "Antiochus" (Dan. viii.

21-24, xi.). The various heads of this family are called the king of the north in Daniel xi. during their struggles with the king of the south (Egypt) and the land of Israel, until its last representative, the Assyrian, comes to his end on the mountains of the "glorious land" (Dan. xi. 40-45).

A multitude of nations constitute his power. In Ezekiel xxxviii., when Gog comes down from the north for the final assault, his allies are Rosh, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, Togarmah. In Ezekiel xxxii. we find a similar, though less complete, enumeration, namely, Asshur, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the princes of the north, and the Zidonians.

The prophet Joel, speaking of the historical and prophetic invasion by the Assyrian, calls it "the northern army," but in other passages, such as Jeremiah x. 22, "the north country" signifies Babylon. In Daniel viii. 23-25 the king of the north is descended from the empire of Alexander, "and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power," that is to say, his own power will be sanctioned and supported by that of the Assyrian or Gog,* Russia (Ezek. xxxviii. 2).

At the close, the king of the north destroys Egypt, and then he is himself overthrown at the moment of his last attack on Jerusalem. After

* Gog seems to be the last form of the Assyrian or king of the north.—ED.

this, during the millennium, Assyria and Egypt will acknowledge the God of Israel. The three nations will be allied and established as a blessing in the midst of the land (Isa. xix. 16-25).

Another power, called **the nations**, is often mentioned in the conflict at the end. In Psalm lxxxiii. they plot the extermination of Israel, and, as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Edom predominates. Following upon him are the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagarenes, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, the Philistines, Tyre, and the Psalmist adds that "Assur also is joined with them." It is evident that these nations are those which surround Israel's territory and not the innumerable hordes which follow Gog (Ezek. xxxviii. 5, 6), and which may possibly in the end be increased by the kings of the east mentioned in Revelation xvi. 12.*

This confederation of nations, supported morally, it would seem, by Assur or Gog, will be the party that will arise in the latter day to seize upon Palestine and destroy Jerusalem. Above all things the Assyrian wants to get possession of the enormous wealth accumulated in Palestine by the return of the Jews, since they will have dwelt there in safety in unwallled villages

* It is just a question whether the kings of the east might not plan a separate enterprise, or even lend in appearance their support to the Beast against the Assyrian.

under the dominion of Antichrist before the last half-week of Daniel (Ezek. xxxviii. 11, 12). It would seem as if the Assyrian, the adversary of Antichrist and the Roman Beast, deceives the people who dwell outside Jerusalem by assuring them of his alliance. He afterwards breaks this alliance to achieve his scheme (Isa. xxxiii. 8), as he did of old in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 14-17). **Edom's** aim differs from that of the Assyrian. Inspired with ceaseless hatred to Israel, which showed itself formerly during the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Ps. cxxxvii. 7), he thinks by gaining possession of Judah and Israel to constitute a kingdom for himself in Palestine (Ezek. xxxv. 10).* These designs are thwarted by the people dwelling at Jerusalem. The **wicked** (plural) who rule there, and who have made a *compact* with Antichrist, form an alliance with the Roman Beast to oppose the Assyrian, who is called at different times "the waters of the river strong and many" (Isa. viii. 7), "the consumption decreed" (Isa. x. 22, xxviii. 2, 15, 17, 18; Dan. ix. 27).† But

* It is scarcely necessary to suggest that all these nations, which have apparently disappeared, will take shape again at the end. Already for many years, almost unobserved by Europe, there has been a movement on foot to reinstate Assyria.

† In Isaiah viii. 8 it is the Assyrian of history; in Daniel xi. 22, the king of the north, or Antiochus Epiphanes; in Jeremiah xlvii. 2, Babylon.

their scheme comes to nought (Isa. xxviii. 14-22). The Lord coming forth *from heaven* with the armies of His saints will destroy by His coming the two props of Jerusalem, the Roman emperor and Antichrist. Afterwards the Assyrian will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel (Dan. xi. 45) by the manifestation of Messiah *on the earth* when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4). At the same time, or a little before, the nations will be destroyed in the territory of Edom (Isa. lxiii. 1-6).

The object against which all this conflict is directed is the *Lord Himself* (Ps. ii. 1-3). It is against Him that Satan, cast out of heaven into the earth, and knowing that he has but little time, stirs up the whole world. Those whom he employs, blinded by their political views, may or may not be cognisant of his aim, but Satan, their leader, never loses sight of it (Rev. xvi. 13, 14, xix. 19).

Jerusalem is the great centre of all this activity. During the time of the end when the land of Israel is still trodden under foot of the nations, Jerusalem forms an apparently solid rampart against their encroachment. At this moment it will be governed by the agents of Antichrist, similar to the princes of Judah under Zedekiah (Jer. xxxviii.), wicked men, mockers and hypocrites, who, counting on support from the west, defy the northern power. The apostate population of Jerusalem confided in them,

but a collective testimony has been formed in their midst from the beginning, through the instruction of the "wise" (Dan. xi. 33-35, xii. 3, 10), a suffering and oppressed remnant,* waiting for the Messiah and trusting in Him. This testimony spreads throughout Judea, and the circumstances of this remnant of Judah are constantly mentioned in the Psalms and unfolded in the prophets. First fleeing in a body, not out of Jerusalem, but from Judea, from the persecution of the Beast and Antichrist, and kept by Divine Providence, taking refuge amongst the nations in the desert † (Matt. xxiv. 15-21; Rev. xii. 14-16); some of them remain at Jerusalem to serve as a testimony amidst the apostasy and to suffer martyrdom for their

* Unless the reader be familiar with prophecy, he may be surprised at the constant use of the term "the remnant." As a matter of fact Old Testament prophecy is filled with it. The remnant is the faithful residue of the people, the nucleus of the future Israel, the saved, those who have escaped. The Hebrew words *shear* and also *shaar*, *sheerith*, *sarid*, *yether* are constantly applied to the remnant.

† It is difficult to define exactly who these nations will be. Certainly not those mentioned in Psalm lxxxiii. Nevertheless in Isaiah xvi. 3, 4, the fugitives of Judah take refuge with Moab from the spoiler and the oppressor. I am inclined to think that Mesech and Kedar on the borders of Palestine will be part of them, and that thus in their precipitous flight the exiles will find shelter north, east, and south of their land.

faith, in the person of their leaders, the two witnesses of Revelation xi. 1-13. The exiles of Judah will return to their land at the close of the three years and a half at the time when the Beast and the false prophet will be destroyed, but they will find the Assyrian in occupation. Those of the remnant of Judah who did not quit Jerusalem are found there again during the events which immediately precede the destruction of the Assyrian. The faithful ones are there awaiting the Messiah when their brethren in the land of promise are already lifting their eyes to the hills from whence cometh their help.



A Word as to Principles.

IT has been said that he who looks for a commandment for everything he does is not a spiritual person. And the thought is, of course, that we are to be guided by principles drawn from the Word of God, as well as by a "thus saith the Lord."

We recognise fully the need, at times, of being led or governed by principles, if such rest absolutely upon the Scriptures. And yet, what is essential and of vital importance with the disciple of the Lord Jesus is, that he keep His expressed word, or commandments. And may we not say that nothing further should be looked for nor

required in owning any, in the fullest way, as believers who are faithful?

We do well to always remember what Christ said to His own:—

“He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (John xiv. 21).

But here principles, even those we speak of as spiritual or divine, are not in question. Greater intelligence would, doubtless, acquaint one with the fuller mind of God, as taught by principles. But Christ's commandments are clear and open to the simplest mind, and where there is love for Him, there will be found the obedient heart. His commandments, indeed, are so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, if he have a heart for Christ, need not err in knowing what is agreeable and acceptable to Him.

A real danger, which is disastrous in its consequences, is the seeking to enforce a principle gleaned from some Old Testament Scripture, which has no direct bearing, according to the present truth, in the present dispensation of God's grace. And, therefore, the greater care and spirituality is needed by those who would lead the saints on in the fuller knowledge of God.

Sometimes those who act, as they say, upon principles are in danger of despising those who cannot see so far, but this is very wrong in the sight of the Lord, and quite contrary to both grace and truth.

G. B. E.

“Joy cometh in the Morning.”

JESUS, Lord, the world is dreary,
 We long for Home :
 Toiling on we oft are weary,
 We long for Home :
 Through the darkness us surrounding
 May that summons soon be sounding,
 When Thy “shout,” with might abounding,
 Will call us Home.

Coming woes the prospect darken,
 We long for Home :
 Grace may plead but few will hearken,
 We long for Home :
 Satan's hand his web is weaving,
 Subtly his dupes deceiving ;
 Led by him men scorn believing,
 Lord, take us Home !

Thou, who didst in mercy find us
 When far from Home,
 Shield us that no snares may bind us,
 Lord, guard us Home :
 Near Thy side for shelter hiding,
 Ever in Thy love abiding,
 Pass safely Home.

Though the waves of strife and sorrow
 Throw high their foam,
 We, in spirit, hail that morrow
 Of reaching Home :
 When Thy voice will earth's links sever,
 Longings we shall then know never,
 Dwell with Thee we shall for ever
 In heaven, our Home !

The Making of Saints.

“ Let no man think that sudden, in a minute,
All is accomplished and the work is done ;
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst
begin it,
Scarce were it ended with thy setting sun.”

THE making of saints is no light matter. It is an undertaking worthy of God, and no one but God could carry it through. I think God is making many of us feel just now that it is His will that we should *be* saints whatever it may cost. It may be that we have been content to know that we are saints by calling, and have somewhat pitied those who shrank from taking to themselves the great name of saint.

“And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men that are settled on their lees : that say in their heart, Jehovah will not do good, neither will He do evil” (Zeph. i. 12).

It has been such a time of late of searching into pretensions of various kinds, and I believe that to many it has been a time of discovery that we are “wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

There is always the possibility, exemplified a hundred times in God’s ways, that His people settling down upon the ground of His calling

may lose the knowledge of Himself and of His government, saying, Jehovah will not do good, neither will He do evil. The next thing that happens is that they find themselves plunged into the full stream of God's ways, and have to confess that the Lord can and will do both good and evil as He sees necessary.

“Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?” (Amos iii. 6.)

But to do good is His delight.

There is no more interesting and touching example of the way in which God makes saints than the history of Jacob.

We tried to trace in very imperfect fashion something of the way in which God made Abraham a righteous man. It may do us some good to try and follow up something of the way in which God made Jacob a saint. It may help us to understand a little of His way in making saints of us.

Before beginning the actual history of Jacob, there are one or two links to pick up with the previous history. The fact that God has chosen to be known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and indeed said distinctly that this should be His *memorial* unto all generations (Exod. iii. 15), shows that we must go back to His ways with these three men, if we find that we are forgetting Him. Moreover, the special name of comfort for those who know some-

thing of the plague of their hearts is "the God of Jacob."

Immediately after the crowning moment of Abraham's life, when the final act of surrender had brought out so fully how the righteous man lives by faith, the thread of God's further purposes is picked up in a very simple and commonplace way. In Genesis xxii. 1 we find:—

"And it came to pass after these things that God tried Abraham."

In verse 20 the thread is resumed:—

"And it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham," &c.

Heaven is brought so close to earth in this life of faith that the importance of events is no longer measured by a human scale. When God's will is being done on earth as it is in heaven the simplest act is charged with eternal issues, and the greatest act becomes a simple step of obedience; the human distinction between things that are trivial and things that are important vanishes.

It is this simple piece of domestic news that conveys to Abraham the needed guidance as to the next step in the path of faith.

But we are not going to linger over the rest of Abraham's life, save just to note the attitude of his soul in sending Eliezer to fetch "the woman," whose name we find in xxii. 23. God, for his soul, is Jehovah, the God of the heavens

and the God of the earth (Gen. xxiv. 3), still the same God into whose secret he had been brought when he met Melchizedek. We find this is still the key of his life. He is so certain that God is indeed the God of the heavens and the God of the earth that he does not doubt that "the woman" will be willing to follow Eliezer. The woman whom God has chosen must be willing, and he would rather Eliezer came home empty-handed than that he should bring home another.

Neither shall we dwell long on Isaac's life. While the story of his offering up, and that of his marriage to Rebekah, have long presented most precious and touching anticipations of Christ to the hearts of the children of God, there is less, far less in Isaac's history, of actual instruction in the ways of God than we find in the lives of his father, and of his younger son. Yet the path of Isaac has some serious lessons. It is not a path that grows brighter and brighter until the day be fully come.

The beginning is promising, as it could hardly fail to be, cradled in such a knowledge of God. After his father's death we find him dwelling at a good place, the well of the Living One who revealed Himself (xxv. 11), enjoying the blessing of Abraham's God as the fruit of Abraham's obedience (xxvi. 3-5, 24). It should be remarked that the greater part of chapter xxvi., which contains Isaac's spiritual history,

comes before chapter xxv. 19-34, and the birth of Esau and Jacob. Without dwelling on the details, we can see that there is progress in chapter xxvi.

“The man became great, and he became continually greater, until he became very great.”

This, too, in spite of his reaping something of the consequences of his father's failure and falling into the same mistake of denying his wife. He has exercises, too, about his wells, and has to wait for God to make room for him in the land. But in chapter xxv. decline of a strange and unlooked-for kind appears, bringing with it, too, very sad consequences. We have already noticed the way in which the purposes of God and His government are interwoven. It may be, and indeed is, good to contemplate at times the purpose of God as it is in His own heart, distinct from those ways of government which often seem so tangled and perplexing. But it is a dangerous thing to suppose that the two can be separated in fact or to think that occupation with God's purposes is a higher and more spiritual thing than to learn Him as He reveals Himself in His ways of government. Nor is it less a danger to be feared that the purposes of God may cease to count as a practical influence on our lives.

This interweaving of God's purposes with His government is seen in the position of chapter xxv., which gathers up those important links of pur-

pose, before going on with the history of God's ways with Isaac. The introduction of God's purposes into this world of sin and man's will is always accompanied by travail. Isaac goes through exercise of heart and is driven to God, and then Rebekah, in the same way, is compelled to "enquire of Jehovah" (Gen. xxv. 22). The reason is that, as God works out His purposes through all the clash of will on earth and makes saints in whom His love can rest, the eternal contrast between what God loves and what He hates has to be learnt in actual experience.

So, then, are born the children in whom this contrast is to be worked out in experience. From the first the principle is established that God's order is not man's order. It is not that God's way is to set aside natural relationships and their order, but we find that man's will has so laid hold of these relationships and made them a channel for the carrying out of His own pleasure that God, so to speak, is compelled to take up what is despised and base to reverse the natural order. This impressed itself on Rebekah's heart. She believed God, and never doubted God's purpose to bless Jacob, her younger son. In her soul the exercises she had been through bore this fruit, that she valued the purpose, that is, the will of God. She loved Jacob; so did God. This was no small thing. We do not know much about Rebekah, but God

has taken care that we should know that and give heed to it.

“Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.”

But for Isaac what shall we say? The words humiliate us, we know what they mean.

“Isaac loved Esau, *because he did eat of his venison.*”

The words are a challenge to my own soul. Is it possible that after growing greater and greater, after being acknowledged by the world as “the blessed of Jehovah” (Gen. xxvi. 29), one may be found loving what God hates and for such a reason? God forbid; yet only God can keep us from it.

It is here that the history of Jacob begins on earth. It had begun before in heaven, and we have to bear that in mind all through. It is the working out of God’s love through His government. It was His purpose to love Jacob. He will make what He loves like Himself and worthy of Himself, and this is the making of saints. But the material is hard and unyielding, so the story is long. The story of Abraham occupies thirteen chapters. The story of Isaac really only occupies one, the twenty-sixth; but the story of God’s ways with Jacob takes up half the book, twenty-five chapters. This speaks for itself.

Before the actual history begins in the twenty-seventh chapter, we have first, in the twenty-fifth, the outlines of the two characters drawn with a few bold strokes, giving the framework of

the characters that were to be filled in by the history of the years to come.

"Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." The word "plain" is a little misleading. The sense is "sound," "wholesome." It is the word that is continually used to express moral uprightness or integrity, *e.g.*, Ps. xxvi. 1, xxxvii. 37, &c. The thought seems to be explained by the words that follow, "dwelling in tents." We recall Hebrews xi. 9, "dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise." It is the description of one whose heart was in the path, even though only in the beginning of it, which led to the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

There was much, very much, to be done in Jacob, but at the outset we recognise the family likeness of faith. For God he is a "perfect" man, for he dwells in tents. It is the same judgment that could say "Thou art rock" to one who had to be addressed as "Satan" within five minutes, that can say of Jacob, "a perfect man, dwelling in tents."

On the other hand, Esau's restless spirit chafes under the yoke of the tent and herd. He is a man of the field; like Nimrod he is a hunter, his arrows and his bow procure him sustenance, by them he lives. It is Nimrod's line, the line of man's will, its restless quest, its achievements that loom so large on earth, that count for so little in heaven. It is not the line of faith. So

it is not what God loves. Yet Isaac loves Esau for his venison. How slight and unworthy an object of desire, and yet it had power to dim his eye and hide from his heart the purpose of God.

Finally, in the incident of the pottage, the curtain lifts, as it were, upon this tragedy of life, even as it falls in Hebrews xii. 17 upon the blank utter despair, the hopelessness which is the sole fruit of the restless striving of man's will for satisfaction apart from God. But in this incident we see already the difference between the two, between the things that they value. Jacob, brooding over the mysterious words that his mother had handed down to him, as he tended his flocks from day to day, had grown up in the faith that this must come true, the purpose of God must stand. And though he knew little enough of God, how little, and from how sad a cause, we shall see later, yet in his dim, groping way, he was feeling after the purpose of God, his heart was set upon what God valued. Hence the incident, trivial in itself, has great issues. Jacob's value of the birthright comes to light. He values it because he knows God means him to have it. Esau's contempt of it also appears. His outlook is shallow, material. What good is such an intangible thing as a birthright? It is not like venison that may be caught and eaten. It will not satisfy the hunger that he feels. Esau only values God's purpose at a mess of boiled lentils.

But Jacob, too, shows the beginnings of that dogged and tenacious will which was to cost him so much in after years. God's purpose may not be wrought by man's will. That is what is so hard, even to the end, for us to learn. To Jacob it appeared a simple thing to bring about God's purpose in this way himself. But he little knew that for pottage he could only buy a pottage birthright and a pottage blessing, and both he and his mother had to learn this later by a bitter experience. But so far it is a great thing to see that Jacob cares for the birthright; impalpable thing as it is, it represents to him the purpose of God, and that is unfathomable.

We shall start next time, if God permit, with the real history, as the springs are set in motion that control the development of the long history of the contest between God's will and Jacob's will in the making of a saint.

S. H. H.



The Bible Class.

Revelation vi.

IN chapters iv. and v. we have been given a sight of heaven, its inhabitants, and their occupation. In chapter vi. we are brought down to earth in prophetic vision.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying,

as a voice of thunder, Come. And I saw : and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon it having a bow ; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and that he might conquer."

Immediately upon the Lamb taking the book, the seals commence to be opened. The book, as we have before noticed, is the book of the inheritance of the purchased possession. It is by judgment executed on earth that the Lamb takes possession. The seals are not, properly speaking, a description of these judgments ; they are providential and preparatory. Until the seventh seal has been opened, the book itself cannot be said to be open. The contents of the book commence with the trumpets.

The circumstances described under the first four seals are an intensified form of God's dealings with men. Dealings of this nature have often been in the history of the world, but at this apocalyptic period they will assume a severer form than ever before. The voice speaks with *thunder*, saying, Come. The best manuscripts leave out the two following words ("and see"). The difference is this, that "Come and see" would be a call to John to behold, whereas the word of command, "Come," is addressed to the rider on the white horse.

Events now taking place in the political world quite possibly, and indeed most probably, are preparing for this very condition of things here symbolically described. There are three things

standing out prominently—the horse, the rider, and the crown.

The horse is the symbol of swift and aggressive power to subdue; the *white* horse is the emblem of victory, a thought which is further emphasised by the words, “conquering and to conquer.”

The rider is the agent appointed by Divine Providence to bring about this state of *bloodless* conquest. The weapon of his warfare is a *bow*, which shows that he himself may be at a distance from the spot where this conquest may have taken place.

Then, **the crown**. It is said that this “had been given to him.” The particular time of this gift is not here specified; he may have been marked out beforehand for this place of pre-eminence amongst the nations. From the brief account here given it would appear that very shortly after the rapture of the saints at the coming of the Lord changes of a startling and notable nature will take place amongst the powers of the world.

In a remarkable letter recently written by an American admiral to the British press, a letter of warning as to England's deterioration of naval power, it was stated that in recent years several *great European wars had taken place!* that these wars had been fought and won without one drop of blood having been shed. We do not enter into the arena of political strife, but

this letter gave us food for much reflection and sent us to this very scene described under the first seal.

The admiral's contention was that matters of strife are continually cropping up, relations are continually becoming strained between the European powers. These critical moments pass and threatened wars are averted. *Not at all*, says the writer of the letter. The war has been fought, not on the battlefield, but in the War Office, the Admiralty, or the Cabinet. The weaker has recognised the futility of holding out against the demands of the stronger. The battle has been fought and won without one drop of blood being shed. It is this that the first seal describes—*bloodless conquest*.

A power will arise—it may even now be in process of rapid formation—so strong in comparison to its neighbours that it will simply require to dictate its terms. It is not for us to prophesy which amongst the European powers this will be, but, nevertheless, there are not wanting indications for those who have eyes to see. And believing, as we do, that the coming of the Lord is near at hand, it is impossible to view the outstanding features of the political horizon without sentiments of profound interest.

“And when He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, saying, Come. And another, a red horse, went forth; and to him that sat upon it, to him it was given to take peace from the earth, and that

they should slay one another ; and there was given to him a great sword."

Civil war seems here the special thought. And it is not confined to any one country, nor is it war breaking out between two or more powers. The whole prophetic earth is involved. It is not exactly a new kind of disaster, for civil wars have already taken place in this world at different times. The point here is the intensity and universality of the disturbance. We see to-day in all countries the principles at work which will bring this all about ; for what does Socialism do but set class against class. Instead of diminishing this will increase, until, goaded on by bitter hate, men shall slay one another in all parts of the earth, the ordinary forms of human government being powerless to repress the carnage.

We may not be able to specify who is intended by the *rider* on the horse, but it is an agent providentially raised up of God at that particular time to carry out His will. To-day in this acceptable time of grace, God raises up instruments to carry out His purposes of grace, but then, the day of grace being over, He will raise up those who shall bring to pass His acts of preparatory judgment ; we say *preparatory*, for the great day of His wrath is yet future.

"And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw : and, behold, a black horse, and he that sat upon it having a balance in his hand. And I heard as a voice in the midst of the

four living creatures saying, A chœnix of wheat for a denarius, and three chœnixes of barley for a denarius: and do not injure the oil and the wine."

Famine in the material sense seems evidently portrayed. We see no reason to spiritualise it as some have done by reference to Amos viii. 11. Certain it is that in those days there will be that spiritual famine of hearing the words of the Lord, but under the third seal we see the natural result of a time of desperate civil war, when there will be forced cessation of all agricultural work, destitution and want, with all the horrors of famine?

And it is to be observed that this famine will specially affect the masses as distinct from the so-called classes. The chœnix measure equals a quart, the denarius was the ordinary day's pay for the labourer as we see in Matthew xx., where the penny of our A.V. is really a denarius. Under ordinary circumstances the denarius would purchase *eight* quarts of wheat, so that great scarcity in the necessaries of food is here implied. The luxuries remain unaffected, the oil and the wine were not touched. It is not difficult to understand their exception. For after all, Socialism, while it aims its deadly blows at wealth, in fact will bring misery first of all to the very people whom the agitators pretend to befriend. The strikes that are now becoming so alarmingly frequent and widespread involve the masses in want and misery.

“And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living creature saying, Come. And I saw: and, behold, a pale horse, and he that sat upon it, his name was Death, and Hades followed with him; and authority was given to him over the fourth of the earth to slay with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth.”

Here the scourge seems more limited in extent. It does not even reach to the full limits of the revived Roman Empire—the *fourth* of the earth, not the third, being affected. May it not be that those Western countries where the light of God's grace had shone most brightly, will in the day of their apostasy be specially given up to His judicial chastisement? We are reminded by the reference to Hades, that death of the body is not the whole question at issue. Men have souls as well as bodies, and these judgments here described are but the forerunners of a far more awful judgment before the great white throne (Rev. xx.), when body and soul shall be cast into the lake of fire.

Oh, if men to-day would only read the Revelation! Better still, if they would hear and keep its solemn warning. For we are convinced that we are now rapidly nearing the time of fulfilment of these things. God has given us His light before the darkness settles upon the earth. The darkness of that day will be, as another has said, “the darkness not merely of absent, but rejected light.”

A. H. B.

Notes and Comments.

The Stone Rolled Away.

While singing part of the 84th Hymn at our meeting for worship this morning—

“The mighty stone is rolled away,”

what precious thoughts came into my soul. I had to turn to Matthew xxviii., and was led to give a word on verse 2. The crown of victory, I think, is in the expression, “and **sat** upon it.” What “a stone rolled away” means to us! Had the watch remained, and the Roman seal of authority and power remained, we should indeed be “of all men most miserable,” still in our sins. Half the precious types would not be fulfilled: the gospel would be a blank: no blessed epistles from the Roman dungeon: no one body: no Church: and a blank eternity for *God*, for “Behold I and the children whom Thou (the Father) hast given me,” would only be idle words. May the truth, with all its fulness of the stone rolled away, be ever a bright living reality in our hearts.

W. H. F.

Within the last few months a **Socialist** movement has been set on foot for **Sunday** the “**Preservation of the Christian Schools.** faith amongst children attending agnostic or secular Sunday schools.”

We are glad to read the long list of well-known

names who are lending their support to this, and endeavouring to stem the rapidly rising tide of atheism and infidelity in our land. May God be pleased graciously to own their efforts and to abundantly bless them in return! A correspondent writes :—

“The grave necessity for such a movement is proved by the fact that in England and Scotland there are at least a hundred Socialist Sunday schools, in which Socialism is taught as a religion with agnosticism as its basic idea. In London alone there are some sixty such schools, which, with an average attendance of fifty, means that at least four thousand children in the Metropolis are being taught this noxious creed. While the many religious bodies of the country have been engaged in heated controversies, the Socialists have seized their opportunity and established a strong Socialist Sunday School Union, whose subtle progress escaped the attention of the warring sects until Lady Jane Taylor and her partners in the enterprise drew attention to it in May.

“The Socialist Sunday School gives a close imitation of religious observances with so-called hymns, ten commandments, and a doxology. The ‘commandments’ include the following :—

“Love learning, which is the food of the mind ; be as grateful to your teacher as to your parents.

“Honour good men, be courteous to all men, bow down to none.

“Remember that all the good things of the earth are produced by labour. Whoever enjoys them without working for them is stealing the bread of the workers.

“Look forward to the day when all men and women will be free citizens of one fatherland, and live together as brothers and sisters in peace and righteousness.

INCENDIARY HYMNS.

“The hymn-book contains ‘The Red Flag,’ ‘The Labourer’s Battle Hymn,’ ‘L’Internationale,’ ‘Our Turn Soon,’ ‘The Battle-cry of Freedom,’ and a song entitled ‘No Master.’”

This is, indeed, a dark sign of the times. We thank God that some in high places are striving to rescue the children, and we feel sure that our brethren, who are seeking to do a similar work in many parts of the country as well as in London, will rejoice and take courage. There is room for far greater effort in this direction, and wherever attempted has been crowned with success and honoured with God’s approval.

With reference to this special movement we are told that—

“The school is now so crowded that no more children can be taken in until additional premises can be secured. So deeply interested are the ladies of the council in this movement that many of them teach in the school, and pay personal visits to the homes of the children during the week. The service opens with prayer and a hymn, and Biblical instruction is given.”

Another sign of the times is to see the crowds flocking to hear a so-called “Pastor” crying “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.”

The Judgment Day.

The great advocate of “Millennial Dawn” teaching recently come from America, has placarded London with his portrait, inviting

people to hear his discourse on "The Great White Throne." He tells us that—

"The truth will be as a 'balm of Gilead' upon an aching heart to those having loved ones outside the Church. The gospel of glad tidings, and not a message of bad tidings, will be delivered on Sunday evening."

The text of his discourse is to be Revelation xx. 11-15, and if the preacher honestly expounds the passage, the glad tidings can only be how to escape the impenitent sinner's awful doom. The day of judgment alone is most undoubtedly "bad tidings," whatever man may dream. The gospel is God's way of deliverance from a judgment which man's sin demands. Christ bore, that the believer might never bear, a righteous and holy God's wrath against sin.

"Millennial Dawnism" teaches that there will be a second chance for the unsaved after resurrection, and that all who refuse this second chance will be annihilated.

It is easy to see why such teaching is popular, but before accepting it we need to burn our Bibles.

Ed.

"There is no sorrow, Lord, too light
To bring in prayer to Thee ;
There is no anxious care too slight
To wake Thy sympathy.

"Life's ills without, sin's strife within,
The heart would overflow,
But for that Love which died for sin,
That Love which wept for woe."

“By Faith Jacob Worshipped.”

(Read Genesis xxxii. ; Obadiah.)

HAS it ever struck us why in God's eye Jacob was so superior to Esau? As the Lord said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” Have we ever reflected how that was?

You know we are told in the 12th of Hebrews, that Esau was a profane person, which is a very strong word, beloved friends. “A profane person,” and yet, Esau was a fine character, naturally, a much finer character, as men go, than Jacob. But Jacob had God's favour and Esau had not, and I need not say there is a lesson to be learnt there, and not only in the fact that results but in the characteristics of the two men that are placed before us, and that teach us these lessons. Do you think we know it?

Now, there is one thing that at all events characterised Esau, and did not exactly characterise Jacob, and that is, that Esau lived in the present; Jacob, weak and failing as he was, had his eye upon the future if it was only so far as the blessing was concerned; he recognised God and valued the favour of God, and the promises of God. No doubt he was manœuvring as to means, and tried to bring about these things in

his own way, whereas Esau cared very little about them, and shifted for himself, and uncommonly well too; he was a clever man, and a strong man, and in fact, *a man*. You could hardly call Jacob a man at all, but Esau was undoubtedly.

Esau started in a certain sense and went all through life well, not merely making the best of it, but really with tact and cleverness and success. He was in a certain sense, you may say, a successful man, though he made great mistakes as to pleasing his father and mother; he did not know the way to set about it, and displeased them in the case of his marriages. However, be that as it may, we find he succeeded. He had kings reigning and he had dukes reigning, whereas poor Jacob, after a certain amount of success, was afraid to meet him, for he had avoided his face, and then he had been for ever so many years a servant, a slave. Nevertheless, he achieved a certain success, and he returned with two bands across "this Jordan," so he was to a certain extent, somebody; but he was nobody, and nothing to Esau. When Esau was in all this grandeur "Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger," that is, he had not got himself a bit more firmly fixed on the earth than his father before him. With all his attempts, he was a stranger where his father was a stranger—succeeded his father in that respect. Though Jacob shunned his face and

kept out of his way, yet Esau always had a grudge against him, and not only that, his posterity, too, as we see in Obadiah.

We there find him helping on the affliction. That was a terrible thing; he was not exactly the instrument, but he was helping on with all his heart the distress of poor Jacob, and there is where we take leave of him; God deals with him after that, and even Jacob destroys his mountain. There is where we leave him, and there is where we see the heartlessness of the great man of the earth. The great man of the earth with all his vaunted superiority is heartless, and that does not do for God, we have got to beware of it. There is nothing so distasteful to God as heartlessness. Jacob with all his faults and weaknesses, we could not say was heartless; he had his exercises, his very failures brought him into these exercises. Our failures are blessed because they exercise the heart and soul, and if they bring us to God unreservedly we can thank God. “In everything give thanks.” It is a difficult thing for the soul, but, nevertheless, it is God’s way. Well, that is Jacob in his failure.

We would just recognise one or two things in the course of Jacob. The child of God is always apt to be influenced by circumstances, and when Jacob came back he refers to when he crossed Jordan, and laid down with a stone for a pillow, and set up a pillar, and says, “With

my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." He was getting a little bit up in himself from the being surrounded by two bands. Then we see God's interposition on his behalf; but He has to deal with him personally first, and the result was he got touched in his thigh and limped ever after. It was a coming down from the "two bands" to a limping Jacob. Such a sense had he then after that, and all the rest of his journey through the land that when Joseph brings him up before Pharaoh, and he says, "How old art thou?" Jacob answered—

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers."

That is Jacob. What a contrast to Esau. Do you think Esau would have said that?—the man of the earth ever have said that?

But there was heart in that. He recognised the failure; he recognised that he was standing before a superior; that he, himself, was only poor "Jacob." Then he improves, for he remains fifteen years there, and then he bids farewell to this world with his heart carried on to the resurrection, and to the hopes that lay there for him; and where do we find him in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews? Almost in the superior place of any there. That chapter is the record that God gives of His worthies on

the earth in His view. We find Jacob there worshipping with the staff with which he crossed Jordan.

“With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.”

We hear nothing about the “two bands” in Hebrews xi., but we find him returned to the staff, but *worshipping*. Are we satisfied to be there? That is the place to be in in this world—nothing but the staff to support feeble nature; but worshipping. May the Lord in His grace hold our souls there, especially in these days, for His name’s sake. “Faint yet pursuing.”

W. F. B.

The Prophetic History of the Last Days and the Songs of Degrees.

HERE we approach one of the most difficult parts of prophecy, namely, **the siege of Jerusalem** by the nations in league with the Assyrian,* and then by the Assyrian in person.

* I am tempted to think that the aim and effect of the first siege of Jerusalem is to facilitate the invasion of the Assyrian at the time of his attempts on Egypt (Isa. xxviii. 19; Dan. xi. 40-42).

Now the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian cannot in any way be confounded with the capture and destruction of this town by Nebuchadnezzar, followed by Judah's captivity. In Micah iv. 9-13 we find *first* the captivity of Judah at Babylon and his restoration, then (chap. v. 1, 2) the Messiah smitten with a rod upon the cheek, and finally (v. 5-9), the invasion of the Assyrian and the attendant circumstances. In Isaiah xiii. and xiv. 22, we have *first* the destruction of Babylon, then in chapter xiv. 24-27, that of the Assyrian in the land of Israel. Moreover, these passages are a proof that the Assyrian of the end is not the same as the Assyrian of history. The latter, after invading Israel and Judah, besieged Jerusalem *before* Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonish army had besieged and destroyed the town. Now, at this epoch, Jerusalem was not taken nor plundered by Sennacherib, as it was by Nebuchadnezzar, and he did not raise forts against her (Isa. xxxvii. 33) as will be the case in the future (Isa. xxix. 3).

Prophecy unquestionably speaks of *two* sieges of Jerusalem in the last days, and clearly distinguishes between them.

In the first siege the *nations* play the chief part, being merely supported by the Assyrian. It terminates by the capture and plunder of the town, exactly contrary to what happened under Hezekiah's reign.

“Half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zech. xiv. 1, 2).

The blood of the saints is shed like water round about Jerusalem (Ps. lxxix. 3).

In Isaiah xxviii. Ephraim and Judah are invaded by the Assyrian, as transpired in history, then Jerusalem is besieged. The men that rule have made a covenant with death and an agreement with hell (the beast and the false prophet) against the overflowing scourge (the Assyrian). Those who had made lies their refuge will not be sheltered. Jehovah will lay in Zion for a foundation a precious stone (the Messiah), and he that believeth shall not make haste.*

Before the beast and his armies can succour the town the refuge of lies will be swept away and the hiding-place inundated; the ungodly people of Jerusalem will be trodden under foot and taken. The covenant with death will be disannulled, and the agreement with hell will not stand. This is the first siege, and, as may be seen, this passage cannot refer to Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem, because the town is captured and trodden under foot.

In Joel ii. the Assyrian, the king of the north, with all the nations (Joel iii.) assemble against

* It is not a question here of the personal presence of the Messiah, but the revelation of His Person and intervention to the hearts of the faithful.

Jerusalem. The city is taken and enemies run to and fro in it. In Zechariah xiv. 1, 2, all nations are gathered against Jerusalem to battle, and it is then that judgment should overtake them, but the city is first captured and rifled. Half of the population go forth into captivity, and "the residue of the people," a term which seems to take in the remnant of Jerusalem, is not cut off.

This first siege is also mentioned in the Psalms. In Psalm lxxiv. the enemy has entered Jerusalem, has plundered the temple as well as all the synagogues of God in the land. In Psalm lxxix., which describes the same circumstances, this enemy is "the nations." They have laid Jerusalem on heaps and have shed the blood of the saints like water round about Jerusalem. In Psalm lxxxiii. these same nations are helped by the Assyrian against the people of God. Jehovah will hear the cry of His people and will destroy their enemies.

Daniel ix. 27 supplies us with the approximate date of the first siege. It says that the Prince that shall come (the Roman Emperor) will confirm a covenant with the many for one week (seven years), that in the midst of the week, he will abolish the sacrifice to the true God, and will countenance idolatrous worship in the temple. For this cause a desolator (the Assyrian) will be raised up until the completion of the judgments on Jerusalem. Thus

the first siege will take place during the last half week, probably at its commencement, and it will be an indescribable time of confusion and desolation.

Scripture is not less explicit with regard to the *second siege* of Jerusalem. Just as in the days of Hezekiah, Jerusalem and the remnant found there are not taken but delivered. The Assyrian is the immediate instrument in this second siege. He is returning from an invasion of Egypt when tidings reach him of events which have happened during his absence. These "tidings out of the east and out of the north" (Dan. xi. 44), which trouble and infuriate him, may be, in part at least, the invasion of Assyria by the chiefs of Judah (Micah v. 5, 6; Zech. xii. 6). But already the beast and Antichrist have been destroyed. Besides, all these events of the end follow closely one upon another.

(To be continued.)



The Great Parable.

THE parable of the prodigal, or lost son, is the great parable of Scripture, because of its perfect description of the condition, the position, and the need of all men before God, and also because of its revelation of the all-

embracing love of God towards all, to whom the gospel of the grace of God is preached (Luke xv. ; Mark xvi. 15 ; Acts xx. 24).

The *condition* portrayed is one of waywardness and insubjection to the will of God, which amounts to sinfulness. The *position* is one of distance from God, who is the home of the soul. The *need* is simply this, home with all its attending delights, and the soul's fitness for it. While the atoning and essential work of Christ for the soul, as before God, is not what is found here, but rather the soul's history, or experience, in departing from God and returning to Him.

The outline of the parable is marked by several successive steps in this departure, and in the return to the Father, with the accompanying sorrow and joy, until all culminates in the supreme and mutual joy of the Father's house, where there are "pleasures for evermore," and where the joy of God and joy in Him abound over the poor, fleeting, mocking "pleasures of sin" that endure in this world but for a little season.

The Journey or Departure from God.

This journey was undertaken by the prodigal after due premeditation. Preparation, with keenest sense of anticipation, was carefully made for it, as well as for the fuller enjoyment at its end, of what appeared to be the lasting and satisfying pleasures in the "far country"

without the father. The allotted and lawful "portion" was asked from the father and given, and all that the son possessed was "gathered together," so that himself and all his possessions might become partners, by choice and will, of a strange country and of a strange people that knew not the father. His heart, proud and estranged from the father, went before his erring and wandering feet, and led them on to a land where covetousness and selfishness prevailed in the strife and struggle for worldly gain.

And likewise does the soul, in its "going astray," depart from the living and blessed God. It is allured by sin away from God and irresistibly yields to sin's destructive lust, and by its own choice drifts further and further away from God, in the sense of its liberty and independence, until all that it has and is languishes in "the depths of sin and shame."

My soul, what a startling yet real picture of the way thy will had ever carried thee further and further away from God and thy home! Thy will and the choice of thy will led thee, in thy prodigality, into ruin and into thy dead and lost estate. But what, if thou hadst awakened to thy poverty and deep misery just the other side of death's portals? Truly, thy vain cry and appeal for mercy had sounded unto eternity!

His Substance Wasted.

The difference between the elder and the

younger son in the parable is this. The younger son, who represents *the sinner*, asked for his portion, received it, and then wasted it. But there was also a portion left for the elder son, who represents *the self-righteous*, for "all that the father had was his." Yet the elder son never asked for his portion, he never received it, and therefore never had it to waste. In truth, he was never seen to enter the father's house. He refused to go in, for he despised the *grace* of the father towards *his brother*, who was a sinner. And so the younger son actually received a "double portion," while the elder son received nothing because he would not *submit* to the way and will of the father in receiving again and welcoming the lost one.

And so, reader, it was not the deeds or works of either of these sons, but rather the *attitude of heart* that decided whether they would enter the father's house, or be left outside to perish in their sin. The elder son, who would *serve* his father, turned out at the last to be more rebellious and irreconcilable than the younger son, who had *sinned* against his father. Yet *this* one repented, and became obedient and reconciled. And who, O reader, is it that is finally shut out of God's kingdom and glory? It is he who **refuses** to *come in*. And all such must "likewise perish," though they should try to "work their way" into the house by "serving in the field." It was the acceptance or rejection

by the elder son of the *invitation*, that made all the difference as to his final place and condition.

“Without God in the world,” is the way Scripture views the condition and position of everyone who has “sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 23; Eph. ii. 12). And it is manifest that all are in the far country, because “all have sinned,” and also, that all who have not yet *come unto God by Jesus* are still dead in their sins and lost (Heb. vii. 25). For the prodigal was lost the moment he crossed his father’s threshold, and he was dead when he first thought and planned for himself independently of the father and the father’s will. His character of “living” in the far country only made manifest that he was dead, as his request and action, ere he left his home, proved unmistakably that he was already dead before he began to “live riotously.” He changed his *position* only that he might live out unhinderedly and enjoyably his *condition*. But the will of both the elder and younger son was at enmity with the father, only manifested to be such at different times and under different testing. Upon leaving the house, the elder son went into the field *to serve*, while the younger son went into the far country *to sin*. But how evident it is, that at the end it was really the will of the elder son that proved his ruin, and robbed him of the blessing. “He *would not*

go in." While the younger son, repenting, did the will of the father, and returned with "a mind at perfect peace" with the father. And though he *wasted* his substance, while living unto himself in sin in the far country, and became poor, he was, nevertheless, made rich by returning as he was, a sinner, and the father, by his grace, filled his treasures with substance that *endured* (Prov. viii. 21; Heb. x. 34).

My soul, could anything more aptly picture the depravity and perversity of thy "desperately wicked" heart; or the wondrous, forgiving grace of God, which for ever justifies the repenting, believing sinner? Art thou freed from that awful servitude and bondage of sin, in which this world can only engage thee at the cost of thine eternal destruction and misery? How, then, are these few, alluring, unsatisfying gratifications to be valued, as compared with an undying soul-hunger and soul-thirst which Christ alone can satisfy?

He Came to Himself.

But just as the prodigal in his distress and abandonment came to himself before he came to his father, so the dissatisfied, distressed soul will come to itself by crying, "I perish with hunger!" and then it will come to God. And at this point the soul will, for the first time in its lost career, become *reasonable* and think rightly about God. And this manner of reason-

ing is what is known as *conviction*; it being not only a conviction about myself as a sinner against God, but it is more blessedly a conviction about God as against sin, yet a Saviour from sin, and *saving me the sinner*. And it was the sense of **grace** that touched the lost one's heart in thinking of his father, as his reasoning would go to prove:—

“How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare?”

And it was grace that could and would *spare*. It was surpassing grace, indeed, that would run to meet an unworthy sinner and embrace him—that spared not the best robe, the ring, and the shoes, and that killed the fatted calf in the joy that filled and overflowed the father's heart. And so the soul comes to know something of “the grace of God in truth” (Col. i. 6), ere the heart is inspired with confidence, and is enabled, in its purpose, to say—

“I Will Arise and Go to My Father.”

Now we observe that “there arose a mighty famine in that land” of the “far country.” And while such may have been felt by “a citizen of that country” as merely a season of “hard times,” it served to create in the soul of the prodigal another kind of famine, as he thought of home and “the free giving” of his father. It was the occasion for the heart of this lost son to go out longingly after father and home.

Reader, have you ever passed through an experience, however brief, of this soul-longing, when it seemed that nothing created or temporal could fill the void of a heart that craved something you hardly knew or could tell what? *It was the symptom of a soul famine.* It was when you "began to be in want" of God and of a home, "which Jesus has gone to prepare" for all those who love and wait for Him. And God is calling you back to Himself just now through "this same Jesus," and when you meet **Him**, He will go with you all the way home.

But mark—this famine that arises in the soul is a witness and monitor to your soul, that it should *at once* arise and go to God, who

"satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. cvii. 9).

And "the soul that sinneth" has nothing to bring to God save its weary, wretched self. Its substance has been spent and wasted, but, naked and destitute though it be, it still represents a life created and given by God, and will, if yielded to divine influence, turn to God when all else has failed to fill and satisfy the heart. And there may be no greater suffering experienced by the lost in hell, than soul-thirst, which must go on eternally unmet and unsatisfied, without "a drop of water" to quench it. The world, with its cisterns of fleeting pleasure, has passed and gone, and the soul has no eternal "fountain

of the water of life," which God gives freely to the thirsty *just now* (Rev. xxi. 6). And it is, indeed, solemn to remember that God makes no overtures or entreaties to the inhabitants of that lost and abandoned world.

It is only within this present, narrow span of years we call "time," that the work of soul-saving goes on between God and men, through Christ the Mediator and Redeemer. And now is thy time, O unsaved reader, to return to God, and so make good thine escape "from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 10). Canst thou meet the searching, consuming gaze of Him who is pre-eminently the holy One? Canst thou stand before the Judge, as one who "has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and as one who is "washed from thy sins in His own blood"? (Rom. v. 1; Rev. i. 5). Has He yet justified thee by this "precious blood," and by His own grace, so that thou knowest His perfect love, which casts out all fear and gives thee holy boldness for the day of judgment? (Rom. v. 9; Titus iii. 7; 1 John iv. 17, 18). If not, then thou art still in thy sins, thou hast yet never believed on the Son of God, and thou art on thy way to the righteous judgment of God, which is an *eternal* judgment of punishment and separation from the Lord and His glory (see Acts xvii. 31; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Heb. vi. 2).

It was thy need, O sinner, which *the Saviour felt*, that brought Him down from heaven to die

in thy stead, and it is that same need, as *felt by thee*, which brings thee back to God, confessing,

“Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy”

Yes, *sinful and unworthy* truly describe thy condition and mine.

But Jesus is *holy* and Jesus is *worthy*, and He died for thee and me; and He is a Saviour indeed.

The conviction of the prodigal formed a purpose within him to arise and go to his father, and this purpose led to definite action, for

“He Arose and Came to His Father.”

And this was the *act*, reader, that saved him from perishing. He turned to the father and this was his *conversion*. It was the one step of faith, without which, though he continued, while in the far country, to resolve and purpose and long for “better things,” he never would have been saved.

The parable, then, treats definitely of the soul's activity *as governed by sin*, in departing from God, and living in the world in sin as dead to God and without Him. And again the soul's activity, *as governed by grace*, is seen in returning to God, fully owning its sinful and unworthy state, but having faith in God.

But the picture has a background which illumines the whole scene with a bright and

heavenly lustre. It is the *attitude* of a Saviour, God in His love and kindness towards all men, whom He would have to be saved by coming to repentance and the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. ii. 4; Titus iii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9). And the *activity* of this love is seen to go out after the lost returning ones and saving them, "not by works of righteousness which we have done," but by His own mercy and grace (Eph. ii. 8-9; Titus iii. 4, 5).

Reader, which place in the parable belongs to you, and which place do you take? Are you one of the younger, or are you one of the elder sons? If the former, then there is for you "salvation with eternal glory," if you will have it, and if you will return to the Father. It only remains for you to *do* what the younger son did. Have you done this?

G. B. E.



The Bible Class.

The Fifth Seal—REV. vi. 1-11.

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

IN order to understand who are here referred to, we must bear in mind the exact period that has been reached in the development of

the ways of God. The Church period is closed, therefore these martyrs are not the martyrs of the Christian dispensation. All the martyrs of the Church, whether slain by Pagans, Jews, or Inquisitors, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His coming. That coming, as we have seen, takes place between chapters iii. and iv. The martyrs of the Church period are included in the company of glorified saints seen enthroned, robed in white, and crowned with gold, at rest and at peace in the heavenly courts. Then followed the commencing acts of judgment upon the inhabitants of the world (Rev. vi. 1-8).

But God still has His witnesses upon the earth, and these will become the object of the bitter hatred of those who to-day despise the Christ of God and reject the gospel of His grace. Some of these witnesses will be put to death for the Word of God, and the testimony which they hold.

Some may be surprised and ask, Who can they be, seeing that all the saints of this dispensation will have been caught up before this time commences? They will be Jewish martyrs. The Psalms make many allusions to this faithful remnant. They will stand for the truth of the Word of God in the midst of an apostate Judaism and Christendom. The Word of God, even in our own days, is practically a dead letter so far as the mass of profession is concerned.

The written Word is being as definitely rejected by Christendom, as the Living Word, the Christ of God, was rejected by the Jewish nation of old. During the time of the fifth seal the Jewish remnant will be the only ones who will bow to its authority, and publicly own its truth. They will witness for God at a time when faith will have abandoned the earth. Their testimony will be a different one from that which it is our duty to render as Christians. The Christian testimony, while insisting upon God's claims over men, lays special stress upon the truths distinctive of this present dispensation. These are clearly unfolded in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and were faithfully exhibited in the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul.

“Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,” &c. (Eph. iii. 8-21).

The breaking down of the middle wall of partition between believers from amongst Jews and Gentiles, and the union of the Church with a glorified Christ, was a testimony specially confided to Paul, and for this he suffered untold persecutions. Not that his testimony was confined to these things. It was of a most comprehensive nature; repentance towards God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, the gospel of the grace of God, the preaching of the king-

dom of God, and the declaration of all the counsel of God (Acts xx. 21-27).

But the Jewish remnant after the removal of the Church will take up again the testimony of the disciples before the cross (Matt. x.), and announce the coming of Christ to take to Him His great power and reign. The Old Testament, both in prophets and Psalms, is full of predictions of this coming kingdom when the earth will be blessed under the direct rule and personal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That these are not martyrs of the Christian dispensation is made further evident by the verse that follows :—

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

How different this is from the intercessory prayer of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Stephen’s prayer breathes the spirit of the grace of the gospel message, whereas these martyrs are in line with such appeals for judgment as are found in the imprecatory Psalms. It is ignorance of dispensational distinctions that would put the language of the Psalms into the lips of Christians, as expressive of their thoughts, feelings, and desires. Infidels exclaim against the inconsistency of Christians repeating week by week fervent desires for the destruction of their

enemies ; in this they are right, though they do not see that these very Psalms with all their appeals for judgment will be the just and proper language of the remnant of Israel in a coming day. There is all the difference imaginable between the heavenly saints and the Church on the one hand, and the earthly saints with Israelitish hopes on the other.

“ And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

In saying that the souls of these martyrs were seen under the altar, it is not implied that they were at that moment in a disembodied condition. It is of course symbolic language, for there was no literal altar there. Another has said, “ Their being under the altar means simply that they had offered their bodies, as sacrifices for the truth, to God.”

These same martyrs are seen further on in the Revelation (chap. xx. 4) amongst those that have part in the first resurrection. Clearly at that time they will be in resurrection bodies though John still speaks of them as “souls.” We must remember that the first resurrection is a *period* of time, and not a mere *point* of time. At the coming of the Lord all the dead in Christ arise at one and the same moment, but those who die by martyrdom after that, we

believe, will one by one receive their resurrection bodies, and pass in amongst the already glorified throng. Heaven will thus be astir with triumphant joy and praise, as one overcomer after another joins the worshipping throng, at the same time that earth will be seething with corruption and violence.

But the time of avenging the blood of these martyred Jews must be delayed a short while longer. When it comes it will be "on them that dwell on the earth," that this vengeance will fall. This expression, as we have already pointed out, is a moral one, and refers, not to all the inhabitants of the world, but to apostate Christendom, who have rejected God's offers of heaven made to them in the gospel, and deliberately chosen the earth. The wrath of God will be their portion when the Lord comes out of heaven in person to execute judgment (Rev. xix.).

There were others yet to be martyred, of whom we shall read further on, and who are found sharing in the glory of the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 4), martyrs under the Roman empire.

And we are nearing the fulfilment of these prophecies! The Christ-rejecting Christendom of to-day may yet in their living bodies witness the unrolling of these events preparatory to the coming of the great day of the wrath of the Lamb.

A. H. B.