

Truth for the Last Days :

A BIBLICAL MAGAZINE.

(PUBLISHED QUARTERLY).

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Vol. II.



WESTON-SUPER-MARE : WALTER SCOTT, HAMILTON HOUSE,
CLIFTON ROAD.

LONDON : W. BLATCHLEY, 27, LANCEFIELD STREET, W.

NEW YORK : LOIZEAUX BROS., 63, FOURTH AVENUE.

1901.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A VITAL AND NEEDED TRUTH. <i>Walter Scott</i> - -	84
AN ATTACK ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. <i>Walter Scott</i> -	237
ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP. <i>Walter Scott</i>	266
A QUESTION ON MATTHEW XX. 1-16. <i>Walter Scott</i> -	287
"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD." <i>Walter Scott</i> -	189
BECAUSE I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO. <i>William Jeater</i>	306
CERTAIN CHURCH TRUTHS AND STATEMENTS RE-EXAMINED. <i>Walter Scott</i> - - -	73
CERTAIN SCRIPTURAL TERMS EXPLAINED. <i>Walter Scott</i>	166
CONCERNING GIVING AND RECEIVING. <i>Walter Scott</i> -	223
COUNSELS TO A YOUNG MAN FROM AN OLD FRIEND. <i>William Jeater</i>	231
EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN TERMS EMPLOYED IN PSALM cxix. <i>C. E. Stuart</i> - - -	239
EXOD. xxxiv. 33 ; 2 COR. iii 13. <i>C. E. Stuart</i> - -	286
EARTH'S COMING JUBILEE. <i>Walter Scott</i> - - -	312
ETERNAL LIFE—A PRESENT AND EVERLASTING POSSESSION. <i>Walter Scott</i> - - -	329
FORTY WRESTLERS, OR FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH. <i>Anon.</i>	318
GENESIS AND DEUTERONOMY. <i>Walter Scott</i> - - -	141
GOD'S GREAT PLAN. <i>Walter Scott</i> - - -	320
IN CHRIST ; OR THE SPIRITUAL RACE. <i>Walter Scott</i> -	27
"I ONLY AM LEFT." <i>W. W. Fereday</i> - - -	37
JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION. <i>Walter Scott</i> - -	319
MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH. <i>Walter Scott</i> - -	137
MOSES AND CHRIST. <i>Walter Scott</i> - - -	139

Contents.

NOT ENDED BUT SAVED. <i>E. R. Wills</i>	-	-	-	-	272
NOTES, EMENDATIONS OF THE SACRED TEXT, ETC.,					
— <i>Selected and Original</i>	-	-	-	-	333
ON SEALING. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	21
ON CHURCH-RECEPTION. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	134
ON THE FINDING OF THE PHAROAHs. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-				182
OUR NEEDS. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	320
PROPHETIC THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS. <i>Walter Scott</i>					178
REST FOR THE BRAIN. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	184
REST FOR THE CONSCIENCE. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	185
REST FOR THE HEART. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	186
REMARKS ON ARTICLE ENTITLED, "SERVICE AND					
FELLOWSHIP." <i>E. R. Wills</i>	-	-	-	-	208
RIGHTEOUSNESS : DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.					
				<i>Walter Scott</i>	325
SOME SAYINGS OF THE LORD JESUS RECORDED					
ONLY BY MATTHEW. <i>C. E. Stuart</i>	-	-			3
SOWING AND REAPING	-	-	-	-	143
SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.					
<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	164
SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-	-	167
SOME NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE DOCTRINE					
OF THE HOLY GHOST. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-			169
SAVED BY THE WORK—HAPPY BY THE WORD.					
				<i>Walter Scott</i>	179
THE HOLIES. <i>T. J. Leonard</i>	-	-	-	-	22
THE PSALMS. AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR					
SEQUENCE. <i>C. E. Stuart</i>	30,	49,	97,	145,	193, 241
THE COMING PERSONAL ANTICHRIST. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-				40
THE FATHER OF HISTORY. <i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	-		46
"THE WIND BLOWETH WHERE IT LISTETH." <i>W. W. Fereday</i>					69
THE BEATITUDES. <i>Harry Friend</i>	-	-	-	-	85

Contents.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON.	<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	91
THE APOCRYPHA.	<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	92
THE SEPTUAGINT.	<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	92
THE NICEAN COUNCIL.	<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	92
THE PENTATEUCH.	<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	93
THE LAST GREAT CRISIS	<i>W. W. Feraday</i>	-	-	125
THE TWO NATURES.	<i>Walter Scott</i>	-	-	129
THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE FIRST BEAST OF REV. xiii.	<i>William Easton</i>			210
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.	<i>E. R. Wills</i>	-	-	221
THE BAPTISM AND THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.	<i>William Jeater</i>			279
THE UNCLOTHED, OR SEPARATE STATE.	<i>C. E. Stuart</i>	-		289
THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY ; OR, HOW TO BE USEFUL IN GOD'S ASSEMBLY.	<i>Walter Scott</i>			296
THE APPROACHING JUDGMENT OF CHRISTENDOM.	<i>W. W. Fereday</i>			321
THE CRITICS : SHALL WE FOLLOW THEM ?	<i>C. E. Stuart</i>			337
WHY DO I PRAY ? A GLANCE AT SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS.	<i>William Jeater</i>	362

P O E T R Y .

COME !	-	-	-	-	-	-	47
THE MOURNING CHURCH.	<i>Albert Midlane</i>	-	-	-			96
CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.	<i>Albert Midlane</i>	-	-				144
THE MUSTER ROLL : AN INCIDENT OF WAR	-	-	-				187
THE PRAYER MEETING	-	-	-	-	-	-	190
" THIS IS YOUR HOUR."	<i>C. G. Chandler</i>	-	-	-			240
" THE MIDNIGHT CRY."	<i>Albert Midlane</i>	-	-	-			288
PENTECOST.	<i>Albert Midlane</i>	-	-	-	-	-	335

TRUTH FOR THE LAST DAYS.



SOME SAYINGS OF THE LORD JESUS RECORDED ONLY BY MATTHEW.

OF the four Gospels that by Matthew is regarded as the earliest. It has always had the first place in the New Testament writings, and tradition has from early days confirmed the propriety of it.

Of this Evangelist's history but little is known, and for that little we are indebted to the three synoptic Gospels. Mark acquaints us with his parentage, telling he was the son of one Alphæus* (Mark. ii. 14), and both Mark and Luke introduce him first by the name of *Levi*. To them we owe the information that he bore that name, our Evangelist only calling himself by his name of *Matthew*. *Levi* means in Hebrew *attaching to*, or perhaps *associate* (Gen. xxix. 34). *Matthew* means in the same language, *gift of Jehovah*. Mentioned as *Levi* by Mark and by Luke on the day of his call, he is henceforth only noticed in the gospel history by his name of *Matthew*. And considering that special service with which for all succeeding time he was to be associated, as the earliest biographer of Christ, it seemed fitting that by his name of *Matthew* he should be more generally known. In every list of the Apostles *Matthew* is his name (Matt. x. 3 ; Mark iii. 18 ; Luke vi. 15 ; Acts i. 13).

His introduction to us is as follows : The Lord "saw *Levi*, the son of *Alphæus*, sitting at the receipt of custom," so wrote Mark

* This is a different *Alphæus* from the father of James the less.

Some Sayings of the Lord Jesus

(ii. 14); "He saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom," so we read in Luke (v. 27); "He saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom," is the Evangelist's first notice of himself (ix. 9).

That Matthew and Levi are the same person, the history of the feast which follows his call makes perfectly plain; and that Matthew was his name before his call, as well as Levi, we take it that his own record is sufficient proof. Peter received a new name from Christ, but the publican bore the name of Matthew before that irresistible call from the Lord, which made him at once throw up his lucrative business, to follow Him, who had not where to lay His head. And evidently, whatever Pharisees might say, *he* was not ashamed of his original occupation, for when mentioning himself as one of the chosen twelve (x. 3), he writes of "Matthew the publican."

Where the call took place Mark (ii. 13, 14) especially informs us. It was by the sea of Galilee. *When* it took place the three synoptic Gospels are in accord. It was on the same day, but subsequent to the healing of the paralytic man in that house at Capernaum, in which the Lord dwelt. "Follow me," just two words, in Aramaic as in Greek, but words of power, did the Lord address to him. The effect was striking and instantaneous. "He left all," writes Luke, "rose up, and followed Him" (v. 28). A publican to be one of the immediate followers of Christ! A Pharisee would not consort with a publican, though he could look in on the company in Matthew's house. How could the Lord have such an one in His immediate following? Ere another sun should rise that question should be answered. Sinners the Pharisees called the publicans (Luke xix. 7). "I came not to call the righteous but sinners," were words uttered that day by Christ when under the roof of Matthew, and as an invited guest to the feast in his house.

Of any sayings of Matthew we have no record. He is never

represented as speaking a single word. The sound of his voice, as it were, is never heard. And of acts only one is reported, that not by himself, but by Mark and Luke, and specially by the latter, who writes, "and Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them" (Luke v. 29). Surrendering a lucrative calling was not enough, he would make for the Lord a *great* feast in his house. He who had called him should be the honoured guest, and a goodly number should be invited to meet Him. The Lord was of great account in Matthew's eyes, and as with Mary of Bethany, so with the publican, nothing was regarded as too good for Christ. But each in their own way. Mary expended ointment on the Lord to the value of three hundred pence and upwards, according to the appraisement of Judas Iscariot. A great feast Levi made the Lord, writes Luke. But with becoming modesty, the fruit surely of divine grace, Matthew, though mentioning the feast, does not tell us where it took place, and at whose expense it was provided, nor does he characterise it as great.

When Matthew first met Christ, and where, is a matter hidden from us. We may, however, reasonably suppose he had heard Him before that day, since others who were called in a similiar way wholly to follow Christ, had previously been in His company. And now conscious of the attractive power of the Lord, he desired all his friends and acquaintances to prove what he had proved, so invited a good company to hear Him, whose words were fraught with everlasting blessing to those who gave heed to them. That day, and that call, were a turning point in Matthew's history. That feast too was a memorable one in the ministry of the Lord, being the first occasion, of which we read, that He sat at meat in the company of publicans, or, as the Pharisees called them, sinners. "Many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples," writes Matthew (ix. 10). "A great company of publicans and of others sat down with them," so runs the record in Luke (v. 29).

Some Sayings of the Lord Jesus

How Matthew's heart must have been cheered as he saw the assembled guests, and full must it have been, when the Lord, in the hearing of all, and in response to the murmurings of the scribes and of the Pharisees, who we suppose just looked on, announced His satisfaction with the company around Him. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Here the better reading in Matthew and in Mark ends, but Luke adds the significant words "to repentance." The Lord knew the state of men by nature, and turned not away from any who had need of repentance. How could He sit at meat in such a company, had been the question of the Pharisees. The sick ones, even those who had need of repentance He came to call, was His answer. And such there were before Him. But more He said, and here Matthew is our only informant, "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (ix. 13). He reminded them of words in Hosea vi. 6. God in the person of the Son was not asking a sacrifice from men, but was shewing mercy to all who with a felt need would receive it. A new era had dawned. Those Pharisees had not perceived it.

Now the feast made by Matthew was an index to the desires of that publican's heart. It should therefore occasion no surprise that he who filled his house with the company that he did, to bring them within the sound of the teaching of Christ, might at a later time compile, as guided of the Spirit, a history of the Lord's ministry upon earth. And treasuring up, as he must have done, those words of Christ just quoted, we can quite understand, that he stored his memory with other sayings and doings of Christ, which have now found their suited place only in his Gospel.

His Gospel is essentially dispensational in character. In this it differs from that by Mark, and even that by Luke. Parables of the kingdom of the heavens have a special place in it, and no less than seven similitudes of the kingdom, not met with elsewhere

(xiii. 44, 45, 47; xviii. 23; xx. 1; xxii. 2; xxv. 1). General parabolic teaching too, from chap. xiii. and onwards, is a marked feature in its pages, and the only notices by the Lord of the church, not then built, are found in it likewise (xvi. 18; xviii. 17). Matthew we feel sure must have been an attentive and intelligent listener, preparing, it may have been unconsciously, for the special service to which he was to be called by the Holy Ghost, as the first to pen an inspired record of the Lord's ministry amongst men. Much he has in common with the Gospels of Mark and of Luke; yet, as we have already noticed, he has matter peculiar to his history. To enter at length into all that would require a volume. Our present purpose is one of a more humble nature, to call attention to *some of the sayings of Christ* not met with in the writings of his fellow-labourers.

The earliest utterance of the Lord recorded in the Word, is met with in the Gospel of Luke (ii. 49), when in answer to His mother's reproach He replied, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The next earliest utterance Matthew has recorded. Challenged by John when He went to His baptism, He quieted the son of Zacharias with the reply, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). True He was sinless, holy, and impeccable, which the Baptist was not, He therefore had no sins to confess like all the rest who sought baptism at the hands of John. Why should He come to submit to that rite? That baptism was part of God's institution for the day. Righteousness, therefore, was fulfilled in submitting to it. Obedient then to it was the Lord of glory, and thus was fully fitted to enter the fold, to lead out in due time the sheep which he might find within it. We have said that Matthew's Gospel is dispensational in character, fitting then was it, it will be perceived, that this saying of the Lord should find its place in it.

And now, having duly entered the fold by the door (John x. 2), let us look at Him as the *Teacher*, and recall some of His sayings

peculiar to Matthew's Gospel, and recorded in his account of the sermon on the mount. In Luke vi. we have a short report of part of that long discourse, and in other places in that same Gospel teachings in accordance with that sermon are to be found. But Matthew gives us a connected account filling three chapters (v.-vii.) It was an important discourse, as it sketched out the character of the Lord's teaching, combined with intimations of that which should be displayed in those who had really entered the kingdom, His disciples in truth. Commencing with the beatitudes uttered on this occasion, Matthew gives us *nine* such, the first eight describing different classes, introduced each one by "Blessed are *they*," etc. The last was spoken personally to His assembled disciples: "Blessed are *ye*, when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in the heavens: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (v. 11-12). In substance this last beatitude is also found in Luke (vi. 22-23). But out of the nine in Matthew *five* are not met with elsewhere, viz., blessing on the meek, on the merciful, on the pure in heart, on the peacemakers, and on those persecuted for righteousness sake (5, 7-10). Matthew was present, and must have heard all this, and doubtless treasured it up in his heart. What should we have lost, had he not, as guided of the Spirit, recorded these different sayings, dispensational as regards the meek, but eminently practical and encouraging as regards all the rest. How many have been cheered, we may boldly affirm, as they practised the virtues here indicated, or endured persecution for righteousness sake. It seems hard to suffer for doing what is righteous, yet Christ's disciples are called to that (1 Peter iii. 14), and encouraged to endure it. Surely too, whilst Christians may now profit by this instruction, the godly remnant of the future will also through grace, proving thereby that they too are disciples in truth.

Now the Lord had a following, disciples were round Him, and

as Luke informs us, He called them to Himself, and chose twelve, whom He named Apostles (Luke vi. 12-13). Then He addressed them. All of the assembled multitude could hear, for a multitude was present, and they heard something different from that to which they had ever listened, about the proper conduct of disciples, and about the new teaching as they would call it. The disciples He addressed, as Matthew tells us, saying, "Ye are the salt of the earth," or land, and "ye are the light of the world" (Matt. v. 13-14). As the *salt* of the earth they had a special position in relation to Israel. As the *light* of the world they would have a sphere only bounded by the confines of earth. Responsibility was connected with both these positions. But the latter announcement foreshadowed a work in which Gentiles would be embraced. The salt was not to lose its savour. The light was not to be covered up, but to shine before men. Was not the Lord Jesus on the mount looking forward to a future, which neither Matthew, nor John, nor James, nor Peter, nor any of His hearers standing around Him, then understood? Judaism was strictly conservative, but blessing to Gentiles was in His thoughts, and the sphere in which that blessing was to act, was world-wide. And surely when He proceeded, interest in all true hearts must have deepened, as they listened to that emphatic utterance, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of the heavens" (20). Often in the course of His subsequent ministry He denounced the ways of those just mentioned, but this sermon seems the earliest occasion on which He did it. Hypocrisy thus condemned root and branch, for hypocrites He elsewhere calls them (xxiii. 23, 25, 27; Luke xii. 1), what would the new Teacher affirm? Had He come to found a rival school? Would He decry the teaching of Moses as out of date? He made His position quite plain, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. v. 17). And then by a series of illustrations He made His

meaning plain (21-44), opening out deeper teaching than they or their fathers had heard, and so He fulfilled, or filled up the law. The Pharisees by their traditions might teach their followers to evade its commands (xv. 3-9). He maintained the law's authority, calling attention to the spirit, and not merely to the letter of it. Harkening now to Him, and obeying His instructions, disciples would become perfect even as their heavenly Father is perfect (v. 48).

He had called attention to the practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, as falling short of that which would please God, or could ensure for the individual entrance into the kingdom of the heavens. He now followed it by His teaching on the doing of righteousness (vi. 1, R.V.)* Three heads of it are touched upon, viz., almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. The first and last of these are nowhere else taken up as here. On the spirit in which both should be exercised He insisted. Ostentation in giving alms He discountenanced (vi. 2-4), and fasting He taught, was for God to see, and not for a display before men (16-18). Then, as He had already begun to teach of the heavenly calling (v. 12), He exhorted those who would listen, not to lay up for themselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but "lay up," He added, "treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where thy treasure is, there will thine heart be also" (vi. 19-21, R.V.)

To call attention to all His teaching would of course far exceed the limits to be allotted to this article. Many parables might then be cited, and dwelt upon in prosecution of the subject. We must therefore content ourselves with quoting just one other saying in this sermon, not met with elsewhere, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (vi. 34). Do not, He would say, carry to-morrow's

*"Take heed that ye do not your righteousness" (not "alms") etc., is the better reading of Matt. vi. 1.

burdens on your shoulders to day. Wise indeed is this teaching, and sorely needed. How apt are we to forget it. The trouble that we are fearing, like a dark cloud, which in the distance seems so lowering, may, when the morrow comes, lose much of its blackness, just as a heavy cloud often does as it draws near. Let the day then have only its own burdens, and wait patiently as regards the morrow. A golden saying, may we not esteem it, which Matthew alone has preserved.

In connection with our contemplation of the Lord as the Teacher, we may view Him also as the *Prophet*. As the Teacher Matthew early presents Him. As the Prophet he sets Him before us, especially when near the end of His ministry on earth. The sorrows of the nation, and the prospect of His people, these occupied Him in His closing days down here. Sitting on the mount of Olives at the close of the third day before His death, and confronting Jerusalem and the Temple, He foretold the coming destruction of the latter, and, as Matthew and Mark have related, He likewise portrayed the sorrows of the Jews in the last days (Matt xxiv., Mark xiii.) A time of fierce persecution will come. The power of the devil will be manifested as it never yet has been (Rev. xii. 12), and except those days should be shortened no flesh would be saved. Defection then will be witnessed because iniquity shall abound, the love of many, as the Lord expresses it growing cold (Matt. xxiv. 12). Yet God will not leave His people without a witness and a testimony; for the gospel for that day, which Matthew alone explains as the gospel of *the kingdom*, will again be heard, and preached in all the world for a witness to all the nations; and then the earnestly desired end shall come (14), and Israel's deliverance at last take place.

But other events there are which the Lord foretold, and one which specially concerns Christians. We refer to the parable of the ten virgins, and the rejection of five of them, when the Lord comes for His own (Matt. xxv. 1-13). Then, looking on to His

return to earth, we have the parable of the sheep and the goats the fulfilment of which will concern the nations alive on the earth (31-46). He who has the future under His eye as much as the present, describes what will be, and foretells the very words which will be heard from foolish virgins when shut out, as well as from the sheep and the goats when He shall address them. Prophets prophesied of Him. He, *the Prophet*, prophesies regarding Himself, yet with an earnest desire to warn professing Christians, and to set before the Gentiles what should be their behaviour towards Israel in the coming day of the sorrows of the latter.

A Teacher, a Prophet, the Lord had also a *heart for those in need*, and could show gracious consideration for such. Of this too Matthew instructs us. The centurion of Capernaum proved it, the Syrophœnician woman too learnt of it. To the centurion's request for his sick servant, when at length preferred by himself, came the gracious response, "I will come and heal him" (Matt. viii. 7). The man's urgent desire, manifested in first sending elders of the Jews to the Lord, and then a company of his friends, exhibited its fullest expression when he afterwards went himself. His faith, called into exercise by the Lord's reply, made him deprecate such condescension. A word he declared was enough, and his servant would be healed. And whilst Luke (vii. 10), states that the friends on returning found the servant whole who had been sick, Matthew has put on record the Lord's gracious response to the centurion's expression of faith, "Go thy way: as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee" (Matt. viii. 13). That friend of the Jewish nation got what he wanted.

And another one, the Syrophœnician woman, who took at last her right place as a dog under the table, proved the Lord's goodness, as responding to her request for her daughter, He said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. xv. 28). She had followed Him into the house, as Mark (vii.) tells us, for she would not be denied. There at His feet she

pressed her suit, and got the reply, of which Matthew in its fullness is the only reporter.

Then too, the son of Alphæus has preserved the Master's reply to the disciples, who asked Him to send away the multitude to buy food for themselves, as He prefaced it with words only found in this Gospel, "They need not depart" (Matt. xiv. 16), adding what Mark and Luke also record, "Give ye them to eat." He would feed the hungry. None should leave Him unsatisfied. All resources were with Him, and all that was needed should be in exercise for that multitude. Five barley loaves and two small fishes summed up all that the disciples could muster. "Bring them hither to me," was the Lord's rejoinder (Matt. xiv. 18), which is reported only by our Evangelist. He would charge Himself with satisfying all before Him.

Short, it may be said, were these different sayings of Christ. Should we pass them over as of little moment? Do they not indicate something of His heart as ready to meet the creature's need, if the individual, like the Canaanitish mother, and the Roman centurion, but owns its unworthiness of any favour? Here we may well call attention to the Lord in the character of an *Inviter*. Those two suppliants just mentioned went to Him with their want. But He did not, or does not wait always for that, He would *invite* souls to come to Him. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (xi. 28-30). Again have we to be thankful for Matthew's Gospel, which has preserved for all time this gracious invitation of the Saviour. Gracious we must call it, for it is as the rejected One that He here invites. Few things are more keenly felt by the natural man than rejection, and that after serving his fellows. Here the Lord, after working mighty works in Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and teaching too in Capernaum, had just pronounced woes on them for their treatment of Him. Now He

stands forth as an *Inviter*. All that labour and are heavy laden He addressed, whoever and wherever they might be. None in Capernaum, Chorazin, or Bethsaida, who were burdened, did He except. To such, as to all others from elsewhere, He would give rest, if only they went to Him. Words of encouragement for people at all time if weary and heavy laden. However such may have treated Him in the past, if only they come to Him, He will give them rest. Grace indeed on His part! a free, a full offer of rest.

But more, He thought of disciples as well, who troubled and tried by the experiences of the way might be needing rest of heart in the midst of circumstances that seemed adverse. He, who trod the path of obedience and dependence on earth, knew well what His disciples might encounter. To them He therefore addressed Himself. Rest they could *find* by taking on them His yoke, and learning of Him, the meek and the lowly One. To the one class He would *give* rest, the other class might *find* it. Rest of *conscience* He would give, rest of *heart* His people could find. And at this juncture He gave a practical illustration concerning the latter, as He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25-26). The Father was working as it pleased Him. The Lord, the Son, was satisfied that it should be so, even if He Himself was the rejected One on earth. Is not this the real secret of finding rest in circumstances? Let God carry on His work as He will. John the Baptist had learnt something of it when he said to his disciples, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30). Are we learning this lesson also?

Rest of conscience then, and rest of heart, of these the Lord spoke. He knew then, He knows still the need. He offers the one, He tells disciples how to find the other. And whilst Luke

(x. 21-22), in common with Matthew has preserved the tenor of the Lord's thanksgiving on this occasion, Matthew alone has put on abiding record these words of gracious invitation. They were never to be forgotten.

The Lord's interest in the real welfare of men was unmistakable. So, if He could invite, He would also *warn* as well as *exhort*. Warnings are needed, for we have within us that evil thing, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. viii. 7). Exhortations too are required, for we are feeble creatures in ourselves, with an ever active enemy on the watch to trip us up.

Of *warnings* we would notice five, two uttered when in Galilee, and three when in Judæa. Of the two in Galilee, one was addressed to the Pharisees (Matt. xii. 36-37), the other was spoken to the disciples concerning them (xv. 13). To the Pharisees, who had declared that He cast out demons through Beelzebub the chief of the demons, He uttered that very solemn warning, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." A judgment to come there certainly is; and He, who will then be the Judge, has issued in view of it this warning. Then in xv. 13, when told by the disciples that the Pharisees were offended at His exposure of their hypocrisy, He answered the twelve, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." One there was in that company of whom that came awfully true. What need for each and all to see where and what we are. A word too, to be remembered by true disciples if in conflict with determined opposers.

The three other warnings to which we would refer are found in xxi. 43, xxii. 14, xxvi. 52. The first was addressed in the Temple to the chief priests and the elders, and the second perhaps in the same place. The first foretold the rejection of the professed husbandmen of that day, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from

you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The second warning, "Many are called, but few chosen,"* was intended for both Jews and Gentiles, that none should slight the invitation of grace. The third warning specially concerns Christians, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." God's present work is not to be advanced by the use of carnal weapons. Of old the nation under Joshua went out to war with swords and spears. Physical force, rightly employed at that time, was not to be employed by the Christian in conflict with opposers of the truth. His only sword in this warfare is that of the Spirit—the Word of God (Eph. vi. 17). The first of these three warnings was dispensational in application, and the history of the Acts shewed it in the process of fulfilment. The application of the other two should more generally be borne in mind.

We have said the Lord *exhorted* as well as warned. Of course there were many exhortations reported by others as well as by Matthew. To two on record only in the latter's Gospel, we would direct attention. Both are met with in the instruction to the twelve ere starting forth on their mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "Freely ye have received, freely give," is the one; "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," is the other (Matt. x. 8, 16). Going in God's work with powers received from Him, and all of grace to them, they were admonished to make no temporal profit out of their exercise. Simon Magus would have traded if possible in such powers as those imparted to the Apostles. "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts viii. 20), was Peter's immediate and indignant rebuke of the sorcerer. Freely had they received the powers entrusted to them, whether miraculous or ministerial. Freely should they give, and whilst the Lord has ordained that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (1 Cor. ix. 14), it is not for the servant to put a price on

* In xx. 16, we meet in the common text with the same warning. Probably the words should there be omitted.

his ministrations. And as to the other exhortation, it has become almost a household word, "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Needful too is this to be borne in mind.

Then what Christian parent but must rejoice in the Lord's announcement about little children. Men think little of a child. What is thought of one such above? Who would have known, who could have guessed, what the Lord Jesus in His goodness has revealed, that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of His Father which is in heaven." As creatures they are thus represented on high; and as those born in sin, the Lord would die for such, for He adds, "It is not the will of my Father which is in the heavens that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 10-14). A gospel about babies we may call it, and Matthew the publican is the only one who has preserved it.

Passing by without comment the Lord's words to Peter respecting the tribute money, associating that disciple with Himself as a son of the Father, "That take and give unto them for Me and thee" (Matt. xvii. 27), we would call attention to dispensational utterances peculiar to our Gospel. First as to the building of the church, then as to the opening of the kingdom, next as to dealing with an offending brother, and lastly as to gathering unto Christ's name.

As to the building of the church, or assembly, at that time not in existence, words addressed directly to Peter have been recorded by the son of Alphæus. Others must have heard them, but Matthew only has preserved them. To the question addressed to all the disciples, Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To that the Lord immediately responded, "Blessed art thou, Simom Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (xvi. 16-18). Upon this rock! What rock? Peter? Certainly not.

He would not build His church on Peter, who was shortly after rebuked by his Lord (Matt. xvi. 23), and years after justly blamed by Paul (Gal. ii. 12-16). The Lord's word was not "on thee," *i.e.*, Peter, but "on this rock I will build my church." It must therefore have been something that was before them at that time. Now, Peter's confessing Christ as the Son of the living God drew forth from Christ immediate approbation, and an acknowledgement of the truth of that Apostle's confession. The rock referred to, we take it, was Peter's confession as to the Lord's Person. On that the church would be built, and the Lord, not man, be the builder. Does not Peter's word in 1 Pet. ii. 4-5, go far to confirm this? Christ is the Living Stone, and Christians are living stones, built up a spiritual house, etc. Peter gives no encouragement to the idea that he was the rock. Then against the Son of the Living God the power of death could not prevail. What He builds will endure. So His Church existing now on earth as His bride, and God's Habitation by the Spirit, will be displayed as the Lamb's wife, and be the Holy Temple completed, which is now growing, and the Tabernacle of God in the eternal state. Death will never overcome it. Jeroboam in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea, where the Lord was at that moment, set up one of his calves. That had passed away, but the church, or assembly, built by Christ, will never pass away. A new thing that would be, not indeed then built, but the like none on earth had ever seen.

Then as to the opening of the kingdom of heaven. To Peter, we here learn, were the keys of the kingdom entrusted. Whilst Paul by his ministry fulfilled the word of God (Col. i. 25), Peter by his service opened the kingdom, first to Jews at Pentecost, and then to Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.

Further, as to dealing with an offending brother, directions are given, till the offender, refusing to hear the church, is to be viewed as a heathen man and a publican. To a heathen man no Jew would grant ecclesiastical privileges. With a

publican no strict Jew would consort. And if men should think the action of the assembly in dealing with an offender, poor and powerless, the Lord here declares that what they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and what they should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven. For these disciplinary actions, if really the fruit of the Spirit's guidance on earth, would be owned, and fully ratified on high (Matt. xviii. 15-18). Who would have conceived that such power could be wielded on earth by any acting for God and for Christ?

Nor is this all. A further revelation foretells what could be enjoyed after the Lord's ascension. Gone from earth, His people might still be in the enjoyment of His presence. "Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together unto (rather than, in) my name, there am I in the midst of them" (xviii. 19-20). What an encouragement have we here! A resource for Christians in times of failure and weakness. A smaller company than two or three there cannot be, but Christ will be in their midst. On His presence they can count though no mortal eye beholds Him. How interested and concerned He must be in that which concerns His people.

Dispensational teaching we call all this connected with the church and also with the kingdom. What should we have lost if Matthew's Gospel had perished, or even had been hidden in some corner! What comfort now to know on the authority of the Lord's own word, the ground upon which real Christians can count on His presence with them!

But this paper must draw to a close. We have in it made only a selection of the sayings of Christ not recorded by the other Evangelists. A few more examples, and we have done. And first to two very interesting ones we would direct attention, illustrating how Matthew's Gospel supplements what Mark or Luke, or both,

have written. At the institution of the Lord's Supper, when handing the cup to the Apostles, the Master said, according to Mark, "This is my blood of the covenant (so R.V.) which is shed for many" (Mark xiv. 24). According to Luke (xxii. 20), He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you." Both speak of His blood, the blood of the new testament, or covenant, and so take us back in thought to Jer. xxxi. 31-34. With them Matthew is in full agreement, but he adds, what they do not, "for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28), words which we may be sure were uttered, and by all the company heard. Matthew apparently treasured them up, and at the fitting moment reproduced them. Then having passed the cup to the Apostles without partaking of it, for a reason we can all understand, Mark tells us that the Lord said, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mark xiv. 25). Luke writes to the same effect, though introducing the words in connection with the paschal cup, and not with that in the Lord's Supper (Luke xxii. 18). Now Matthew, whilst endorsing what those two have recorded, has an addition of interest to all. Reading in Mark we may as it were hear the Lord saying, "Until that day that I drink it new," etc. Then Matthew's voice is heard adding "with you," after "new" (Matt. xxvi. 29). These two additions we have noticed are of deep interest. The former shows how the Lord would meet the need of guilty ones. The latter shows how He will associate His own in the future with Himself, He and they rejoicing together in the result of His atoning sacrifice. All fear of judgment to be removed now, as the words "for the forgiveness of sins," are remembered, and joy with Christ in the future before true believers, as the two last words "with you," are read and understood.

Just one more saying will we notice. It tells of the undying love of Christ to His own, and it forms the closing words of our Gospel, words indeed to be remembered, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. xxviii. 20). With these

Recorded only by Matthew.

21

words ringing in our ears Matthew speaks to us no more. Shall we not all agree that he has done good service, as, taught of the Spirit, he preserves from oblivion sayings of the Lord which no other Evangelist has mentioned?

The *perfect Servant* fulfilling all righteousness; the *Teacher* fulfilling the law and the prophets; a *Prophet* too, but different from all others who were before Him; then too, *meeting creatures in their need*, and though rejected, *inviting, warning, and exhorting, promising* also to be in the midst now of two or three gathered to His name; and announcing *His presence* with His people to the end of the age—surely Matthew in thus ministering of Christ has done service for which we should all be thankful.

C. E. S.

ON SEALING.

THE SEAL. “Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. i. 13). The seal is not an effect produced *on* you, nor *in* you by the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is not God’s seal; neither the new birth, nor the new nature in the believer is the seal. It is the Holy Ghost Himself which is the seal.

WHO ARE SEALED? “The Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him” (Acts v. 32). Obedience to the Word, the reception of the gospel as illustrated in the conversion of the Gentiles under the preaching of Peter (Acts x. 43, 44) secures the gift of the Holy Ghost. “In whom having also believed, ye were sealed” (Eph. i. 13). Believers alone are sealed. Clearly then, sealing is subsequent to believing, subsequent to the new birth.

WHO SEALS? “God who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). Sealing of the Spirit, or by the Spirit does not convey the accuracy of Scripture. Believers are sealed by God with the Spirit. It is God who seals. The Lord on high baptizes into the body—the body of

Christ. God seals believers. The former is a corporate act ; the latter is individual action.

MEANING OF THE SEAL. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). It is God's mark that one belongs to God, to Christ. The Spirit too is the earnest of glory to come (Eph. i. 14) ; the power to combat and overcome evil within (Gal. v. 17 R.V.). By the indwelling Holy Spirit God's love is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5). The Holy Ghost *in* believers is the power to make good in the soul every Christian truth and blessing.

THE HOLIES.

THAT God had a people on earth before the present day of grace began, in whose hearts He wrought by His Spirit to turn them to Himself, is largely evidenced in Scripture. One effect of the death of Christ, and immediately following it, was to bring in between God and His people new relations in respect of sin and righteousness. The whole question of evil had been solved and settled through the cross, and thereby a channel opened for the outflow of divine love. It became possible, too, for men renewed and regenerate, to approach God according to the light in which the cross had revealed Him, as perfectly judging evil, yet commending His love to the guilty.

The death of Christ was in fulfilment of divine counsel (Acts ii. 23), and provided a basis on which God would carry out His eternal purpose to have a people in His presence, "holy and without blemish before Him" (Eph. i. 4). His counsels and purposes, as now revealed to faith, are from eternity and for eternity, but their working out and completion awaited the death of His Son as their only possible foundation. Yet in the perfection of His ways, and long before His counsels were made known, in type and incident full of precious instruction and encouragement, He anticipated

their accomplishment. From these we may learn, nor need the consciousness that narrowness and limitation must ever characterize the most painstaking research, deter us from their diligent study.

More conspicuously perhaps than any other in the Old Testament, the Mosaic Tabernacle stands out in relief as the prefiguration of "the Holies," or "holy of Holies" (Heb. ix. 12), a scene of infinite and everlasting purity.

In the tabernacle there was "a second veil" (ix. 3), dividing "the holy place," from "the most holy" (Exod. xxvi. 33). Both are comprised in the Holies, wherein there is no dividing veil, and Christ is seen in the golden altar, table of shewbread, and lighted candlestick, no less truly than in the blood-sprinkled and cherubic throne. Completely, and in His own Person, He fulfilled the types that were designed to set Him forth as the One in whom alone God is, or could be revealed in a world of evil.

Passively in its structure and furniture, the tabernacle was formed to express in type Christ in His personal and divine perfections, and in His all-sufficiency towards His people who are associated with Him. In His death the "shadow" disappears, and the "very image" comes into view. All, save an unrent veil, is seen in the antitype. Actively on the day of atonement (Lev. xvi.), the ceremonials within its holy courts pointed to a work that would be done by Him alone. All on that day ceremonially foreshadowed was fulfilled by Him, and all, save the cloud on the mercy-seat, is seen in the antitype in results that abide eternally. The burning of the "sweet incense, beaten small," within the holiest by the high priest, with fire from off the sacrificial altar, spoke of Him whose excellencies, perfections, and worth, were presented to God in the "one sacrifice" (Heb. x. 12). The cloud from the censer covering the mercy-seat indicated the insufficiency of the sacrifices then offered to give title or fitness to draw near to God. Of this the veil was the constant witness, and the cloud yet betokened it when the veil was passed.

The veil, signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest (ix. 8), was made the witness of that way opened and rent as a sign of the termination of the whole system of "shadow" (viii. 5 ; x. 1), to which it belonged, and of which, as an excluding veil, it was the great characteristic.

In chap. x. 20, we learn of another veil, "His flesh," "*through*" which we have "a new and living way." This veil, then, is a way of entrance, and "a way which He (Jesus) dedicated for us," by dying for us. His death is the way and His death is the dedication of the way. There is no intermediate way for us between His death and the Holies. He Himself passed in through death—His own death. The high priest in the type went in "*with* blood, not His own" (ix. 25); our High Priest entered "by His own blood," the representation and the witness of His death for us. Prominent amongst the types of "the good things to come," the blood of the Jewish sacrifices availed for an external and temporary cleansing only (ix. 13), but Christ's offering conjoined to an eternal Spirit and therefore infinitely transcended and superseded all others. His priesthood is and could only be in character and keeping with the heavenly sanctuary, and His entrance therein is characterised and distinguished by that which is of infinite value—His own blood. He came in accord with the *heavenly* sanctuary, He entered in accord with His *own* blood; His coming and ministry as High Priest of the good things to come being wholly in connection with these. By His own blood He entered; the blood in a sense gave its own character to the entrance, and thus it became an entrance "once for all" (12). As our priestly representative in the Holies "it is necessary" that He "have somewhat to offer" (viii. 3). He could neither "enter for *us*," nor become *our* high priest, without blood; His death must precede both, and His entrance precede ours. He entered a scene created by the shedding of His blood. By it "the heavenly things themselves" were cleansed (ix. 23), the "true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (viii. 2), was formed and brought

into being—the Holies became a great reality, no more to be seen in type and shadow, but to subsist in unbroken perpetuity in holy and heavenly relations between Christ and His people.

The “things in the heavens” were reproduced in *figure* on earth to express what was before God as His unfulfilled purpose of grace through Christ. The tabernacle forming it was anointed with oil to “hallow it” (Exod. xl. 9), and sanctified by the divine glory dwelling therein (xxix. 43), but it stood amongst a people who were unclean. Atonement therefore, and that by blood, was required for it and for the people in the midst of whom it dwelt. Thus we have the cleansing of holy things in the type, to speak of the cleansing of heavenly things in the antitype, the “greater and more perfect” tabernacle, the heavenly in contrast to the earthly one, made “perfect” by cleansing that needs no repetition, “not *made* with hands,” nor “*of this creation*” (Heb. ix. 11), that is of this visible and material world and the heavens as we see them—the “true tabernacle which the Lord *pitched*, not man.” The materials (so to speak) were there, the “true” or “very image,” is formed, and the “shadow” is dissolved, for both could not co-exist together.

Atonement for the holy places, the altar, and for the people themselves, was effected by the work of the high priest in Israel. Through the power of atonement, a people “clean before the Lord,” and in holy relationship with Him ensued. The place of propitiation, the mercy-seat within the holiest, was as essential to the work of making atonement as the place of sacrifice, the altar without. Apart therefore from the cleansing of the holy places and the altar, atonement for the people was not possible.

In “the heavenly things themselves” we have the contrast to the mere material and earthly things cleansed by “the blood of bulls and goats” (ix. 13-23). They embrace every one and every thing purged by the blood of Christ, and together form a scene of surpassing purity and perfection in which God in Christ will dwell

for ever. The world will ultimately share in this result of the cross (John i. 29).

Primarily, atonement is for God and presented to Him, therefore we see the blood sprinkled first on the mercy-seat to vindicate the holiness of the throne to which it belonged. This became necessary because of the relation in which the throne stood to the people. Typically, the sprinkled mercy-seat or propitiatory, spoke of propitiation effected by blood. The sprinkling of the blood before the mercy-seat in the holy place and within the tent of meeting, was for their cleansing by atonement, and present in type the cleansing of "the heavenly things."

The tent of meeting was God's dwelling in a wider sense than the holy place (Lev. i. 1), to it the priestly family had access, its equipment too furnished other aspects in which God in Christ is revealed in the midst of His people. The altar without, in a wider sense still, was the witness of His grace in Christ in the midst of a ruined world. The horns of the altar were anointed to demonstrate that the whole power of atonement is in the blood, that God in Christ is mighty to save.

There are two standpoints from which we may view the Holies—that of the Jewish saint who saw the type from without, but was excluded from its precincts, and our own. To the former who had learned through the gospel the spiritual signification of the rending of the veil, the exhortation to "draw near" (Heb. x. 22), would appear simple and intelligible, but we, believing the gospel, draw near without distraction, and from within learn that we stand where every barrier between God and ourselves has been removed by the blood of atonement. We are "in the light as He (God) is in the light," but *we* are there in virtue of the blood. Divine Holiness has been vindicated to the utmost in cleansing and perfectly fitting us to be there (x. 14, 22).

The exhortation to draw near is addressed to those who already, in their measure, constituted "the house of God" (x. 21). Its

highest privileges are now theirs. To draw near is to reach the "perfection," or full growth of chap. vi. 1—to advance to the full measure of the light and truth of Christianity in what it makes known of the work that put away sin, cleansed our consciences from the guilt of it perfectly and for ever, and gave us holy liberty before God. In "fulness of faith" we draw nigh unto Him (vii. 19).

The "hope set before us" in the gospel centres in Him who fulfils all "the promises" to Israel, and in whom they are now confirmed to God's glory "by (or through) us" (2 Cor. i. 20). The "hope of Israel" centered in the promise that Christ should come. To those who had been awakened to the consciousness of their guilt concerning His death, and had "fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them," there was this "strong encouragement," that God had bound Himself by "promise" and "oath" to bless them. More than this, such hope following its object entered "within the veil," the holiest, "as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast," connecting them with all that it signified of approach and nearness to God. "Sure" because "as a forerunner" Jesus had entered for them, and His entrance became the pledge of their own; "steadfast" too, in virtue of His changeless priesthood (vi. 19-20). Yet on their part it was no more than entrance in hope, and not that associated with "fulness of faith" (x. 22). To reach this, to enable them to say "*we* have boldness to enter," they needed a fuller unfolding of the truth of Christ's sacrificial and priestly work and power, with corresponding receptiveness in themselves (v. 11).

T. J. L.

IN CHRIST; Or, THE SPIRITUAL RACE,

UNTIL of late years, we doubt whether any satisfactory explanation has been furnished of the oft repeated scriptural expression, "In Christ." There is yet in many quarters, and even amongst well taught believers, a lamentable want of distinct and definite

thought on the two contrasted terms, "In Adam," and "In Christ." What do these terms respectively set forth? What lines of teaching do they convey? There is a natural race, and there is a spiritual race. Adam is the head of the one, Christ is the head of the other. The acts of the respective head of each race in their effects, directly bear upon each member of the race concerned. Thus the sin of Adam constituted his descendants sinners; from him each member of the human family derive that sad inheritance—a fallen, corrupt, sinful nature, and which the new birth neither eradicates nor cleanses, spite of Keswick teaching to the contrary. Again, as condemnation rested upon Adam head of the race, so in like manner it bears upon "all men," on the simple principle that the acts of the head affect the race; the condition of the head determines, and is one shared in by the race at large, and individually as well. God can, of course, come in and righteously deliver by His grace and power from the eternal consequences of the acts of the head of the natural race. This truth is fully opened up in Rom. v. 12-21. In this important introduction to the second part of the epistle, which treats of deliverance from the dominion or power of indwelling sin, the respective races—the natural and the spiritual—and their heads Adam and Christ—are truths specifically taught. Thus, then, to be in Adam is to belong to that race of which he is head. To be in Christ is to be of that race of which He is the head on high.

Now, in the human family or natural race, sex, social, and national distinctions are recognised. The sexes are also taken into account in the church (1 Cor. xiv.); but in the spiritual race none of the foregoing relations exist. It is a new creation (2 Cor. v. 17), a new race, a new order of being in which earth's relations have no part (Gal. iii. 28). To be in Christ is one thing; to be in the Church is another. We as Christians are in both. But in the latter, men and women have their respective places assigned them; whereas, when viewed as in Christ, sex and other distinctions disappear. The two races, or two creations, each with its respective

head, are in almost every respect set in sharp contrast. A part only of those once in Adam now constitute new creation in Christ.

The truth of being *in* Christ is often confused with united *to* Christ. Christ is both head of the body, and head of the race. We are both of the body, and of the race, but in the former we are united to Him, and in the latter said to be in Him. Membership in the body is therefore distinct from membership of the race. Christ is head of both. But we would do well to carefully distinguish these two lines of teaching. As united *to* Christ we are of the body. As *in* Christ we are of the new or spiritual race. The former is much more limited in numbers than the latter. All saints from Pentecost (Acts ii.), till the Rapture (1 Thess. iv.), make up the body in its fulness ; whereas new creation, or the spiritual race comprehend all saints from Abel onwards. Old Testament saints, as also those of other ages, are in Christ, hence the importance of carefully distinguishing terms and truths which differ.

Now, every truth is of practical value, and that of being in Christ has its own special worth. It is only said of those in Christ, and because of it, that they are dead with Christ, and risen with Him. Can we overrate the practical importance of these truths? Of their bearing on the life and happiness of Christians? Being in Christ we share His condition. The act of the head affects the members. Thus as in Him we are dead with Christ, necessarily dead to all He is dead to. Is He dead to sin? So are we (Rom. vi. 6, 8, 10, 11). Is He dead to the law? So are we (Rom. vii. 4). Is He risen? So are we (Col. iii. 1). It really forms the foundation truth of deliverance from the mastery of the old man in each one of us (Rom. vi.), as also deliverance from the law (vii.) *Life* unto God, and *fruit* for God flow from the truth of "In Christ:" see Rom. vi. 11, and vii. 4. Our associations with Him are dependant on the fact that we are *in* Him, save that of the body and kindred truths which involve our union *to* Him.

We as Christians, and as having received the Holy Ghost, are in Christ. It is not the gift of Eternal Life which puts one in Christ, but the gift of the Holy Ghost. We read, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ (*i.e.*, the Holy Ghost), he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9), does not belong to Him. But we, having the Holy Ghost in us, are thus sealed by God as His precious property, and also Christ's or in Him, for these statements are interchangeable: see 1 Thess. iv. 16, "the dead in Christ," with "they that are Christ's," 1 Cor. xv. 23; also Gal. iii. 28, "in Christ Jesus," with "if ye be Christ's," verse 29. Thus "in Christ" and being "Christ's" are reciprocal statements. We trust, therefore, that the vagueness with which the important expression and truth "In Christ," has been generally held, will give place to a firmer and clearer grasp of what God has revealed of it in His Word.

THE PSALMS.

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR SEQUENCE.

The book of Psalms bears in the Hebrew Bible the name of *T'hillim*, or praises.* In the Vatican copy of the Greek Septuagint it is styled *Psalmoi*, whence our English title Psalms; but in the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint it is called *Psalterion*. From this probably comes the other term by which it is known as the *Psalter*.

This book evidently stood, and still stands in the Hebrew Bible at the head of the third great division of the Old Testament Scriptures, and so gave its name to it, as appears from the Lord's words summing up that revelation, under the three heads of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke xxiv. 44). As a book it is

* One Psalm and one only, the last in the book ascribed to David, cxlv. bears the title of *T'hillah* *i.e.*, praise. It ends with the declaration, "My mouth shall speak the praise, *t'hillah*, of the Lord." Fitting that his last known composition in the book should be praise.

The Psalms.

31

unique in character, being made up of compositions by different writers, and ranging over a period of nearly a thousand years ere its contents were all produced, the earliest writer mentioned being Moses, (Ps. xc.), and the latest certainly not anterior to the Babylonish captivity (Ps. cxxxvii.) Faith in times of affliction, conflict and declension, and the outpouring of the heart to God whether in prayer or praise under such circumstances, characterise the compositions. Fitly then may they begin chronologically with Moses, who, as Heb. xi. 24, 25 would teach us, had to choose whether he would take his part with God's people in affliction, or would enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

By whom, guided by the Spirit, the whole collection was arranged, each composition brought into its present place, and whether the work of one servant of God, or of several, is hidden from us. Enough for us it is to know, and own, that the different authors wrote in words taught of the Spirit, as one of them has expressed it (Ps. xlv. 1), his tongue being the pen of a ready writer. And we may add our belief, that the arrangement of the different Psalms, in the order in which they have come down to us, is not of human origin, but is the carrying out of a divine purpose. Hence there is a moral order in the arrangement of this book, as there is in other books of the inspired volume.

Looking into the whole collection we learn that it is divided into five books, viz., i-xli; xlii-lxxii; lxxiii-lxxxix; xc-cvi; cvii-cl. Each of the four first have at their close a doxology, connected with which we meet with the significant word "Amen." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen" (Ps. xli. 13). "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen" (Ps. lxxii. 18,19). "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen" (Ps. lxxxix. 52). "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say Amen Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. cvi. 48).

Then the whole collection terminates with a call on everything that hath breath to praise Jah, the Psalmist striking the key note, "Hallelu—Jah" i.e., praise ye the Lord (cl. 6). What a day that will be! Hallelujah having first resounded throughout the vault of heaven (Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6), that joyful note will be taken up on earth, and everything that hath breath will praise Him.

This book then has a prophetic character, telling us as it does in plain language of that day—the day which shall dawn upon earth, the like of which has never been seen, since man in innocence walked in Eden, and as fallen had the hope given to him and to Eve of the woman's seed, who shall bruise the serpent's head.

Now living as we do in times subsequent to the first outpouring of the Spirit, we can see, that the sacred writers, whoever they were (for the authors' names have in several instances been withheld from us) sang not only, as surely they of course did, to solace their own souls, or the souls of their contemporaries; but they sang for saints in other ages, and for saints still unknown. For the prayer of Moses, and the Psalms and songs of David, of Asaph, and of others will be found to furnish thoughts, and to express in suited language the feelings of the godly remnant of the earthly people in the time of their greatest trial under the beast and the Antichrist, as well as during the inroad of the northern confederacy. Thus, whilst the prophets have described beforehand the events of those days, the Psalms will provide the saints with suited language in which to express themselves to God, language true in a measure as we have said, of the different writers, and true in a deeper aye in the deepest sense in places of Him, who became a man to die, and who died for that nation (John xi. 51), besides dying also for us.

Thus the godly remnant will find comfort in the Psalms, their very circumstances being faithfully delineated, and the real expression of their hearts being prophetically recorded. Comfort too it surely will be for the wise among them, the *Maschilim* of Daniel xii. 3), as they learn, that others have been in circumstances

similar to theirs, and have been delivered ; and also that in distant ages, long ere Rome was founded, the head of which empire will be oppressing them in their day, God was looking onward to that great conflict which will usher in the day of the Lord. Comfort, too, one may add, Christian saints find in the Psalms, however different the Psalmist's circumstances were from those in which these last have found themselves placed by God. For there are experiences, we would remark, common to us and to them as *saints*, as well as those proper to us as *Christians*, a distinction this is of importance to be borne in mind. And the first Epistle of Peter may help us to understand it, as the Apostle writes to encourage any suffering wrongfully (ii. 19), or any suffering for righteousness (iii. 14) (on both which grounds one could suffer as a saint), as well as any suffering as Christians (iv. 16). But what reason is there for the order in which the different Psalms are introduced ? As we have said there must be a moral order, for manifestly they are not arranged chronologically. This is patent since Ps. cxxxvii written after the Babylonish captivity commenced† directly precedes a whole series (cxxxviii-cxlv.) from the pen of the sweet Psalmist of Israel (2 Sam. xxiii. 1). Clear too it is that they were not grouped together, so as to present each Author's compositions apart by themselves. To rationalists the order in the book may seem an inexplicable puzzle, such thinking, and some of them are not afraid to avow the opinion, that the compiler, who ever he was, mistook his vocation, and would have done better had he possessed, and acted in accordance with the critical acumen characteristic of the present day.

Now it is instructive to remember that, as regards the arrangement of the Psalms, there seems never to have been any manner of doubt. The order of the books of the Old Testament revelation differ considerably in the Greek Septuagint from that in

†We have said *commenced*, because it is questioned, whether the Hebrew word in v. 8 should be translated, "Who are to be destroyed" as in A.V. and in R.V. in text ; or as in margin of R.V. "that art laid waste."

which they appear in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Peshito Syriac, which in age comes between the Septuagint and the Vulgate, the order of the books differs at times from that both in the Hebrew and in the Greek Bibles. Again, a good part of the prophet Jeremiah is arranged in the Septuagint in a very different order from that in which it is found in the Hebrew, to which last modern versions made from the original, as well as those made from the Vulgate all conform. No such variations of order however are found in the Psalms in any of the versions mentioned. Each Psalm appears in them in the place in which it is found in the original; only that in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate, Psalms ix. and x. are joined together as well as Psalms cxiv. and cxv., Psalms cxvi. and cxlvii. being respectively divided into two, to make up the number of one hundred and fifty. Of the apocryphal Psalm in the Septuagint, numbered 151, we need here take no account. In the Peshito Syriac the numeration of the inspired compositions agrees with the Hebrew; except that Psalm cxiv. and cxv. are conjoined, and cxlvii. is divided into two. The arrangement then of the Psalter, as far as the most ancient versions are concerned, is unquestioned, hence the reason for it must be sought from a study of the different compositions. It is to this that the reader's attention is now sought to be drawn.

The five books of the Psalms mentioned above are arranged in an historical sequence. Not that by this is meant that all they refer to is fulfilled, very far from it. But the character of the different books marks a progress in a history, which the Spirit of God has by prophecies foretold. And this progress can be traced in those Psalms which form a preface to the different books. Psalms i. and ii. stand as a preface to the *first* book; Psalm i. describing the walk of the saint in Israel, and the respective ends of the ungodly and of the godly, who have been called with an earthly calling, *i.e.*, to whom life on earth has been conditionally offered as their portion. Then Psalm ii. acquaints us with the conflict between the powers on earth and God respecting the establishment out-

wardly of His kingdom, and the need of the acknowledgment by all on earth of His Son as the king in Zion. This conflict, which began at the cross (Acts iv. 25-28), will only be terminated by the return of the Lord out of heaven (Luke xix. 15-27: Rev. xix. 11-16); previous to which, but subsequent to the rapture, the godly remnant of the Jews will experience the persecuting power of their enemies, notably under Antichrist. Hence the *second* book of Psalms opens with xlii. and xliii. as a preface; the former describing the godly one driven out of the city, so deprived of access to God's altar, and crying to Him from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites; and the latter asking Him to send out His light and truth, to bring the exiled one back to His holy hill, and to His tabernacles. The saint driven out of the city, thus looks to be brought back through Jehovah's interposition on his behalf. In the *third* book the troubles are seen to be increasing, and Psalms lxxiii. and lxxiv. give their character. Apostates openly flourish, whilst the saints are in trouble (lxxiii.), and the temple of God has been laid low (lxxiv.) by the northern confederacy, and as we learn elsewhere, its last overthrow, ere rebuilt for God to return to dwell in it, and never again to forsake it (Ezek. xliii. 7). A power opposed not only to God's saints in the land, but to their national existence, is viewed as having entered the city, and laid low the house: compare Dan. viii. 11; ix. 27; Isa. xxix. 4; Zech. xiv. 2. The godly remnant thus brought low indeed, having no refuge now but in Adonai, their resource however as in all previous generations, the *fourth* book opens with a direct address to Him (Psa. xc.), and a prayer for His favourable intervention. This is answered in the series of Psalms xciii.-c., describing the kingdom set up in power. The *fifth*, and last book, commences with Psa. cvii., describing God's ways in power and government with His redeemed, followed by Psa. cviii., in which He is praised for His mercy, and the land it is remembered is His; so his saints will yet fully enjoy it, and sing therein the great Hallel of praise. These two Psalms form a preface to this, the last book.

To seize the full teaching of the different compositions we must remember the prophetic teaching, elsewhere given of the godly remnant of the earthly people in a time yet to come. For, whilst many statements in the Psalms may afford comfort and encouragement to Christians, there is scarcely a Psalm, in which the saint's experience is expressed, that a Christian could intelligently apply throughout to himself. This remark may startle some. Let them put that question to the test. They will find it is sober truth.

Among the authors of the different compositions, David of course figures largely ; but Moses, Asaph, Heman, and Ethan also appear, and it may be Solomon as the writer of Psa. lxxii. and cxxvii. Then as to the circumstances which gave rise to many of the compositions, all so described are attributed to the history of David, Psa. cii. alone excepted. But whether the different headings can be depended upon, that of Psa. xviii. excepted, is a matter on which there is not agreement, though very early they must have been inserted, being found in the Greek Septuagint version. In that version however there are headings to other Psalms which have no authority from the Hebrew text. Then of instruments of music we have mention, both wind and stringed instruments being pressed into the service of God. Psa. iv. tells of the latter, and Psa. v. speaks of the former. And tunes, it would seem, well known in those days, we read of, to which certain Psalms were to be set, such as *Al-taschith*, "destroy not," Psa. lvii., lviii., lix., lxxv. The character also of the different compositions are noticed, as *Psalms*; *Songs* also, as Psa. xxx. ; xlv. ; xlvii., etc., *prayers* as Psa. xvii. ; lxxxvi. ; xc. ; cii. ; cxlii. ; and *praise* as Psa. cxlv. Some too, are distinguished by the Hebrew term *Michtam*, Psa. xvi. ; lvi. ; lvii. ; lviii. ; lix. ; lx., an addition as we see at times to the designation of "a song;" others are described as *Maschil*, see Psa. xxxii. ; xlii. ; xlv. ; xlv., etc. Into all this however it would be foreign to our purpose here to enter. So closing these prefatory remarks, which remind us of the varied character of the compositions, we invite our readers to examine with us the *order* of the Psalms in detail.

C. E. S.

“I ONLY AM LEFT.

It does not bespeak a very good condition of soul when Elijah made his petulant complaint against Israel thus ; “I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts ; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away ” (1 Kings xix. 10).

In the main, Elijah furnishes us with a fine example of faithful testimony for God in an evil day. In the midst of widespread apostasy he stood out boldly for Jehovah, caring little whether he was supported by many or by few. None would question that he had been truly jealous for the honour of Jehovah, and that he had earnestly sought to uphold it in the face of all opposition. But at the time that he made his complaint at Horeb he had become unduly occupied with himself and his testimony, and had come to regard himself as the sole pivot on which everything turned. For the moment *God* had been displaced by *Elijah* in his soul's vision. *Elijah* seemed to be the great indispensable factor, and his life was in danger ; what would become of the testimony then ? To his mind it appeared that all true testimony for God was at an end in Israel, and that Satan had become absolute master of the situation.

How painfully self-assertive are these poor hearts of ours ! The best and truest of the servants of God are not proof against the snare. True it is that He can sustain a lonely man, and make him a power for testimony in a dark scene, as in Abraham's case ; “I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him ” (Isa. li. 2). It is equally true that he can so strengthen the feeble one that he may become as David (Zech. xii. 8) ; but let not the witness regard himself as indispensable, or disaster will immediately result. Communities are as liable to fall into this error as individual witnesses. If a company of saints, few or many, seek diligently to recover for practical use principles of truth that have lapsed,

their zeal and obedience will unquestionably turn to a testimony, and God may be relied upon to be with them for their sustainment and blessing. But let them get occupied with themselves as witnesses, let their testimony to others become more important in their eyes than their own spiritual condition; and God will no longer support them, but give them over to disaster and shame. Has not the truth of this been made painfully apparent to many of us?

Elijah's occupation with himself led him to entertain highly improper feelings towards the erring people of God around him, "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel" etc. (Rom. xi. 2). Intercession *against* Israel! Speaking well of himself and ill of God's people! Is this the true part of God's witness? In speaking thus was he faithfully expressing the feelings of that heart which bears long with His people, and, in spite of all their waywardness and sin, never gives them up? Moses spake very differently; it is most refreshing to listen to his touching intercession to God for Israel after their worship of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. ; xxxiii.) Though he felt strongly the affront to Jehovah, yet in His presence not a single ill word escaped his lips concerning them. On the contrary, he persisted in reminding Jehovah that they were His people notwithstanding their grave sin, and that the honour of His great name was bound up with their blessing. Rather than they should be overthrown he was willing that God should blot him out of the book that He had written.

Let us note this principle well, for it is greatly needed in this day. Self-inflation, occupation with our own faithfulness in testimony, breeds censorious feelings in our hearts toward the people of God around us, and puts us quite out of the place of intercession with God for them. Need we be surprised, also, if our improper airs draw forth from others the sarcastic remark, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (Job xii. 2).

In Elijah's case his complaint had quite different results from what he anticipated. We may pass by at this time the lessons taught him by the wind, the earthquake, the fire, and the still small voice, and dwell a little on the actual words of Jehovah to him. "And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when thou comest anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha, the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay, yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings xix. 15-18). Did He wish the people of God to be chastised for their sin? He Himself should anoint the executors of God's judgment—painful work surely for one who really loved the people. Did he consider himself indispensable as a witness? Then he must go and anoint his successor—Elisha the son of Shaphat. Did he regard himself as the only faithful man left in the land? Then he must learn his mistake in the startling announcement that Jehovah had still 7000 loyal hearts among Israel's tribes.

Serious lessons these, happy for us if we learn them thoroughly. To magnify our own importance in testimony is to be set aside as witnesses altogether, that others may take our place. Has not this happened, to our deep sorrow? Have not some of us been accustomed to hear many saying, "We are in the place of testimony, we are Philadelphia, and nearly all else is Laodicea," with the painful result that when we look around for the special operation of God's Spirit, we observe it not amongst those who speak thus approvingly of themselves, but amongst others possessing far less spiritual light and knowledge of the letter of God's Word. It is the inevitable result of allowing ourselves to displace God in our minds and hearts. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth " (2 Cor. x. 17-18).

What comfort that even in the darkest hour God has this true-hearted 7000! If they do not come out so boldly in public separation from evil as we would desire, it is nevertheless joy to us to know that they sigh and groan over the sins of the times, and seek to keep their affections right towards their Lord and ours. "Thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev. iii. 10).

W. W. FEREDAY.

THE COMING PERSONAL ANTICHRIST.

THE rise of a personal Antichrist in the last dark days of Gentile and Jewish apostasy, was an undoubted article of belief in apostolic and succeeding Christian times. There have been many Antichrists, and Antichristian systems of deadly error, but there is yet a blacker outlook. The Antichrist to come, an apostate of Jewish extraction, shall be the incarnation of Satanic wickedness, and the greatest soul-destroyer which has ever trod the earth; moreover, he shall sum up in himself every form and phase of sin, and head the most awful system of corrupt and damnable evil ever known—a combination of Jewish and Christian religious profession, "natural religion" too, all then in open daring rebellion to God. He assumes Christ's place, titles, and functions on earth. He works miracles. Supernatural signs accredit his mission; by these he deceives guilty Christendom, and thus lures it on to hopeless destruction.

It is during the last phase of the revived power of Rome when distributed into ten kingdoms, that the personal Antichrist arises.

The Coming Personal Antichrist.

41

This final character of Rome was therefore dreaded by the early Christians. In their minds the future revival of the civil power of Rome, and the presence of the Antichrist, were co-eval and connected events. The early Christians were wont to pray for the continuance of the empire in its then imperial form, and even for the rule of the cruellest of the Cæsars, as the one undivided empire was regarded as the last bulwark against the coming sway of the Antichrist. The subject of the Antichrist was a common one to the Fathers of the Church. Some held that he was the devil incarnate; others spoke of him as "the devil's son." The relation of Satan and the Antichrist in the traditional lore of the first four Christian centuries, may be resolved into two distinct thoughts: 1st, that the coming Antichrist (John), or man of sin (Paul) is a real man of earthly Jewish parentage controlled directly by Satan; 2nd, that he is Satan incarnate and thus in his conception simulates the miraculous birth of our blessed Lord. The former notion is undoubtedly the Scriptural one, and it is an interesting fact that Jerome in the West, and Chrysostom in the East, distinctly taught that the Antichrist is a man energised by Satan, and in direct opposition to those who maintained that he was the devil in human form, "henceforth the assumption that the Antichrist is the devil himself practically dies out of ecclesiastical tradition." The early Christians regarded Nero and Claudius, especially the former, as precursors of the Antichrist. The almost super-human wickedness of Nero, marks him out in the page of history as the most apt and fitting historical type of the coming man of sin and blood.

The mass of Protestant expositors apply the term Antichrist to the papal system. But this we conceive is a blunder. The term Antichrist whether employed in the singular or plural, denotes a person or persons, never a system. The Roman Catholic interpreters have written much and learnedly on this theme, and, we are compelled to add, more correctly than many of their Christian opponents. The former look on to the end for the rise of a personal Antichrist, and in this they are right. He is yet to come. Dr. Manning, one of

the most distinguished of Roman Catholics in modern times, holds that the Antichrist, or "the man of sin," is one individual, and not a succession of persons, nor a system. He says, "To deny the personality of Antichrist is therefore to deny the plain testimony of Holy Scripture." The learned Cardinal adds, "He (the Antichrist) may indeed embody a spirit, and represent a system, but is not less, therefore, a person." Bellarmine, second to none as a Roman Catholic writer, tersely sums up papal belief on the subject of the Antichrist, saying, "All Catholics hold that Antichrist will be one individual person." One special person, a man, a Jew, an apostate, is the Antichrist of the prophetic Scriptures.

Some modern expositors regard the Antichrist as the civil head of the Roman empire, but this is not so. He is the false Messiah, the minister of Satan amongst the Jews in Jerusalem, working signs and displaying wonders through direct Satanic power. He sits in the Temple of God then set up in Jerusalem, and claims divine worship. The beast (Rome), the false prophet or the Antichrist, and the dragon (Satan) are deified and worshipped, counterfeiting the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The apostate nation accepts the Antichrist as King. In no sense is he a great political power. True, he influences Christendom, but religiously, not politically. The then governing power of the world—civil and political—is in the hands of a great Gentile chief. It is he whose throne is in Rome who rules politically under Satan. The Antichrist has his seat in Jerusalem; the head of Gentile dominion in Rome. The two men are ministers of Satan, confederates in wickedness; the one a Jew, the other a Gentile. Both are found alive at the coming of the Lord in judgment, and both are consigned alive to the lake of fire—their eternal doom.

The term Antichrist is used only by the writer of the Apocalypse, and by him four times (1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3; 2 John 7), and once in the plural (1 John ii. 18). From these texts we gather several important points. The rise of Antichrists is a definite mark of "the last time;" they are apostates. The Antichrist sets

himself in direct opposition to what is vital in Christianity—the revelation of the Father and the Son—and also to the distinguishing truth of Judaism—Jesus the Christ (1 John ii. 22). The holy person of the Lord is also the object of Satanic attack by devil-inspired Antichrists (2 John 7). Evil of this character is found fully developed in the coming Antichrist in whom every form of religious evil culminates.

Paul in one of his earliest and briefest epistles—2 Thess.—sketches a personage characterised by impiety, lawlessness, and assumption towering far beyond all the world has ever seen, a character clearly identical with the Antichrist of John. They are one and the same person, and on this in all ages, there has been an almost complete consensus of thought.

It is evident that Paul had personally instructed the Thessalonian Christians on the solemn subjects of the coming apostasy or public abandonment of Christianity, and consequent thereon the revelation of the man of sin (verse 5). He now adds to former verbal instruction. There are three descriptive epithets here used of the Antichrist; “the lawless one” (R.V.), “the man of sin,” and “the son of perdition.” The first intimates that he sets himself in direct opposition to all divine and human authority. The second that he is the living and active embodiment of every form and character of evil—sin personified. The third that he is the full-blown development of the power of Satan, and as such perdition is his proper doom and portion. This frightful character takes God’s place on earth, and sits in the temple then set up in Jerusalem, claiming divine worship and honour (verse 4). His religious influence (for he is not a political person of any account) dominates the mass of professing Christians and Jews. They are caught in Satan’s snare. *They* had already given God up, had publicly renounced the Christian faith, and the essential truth of Judaism, now in retributive justice *He* gives them up to the awful delusion of receiving the man of sin, while believing him to be the true Messiah (verse 11). What a lie! The Antichrist received and

believed on instead of the Christ of God ! If verse 9 is compared with Acts ii. 22, a remarkable correspondence is shewn. The very same terms are found in both texts, namely, power, signs, and wonders. By these God would accredit the mission and service of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts ii. 22), and by the same credentials Satan presents the Antichrist to an apostate world (2 Thess. ii. 9). In the latter case, however, lying and deceit significantly characterise the more than human signs of that day (verses 9-10).

The Lord Himself refers to the Antichrist and to his acceptance by the Jews as their Messiah and prophet (John v. 43). In the book of Psalms he is prophetically written of in his character as "the man of the earth" (x. 18), as also "the bloody and deceitful man" (v. 6), while these descriptive epithets are in themselves characteristic of the wicked in general in the coming crisis, yet there is one person, and but one to whom they can in the fullest terms refer. It is the character of the Antichrist, and not his person that is before us in these and other psalms.

Daniel in chapter xi. of his prophecy refers to three kings ; The King of the North (Syria) ; the King of the South (Egypt) ; and the King in Palestine (the Antichrist). The wars, family alliances intrigue so minutely detailed in the first thirty-five verses of this interesting chapter, have had an exact historical fulfilment in the history of the Syrian and Egyptian Kingdoms, formed after the break up of the mighty Grecian Empire. It was this prophecy in its exact and detailed fulfilment which so roused the ire of that bitter pagan and opponent of Divine truth, Porphyry in the third century. His "Treatise against Christians" is the armoury, which, from the seventeenth century has supplied material for attacks upon Christianity. Think of Christian teachers eagerly availing themselves of the help of a pagan in their wicked campaign against the truth !

In verse 36 "*the King*" is abruptly introduced into the history. This king is the Antichrist whose reign in Palestine precedes that of the true Messiah, even as King Saul preceded that of King

The Coming Personal Antichrist.

45

David. The former pointing to the coming Antichrist, and the latter to Christ. This portion of the chapter, (verses 36-45) is yet future, carrying us on to the time of the end (verse 40). The Antichristian king exalts himself and magnifies himself above man and God. The pride of the devil is embodied in this terrible Jewish character. God's place alone will satisfy his ambition. What a contrast to the true Messiah, to Jesus who humbled Himself as none other ever did. He who was God humbled Himself even to the death of the Cross (Phil. ii. 5-8).

That the Antichrist is of Jewish descent seems evident from (verse 37), as also from the consideration that otherwise he could have no claim even with apostate Jews to the throne of Israel. The King or the Antichrist is attacked from the North and South, his land, Palestine lying between the two. He is unable, even with the help of his ally the powerful chief of the West, to ward off the repeated attacks of his Northren and Southern enemies. The former is the more bitter and determined of the two. Palestine is overrun by the conquering forces of the North, but its King escapes the vengeance of the great Northren oppressor, of whom Antiochus Epiphanes of infamous memory is his prototype. The Antichrist is the object of the Lord's Judgment.

In the Apocalypse, chap. xiii., two beasts are seen in vision. The first is the Roman power and its blasphemous head under the direct control of Satan (verses 1-10). The second beast is the personal Antichrist (verses 11-17). The *first* is characterised by brute force. It is the political power of earth in those days. The *second* beast is clearly subordinate to the power of the first (verse 12). It is religious and not political ends he has in view. Religious pretension is supported by the might and strength of apostate Rome, thus the two beasts act together, and both under their chief—Satan.

The second beast, or Antichrist, is identical with "the false prophet," named three times, chaps. xvi. 13 ; xix. 20 ; xx. 10. The respective heads of the rebellion against Christ in His royal and

prophetic rights, are two men directly energised and controlled by Satan—a trinity of evil. “The dragon has given his external power to the first beast (xiii. 8), to the second he gives his spirit, so that having this spirit it speaks as the dragon” (v. 11.).

Finally, Zechariah refers to the Antichrist in terms so explicit that comment is needless (chap. xi. 15-17).

THE FATHER OF HISTORY.

Who is entitled to the appellation, “Father of History?” Moses or Herodotus? That designation only and properly applies to Moses, who, in the book of Genesis wrote the world’s history from its birth—a history then of 2,369 years. Equally distinguished in legislation, he not only records the initial stages of Israel’s wonderful history of 40 years, but in a body of laws—characterised by depth of wisdom, and in a system of separating ordinances, which, when read intelligently, opens a grand future, yet to be written of the Hebrew nation, leaves the Pentateuch a marvel in conception, and in its unity of books, and subjects, and design stamped—if ever book or work was—with the seal of the Living God. It may be remarked that in this respect, the ordinances and feasts of Israel differ from those of any other nation or people. Israel’s ordinances (with one or two slight exceptions), were *anticipative*, and foretold a future history; whereas those of other nations are *commemorative* of past history and events. The high antiquity of the Pentateuch is unquestionable—preceding Herodotus by a thousand years, and Homer and Hesiod, yet more ancient, by six or seven centuries.

The Son of God became the Son of man, that the sons of men might become sons of God.

Christ is the Son of God, and therefore beloved (Matt. iii. 17). We are beloved, and therefore the sons of God (Rom. viii.)

C O M E!

Lord Jesus, Saviour, come !
Thyself our Hope, Thy love our home—
The Spirit and Thy bride say, Come
O heavenly Bridegroom, come !
What bless to be
With Thee, with Thee !
We long, O Lord, Thy face to see!
The Spirit and Thy bride say, Come!
Here weary, fainting, prone to roam,
Dear Lord, we long to be at home—
At home with Thee
In liberty,
To praise and gaze in ecstasy !
To gaze in grace
On His dear face
Who died in love to set us free !
The Spirit and Thy bride say, Come !
We long, we long, we long for home,
God and the Lamb enthroned to see,
In light's bright blaze
In love to raise
The wondrous praise of God and Thee !
Saviour, Saviour, take us home
Beyond this weary scene of gloom,

Beyond the curse, beyond the tomb,
To see Thee, be set free by Thee—
To see Thee, see and worship Thee!

Heaven to amaze

With saint's sweet praise—

Those golden harps' deep melody,
Sweeter than seraph-symphony—
The filial and the bridal song
Bursting from the sainted throng—
Wondrous, wondrous, wondrous praise,
Like clouds of incense, love doth raise!
Come, sweet singer, David—King—
These jarring harps come Thou and string!

Come, sweet Musican, come!

Come, take Thy harpists home,
Where Thou shalt chief Musician be
To wake the choral harmony
'Mid singers Spirit-joined to Thee!

Come! come! come!

Come, Bridegroom—King—

On love's swift wing

Thy Bride before Thy Father bring!

Come, Bridegroom, come!

Come, waft us home—

Robed in Thy resurrection-bloom,

O bear us on Thy bosom home!

F. A.

THE PSALMS.

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR SEQUENCE.

The first book Psalms i-xli.

PSALMS I and II form the introduction to the Psalter. In the former we learn of two moral classes viewed as existing on earth, viz., a saint on the one hand, and wicked men on the other. An individual saint is described in the midst of ungodly men, sinners and scorners—not that he is the only righteous one upon earth, for the Lord, it is said, knoweth the way of the righteous (6) literally, righteous ones. But the saint has to stand his ground individually, it may be, against a crowd of ungodly men, as if he were the only person upon earth governed by God's law. His sure end is described, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (3). He will abide, whilst the wicked, as chaff driven by the wind, will pass away. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (4, 5).

We have here a very different future for saints to that which forms the Christian's hope. He looks to be taken out of this scene, whilst the wicked remain for judgment (2 Thess. i. 7-9). The saint in the Psalms (Ps. xvii. 15 excepted), looks to be preserved alive on earth, having an earthly calling; so whose proper expectation is to be kept from death (Ps. lxxviii. 20; cxvi. 8, 9, 15; cxviii. 17), and to see Jehovah, in the Person of His Son, reign in power at Jerusalem, then made the metropolis of the whole earth (Ps. xcix. 2). For God's counsels about His Son shall certainly be accomplished.

Of this purpose the second Psalm treats, intimating, however, the opposition that would be raised, if possible to prevent it, by ruling powers and peoples on earth. The heathen may rage and peoples, or nations, imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth setting themselves, and the rulers taking counsel together against Jehovah, and against His Anointed, say-

ing, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. ii. 1-3). But all in vain. God's determination, expressed in this Psalm written ages ago, will be fulfilled to the letter. Two questions may here arise. Who is God's King? And when was the opposition to begin to display itself? God's King is His Son, and of His birth the Psalm speaks (7). Nor are we to be in doubt about the Person so designated; for the Apostle Paul in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia taught his hearers, and teaches us, that to the incarnation of Christ that verse of the Psalm refers (Acts xiii. 33). Would any ask—When did the conflict between the powers of earth and Jehovah begin? Acts iv. 25-28, supplies the answer. It began at the Cross. It continues still; and will break out in yet more determined opposition, when Rev. xix. 19 receives its fulfilment. Meanwhile God would entreat opposers to be wise, and submit to the King—kissing the Son in token of submission (Ps. ii. 10-13). But as we shall see further on, the entreaty is to little purpose.

Now it is indisputable, that when this Psalm was written, the King of whom it treats had not appeared. It was *then* prophetic in character. It is in part prophetic still. So placed here at the outset of the Psalter it evidences the prophetic character of the whole collection. And as we proceed to examine this wonderful book, we shall learn later on of God's King reigning at Jerusalem (xcix. 1, 2), and when reaching its close shall find all on earth engaged in praising Jehovah (cl.) Christians are not then those of whom the Psalms even prophetically treat. They have a heavenly calling (Heb. iii 1). The saints in the Psalms have an earthly calling. But, as we have already remarked in the introductory paper, there are experiences common to saints in all ages, and in which Christians as saints have part. So we can often find much comfort for ourselves in this book.

These two Psalms (i.-ii.), form a fitting introduction, the first giving us, as we have said, a *moral* picture, the second as it may be called the *political* one. Both, too, speak of the blessedness of the saint, the first beginning with it, the second ending with it. "Blessed is the man," etc., (i. 1). "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," *z.e.*, the King (ii. 12).

The Psalms.

51

Following on from the character of the saint's walk and his hope, and the picture of insubjection to the Divine will concerning God's Son, we have next set forth (iii.-vii.) various trials to which the godly one may be subjected. All on earth not being subject to God, the godly cannot look for a perfectly smooth path. *First* then he is viewed as *suffering persecution* at the hand of his enemies, who are many, and who regard him as without help or salvation from his God (iii. 2). But to Him he cries as his shield, his glory, and the lifter up of his head (3), and who hears him from His holy hill (4). Hence he has slept in peace, and will not be afraid of myriads of the people that have surrounded him. He cries then in confidence, that what he asks God will grant. "Salvation," he says, "belongeth unto the Lord : Thy blessing is on Thy people " (8). So in Ps. iv., whilst still crying to God, he evidences that he is a saint, for he appeals to men to turn from their ungodly ways, to offer sacrifices of righteousness, and to trust in the Lord, in whom his confidence is unabated (8). And indeed how could he doubt, when he remembered the character of his God (Ps. v). "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness ; neither shall evil dwell with Thee. The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight : Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing : the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man " (4-6). Thinking of God's character the issue, he knows, is not uncertain. "Thou wilt," he adds, "bless the righteous ; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield " (12). Interesting it is to learn how confidence can be engendered.

Another trial he experiences, viz., *chastening at the hand of Jehovah through sickness* (vi). To Him then he turns (2-7) ; and, assured that the Lord has heard his prayer, bids the workers of iniquity to depart from him, those perhaps watching for his death, the proof, as they would declare, of his hypocrisy in life. By Christians, such a trial as sickness, though it may be from the Lord in government (1 Cor. xi. 30 ; James v. 14, 15) ; and perhaps with death as a certainty in prospect, even if an act of special government (1 John v. 16), must be viewed in a different light

from that in which a saint in the Psalms will regard it. We go through death to be with Christ, called with an heavenly calling. One calling himself a saint in the future, if apparently dying from Jehovah's hand on his body, *might* evidence that he had been practising hypocrisy. Death, unless for martyrs, we have reason to think no saint on earth after the rapture will experience (Rev. vi. 9-11 ; xv. 2 ; xx. 4). We may understand then, that it is a special trial for those called with an earthly calling to be chastened in body by Him who they really serve. And how jubilant the ungodly may be, pointing the finger at the one as he lies sick, somewhat like Job's friends, and worse perhaps even than Zophar, who made the suffering patriarch sit for the portrait of the wicked man, the hypocrite (Job xx.) Did not Wyckcliffe experience that ? Nor has it been confined to his day.

A *third* trial is that of *slander* (vii. 3-5). Accused wrongfully he turns to God, the resource for His people at all times. Had he acted injuriously to others he might well deserve punishment (5). But clear from all charge that the enemy would bring against him, he cries, " Arise O Jehovah in Thine anger ; lift up Thyself, because of the rage of mine enemies ; and awake for me to the judgment that Thou has commanded. So shall the congregation of the peoples compass Thee about ; for their sakes, therefore, return Thou on high, *i.e.*, take again Thy place on Thy heavenly throne.* Jehovah shall judge the people, judge me O Jehovah according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. (What Christian could ask this ?) Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end ; but establish the just : for the righteous God trieth the hearts and the reins. My defence is of God which saveth the upright in heart " (6-10). Such was his cry, and such his confidence. So whatever the trial the resource of the saint in each case is in God, to Whom

* " The Psalmist, so to speak, arranges the judgment scene ; the assembly of the nations is to form a circle round about Jahve in the midst of which He will sit in judgment, and after the judgment He is to soar away (Gen. xvii. 22) aloft over it, and return to the heights of heaven like a victor after the battle. Ps. lxxviii. 18." *Delitzsch*.

he speaks, and Who is not, and will not be indifferent to the sorrows and trials of His people. What a comfort to be able to speak to God !

God having been called on to judge for His saints, and to judge the peoples, *i.e.*, the nations (vii. 6.-9), will He remain indifferent to such an appeal? No. He hears the cry of His people, and will help them. "Shall not God avenge His own elect?" (Luke xviii. 7). How this will be accomplished is next set forth in Ps. viii.-x. And first we read of the One to whom this work will be committed (viii). It is the Son of Man, under Whom, we learn, all things will be put, even the second Man the last Adam, of whom Adam as head of a race was a type. Who He is Heb. ii. 6-9 makes plain, and interprets for us the statements in our Psalm about Him (4-6), telling, as it does, that this divine word, penned by David, yet awaits its fulfilment; whilst 1. Cor. xv. 27, teaches what interpretation we are to put on the words, "Thou hast put all things under His feet." Connected with this we learn next (ix), that the Lord will take up the cause of His persecuted, and, humanly speaking, helpless people, and that He will judge the wicked man; so that the man of the earth, mortal as he is, may no more oppress (x. 18). This necessarily leads on in thought to the millennium. No wonder then that in view of this happy consummation for the saints, the Psalmist could say, "I will praise Thee O Jehovah with my whole heart; I will shew forth all Thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee; I will sing praise to Thy name, O Thou Most High" (ix. 1. 2). Here for the first time in the Psalter have we the name *Most High* applied to God, His special title in the millennium, as Psalm lxxxiii. 18. states, "That men may know that Thou whose name alone is Jehovah art the Most High over all the earth." The Gentiles rebuked (5), the wicked man destroyed, the habitable world judged in righteousness, and peoples in uprightness, such statements show us that the events contemplated have a world-wide importance, the effects described reaching beyond the limits, and the national interests only of the people of Israel.

In Ps. ix. the nations are mentioned (5). In the following, the

wicked man's ways are described, persecuting the poor, boasting of his heart's desire, blessing the covetous, and lying in wait for his victims. God is not in all his thoughts. Hence comes a prayer for his destruction (x. 12-15), and the Psalmist here closes with the announcement that Jehovah is King for ever, and ever, the heathen (or nations) have perished out of His land. "Thou hast heard O Jehovah," he adds, "the desire of the humble ; Thou wilt prepare (or rather, establish) their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear ; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress" (x. 16 18). Thus the godly are carried on in thought to the establishment on earth of the Kingdom in power ; for nothing short of this is God's design, and nothing less will meet the need of His tried, persecuted, and earthly people. And we should observe that this happy consummation will be brought about by One who is a man, and could die, and who will demonstrate to all, that the wicked one of Ps. x., who in the pride of his heart banishes God from his thoughts, and puffeth at his enemies, is only a man of the earth, who must succumb to the power of the Son of Man, who, though He has died, will return as man to reign.

Following on we read next of *exercises* of heart through which the godly pass, before the deliverance just described is effected. And *first* we have the answer of faith to the taunt of the unbelieving, "In Jehovah put I my trust : how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain ?" (xi. 1). *Next* the cry of faith to God (xii.) for help, "For the godly man ceaseth ; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Are we not here reminded of the Lord's words for a time that is coming, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth ?" (Luke xviii. 8). We say a time that is coming, for whilst the Holy Ghost is here, and the Church is here, such a state of things could not be. The cry becomes more urgent in Psalm xiii.; and is followed by xiv., which shows both the effect on the ungodly Jews of God's presence amongst His people (5), and also that the deliverance of the saints is contemplated as bound up with the restoration of the nation from captivity (7), an event this is which

The Psalms.

55

is still future (Ezek. xx. 34-38). After this we have in Ps. xv. the description morally of the one who shall abide in Jehovah's tabernacle, and dwell in His holy hill. For as xiv. recognises the existence of the two classes amongst God's professing earthly people, the righteous and the fool, the godly remnant of the future are here seen (xv.) distinct from the rest of the nation. Great indeed are their trials, as Ps. iii. vi. vii. have described them. Deep too are the exercises of heart (xi.-xiii.), and most earnest the cry to God as deliverance seems delayed—"Consider and hear me, O Jehovah my God ; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death ; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him ; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved" (xiii. 3, 4).

Has any one ever been in like trials? One we have to answer has, who is called elsewhere, the Author (or Captain), and Perfecter of the faith (Heb. xii. 2). He has trodden the whole path perfectly, and has been raised from the dead, and is beyond all suffering and trial—so saints can hope for deliverance in their turn. This One is now introduced to the attention of those suffering ones, to encourage them, and indeed all saints on their road. So we have a series of Psalms about the Lord Jesus Christ, commencing with Ps. xvi. and ending with Ps. xxiv. ; but divided into two distinct parts by the interposition of Ps. xix. For Ps. xvi.-xviii. treat of His walk as a man, and of His final victory over His enemies ; whilst Ps. xx.-xxii. have for their theme the troubles He experienced as man, and the sorrows He alone endured on the Cross, when bearing for sinners divine judgment. One sees here plainly, that it must be a moral and not a chronological order in which the Psalms are arranged, else those which speak of His life of humiliation and of His death on the Cross, must have preceded in the book any which tell of His power and triumph. But it is not so.

In Ps. xvi. He is presented as walking on earth, and that for God. The company in which He delights, and His confidence in God to be preserved, though with death before Him, all this we learn about, as it were, from His own lips. The sorrows too of those who turn to another God, and His complete separation

from all such, with Jehovah as the portion of His inheritance, and of His cup, and the maintainer of His lot; all this does He declare. Dependence and obedience characterise Him, and of His resurrection by the power of Jehovah, whom He has always set before Himself, He speaks with confidence. Death then could not rob Him of His portion, for the path of life for Him lay through it (11). Hence though saints may die, resurrection from the dead they can share in, as He has who is risen the first begotten of the dead.

In the xvith Psalm the Lord appears alone. Both Peter (Acts ii. 25-28), and Paul (Acts xiii. 35), attest its special application to Him. From the xviith Psalm, though not applying exclusively to Him, we learn what it was that guided Him as the Obedient One in His walk: "Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (xvii. 4). He judged all by the unerring standard of the Word. How fully the history of the Temptation in the Wilderness illustrates this! But, as remarked, others are also in this Psalm in view; "They have now compassed us in our steps," we read (11). So the safe and only guide for saints is declared (4). And resurrection is assured such if they die, as the contrast is drawn between the wicked and the righteous in the closing verses. "Arise, O Jehovah, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Thy sword: from men which are Thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure; they are full of (or satisfied with) children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness" (13-15). Neither class is here viewed as necessarily always abiding on earth. The wicked will pass away, their portion of good things left behind them. They have been *satisfied*, or filled full of children, passing away, however, ere their descendants emerge from a state of infancy. The saint will be satisfied only as he awakes with Jehovah's likeness. His portion is in front. Let the reader mark the contrast

between that which satisfies the wicked now, and that which satisfies the saint in the future. These two Psalms then tell us of the walk here of the Messiah, of His death, too, and resurrection, and where the walk of faithfulness to God surely ends. Further, they can furnish principles for the saint's walk as exhibited in the life of the Lord. "Learn of Me," He said (Matt. xi. 29). Psalm xvii. may in measure illustrate it. And of 1 Cor. xv. 49; Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2 the reader may be reminded.

But God's purposes on earth are bound up with the presence here, and the fortunes of the King as victorious over all His enemies. Of this we next read in Psalm xviii. Of God's King we have heard in Ps. ii., with God's unchanging purpose about Him there declared. Here He is presented as finally victorious in a Psalm composed by David, "When delivered from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." Often had David been in danger of death, but deliverance out of all his troubles he lived to prove. Yet his history and personal salvation is not all that the Psalm celebrates, for it speaks really of One greater than him, as it looks on to millennial times (44, 45), and to the triumph of the King displayed in its completeness, but only after His resurrection has taken place (xvi. 10). In David's case it was deliverance on earth before death. In the Lord's case He will appear triumphant as the risen One. There seems a propriety then in introducing the resurrection (xvi.) before His final triumph over all earthly foes in xviii.; for it is God's deliverance of His anointed. And v. 43-45 were clearly not exhausted in the history of David. Could we say that in his case they were fulfilled? A coming day will witness that not one word of this has fallen to the ground.

What God was to David set forth (xviii.)*, we next learn in

* In varied language does the royal Psalmist describe it. God was his Rock (2) literally a cleft in a rock, or a cleft rock. He was also his fortress or watch tower; his strength, too, like a hard mass of rock; his buckler, or shield; and his high tower, or steep height. "All these epithets applied to God are the fruit of the afflictions out of which David's song has sprung, viz., his persecution by Saul, when in a country abounding in rugged rocks, and deficient in forest, he betook himself to the rocks for safety, and the mountains served him as his fortresses." *Delitzsch.*

xix. how others may learn about Him. He is Jehovah, the self-existing One, Who has given a double testimony of Himself, first by *creation* (xix. 1-6) and then by *revelation* (7-14), the practical importance of this last for saints v. 11 states. "By them, *i.e.*, Jehovah's judgments, is Thy servant warned ; and in keeping of them there is great reward." Others then can learn about God, whose mind for His creatures and saints is to be gathered from divine revelation. And those thus taught will be found to take an interest in Him, Who, before He ascends the throne had to enter into a depth of trouble, known only in its fulness to Himself (xx.-xxii.)

To this we are next directed. In xx. the godly ones state to the King their desires for Him to be heard in the day of trouble, and how they will rejoice in His salvation (1-5), followed by the expression of confidence as to His deliverance, and of theirs also (6-8). "Save Lord, *i.e.*, Jehovah," is their cry. "Let the King hear us when we call" (9). In xxi. they address Jehovah who has heard the prayer of His anointed One, recounting what He has given to Him, and setting forth what the King will do with His enemies, since Jehovah has espoused His cause.

Then in xxii. we have the thoughts and feelings of that same Anointed One when making atonement on the Cross ; as well as the wide reaching results, as far as earth is concerned, consequent on His substitutionary sacrifice. The grace which could allow others to express their interest in the King, and their joy at His deliverance, we can understand. But what shall we say of the favour, which allows *us* to know by the spirit of prophecy the Lord's feelings, as expressed to God, when He hung on the Cross, and was there made sin for us? What a subject then it is of which Psalm xxii. treats—the innermost feelings and thoughts of the Lord Jesus, when on the Cross, expressed by Himself (and who else could have expressed them?) and that in human language as far as it could interpret them.

He suffered from God, and He suffered from man. What He suffered from God in making atonement is expressed in the Psalm, and also in the Gospels, but in a way which shews that

no words could really describe it, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The heart can only bow in worship, as the believer learns, *first* that there was a depth of sorrow into which He entered beyond words to express, or even for the human mind to understand; and *secondly* that none but He, who there died, could have made atonement for our sins. But what He felt as to men, in their sayings and doings about Him, when on the Cross, the gospel history passes over. So this Psalm alone can teach us about *that*. But the Psalm does not end there. And how fitting is it, that He who there suffered, should have the joy of setting forth the wide reaching results for God's glory and the blessing to souls of His atoning sacrifice, commencing with the day of His resurrection, and looking on to that of His manifested power and glory (22-31). And further, we may see, that nothing but grace flowing out consequent on His death is therein contemplated. Other Psalms speak of judgment on the opposers and wicked ones. This only speaks of grace the result of His sacrifice. Ps. xvi. views His path through life up to His resurrection. Ps. xxii. begins with His death on the Cross, and ends with the kingdom set up in power. But, as the purport of these papers is to endeavour to trace out the *moral* order in which the Psalms are presented to us, we must hasten on, and not dwell at length on this solemn but deeply instructive composition.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Hence saints of God though born in sin can count on Jehovah's Shepherd care, and look for preservation from death to enjoy life in millennial blessedness on earth (xxiii. 6); for the One who has made atonement on the Cross will return here to reign (xxiv.) Thus these two Psalms come in. The former is the language of assurance for the sheep, arising from the knowledge that they have of Jehovah as their Shepherd. And it is what He is to them, and what He will do for them, that is declared, and all for His name's sake, with the certainty as earthly saints of immunity from death, for they shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. One knows the common application of verse 4 of this Psalm by Christians. But whilst one can apply the passage *figuratively* to the passing through

death, we believe that the remnant of Israel will find its *literal* application just suited to them, the word here translated *shadow of death* expressing darkness, or dangers which may threaten death, but *not* temporal death actually. In the same sense we find it elsewhere in the book of Psalms xlv. 19 ; cvii. 10 - 14 ; so also Isai. ix. 2 ; Jer. ii. 6. We think it will be clear, that temporal death is not contemplated in xxiii. 4, since the saint goes on to speak of a table spread before him by Jehovah in the presence of his enemies, and then to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Earth, not heaven, he contemplates as his portion.

Now this, we think, is supported by Ps. xxiv., which clearly looks for millennial blessing on earth, and not for a heavenly portion above. It answers the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or, who shall stand in His holy place?" (xxiv. 3), when He returns to reign. For of the Lord's return to reign, and not of His ascension, does this Psalm really treat. Those practically righteous, whoever they may be, shall ascend thither. For the language of this Psalm, let the reader remark, describing the character of such saints, may well include those from among Gentiles as well as those from among Jews in the coming day; whereas the wording of Ps. xv. seems to point to those rather who have kept the law.

This, viz., the opening a door for the introduction of Gentiles into millennial blessing, is quite in keeping with the order of these subjects observed elsewhere. In Isaiah xlv. 20-24, the Prophet having previously predicted blessing for Israel, the Lord turns to address all the ends of the earth, and offers to them salvation, Gentiles coming in on the tail of the skirt of the Jew. So in Rev. vii. the godly remnant of the twelve tribes are sealed, before they enter into the tribulation; but the saved Gentiles are only seen after they have come out of it. It seems fitting therefore that, since godly Gentiles will stand before the throne and before the Lamb on earth (Rev. vii. 9), this series of Psalms (xvi.-xxiv.), connected especially with the history of the Lord, and this last one (xxiv.) with His return to Zion (7-10), should not close without a word which admits them to share in the blessings of the day of His glory.

The Psalms.

61

The Lord's return thus predicted, we know how this carries on the intelligent student of the Word in thought to a future day, when there will be seen, what cannot now exist, a godly remnant of His earthly people awaiting Jehovah's intervention on their behalf. Of different *trials* to which they will be exposed, we have already read (iii-vii.) And of their *exercises* of heart in consequence we have also learnt (xi.-xv.) Now we are to be introduced more particularly to their *moral* and *spiritual* condition. This, since the atoning death of the Lord has been viewed as accomplished, can be entered upon. But ere doing that, the Lord's own pathway as a man has been brought before us. Their circumstances and His, they may find are somewhat similar; but He was holy, harmless, undefiled. It seems fitting then, that His pathway, so instructive for saints, should be described, ere their moral and spiritual condition should be entered upon, as follows in Ps. xxv.*-xxvi.

In the former Psalm the saint turns to Jehovah his God for forgiveness and deliverance (11-20). His sins, the sins of his youth and his transgressions are frankly admitted, and Jehovah is entreated, "Remember O Lord Thy tender mercies, and Thy loving-kindnesses, for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness sake O Lord" (6-7). Three times over does he utter the word *remember*—"Remember Thy tender mercies, and Thy loving kindnesses." But this carries him back in thought to the past. So necessarily he cries, "Remember not my sins, nor my transgressions," adding, what would sound strange, if the character of Jehovah was unknown, "according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness sake O Lord." He is cast, and casts himself wholly on the goodness and kindness of the One against whom he has sinned, and whose ways with sinners, when they are meek, he describes (9, 10).

* This is one of the alphabetical Psalms; the verses begin with different letters of the alphabet, but in alphabetical order. Nine are thus characterised, ix.; x.; xxv.; xxxiv.; xxxvii.; cxi.; cxii.; cxix.; cxlv. Few of them are perfect.

A sinner then though he is, his transgressions too, of former days acknowledged, he is one who fears Jehovah (12), so can cry to Him for deliverance, a deliverance which he awaits (15), counting on integrity and uprightness to preserve him. In this the godly remnant, of whom he is a party, will also share. So he prays, "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles."

A work of God has gone on in his soul. We have before us evidently one born of God, but who is under law, and rightly so, speaking as he can of his integrity and uprightness, as Zacharias and Elisabeth in Luke i. could have done. So in xxvi. he asks Jehovah to judge him, for he has walked in his integrity, and goes on to enumerate what his ways and desires have been. Now a Christian, it is plain, if he understands the truth, will not plead on such ground with God. We are evidently here on Jewish ground, and Levit. xxvi. 40, as well as Deut. xxx. 2 afford a clue to this state of soul in the future. In the former passage we have confession of sins looked for as in Ps. xxv. In the latter, obedience after failure is contemplated as in Ps. xxvi.

But as yet the foundations of the earth are out of course. The Lord's return in power can alone remedy that ; so after all that we have read of the saints' past ways in xxv., confidence in Jehovah is still unabated. His presence to be enjoyed is the desire of the godly one's heart, viz., to dwell in Jehovah's house; to enquire in His temple, and to be hidden in His tabernacle (xxvii. 4, 5). However numerous his foes, he cries to God, who is his light and his salvation, believing he will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. So in xxviii. he looks to God, who is his strength and shield, that he should not be confounded with the wicked in the day of judgment (3, 4). And as we have already seen the Psalmist expects Israel's deliverance as well as his own (xxv. 21, 22), so here he adds (xxviii. 8), "The Lord is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His anointed."

Having spoken of Jehovah as the strength of His people it will not be out of course to be introduced to the subject of Ps. xxix., in which the children of the mighty are exhorted to ascribe unto Him glory and strength, whose power as Creator is

The Psalms.

63

displayed by His voice when He speaks, and whose glory is the theme of all who are in His temple. But more, "Jehovah sitteth upon the flood ; yea, Jehovah sitteth King for ever." He, too, will give strength unto His people : He will bless His people with peace. How David learnt this experimentally, and was therefore competent to speak of it, another Psalm (xxx.) tells us, describing exercises which God passed him through. In prosperity and confident of its endurance, he learnt by the hiding of God's face from him of his real dependence. God's face hidden, immediately was he troubled. Then, crying to God with death in prospect, he proved Jehovah's deliverance. His mourning was turned into dancing. God put off from His servant his sackcloth, and girded him with gladness. What David then proved, others may prove likewise. So he writes, " Sing unto Jehovah O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. For His anger endureth but a moment : in His favour is life ; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning " (4, 5).

Open persecution, God's hand in government on the person of His servant, secret plottings, and slanderous accusations, these, as we have already pointed out, are the great causes of trial to the saint. Of this third source of trouble the Psalmist now again speaks (xxxi.), crying to God for deliverance in His righteousness. In xxvi. he pleads his own integrity. Here he pleads Jehovah's righteousness, as a ground for deliverance, and that speedily. " Be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me "—a rock to stand on, an house to take shelter in. Urgent indeed was his need. " Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me ; for Thou art my strength." Actually, as it were, in the net before he saw it, he could not extricate himself. God alone could rescue him. So he commits himself to Him in words made familiar to us by the Gospel (Luke xxiii. 46), as the resource of the godly in their extremity. Reproach, slander, lying lips, all this he experienced. Were such trials confined to David ? No. Into that of which v. 13 speaks Jeremiah entered, and quotes the words of this Psalm confident of the power and the presence of Jehovah with him (Jer. xx. 10, 11). Others then

may experience similar treatment, and subsequent deliverance also at the hands of God. Of this the Psalmist writes (19, 20):

What a resource is Jehovah when all may be against the saint (11-13), and his feet actually caught in the net! What a resource for His people, even though they have sinned (10), and have to suffer for it! For, as xxxii. teaches us, God can forgive the sinner, and does so, when he has confessed his transgressions unto the Lord. How David learnt this, he here puts on record, and exhorts therefore all the righteous to rejoice and be glad in the Lord, and all the upright in heart to shout for joy. Thereupon we have next an inspired composition xxxiii., written we know not by whom, which, taking up the closing verse of the previous Psalm, exhorts the righteous to rejoice in Jehovah, "praise," it declares, "being comely for the upright." And who is Jehovah? He is the Creator (6-9) whose counsel shall stand (10, 11), and the observer of men (13-14), and deliverer of His people (18-20), loving righteousness and judgment, and of whose goodness, or loving kindness, the earth is full (5). For Him then the saints are to wait, who is their help and their shield (20). Nor shall they wait in vain, for David in xxxiv. has made known how he sought the Lord, and He heard him, and delivered him from all his fears (4). What He has been to him, He will be to others (7-10), so even children, the royal singer would teach to fear Jehovah, whose ways with the righteous and with the wicked are plainly stated (15-22). Hence Jehovah is asked to plead the cause of the saint against the ungodly xxxv., the former being seen to be a child of God, a partaker of the divine nature, by the spirit which actuated him when his enemies were suffering from sickness (13, 14). "False witnesses," he states, "did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul." Such had been their treatment of him—"But as for me," he writes, "when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother, I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother." How

The Psalms.

65

on the other hand did they act towards him? He tells us, "In mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; yea the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not; with hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth." What could such wickedness deserve? And since full deliverance for Israel cannot be effected without the destruction of their enemies, prayer for that is perfectly right. They will reap that which they have sown. Now hiding their net for the saint in a pit, and that without cause (7) they manifest really their hatred of all which is of God. So the next Psalm xxxvi. appropriately contrasts what the wicked man is and does (1-4) with that which Jehovah is, and does (5-9). What a contrast it is! The former constantly plotting evil, the restlessness of the unregenerate heart (Isai. lvii. 20) thus manifesting itself; and transgression, iniquity, and deceit characterising the man who makes self his centre, and who works for the carrying out of his own desires. But if man is active, so also is Jehovah. Loving kindness, or mercy, faithfulness, and righteousness characterise His ways who preserves man and beast, and will abundantly satisfy the children of men with the fatness of His house, and will make them drink of the river of His pleasures. So the Psalm closes with a prayer to Jehovah. "O continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee, and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me." After this prayer comes the following expression of confidence as to the issue. "There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise" (10-12). God's interposition then will certainly take place. But He bears long with the wicked, so must the saint.

Accordingly we have in Ps. xxxvii. an exhortation to the godly to be patient, and to be waiting for the Lord. A beautiful Psalm this is. God knows where the saint is in danger of breaking down, ere the dawn of the day of deliverance appears. So He encourages Him to be quiet and to wait. "Fret not thyself

because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb." Meanwhile the godly one is to trust in the Lord, and to do good, to delight himself also in the Lord, to commit His way unto Him, to rest in Him, to wait patiently for Him. And, as if to emphasize the injunction to be patient under evil, three times in the first eight verses do we meet with the words, "Fret not thyself," viz., "Fret not thyself because of evil doers" (v. 1). "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way" (7). "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil" (8). In judging of men and things how apt are we to make mistakes. To "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him," what wisdom is there in that! "For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not His saints. They are preserved for ever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off" (28).

Now whilst waiting for this, the history of the past, we are taught, may encourage real saints, and instruct too all as to the future. The Psalmist can speak of the way of the wicked, and that of the righteous (9-24) recalling to mind what he has learnt from observation of the divine procedure in government with the righteous (25, 26) and with the wicked (35, 36). He had never, he here declares, seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread (25). On the other hand he had seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and he was not, he sought him, but he could not be found (35, 36). These statements of what he had *not* seen, and of what he *had* seen, were to encourage the fainthearted. The vanity of worldliness, and of earthly wealth and power, the Psalmist was impressed with. "He passed away, and he was not." "I sought him," he adds, "and he could not be found"—his place knew him no more. So the Psalm closes with a statement as to the end of the righteous and the end of the wicked. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, He is their strength

The Psalms.

67

in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him" (37-40). Such will be the sure end for the earthly saint. With the heavenly saint it is different. He may have to succumb outwardly to the power of the enemy, even to the surrendering of life here for the truth of God; yet he overcomes really, and by and by, when God judges the great whore, He will avenge the blood of His servants at her hand (Rev. xix. 2). Meanwhile the need of assurance in the last verse of our Psalm is exemplified in that one which follows.

For in xxxviii. and xxxix. we see the saint suffering in sickness. In the former he tells out to God what he feels in his sickness, and what his trials are caused by the desertion of friends, and by the mischievous speeches of his enemies. Before these last he is as a deaf man that hears not, and as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. though confessing his sins to God, and hoping in Him. The reproaches, and the gibes of men are hard to bear. And, when the one thus taunted is suffering under God's hand as well, the trial will be especially heavy, insupportable indeed, could not such an one unbosom himself to God. This he does, saying, "In Thee O Lord do I hope: Thou wilt hear O Lord my God, For I said, Lest they should rejoice over me; when my foot slippeth they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin" (15-17). Thus bowing under God's hand, and owning his iniquity, he closes with an earnest supplication, "Forsake me not O Jehovah: O my God be not far from me. Make haste to help me O Lord my salvation." In xxxix. feeling acutely the trial of God's hand being upon him, dumb though he had been before his enemies (1, 2), he could not keep silence before God. His heart was hot within him, while he mused the fire burned, so he speaks to Jehovah. The vanity of things here he confesses. Desirous to know his end, he hopes in the Lord, and asks for deliverance from all his transgressions, and that he should not become the reproach of the foolish. Then he closes with the prayer "O spare me," or rather, "Look away

from me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more." What a comfort that we can turn to Him who chastens us, and fully unburden our heart before Him ! .

The fleeting character of man's existence comes home to one when suffering in body from the pressure of God's hand. Fully did the Psalmist realise it, when he said, "Jehovah make me to know mine end and the measure of my days what it is ; that I may know how frail I am. Behold Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ; and mine age is as nothing before Thee : Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity " (xxxix. 4, 5). The sinner can rightly look for nothing but death. He has forfeited all claim to continue in life on earth ; and, as far as he is concerned, he can give no answer why death should not seize upon him. The saint can look beyond it though owning God's hand upon him in government because of his transgression. The full explanation of this must be sought for elsewhere. One has died, the just for the unjust, to make atonement for those who should believe on Him. Further he is risen from the dead. So saints will either share in resurrection from the dead, or be preserved alive on earth to enjoy millennial blessing under the sway of the Lord Jesus Christ. In one or other of these two conditions every saint must have part, both the fruit of the Lord's atoning death. So this first book of Psalms concludes with Ps. xl. and xli, the former telling of resurrection from the dead, exemplified in the personal history of the Lord ; the latter speaking of preservation in life on earth. For Christians it will either be to die and to rise from the dead, or to be caught up alive to meet the Lord in the air. For God's earthly saints, *i.e.*, those who had, or shall have, an earthly calling, it will be either resurrection from the dead, or to be kept alive upon earth. Hence, as God's earthly saints are before us in the Psalms, the latter alternative is likewise set forth.

In Ps. xl. we have the Lord Jesus especially before us in His life of public testimony for God ; in His sacrificial death, and in His resurrection too, as brought up out of an horrible pit and out of the miry clay ; having first waited patiently for Jehovah, till He

inclined unto Him, and heard His cry. He waited patiently, but did not wait in vain. His people may have to wait, but it cannot be in vain ; for He has been heard, and delivered ; so they will, for by His death he has made atonement for their sins. One sees the importance of a Psalm in this place in the book, which introduces so distinctly the thought of the atonement, since on that ground alone could any one of Adam's fallen race look for resurrection *from* the dead, or preservation in life, *i.e.*, life for evermore. But since He who has borne our sins is risen, saints who die will certainly be raised.

On the other hand, as we have said, there will be those whom Jehovah will preserve and keep alive. And they shall be blessed upon earth. Such cry to Him in xl. 13-17, and will be heard, those being ashamed and confounded together that seek the saint's soul, or life, to destroy it (14). Now of the preservation of such saints Ps. xli. treats, however much they may have been exposed in the past to the three kinds of trial noticed in the earlier part of this paper. Are they called to endure persecution (2), or sickness at the hand of God (3, 4), or to be tried by the tongue of slander (5), or to be betrayed by a familiar friend (9)? Whatever the trial may be, out of all will Jehovah deliver the one who shall consider the poor (1), for here we are on the ground of keeping the law, so he will be upheld in his integrity, and be set by Jehovah before His face for ever. Fittingly then a doxology follows, with which this book closes as we have already seen. What more can the saint on earth enjoy than being before Jehovah's face for ever? With that surely is connected all earthly blessing. And how fully will they be able to say from the heart, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen and Amen.”

C. E. S.

“THE WIND BLOWETH WHERE IT LISTETH.”

Nothing is more observable in the book of the Acts than the sovereign action of the Spirit of God. In a general way, that book is the record of His testimony through the apostles Peter

and Paul, the apostles respectively of the circumcision and the uncircumcision. But the Spirit's action is always free; thus we find Him not acting according to one defined rule, but occasionally raising up special witnesses in a very remarkable manner.

Foremost amongst these was Stephen. In his day, Peter and John were being prominently used of the Spirit in Jerusalem. They (especially Peter) had borne a bold and faithful testimony there, and had suffered not a little in consequence. We have no reason to believe that the Spirit was unable to use them for a season because of any declension in their souls; nevertheless, the fact remains that Stephen was suddenly called to the front to bear a very striking testimony to the Jewish nation. This is the more remarkable because Stephen had but lately been appointed to "serve tables." He was one of the seven set apart by the choice of the saints, and by the laying on of the apostles' hands to look after the temporal affairs of the assembly. His appointment did not extend to preaching; indeed no one in scriptural times was ever appointed to preach the Word of God. But Stephen proved in himself the truth of the word in 1 Tim. iii. 13: "They that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus"; hence we find him very soon brought into the forefront of the testimony. Truly, "the wind bloweth where it listeth" (John iii. 8). All the apostles were apparently in Jerusalem at the time, and in all probability filled with the Spirit, and so in a condition to be divinely used, yet the Spirit took a Hellenist from his diaconal work, and set him to render to Israel one of the most solemn testimonies ever rendered to that nation. In the presence of the Sanhedrim, he recounted the history of the people from the call of Abraham, and shewed conclusively their habitual resistance of the Holy Spirit. He solemnly charged home upon them their disobedience to the law, their persecution of the prophets, and their betrayal and murder of the Just One. It ended, as we know, in the utter rejection of the testimony of the

Holy Spirit through him ; and the faithful witness was cast out and stoned. This was Israel's way of sending a message after Christ, saying : " We will not have this man to reign over us " (Luke xix. 14). Stephen's testimony marked an epoch in the history of God's dealings with Israel, and it was the close of the first part of the disciples' commission. (" Beginning at Jerusalem "—Luke xxiv. 4). Why did not the Spirit of God use Peter or some other member of the apostolic band to bear so important a testimony ? We cannot tell ; but we learn from it the sovereignty of His action, and the freedom of His ways.

Philip's case, recorded in chap. viii. is remarkable also in its way. Samaria was to be brought under the power of the Gospel. This was a work of unusual importance, because of the peculiar position that Samaria had maintained for several centuries in relation to Jerusalem. Though a mixed race, the Samaritans professed to worship Israel's God, they revered their Scriptures, and had a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim. For all these things the Jews hated them, and had no dealings with them. Their conversion was therefore a matter of great importance and significance, yet we find the Spirit of God again passing by the twelve, and using for the blessed work another of the chosen seven. Philip preached Christ to them, and wrought miracles of healing amongst them, filling the city with joy. In the wisdom of God the Samaritan converts did not receive the Spirit until Peter and John went down (for unity's sake) ; but all the foundation work in their souls was wrought by the preaching of the ardent evangelist. Who can fail to see in Philip's case, as in Stephen's, the sovereignty of the Spirit's action ?

Saul, of Tarsus, comes before us next. The time had come for the unfolding of the heavenly relationships of the newly gathered church, and the counsels of God respecting it, but God did not use any of the existing twelve for the purpose, but brought upon the scene a new worker altogether, and from a most unexpected quarter. A malicious persecutor of the saints is suddenly arrested in his evil career by the revelation of a

glorified Christ, and in due course made the depository of the divine thoughts and plans concerning God's assembly. And as if God would make this display of His sovereign action the more striking, though He intended Saul to play so distinguished a part, it was not an apostle that was sent to his relief during those dreary days in Damascus, but a plain disciple, of whom we never hear again. He (Ananias) imparted to him the Holy Ghost by the laying on of his hands, and forthwith baptised him. All this was done apart from Jerusalem and the twelve altogether. Truly, "the wind bloweth where it listeth!"

Further on in the book of Acts, another extraordinary worker is brought to view—Apollos (Acts xviii. 24, 28). This man at first knew nothing beyond the baptism of John, but what he knew he preached diligently, enforcing all he said by Scripture. Two humble souls heard him in the synagogue at Ephesus—Aquila and Priscilla; and perceiving him to be a true soul only needing light and help, "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." The result was that he became a powerful preacher of the Gospel of Christ, and a great spiritual help to those who already believed through grace. Called apart from both Paul and the twelve, he seems to have pursued his path of service independently throughout. At a later date we find Paul writing to the Corinthians concerning him: "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time." (1 Cor. xvi. 12.)

From all these instances, valuable lessons may be learned by all who have ears to hear. The Spirit of God is here for Christ's glory, and the blessing of men; and is sovereign and free in all His actings. Men like stereotyped forms, and would have divine blessing habitually flow through certain recognised channels; but such is not the way of God's Spirit. He uses one, and sets him aside again, for a time, or altogether as it pleases Him; He blesses a particular method on an occasion,

and perhaps never reverts to it again. He is not here to exalt men or methods, but Christ; would that we could all learn the lesson well.

W. W. FEREDAY.

CERTAIN CHURCH STATEMENTS AND TRUTHS RE-EXAMINED.

THE word Church or Assembly applied to the nation of Israel in the wilderness (Acts vii. 38), is also used of the mystical body of Christ (Eph. i. 22, 23). Carefully note these two distinct Assemblies: "The Church in the Wilderness," and "the Church which is His body." The confusion between Israel and the Body, between the earthly hope of the former, with the heavenly hope of the latter; between the nature, constitution, and blessing of the former, with the nature, constitution, and glory of the latter, has wrought irreparable mischief. The late J. N. Darby, and others who followed in his wake, have done much to enlighten Christendom on these distinguishing truths. But yet a vast amount of ignorance remains, and we must sorrowfully add, that many who once apparently rejoiced in the recovered truths of the last century, are now giving them up to their loss and shame.

It is with the Church of the New Testament that we are specially occupied with in these pages.

WHERE AND WHEN THE CHURCH BEGAN.

Jerusalem was the place, and the day of Pentecost (*i.e.*, fifty days after Christ's Resurrection) the time, when the Church was born. It was a unique day in the history of the world when a gathered body of believers in the power of the Holy Spirit were first witnessed. It was an awe-inspiring sight. Previous to the day of Pentecost, and even during the life of the Lord on earth, believers were regarded as so many *units*—no bond uniting them either to Christ or to each other. Of course, there ever was unity of life and nature, for life, Eternal Life is one and necessarily the same in all ages. But while the unity of Israel can

be affirmed, the unity of believers in a visible body on earth was utterly unknown. It needed Christ's death to form a basis on which He would "gather together in *one* the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 51). The Church was neither built, nor in process of building when Christ was on earth. In Matthew xvi. 18, we meet with the first mention of the Church. The only other Gospel references to it being in the 18th chapter of the same Gospel, verse 17. The declaration of our Lord near the inland town of Cesarea Philippi, "I will build my Church," seems conclusive enough that the construction of the Church had not then commenced. It was not then built, nor had its foundation been laid. Christ in glory is the builder of His Church. He it is who baptizes with the Holy Ghost (John i. 33). When did this spiritual baptism take place, and what was effected thereby? Acts i. 5, was spoken in the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension, and hence the baptism there predicated was then future. The fulfilment of the promise of the Father (John xiv. 16. 26; Acts i. 4) took effect at Pentecost, and is historically narrated in Acts ii. About 120 believing *Jews* (Acts i. 15), were baptised by the Lord on high, in one Spirit. A second, and subsequent outpouring of the gift of the Spirit, took place so as to embrace believing *Gentiles* (Acts x. 45). These two historical events — Jerusalem the scene of the one, and Cesarea the scene of the other—are grouped together, and the grand result stated in 1 Cor. xii. 13, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." (R.V.) We beg our readers to carefully distinguish between this spiritual baptism, and baptism in water. The Church was founded *before* the Lord's commission to baptize (Matt. xxviii. 19), was begun by the disciples. They were directed to remain in Jerusalem till the advent of the Spirit, and hence could not carry out the Lord's command to disciple the nations till after Pentecost. Pentecost (Acts ii) and the Rapture (1 Thess. iv), are then, the events which respectively characterise the beginning and the end of the Church's sojourn on earth.

THE CHURCH'S TWO-FOLD RELATION TO GOD, AND HER TWO-FOLD RELATION TO CHRIST.

The Church is spoken of as God's house (1 Tim. iii. 15), and as God's habitation (Eph. ii. 22). The former is the sphere of special Christian responsibility, in which Church discipline is exercised, in which divine order and godly behaviour are to be witnessed. The house of God, because of our failed responsibility is the first subject of the Lord's judgment (1 Peter iv. 17). The habitation of God refers to the place where God dwells. The Ephesian believers, with all believing Jews and Gentiles on earth, constitute God's habitation by His Spirit. The *house* is what is built and governed. The *habitation* is where God dwells. Responsibility is specially connected with the former. Privilege is as distinctly characteristic of the latter.

The Church's two-fold relation to Christ is expressed in the terms, Body (Eph. iv. 12) and Bride (Rev. xxii. 17). Not individual, but corporate relation to Christ, and that moreover of a vital character, is affirmed in the application of these terms to the Church. Human responsibility does not enter into the constitution of the Church as Christ's body. In the house of God, Christ builds (Matt. xvi. 18), but only with living stones (1 Peter ii. 5), hence His work is perfect, but the "house" is also the subject of human administration, and thus in danger of having foreign material introduced in its construction (1 Cor. iii. 9-17). It is not what Christ builds which comes under judgment, but that which man builds. This is evident from 1 Cor. iii. and 1 Peter iv. 17. But on the other hand, the body consisting of all believers from Pentecost till the Rapture, intimates a vital connection with Christ. *Mere* professors are excluded. Thus the house and the body are not co-extensive. The former embraces a wider circle than the latter. The body is the nearest thing to Christ. Nothing is more near to a man than his body and its various members. Then again, these members are inseparably united to each other, and the whole to the head—the seat of government. The human body with its many members and their diversified uses, is the chosen figure

to express our intimate and vital connection with Christ, and with each other (1 Cor. xii. 15-26). The body is on earth, its Head is in Heaven. All needed for the growth of the body proceeds from the Head. He is its source of government and fountain of supply (Eph. iv. 15, 16; Col. ii. 19). But if the body (and there is but *one* (Eph. iv. 4) — the death-blow to denominationalism)—expresses the *nearest* known relation to Christ, that of the bride intimates that the Church sustains by far the *dearest* relation to Him. The place which the Church bears to Christ in undying love now (Rev. xxii. 17; Eph. v. 32), in Millennial days (Rev. xxi. 9), and in Eternity (Rev. xxi. 2), is finely expressed in the relation of bride, loved and beautified beyond that bestowed upon other saved ones, or Israel, or creation. The wealth of love and glory are lavished upon the Church—the bride.

CHURCH RUIN.

What *was* the Church in her birth and youth? The brightest exhibition of Divine grace the world or angels ever witnessed. What *is* the Church in this the evening of her days? A huge wreck, and the sport of an unbelieving world. What *will* the Church be in Millennial and Eternal times? The bride, wife, and eternal companion of the Lamb in glory. Grace, ruin, and glory respectively characterise the past, present, and future of the Church. The history of the Church from her birth till her presentation to Christ in glory is a subject of surpassing interest.

Church ruin may be regarded from various stand-points. First, that of sound doctrine. Second, that of holiness and Christian morality. Third, that of separation from the world. Fourth, that of order and government. In these four respects the Church of to-day lies before us a false witness. Diverse teachings nigh as numerous as the sects from which they emanate are scattered broadcast. The countries of the Reformation — England and Germany — have theologically joined hands, not to defend the faith of God's elect, but to destroy it, to pull the Bible to pieces. The universities of these countries are a mass of doctrinal corruption, relieved here and there by a

distinguished Christian teacher. Take the initial ordinance of Baptism as a sample of what prevails, of what is generally taught. In the Lutheran Church, in the Roman, in the Anglican, in the Presbyterian, and other Churches, Baptism is regarded, either as a soul-saving ordinance, or as the sign and seal of grace received, whereas in Scripture it points to an *objective*—Christ and His death (Rom. vi. 3, 4). The confounding of priesthood—common to all believers—with a ministry committed to a class; and the confusion of the sacramental system of the New Testament, with vital truth, have wrought to the ruin of Christendom. As to separation from the world, the mass of the professing Church makes no profession of it. Nay, the public boast is that the Church and the world were never on better terms than they are in the opening of the twentieth century. A new era has dawned upon the earth. The Church and the world once so far apart have been drawn together by mutual appreciation. We seldom hear James iv. 4 referred to or quoted; its applicability to the present state of things is patent. “The friendship of the world is *enmity* with God.” Will our readers read over the history and doctrines of the Church as presented in the Acts and Epistles, and then compare its Apostolic features with its twentieth century characteristics? Primitive Christianity as seen in Acts ii-xx; 1 Cor. and 1 Timothy present a series of striking contrasts to present Church features. As to Church order: 1 Cor. xii and xiv, are a dead letter to the Churches of Christendom. The partial recovery of Church truth in the early years of the last century have been acted upon by those termed “brethren”—a term really applicable to *all* the Lord’s people, and disclaimed in any exclusive sense by those to whom it is generally applied. The teaching of first Corinthians, if faithfully carried out, would overturn the whole ecclesiastical system of Christendom, and restore many an apostolic feature of the Church now lost. The unity of the Church as one body exists as ever. It is an inseparable unity, maintained as such by the ever present Holy Spirit, but a *visible* unity it is not. The papacy claims to represent it, and thus deceives the ignorant and unwary, but it is simply Satan’s counterfeit, “the

right - wrong thing." Protestantism as a system is infinitely preferable to either of its rivals, the Greek, and the Roman Church, inasmuch as in the former the soul is brought into contact with God by the Written Word. But if Roman Catholicism is the devil's counterfeit of the "one body," Protestantism virtually denies true Church unity, for it is cut up into, it is said, 1,300 fragments.

Now the Apostles solemnly warned Christians of what the Church would become in the last days. Both clergy and laity are equally guilty; as to the former see Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian governing body (Acts xx. 29); as to the latter see 1 Cor. i. 12. John (Rev. ii; iii), Peter (2 Epistle ii; iii), and Jude (verses 4-19) concur in one common testimony to Church ruin of such kind and character as to shock the very heathen.

INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY.

In the ruin of Christendom, each and all have their part—a sorrowful and shameful one. This ought, in the first place, to be frankly and fully owned. Following an honest confession of sin, the question arises, What is to be done? Am I to sit still, sullen and indifferent to the dishonour of the name of Christ, and to the rejection of the Spirit? Am I to continue to be an active or even passive participator in the corporate iniquity of Christendom? Surely not. The nature of God as *light*, and, "Holiness becometh Thine house O Lord for ever" (Ps. xciii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 17) must rebuke the slightest thought of connecting His holy Name with evil. May God forbid the thought, much more the act. Complicity with evil—immediate or remote—must on no account be entertained. Another course of action has suggested itself to active minds; to reconstruct the Church on an apostolic basis, to supply it with a ritual in part borrowed from both Testaments, and with a ministry of twelve apostles, etc. The founding of and constitution of the Church was *God's work*. Man can no more make the Church of the New Testament, *i.e.*, the one body of Christ, than he can create worlds. God in the energy of His Spirit set up the Church at Pentecost. He endowed it with numerous gifts, some of which

no longer exist—although the power by which they were given and directed remains. What arrogance then ; what assumption in failed and failing creatures to attempt the *impossible* ! Instead, therefore, of seeking to re-set the Church on its apostolic footing, how much wiser and better to diligently search the Scriptures and see what is our duty in these last days of Church iniquity. Has God an appointed path for His people ? If He has, it must necessarily be one of separation from evil ; a course of action is prescribed, not one of power, but one of simple obedience and holiness.

In the last written of the Pauline Epistles, the ruin of the Church, and the individual pathway of Christians are pointed out (2 Tim. ii). But first a principle is stated, one of vital import ; imperative and true in all ages and under all circumstances, “ Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness ” (verse 19 R.V.) Fellowship with iniquity is an insult to the nature of God. Then the Apostle likens the Church to a great house (a contrast to that presented in first Timothy iii. 15), in which vessels of all sorts are found ; good and bad mixed up. The vessels differ in value and in character, as gold, silver, wooden, earthen ; honour, and dishonour (verse 20). What a curious, what a miscellaneous assortment of persons and things are here described as filling the house of God. Where the good predominates as in 1 Cor. v, the evil can be purged out, but where evil is all-powerful then the remedy is to purge yourself out. This latter is the course prescribed here. “ If a man therefore purge himself from *these*,” not from *it*. Christians, and mere professors are alike in the great house, and cannot get out of it, save by death or the coming of the Lord. “ These ”—vessels unto dishonour—are to be separated from. The duty therefore of every Christian is to separate himself from all that dishonours Christ, whether it be in the walk or doctrine or both of those bearing the Christian name. Men there may be of unblemished moral character, of distinguished scholarship, of great reputation, of untiring zeal, and much more, so as to command our love and admiration, but the simple question we have

to consider is their relation to Christ. Do they honour Him, or dishonour Him, who is "the holy" and "the true"? It is no question of men, but of Christ. Our individual responsibility is to cease from evil, to purge oneself from all association with it. But it does not end there. Scripture assumes that a company of saints have acted upon the definite instructions of the Apostle—the company formed by individual action; that is, each sanctified vessel has personally cleared himself. But while personal action is urgently demanded if holiness is to be maintained, independency is as strongly condemned, hence adds the Apostle, "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (verse 22). With such we, through grace, find ourselves to-day. The truth necessarily throws us together. To say we cannot find those pure-hearted, sanctified ones—those vessels unto honour—is to make the apostolic command nugatory. Where saints are found resisting evil and contending for the honour of Christ, with such we desire to find ourselves in holy and happy fellowship.

But not only is there *individual* responsibility, Church or corporate responsibility also exists, and must equally be insisted upon. Individual blessing and responsibility precedes that of a corporate character. The Church is composed of individuals, and it can only be through, and by the latter that the Church acts in anywise.

A recent expression, "A circle of fellowship" (its source unknown), is considered by some to define the limits of Church fellowship and corporate responsibility. The expression has a sectarian ring about it which we do not like, yet we are satisfied that the substantial truth behind it, is scriptural. We do not like the term, but the truth which it embodies, if *rightly understood*, heartily commends itself to us. Let us explain. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the instructions concerning Discipline, the Lord's Supper, Ministry in the Church, Worship, etc., are directly addressed to the saints in their corporate and individual character (i. 2). A local governing body as Bishops and Deacons are not even named. The Epistle is beyond all others, a Church

one. Its weighty instructions, its wealth of detail are meant to apply to every professing company of Christians on earth. Joined with Corinth we read, "With all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"; such is the breadth contemplated in the Epistle: see also chaps. xi. 16; xiv. 33, 34. Now what are the plain, undeniable facts. By far the great part of Christendom absolutely ignore the teachings of this Epistle, save the grand and vital truth of Resurrection (chap. xv). The regulation of the Church's ministry and worship apart from any special class of ordained persons (chaps. xi-xiv), the liberty of every Christian man to exercise in God's Assembly whatever gift he may have received (chaps. xii. 7, 11; xiv. 24, 26, 31), are peremptorily rejected. God's order in His own Church or Assembly so minutely prescribed in our Epistle is set aside as unworkable, and a cultured ministry and human order substituted. But through the revival of Church-truth in the last century, many Assemblies of saints were formed whose Church organization were of the simplest character. There was no pretension to power. Separation from iniquity, and from the world, and a rigid adherence to God's Word characterised them. Gathered to the Holy Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, owning the presence and guidance of the Spirit, and gladly availing themselves of all the help and ministry given by an ever gracious God, they enjoyed peace, and were built up in their most holy faith. These Assemblies of saints multiplied under the energy of the Spirit, and in the power and ministry of men, whose only resource was God and His Word. Necessarily, then, these companies of saints were thrown into a united fellowship. Their fellowship *as* Assemblies were, of course, restricted. The human constitution of the Churches around them, and from which they had purged themselves, debarred them from finding a corporate fellowship there, while fully owning every individual saint wherever found as a member of the body of Christ. Hence through no fault of theirs, a fellowship was formed narrower than the whole Church of God. But while all this is true, one fears to employ terms which would seem to sanction a fellowship of saints and Assemblies which *ought* to

embrace *all*, whereas it is only a part. We take no account now of certain recent unhappy divisions. A fellowship then has been formed in the power of God's Spirit which is narrower than the whole Church.

Now what is, or ought to be the attitude of these Assemblies to the numerous Churches and sects which so largely abound in the present day, and in every one of which saints of God are found? Without question there can be no corporate alliance. Our duty is to maintain an uncompromising position of separation from the numerous sects into which Protestantism is divided—not opposition, but one of separation. But on the other hand, we should seek with yearning desire the blessing of saints in whatever denomination they are found. We cannot, however, re-enter their unholy or unscriptural associations even with that desirable object in view. But surely there are means by which we can reach God's people individually, and minister the grace of Christ. A stern denunciation of evil is not always the wisest plan, and should only be resorted to when the circumstances urgently demand it. It is the ministry of grace to the heart, the unfolding of positive truth in warmth of love, which most surely rouses up the conscience to desire to do the will of the Lord. Then, as a principle, we hold that every member of the body of Christ has divine title to Church fellowship, to break bread in remembrance of Christ—their Saviour and Lord. But in the *practical* application of the principle, an important modification must be made, owing to the looseness on every hand. We require and rightly so, that the person be fully commended, either by letter (2 Cor. iii. 1), or by one on whose judgment we can rely (Acts ix. 26, 27), assuming, of course, that the comer is sound in doctrine, godly in walk, and free from association with Christ dishonouring teachers and teachings. The mere fact that a saint is a member of a sect should not in itself disqualify him from our fellowship. It is a grave matter which would scripturally debar a Child of God from the enjoyment of his undoubted privilege of remembering his, and our Lord in the breaking of bread.

And Truths Re-Examined.

83

On the question of responsibility connected with the present ruined state of things, we have—Our *individual* responsibility as in 2 Tim. ii ; Rev. ii and iii, “he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches” ; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, etc. Then we have *local* Church responsibility, for which see 1 Cor. Next, comes the fellowship of Assemblies based on the maintenance of the truth recovered, involving a responsibility towards each other as obligatory as when the Church was visibly one. In this connection we may remark that *groups* of Assemblies is a recognised principle in scripture (Rom. xvi. 16 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19 ; 2 Cor. viii, 1 ; Gal. i. 2, 22). Lastly, the *whole* Church of God has its own special responsibility ; 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Rev. ii and iii.

We need wisdom, not human sagacity, but wisdom from on high, to carefully adjust the respective claims of grace and holiness. Some are constitutionally, and by force of circumstances, training, etc., narrow and illiberal and are apt to repel souls instead of winning them. Harshness is supposed to be faithfulness. We have witnessed in the past the sad effects of such a course. On the other hand, there is quite as great a danger in a warm and impulsive heart overstepping the claims of righteousness, and ignoring the fact that names must sink, and the honour of Christ be upheld. “O he is a good man” is made to cover sin which ought to be detested by every one true and loyal to Christ. To have *broad* and ever widening sympathies, yet to tread the *narrow* paths of holiness, require wisdom and a spiritually balanced mind. But God loves His people, and He recognises the desire in each one to please Him. Patience with each other is needed. Love, too, which hopes the best, is not suspicious, does not judge motive, but serves all, must ever be in constant exercise, else we are unlike our Master (1 Cor. xiii). Love is an influential and potent power in Church life. May it be more earnestly cultivated !

A VITAL AND NEEDED TRUTH.

A REASONING mind may baffle and bewilder souls sincerely desiring to do the will of the Lord. Plausible arguments may confuse right and wrong, but there is a way by which the balance of the soul may be recovered, the wrong condemned, and the right justified. One principle there is of such a vital character, that to it all interpretation of scripture must bow, all reasonings and arguments must submit. “*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*” (1 John i. 5). Test the question submitted to you thus: Is the matter in character with the holy nature of God? If it is not, then condemn it as *sin*. Do not fear to do so. Never sanction evil on any plea whatever. “In Him is no darkness at all.” It has been said that even unrighteous Church-judgments must be received on the plea, by some that there is “one body,” by others that all decisions are “bound in Heaven.” We hold that discipline (1 Cor. v) extends to the utmost bounds of the professing Church (chap. i. 2), but if that discipline is fully demonstrated to be unrighteous after, of course, patient investigation, the plea of unity is worthless, as also that of binding in Heaven. If unrighteous, it is contrary to the nature of God who is light. Specious arguments here are of no avail. The nature of God—the highest and most profound test—condemns it, and *that* unjust Church-decision never was, nor could be bound in Heaven. The plea that there is one body—a blessed truth surely!—must not be used to bolster up wrong. We have known many truly honest souls sadly confused by reasonings on Church discipline. The two pleas referred to, namely, Church unity, and binding in Heaven, only avail when the discipline in question is the fruit of God’s Spirit. While we hold that for every event and circumstance of life there is a divine principle for guidance in the inspired Word, yet in many cases we may not be able to find it. Here then is a Court of Appeal, the highest in the universe, and one to which every soul can instantly refer. God Himself as *light*, settles every question as to right and wrong, and we dare not and must not on any plea whatever, sanction evil. It is a prin-

ciple of eternal right that God revealed as light and love is the standard, and everything short of it is sin. Test the actions of every-day in the Church and in the world by this simple question : Are they in consonance with the nature of God ? What strength ! what holy boldness this would impart to the soul !

THE BEATITUDES.

(*Matth. v. 1-12.*)

THE marvellous sign promised to unbelieving Ahaz, and through him to Israel, had been given ; for the virgin child (Isa. vii. 14) had been born, and found in this world is declared to be "Immanuel—God with us." Such is the wondrous Person heard in chap. iv. 17, heralding the tidings, "Repent : for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and who is seen gathering a little company round Himself (ver. 18).

It is to this company of disciples that He, the King of that Kingdom, is found giving instruction, acquainting them with principles which were to govern them ere His Kingdom was set up in power, and teaching them of virtues that they should display. For He spoke to His disciples, yet in the hearing of the multitude. A two-fold purpose would thereby be effected ; for whilst His words to them would reveal what manner of people they ought to be, the presence of the multitude would define the relationship of the disciples to them. True then it was, and true it is now, that if the saints of God fail to realize what is consistent with their testimony and fail to walk accordingly, the world is fully aware of it and quickly detects the spurious. The testimony given to us, or the testimony we render, should set us in our proper sphere and keep us there. An illustration of this, clear and forcible, we have in the incident recorded in Ezra viii. 22. Ezra was about to start with his little band to go to Jerusalem, taking with him treasures for the Lord's house. They were a feeble folk, and there were many enemies in the way. But Ezra had been great in the King's

court ; then why not seek an escort from the King to journey with them to protect them and the treasures ? Yes ; why not ? In the court of the King Ezra had been faithful in rendering a testimony, and he saw that to ask for a band of soldiers would be to completely nullify his own words and condemn himself. Had he not declared unto the King that " The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him ; but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him." Standing by this testimony he proclaims a fast, and God is entreated of them, and without the aid of soldiers brings them safely to Jerusalem. The words of the Lord settled the attitude of the disciples to the multitude and defined their relationship to them.

Then first speaking of what was to characterise them, we find the statements are given in a definite order, the first four lifting up to God, as it were ; the next three connecting His disciples with others ; and the last couple (ver. 10-12) revealing what they might experience from others as they trod the path with His name upon them. Is not the beauty of the order apparent ? for it is impossible that the heart can in any measure reflect God unless there has been heart engagement with God. How good to remember that all that the Lord here lays down found its perfect exemplification in His life, and hence the disciple in carrying out the teaching of His Master would find himself following in His footsteps.

" Blessed are the poor in spirit " is the first statement—" Poor in spirit " the first distinguishing trait. And this is to be free from all self-seeking and perfectly willing to be nothing. This in its perfection was true of Him, but His disciples having it not, had to seek to cultivate it. A reference to just two incidents will serve to mark the truth of this. Whilst journeying to Jerusalem where he was to be condemned to death, the two sons of Zebedee came seeking the chiefest places in the Kingdom (Mark x. 35 ; Matth. xx. 20). When the ten heard they were filled with indignation *against the two brethren* (ver. 24) ; for they were surely equally desirous of filling those honoured positions. But where was the manifestation of being poor in spirit ? The only One who had a right to feel grieved was

The Beatitudes.

87

unmoved, and speaking to them of the cup and baptism that awaited Him, He proceeded to instruct them afresh about what should characterise them, and crowning His teaching with a reference to Himself, he says, “*Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.*” Ah! He knew the blessedness of being poor in spirit.

Again, on another occasion He entered into a certain village of the Samaritans and they refused to receive Him “because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.” Bowing to rejection He would pass on. Two of His disciples, however, ask Him if *they* should command fire from Heaven, as Elijah did, to consume His rejectors. “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of” was His reply (Luke ix. 52-56). How rebuked they must have felt!

But the poor in spirit are to receive the Kingdom of Heaven. Willing to be empty now the day of approval and blessing would presently dawn for such, and they would be associated with Him in exercising heaven’s rule over the universe.

Proceeding, the Lord pronounces His blessing upon those that mourn. Sorrow is not a thing that any like to anticipate and yet it is a necessity for those who enter into God’s thoughts. Mourning after this fashion does not touch the source of the saints’ joy. “Rejoice alway; and again I say rejoice,” is Paul’s exhortation; and this they can do with unfeigned joy; for God is the strength of their heart and their portion for ever.

The life of the Lord was the life of the Man of Sorrows. He only could perfectly measure the distance that existed between God and man, and as the vastness of that was ever present with Him, can we not understand that of the wine of this world He could not, would not taste. Of His smiles we read not. That He wept is indelibly recorded. Yet with peace and joy in their fulness He was acquainted, and left them—His peace and His joy—as legacies for His own (Jno. xiv, xv). Peace He found in reposing in His Father’s will, and joy He found in accomplishing it.

How often the plea is urged to-day that we want a bright genial Christianity. But we have it; for Christianity is that, providing what can be obtained from no other source. Traced to their beginning such pleas are generally found to mean that room should be left for the allowance of the flesh, and that licence is sought to crack the foolish pun and joke. People must be won? Yes, truly; but people are won for Christ, by Christ displayed in our lives, and sobriety is becoming in very truth in those who are conscious of how God measures things. Grace awakens to this; and then, thus made sensitive, how can mourning be absent as we behold suffering and tears, misery and wretchedness, hard-hearted refusals of proffered mercy, and hear the groans produced by wilfulness and sin. Different indeed is this scene now from that blissful, though brief moment, when in the Garden in Eden calm reigned supreme and God could commune with His creature-man.

But mourning is not to last for ever. Sin is not to triumph. The Paradise of God awaits us; and then, the moment of deliverance having come, "they shall be comforted" will be fully verified. All trace of sin shall be removed, and every tear be wiped away by God Himself—blessed time! In view of it may we betake ourselves to God and so learn of the sweetness of the encouragement which He vouchsafes.

"Blessed are the meek," declares the One who later on proclaimed Himself as the "Meek and lowly in heart" (chap. xi). Perfectly resigned to His Father's will He patiently accepts rejection and leaves His cause there. His words and His works refused, He solemnly pronounces sentence upon the guilty cities wherein He had laboured most, and then shows that the haughty heart was far from Him as, finding solace in the fact that so it seemed good in His Father's sight, He invited the weary to come to Him (Matt. xi).

To give up and bow to His will is the way to possess blessing permanently. Do the meek fail to assert their rights? "Blessed are the meek," the Lord taught, "for they shall inherit the earth." The enemy might for the time be in possession of the

The Beatitudes.

89

inheritance but God would dispossess him and vindicate the meek—“*they shall inherit the earth.*” Dispensationally this sets forth the future of the faithful remnant, yet noting what they would be—the meek, and also the certainty of their blessing after many trials and tears, we may derive instruction and comfort from it likewise.

To the future this points. In the meantime this barren scene can provide naught to satisfy the cravings of the spiritual appetite in the panting soul. Now the god of this world is Satan; sin is rampant, evil rises above the good and *seems* to carry prosperity with it. Under such conditions the Lord proclaims that, “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Hunger and thirst! How that intimates the intensity of the desire for what is of God. Such can not be satisfied by a world full of departure from Him, and so the soul by such pangs is linked with God. And God will give full satisfaction to every such desire, and they which are hungry shall cease. “They shall be filled,” He declares; and in that scene where righteousness is to dwell shall they find an eternal abode.

Of the poor, of mourners, of the meek, of the hungry and thirsty the Lord spoke. Repose for such there is in God, and being thus turned to Him would fit them to express Him before men. Consequently we find that the next three statements reveal what His disciples were to be in their intercourse with others. They were to be merciful, pure, and peacemakers.

“Blessed are the merciful.” Of Israel Jehovah had indeed required that they should love mercy (Micah vi. 8); and the Speaker here is the One who brought the fulness of mercy to man. Freely He dispensed it, and hearts were gladdened as one and another experienced what it was to receive mercy. Would they, then, show that they were His disciples? The manifestation of mercy by them would indeed intimate that they were that. And how precious is the reward—“They shall obtain mercy.” Yes, now; and so taste afresh in the soul the sweetness of the mercy of God, and presently, by mercy pre-

served throughout the pathway, be received to glory, blest trophies of His mercy and grace.

But mercy does not mean compromise with evil. So "Blessed are the pure in heart" follows, teaching that God loves inward purity, and that to be merciful does not necessitate the sacrifice of holiness. Should not the knowledge of mercy received give the greatest abhorrence of evil, and lead to the maintenance of God's standard? With the springs of our actings in God, this will be possible, and the blessedness of being pure in heart will be known, for such "shall see God."

Flowing from this we have, "Blessed are the peacemakers." The object of hatred it may be, and knowing full well the deep meaning of rejection, yet the disciple of Christ is not to add to the confusion around but to make peace. He is not to raise strife but to quell it. Blessed work! a work that we know fully accords with the mind of God. His Son was ushered in at His birth with heraldings that told of peace, and all His words and works savoured of it. So-called standing for God and strife-making are often near akin. It is necessary to be merciful but pure; to be pure yet peacemakers; for upon each His "blessed" has been pronounced. Who so faithful as "The faithful and true Witness," yet surely his path was redolent with the sweet fragrance of peace. And in a special way God owns and marks with His seal the blessedness of being peacemakers. "They shall be called the children (or sons) of God." He will invest them with the dignity that pertains to a relationship so intimate, and clothe them with the glory that belongs to a title so blessed. May we all covet its bestowal in this way.

Having taught His disciples about the moral virtues which should manifest themselves in them as children of the Kingdom, the Lord next spoke about results that may accrue to them, as they sought to put His teaching into practice. Of suffering He spoke, intimating that they might have to suffer in a two-fold way—for righteousness' sake, and for His name's sake. They would suffer for righteousness' sake as they sought to maintain a good conscience before God, eschewing evil and loving good.

The Old Testament Canon.

91

To be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless would be their desire (2 Pet. iii. 14). Men might think of them as losers judging by outward appearances and *present* results; but "Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" negatives such a conclusion. The result is sure. It was the King who proclaimed it. This would furnish a weighty incentive to faithfulness and endurance.

The Lord addressed each of His assembled disciples when speaking of suffering for His name's sake—"Blessed are *ye*." Because of Him they would be regarded as the off-scouring of the earth, fit only to be shunned and cast out. Nothing would men esteem too vile to spread about them; yet, as it was all false, so were they to rejoice with a gladness that should scarce know limits—exceeding glad. Away from earth to heaven He directs their eyes, giving the first intimation of the calling on high. He spoke of blessing awaiting such sufferers in heaven. Death might be their portion here, but that would in no wise rob them of their reward for it was "great in heaven." Nor would they be alone in this suffering. Prophets before them had been sent, and some were beaten, some stoned, and others put to death. Rejection those experienced. And now, as they should be sent forth by the King of God's Kingdom, they were to account it blessed thus to suffer. A portion on high, in company with those who had suffered before them, they would enjoy. Is there not meaning in this for all God's saints now? Instruction and comfort it surely should convey to each one. May each be enabled to appropriate it, that we may be to His praise to whom all praise belongs. H.F.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON.

THE Old Testament Canon was completed about the times of Esther or Malachi. Probably Ezra, the ready and distinguished Jewish priest and scribe, collected the Old Testament books, adding explanatory notes—save, probably the books of Malachi, Esther, and one or two others.

THE APOCRYPHA.

THE Apocrypha was commenced *after* the completion of the Old Testament, and while some of its books may be valuable in a literary point of view, certainly they are not inspired, nor do they claim to be, nor did the Jews regard them as such. There is not one quotation from them in any part of the New Testament. The Apocrypha was first received as canonical by decree of the Council of Trent, 1545.

THE SEPTUAGINT.

THE Septuagint, or Greek Version of the Old Testament — the parent of all succeeding translations — was commenced about 283 B.C. The Lord and His Apostles quoted both from it and the Hebrew. The latter, of course, must be authority in any disputed reading or question.

THE NICEAN COUNCIL.

THE first general council subsequent to apostolic times was held at Nice, in Bithynia, in the year 325. It was attended by about 300 Bishops — a truly representative assembly. Some term it “the council of the 318,” because of the number of Bishops present. The council was a unique one in this respect, that many of its members — distinguished prelates and ornaments of the Church, both lay and clerical — had emerged out of the last of the ten imperial persecutions — the hottest and fiercest of all. It was a magnificent assembly; many, scarred and mutilated, bore in their persons the memories of their terrible conflict with pagan superstition. In the latter part of the ten years of the tenth persecution, the enraged Emperor caused diligent search to be made for the sacred writings, which, when found, were eagerly committed to the flames, while torture and death were appointed to those who refused to deliver them up. But the Bible is imperishable; it will never know a resurrection, for it cannot die. Copies of the sacred writings were carefully preserved; were transcribed and multiplied by command of

Constantine; one of those Constantine - copies of the sacred writings is supposed to be the Sinaitic Bible, discovered by that great and good man, Professor Tischendorf, in the year 1859, in a monastery in Mount Sinai, and now in the possession of the Russian Government—perhaps the oldest literary relic extant. The Bible was in the *flames* under Diocletian. Lo, it rests on yonder gilded *throne* under Constantine! All honour to the Nicean Council for the homage paid to the Word of God. In the midst of the Council, and before their deliberations began, was placed a throne, and on it rested a copy of the four Gospels. The Scriptures were enthroned; their authority being held to be supreme and unquestionable.

THE PENTATEUCH.

THE root of the "Down-Grade" controversy is rank unbelief in the verbal inspiration of the Word of God. It is round this pivot the battle must be fought. The respective forces of light and darkness, of truth and error, of Christ and Satan, of the whole Bible and no Bible, are rapidly gathering. We welcome the contest, having not the slightest fear of the result. Ours is not a "forlorn hope," nor even death in victory. God is for us: yea, God is for Himself. The battle is the Lord's, and the victory certain. Now as to the Pentateuch, the enemies of Revelation are very much agreed. "Down with it," is the cry; burn it; destroy it; tear Moses to pieces; he is old, is antiquated, is unscientific, is untrustworthy, is not abreast of the age. Well, when science keeps within her own domain, confines herself to her proper province, and does her own work, she is all right. Science can only deal with what *is*. She can discover and trace out what exists. She may group and classify; but the facts and principles discovered were there before science found them out. Is this not so? Science and the Bible are not in conflict; quite the reverse, they are in harmony. They do not need to be reconciled, for they have never spoken in opposing terms. God wrote the Bible, and made the rocks. Hence we heartily welcome the discoveries of

science ; but be sure that you are furnished with *facts*, not with *guess-work*.

Scientists sneeringly pointed to the Bible record of creation (Gen. i.), which declared the existence of light on the *first* day (verse 3), and the sun on the *fourth* day (verse 16). What?—light apart from the sun? How they did laugh! Just fancy Moses leading astray the ancient and modern worlds! Then such a torrent of contempt was poured upon the ancient records, penned by Moses, the man of God! But that is past, for it is demonstrated that light does exist apart from the great luminary. The Bible is right, and they, on their own showing, proved to be wrong.

We have yet to be informed of a single fact contradicting the least obscure statement in the books of Genesis and Job — the first books given to the human race, so far as is known. Now we can very well afford to stand aside, and let the Scientists fight their own battles. The successors of these very men have announced that their predecessors were wrong in many points, and the Bible right. The Geological works of the last 50 years are unsaleable to-day. The fact is, that the temple of science is strewn with the wreck of exploded theories. Pretentious bubbles are announced with a flourish of trumpets. Succeeding investigators examine them, when lo! they burst, only, however, to be followed by others. The more foolish or ridiculous a theory is, all the better it seems; there will be no lack of belief or of disciples. A certain monkey-loving Scientist propounded the degrading thought that the hairy creature with which his name is identified was the progenitor of the human species. Everybody laughed at the absurdity, and ridicule was, at first, the only answer vouchsafed to the learned Professor. But the Christian nation of Great Britain accorded *that* distinguished man—who denied the Bible account of each species being created “after his kind,” and man, the noblest work of all, created in the image and after the likeness of His Creator—a public funeral and a grave in the venerable Westminster Abbey.

But the Pentateuch is assailed on other grounds by its professed adherents. Ah! Christ is again wounded in the house of His so-called friends. We lately heard a *real* lover of the Bible—one who has written ably in its defence, state his conviction that Moses probably had before him written accounts of creation when he penned under the guiding Spirit of God the first thirty-four verses of the Bible. Now we will venture to say that the Mosaic account of creation, furnished in those thirty-four verses, for simplicity and majesty, stands alone in the range of the world's literature. There is nothing elsewhere like it. Such is the sober judgment of men in no wise influenced by Christian views. Now what right have Christian men to play into the hands of our assailants? When will we learn to be bold and true, and take our stand on the Divine authority of the sacred Scriptures, making neither terms nor compromise with the enemy!

On what grounds has any theological doctor, however learned, the right to pour the poison of unbelief into the minds of thousands? Who informed the learned Canon that Moses used pre-existing documents in writing the early part of Genesis? Does Moses tell us? No. Well, perhaps Joshua, or Samuel, or other of the sacred writers is the authority for such a statement? No, emphatically we answer *no*. Neither sacred, nor secular historian can inform us as to the existence of these supposed pre-Mosaic documents. It is perfectly certain that the biblical account must have originally been communicated by revelation from the Creator; neither man nor angel could possibly tell of a primal creation, for the simple reason that they themselves are subjects of it. The Creator alone could communicate the fact, adding details according to His pleasure. Now it is altogether a gratuitous assumption, and one without a particle of proof or tittle of evidence to support it, that Moses compiled the biblical account of creation from other and prior documents. Why not by distinct revelation from God? Why this unwillingness to own God as immediately communicating His mind on this as on other subjects? Could He not do it? and has He not done it? He has.

THE MOURNING CHURCH.

“The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.”—*Mark ii, 20.*

Why gather saints where scenes of earth
Attract the soul to stay,—
Where show and glitter woo the soul,
And home thoughts steal away?

Our Master chose the “upper room”
Where to make known His grace,
And some such scene, for Christian use,
Throughout the Word we trace.

His death upon the Cross has sent
All outward pomp to Heaven,—
His Cross and shame all worldly show
From earth’s dark scenes have driven.

The Temple’s beauteous scenes of old
Could not man’s hate restrain,
Amid it all his hatred rose,
And Christ, God’s Lamb, was slain!

The Church should mourn her absent Lord,
From earth so basely spurned,
And shun to gild the guilty place
Where only malice burned.

Friends mourn their earthly loved removed,
And sorrow ’mid the gloom;
Yet, ah! how few the tears which fell
Upon the Saviour’s tomb!

’Till He return, His own should watch,
From earthly glitter far,
Just pilgrims, passing on to Heaven,
Home, heart, and treasure, there.

ALBERT MIDLANE.

THE PSALMS.

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR SEQUENCE.

The second book Psalms xlii.-lxxii.

AT the close of the last Psalm the saint's confidence is expressed, that God will set him before His face for ever. Much, however, has to take place ere that is brought about. For this book opens with the saint being far from the place of God's presence, the two Psalms, xlii. xliii., which form a preface, acquainting us with his sorrowful circumstances, his desires too, and the way he looks to have them fulfilled. In the former (xlii.) he thirsts for God—"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" Here, for the first time in the Psalms, do we meet with the term *the living God*, whose voice Israel heard at Sinai (Deut. v. 26), and whose presence in the midst of His people was proved at the passage of the Jordan (Josh. iii. 10). To appear before Him was the Psalmist's desire. But circumstances were against him, and his enemies cast up to him, Where was his God? The living God, he affirms, is his God. Of His appearance formerly on behalf of His people all were cognisant. His power, then, none could question. But was this outcast, this exile, authorised to call Him his God? Why had He not interfered as of old, causing His voice to be heard, and His power to be displayed? Taunts such as these, of which the saint complains, are hard to bear, whilst waiting for divine intervention. "This derision," Delitzsch remarks, "in the Psalms and in the Prophets, is always the keenest sting of pain." Ps. lxxix. 10; cxv. 2; Joel ii. 17; Micah vii. 10.

But "God will avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them," or "is long-suffering over them" (Luke xviii. 7). On this the afflicted one counts. And as he remembers the daily taunts of his foes, he

recalls past* seasons of happiness when he went to God's House (4). So he encourages himself as to the future (5). After this he relates more at length what his circumstances are, addressing himself directly to God. Far off from the divine presence, in the land of the Hermonites, God's waves and God's billows passing over him, his God seemed against him. He confessed it. He viewed all, took all as from Him. But God is Jehovah, that name by which He made Himself known to Israel. On that, therefore, he counts, and declares it, "Jehovah will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, even a prayer (R.V.) unto the God of my life. I will say unto God, my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" Then the Psalm ends with a repetition of verse 5 (see note), an address to his soul in the confidence of coming deliverance.

The next (xliii.) begins with an appeal to God for that which he so earnestly desires, and it states how that can be brought about, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy Tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God, my God" (3, 4). God Jehovah was in truth his God. Assured of it, keeping fast hold of it as a stay to his soul amid all his wanderings, he was confident that would be manifested before all. He, now in prayer, would yet on the harp praise His God. With this assurance of God's intervention, he closes this Psalm, and with it ends the preface to the *second* book of the Psalms, reiterating the exact language of xlii. 5, 11, according to the

*Past seasons we have said. So the authorised version and the revised, with many moderns, have translated the verbs. The Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus, and the Vulgate, with some moderns, render them as in the future, thus making v. 4 the Psalmist's expression of hope, while xliii. states how it will be fulfilled. Then verse 5 seems best ended like v. 11 and xliii. 5, "the health of my countenance, and my God." Verse 6 would then begin, "My soul," etc.

Septuagint, and Syriac also, which is followed by many moderns. But if we keep to the reading of verse 5 in xlii., as in A.V., the Psalmist's faith appears equally in his address to his soul. Thus faith can count on God. And the man of faith encourages himself (if of human comforters he has none) in the dark hour ere his God acts on his behalf. "God, my God." This speaks of redemption effected, and known, and which can never be undone. For how did He become his God? He redeemed Israel of old at the Red Sea by the arm of His power. From that day forth He became their God, and they became His people (Exod. vi. 7). That, as we have said, never alters. Redemption, whether by power or by blood, brings the redeemed into a condition which nothing can change.

Redemption by power the people had known, and consequences of it their fathers had once enjoyed under the leadership of Joshua. This is now recorded in xliv. 1-8, and the present sorrowful condition of the godly remnant (9-16), as well as their faithfulness and constancy (17-22) are set forth before God, for it is an address to Him throughout, the Psalm closing with a most earnest appeal to *Adonai*. "Awake, why sleepest Thou, Adonai? Arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake" (23-26). Will He disregard such an appeal? Oh, no. So at once the coming King and victor is introduced upon the scene in a Psalm (xlv.), which the New Testament teaching about it (Heb. i. 8, 9) shews clearly to be Messianic. It speaks of things which the inspired writer has made concerning the King. But who is He? We know. It is neither David nor Solomon, but the One Who has died and is risen, and Who returns to reign. In it, too, the mystery of His Person is set forth, in that He is both God and Man, seeing that He is addressed as God in verse 6, and God is declared to be His God in verse 7.

Who addresses Him in this way? The Psalmist men might

answer. God Himself we must say, and that on the authority of the written Word (Heb. i. 8). The Psalmist asserts his inspiration, claiming for his words that they were taught him by the Spirit of God, as he states, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." He was the instrument to put on record the very words of God. And the Holy Ghost, whose words he has recorded with his pen, has told us in the Hebrews that the utterance of verse 6 was God's address to the King, His Son. The King, the coming One, is then before us. His personal appearance, His triumphant progress, His victorious career, are treated of in beautiful language. God and Man!! His throne, as God is, for ever and ever; the sceptre of His kingdom is a sceptre of equity. Inflexible, but perfect rule. As Man, He has loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, His God, has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. His companions are just mentioned, and the Psalmist, occupied with the King in person, goes on to speak of His garments perfumed with myrrh, aloes, and cassia, whilst from the palaces of ivory musical strains, or stringed instruments, will delight Him. He has spoken of the King, he now turns to describe the queen, and to address her (9-15), telling of her robes and retinue in the day of the King's glory, and of her presentation to Him, the whole closing with an address to the King on the part of God, His God (16, 17). How changed are the circumstances of the King, and the condition of the queen!! He formerly was here in humiliation, despised, rejected, and at last crucified. He will return to the scene and very place of His rejection in power and glory. And the queen, Jerusalem, trodden down as she has been of the Gentiles, will receive the homage of Tyre, *i.e.*, of the commercial world, and the rich will appease her with presents. But, better far than all, the King will desire her beauty; whilst His name, now often treated with contempt, God will make to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall peoples praise Him for ever and ever.

The personal glory of the King, by whom deliverance will be wrought, thus set forth, the confidence of the people in their

The Psalms.

101

God whilst awaiting that deliverance is next declared (xlvi. 5). This Psalm is divided into three parts, 1-3; 4-7; 8-11. In the first they profess that God is their refuge and strength, a present help in trouble; so they will not fear though all nature be convulsed. What are the convulsions which will take place, ere full and settled peace is enjoyed by Israel? Ezek. xxxviii. 20, tells us. What political catastrophes will be experienced, Revelation (vi. 12-15) intimates. But in this part of the Psalm it is the convulsions of nature that are referred to, in the presence of which they will not fear, for God the Creator is declared to be their refuge and strength. In the other parts of the Psalm, where the overthrow of hostile powers arrayed against them is celebrated, God is characteristically spoken of as Jehovah of hosts. How signal we learn will be His intervention. A river to refresh the city of God, the holy place of the Tabernacles of the Most High, God, we are told, is in the midst of her, and He will help her at the turning (or dawn) of the morning.* His presence with His people assures them of the coming deliverance which the next verse so graphically describes. "Gentiles raged, kingdoms were moved, He uttered His voice, the earth melted" (6). Of old He spake, and it was done. By-and-by He will speak, and His enemies will be confounded. What confidence, what assurance in the face of hostile powers can the presence of God engender in the hearts of His people! Amid all the tumult of the enemy His voice will, and must, be heard when He speaks. And who can answer Him? "The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded (rather, appointed) staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps; and in battles of shaking will He fight with them" (Isaiah xxx. 30-32).

*It was at the turning of the morning that the Egyptians of old were overthrown in the Red Sea.—Exod. xiv. 27.

So writes another prophet of that same time, the prelude to the reign of peace of which the closing verses of our Psalm speak. "Come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire." Such is His character, and such will be His acts. For Him His people may well wait. Suited, then, is the exhortation at the close, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Who speaks thus? Jehovah of Hosts is the answer. His title suggestive of power; the God of Jacob, too, reminding all that He can act in grace toward one who does not deserve it. He has but to speak, and His enemies are confounded. He speaks, and His people are encouraged. We may remark on the different characters in which in this most interesting Psalm God is introduced. He is God. He is Jehovah. He is Most High. As God He is the strong One. As Jehovah He is the self-existing One. As Most High He will be owned when all on earth is brought under His sway: such is the God of Jacob. Such we, too, can say is our God, the New Testament revelation telling us in addition of the *relationship* He has formed by birth between Himself and us, for He is our Father.

But other nations are deeply concerned in all this. Dynasties may rise and fall, and neighbouring nations be little affected thereby. But it is not so, it cannot be so, when God takes to Himself His power and reigns. Absolute in will, He has declared beforehand the establishment of His kingdom (Psalm ii. 6) and announces (xlvii. 10) His exaltation over all powers on earth. All peoples are, therefore (xlvii.), called upon to welcome Him with acclamation. "O clap your hands all ye peoples, shout unto God with the voice of triumph: for Jehovah Most High is terrible, a great king over all the earth." To Israel will He give pre-eminence, subduing the nations under their feet, and choosing out an inheritance for them—even the excellency of Jacob, *i.e.*, Jerusalem (Isaiah lx. 15) "whom He loved."

The Psalms.

103

To it, the place of His earthly throne, He has gone up^{*} with a shout with the sound of a trumpet, for He is Israel's King (6) King over all the earth as well (7), reigning over Gentiles, and sitting upon the throne of His holiness. In the preceding Psalm God is said to be in the midst of Jerusalem, so He will help her. In xlvii. He is set forth as enthroned in her, and as receiving the homage of nations, who own Him as the King, and now acknowledge Israel as His people, the princes of nations gathering to them as the people of the God of Abraham.†

With Psalm xlviii. this little series of millennial psalms comes to a close. Jerusalem as the queen has been described in Psalm xlv., God's presence in her midst is declared in xlv. And seated on His throne in xlvii., we have next the song of a Psalm in xlviii., in prophetic celebration of the victory which God has procured for Israel, when the kings, with their besieging hosts, were gathered together against the beloved city, here described as "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," "the city of the great King." How joyous and graphic is the description of this deliverance. "For lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind" (4-7). Of God's

*Some view xlvii. 5 as descriptive of God's ascension to His heavenly throne after interposing in power on behalf of Israel. The Psalm, however, speaks of Him as King over all the earth. It will not, then, do violence to the context, if we connect v. 5 with the place mentioned in v. 4, to which in days yet to come we read in the prophet (Zech. xiv. 16), those that are "left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles."

†Many would translate as R.V., "The princes of the people are gathered together to be the people of the God of Abraham," assuming that all on earth in that day will be converted. Scripture teaches the contrary of this. An iron rule would not be required if that were the case (Rev. ii. 27).

intervention in power on previous occasions Israel had heard. Now they have witnessed it. So they sing, "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of Jehovah of Hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah. We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple. According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of righteousness" (8-10). Then they close, saying, "Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of Thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide unto death" (11-14). The fact of Jerusalem's deliverance at this final siege Isaiah (xxix. 4, 5) more dimly, but Zechariah (xii. 1-9) plainly described. In the Psalm we learn what the feelings of the delivered people will be in that day. The prophets have foretold the event. The Psalm predicts the effect on those delivered.

The power of God on His people's behalf, thus prophetically described, in order to further encourage the saints, for our God, is a God of encouragement (Rom. xv. 5), another ground of comfort whilst in trouble is set before them. "Wherefore," asks the Psalmist, "should I fear in the evil days, when the iniquity of my supplanters (rather than heels) compasseth me about?" (Ps. xlix, 5). The answer to this question is furnished by the remembrance that the ungodly will prove to be but sojourners in this scene, however wealthy and powerful they may be (6-12). Life for evermore is not for such, whether wise, fools, or brutish; nor can friend or brother redeem them from death. "Man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (12). Anyone, every one can see this (10), yet it is a lesson by many still unlearned (13). Not such, however, is the portion and prospect of the righteous, to whom blessing under Messiah's rule is the proximate and sure hope. God will redeem such from the power of the grave. Death,

The Psalms.

105

which feeds on the ungodly, will never touch them: for the promise of Isaiah xxv. 8, "He will swallow up death in victory" (or for ever) will receive its accomplishment. And the upright, who have felt the oppressing power of the ungodly, will have dominion over their persecutors in the morning (14), that morning without clouds, to which, for them, there will follow no night. Hence the psalm closes with a word of encouragement, but only for the righteous (16-20). "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased: for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him. Though while he lived he blessed his soul: (and men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself:) it, *i.e.*, the soul, shall go to the generation of his fathers, they shall never see light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish."

True, solemnly true. God, however, does not desire that. It is not His will that anyone of His earthly people should be found in that condition, hence follows Ps. l., acquainting us and them with the Lord's judgment of His people Israel, set forth nowhere else in the Bible as it is here (1-6). He comes to judge them, with all the heavenly saints in His train, for in this way will the heavens declare His righteousness (6). In view of that coming judgment, God here addresses, first the righteous in Israel (7-15), and then the wicked (16-23), encouraging the former to hold on their way confessing Him (14-15); and exhorting the latter to give ear to what He says. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoso offereth thanksgiving, not praise (see v. 14), glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."

A way of escape from judgment thus offered to the undeserving, we next read of that which is absolutely needful, if that salvation is to be known, *viz.*, confession of sin after grievous failure (Ps. li.) Of this David is the example. Of murder and adultery had he been guilty, grievous crimes in the eyes of men. What, indeed, were they in the eyes of God? What, then, was

his resource? On what could he count? For himself he could say nothing, but acknowledge his guilt and the taint of corruption derived from his progenitor, Adam (2-5). On God's mercy, however, he could cast himself, the unfailing resource of all who in truthfulness of heart resort to it. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." He could do nothing but this. He could offer nothing to meet his case, for the law did not provide a sacrifice for one who had sinned presumptuously, as he had. Death was its only award (Numb. xv. 30, 31), and the only sacrifice which God could accept under such circumstances for David was that of a broken spirit; but a broken and contrite heart God does not, He will not, despise. Further, if he can act in grace toward an individual sinner amongst His people, He will not forget Jerusalem, with whose fortunes and restoration the hopes of His people are inseparably connected. So with this the Psalm ends, "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion, build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar." Not till the Lord comes out of heaven will the godly remnant of His people know the forgiveness of their sins. Hence forgiveness to be enjoyed by them is, and must ever be, associated with the commencement of their time of millennial blessedness. One understands, then, why the re-building the walls of Jerusalem will be connected in their minds with Jehovah's ways in grace towards them. We need to understand dispensational actings in order to be able to trace the connection of their thoughts. Much there is of deep interest in this Psalm (li.), but the limits of our present inquiry forbid us to dwell on it. We must pass on to trace the connection with the Psalms which follow.

We have now four (lii.-lv.) called *Maschil*, and five called *Michtam*. In the previous book one Psalm, xxxii., is called *Maschil*, and one, xvi., *Michtam*. Other Psalms, as xlii., xlv., xlv., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxviii., lxxxix, and cxlii., have also the

The Psalms.

107

former title, but none beside those above mentioned bear the title of *Michtam*. After all that has been said it seems wisest to acknowledge that a true solution of the meaning of these titles is still to be desired. Another remark may here be made, viz., that in this, the second book of Psalms, six of them (lii., liv., lvi., lvii., lix., lxiii.), if the inscriptions can at all be trusted, were occasioned by David's trials when persecuted by Saul. and compelled to be an outcast from his home. Only two others, viz., xxxiv. and cxlii., are stated to have been written during that same time.* Is it not in keeping with the state of things viewed in this book of the Psalms, that so many described as written during that portion of David's life should find their place in it?

Turning now to the four entitled *Maschil*, we see they set before us the special features of the time when the righteous will be driven out from Jerusalem. Of the three chief kinds of trial to which they are exposed, viz., persecution, suffering under the hand of God, and calumnious accusation, Psalms iii., vi., vii. have treated. Now, in addition to all that, when driven out of Jerusalem (xlii. 6), they have to speak of the mighty man boasting himself in wickedness, really anti-christ (lii.), of apostates (liii.), of persecution at the hands of others besides those of their own nation (liv), and of the wickedness going on in the city (lv.)

In lii. we see the saint's confidence in God expressed, whilst as yet the mighty man is going on in his course unchecked. He boasts himself in mischief, the goodness or kindness of God enduring continually. God and the mighty man the saint here contrasts. God's goodness leads to repentance (Rom. ii. 4). The display of it, however, is lost on this one, as verses 2-4 describes. His tongue devises mischief, he loves evil more than good, and lying rather than righteousness. His destruction, then, to faith is sure, God will effect it (5); and the righteous will be preserved alive to witness it. What a change will be brought about! The triumphing of the wicked is short (Job

* To these, Ps. vii. may perhaps be added. But who Cush was, is not known, beyond that he was a Benjamite.

xx. 5). "Lying lips shall be put to silence which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous" (Ps. xxxi. 18). God deals with this man, in principle the anti-christ of the future, and over his destruction the righteous shall laugh. "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy (or goodness of v. 1) of God for ever and ever. I will praise Thee for ever, because Thou hast done it: and I will wait on Thy name; for it is good before Thy saints." The wicked trusted in his riches, the righteous trusted in the kindness or mercy of God. This last is a sure resource. How fully will that be proved when God's loving-kindness (same word as "goodness," v. 1, and "mercy," v. 8) of which they have thought (Ps. xlviii. 9) shall be so gloriously exemplified.*

In the fifty-third Psalm we may recognise the fourteenth with alterations. The word God is now substituted for Jehovah. And whereas in xiv. 5-6, we read, "There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor; because the Lord is his refuge;" in liii. 5, we have, "There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them." This alteration marks progress in the events of the last days. In the former Psalm the righteous and wicked among the Jews alone are seen, whilst God, being in the generation of the righteous, makes those who deny His existence afraid. In the latter, besides these two classes, an invading enemy is now viewed as having encamped against them. The apostates were afraid, for they did not trust in God. But there was no reason to fear, as the sequel showed. God could do,

*Is there not intentional irony in the language of the righteous, yet teaching likewise? "Lo, this is the man (or strong man) that made not God his strength." What is human strength if its possessor is not really dependent on God?

and did what His people could not. He scattered the bones of the people's opponents, putting the invading army to shame, because God had despised them. A clue to this state of things we have in the prophet Isaiah (viii. 12), where the remnant are exhorted not to fear like the ungodly amongst them, for Jehovah of Hosts will be for them in the time of their trouble. To make a confederacy will, in that day, be the cry, and with death and hell will the apostates be in agreement, that the overflowing scourge should not pass through them (Isaiah xxviii. 15). To wait, however, for God will be the people's wisdom. And this Psalm prophetically declares it. And connected with the events of those days will be the salvation of Israel, full, final, and everlasting.

Foreign foes having been mentioned in liii. 5, the godly know what to do. Weak and defenceless as far as human resources are concerned, the saint, not in terror like the apostates, cries to God. Assured that His arm is not shortened, nor His ear heavy that He should not hear (Isaiah lix. 1), he tells his God of the strangers, *i.e.*, those outside of the land nationally, and of oppressors* which seek after his life, they have not set God before them (liv. 3). Great indeed is his trouble, a power from without, and the mighty man and the apostates within, what hope, humanly speaking, can there be for the righteous one? Not indeed that in that day God's witnesses on earth will be reduced to one solitary person, as Elijah thought was the case when the still small voice reached his ear in the recesses of the cave at Horeb (1 Kings xix. 13, 14). We read in Rev. xiv. of 144,000 who will stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, the godly and preserved remnant of the Jews. But the remnant are personified by the Psalmist, which of itself tells of Jehovah's graciousness, *viz.*, that He will not despise the cry of a single saint on earth. If isolated for the moment from all others, the saint can cry to Him. And He, who responds to common inter-

*Isaiah xxv. 5, tells us of the overthrow by God of these two classes of enemies, strangers and oppressors, or terrible ones, employing the same terms as the Psalmist wherewith to describe them.

cession, forgets not the cry of the afflicted one. Jonah could say, "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice" (Jonah ii. 2). Each saint can count on His ear, if he cries in faith. Of this the Psalmist is confident, and about the answer he is intelligent. "Behold, God is my helper, the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in Thy truth. I will freely sacrifice unto Thee: I will praise Thy name, O Lord, for it is good. For He hath delivered me out of all trouble; and mine eye hath seen my desire upon mine enemies."

In Psalm lv. the righteous one is outside the city but cognisant of that which is going on within (9-15). In great affliction he turns to God, "Attend unto me and hear me, I wander (or am restless) in my complaint, and make a noise; because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me" (2-3). Thus crying earnestly to God (1-8), he asks for the destruction of his enemies (9-15). Being sure of deliverance since he counts on God (16-19), he tells of the treachery of the one who has broken the covenant (20-21), and counsels other godly ones as to their course in such circumstances (22-23). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days: but I will trust in Thee." Friends, counsellors, companions of years may fail, but Jehovah will sustain His servant, and is ready to relieve him of his burden.

Coming now to that series, lvi.-lx., designated *Michtam* we may see how they illustrate the subjects of the two closing verses of Ps. lv., viz., the sustainment of the righteous one by God, and the destruction of his enemies. Throughout this series there is a vein of confidence in God. See lvi. 4, 9, 11; lvii. 3; lviii. 10, 11; lix. 8-10, 17; lx. 6-12. Psalms lvi. and lvii. go together in this, that God is entreated to be merciful or gracious to His servant; and if the headings of these Psalms

The Psalms.

111

may be trusted, the date of their composition is fixed at the time when David's fortunes were at the lowest. He had just fled from fear of Saul to Achish, King of Gath, and then got away from Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam, from which time men began to rally round him (1 Sam. xxi. xxii.). Low as he was in his circumstances, he was not beyond the reach of divine mercy, which alone could extricate him from all his difficulties. To God he therefore turns, and casts himself on His mercy, assured that he will not plead in vain. Both Psalms begin in the same way, "Have mercy on me," or "Be gracious to me, O God," but the plea in the former is based upon what men do to him, in "Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies would daily swallow me up, for there be many that fight against me proudly."* (lvi. 1, 2). The plea in the latter is grounded on his confidence in God. "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in Thee; yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast" (lvii. 1). Dependence and boldness characterise him. Powerless in himself, he nevertheless views his enemies aright. "I will not fear. What can flesh do unto me?" (lvi. 4). What they did he recounts (5-7), whilst remembering that they were flesh. Now he and they had to do with God.† Nor was God indifferent to them. "Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle; are they not in Thy book?" The issue, then, could not be doubtful. So he proceeds, "In God have I put my trust. I will not be afraid. What can man do unto me? Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto Thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, hast Thou not delivered my feet from falling? that I may walk before God in the light of the living" (11-13). And yet more in the following Psalm. "I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the peoples: I

*"Proudly" or "haughtily" the Hebrew here means, not "Most High."

†So what God did he also states (8), "Thou tellest my wanderings." All his trials in his exile were known to God.

will sing unto Thee among the nations. For Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds" (lvii. 9-10).*

What comfort surely will saints in the future draw from these Psalms. What comfort, too, saints in the present can find. And whilst each class can be looking for the fulfilment of their proper expectation, both may say of themselves—never too low for God to come in, never so low that despair should take possession of them. A new road to us, it may be, along which we are travelling. Experiences, to which we are strangers, we may meet with by the way. But if God has put us on it, it must be right. And a little word like this, "Thou tellest my wanderings," can brace up the flagging energies. Or, "Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle," can revive the drooping spirit. God is not unmindful of His servants' difficulties. Nor is He indifferent to His children's tears. He would have them remember that. Nor that only. For past deliverances, and mercies which have been experienced, are to encourage the saint in present difficulties. "Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praises (or, rather, thanksgivings) to Thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death," as David had learnt in the valley of Elah (1 Sam. xvii.), "hast Thou not delivered my feet from falling? that I may walk before God in the light of the living" (lvi. 12, 13).

The deliverance of the righteous necessitates the cutting off of the wicked, where it is the blessing of the earthly people that is in view. Of this, then, Ps. lviii. and lix. specially treat, the former telling of the innate wickedness of the ungodly among the people (lviii. 3), the latter of God's judicial dealing with the heathen as well (lix. 5, 8). But this, as the reader may understand, is connected with, and dependent on, the establishment of God's kingdom in power. Hence the King is introduced in lix. 11, "Slay them not, lest my people forget." For by this designation, "my people," David speaks of Israel (1 Chron.

*We shall meet again with lvii. 7-11, and with lix. 5-12, forming together Ps. cviii.

The Psalms.

113

xxviii. 2 ; xxix. 14) over whom he had been chosen to reign ; and had been anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. xvi).^{*} The King, in thought thus introduced, we have next a prayer for God's interposition on behalf of His beloved ones,[†] through the instrumentality of the King (lx. 5), accompanied with an acknowledgment of God's sovereign rights over the land (6-8). Victory, then, must be, and will be, for the King, and for those with Him, though they have to confess their rejection by God in the past (1-3). This leads on to further prayer (lxi.), in the confidence of dwelling in God's tabernacle for ever, and finding refuge in the covert of His wings. For God has heard His servant's vows, and has given to him the heritage of those that fear His name (4, 5). Now since all blessing is bound up for the earthly saints with the preservation of the King, we read, "Thou wilt prolong the King's life, and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him. So will I sing praise unto Thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows" (6-8). How perfectly fitting at this juncture is the introduction of mention of the King.

After this we have the reminder (lxii. 11) "that power belongeth unto God," and, "Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for Thou renderest to every man according to his work." The confidence this can impart the Psalmist openly confesses. "Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved" (1, 2). So he views the wicked as a bowing wall and a tottering fence, and knows what must

*Whilst the Psalm is the utterance of David, a greater than him is surely referred to. This lxi. 6, 7, would indicate, even One who will abide, which, of course, David did not.

†"Thy beloved ones!" What a plea to urge with God! Faith counts on the unchangeableness of God, whatever the failure of the people. "He loved thee," said Moses (Deut. xxiii. 5), when they did not deserve it. So the Psalmist can write of God's "beloved ones," but who had known what it was to be made by God to drink the wine of staggering (lx. 3).

be the end of the conflict. His soul, then, he would encourage in waiting on God, and the more he does that the greater his confidence. "I shall not be greatly moved" (2) had been the utterance of his mouth; "I shall not be moved" (6) is the assurance of his heart. It is God's battle, so the victory is sure. What a difference confidence as to this can make. How often have human calculations of victory been mistaken. Some circumstances, perhaps, have been forgotten. Some factor in the problem overlooked. Or causes over which man had no control have conspired to defeat man's purpose. Nothing of this kind can be in question where the battle is the Lord's. So with no faltering tongue the Psalmist can exclaim, "In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, or loving-kindness, for Thou renderest to every man according to his work" (7-12).

He has heard that power belongs to God, he next desires that it may be openly displayed as he has seen God in the sanctuary (lxiii. 2). Mercy, or loving kindness, too, belong to God, and of that he has tasted, and proved its comfort. His loving kindness is better than life, therefore his lips shall praise Him (3). Who will he praise? God, who is his God, whom he seeks, earnestly desiring Him in a dry and thirsty land wherein is no water (1, 2). What a portion has he in God! What a prospect lies before him! In the wilderness his soul can be filled as with marrow and fatness, and his mouth praise God with joyful lips, as he remembers Him on his bed, and meditates on Him in the night watches. For it is a known God to whom he turns, who having been his help in the past, in the shadow of His wings will he rejoice though in the wilderness. Many a one

The Psalms.

115

who has followed his own will would, if possible, forget the past, and be only too thankful if it could be obliterated from the memory of God and of man. The saint, however, draws encouragement from the past, as he remembers God who has been his help. Lessons indeed have we by the way, and from the way. Lessons of our folly, but lessons too of God's goodness, who has redeemed us and delivered us out of difficulties, and it may be dangers, as they arose. Reviewing our past we may learn what to avoid, and against what we should be on the watch. Reviewing God's past ways with us, we may learn what He is, and what He *can* be to His people, from what He *has* been to them. Hence to Him the saint can turn. "My soul followeth hard after Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me. But those that seek my soul to destroy it shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes (or jackals). But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone that sweareth by Him* shall glory, but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped." In nothing short of the millenium does the Psalmist in thought stop.

So we are led on to that through Psalms lxiv.-lxvii., the first of these treating of divine dealing with the enemies, whose end we have just read, is to go into the lower parts of the earth. As they sought to do with the saint, God will act toward them. For this the Psalmist prays, describing first, in vv. 3-6, their ways and plans; then in vv. 7, 8, God's dealing with them in judgment. Do they whet their *tongue* like a sword? God shall make their *own tongue* to fall upon them. Do they *suddenly shoot* at the righteous? God shall *shoot* at them with an arrow, *suddenly* shall they be wounded. So there is a comparison, but there is also a contrast. In *secret* they thought to shoot at the perfect, and privily they thought to lay snares, saying, who shall see them. But *openly*, before all will God deal with such workers of iniquity; then all that see them thus dealt with by divine

* Sweareth by Him. With Deut vi. 13 for the precept, and Isai. lxxv. 16 for the prophetic announcement of the practice in the future, it seems best to refer the pronoun to God. But viewing the Psalms prophetically, the King is God.

power will wag (R.V.) their head (8). "And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of His doing." So the workers of iniquity shall pass away, but the righteous will abide, and "shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in Him, and all the upright in heart shall glory."

For this, God's intervention, the saints must, however, wait His time. He does not hurry the development of His plans. Hence faith is the more called into exercise, and confidence in His intervention has to be strengthened in the soul. And here His word meets us, and divine wisdom and goodness are manifested in the revelation of His mind, who always points His people onward to the fulfilment of their hope, whether it be the heavenly or the earthly one, not stopping short in His Word of the kingdom being established in power. To that line of things we are now conducted in Ps. lxxv.-lxxvii. We have read of the destruction of the persecutors and workers of iniquity in Ps. lxxiii.; for they must be dealt with in judgment, ere deliverance can be known by the earthly saints. Now we learn in lxxv. how these last will be able in some measure to discern the signs of the times as harbingers of the long-looked-for blessing. So in Ps. lxxv. we have the *prospect*. In Ps. lxxvi. there is the *retrospect*. In Zion shall God be praised, unto Him shall all flesh come.

But the saint has sinned, nor does he forget it. Like Jacob when told to go to Bethel, he is conscious of his unfitness for the divine presence, an unfitness which we know can only be removed by divine grace consequent on the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of this unfitness he speaks, "Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions Thou shalt purge them away. Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple." This book had opened (Ps. xlii. 6) with the Psalmist far off from the house, yet confident (xliii. 3) that he would again reach it. One learns in lxxv. 4 that his confident hope remains unshaken. "We shall be satisfied with the goodness

of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple." God's purpose is to gather His earthly people around His dwelling-place. Of old (Exod. xv. 17) was that declared, and subsequently it was fulfilled. Again shall it be made good for His people, who will then never more be driven out of the land of their inheritance (Ezek. xliii. 7), having been restored to it by the arm of divine power (Ps. lxxv. 5). For their God is able to do this, being the Creator, who makes fruitful the earth. Of Him as such they now speak, who has restored fertility to the land (9-13). For the words may be, and probably should be, read in verse 9, "Thou hast visited the earth," *i.e.*, the land of Israel, and again in verse 11, "Thou hast crowned the year with Thy goodness."

The significance of these statements will be understood, as we remember God's promise in Levit. xxvi. 42, "and I will remember the land." The fulfilment of this promise Ezekiel has predicted, xxxvi. 8, "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come." Of the time and fact of its accomplishment the Psalm treats, the harbinger, as the remnant will understand, of millennial blessing being on the wing. And in this they will not be mistaken, for Ps. lxxvi. 1-12 celebrates the deliverance as accomplished. Of this the prophets Isaiah and Zechariah have sung. For remembering that this Psalm is a retrospect, we can understand that verses 6, 12 refer, not to the former deliverance out of Egypt, but to that intervention on behalf of the people which God revealed by the prophet, the son of Amoz (xi. 15, 16; xliii. 1, 2), and which is still future. Also that which Zechariah xiii. 9 predicted, the saints in this Psalm (lxxvi. 10) speak of as past. What then remains but to pay their vows and to declare what God has done for them (13-20)? So the house is viewed as re-built (13), and the saint will proceed thither with his sacrifices and will declare to all that fear God the deliverance he has now experienced.

Of old, God brought Israel out of Egypt, and separated them to be a people to Himself, whilst the Gentiles as such remained outside the circle of divine favour. In the future it will be

different. Israel's deliverance will be accompanied by real blessing to Gentiles. Of this we now read in Ps. lxxvii.* "God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us ; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health (or, salvation) among all nations. Let the peoples praise Thee, O God ; let all the peoples praise Thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy ; for Thou shalt judge the peoples righteously, and govern (or lead) the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise Thee, O God, let all the peoples praise Thee." This result the faithful know is near at hand. And the reason is stated ; for " the earth has yielded her increase " (6), as it should be rendered. Its renewed fertility they have noticed, and understand it. Consequently then, and confidently can they add, "God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." Surely the saints in those days will study the Word to profit, and so will interpret aright the sign of the land's renewed fruitfulness.

"God shall bless us," they say. Assuredly He will. Now it will be under the reign of their King. To Him attention is then to be directed, who is God as well as man. So Psalm lxxviii. which follows commences with words that remind us of the wilderness days when God went forth with his people. "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, let them also that hate Him flee before Him ;" for it is the same One who is celebrated in this Psalm, well called a song, to whom Moses spoke when the ark set forward on its journeys—"Rise up, Jehovah, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee" (Numb. x. 35). Moses speaks of the effects to follow Jehovah rising up ; this Psalm views prophetically its consequences being carried out, affecting as they will the righteous and the wicked (1-3). Who and what He is to call forth the praises of His people is then declared. "Sing unto God, sing praises unto

* This Psalm has been viewed as a harvest thanksgiving. Granting that may have been so in the past, it is plain that the introduction of "all the nations," "all peoples" indicates, that something else is intended than the harvest of the year in the seventh month.

The Psalms.

119

His name ; cast up a highway for Him who rideth through the deserts (R.V.) ; His name is Jah ; and rejoice before Him. A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows is God in His holy habitation. God setteth the solitary in families : He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a dry land." We are taken back in thought to the past, to the days of Israel, and to those of the patriarchs. "As riding through the deserts," for such probably is what the Psalmist meant ; we are taken back to the history of Israel in the wilderness, when Jehovah went before them ; whilst the exhortation to cast up a highway for Him who is thus described, recalls the language of the prophet, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isai. xl. 3) ; the son of Jesse, and the son of Amoz writing by the Spirit of prophecy of the very same time,—the day of victory, and of His glory who was once here in humiliation, crucified, and cast out.

And what shall be said of the character of this One ? Is it altered, is it affected by time ? His people well know it is not. His ways and His dealings in the past are for the encouragement and instruction of His people in the present. "God setteth the solitary in families." Could not Abraham bear witness to this when Isaac was given him, the earnest of the promise, that he, who had left his country, kindred, and father's house, should have seed as numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is on the sea-shore ? "He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity." Could not Joseph speak of this, when he was taken straight from the dungeon to be lord over the land of Egypt ? "But the rebellious dwell in a dry land." Were not those who came out of Egypt and who never entered the land, but perished at length in the wilderness, solemn illustrations of this ? Such is His character who is celebrated in this song as Jah, here for the first time in the book of Psalms being found that name of God, so familiar now to all of us in the compound word Hallelujah, *i.e.*, Praise ye Jah. Moses, in his song, first uttered it (Exod. xv. 2), and after the victory over Amalek (xvii. 17) repeated it. The Psalmists, whether David, or Asaph, or Ethan, make mention of it. And the prophet Isaiah, and Hezekiah re-echo it.

The Psalm celebrates Jah's victorious intervention on behalf of His people in the past, and in the future, for He has ascended on high, He has led captivity captive, He has received gifts among men,* yea among rebellious ones, that the Lord (lit. Jah) God might dwell among them. Hence, praise to God is the result (19-21), with the announcement of Adonai's determination to bring back into blessing, now to be full and final, His earthly people Israel. So the Psalm closes, "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth ; O sing praises unto the Lord ; Selah : to Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens which were of old ; lo, He doth send out His voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God : His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds. O God, Thou art terrible out of Thy holy places : the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God" (32-35). Blessed indeed will they say He is, when this Psalm receives its fulfilment.

Adonai, who is Jah and man also, will bring His suffering people into blessing, having Himself experienced sufferings and rejection by man, and deliverance at the hand of God. To this our attention is next directed by the lxixth Psalm, which, though it treats of saints (26), "those whom Thou hast wounded," treats also of the faithful and true witness, as vv. 9, 21, referred to respectively in John ii. 17, Rom. xv. 3, and John xix. 28, indicate. What encouragement it is to us, and will be also to God's saints in the future, to learn of the circumstances through which He passed, who is the leader and perfecter of the faith, and of the spirit manifested by Him when suffering at the hands of man. What man is capable of, the Psalm tells us. All perfectly known beforehand to Him of whom it speaks. *We* may have to make painful discoveries by the way. He knew all that to which He would be exposed, ere He visited this earth. Yet knowing all, and though He was Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Now if He experienced what this Psalm describes, as

*The reader may remember that to this Scripture the Apostle Paul refers in Ephes. iv. 8, which shows that the psalm is really Messianic in character.

The Psalms.

121

surely He did, it need be no matter of surprise if His people experience similar treatment. "It is enough," He has told us, "for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household" (Matt. x. 25); again, "The disciple is not above his Master; but every one that is perfected shall be as his Master" (Luke vi. 40). Called as we are to follow His steps, we may see depicted in this Psalm something of the trials and sorrows of God's saints common in some measure to them and to the Master. But especially does it describe the low condition to which the godly remnant will be brought, through faithfulness to God, before their deliverance can come. And wonderful surely will it be to them to learn that Adonai Himself has passed through the deep waters before them.

It opens with a cry for salvation (1-3). No depth of trouble, however great, should shake the heart's confidence in God. Here the depth of it is great indeed—"I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me." Yet He turns to God, and addresses Him as "my God" (3), for God's relation to His people on the ground of redemption never changes. As well in the darkest as in the brightest day the saint can cry to Him as "my God." From verse 4 to verse 21 the afflicted one tells out what he suffers from men for God. Hated without a cause, in danger of death, a stranger to his brethren, an alien to his mother's children, the reproaches of them that reproached God fallen on him. Such was his experience. He wept, and fasted, and it was turned to his reproach. He mourned, and became a proverb to his enemies. The chief men talked of him, and he was the song of the drunkards. Now why was all this? What had he done to deserve it? He will tell: "For Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face" (7). "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (9). So he can turn to God, preferring his two requests. The *first*, that none that wait on God should be ashamed for his sake (6). How he thinks of others. The *second*, that God would turn according to the multi-

tude of His tender mercies, and redeem his soul, because of his enemies(18). God knows his reproach, sees his adversaries and his desolate condition. Alone in the midst of his enemies, even in food and drink he is made to feel the bitter and relentless hatred of his foes. His case is thus laid before God. Then he asks for judgment on those that persecute him, associating other sufferers with himself, 22-28 ; after which he prefers his request for himself, viz., for God's salvation to set him up on high, looking forward to the effect his deliverance will have on the meek, and its connection with the accomplishment of God's purposes about Zion (28-36).

What a subject for us to contemplate — as we remember, that here are depicted sufferings of the Lord on the cross (21) at the hands of man ! What a thing for the meek to remember — the deliverance of One who has been in such depth of trouble ! What comfort, too, for Jerusalem in the future ! “ The Lord heareth the needy, and despiseth not His prisoners.” In clouds and darkness the day of the Lord's crucifixion seemed to close. It will prove to be the advent of that day, the like of which has never been known, when “ heaven and earth shall praise the Lord, the seas and everything that moveth in them.” When the corner stone of the earth was laid, “ the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ” (Job xxxviii. 6, 7). In the coming day, not heaven only but earth also will rejoice (and of this, John in Patmos witnessed in his prophetic vision, Rev. v. 9-14), “ For God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah; that men may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it ; and they that love His name shall dwell therein ” (vv. 34-36). The deliverance of the Lord in resurrection is the sure presage of the accomplishment of Zion's and of Israel's fondest and long-cherished hopes.

Hence have we in Ps. lxx. the prayer of the individual saint who is poor and needy, and in Ps. lxxi. a prayer suited for the nation in its old age, for God's intervention in power, followed by

Ps. lxxii., which gives the picture of millennial peace and blessing under the reign in person of the Messiah, the Christ of God.

A word on Ps. lxx., which, as the reader may see, is the concluding part of Ps. xl. made into a separate Psalm with a few alterations. That it thus appears as a separate Psalm is of great interest to us, because it shows that language which the Lord could use, His saints can have part in ; whilst there are sufferings, and therefore expressions connected with them, peculiar to Him alone. Of the Messianic application of Ps. xl. there can be no doubt. It is quoted of Him in the New Testament (Heb. x. 5-9). That part, which applies to Him alone, is found only in Ps. xl. That part of it, which saints can likewise use, is here made into a separate Psalm, in perfect keeping with that which we observed in Ps. lxix. 26, viz., the association of other sufferers with the Lord Jesus Christ. The fitness of the introduction of these verses in this place as a distinct Psalm is also apparent. The Lord has spoken in lxix. The other sufferers individually speak in Ps. lxx., whilst the nation as such in its old age will find suited language in lxxi. in which to express itself.

This last composition it will be seen reminds us of other psalms, vv. 1-3 being almost the same as Ps. xxxi. 1-3 ; verses 5, 6 being similar to xxii. 9, 10 ; and v. 12 to xxii. 19 ; v. 13 to xxxv. 4, 26, and xl. 14 ; and v. 24 to xxxv. 28. Appeal is made to God not to cast off in the time of old age, nor to forsake when old and grey-headed the one whom He has upheld from the womb, and taught from his youth (9, 18). "Thou," we read, "who hast shewed us* many and sore troubles, shall quicken us again, and shalt bring us up again from the depths of the earth" (20). The Psalmist here, if we follow the Hebrew *text*, speaks in the first person plural, instead of as in the other verses in the singular, confirming the thought expressed

* The English reader may thank the revisers for presenting the Hebrew *text* in this verse, the *ch'thib*, as it is called, *i.e.*, what is written, instead of the *k'ri*, *i.e.*, what is read. In verse 22 we meet for the first time in the Psalter, with the appellation, "Holy One of Israel." Elsewhere in the Psalter we meet with it in lxxviii. 41 ; lxxxix. 18.

above, that the writer personifies the nation of whom this will be true. "Thou shalt bring us up again from the depths of the earth," when the dry bones will live, and the nation awake up to political existence once more (Ezek. xxxvii. ; Dan. xii. 1, 2). For of the nation as such that only will be true. "A wonder unto many" (7), but trusting in Jehovah, the Psalmist can say, "Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." How fully that will be effected one need not point out. These two Psalms then are very interesting, connecting by their language sufferings of the Lord on the cross with those of the saints and of the nation, whilst at the same time distinguishing very clearly between Him and them. There could be language in common, but there is language which He alone could use.

The cry of the afflicted saints will not be in vain. Assurance of that is immediately provided in Psalm lxxii., which describes in beautiful language the blessings for those on earth under the reign of God's King, who is also the King's son. For Him God's judgments and God's righteousness are requested; the former that He may know God's mind under all the varied circumstances in the kingdom that may arise, the latter that he may judge righteously God's people and God's poor. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of God's throne (Ps. lxxxix. 14). Executing righteousness and judgment characterised David (2 Sam. viii. 15 ; 1 Chron. xviii. 14) and Solomon (1 Kings x. 9 ; 2 Chron. ix. 3) and Josiah (Jer. xxii. 15). A king shall yet reign at Jerusalem executing judgment and righteousness. The effect of this the Psalmist goes on to describe in vv. 4-17. And as he describes in glowing terms the happiness of that time, he speaks of one reigning at Jerusalem, whose kingdom as such will be from sea to sea and from the Euphrates to the end of the earth, or the land ; but who will receive the homage of all kings and be served by all nations, the dwellers in the wilderness bowing before Him, and his enemies licking the dust ; whilst the soul, or life of the needy He will redeem from violence, and they shall be preserved alive on earth ; for precious shall their blood be in His sight. For Him too shall prayer be made, and daily shall He be praised. A

picture indeed of millennial times and millennial happiness. Fertility will characterise even the mountain-tops, for "abundance (not a handful) of corn shall be on the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed" (16, 17). His words will then come true, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* men unto Me" (John xii. 32). With all nations calling Him blessed the picture of millennial happiness here closes. Nothing more could be said, and nothing else could be a fitting conclusion to such a description of the future but the doxology which follows. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (18-20). He could ask for no more as this picture of millennial blessing passed before his mental gaze. And saints, whilst waiting for the second advent of Messiah, are to be encouraged by the prospect, sorrows great and heavy meanwhile having to be endured. But this carries us on to the *third* book of the Hebrew Psalter.

C. E. S.

THE LAST GREAT CRISIS.

It is not an unusual thing to find students of prophecy confounding together the different actors in the great crisis of the last days. The reason is not far to seek. Some of those characters act in unison to such a degree, and pursue to so large an extent the same policy, that it is easy to account for the confusion that exists in the minds of some as to them. Considerable discrimination is needed in the examination of this subject.

The Antichrist naturally comes to mind first. This title occurs in 1 John ii. 22, where he is spoken of as the leader both of Jewish unbelief and of Christian apostasy. He not only denies that Jesus is the Christ (the long known form of Jewish unbelief),

but he denies also the Father and the Son. In 2 Thess. ii. 3-4, he comes before us as the man of sin, the son of perdition. In this passage we learn that he will sit in the temple of God (in Jerusalem, surely), and proclaim himself the supreme object of divine worship. To this lie, God will give up the great mass of the Jewish people who will have returned to their own land in unbelief, and also the vast body of lifeless professors of Christianity who have never received the truth in the love of it. This passage reminds us of Dan. xi. 36, where the same great leader in wickedness is spoken of as "the king." Here we find him in a strictly Jewish connection. He is the accepted political head of the returned Jews, and an object of jealousy and hatred to the kings of the North and of the South, who both make war upon him. No one, we judge, can read Dan. xi. 36-39 carefully, and question that the Antichrist is a Jew. Under the same title of "king" he appears also in Isaiah xxx. 33 ; lvii. 9. In the first of these passages his doom is described ; in the second, Israel is reproached by Jehovah for having any dealings with him. Turning again to the New Testament, he comes before us in Rev. xiii. 11 as a wild beast coming up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. Here is shown his connection with the Imperial power, of which we will speak presently. It is plainly the same wonder-working person as in 2 Thess. ii. A later passage in Revelation (xix. 20) speaks of him as "the false prophet," which carries our minds back to Deut. xviii. 15, of which Scripture he pretends to be the fulfilment. Another plain allusion to the Antichrist may be found in Zech. xi. 15-17. As the foolish shepherd, he devours the flock that the true Shepherd loved so well, and would fain have blessed. Having refused Him who came in His Father's name, Israel will receive him who comes in his own name to their hurt and ruin. There are many minor allusions to the same person in different parts of Scripture (*e.g.*, Psalm x. 18—"the man of the earth"), but those referred to above are the most important ones, and will suffice for our present purpose.

We will consider next the last great Imperial Head of the West.

In Dan. vii. 8 a little horn, bold and blasphemous in his actings, arises out of the ten-horned fourth beast. We need not stay to prove that the fourth beast represents the Roman Empire; most of our readers are agreed as to it. Its ten horns are the ten kings who rule it at the end under the presidency of the little horn. As the Prince of the Romans, who long ago destroyed Jerusalem and the sanctuary, he will form a covenant with the mass of the returned Jewish people for one week—seven years (Dan ix. 26, 27). This covenant or treaty will doubtless be negotiated by the Antichrist acting on behalf of the Jews as their king. It is divinely described in Isaiah xxviii. 14-20 as a covenant with death and an agreement with hell, and appears to be entered into on the part of the Jews as a defence against their dreaded Northern enemy. The book of the Revelation furnishes us with some valuable information as to the re-appearance of this great power, which, as all are aware, has no existence at all at present. In Rev. xiii. 1, it arises as a wild beast out of the sea. This shows us the circumstances which lead to its uprising. The sea represents the nations in a state of upheaval. Such a condition of things can easily evolve a great empire, the empire of the first Napoleon being a proof of it. But such passages as Rev. xi. 7; xvii. 8 imply that another power will be at work. "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit": ominous words! Satan's hand is there, in order to deprive God's King, if possible, of His rightful inheritance in the earth. He nominates the beast for universal sovereignty in a moment when God's time has almost come to give the kingdoms of the world to His beloved Son. We are disposed to regard Isaiah xiv. also as referring to the last great Gentile head under the titles of, "Lucifer, son of the morning"; we leave it as a suggestion with our readers.

The third actor is the little horn of Dan. viii. 9. Care is needed here, for many fail to distinguish between the horns of chaps. vii., viii. The horn of chap. vii., as we have seen, arises out of and dominates the *fourth* beast, which is almost universally believed to be the Roman Empire. The horn of chap. viii. arises out of one of the four principal divisions of the Grecian Empire,

the *third* beast of the preceding chapter. The horns are thus totally distinct. Antiochus Epiphanes was the forerunner or type of the Eastern horn, who will be a great thorn in the sides of the returned Jews. As the King of the North in Dan. xi. 40, he makes war upon them, and comes to his end in their land. In him will probably be fulfilled the many unfinished prophecies concerning the Assyrian, notably Micah v. 5-6. This power has no existence at present, but will doubtless be brought upon the scene in due time.

The fourth prominent figure in the latter day crisis is Gog, prince of Rosh, Mesheck, and Tubal (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix). Here we have the vast dominion of Russia, a power ever bitterly hostile to the Jews. This enemy appears to come up against the land after the appearing of the Lord; his overthrow and the complete annihilation of his hosts is graphically portrayed by the prophet. This is *not* the same enemy as the king of the North, though many students of the prophetic word appear to think so. Their policy is the same, and they both come against Jerusalem and the glorious land from the North; but they are distinct powers nevertheless. The king of the north is the less formidable antagonist of the two, and is backed up by another, in all probability by Russia itself (Dan viii. 24); Gog comes up with far greater hosts after his tool (as we cannot help regarding the king of the North) has met his doom. Another Scripture which we believe refers to Gog is Isaiah xxxiii. 1. After the opening of the kingdom of Christ in chap. xxxii., a new enemy comes up treacherously to spoil His people, and is consumed as the burnings of lime and as thorns in the fire. Who is this but the great Northern adversary? There are thus four principal movers in the stirring events of the last days, and if we would understand prophecy aright we must not confound them. The first two act together in their wickedness; the second two act in concert likewise. The first pair are characterised by hostility to God's Christ; the second by animosity to His earthly people. But God will triumph over all in His time, and will yet give the kingdoms of this world to His beloved Son, who alone is worthy.

W. W. FEREDAY.

THE TWO NATURES,

OR THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN.

THE old nature, the old man, the flesh, the carnal mind, sin in us, are expressions substantially meaning the same thing. There are shades of difference in their use, but practically they all refer to the inbred corruption of the life or nature derived from Adam, and existing *in* every human being on earth.

When God saved us, He granted a full, absolute, and eternal forgiveness of all our sins. But the nature in us, from which the sins proceed, the root of which our actions are the fruit, is not forgiven, is not removed, is not sanctified, is not cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. You can forgive a person, but you cannot forgive the nature of the person. Acts, not the root from which they spring, are pardoned. The nature and the person are distinct, thus, "*our* old man" (Rom. vi. 6); "sin that dwelleth *in me*" (vii. 20); "that *ye* put off . . . the old man" (Eph. iv. 22); "that *ye* put on the new man" (verse 24). The person is *forgiven* (Eph. i. 7); the nature is *condemned* (Rom. viii. 3). Every believer has thus two natures in him, distinct and opposite in character, and to either every action of life can be referred—the bad to the old man, the good to the new man. But responsibility attaches to the person, not to the nature. I am responsible for my acts whatever the character or tendency of my nature may be. As a Christian I am responsible for the activities of either nature—the old and the new. A sinner, too, is equally responsible for his acts, not the sinful nature in him. The old nature is not bettered, sanctified, cleansed, or removed at conversion. What then is done with it? Are we to be controlled by it as in our unconverted days? Certainly not. Are *you*, beloved fellow believer, struggling to master the old nature within? Are you by prayer, resolution, vows, and efforts, seeking to subject it to God's authority? O the agony of soul experienced by many sincere souls, struggling after holiness in the repression of the old nature in all its unholy and powerful tendency to evil! What is the every day life of many believers? Morning resolutions,

broken vows and defeat during the day, and in the evening the bitter acknowledgment that sin again and again has had the mastery. The desires are right, the breathings after holiness having certainly the new nature as their spring and source. Through these weary and fruitless struggles you have learnt that the old man is evil and only evil, but further that it is more powerful than *you*. It has repeatedly mastered you. What you need is power, not your own but the power of another. Let us here pause, and look the matter straight in the face. You are saved, your sins are forgiven, you have everlasting life, but in your every day life as a Christian you are finding out that the *evil in you* is more powerful than the good. Your longing after holiness and moral conformity to Christ, spring from the new man, but you lack the power to carry them into effect. Why is this? Surely holiness and power reside in the new nature! No, holiness does, but *not* power. The past experience of Paul in Rom. vii. 15 proves it. The old nature is sinful and *strong*; the new nature is holy and *weak*. These are truths taught in Rom. vii.; these two are lessons of experience. What you need therefore is *power* to carry into effect the holy desires of the new man.

The way and mode of deliverance out of this terribly trying position — one which paralyses the spiritual energies, hinders Christian joy, and checks progress in the soul — must now be pointed out.

In Rom. vi. 6 we read, "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him"; that is, God has subjected the old man to judicial judgment. It is not cleansed, it is crucified. It is not sanctified, it is crucified. God's hatred *of* it, and *to* it is thus expressed. He does not say it is dead, but crucified. Crucifixion is a lingering course of judgment, and is the act of One duly empowered to pass such a sentence. *Men* crucified Christ thus expressing their hatred of *Him*. *God* has crucified the old man the witness of His hatred to *it*. Now we can understand the strength of the language in Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law (or authority) of God, neither indeed can be." If, therefore, the carnal mind in

The Two Natures.

131

each believer is so lawless and rebellious that God's authority over it is defied, that nothing can change its bitter enmity to God, what then remains? — Subject it to the severest judicial dealing which it is possible for God to inflict, and this He has done— “our old man is *crucified* with Him.” The first and necessary step in the way of deliverance is the full and hearty acceptance of these two truths : the incorrigible badness of the nature (Rom. viii. 7), and its judicial judgment by God (vi. 6). Here then is a door of hope, here a spring of comfort for the distressed soul. The weary struggle ends. The repression of the old man is given up as an utter impossibility ; its improvement is now seen to be a hopeless task. We have now put our foot on the first round of the ladder of hope, and already gleams of light flash athwart the soul.

Now that our strength is measured, and proved, and shown to be weak as water, we necessarily cry for a deliverer. Deliverance is the goal. We cannot deliver ourselves. Scripture and experience prove it. Deliverance comes not from *within*, but from *without*, not self but God is the Deliverer. There may be much to learn ere deliverance is fully known, but the soul is on the way to it. The *power* of the flesh who will hold its captive, and the *weakness* of the nature to fulfil its holy longings leaves one helpless, hopeless, and defeated. Well it is, when such a lesson is *thoroughly learnt*. Now Christ is the One who *bore* our sins, and He alone delivers from the *dominion* of sin. Deliverance from sin itself, is effected by death or the coming of the Lord ; but deliverance from its dominion is a present truth. We note several stages in the progress of the soul's experience detailed in Rom. vii. 7-23. In the struggle for deliverance from the dominion of sin, successive lessons are slowly and painfully learnt. How needful and useful for every one to travel this road ! The opposition of the two natures is the substantial truth of the chapter, not doctrinally but experimentally set forth by one whose exact experience is there delineated. Brought down to the acknowledgment of his utter powerlessness to deliver himself, the point is reached where God can meet him. He cries out in this the crisis

of his spiritual history, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" (verse 24.) It is not "who shall *help* me ?" But, "who shall *deliver* me ?" Deliverance out of this wretched condition of slavery to the flesh must be the work of another. *I* cannot break the shackles ; *I* cannot break the tightening grasp of sin. No, but another can. The next cry is one of triumph, of assured victory, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The goal is reached. What a contrast between those two cries ! The cry of need is answered by the cry of triumph. One can scarcely realise the rapid transition from wretchedness (verse 24) to victory (verse 25).

But now instruction about the old man and the new man are given, in order that the delivered one may intelligently walk before God. The two characteristic powers of life are stated in terms so precise, that mistake seems nigh impossible—"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin ;" thus the two natures are distinguished as the "mind" and the "flesh" and their respective governing laws. The new nature serves the "law of God." The old nature serves the "law of sin." It is not that the delivered one is to go on in practical obedience to these two masters. The partnership with the old man is now dissolved, and the soul is free to serve God and to live to Him wholly. What the verse states is the abstract character of the natures.

The power of the old man is now broken, and the new man is free to act in the power of the Holy Ghost. Now there are two things said of the old man. First, it is crucified (Rom. vi. 6) ; second, it is put off (Eph. iv. 22). The former is God's act, the latter is the act of believers. "As the truth is in Jesus" (verse 21), does not refer to truth in general, but points to one distinct, definite act, namely, the putting off the old man, and putting on the new (Eph. iv. 21-24). This was done at the moment of our conversion. Then the old man with his deeds were put off, and the new man put on. The old nature as expressed in former life and ways is done with, "put off" as you put off an old threadbare garment unfit for further use ; then, too, you put on the new

The Two Natures.

133

man, or a new public character, new ways, new conduct. Do you want to see the new unspotted garment displayed in all its beauty? You see it perfectly in Jesus, in His holy life. Every act, every word, every thought reflected the beauty of the new man. "The truth is in Jesus," means that in Him, here on earth, we behold the pattern of the new man; *that* is what believers before God *are*, and what believers ought to *be*. His grace, His gentleness, His love, His truth, His meekness, His lowliness, His consideration, etc., are characteristics of the new man, and these should be increasingly displayed by each believer.

The works of the flesh are enumerated in Gal. v. 19-21—seventeen in all. These are the gross forms which manifest the flesh in its utter badness. It has other characteristics which we need not here name. The workings of the flesh *in us*, are met by the Holy Ghost *in us*. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (verse 17), and as ever, "these are contrary the one to the other." The opposition of the natures (Rom. vii.) is still continued (Gal. v). But a new power is here introduced. The Spirit is that power. The conflict in Rom. vii. is between the old man and the new. The struggle in Gal. v. is between the flesh and the Spirit. But not only does the Spirit repress the risings of the flesh, He also produces the varied graces of the new man as patterned in the life of Jesus. We have had the *works* of the flesh, now we meet with another and contrasted expression, the *fruit* of the Spirit (Gal. v. 19, 22), not fruits. The works of the flesh are distributed amongst men — one or more here and there. But the fruit of the Spirit is *one*. The Holy Ghost would have the life of Jesus here on earth reproduced in each believer. It is not that we are called upon to *do* what Jesus did; that we cannot. But the moral principles which governed Him in all His actions, words, and ways; the excellencies of Jesus are to be witnessed in our lives, not *one* feature merely of that blessed life, but *all*. We are to walk as He walked, to live as He lived. The work of the Spirit presents one undivided cluster of fruit and flower, having their root in the new man. Nine such are enumerated (verses 22, 23). Then are added the

significant words, "Against such there is no law." You cannot love too much, you cannot abound too much in joy, you cannot show too much long-suffering, you cannot be too meek, and so on. Against the exercise of all these graces there is "no law." Let the new nature indulge itself in these graces, beauties, and moral excellencies. Are we doing so? Are we daily becoming more Christ-like? Less of self and more of Christ? Are we thus pressing on? May Paul's motto be ours—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. i. 21).

ON CHURCH-RECEPTION.

VARIOUS communications have reached us on subjects and points of interest, suggested by an article which appeared in our last issue of *Truth*, entitled, "*Certain Church Statements and Truths Re-Examined.*" We are thankful for the exercise of soul and awakened interest on the part of some, and trust it may be deepened, and lasting in its effects. The following, amongst other reasons have been advanced by our correspondents as characteristic signs of weakness. We will deal in this paper with:—

NARROW AND SECTARIAN VIEWS OF RECEPTION.

Attention has been called to the fact that certain published statements by accredited teachers, and the practice as to Church-Reception are not in happy accord; that one thing is taught and another practised. It is contended that true principles giving the breadth of Scripture are clearly enough taught and expounded, while on the other hand these Church principles of truth are practically ignored when cases arise demanding their application. Is this so? Do we *teach* one thing, and *do* another of an opposite character? We are satisfied from a careful examination of facts, that a narrow and sectarian spirit does prevail in certain quarters, and that this attitude towards God's beloved saints repels many. We have witnessed it and grieved over it, and must sorrowfully admit that the charge advanced is in measure true. Now we can only be maintained in divine thought and corresponding action, as

On Church-Reception.

135

Scripture is allowed its place in our consciences. That alone corrects the sectarianism common to the human heart. The interests of party imperceptibly grow upon us, and perhaps insensibly influence us in our modes of thought. Sectarian *in spirit*, we then become sectarian *in action*. Scripture alone must be listened to in questions of Church-Reception as in all else. Traditional teaching is worthless, and custom, even if sanctioned by names deservedly high, equally so. We insist upon the literality of Scripture, but along with it, its warmth. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me," but not in the coldness of the letter merely, for adds the apostle, "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. i. 13).

In this spirit we ask the question: Who should be received into the assemblies of God's saints? *Primā facie* every Christian. But holiness and truth are divine principles which must never be surrendered. These principles are immutable. They flow from what God is — holy and true. Now the Living God has imprinted on His assembly His own character as holy and true (Eph. v. 27; 1 Tim. iii. 15). Christ's *present* attitude to His saints is in His two-fold character as the holy and the true (Rev. iii. 7). Now we insist upon the full and hearty reception of every Christian as his scriptural right and privilege, consistently with the maintenance of these two fundamental principles. We break bread together as believers (Acts ii. 42, 44), as disciples (xx. 7), as members of Christ's mystical body (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). Intelligence was not looked for, much less demanded on the part of those received. People were taught when *inside*. It is said, "Persons should know what and where they are coming to before the door is thrown open for admission." Is the person a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he a true disciple of Christ? Is he without doubt a member of the body of Christ? If these questions can be satisfactorily answered, why *add* to them? "Remember Me" is the Lord's word to one and all. This heart-searching word is not addressed to a class, but to all without exception. Persons who look for intelligence on the part of the received, themselves clearly manifest their lack of it. And pray

what is the measure of that intelligence insisted upon, and what its character? Analyse it, and you will find that in nineteen cases out of twenty, it amounts to an admission that, "We are right; we are the true orthodox company in contradistinction to those who are not." We hold firmly and unswervingly that the Church position occupied through grace for nearly half a century is *of God*, but we do not ask others to affirm our personal conviction. To insist upon the acknowledgment on the part of comers, that a certain Church position is alone right, or simply right, is to impose a test which Scripture—our only guide and authority—does not warrant, and in so doing we are sectarian in principle and practice. The simplicity and breadth of the Word of God in Reception must be firmly maintained.

In receiving on adequate testimony—personally or by letter—no conditions or bargains must be made. Where the comer *may* go to next Lord's Day is a question with which we have nothing to do. We break bread just for one Lord's Day—the next we may be with *Him* in the air. We cannot guard against what any of us may do in the near or distant future, and must not suppose that a wrong is to be done. Besides, which, *all* breaking bread are amenable to discipline. "Do not ye judge them that are within?" (1 Cor. v. 12.) One who breaks bread even once, thus identifying himself with God's assembly is as truly "within" as the most enlightened or aged saint.

Should Christians be freely received from churches, chapels, and from meetings which we probably and rightly regard as sectarian in character and constitution? Subject to the firm yet gracious maintenance of the two principles already referred to—holiness and truth—we unhesitatingly, and without further qualification answer, YES. Sectarianism prevents us going to places, from which, however, individuals are gladly welcomed. Sectarianism in itself is undoubtedly an evil, but in the systems so designated there are many truly godly souls. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis (*Protestantism*) which have not defiled their garments" (Rev. iii. 4). Heartily receive all such. The religious systems of the day are built up not on a foundation of wickedness, but of

ignorance. It is supposed that ordination exists now as in apostolic days, and acting on this belief churches are called into existence and a humanly devised ministry instituted. Many truly pious persons honestly hold that the numerous bodies into which Protestantism is divided are scripturally constituted both as their government and ministry. We rightly hold them to be wrong. But these saints have a right and title equal to ourselves to break bread in remembrance of Christ. Woe be to us if we deny them their undoubted claim. Nor must we coldly say, "We cannot hinder them"; nay, rather we should gladly welcome all such and *tell them so.* Sectarianism in itself should not be allowed to hinder one coming to the Lord's table. Teach them by all means; instruct them more fully in the will of the Lord. Lovingly and wisely counsel but receive them to your heart and to the Lord's Table, and do not keep them back *till* they have renounced their sectarian Church position. Their title to Church fellowship is as good as your own.

The narrowness of Sectarianism has to be judged, and the breadth of Scripture sedulously cultivated.

MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH.

Such theories, as pre-existing documents and accounts which nobody has ever heard anything of, till within the last 150 years or so, and from which it is alleged Moses borrowed his account of creation, are the veriest rubbish imaginable. It is sad when men who believe, or profess to believe, in the Bible as fully inspired, lend themselves to propagate such God-dishonouring thoughts! Away, for ever, with these unhallowed speculations and consign them to eternal oblivion!

But with whom did this singular fancy originate? Nearly a century and a half ago, a certain Dr. Astruc, a Belgian physician, of more repute in medicine than in theology, propounded the singular idea that the inspired historian had before him several

different accounts of creation, founded on the supposed difference of names and titles of God in the first two chapters of the Bible. *God*, he said, characterised the first chapter of Genesis, and *Jehovah-God* the second chapter, and hence the inspired record must have been based on other and prior accounts. Certain we are that this theory would not have survived its author had not some Germans taken kindly to it. You see even the "ponderous" German mind is capable of conceits and littleness! English divines followed suit. It never seems to enter the head of these learned gentlemen that their theories *may* be wrong. No. Moses *must* be wrong, of course.

But these men are amiable, for they are good enough to excuse Moses on the ground that his was an early age — one not far removed from barbarism. But Moses, rather God, *is* right, and these men *are* wrong. Divine names and titles are used in the Scriptures with the most remarkable precision. Let a few instances suffice, and may the reader follow out this interesting study, and he will find that it is one which will stand microscopic examination. *God* is the creatorial name. Now, the first three verses of chapter ii. of the Bible conclude the subject matter of chapter one, which is that of Creation pure and simple; hence "God" occurs 34 times within those 34 verses. But chapter ii., from verse 4, has, as its main subject, the moral relationships of the creature with God, thus the title "LORD God," as expressing those relationships, occur eleven times. It is ignorance of the Word to confound the teaching of those two chapters; they treat of different subjects however closely related. Now compare Genesis vii., verse 5 with verse 9. In the former "the *Lord* commanded him"; in the latter it is "*God* had commanded Noah." Why this? Are we to invent an explanation, or, worse still, to deny Scripture, because we do not understand? Observe that in the context of verse 5, where "LORD," or Jehovah occurs, seven pairs of clean animals were to be brought into the ark, because required for sacrifice (compare verse 2 with chapter viii. 20), hence the relationship title; while in verse 9 the simple thought is the Creator's right in the propagation of the species. Thus *God* is the fitting name employed.

It is now generally recognised that the 150 Psalms are divided into five distinct books, ending respectively with Nos 41, 72, 89, 106, 150. Thus in the first book (psalms i.-xli.) LORD or Jehovah occurs about 270 times while *God* occurs about 50 times. Again, take the second book (psalms xlii.—lxxii.), and we meet with the reverse order: *God*, the creatorial name, occurring about 200 times; while we have only about 30 instances of the relationship title, LORD or Jehovah. But indeed the Bible is full of this subject. Thus in the book of Proverbs it is always LORD; while in the book of Ecclesiastes it is ever *God*.

MOSES AND CHRIST.

In the historical books of the Old Testament "the law of the Lord" is mentioned more than thirty times, while fifteen times Moses is named as the giver or mediator of it. Again, in the New Testament, Moses is mentioned eighty times, in about forty of those instances the law-giver is expressly referred to as the giver of it. *All* the prophets refer to the Pentateuch. In Deuteronomy alone, we meet with about 36 express references to the previous books. But the chain of evidence is complete, the Divine legation of Moses proved and vindicated, and the authority of the whole Pentateuch amply vouched for, inasmuch as the Lord *before* the cross, appealed to the writings of Moses as of equal authority with His own words (John v. 46-47); while *after* the cross, He spake of them as the first great division of the Old Testament books (Luke xxiv. 44); also expounding them and applying them to the hearts of the disconsolate travellers to Emmaus (verse 27). But there comes yet another, and a solemn witness from the invisible world. *There* you have absolute truth and certainty; *there* the voice of the objector is hushed; *there*, too, the tear is never dry, nor the wail of anguish cease. "The larger hope," or, a gospel after death, finds not a shadow of countenance in the Scriptures; certainly the 16th chapter of Luke,

19:31, which is *not* termed a parable, is in direct opposition to it (verse 26). Abraham sets the authority of *Moses* and the prophets on a par with the great truth of Christianity itself—the Resurrection. “If *they*,” not persons in hades, but on earth, “hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead” (Luke xvi. 31). This witness is true, for a Lazarus was raised from the dead, yet the law-leaders sought his life (John xii. 10). Again Paul, that great exponent of Jewish law and custom, and distinguished interpreter of the Mosaic writings, in course of his fourteen epistles comments on almost every part of the Pentateuch. Thus the Scripture cannot be broken. Let every *unbeliever* in Moses solemnly remember that he cannot also be a believer in Christ, for “if ye believe not his (Moses’) writings how shall ye believe My words?” Moses and Christ stand or fall together. The men we are at present contending with, while depreciating Moses are with the same breath covertly attacking Christ. With some it is done in ignorance, but it is done all the same. Of course it is not the public attitude taken up. In the same book, in the same page, yea, in the same paragraph, you may find Moses assailed and Christ praised! The ignorance of Moses exposed, and the character of Christ exhibited in the most charming light! But we indignantly refuse to recognise the Christianity or own the morality of the men who *lower* Moses and *exalt* Christ! Their words of adulation about the Lord are fulsome, and their honeyed sentences are exceedingly nauseous. That, however, is the least of it. Their wickedness is great, and may the Lord pardon them before they go to the grave, and afterwards meet Him—their injured Lord—in judgment! Are we to understand that He who is “the truth” and the Creator of worlds, did not know of the mistakes in the Pentateuch, or, if He did, that knowing all, yet commended the contradictory writings of Moses? What an impious attack upon the character of our Lord!

GENESIS AND DEUTERONOMY.

Now it is remarkable that the first and fifth books of the Pentateuch—Genesis and Deuteronomy—are perhaps more bitterly assailed than any other part of the sacred volume, yet none of the holy books are more fully verified and authenticated. Take the book of Genesis—the introductory part of the Pentateuch, and without which the Bible could not be understood either in its history or doctrines—and just take a glance at it. Here is a book some 3,500 years old, the most ancient (if we except the book of Job, which *may* have been written some 40 years earlier), and certainly the most interesting monument of antiquity. It has been termed “the book of the beginnings,” or seed-plot of the Bible, as it contains, in germ, every subject developed in the succeeding 65 books of Scripture. The book is positively sublime in certain respects; it is the most venerable and ancient of books, while the lofty and diversified character of its contents, constitute it a work of intense and of universal interest. It is also the source of the growth and after-development of the Hebrew Commonwealth, both in its civil and religious aspects. Genesis is divided into two unequal portions, besides ten sections, each commencing with the words, “the generations” or histories. In the first part, chaps. i-xi., the earliest histories of the race are given for a period of about 2,300 years—of which not a scrap of authoritative information elsewhere exists. Here we are furnished with a full and satisfactory answer to quite a crowd of questions; here we have numerous difficulties solved, and facts and principles accounted for, otherwise insolvable by the keenest wits of this much-vaunted scientific age. *Now* Revelation supplies us with the right end of the tangled web, and the story of creation lies open before us—a story sufficiently wonderful in itself without the mythological, yet accounts for that which in numerous instances has had a basis of truth. Then *how* the story is told is so worthy of God, so unlike man; without preface, bombast, or argument—“God said” and “God made”; sentences truly divine in their combined

grandeur and simplicity. The second and larger part of this charming book, chaps. xii.-l., records the patriarchal life—domestic and public—of the fathers of Israel. The moral element predominates here.

The inspiration and consequent authority of the book of Genesis, as an integral part of the Pentateuch, and introductory book of the Bible is unquestionable. The mass of evidence, historical and internal, is overwhelming. The whole Jewish people, past and present, witness to it. The Samaritan Pentateuch bears its unwilling testimony. Such *un*-Christian writers, as Philo the Alexandrian philosopher and Jew, and Josephus the Palestinean historian, who both flourished in the latter half of the first Christian century, add their witness to the divine legation of Moses ; while, as we have already seen, the Bible in all its parts, and in all its books, proclaims the divine character of the book of Genesis.

But Deuteronomy too has come in—in late years especially—for a considerable amount of abuse. Is it wilful ignorance or forgetfulness of the plain fact, that the blessed Lord in His memorable conflict with Satan quoted from this book, chaps. vi. and viii., three times ;—in each instance introducing the citation with the words, “It is written” ? Thus, then, the book of Deuteronomy was the armoury from whence the Lord furnished Himself with the weapon before which Satan was powerless. Ah ! there is nothing like the sharp old blade of Jerusalem—the sword of the Spirit. It cuts, that is *why* men will not let it alone. Were it a powerless book ; were it chained like Bunyan’s lions, or stingless like the harmless serpents of the Indian charmer ; its power to trouble the conscience gone, *then* men and critics could rest from their weary and laborious work. Their battering rams are perfected, their shafts are poisoned, yet the Bible is more largely circulated than ever. But not only have we the blessed Lord putting His seal and witness to the precious fifth book of the Bible ; but Peter (Acts iii.) and Stephen (Acts vii.) both quote from its 18th chapter. Paul, too, quotes from chapters xxx. and xxxii. in arguing out the truth

of the Sovereignty of God, and the fulness and freeness of Divine grace to all, irrespective of national distinctions, in chapter x. of his epistle to the Romans. The Lord seals the *early* part of Deuteronomy. Peter and Stephen the *central* part. Paul the *latter* portion. A three-fold cord is not easily broken. The deniers of inspiration had better take warning! God is not mocked! We do unhesitatingly assert that they are foiled in every attempt. That the mass of evidence is clearly against them; that their own consciences are against them, that their own ally is the devil, whose judgment is known to himself and justly dreaded; yet he too believes and trembles (James ii. 19). Perhaps, if the truth were known, our objecting friends, who are most certainly on the "Down-grade," are, after all, not *quite satisfied* that they are right. What if they are wrong? Somehow the Bible is a book which will speak in the conscience and make men uneasy. Very often the more energetic a man is in attacking the Bible, it may be found that it springs from a soul ill at ease with itself. You know there is such a thing as trying to *make* believe what you really do not believe.

SOWING AND REAPING.

"Let us not be weary in well doing."

SOWER ! WEARY NOT.

"In due season we shall reap if we faint not."—*Gal.* vi. 9.

REAPER ! FAINT NOT.

God oversees the work of each one and He will infallibly secure the result. Sower and reaper shall rejoice together in the Lord's own presence.—*John* iv. 36.

“CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.”

(JUDE III.)

For the holy Faith contending,
Who, in these last days, are seen,—
For the simple faith in Jesus,
From the Written Word we glean ;
Who contends with error deadly,
Using but the Spirit's sword,
That the only Lord our Saviour
Be exalted and adored ?

Parties, bodies, sects and schisms,
Rites, and creeds, alas ! demand
Seemingly the heart and fervour
Of the crowd on either hand !
Where—the earnest voice uprising,
Where—the fervent pleadings heard
For the faith of God's delivered,
Treasured in the Written Word ?

Reason, and poor man's delusions,
Now supplant the Lord's commands,—
Pride of intellect and learning,
On the right and left expand ;
Oh, that saints to faith returning
Hid themselves that Christ be seen,
For the simple Truth contending
Nought of man to intervene.

ALBERT MIDLANE.

THE PSALMS.

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR SEQUENCE.

The third book Psalms lxxiii.-lxxxix.

To understand the arrangement of the Psalms, it is important to remember prophetic revelation. We read in Daniel viii. 9-12, "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, toward the east, and toward the pleasant (or glorious) land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, it magnified itself even to the Prince of the host, and by (or rather, from) Him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt-offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground; and it practised (or, did its pleasure), and prospered." Here is described the one that maketh desolate of Dan. ix. 27 (R.V.), and we have followed in part in the quotation the reading of that same version. It is in connection with this state of things—the inroad of the northern and desolating power, that the *third* book of the Psalms will especially treat. Apostasy rife in Jerusalem through the image of the beast set up in the Temple for worship (Rev. xiii. 14, 15), an invading power called in Daniel xi. 40, the king of the north will overrun like an irresistible flood the land of Israel with his enormous host, capturing the city (Ps. lxxix), and laying low the Temple (Ps. lxxiv). For this, the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. xxx. 7), must precede the coming of Messiah to set up that kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Dan. vii. 14). Now, as God has foretold that time of trouble (Matt. xxiv. 21), He has also graciously provided guidance and encouragement for His saints throughout it. Of this last certain Psalms treat.

The current of apostasy running strong, and to outward eyes unchecked, we learn from Ps. lxxiii., how it will affect the faithful at that time. So Asaph speaks, who was one of the

Levites specially set apart by David as a leader in the service of song, and told off by the king to minister before the ark in the tent pitched for it in the city of David (I. Chron. vi. 39; xvi. 37). To one of this man's compositions we have been already introduced in Psalm 1. Now, from lxxiii. to lxxxiii. inclusive, we have others. After these we have no more in the whole collection ascribed to him as their author. In character with Ps. 1., which is manifestly prophetic, though in part applicable to Israel at all time, these Psalms, on the consideration of which we now enter, carry the reader on in thought to the circumstances of the latter days.

"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (lxxiii., 1); so wrote Asaph about to describe the temptations of a saint in times of declension. Kept as the saint had been in the midst of great inducement to him to turn aside, he can put on record the greatness of his own danger, his feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipped. (2). What was the snare? He describes it. It was the prosperity of the wicked, and their unabashed arrogance. Things it would seem were flourishing with them, having more than heart could wish (3-9). Direfully was all that acting on others, drawing aside into an apparently easier path those who should have withstood the temptation. The bait which ensnared them, and the thoughts of their heart are both described. The bait was waters out of a full cup. Present ease preferred to faithfulness to God. It is the state of mind which will land many in a coming day in apostasy. God is shut out of their thoughts. "How doth God know?" they say, "and is their knowledge in the Most High?" For a time the ungodly prosper, and increase in riches (10-12).

Many thus ensnared, the godly one expresses what he has felt. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (13-14). How natural this seems to one who knows anything of his own heart! But is it right thus to give way through contrasting one's lot with the flourishing wicked ones? No, says the Psalmist, it is not. He

The Psalms.

147

would not thus speak, great as might be the temptation. Were he really to do that, he would offend against the generation of God's children. But whence could light be got as to this perplexing matter—the ungodly prospering, whilst the saint was suffering? In the sanctuary of God he found it. There all was plain. He saw the end of the wicked. Thenceforth all was clear to him (17). Those drawn aside looked only at the present. They saw the wicked prospering, and they were ensnared. The Psalmist sees the end of such men, and so is kept from casting in his lot with them.

How needful for all to remember this. Present appearances and circumstances may mislead. The future learnt from God can dispel the delusion (16-22). And whilst the wicked and their dupes may be saying, "Doth God know?" etc., the Psalmist says, He does. He knows me, He holds me, He guides me, and afterward will receive me to glory. How much is God to him! None there is like Him in heaven or on earth. Flesh and heart may fail, but God will be the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. Nor is this all. Whilst all far from God shall perish, the faithful one draws nigh to Him. He makes Him his refuge, and has the privilege and joy of telling of all His works (23-28).

Reading this Psalm, we must feel as if transported into the very scene, beholding the wicked in their high-handed ways, surveying, too, the waverers who are leaving the path of faith, and marking the faithful one who keeps at all costs on the road. But this Psalm, like many another, is prophetic in its bearing. How far Asaph's personal history illustrated it we cannot say. But as in Ps. xxii. 1-21, whatever David its writer could have felt, we know that it has its full application only in the Lord on the cross; hence in this, and in other prophetic Psalms, the Spirit of God has indited by the different writers thoughts and language, suited to times posterior to those of the individual whose name is affixed. So in lxxiii. we may learn what a time it will be, when the Beast (Rev. xiii.) and the false prophet are running their awful, and apparently victorious, career. And we can understand, with this Psalm before us, why the Lord should

say, "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). How gracious is this warning announcement with reference to those times, since, except "those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." What compassion on the part of our God, that for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (Matt. xxiv. 22.)

Viewing our Psalm as descriptive of the strong current of the apostasy of the future, and of its baneful effects on people, we are carried on in Ps. lxxiv. to hear of penal consequences that will follow it. What Daniel foretold in the passage we have already quoted, is now contemplated as having come to pass, "The place of His sanctuary was cast down." For the image of the Beast, that abomination of desolation having been erected in the holy place (Matt. xxiv. 15-21), the invasion of the land must follow, and the sanctuary be laid low, Jerusalem having been again (Zech. xiv., 2), and for the last time captured. Of this last mentioned sorrow we shall read in Ps. lxxix. Here in Psalm lxxiv. we learn of the utter desolation of the sanctuary consequent on the apostasy. Thereupon is heard the language of intercession from true saints, "O God why hast Thou cast us off for ever? Why doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture? Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old; the rod of Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed: this Mount Zion, wherein Thou hast dwelt. Lift up Thy feet unto the perpetual desolations: even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary" (lxxiv. 1-3.)

We have evidently a prayer of saints on Jewish, not on Christian ground. Christians have no such earthly sanctuary. The whole company of Christians are God's House in this dispensation (Eph. ii. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 Tim. iii. 15); and all Christians locally are together God's Temple in any one place (1 Cor. iii. 16). The language of this Psalm then could not apply to God's House or Temple as now viewed by Him. A saint in Judaism therefore it is who here speaks. Then follows a description of the state of matters (3-11). The sanctuary has been burned, its beautiful carved work having

been first destroyed by axes and hammers. The sacred courts, to be trodden only by those engaged in the service of God, have been desecrated by feet of the heathen. All traces, too, of true worship in the land these have tried to efface (8). And the faithful have to say, "We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (9). Dark, indeed, are these days. But this casts them upon God, as vv. 10, 11, show.

But it is a known God, the King of His people, working salvation in the midst of the earth (12). And He is the Creator, who made day and night; and prepared the light and the sun. What idol has done, or could do that? Moreover, He has shown His power in past times, a power exercised on behalf of Israel, and for no others. Their deliverance from the power of Egypt, their passage through the Red Sea, the pathway made for them through the Jordan: all that, when remembered, emboldens the saint in Israel to look to God in this the dire distress (12-17). Hence comes the prayer for the deliverance of God's turtledove, and of His poor, the oppressed, and the needy. Their cause is the cause of God. Their enemies are the enemies of God (22, 23); for those, who are carrying all before them, are rising up against Him. Such is the light in which the saint views them. And the language is really that of the Spirit of God in the suffering one.

Now to what event does this Psalm refer? Till the days of Nebuchadnezzar the Temple, built by Solomon, was in existence. To no event before the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans can reference here have been made. Twice has the Temple been destroyed. First, by the Chaldæans, centuries before Christ; and the second time by the Romans, some years after the Crucifixion, but on the same day of the year, it is said * on which the Chaldæans set fire to it. Between these two epochs the House, though desecrated, was never burnt, for in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes the doors of the Temple only were burnt. The House, however, was not. So 1 Macc. iii.

* See Josephus *Wars of the Jews*, VI., IV., 5.

45, and 2 Macc. i. 8; viii. 33, to which some would refer, cannot really be cited as fulfilling Psalm lxxiv. 7. It was not in the interest of Antiochus to destroy it. His purpose was to profane it.* This he did.

Can then the destruction under Titus be quoted as the fulfilment of the Psalm? We think not. For certainly at that time the real saints of God were the Christians, not the Jews. For them the Temple was no longer connected with their worship. And we cannot suppose that the Spirit of God provided in this Psalm language in which the unbelieving Jews, rejecters of Christianity, should address God, and seek His interposition. Did the Psalm receive its accomplishment when Nebuzaradan, the captain of the Chaldæan guard, set fire to the House? Such a thought is at once forbidden by v. 9, "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." The prophet Jeremiah was then alive, and in the land, and he had foretold the duration of the Babylonish captivity (Jer. xxv. 11; xxvii. 6, 7; xxix. 10); predictions which many years later Daniel (ix. 2) studied, this showing that they had been carefully treasured up in remembrance. No past vicissitude then in the Temple's history can be successfully adduced as fulfilling the Psalm. So to the future we must turn, believing that to the time of which Daniel (viii. 11) wrote; and to that to which Isaiah (lxiv. 11) refers, we must relegate the fulfilment of the words of Asaph.

These two Psalms (lxxiii., lxxiv.), forming the introduction to the third book, setting forth the circumstances in which the godly will find themselves, the question naturally comes up, will God hear and answer? Is it really His cause, as the troubled ones have averred? The two following Psalms, lxxv., lxxvi., give a clear answer to this, so are fitly called *songs* in common with Ps. lxxxiii. In the first of them Messiah is introduced, and speaks: for it is certainly a divine Person who answers, as we believe, in vv. 2-10. Who but One divine could use the

* So we read 1 Maccabees iii. 45, that "the sanctuary was trodden down."

The Psalms.

151

language of v. 3? "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble" we elsewhere read. Here again we have an illustration of it. Then in Ps. lxxvi. God's intervention in power is graphically foretold.

We have said that in lxxv. it is Messiah who speaks from vv. 2-10. It is clearly One who having absolute power in government (10), can yet sing praises to the God of Jacob (9). To Him, who is both God and Man, this can appertain. At the right moment will He intervene, as the Revised Version gives it, "when I shall find the set time I will judge uprightly" (2). * The saints must, therefore, still wait, like those under the altar in Rev. vi. 11. And who but One can restore order, and re-establish authority upon earth, dealing in a day like that which is coming with the apparently overwhelming power of the wicked? Messiah, and He alone, can do it, the One of whom David made mention in his last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 7). We feel driven then to the conclusion, that in this Psalm Messiah is prophetically introduced,—the real hope of the godly in Israel, and the restorer of order on earth, where God's authority has been unblushingly disowned. Fittingly does He speak, reminding people that promotion (or, lifting up) cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, † but only from God, who acts as He will, putting down one and setting up another, and dealing in unsparing judgment with the wicked.

Had some been ensnared by the prospect of "waters of a full cup" (lxxiii. 10)? There is a cup prepared by God, which the finally impenitent must drink to the dregs (lxxv. 8). Judgment will certainly fall on apostates, as well as on the invading power from the north. This is set forth in lxxvi. The cry of the afflicted and persecuted has not gone up in vain. God will arise to save all the meek of the earth (9). He will,

* This in accordance with the marginal reading in A.V. is generally accepted as the right translation.

† Is the north here omitted because the king of the north will have invaded the land, so to other quarters, if mere human help could avail, must men look? God is, however, the only resource.

the Lord has taught us (Luke xviii. 7, 8), avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him. Are we not in these Psalms introduced to the very circumstances to which the Lord points, viz., that awful time for the returned Jews to be followed by deliverance at Jerusalem? In Ps. lxxvi. this last is celebrated (1-6), God having arisen to save His people. When has anything like this had a fulfilment? The meek shall inherit the earth, the Lord Jesus has said (Matt. v. 5). To this consummation prophets looked forward (Ps. xxii. 26; Isai. xi. 4). God will beautify the meek with salvation, we read (Ps. cxlix. 4), a prospect which is still future, and connected, as David and Isaiah teach us, with the coming of Messiah in greatness and power. Clearly then, as we read this Psalm of Asaph (lxxvi.), we are in spirit in the circumstances of the last days.

Could the overthrow of Sennacherib have been its fulfilment? It may have been in a measure viewed as foreshadowing it. In *measure* we can only say, for Sennacherib's army, let us remember, was not destroyed at Jerusalem. This 2 Kings. xix. 32, 33, plainly intimates. For he was not to come into the city. He was not even to invest it. He was not to shoot an arrow there, nor to come before it with shield, nor to cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by that same should he return. Now that way had evidently been along the low country, the great highway between Syria and Egypt. From Lachish, in the south-west of the land, Sennacherib first sent to demand the submission of Hezekiah and his people. From Libnah, when about to move south to meet Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, his last insulting message was despatched (2 Kings xix. 8, 9). Then in one night, at a place not mentioned, his army was more than decimated by a sudden pestilence, for 185,000 were cut off by angelic agency. True, indeed, could be the application of the Psalmist's words, "The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep" (lxxvi. 5), with reference to the crushing blow that Sennacherib experienced; but his soldiers fell we know not where, whilst Asaph foretells a victory to be displayed at Jerusalem, for there the Lord broke

the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle (3).*

If then the destruction of Sennacherib's host cannot be the one predicted, what other event in the fortunes of Jerusalem can answer to the description which Asaph has given? Nothing, we believe, in the past can be adduced as fulfilling the divine Word. We affirm, therefore, that this Psalm must be viewed as distinctly prophetic. Now there are still two sieges to which Jerusalem will be exposed, ere millennial peace can enwrap her and her people. Zechariah has foretold them both, and we believe Isaiah xxix. refers to them likewise. The first of these sieges will be successful. This the son of Berechiah teaches us in xiv. 1, 2, and to it Ps. lxxiv. and lxxix. refer. The second, which will be defeated by the presence of the Lord Jesus, is mentioned in xii. 1-9 of the prophet. This deliverance it is that we conclude our Psalm prophetically describes. To it Zech. xiv. 3 refers.† Then, indeed, will vows be paid to the Lord, and presents be brought by all that are round about Him (Ps. lxxvi. 11); and the last verse of the Psalm will surely have an unmistakeable fulfilment.

How graciously then, as we see, are the saints in a coming day to be encouraged by the certainty of final blessing, depicted prophetically as if actually taking place (lxxvi. 1-9). For, of course, the reader will understand, that the circumstances therein described are not such as will ever affect us. But we are now led on to the reminder of the way and ground for encouragement for God's saints all along the ages since Asaph's day to the appearing of the Lord Jesus out of heaven, and His coming in delivering power. Here instruction is provided also

* Isaiah x. 28-32, describes the invasion by Sargon, who came from the north. We have said "we know not where;" for Herodotus, giving an Egyptian tradition, says it was near Pelusium, but this lacks proof.

† The word "then" in Zech. xiv. 3, may tend to mislead the English reader as to the time to which it refers. The Hebrew is simply, "And the Lord shall go forth," etc. So the ancient Versions, the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Syriac, marking the sequence of events, but not the moment of their fulfilment. This verse is connected in time with xii., which treats of the last siege of the city, and of its final deliverance.

for us, reminded as we are of the Lord's gracious words in the gospel of Luke, "that men ought alway to pray, and not to faint." For in Ps. lxxvii. we have a saint in prayer, but well-nigh disheartened at God's apparent unconcern. Then he learns, and proves from divine intervention of old on behalf of the nation of Israel, how in his turn to draw encouragement, so as to wait confidently for God's interposition, which he so ardently desires.

Sorely, indeed, had he been tried, as he expresses it. To God he turns, "I will cry unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and He will give ear unto me" (1). * What he had gone through in his trouble he recounts in verse 2. His hand (not, his sore) had been stretched out in the night, and slacked not: his soul refused to be comforted. Past seasons of joy he remembered, but only to contrast his present lot with those times when singing in the night was in season. Songs were all banished now. Nothing but prayer, earnest continued prayer, suited him. But prayer seems unanswered. Then comes the dark cloud of unbelief about to enwrap his soul. Let him express his thoughts in his own words. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" (7-9). Six questions thus rise rapidly in his mind. How shall they be answered?

No acts of divine power are displayed on his behalf. No voice from heaven is heard to quiet all his doubts. The time for the deliverance of the earthly saints has not yet come. Despair, however, is to be banished, and faith to be strengthened. But how? Verses 10-12 teach us. God's intervention of old on behalf of Israel is a lesson to be studied right on to the end. Redemption by power that nation once experienced. Could God drop those whom He has redeemed? Impossible. By redeeming power at the Red Sea God became their God, and they became His people. Light now breaks in

* So the Revised Version.

The Psalms.

155

on him in his trouble (13-20), and we hear no more of doubts about his God. A saint, and one of the redeemed nation, how could God forsake him? So deliverance he should expect, though the way of it he might not perceive. God's way of old was "in the sea, His path in the great waters, and His footsteps not known." All, however, became clear in due time, and He led His people "like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (lxxvii. 19-20).

Shall *we*, however, read the Psalm as just recording the experience of a saint of other days? Should we not profit by it? For the principle it enunciates is always true, viz., that those whom God has once redeemed, He will never forsake, however He may have to deal with them governmentally for their ways. So if the dark cloud of unbelief would steal over the soul, and despair begin to benumb its energies, the remembrance of redemption accomplished (and that for Christians is redemption by the blood of Christ, Ephes. i. 7) should disperse the deepening gloom, and brace up the person for renewed energy, whilst waiting for deliverance in God's time and way. "My infirmity" (10), the Psalmist owned, occasioned within him those dark thoughts to which he has given expression. Have not some since his day had to confess that the like has been the case with them? Let Asaph teach any in a similar condition, what is a way out of it.

To return. Through the Red Sea Israel was taken of old. Where no way was apparent, a safe way was opened. And in the wilderness journey they were led like sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron. What the remembrance of that was to the Psalmist, he has now taught us. But the wilderness journey spoken of, the history of Israel in all that naturally comes to mind. So the Psalm which follows, the first of the historical Psalms, treats of it, showing with what their deliverance through the sea, and their wilderness journey should have impressed them. God's ways in the past may be lessons for the present. Fitly then does Ps. lxxviii. find its place here, in the third book of the Psalter.

Why, too, it was written its composer will now tell us. "I

will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and might not be as their fathers a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God'' (2-8).

Teaching from the past history of the nation, the Psalmist will now set forth, evidently addressed to an earthly people, since generation after generation is contemplated as needing instruction. With Christians it is different. We look for the Lord Jesus to come and take away His people, and we know not how soon. No prediction is there in the Word, the accomplishment of which must precede it. For the rapture (1 Thess. iv. 15-17) will be the first of the revealed acts in connection with the coming kingdom. But for Israel as the earthly people the expectation is to be alive in this scene when the appearing of Christ takes place.

And now the Psalmist reviews the history of his nation from Egypt to the establishment of the monarchy in the house of David. Beyond that he does not proceed. Living in the days of David, and perhaps surviving to see Solomon on the throne, we can understand it. He stops the historic record with the commencement of that dynasty in Israel, which never has been, and never will be superseded. For the Lord Jesus will have given to Him the throne of His father David (Luke i. 32). But what a blotted history was that of Israel in the wilderness, and in the land also up to the appearance of David! With Ephraim's failure the Psalm begins (9-11) That tribe's

The Psalms.

157

defection just noticed, the Psalm ends with its rejection, and the selection of Jerusalem for the resting place of the ark, as well as the selection of David to be king. What caused the defection of Ephraim, though the instance of it is not elsewhere we believe recorded, is plainly stated (10, 11). They kept not the covenant, they forgot God's works, and His wonders which He had shown them. The works then described (12-16), the lessons they could teach were lost on the people, acting as they did rebelliously against God, in the wilderness tempting Him in their heart, and speaking against Him (17-19). Yet He provided for their wants in the manna from heaven, and in the quails as flesh to satisfy them (23-29). Governmental dealings had no lasting effect on them (30-37); merciful dealings did not change them (38), oftentimes provoking Him in the desert, and grieving Him in the wilderness (40). Yet He brought them into their land, driving out nations before them (54, 55).

What had He not done for that people? How did they requite Him when in the land? They provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images (58). Hence Ephraim as a tribe lost its foremost place among the people. Shiloh was deserted. God refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah, and the Mount Zion which He loved, building there His sanctuary, and inaugurating the dynasty of David's line. The Psalm then closes with the service of David as king, feeding the people according to the integrity of his heart, and guiding them by the skilfulness of his hands (71, 72).

We may read all this as past history, but what will it be to the godly remnant in a coming day? What consolation can it afford the faithful ones in the midst of the sorrow of that time, sorrow which lxxix. and lxxx. will next describe. Most fittingly are these now introduced. Ps. lxxviii., by Asaph, has been historical. Ps. lxxix. and lxxx. also by him, are prophetic,*

* We have said they are prophetic. Would any raise a difficulty as to this because of the tenor of them both? If David, as we have before remarked, was taught of the Spirit to foretell the thoughts, feelings, and

the former treating of a desolation not yet brought about, the latter lamenting a sorrow, which for ages has been in existence. Zion had been chosen as God's earthly dwelling place, and David's dynasty had been established (lxxviii. 68, 70, 71), and neither of these were to be superseded. Jerusalem will ever be the true metropolis of the land, David's offspring, too, will be seated on his throne. But what was to happen in the then future? The two Psalms we have mentioned here declare.* God's inheritance, Jerusalem, is described as captured by the heathen, the Temple has been defiled, and the city laid on heaps. God's servants have been slain, their bodies unburied are meat for the fowls of the air, and the flesh of His saints for the beasts of the earth (lxxix. 1-3). Where can the faithful turn? To whom can they look? Ps. lxxviii. 38, can teach them. And profiting by it, they turn in lxxix. 8-12, to the God of all grace, the God of Israel. For if God could, and did deliver in the past, "being full of compassion," they count on Him for deliverance still. And the Psalm, which begins with speaking to Him of the desolation of the beloved city, closes with a hope; "So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever: we will show forth Thy praise to all generations" (13). The ministry of Asaph in lxxviii. will bear fruit in a coming day.

As the sheep of God's pasture they appeal to God, clearly no longer to be viewed as "Lo-Ammi," which they have been since the days of Nebuchadnezzar. But if they are the sheep, God is the Shepherd. He was that in the wilderness of old, when the ark, the symbol of His presence, preceded the camps of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh (Numb. ii. 17; x. 21-24). They cry then to Him as that still, asking for His face to shine on them, and they shall be saved (Ps. lxxx. 1-3). But why this

language of the Lord Jesus when on the Cross, as he plainly did in Ps. xxii., which is undeniably a prophetic Psalm, why could not Asaph have been equally taught to express the feelings and desires of the remnant in the future?

* Psalm lxxix. certainly refers to the same time as that of lxxiv. And as to no previous trouble in Israel would Ps. lxxiv. have reference, so we view lxxix. as alike future in its application.

petition? Because the throne has been overturned, and without its re-establishment they cannot get national blessing. Of the vine and of the vineyard they speak. The vine is the men of Judah. The branch of it is the royal house of David. The vineyard is the house of Israel. So we read in Isaiah v. 7. That vine once so flourishing, and stretching out from the Mediterranean Sea to the river, *i.e.*, the Euphrates (8-11), it has been wasted and devoured (12-13). Men have carried out their will in dealing with it. Powers, which Israel could not successfully resist, have trampled on it.

The resource, therefore, is only in God. To Him they turn. "Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself" (17). New Testament teaching makes plain to us to whom reference by the Spirit is here really made, even to Him who sits now at Jehovah's right hand (Ps. cx. 1), and who will again manifest Himself as the arm of Jehovah (Isaiah li. 9; liii. 1). But when will He appear? Rejected by the people of old, He has gone away; so they must wait God's time for His return. Hence the Psalm closes with the prayer, uttered now for the third time and with increased emphasis. "Turn us again, *O God*, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (3) had been a *first* petition. "Turn us again, *O God of Hosts*; and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved" (7), so runs the *second* request. "Turn us again, *O Jehovah God of Hosts*; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved," is the third and last utterance (19). We may here recall the formula of blessing appointed for the use of God's High-Priest in Israel, as stated in Num. vi. 23-27. "Jehovah make His face shine upon thee," Aaron was to say. "Cause Thy face to shine" is the prayer of the godly in this Psalm. They have not, and will not, forget the words in Numbers.

And now, as prayer characterized them in lxxx., singing to God should not be forgotten, nor the appointed blowing of trumpets be neglected (lxxx. 1-4). Of this the godly ones can make mention, that all may respond to the invitation, "Blow

up the trumpet* in the new moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day." So runs the Revised Version. It is the Passover month, to its new moon reference is here made, and to the Paschal feast kept at its full moon. Hope has revived, though the divine intervention has not yet been effected. We have had the tale of national trouble recounted in lxxix. and lxxx.; now of its cause the Psalmist reminds all, but in language from God addressed to His people. Silent for ages as regards them, He will speak again, and tell them why they have been in trouble (8-16). "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah lix. 1, 2). That was the case in the prophet's day. God in our Psalm confirms the statement. Yet we can say that He desires to help them; else why declare what has hindered His activity on their behalf?

The way of blessing made known, and that is by obedience to God, the following Psalm lxxxii. warns the people of the divine presence in the congregation of God (R.V.), and of His judging among the gods. Israel was, and will again, be owned as His congregation (Num. xxvii. 17); and the judges were called gods (Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8).† The iniquity of the judges here exposed (lxxxii. 5), God must deal with them, all the foundations of the earth being out of course. Nor that only, for He will judge the earth as the godly request, and inherit all nations (5-8). God's final triumph over all that then will oppose is confidently expected, and He is the true resource for His saints.

So the godly remnant, when the great confederacy shall arise (Ps. lxxxiii.), will cry to their God for the complete discomfiture of their foes, intent as those are in wiping out the very name of Israel from the earth (4). It is the great confederacy under the northern power (Isaiah xxix.; Joel ii. 20; Dan. viii.; Zech. xii. 2)

*Blowing the trumpets would be for a memorial before their God.—Numb. x. 10.

†The judges are called gods in those passages in Exodus. But it was from our Psalm that the Lord quoted in John x. 34.

The Psalms.

161

in league really against God. Of old had Jehovah subdued the Midianites (Judges viii. 28), and at an earlier date the Lord had subdued also the Canaanites, whilst gathered together under the leadership of Sisera (Judges iv. 23-24). Again, then, do His people in our Psalm (lxxxiii.) look for His intervention, to be as effectual as in the days of Barak and in the days of Gideon. And their prayer for it is prophetically set forth (13-18), that the confederacy may know by the divine interposition, that He whose name is Jehovah is only the Most High over all the earth.

“The Most High over all the earth!” As such will He be known by the nations of the world in millennial days. Now He, who will be thus known, must certainly be the true God; and hence the earthly saint thinks of His Tabernacles, desiring the courts of the House of the Lord, his heart and his flesh crying out for the living God (Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2). In Ps. xliii. 3, as far from those courts, he has desired to be led to them. In Ps. lxiii. 2, he remembered what formerly he had witnessed in the sanctuary. Now in lxxxiv. he thinks again of the House, made desolate by the northern enemy (Dan. viii.; Ps. lxxiv.), and its altars unused for worship, so that the very birds nest on them (3). Is, then, that desolation final? Is the House never to be restored? The confederacy of Ps. lxxxiii. will be finally crushed (9-17); and the House will be again raised up, and blessed will be those who will then dwell in it, they will be still praising God. Blessed, too, will be the man whose strength is in God, and in whose heart are the highways to Zion. Blessed, too, will be the man who trusteth in God (lxxxiv. 4, 5, 12). For God will triumph, so His people will be blessed. We see here surely how faith can shine in days of darkness and distress; for the desired consummation awaits the advent of Messiah (9) returning in power to reign.

The Jews brought back by some earthly power (Isaiah xviii), but not owned of God, the faithful among them will be painfully conscious of the troubles, in which they will share as part of the people who crucified the Lord their Messiah. We read, then, in Ps. lxxxv. of their desires in consequence, for no abiding

peace can they enjoy unless the Lord Jesus is sent to them again, who, as Peter told their fathers (Acts iii. 21), must remain in heaven till the times of the restitution of all things. How earnest is the united supplication of the godly remnant here prophetically depicted (lxxxv. 4-7). Then follows a prayer of David (lxxxvi.), the language of an individual saint, addressing God in the consciousness of that which God is, and can be, in grace—good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Him (5). Further, universal worship will be rendered Him, for He is great and does wondrous things, He is God alone (10.) Mercy already experienced by the suffering saint in preserving him from death (13), he still looks for mercy, remembering the revelation to Moses of the divine name (15, 16). What a stay to the saints has that revelation of God (Exodus xxxiv. 6) been age after age, as the Old Testament shows! What a stay it will yet be to the earthly saints in the time of Jacob's trouble we can from this Psalm understand. And the suppliant, knowing Jehovah as the true God, and himself as His servant, with one more request closes this prayer, "Shew me a token for good: that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed: because Thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me" (17).

What will be the token? We think, Ps. lxxxvii. tells us, God's "foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (1-3). True, indeed. So for the saint to have his name written on the burgess roll of that city will be a manifest token for good. On Christians, who will overcome, the Lord will write the name of the city of His God, which is New Jerusalem (Rev. iii. 12), showing that they belong to that. Here the earthly saint will find his name on the burgess roll of the city of God, even Zion, which will arise from the dust of ages, and be arrayed in her beautiful garments (Isaiah lii. 1). But as yet that is viewed as future; so the city still laid low, the godly remnant must share governmentally in the sorrows of their people; and, because they are saints, must

The Psalms.

163

endure persecution at the hand of those that hate them (Ps. lxxxvi. 17).

Two Psalms then follow. The one, lxxxviii., depicts the sorrowful state of an individual. The other (lxxxix.) contains the cry for the restoration of the throne in fulfilment of God's promise to David. In the former, that to which the name of Heman is prefixed, the saint tells out to God his sorrow. In the latter, to which the name of Ethan is prefixed, the Psalm celebrates the mercies of the Lord, an abiding subject of song. The political condition in both Psalms is the same. The King has not appeared. The throne is still cast down. But in the one case the saint is occupied with all that he is feeling; in the other he is occupied with that which God has done, and looking for that which He will do. Experiences these are very different. But may we not understand them? If our circumstances are before us, how dark things may appear? If God's revealed thoughts occupy us, in what a different light will all be viewed.

In Ps. lxxxviii. the saint, for he is one, freely expresses to God all that he is feeling (3-5), but takes all from the hand of his God (6-18). Surely, we get here one walking in darkness, and having no light, yet fearing the Lord (Isaiah l. 10). In the other (lxxxix.) the mercies of the Lord and His faithfulness the Psalmist would celebrate, making mention of them to all generations. David's throne must be restored. God has promised, and bound Himself by covenant and by oath, not to lie unto David (3, 4). And God is Almighty. He had taken up the cause of His people in Egypt, then breaking Rahab in pieces. The God of heaven He is, and the God of the earth also. All has been founded by Him (11). North and south, Tabor, *i.e.*, the west, and Hermon, *i.e.*, the east, shall rejoice in His name (12). And the joyful sound of the trumpet gathering together the people shall yet be heard. To this verse 15 points, we believe. But that cannot be without the presence of the King. Would any question His appearing? God's promise to David will not fail, and that promise is here remembered and recited (19-37).

But how great the contrast from that which things were when

164 *Suggestive Thoughts on Important Subjects.*

David was first made king. "Thou hast cast off and abhorred (or, rejected), Thou hast been wroth with Thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant; Thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground" (38, 39). How long shall that continue, is the Psalmist's cry. Man's life is but short. Will he, then, pass away without seeing the restoration? (47, 48). Now comes a prayer (49-51); and the Psalm, and the third book of Psalms ends with a short doxology, "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen."

Earnest has been the cry in this, the third book for deliverance (lxxiv.; lxxix.; lxxx.; lxxxiii.; lxxxv.; lxxxviii.; lxxxix). Shall that go up and be unheeded? "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble" wrote David (Ps. ix. 12). The remnant of the nation will joyfully experience the truth of that. It will then be fully seen that David had not misrepresented his God. Apostasy rife, and ensnaring many, is the outlook at the beginning of this book. But the saint kept true, and looking for the kingdom in power is the expectation at its close. Who will prevail? God? or the enemy called in the New Testament, "the prince of this world?" The fourth book will tell us. To that we must next proceed. C.E.S.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

Christ ascended is both Head of the body and Head of the race. We are united *to* Him—the body. We are *in* Him—the race. Ere the truths of dead to sin (Rom. vi.), and dead to the law (vii) are entered upon, the respective headships of Adam and Christ are unfolded in that introductory section of the Romans v. 12-19. "In Christ" as distinguished from "In Adam," is the key to the truths of Chaps. vi. vii. It is because we are *in* Christ, and that by the Holy Ghost (viii. 9), that we share His condition, "dead with Christ," and consequently dead to all that He is dead to, as sin, law, and the world. Those in Christ are new Creation (2 Cor. v. 17.; Eph. ii. 5-10; Gal. ii. 28. 29), in which no national, social, nor sex distinctions are recognised. It is a new and

Suggestive Thoughts on Important Subjects. 165

spiritual race. Distinctions in the Church there are ; in Christ there are none. We are not *brought* into a new Creation, but as in Christ we are *that*.

“In the flesh,” and the flesh in us, are terms of very dissimilar import. The former is a *weak* condition, expressive of the state of Old Testament saints, and of the experience detailed in chap. vii. of the Romans. It is a condition not of sin, but of weakness—one in which the holy desires of the new nature cannot be carried out for want of power, that power is the Holy Ghost. The *past* condition of a renewed, quickened soul, but in experience and conscience under law, is the story told in Rom. vii. ; the *present* state of a soul, fully delivered, and in whom the Holy Ghost acts in power, is the lovely picture unfolded in chap. viii. “Lazarus come forth”—there was life in the voice of Christ. “He that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes ; and his face was bound about with a napkin.” There you have life but not liberty. “Loose him, and let him go.” These three successive stages illustrate the spiritual history of many. (1) Life given (Rom. vi). (2) Bound and powerless (vii). (3) Liberty (viii).

But the flesh *in* us, is not a weak condition, but a sinful thing. The flesh in us is sin, and must not be allowed to reign (Rom. vi. 12). Being in Christ we are dead to sin, now *reckon* it to be so. Dominion over the sin in us, is our present victory. Freed from the presence of sin in us, is our future triumph.

“The Word of life,” and “Eternal life” are to be distinguished. The former is the subject of the first verse of John’s first Epistle ; the latter is treated of in the second verse. The first is a Person, the second is not. “The *Word* of life” refers to Christ personally. He is also termed “the Word of *God*” as He absolutely expresses God in His moral character. He is “the Word of *life*” as being the perfect expression of life. The important point to lay hold of is, that life and the Word of life are not convertible terms, but are

accurately distinguished. "In Him was life" (John i. 4). The person and the life are distinct. John xvii. 3, is not a definition of eternal life, but intimates its necessity in order that one may know God and His Son.

CERTAIN SCRIPTURAL TERMS EXPLAINED.

God's sovereign and eternal choice of persons (Eph. i. 4), infallibly secures all embraced in God's election, and which believers *now* know (1 Thess. i. 4). They cannot perish, for they were chosen in Christ before sin entered, or the course of human responsibility commenced, hence neither the state of the creature, nor his doings can frustrate God's eternal choice of certain individuals out of the mass.

Predestination refers to that special character of blessing to which we are set apart. Thus *predestinated* to adoption (Eph. i. 5); to have part in Christ's glorious inheritances (verse 11); and to be perfectly conformed to God's Son (Rom. viii. 29, 30). Election secures the *person*, predestination secures the *blessing*.

Purpose and *counsel* (Eph. i. 11), the former refers to the blessed fact, that God in Himself, has in the exercise of His Divine and Sovereign will, devised a system of government and glory to be displayed in after ages; while the latter term intimates the way, the means, and method of carrying out His purpose. *Predestination* is applied to the special privileges of believers, not to those special to the Church as such; whereas *purpose* is used of the Church (Eph. iii. 11) and of believers as well (Rom. viii. 28).

Foreknowledge—"For whom He did foreknow" (Rom. viii. 29). God's absolute *foreknowledge* of persons, of things, of events—small and great—is necessarily a Divine attribute. With God all is one ever present. The Eternal God is. A past and future are relative ideas. But what a strength and consolation

Service and Fellowship.

167

to God's tried saints that *they* individually were known to God in eternal ages; their life-history, the most trivial circumstances concerning them, every detail of life and character lay open to Him. All were and ever before Him. The text in Romans refers to individuals. We, and each personally, before Him, in absolute knowledge of *what* and *where* we were, before Him in our sin and ruin, and yet He chose us for blessing. "For whom He did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son."

"The hope of *His calling*" (Eph. i. 18). What is God's calling? It is the sum of the wonderful blessings and privileges contained in verses 3-5. We are called to the enjoyment of this marvellous display of grace; *God* has called us to it. "The *hope* of His calling" intimates that the wealth of blessing and privilege is yet future, while of course the *present* moral effect flowing from the knowledge of it, is part of the prayer of the Apostle for all saints (verses 17, 18).

"The riches of the glory of *His inheritance* in the saints" (Eph. i. 18). The whole system of things in Heaven and on earth, yea, the vast universe—the lake of fire excepted—is to be set up on a new basis, filled with glory and blessing. It is God's inheritance, even as the calling is His, but He takes possession of the inheritance in His saints, as He took Canaan in or through Israel. It is not that the saints are His inheritance, but all created things are, save the exception named, and this vast ordered system of government and glory set up under Christ as man *is God's*, but He takes it in His people.

SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP.

Preaching, teaching, and every form and variety of ministry is an individual matter. Each minister is directly responsible to Christ as Lord. The Church dare not come between the Lord and the Servant; of course, if the ministry of any one in the

Church is not for edification, then he should be told so. The Church may in its undoubted right refuse or accept any professed minister, but the servant's direct responsibility is not to the Church but to the Lord, whose servant he is. The Church may be right or wrong in its judgment of the servant, but his personal responsibility remains intact. If refused in one place, he can go elsewhere (Luke ix. 53-56.) A servant should never contend for the exercise of his gift. Whatever measure of grace or gift is bestowed, God will cause *that* to be respected by the saints sooner or later. Counsel and advice from godly men should ever be welcomed, and if at all possible, accepted and acted upon. But on no account allow yourself to become the servant of men. Remember the dignity of your calling, you are a minister of God, a servant of Jesus Christ.

In the fullest exercise of the gift bestowed, you may feel free to go and deliver your Master's message anywhere. Church, Chapel, Hall, Theatre; buildings are nothing—it is all the same to you. In delivering the Word of the Lord in any of the foregoing, or other places, you do so as the Lord's servant, and not as in any wise identifying yourself with the ecclesiastical position of any party whatever, nor do you preach or teach as the representative of any fellowship. You minister simply and solely as the Lord's servant, and in your own individual responsibility to Christ. Hence while a servant should exercise the greatest wisdom and grace in his dealings with fellow-saints, and remember, too, that he is equally amenable as others to reproof or correction, yet in his service he is alone responsible to Christ.

We break bread as members of the body of Christ. We worship as priests. We serve as servants. It is said that "Preaching the Gospel in a Church or Chapel identifies you with the ecclesiastical fellowship gathered in that particular place." We think not. At the same time, we consider that care and wisdom are needed in accepting invitations to preach or teach in sectarian places of meeting, but on this point each servant must act as before the Lord. The main thing, however, to be clear about, is that one's service does not in itself link one up with the Church

or party, meeting in the place where you have preached. We would, again, repeat that the service is entirely an individual matter, and there it must rest. The one so preaching or teaching does not by any means commit his brethren in what he does. If one breaks bread in any place, he more or less identifies his brethren in the act. The breaking of bread is an act involving others—you do it *with* others. It is the expression of a united, corporate fellowship. It would be well therefore to carefully distinguish between breaking of bread in which I involve others, and ministering the word in which I stand alone—in the exercise of this latter we may, or may not have the fellowship of saints.

SOME NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1. The Holy Ghost is a Divine Person. The third Person in the God-Head (Math. xxviii. 19). He is not an influence, but a real Person, as truly such as Christ. The Holy Ghost existed in eternal ages, so also Christ; only the latter became incarnate, assumed humanity in a holy condition (Luke i. 35). The former, *i.e.*, the Holy Ghost, has not become a man; no need for it in His case. The characteristics of a distinct personality are ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Thus He can be grieved, He guides, He leads, He speaks, He teaches, He comes, He dwells, He reveals, He descends, He works. The Divine prerogative of Sovereignty is exercised by Him (1 Cor. xii. 11). He is God: compare Acts v. 3 with verse 4. In Himself, He is equal in Power, and in every other divine attribute to the Father and the Son, and is associated with Them in all work and testimony down here.

2. The Holy Ghost is on the earth. His dwelling places are here, not in Heaven. His sphere of testimony and operation is earth, not Heaven. He dwells in the Church universally (1 Cor. iii. 16), locally (Eph. ii. 22), and in each believer (1 Cor. vi. 19)—these are His temples on earth. But His operation is not con-

fined to the Church. True, He acts in sovereign grace within that sacred enclosure (1 Cor. xii.), but His divine ministry extends to the utmost bounds of the world, and embrace in their range every sphere of human responsibility. All the good wrought on earth, all that God can and does own, both in the realms of grace and government is the fruit of His Spirit. He is equally sovereign in His choice of instruments, as in His spheres of operation. There is a large amount of social and moral good, right in itself, even where redemption is unknown, which every Christian should heartily acknowledge and rejoice in—the fruit of the Spirit's work. But a word of caution is needed here. The sovereignty of the Spirit in working *where* and by *whom* He will, affords no ground for personal identification with men or movements not in accordance with the written Word of God. Sovereignty is a Divine prerogative. Obedience is the grand characteristic of the creature. *God* does as He chooses, *we* do as we are bid. We rejoice in much with which we dare not identify ourselves. A *large* heart and a *narrow* path are to be maintained: 2 Cor. vi. 11-13 for enlargement of heart; verses 14-18 for a path narrowed by the requirements of holiness. Thus all the good wrought in this world from the first mention of the Spirit (Gen. i. 2) till now, is the work of the Holy Ghost. Whether He takes His place in the Church or governmentally before the throne (Rev. i. 4), He is the effectual power of all good such as God accepts. The pronouns *what* (2 Thess. ii. 6) and *He* (verse 7) both refer to the Holy Ghost. The former to His power in civil and political government, as also in the Church at large; the latter to Himself personally.

3. We shall now take note of the great fact, of the Spirit coming down from Heaven to dwell on the earth in His home and temple—the Church. When did He come? This question is conclusively answered in John vii. 39: "The Holy Ghost was not yet; *because* that Jesus was not yet glorified." The coming of the Holy Ghost was dependent upon the great fact: Jesus glorified in Heaven. Now when was Jesus glorified? Forty days after His resurrection; then, again, ten days after that—50

days in all—brings us to Pentecost (Acts ii.), when the Holy Ghost came down to testify of Him, to bear witness of His glory on high, for the Holy Ghost *had* seen the homage paid to Christ, *had* personally witnessed the honours heaped upon His blessed head. He came at Pentecost, but that coming was according to promise (Acts i. 4-5). The promise is noted in chaps. xiv. 16-26 ; xv. 26 ; and xvi. 7, of St. John's Gospel. The coming of the Holy Ghost is specially referred to as the "promise of the Father." Now let us firmly grasp these two closely related facts : Christ glorified in Heaven, and the Holy Ghost come down to earth. We may remark that the Holy Ghost as sent by the *Father*, (John xiv.) is for the enjoyment of communion, and the establishing of our hearts in grace ; while as sent by the *Son*, (John xv.) He enables us to serve and testify. Further, John xvi. 8, does not apply to the Spirit's action in grace in individual souls, but refers to the fact that the Spirit is here on earth, and the effect of such an amazing truth. By the fact of His presence on earth, He *convicts*, not reproves, the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The presence of the Holy Ghost is a solemn demonstration to the world of its sin in crucifying Jesus, and of its *present* rejection of Him.

4. The circumstances connected with the Coming of the Spirit are interesting ; these are detailed in Acts ii. 1-4. We judge that from the Ascension of the Lord till Pentecost—10 days—that the disciples were gathered in expectation and prayer. The women are mentioned incidentally, the only one named being "Mary, the mother of Jesus." This is significant in view of the place accorded her in Roman Catholicism. She is not only worshipped, but is regarded as the chief mediator with her Son ; whereas Christianity knows of no mediator between men and *Christ*. "There is one God, and ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Christ Himself is the one and only mediator. Mary, therefore, is singled out from amongst the women as personally needing the grace and power of the Spirit, equally with others.

The disciples, numbering about 120, were in united and happy

accord gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. "Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind " The promise of the Father was about to be realised: they were waiting for it (Luke xxiv. 49).

The Sovereignty of the Spirit as to the moment of His coming is intimated by the word "suddenly," as also the manner of it, as the sound of a mighty irresistible wind. Then He filled all the house, and also rested on each one. The appearance of the Spirit was as cloven tongues of fire. "*Cloven*" so that the human race might hear the wonderful works of God; *fire* as denoting the energy in which the story of grace was to be told. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." We would here notice a difference in terms, each having its own distinctive thought: "*filled* with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 4) and "*full* of the Holy Ghost" (vi. 3). The former intimates power for special service; the latter refers to the normal state of believers, of which the martyred deacon of Jerusalem is a sample (Acts vii. 55). Thus, then, the house and each believer were filled with the Holy Ghost—a double action. The foreign speaking tongues were for Jews of many nationalities. Such a powerful operation of the Spirit of God had never before been witnessed. The tidings quickly spread. The multitude flocked together in wonder and amazement; some doubted, "others mocking said, These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13). This was a definite charge which Peter instantly repels. "Peter, *standing up* with the eleven" (verse 14) would be proof to all of the falsity of the charge, adding, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day," *i.e.*, nine o'clock in the morning: see also 1 Thess. v. 7.

The impartation of the Holy Ghost to the disciples *as a company* (John xx. 22-23), and before the Ascension, was for a distinct purpose. An administrative forgiveness of sins—not priestly absolution—was an authority conferred on the disciples as a whole. The Holy Ghost was needful for such a service—one requiring wisdom and grace. In the reception of persons

into their company, or in the rejection of such, the disciples thereby remitted the sins of those received, and retained the sins of those rejected. It is no question whatever of eternal forgiveness of sins before God ; that is not man's prerogative. When a Jew or Pagan sought a place amongst God's people, *they* had to be satisfied that the comer was a truly saved person, hence for the earth and as an administrative act, the sins of his former life were remitted by the company of believers, but the man's sins *had* been already forgiven by God. Divine forgiveness, and a human administrative forgiveness are two very different things. Now for this latter, and in the absence of Christ, the Holy Ghost was needed. The Holy Ghost for power and for the formation of the body was the great Pentecostal gift. But the Spirit given in the peculiar way, and for the special service enjoined in John xx., marks out a line of truth distinct from that of Acts ii., and one imperfectly understood by the mass of professing Christians. Some have supposed that what the Lord breathed on His disciples was life "more abundantly" than they had previously possessed, quoting John x. 10, in proof. But there is no such thought in Scripture as a double communication of life. The passage simply reads, "I am come that they may have life abundantly," *more* abundantly, has no warrant whatever in the text. John xx. 22, speaks of the Holy Ghost imparted, not of life given.

5. The Spirit's great corporate work "one body." The fundamental text is 1 Cor. xii. 13, which in the R.V. reads "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free ; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." This one and only body of believers—all believers on earth—is termed "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. iv. 3), because the body cannot well be thought of apart from the Spirit in whose power it was formed, who is its life and its energy in action and growth. The term "unity of the body" does not occur in the Scriptures, but the truth of it is undoubtedly taught in 1 Cor. xii. 12 ; Eph. iv. 16. Now on two distinct occasions the Holy Spirit fell on believers ; first on Jews (Acts ii), second on Gentiles (Acts x). The words of Peter are important as

linking up Jews and Gentiles in the *same* blessing. "As I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on *them* (Gentiles) as on *us* (Jews) at the beginning" (Acts xi. 15). The body then is composed of Jews and Gentiles—believers, of course. The body is a perfect unity. It is complete on the earth at any given time from the descent of the Holy Ghost till the translation of all saints (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). The body as such, is not caught up at the Coming, but those comprising it with others are. The body consists of the aggregate of saints alive on the earth, not part in Heaven and part on earth, but is viewed as on the earth, and the Spirit acting through its members here. Christ the Head is in Heaven. The body is on the earth. The divisions on every hand cannot mar the integrity of the body. Its unity is maintained by the Holy Ghost. We have hindered the *display* of the unity, but the thing itself ever abides.

6. The Holy Ghost in-dwelling believers is God's seal that we are His, that we belong to Christ (Rom. viii. 9). The baptizing of all believers into one body is a corporate act and never repeated. As the result of this spiritual baptism the one body is formed, and into this Spirit-baptized body believers find themselves when sealed by God. The sealer is God. The baptizer is the Lord. The former refers to *each* one of us ; individually we are sealed : The latter intimates an act of a corporate character in which all saints are embraced. "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). The Holy Ghost Himself *in us* is God's seal. "Sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). It is not the effects or workings of the Spirit in us which constitutes the seal, but Himself is the seal that we are Christians, God's property. The sealing is subsequent to new birth. The interval between being born and sealed, may be but a moment or prolonged for years. The Holy Spirit is given to them who obey God (Acts v. 32). Where there is submission to the testimony of God in the Gospel, then the person is sealed. Acts x. 43, 44, is a case in point. The new birth is, of course, the moral foundation in the soul of every

inward blessing, but there is an *order* in the communication of truth and grace. Thus in the new birth you become a child of God, but a subsequent and added blessing is that of sonship which is ours by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26, R.V.) The Old Testament saints were children of God, but they were not sons of God, this latter being a New Testament blessing. Now we are not sealed as children but as sons (Gal. iv. 6). Then we are sealed in view of redemption—for that day when the body raised and glorified, shall fully share in the blessing flowing to us from the atoning sacrifice (Eph. iv. 30). O how carefully we should walk and think and act in light of that marvellous truth ! *The Holy Ghost is in us*, in our bodies.

7. The Spirit's place in regard to the ministry and worship of believers. The professing Church sins against the Holy Ghost in instituting an exclusive class of priests and servants. The respective systems of Judaism and Christianity present a series of sharply drawn contrasts. The worship in the former was confined to the family of Aaron (Exod. xxviii. ; xxix.) ; the worship in the latter is a blessing and privilege conferred on *all* believers (1 Peter ii. 5-9 ; Rev. i. 6 ; Heb. xiii. 15, 16). Christianity knows nothing of a priestly caste. Then the service of God under Judaism was essentially conservative ; that under Christianity is bounded only by the limits of the human race. Every member of the body of Christ has a unique place assigned him and a special work to do (1 Cor. xii). But a human system of ordination has been built up, a system which arrogates to itself an exclusive right and title to minister in the Church and in the world. "Our minister" or "our clergyman" is the embodiment of the idea. Now this clerical system usurps the prerogative of the Spirit of God, and thus sins against Him. It is a system also which robs the mass of God's people of their undoubted right to minister at all times and in all places, subject, of course, to the Spirit's regulations as in 1 Cor. xiv. Let any one read over the fundamental portions of the Divine Word on ministry, Rom. xii., 1 Cor. xii., xiv., Eph. iv., and then ask themselves the question Are not these gifts and ministries independent of ordination

Unhesitatingly we assert the right of every Christian man to minister the truth and grace of Christ. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man (*i.e.*, every Christian) to profit withal" (1 Cor. xii. 7). The power to minister does not lie in intellectual ability, while that, of course, is recognised in the Spirit's bestowal of gift (Matt. xxv. 15). The Lord endows with gift and truth according to each one's "**several** ability." But intellectual ability and the Holy Spirit's power must not be confounded. That remarkable sermon, and its equally striking results detailed in chap. ii of the Acts was due to the unction of the Holy Ghost. The rough, rugged, and fervid eloquence of Peter, the uneducated Galilean fisherman, would not have been brooked in the Academy, but Peter spoke in the power of the Holy Ghost. God wrought mightily on the day of Pentecost. There is a deep and wide-spread feeling of complaint at the paucity of result in Gospel and other work. The absence of blessing is easily accounted for. The presence and power of the Holy Ghost is ignored, and God is expected to work by the religious machinery duly established. But God is not mocked. If Christians would but return to the simple and primitive order, when all effective service was carried on under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost, there would be blessing rich and abundant as in the past. Sweep ordination aside as destitute of Divine authority. Abolish Missionary Societies as equally lacking Scriptural sanction, and let servants of Christ go out into the home and foreign field "taking nothing of the Gentiles." Let Apostolic methods of service be adopted, and commensurate results are sure to follow.

What was the power in which Stephen confounded his adversaries (Acts vi. 9, 10), and by which he preached one of the most pungent and conscience-stirring discourses ever breathed from mortal lips (vii)? It was the power of the Holy Ghost. How were the movements of God's servants of old controlled? By Committee? By Society? By Presbytery? Nay, but *directly* by the Holy Ghost (Acts iv. 8 ; 31 ; viii. 29, 39 ; xi. 12 ; xiii. 2 ; xvi. 6, 7, &c.) The Holy Ghost remains as ever to guide, to teach, to work, and to control. The question is a simple one,

but the answer is fraught with consequences of a far-reaching character. Are we prepared to break off from every association which interferes with the sovereign right of Christ, and return to the simplicity of early times? We look around upon the vast heathen world of more than 800 millions, and we can only ask : What is to be done? Answer the appeals of our Missionary Societies for more men and money? No. The Lord *alone* can send out into the mission field. Let there be no mistake here. In Matt. ix. 38, the remedy is prescribed by the Lord Himself, " Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Pray, that He to whom the harvest belongs, will thrust out men and women, and in this work Missionary Societies have nothing to do, then let us dip our hands deeply into our pockets, and generously and lovingly care for these servants (1 Cor. ix). All such arguments as that a previous course of training is needful, is beside the mark. The learned Paul (Acts xxvi. 24) and the uneducated John and Peter (vi. 13), were each fitted for their special sphere of service by the Lord *alone*, and it would have trenched upon the sovereign prerogative of Christ, to have insisted upon the latter undergoing a course of instruction ere they commenced their ministry.

The Lord when He ascended gave gifts to men (Eph. iv), and rest assured, that human interference with any Christ-given gift is a dishonour and an insult to Him. Again, after enumerating a number of gifts in the Church, the Apostle adds these pungent words : " But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will " (1 Cor. xii. 11). The ministry in the Church and in the world is under the complete control of the Holy Ghost. Only admit this truth, and act upon it, and you have in your hands the great factor which would revolutionise the state of things, and introduce a power which would again startle the world by the great fact that God by His Spirit is on the earth.

PROPHETIC THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

THE future is mapped out in the Word both in bold outline and in detail. A few preliminary observations to its study may prove helpful.

1. Prophecy commences, not with the translation of saints to Heaven, but with the restoration of Judah to Palestine. Israel is God's centre amongst the nations (Deut. xxxii. 8); Jerusalem His special object of interest amongst the countries (Ezek. v. 5). God's historical dealings with His ancient people were broken off in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, and in the world-wide dispersion of Judah. The history is resumed when Israel once again occupies the prophetic scene.

2. The various geographical positions, as *north, south, east*, etc., are in relation to Jerusalem and Palestine. This borne in mind, will enable any one with a good map of Eastern biblical countries, to locate with certainty the numerous nations and places referred to in the prophecies, besides fixing their location in the memory. Take Palestine as your centre, then apportion the nations in relation thereto, and the general prophetic situation is before you.

3. The revival of the old Roman political Power must be constantly borne in mind. The beast, *i.e.*, revived Rome, plays a fearful part under Satan in the scenes of the last days (Rev. xiii.; xvii.)

4. The personal Antichrist who comes upon the scene after the revival of the Empire, and is in himself the embodiment of Christian and Jewish apostasy. He is also termed "the false prophet" amongst the Jews; and King in Palestine. He is confederate with the beast, but inferior to him in political power; religiously he supports the blasphemous pretensions of the beast. They work together and are eternally punished together. He is a Jew, whilst the beast is a Gentile.

The translation of the saints paves the way for the introduction to the event of the centuries, and which is also the fundamental factor in the prophetic programme:—*Wrest Palestine from the grasp of the Turk and restore the Jews to their rightful land.* The Zionist movement—a most remarkable one—has quickened the pulse of the Hebrew nation. It is also creating a national sentiment. The progress of the movement is attracting general attention to the Jewish question. Already efforts are being made to get the United States of America, or Great Britain to espouse the cause of the Jew. Perhaps the political situation is not yet ripe for either nation restoring the Jews to the land. A rupture with Turkey is possible, nay highly probable, and indeed the dismemberment of that corrupt Mohammedan Power is only a question of time. Circumstances may bring it about sooner than any of us expect. But in whatever way the restoration of Judah is to be effected, the result is certain. It will soon become an accomplished fact. The present movement on the part of influential Jews to recover the land, is one apart altogether from faith in God. It is a national and political movement, which aims to give practical expression to the desire for the consolidation of the tribes of “wandering feet and wearied breast” in the land which is theirs, and to assume a national position amongst the peoples of the earth. The governmental hand of Jehovah is yet upon the Jew. The national restoration whenever it takes place, or by whatever means it may be effected is an event most sure. The word of the Lord hath spoken it, and that is enough (Isa. xviii.)

SAVED BY THE WORK—HAPPY BY THE WORD.

THE eight persons in the Ark were equally saved, but *may* not have been equally happy. What secured their safety was the simple fact that God caused the Ark to be constructed JUDGMENT-PROOF. There was no fear of rot in the timbers of the huge vessel, for it was pitched *within* with pitch, and it was impossible for the waters to enter, for it was pitched *without* with pitch

(Gen. vi. 14). Then there was no getting out, nor falling out of any of the saved eight souls. There was but *one* way of getting in and out, and that was by the door in the side, but Jehovah—the Self-Existing One, whose fiat heaven and earth, angels and men obey—Himself became the guarantee of safety, for exultingly we read, “The LORD shut him in” (Gen. vii. 16). All within that ark of safety were saved and saved by God.

Now suppose Ham or Japheth—the youngest and eldest sons of Noah—had spoken to their brother Shem, saying, “We are most unhappy: we cannot sleep at nights through fear; we often examine the vessel to see if the timbers are sound, and frequently fumble about the door in case it is not properly secured”: Would their fears or Shem’s quiet confidence affect their safety in the least degree? Surely not. All were equally safe. God had pledged Himself to *that*. But all were not equally happy. Their feelings, good or bad; their faith, strong or weak, had nothing to do in securing their safety, which was God’s concern *alone*. But just in proportion as they believed that Jehovah had shut them *in* the JUDGMENT-PROOF ARK, so were they happy. Happiness flows from simple faith in God’s testimony that as believers we *are* saved (Eph. ii. 5), and *have* everlasting life (1 John v. 11). Doubting believers are as safe as strong-faith ones — both are equally saved. A Christian in this world is as safe from Divine judgment overtaking him, as Christ Himself at God’s right hand (1 John iv. 17). It is a bold thing to say, but it is true nevertheless, that Christ and the weakest believer on earth, are precisely on the same ground, *i.e.*, beyond judgment. Should not this make you happy? We want you to see that you are safe, and ought to be happy. God secures the one, and in exact proportion as you rest in that fact you are happy.

The pious God-fearing Israelite sprinkled the blood of the paschal lamb on the side-posts and door post of his dwelling (Exod. xii. 7). He then entered his house and prepared for his departure from Egypt. With girded loins, staff in hand, and shoes on feet, he sat down to feast on the flesh of the lamb whose blood was sprinkled *outside* (verse 11). While the Israelites were

Saved by the Work—Happy by the Word. 181

feeding within their blood-sprinkled dwellings in *perfect peace*, the destroyer was passing thro' the whole land. "It came to pass that at midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharoah that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle" (verse 29). Did none escape? Yes, those *only* who, in the obedience of faith, sprinkled the blood on the posts of their dwellings; all such had God's word of safety. "When I (Jehovah) see the blood, I will pass over you" (verse 13). The fears, or feelings, or character of the inmates were not in question on the night of Egypt's doom. Those and those *only* who were under the shelter of the blood were safe. The blood was outside for the eye of Jehovah; on it the gaze of the destroyer rested, and that sprinkled blood *alone* turned aside the sword of judgment.

But were all inside their blood-sprinkled dwellings equally safe? Undoubtedly. The man of weak faith was as safe as the man of strong faith. Suppose some trembling Israelite whispered to his friend, "I am afraid. Do you think, after all, that the destroyer will pass our dwelling?" Is that man happy? Certainly not. But is he safe? Why he must be, for Jehovah had said, "When I SEE THE BLOOD, I will pass over you." That poor, unhappy Israelite is *absolutely safe*, for God's eye is not on him, but on the blood. Why then is he not happy? Because he has not unquestioning confidence in the *word* of Jehovah. What word? Why this, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." The blood *outside* was for God and secured the man's safety. The word *inside* was for the Israelite and, as believed, secured the man's happiness.

Now do you see these two things? Do not confuse them in your thoughts or experience. God's work secures your safety. God's word secures your peace. The work and the word; the former for God, the latter for the poor heart. The conscience rests on what He has *done*. The heart rests on what He has *said*. All, therefore, are equally safe, but all are not equally happy. The *work* rested on secures salvation. The *word* believed on

gives confidence. Some known to us when they discover any inconsistency in life at once question their salvation. Our salvation reposes on the solid rock of ages, on the mighty work of the cross, and not on the life, be it good or bad, or on faith, be it strong or weak. All believers are equally safe, and all ought to be happy, rejoicing Christians.

ON THE FINDING OF THE PHAROAHS.

OF twenty of the most celebrated Infidels of our day, in Great Britain alone, sixteen have returned to the faith of Christ. After all, the Cross is a great fact. In all correspondence and chronology, the letters B.C., or A.D., before or after Christ, are the world's witness to the great and distinguishing truth that they have to do with the Lord. The most unlettered person unconsciously pays homage to the Cross of Christ, in putting the mark of the **X** to a document.

In the year 1878 the then ruler of Egypt authorised Professor Maspero to found a Museum at Boulak, a suburb of Cairo. The object was to gather together antiquities, for which Egypt is justly celebrated.

In 1881, July fifth, a cave near Thebes was exposed, and its rich contents removed to Boulak. The find was one of thrilling interest: Mummies of Kings, of Queens, of Priests, and Priestesses, besides numerous articles of subsidiary value as clothing, papyre, vases, etc. The priests of the Egyptian Church carefully preserved the remains of their great kings as they liberally endowed the religious system in vogue, and, in fact, the priesthood of Egypt was the main support of the throne; see Gen. xlvii. 22.

There exists a law in Egypt absolutely forbidding traffic in these articles of interest, but somehow or other numerous objects of high antiquity, found their way into various Museums and private collections in Europe. Professor Maspero instituted an enquiry with the result that several Arabs were arrested. One was com-

On the Finding of the Pharoahs.

183

pelled under threats to reveal the hiding place. The authorities were conducted to the cave—rich in its memorials of Egypt's departed great.

At the foot of a rugged mass of precipitous rock, so hidden that you might have passed it unobserved a hundred times, there was a perpendicular shaft, 35 feet deep and 6 feet in diameter. At the bottom of the shaft, in its western corner, was an opening, two feet high and five feet wide—the entrance to a narrow passage tunnelled in the rock. This tunnel lay due west for 25 feet, and then turned abruptly to the north for 200 feet which ended in an oblong chamber 260 feet long. The entire length of the tunnel was about 500 feet. This was literally covered with memorials of the dead from about 2000 B.C.

The whole were carefully removed in 48 hours by the aid of 300 Arabs to the vessels chartered to take them to Boulak.

Here lies before us Seti I. in whose reign the oppression of Israel commenced. This monarch was the son of Rameses I., the founder of the 19th Dynasty. Another distinguished king lies before us, RAMESES THE GREAT, son of Seti I. The mummy shews that he must have been a tall man about six feet high. The father's features are finely chiselled. The son, on the contrary, must have been a coarse and brutal man. He reigned about 66 years ; in his reign Moses was born, and at his court was educated and brought up. You are gazing on the very features of the foster father of Moses. Rameses, or Sesostris, so termed by the Greeks, has ignobly rendered himself famous as a warrior, and as Israel's great and cruel oppressor. His battles, and his greatness on monuments cover the whole country. What has infidelity to say to this ? The Bible as a record is ABSOLUTELY TRUE. Go to the Boulak Museum and your infidelity will vanish at a sight of these coffins and mummies 3,500 years old. The king who raised "Cleopatra's Needle" — now on the embankment of the Thames—had his features exposed to gaze ere the body crumbled to dust. Ah ! God is in these things. Open infidelity is retiring abashed from the conflict with Christianity. Yes, the Bible is absolutely true.

REST FOR THE BRAIN.

God's account of creation is a simple, yet dignified one. The whole record is contained in the first two chapters of the Bible. It begins with a statement of elementary, yet fundamental truth : "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," followed by subsequent details of fascinating interest, and not more strange than true. There is neither argument nor proof advanced. God needs not to prove His statements ; they are self-evident. Surely it is better and safer to trust the written testimony of the Creator than the testimony of the rocks as interpreted by the scientists of whom scarcely two agree. The results of scientific research which bear on Gen. i. and ii. absolutely fail as a basis of faith. The brain cannot rest on writings which are proved on fuller and more careful evidence by succeeding investigators to be misleading and untrustworthy. The geologists of 20 years ago were as loud as they are to-day in asserting the correctness of their theories and conclusions. But they are not now quoted as authority and their books can now be had for the price of an old song.

Now in the Bible alone have we absolute truth. In the opening words of our God we have fundamental truth stated in language of charming simplicity. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Thus matter is not eternal, and the God of Revelation is the Creator. Here the brain rests. The account of creation as given in Genesis, chaps. i. and ii., has stood the test of a scientific world for thousands of years. Has it been disproved ? Has its statement of facts been contradicted in any one particular ? No, no. These two chapters constitute a rock on which to build and on which to rest one's weary feet. The how ? why ? and wherefore ? are herein satisfactorily answered. Millions in all parts of the globe and in all ages have had the mind calmed, and the brain rested on this Genesis-record of creation. God loves His creatures, and His first care is to rest the weary brain, ere other needs are spoken of or provided for. Divine Revelation is a solid basis of faith. It cannot be

overthrown. God, who caused the Bible to be written, imprinted on the stones a story of pre-Adamic times which it is foolish to regard as in conflict with revelation. The stones and the Scriptures unite in *one* testimony to God—the Creator.

REST FOR THE CONSCIENCE.

AFTER all, men are sinners. The philosopher and the boor, the prince and the peasant, the religious and the profane are *all* on one common platform before God—all have sinned and all are guilty. The fear of coming judgment is well grounded. The dread on the spirit of having to meet God in judgment is an awful feeling, and the dread is intensified as one reads the calm and holy words of scripture: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolator hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for *because of these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience" (Eph. v. 5, 6). The day too is appointed and the judge ordained, so that all is fixed and certain (Acts xvii. 31) and it is a judgment into which all the unbelieving and impenitent must enter and from which there is no escape (Heb. ii. 3).

The certainty of coming judgment is like a millstone round the neck. It is a perpetual weight. It haunts one day and night. It crushes the very life out of one. It is a thorn amidst the roses and lilies of life. There is a meeting to come off between every man and God. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12), and with many it will be a dark and black account, hence the general fear. We suppose every one has at one time or another had this dread, and which nothing can effectually shake off.

What then? What is to be done? There is only one thing which can clear the conscience and make you fearless in the view of future judgment and that is **THE BLOOD OF CHRIST**. You can neither avert judgment nor remove the daily dread of it from the

mind. You know you are a sinner and the sins of your life stand between you and God. How can they be removed? THE BLOOD OF CHRIST delivers from condemnation and removes our sins. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). The saved announce the same truth in one of their many songs "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. i. 5). The blood of Christ cleanses the deadly stain from the conscience, wipes out the account between the sinner and God, and dispels all fear of a judgment to come. If Christ has borne the judgment of your sins, you are free, and the conscience hitherto so burdened enters into rest. All is peace.

REST FOR THE HEART.

GOD gave rest to the brain on reading in faith, Gen. i. and ii. Then He gave rest to the troubled conscience as one's soul grasped the blessedness of 1 John i. 7. But the heart too longed and yearned for rest and Christ gave it, according to His own words "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). The wearied sinner of John iv. entered into rest on the discovery of Christ Himself—"I that speak unto thee am He" (v. 26). "I" who is He? The saviour of Jew and Gentile—the saviour of the world. It is Christ Himself, known and believed on, who alone wins the heart. The discovery of Christ dispels the gloom and scatters fears and doubts to the winds. "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself" (Luke xxiv. 38, 39.) "I myself" risen from among the dead! "I myself" once the victim, now the conqueror. He, risen from the dead won their hearts. Yes, He and He alone rests the heart. Its fears, its anxieties, its sense of loneliness, its desolation are all met by one believing sight of Christ. His perfect sacrifice on the cross is the answer God supplies to the need of a troubled conscience. But the heart too

has its own special needs and perplexities, and absolutely nothing can meet the heart, give it rest, and win it, but Christ Himself revealed to the soul. "Come unto *me*" He said, and "Come unto *me*" He says. The heart is formed to love and rest upon a person. You cannot love a doctrine, or a work, but a person, and that person is the Son of God.

Rest of heart cannot be found in the church, nor in sacraments. Christ gives it by coming to *Him*. There is no other way of getting rest. He clears the conscience by His sacrifice and wins the heart by revealing Himself. His acts and words tell who He is. A sight of the Christ of the Gospels, draws the heart after Him. But better still, a sight of Him *after the cross* with the wounds of Calvary in His blessed person as in Luke xxiv. 40 and Rev. v. 6, settles the heart's perplexity. Now the heart can enter into rest. Thus brain, conscience, and heart are at rest. "My beloved is *mine* and I am *His*."

THE MUSTER ROLL.

AN INCIDENT OF WAR.

A BATTLE had been fought,
 And on the plain, unmindful of defeat
 Or victory, the slain and wounded lay.
 Grim death was busy still, unsatisfied,
 Gathering the remnants of that sad day's spoil.
 As night drew on,
 Two men of God were seen moving amid
 Those scenes of death and dying agony,
 As, nerved by heavenly strength, and tender care
 For souls, they sought to comfort dying saints
 By whispering in their ears His promises,
 From whom nor life nor death can separate ;
 And to the Lamb of God, whose precious blood
 Can cleanse from every sin, to point the gaze
 Of those whose day of life was almost past,
 Their sins yet unforgiven.

The Muster Roll.

And now they stand
 Beside a manly form, outstretched alone.
 His helmet from his head had fallen. His hand
 Still firmly grasped his keen but broken sword.
 His face was white and cold ; and, thinking he was gone,
 They were just passing on, for time was precious,
 When a faint sigh caught their attentive ears.
 Life was still there ; so, bending softly down,
 They whispered in his ears most earnestly,
 Yet with that hush and gentleness with which
 We ever speak to a departing soul,
 " Brother, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son,
 Cleanseth from every sin ! "

The pale lips moved,
 And gently whispered, " Hush ! " and then they closed,
 And life again seemed gone.

But yet once more
 They whispered those thrice-blessed words, in hope
 To point the parting soul to Christ and heaven,
 " Brother, the precious blood of Jesus Christ
 Can cleanse from every sin ! "

Again the pale lips moved ;
 All else was still and motionless, for Death
 Already had his fatal work half done ;
 But gathering up his quickly failing strength,
 The dying soldier—dying victor— said,
 " Hush ! for the Saviour calls the muster roll :
 I wait to hear my name ! "

They spoke no more.
 What need to speak again ? For now full well
 They knew on Whom his dying hopes were fixed,
 And what his prospects were ; so, hushed and still,
 They, kneeling, watched.

And presently a smile,
 As of most thrilling and intense delight,
 Played for a moment on the soldier's face,

“ Be still, and know that I am God.”

189

And with his one last breath he whispered “ Here ! ”

O Grand

And blessed death ! Quite ready for the call,
He heard his Captain’s voice. Life’s battle fought—
Life’s victory won—the soldier thus received
His welcome and his crown !

“ BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.”

It is hard to be still when all is turmoil and commotion around —when dangers thicken and troubles multiply on every hand. There is at least a moral heroism in battling single-handed with opposing hosts even if you fall in the struggle. Controversy has its uses as well as its dangers, and never let us forget that the Judah-remnants who returned to Jerusalem from their forced exile of 70 years were men who could wield the sword as well as handle the trowel. “ For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded ” (Neh. iv. 18). There are times and seasons, when the advances of our wily foe on the citadel of our most holy faith, must be resisted in spiritual energy —foot to foot, and inch by inch. The sword must not be sheathed, must ever be sharpened and burnished and ready for use. The armour is needed for conflict with Satan and wicked spirits (Eph. vi. 11-13).

There are, however, times when God *seems* to hide Himself, when our only safety is in doing nothing. The voice of our Saviour-God is heard beside many a Red Sea difficulty, “ *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.* ” It is a hard lesson to “ stand still ” in the midst of opposing foes. Jehovah is the *Living* God. Cloud and storm are beneath His feet and His throne remains unmoved. Can’t you, won’t you let Him act for you ? Be still and see the wonder-working arm of Jehovah clearing a path for your feet. Once more the seas divide and Jehovah has triumphed and then we sing.

THE PRAYER MEETING.

I was awfully tired and worried,
 The week had been full o' care ;
 So over my work I hurried,
 And went to the house of prayer.

My poor husband's health was failin' ;
 It was little that he could earn ;
 An' young Jackie, in climin' a palin',
 Had given his ankle a turn.

The weather was hot and broilin' ;
 It was washin' week with me, too ;
 An' I guess my temper was failin',
 For it rose as seldom it do.

I'd spoke sharp to my daughter Mary,
 Who'd tried all my labours to share ;
 So, although I was tired an' weary,
 I crept to the house o' prayer.

'Twas the regular week-end meetin',
 An' auld Deacon Weston led.
 (He mostly did the leadin',
 An' was looked up to as the head).

He read a long Psalm of rejoicin'
 By David o'er vanquished foes,
 But that I felt I'd no voice in,
 Though 'twas all very good, I suppose.

An' then the good deacon, he led us
 In prayer in his usual way—
 Thankin' God that His wisdom had made us,
 An' guided us up to that day.

He thanked Him for "peace like a river,"
 For grace given by which we'd "been kept,"
 An' I sighed as I thought, with a quiver,
 How my anger o'er reason had leapt.

He praised Him for store above measure,
 For bounties that strew'd ail the way,
 (The deacon, they say, at his pleasure,
 Could buy half the town any day).

The Prayer Meeting.

191

He prayed a long spell for the pastor,
 For "souls as his hire an' seal,"
 And that he in the steps o' his Master
 Might press on with courage and zeal.

He prayed that the church and its members
 May be knit like the heart o' one man ;
 That their love might leap up from dull embers
 Like a fire under breath from a fan.

He prayed that the Sunday School also
 Might " Marys and Timothys " train.
 But, ashamed as I felt that it was so,
 I thought only of Jackie's bad sprain.

He prayed for the world altogether,
 In the arms o' the wicked one Cain.
 (And I found myself wondering whether
 God couldn't the evil restrain.)

He prayed for the Queen an' the missions,
 For all sorts and conditions of men ;
 An' endin' his numerous petitions,
 Finished off with a double " Amen ! "

We'd more singin' and then Deacon Warren
 And several more brethren prayed,
 (But the words so familiar seemed barren,
 I was quite out o' tune, I'm afraid).

We'd to draw from the wells of salvation,
 The Scriptures search line upon line,
 An' overcome strong bulls o' Bashan,
 Like giants refreshed with new wine.

We'd to mount up on wings like the eagle,
 And never grow weary or faint ;
 Our high calling was priestly an' regal,
 Nought less was becomin' a saint.

An' now the last singin' was finished,
 And shortly the meeting must close,
 An' my troubles an' care undiminished,
 Forbade hopes of peaceful repose.

The Prayer Meeting.

I had eagerly watched for some token
 But nought seemed just suited to me,
 An' I felt sad and almost heartbroken,
 And as wretched as wretched could be.

I felt I'd been hard on dear Mary,
 An' yet somehow—I couldn't say why,
 It was things goin' cross an' contrary,
 Seemed more deserve blamin' than I.

The good deacon stood up for the blessin',
 An' I sadly half rose from my knees,
 When a voice (it was old Widow Lessing's),
 Broke the silence with passionate pleas.

(She'd a son in the 'sylum at Ryall,
 Another bedridden at home,
 An' a daughter—her bitterest trial—
 Gay, dressy, and given to roam).

“Oh, Lord—our Great Father,”—she started,
 Then she paused, as if trouble pressed sore,
 “Thou knowest”—the words through me darted,
 An' I scarcely heard anything more.

Yes, there was the message I'd waited,
 “Thou knowest,” that's all we can say
 At times when with cares overweighted,
 We neither can worship nor pray.

Thou knowest—my cares then I'll bear them ;
 My strength—then right onward I'll press ;
 My few joys—then, if need be, I'll spare them ;
 My failings I'll freely confess.

Yes, my blessing had come, though it tarried,
 I'd surely not waited in vain.

Small now seemed the burden I carried,
 An' light my affliction and pain.

A warm kiss made it up with dear Mary,
 And I soothed little Jack for the night ;
 E'en my husband grew hopeful and cheery,
 Seein' me look so happy an' bright.

Avoid long and pointless Prayers. Be brief and simple ; express the varied needs of the Saints and of the Church. Be specific in your requests. Pray earnestly and believingly.

THE PSALMS.

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR SEQUENCE.

The Fourth Book Psalms xc.-cvi.

THE fourth book of the Psalms comprises seventeen compositions, numbered from xc. to cvi. inclusive. Two of these, ci. and ciii., are ascribed to David, and one to (xc.) to Moses. The rest, fourteen in number, bear no author's name, though one (cii.) is described as "The prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." And three others, we may boldly say, were in existence in the lifetime of David. We refer to Ps. xcvi., cv., cvi., the whole of the first of these and part of the other two having been sung on the occasion of the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem (1 Chron. xvi. 7-36). Praise is the characteristic of most in this book, only two (xc., cii.) being designated as *prayers*.

Between this book of the Psalms and the fourth book of the Pentateuch, *i.e.*, Numbers, an analogy may in measure be traced. In the latter we read both of the end of the wilderness journey, the congregation having crossed the brook, or valley, of Zared (Num. xxi. 12); and of the commencement of the wars, which would issue in the conquest and possession of the land (Deut. ii. 31; iii. 12). Beginning with the extermination of the Amorites east of Jordan under Moses, the war went on west of Jordan under Joshua. Rest for Israel nationally in the past was only reached, as we read, in Josh. xi. 23; years of conflict passing ere that was achieved. In the fourth book of the Psalms the Lord's return to reign is celebrated. Anticipations of it we have met with (Ps. ii. ; xlv. ; lxxii.), but the announcement of His presence once more in Zion is reserved for Ps. xcix. 2. Then, as other Scriptures teach us, millennial rest and peace must await the utter discomfiture of all Israel's foes, a consummation future to the Lord's appearance at Jerusalem.

Hence it need cause no surprise to find, when we come to the fifth book of the Psalms, that the end of the people's trouble will not have been reached at the moment of the Lord's return to reign. Born King of the Jews (Matt. ii. 2), He will return with the emblems of imperial power and sovereignty (Rev. xix. 11-16); but conflict and conquest must go forward ere the earth can know the blessings of peaceful rest. For first the Lord will encounter the beast, and the false prophet, and their armies, engaged in the mad purpose of keeping Him, if possible, out of His kingdom here below (Rev. xix. 19-21). Next He will deal with the king of the north, as both Isaiah (xiv. 25; xxx. 29-32), and Daniel (viii. 25; xi. 45) have predicted.* After that the invasion of Gog will take place, followed by his overthrow, and that of his huge host (Ezek. xxxviii.; xxxix). Beside all this the conquering campaign of Israel in the land of Nimrod, foretold by Micah (v. 5-8) must have its place. Peace, therefore, enduring peace for this weary world, will not be brought about at the moment of the Lord's appearing, or Epiphany (2 Tim. iv. 1), like a magician's wand effecting an instantaneous deliverance. But the final victory is certain. As when Solomon reigned there was neither adversary nor evil occurrent (1 Kings v. 4), so will it be under the sway of Christ, when that beautiful picture of Psalm lxxii. has its realization.

To turn now—to Ps. xc., entitled “A prayer of Moses, the man of God.” In His closing ministry to Israel the lawgiver sketched out the fortunes of the nation till their final blessing, when they shall return to the Lord their God, and obey His voice, their hearts being circumcised, and their captivity then ended. Then, too, the Gentiles will rejoice with Israel (Deut. xxx.; xxxii. 43). Directed of God to foretell all this, we may well understand his being inspired to indite the prayer of Ps. xc. as a prelude to that happy time.

* The reader may remark that in Isaiah xiv the destruction of Babylon is predicted before the overthrow of the Assyrian is declared. The converse was the case in the past. In the future what will answer to the Assyrian will be dealt with after the decisive conflict with the head of the Roman earth, the beast of Rev. xiii. xix. 20.

The Psalms.

195

Great would be and many the vicissitudes of the nation. Generation after generation would come, and go ; but there is One who has been Israel's dwelling place, and their refuge in all generations. That One is here called *Adonai*, i.e., Lord. Who is He? From all eternity He is the everlasting God. In His hands are all men. And their mortality becomes apparent as they die under His hand. But the race does not become extinct. For the word goes forth from the Everlasting One, "Return, ye children of men." So we understand the third verse, bearing in mind the term used for man. In the first clause it is *Enosh*, i.e., mortal man, referring to their dying. In the second clause the Psalmist speaks of them as children of men, Adam, i.e., the race. Men then may pass away, but the Everlasting One remains. Time to Him is nothing. A thousand years (and no man has ever yet lived so long) are in His eyes but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Such is God—everlasting. Such are men, fleeting mortal creatures.

Fleeting, indeed, is man's temporal existence, like grass, which flourishing in the morning, is cut down, dried, and withered by nightfall. "Carried away as with a flood," so the Psalmist describes them. Is this just a figure from nature, or is there any prophetic reference to the troubles the remnant will pass through in the last days? Considering what has passed before us in the *third* book of Psalms, connected as we saw with the invasion of the northern army (Joel ii. 20); and remembering that the Assyrian, or northern power of the last days, is described by Isaiah as over-running the land like a flood *Zerem* (Isai. xxv. 4 ; xxviii. 2) ; and that the word in our Psalm for "carrying away like a flood" is an unusual one *Z'ramtam*, the verbal root of the noun *Zerem*, can it be that the fifth verse of our Psalm has a prophetic reference to that calamity, which in its completeness awaits the returned remnant of the Jews? Could we say that this suggestion is improbable? Would not the statements in the following verses (7, 8) be in character with it? The language of the Psalm is clearly that of *saints* in Israel. Yet they have to say

We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we

troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." How could such language become them? The answer is plain. As part of the nation then in apostasy they suffer governmentally with it. And the invasion of the land by the northern power of the future will be consequent, as Daniel ix. 27 has foretold, on the setting up in the Temple at Jerusalem of an idol,—the abomination of desolation (Matt. xxiv. 15), which we learn from Rev. xiii. 14, 15 will be the image of the beast.

Suffering, then, as the godly will with the rest of the returned remnant, is death to overtake them, ere their long expected deliverer in the person of the Messiah shall appear? It might seem like it. Brief life their portion, death the certain event (9, 10). God's wrath, too, they keenly feel. But who knows the power of His anger? None on earth have experienced that. Who, indeed, knows that wrath according to the fear that is due to God (11)? Two petitions then ascend. First, to be taught to number their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom (12). And, secondly, they request Jehovah to return repenting Himself concerning His servants (13). Hope, then, is not quite extinguished, so the Psalm closes with prayer, "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil." A large request indeed! "Let Thy work," they continue, "appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto (or, upon) their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it" (14-17).

Studying this Psalm we come to understand something of the trials and of the feelings of the godly amongst the Jews in that day, ere deliverance dawns upon them. In Ps. lxxxix 47, 48 the saint reminds God of the brevity of human life, and, as he fears, of the certainty of his death. In this prayer of Moses that feeling and fear are intensified. Will that really come about? Will

The Psalms.

197

death overtake them? An answer comes in Ps. xci. In doubt as to that God's earthly saints shall not remain.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Such is the opening statement (xc. 1). That which David counted on for himself (xxvii. 5), others may share in as well. And under the shadow of Him who is the Almighty what can harm them? Protection from troubles and from dangers of any kind can such count upon (3-8). In security shall they dwell, and angelic guardian care shall they experience (10-13). Such is the language of this interesting Psalm. Two speakers are introduced. One speaks in verse 2 and again in the first clause of verse 9, translated by the Revised version, "For Thou, Lord, art my refuge." All else to verse 13 inclusive is the utterance of another. Then God speaks, "Because he hath set his love upon Me," etc., to end of the Psalm. Abiding security therefore is assured to one so characterised. Length of days, too, shall he enjoy, and God will show him His salvation (14-16). An answer how full is this to the prayer in Ps. xc. 13-17.

An interesting Psalm we have called it. And the reader may remember how Satan quoted from it to turn the Lord Jesus from the path of obedience, but in vain (Matt. iv. 6, 7; Luke iv. 9-12). He omitted in His quotation the second clause of verse 11 of this Psalm, "in all Thy ways." How important to be careful in quoting God's Word!

Passing on to Ps. xcii., having looked at the *prayer* in Ps. xc., and noted the *full answer* to it in xci., we shall be prepared for the outflow—of *praise* in xcii. "A Psalm, or song for the sabbath day." So it is entitled. And well will it be suited to the remnant of the future when they shall enter into that rest, of which God has foretold them (Ps. xcv. 7-11). Fittingly, then, may the song for the sabbath day have its place in this connection; for the promise expressed in xci. 8, "Only with thine eye shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked," is contemplated by the godly one as certain of fulfilment (xcii. 7). Triumph he will in the works of Jehovah's hands (4). Exaltation, too, will he enjoy,

whilst the ungodly shall be utterly discomfited. His enemies are God's enemies. And the "Lord is on high for evermore" as we should translate in verse 8. He has never vacated His throne, whatever the apostates might think. The righteous, therefore, will He bless, for He is upright, and there is no unrighteousness in Him (xcii. 10-15). Faith is in exercise. The end is sure. The godly man will be preserved, and see his desire on his enemies. A righteous thought this is for earthly saints, but not language that should characterise a Christian.

"The Lord is on high" we have just read. Hence follows Ps. xciii., which has for its subjects the majesty and might of Jehovah. On His throne He sits, who is from everlasting. He reigns, and reigns in irresistible might. But how does the saint know this, seeing his deliverance has not yet been brought about? May not the answer be, that the judgment of the great whore has already taken place; and the voice which John heard celebrating it (Rev. xix. 1-3, 6), may have sounded, saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God shall be finished, great voices in heaven will proclaim the advent of the kingdom in power, and the four and twenty elders will give thanks in contemplation of it (Rev. xi. 15-18). Those in heaven understand what is coming. So, when the whore has been judged, saints on earth may perceive that the wished for consummation is not far off. God, they will see, is manifesting that He reigns. With Revelation then before us we can better apprehend the joyous announcement in Ps. xciii., though the oppressing and persecuting powers have still to be dealt with. "Jehovah reigneth." Who can withstand Him? "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. Above the voices of many waters, the mighty breakers of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty" (3, 4. R.V.) Mighty in power is Jehovah. He is steadfast to His word. Holiness becometh His House for ever (5). If this last is the case, as it certainly is, judgment must take place on the enemies of God's earthly people.

So God, in the Psalm which immediately follows, is looked

The Psalms.

199

on to display Himself as a God of vengeance, rewarding the proud after their deserts (xciv. 1, 2). Now the appearance of God in this character Isaiah has predicted (xxxv. 4). And the joyous message in consequence for Zion and the cities of Judah he has also foretold (xl. 9). Joyous will it be, for divine intervention will have been sorely needed. Breaking in pieces God's people, afflicting His heritage, slaying the widow and the stranger, and murdering the fatherless; such will have been the oppressive acts of the wicked (3-6). Insensate folly, and high-handed wickedness will characterise them. In determined apostasy they would shut out all true worship of God, as they will have shut out God from their hearts. The language we have listened to in Ps. lxxiii. 11, is their language still (xciv. 7). Fools, indeed. So the Psalmist proceeds, "Consider, ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the nations, shall not He correct, even He that teacheth man knowledge? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (xciv. 8-11. R.V.) How can this evil be dealt with?

Will godliness be utterly stamped out? Unchecked have the oppressors been in their mad and wicked career, helpless, too, the godly appear. Yet as at the beginning of the book of Psalms we saw there were two classes on earth, there will be the two classes still. God will not leave Himself without witnesses here below, and He will not forget His people who serve Him. So now the righteous are mentioned (12-15); and judgment, divorced from righteousness when the Lord was condemned, will return to it, and all the upright in heart will follow it. The end of the wicked is certain (13), for God will undertake the cause of His people, upholding them, when no human defender appears (16-19). Thoughts sad and sorrowful may have crowded in on the heart; but God's comforts will delight the soul.

A question, therefore, is asked for which we need the light of prophecy to understand. "Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with Thee, which frameth mischief by statute?" (20. R.V.). What does this mean? It refers to a state of matters in

Palestine in the end of the days. Wickedness and fellowship with Jehovah can never go together. The throne of wickedness is that of Antichrist reigning at Jerusalem under the power of the political head of the Roman empire. He will be the ecclesiastical leader in the great apostasy (Rev. xiii. 11-16). Prophecy sheds a light on the termination of Antichrist's reign, as we read what the seer in Patmos beheld (Rev. xix. 19-21). In the prospect then of divine intervention, the saints can say, "The Lord hath been my high tower; and my God the rock of my refuge. And He hath brought upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own evil; the Lord our God shall cut them off" (22, 23. R.V.)

Near then, imminent indeed must be the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the consciousness of this Ps. xcv. speaks. Familiar with this Psalm have many Christians been, generation after generation repeating it in their worship daily or weekly. Yet may we not confess, often as perhaps we may have joined in it in the past, we did not think of what its language will be to the godly remnant of the Jews, when the full time for its exhortation shall arise. David could say, "His anger is but for a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may tarry for the night, but joy (or, a shout of joy) cometh in the morning" (Ps. xxx. 5. R.V.) Fully will the remnant enter into this experience. And here (xcv.) have we not a shout of joy, as the Psalm commences, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms" (1, 2).

King above all gods is Jehovah (3). How applicable will the reminder of that be to the special circumstances of the faithful remnant, when the false Christ—the Antichrist is to be dealt with, and the true King to appear! Moreover the people are Jehovah's. He made them that at the Red Sea (Exod. vi. 6, 7; xv. 13. 19; Ps. lxxvii. 15); never through all the years of their waywardness and sin has God cancelled that. They are His people still, and will that be for ever. So here, before the Lord's appearance out

of heaven the faithful joyfully remember it (7). But a needful exhortation now comes. They must continue faithful for the little while, ere deliverance is complete (7-11). Of the awful character of those coming days the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples, when sitting on the Mount of Olives, confronting the city and the Temple. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there ; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect " (Matt. xxiv. 21-24).

Such is the Lord's forecast, and surely Ps. xciv. gives us an insight into things in the coming day as well as Ps. lxxiii. The exhortation then in xcv. is called for. And though as we see in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it was applied to the professing Christians from Judaism in apostolic times, its full application will be, when the remnant of the future are subject to the trials and persecutions set forth in the Psalms. The danger lest they should yield is evident, else why such an exhortation ? The temptation will be great, the conflict fierce. But God cares for His own, so has provided beforehand a ministry to meet them. Precious, how precious to Him, are His redeemed ones !

Songs ere deliverance is effected ! (xcv. 1, 2). The remembrance of what God is can call them forth. A great God, a great king above all gods, Creator, Maker, and Israel's God (3-7), singing then becomes His people. What a contrast to the feelings, and to the exhibition of them of the apostates shortly before the Lord appears. Scorched with heat, and gnawing their tongues with pain, they will blaspheme the God of heaven in their impotent rage (Rev. xvi. 8-11). Singing to the Lord by saints, blaspheming His name by apostates. What a state of things will it be !

And now those who can sing to the Lord, exhort others to do

it likewise. When David was made king at Hebron, and even when he moved to Jerusalem, what kingdom outside the limits of God's grant to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18) was concerned about it? When the Lord was born at Bethlehem Rome remained undisturbed. But, when the Son of David shall return in power to reign, all the earth will learn how that concerns them. For the heathen, too, will hear of it (xcvi. 3, 10), and Isaiah has foretold how they will learn about it (Isai. lxvi. 18, 19). And even nature itself will be moved at the advent of her Maker, coming to judge the world (xcvi. 11-13). This Psalm, we would remind the reader, was sung at the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem (1 Chron. xvi.), and told out what that entrance foreshadowed, which is now viewed as about to be accomplished. We would here notice that the Psalms, from which other portions were sung that day, are likewise found in this the fourth book (cv. 1-15; cvi. 1, 47, 48). By whom the Psalter was arranged we cannot say. But it is evident that the compiler was guided of the Spirit in placing these in that book, which contemplates the advent effected of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of this we are again reminded as we read Ps. xcvi. "Jehovah reigneth," so it begins; "let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Cloud and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation (or, foundation) of His throne" (1, 2). It is the prerogative of the king to execute justice (or, righteousness) and judgment. This Solomon did, executing righteousness in dealing with offenders, *i.e.*, Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei (1 Kings ii. 13-46), and ministering judgment to the two women who had sought it (iii. 16-28). The Lord will do both. Righteousness is viewed in this Psalm as now openly displayed (6), since the Lord is contemplated as having come with His heavenly saints, who will be the illustrations of divine righteousness (2 Cor. v. 21). Coming with them, Zion will be glad, and the daughters of Judah will rejoice, because of His judgments (8). And now, that, of which Isaiah wrote (ii. 18) concerning idols, will become true, for confounded will be all their worshippers (Ps. xcvi. 7). The long domination of idolatry will cease, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

The Psalms.

203

Idolators confounded, the heavenly saints come with the Lord, the angelic host, as Heb. i. 6, teaches us to understand the last clause of Ps. xcvi. 7, worshipping the King, Zion glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoicing, the godly ones can say, "The Lord preserveth the souls of His saints : He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous ; and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness" (10-12). What joy to earthly saints will the Lord's return impart ! What a scene will it be !

Hence a fresh call is made to sing a new song (xcviii. 1), a call addressed as in xcvi. to all the earth (4). In the former Psalm the call proceeds on the ground of what Jehovah is, and that He reigns. In xcviii. the call is renewed, for Jehovah is victorious over His enemies. "His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory" : His salvation is made known, "and His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the heathen, or rather, nations" (2). What will the nations behold ? The next verse tells us, "He hath remembered His mercy and truth towards the house of Israel : and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God." But why can all the earth, and all nature, too, be concerned in the Lord taking up that despised people, so long without a country on earth, and without proper political existence ? It is the prelude to millennial, and to world-wide blessing.

The victory celebrated in xcviii., we next learn where is the place of Jehovah's earthly throne, where it is that He will reign. "The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all peoples" (2). "Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father," so stated the Chronicler (1 Chron. xxix. 23). The Lord's throne was then at Jerusalem, and never has it been elsewhere on earth. To Zion, therefore, He will come back, for He hath chosen her, He desired her for an habitation (Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14) ; and there will He receive the homage of His creatures (xcix 3-5). Can the godly remnant hope for any favour at His hand ? His ways with Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are recalled as encouragement (6-8). God forgave them. He can, and will act in

similar grace towards the faithful remnant of His earthly people.

Cheerily, then, will they call on all the lands to praise Jehovah, making a joyful noise to Him. "Serve the Lord," will they say, "with gladness, come before His presence with singing" (c. 1, 2). Who thus speak? The third verse explains. God's earthly people, Israel, are the speakers. Who in the present, during the Christian dispensation, could conceive of such a call emanating from them? But, when the Lord appears for them, will that call pass unheeded? To His courts must all lands then repair, Jerusalem being owned as the metropolis of the whole earth, and the Temple re-built as the universal House of prayer. The Lord known to the remnant by His dealing in grace with them, they can confidently invite all lands to praise Him. "The Lord is good," they will say, "His mercy is everlasting ; and His truth (or, faithfulness) endureth to all generations" (c. 5). Many a one in the present may have echoed these words as expressive of that which is true, yet without much feeling about them. With a depth of feeling more, may we not say, than we can understand, will the godly remnant utter them. "Good." Aye, how good to take up their cause once more. "Mercy everlasting." Age has made no difference in that. It has not grown obsolete, though for centuries their public prayers and praises may have seemed unanswered. "His truth (or, faithfulness) too endureth to all generations." Not one prophetic word will fail of its accomplishment.

Here this series (xciii.-c.) concludes, concerned, as it has been, with the coming of the Lord to reign. Israel's King, He will also be King over all the earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. xix. 16). None at that time can afford to be indifferent to this. "There shall be one Lord, and His name one," so writes in view of it Zechariah, the son of Berechiah (xiv. 9). "I will turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." So predicted Zephaniah (iii. 9). Whilst Malachi (i. 11) has put on record, "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the

same, My name shall be (or, is) great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering : for My name shall be (or, is) great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts." These predictions, long announced, will receive their full accomplishment. " His faithfulness endureth to all generations."

Now follows a short Psalm (ci.) written by David himself, declaring the character of rule in the kingdom. That David did not come up to its requirements his last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7) attest That One would those same words foretold. And this Psalm (ci.) proclaims to all the holiness and righteousness of the rule of the King.

Born King of the Jews, He has never yet sat on His throne, though for a time He lived on earth. So we are taken back in Ps. cii., to His sojourn here, and to His affliction at that time. We learn thereby what He, who is Jehovah, and who will reign, felt as a man with death in prospect. " My days are like a shadow that declineth ; and I am withered like grass " (11). Again, " He weakened my strength in the way ; He shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days : Thy years are throughout all generations " (23, 24). Then, reading Heb. i. 10-12, we learn that vv. 25-27 of the Psalm are the answer of God to the afflicted One, declaring that He who was a Man on earth with death in prospect, is Jehovah, the Creator, the Eternal One. His excellency and power have been set before us, ere we are here called to contemplate His affliction when in humiliation. The same principle in the arrangement of subjects may be traced in xxi. compared with xxii., and in lxviii. with lxix. Then our Psalm ending with, " The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee " (28), Ps. ciii. well strikes in, being the praise from a millennial saint, whose heart is full of the goodness of Jehovah. The Lord's past sorrows recounted, blessing flow to the children of God. And though many and many a child of God has found comfort and encouragement from this Psalm, much of it being applicable to saints in all ages who have proved the mercy of their God ; yet it must be

admitted, that every word of the Psalm could not really be applied to believers in Christian times. All their diseases are not healed (3). For all the oppressed now righteousness and judgment are not executed (6). And whilst Christians look to depart, and be with Christ, the saint in this Psalm celebrates the redemption of his life from destruction (4). It is the language, in its fulness, for millenial saints. "The Lord's kingdom ruleth over all," they say (19). Angelic hosts must therefore praise Him, and all His works in all places of His dominion should bless Him (20-22). And as the Psalm begins, so it ends with, "Bless the Lord O my soul." The heart is full, and the mouth gives expression to it.

With three more Psalms the fourth book concludes. Set free before the Lord from the question of sins (ciii. 3, 12), and the fear of death, the godly one can be occupied with Jehovah, as manifested in His works (civ). And the Psalm closes with his desire, that his meditation should be sweet to God (R.V.), and he will, he states, be glad in the Lord—moreover he desires, and that is not a vain wish, that sinners should be rooted out of the earth, and that the wicked should be no more (34, 35). What a change will come over the scene in the expectation of the godly remnant !

Next follows a recapitulation of God's dealings in goodness with the nation, beginning with the mention of the covenant made with Abraham, and God's oath unto Isaac, confirmed as it was unto Jacob for a statute, and to Israel subsequently for an everlasting covenant (cv. 9, 10). The land of Canaan should be theirs, God's grant of old to them. For centuries now they have not possessed it. But they will again (Ps. cviii. 7, 8) ; and the Jews, viewed as returned to it in the Psalms we have had before us, now recapitulate God's dealings in goodness with their fathers in the past. This is the subject of cv. What, however, have their fathers been ? And how have they acted when of old inheriting the land ? That must not be forgotten. So Ps. cvi. well follows, dealing with their past history, telling also as it does of God's ways in mercy after the nation's repeated failures (41-46).

Such then (cvi.) had been the people's failures. Such, too, had

The Psalms.

207

been God's ways in mercy. His covenant with Abraham has remained uncanceled. The twelve tribes therefore shall repossess the land. But as yet, we conclude, as far as the Psalms we have noted conduct us, whilst the Jews have been brought back, the ten tribes are not in the land. But they will come back certainly, as Ezekiel teaches, and to be arranged in the land in a new order (xx. 34-38 ; xlviii.) The Jews are to be brought back in unbelief, and to pass through awful times under Antichrist, the bulk of them becoming by his influence apostates. The ten tribes will return, but only when the ungodly among them have been purged out on the way. For they did not reject the Lord when He was here. The Jews did, and therefore these last must suffer under Antichrist. Considering then that the ten tribes are not yet viewed as back in their land, we can fully understand the language of Ps. cvi. 47, "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks to Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise." For, "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26). Till that is effected the remnant of the Jews back in their land will not be satisfied. Short of that God's purposes for His earthly people will not stop.

And now as with the previous books this also ends with an ascription of praise, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting : and let all the people say, Amen. Hallelujah," *i.e.*, Praise ye the Lord. Surely the response will be hearty and full from His people in a coming day : and a loud Amen be the utterance of their lips.

We pass on now to the fifth book.

C. E. S.

REMARKS ON ARTICLE ENTITLED "SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP."

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

In a short article of yours in *Truth for the Last Days*, October number, 1901, entitled "Service and Fellowship," there are one or two statements upon which I would like to make a few remarks. Page 168, the second paragraph, runs thus: "In the fullest exercise of the gift bestowed, you may feel free to go and deliver your Master's message anywhere. Church, Chapel, Hall, Theatre; buildings are nothing—it is all the same to you." Then in the next paragraph I meet these words: "It is said 'Preaching the Gospel in a Church or Chapel identifies you with the ecclesiastical fellowship gathered in that particular place.' We think not." Now I must plead guilty to being one of those who think there is some identification. I believe it to be a grave mistake, and the consequences in so many cases known both to you and to me, have proved most disastrous. On page 175, I believe from your pen, in paragraph two you write, "But a human system of ordination has been built up, a system which arrogates to itself an exclusive right and title to minister in the Church and in the world. 'Our Minister' or 'our Clergyman' is the embodiment of the idea. Now this clerical system usurps the prerogative of the Spirit of God, and thus sins against Him." With this last quotation I entirely agree. Buildings are nothing, be they Church, Chapel, Hall, or Theatre: quite so. But Church and Chapel are the recognised property of a Denomination, which in itself is a denial of the "unity of the Spirit," and the minister or clergyman is the authorised controller of the services conducted in them. If you are invited to preach it must be by one of these. You are dependent upon his invitation for the opportunity of preaching there, and his authority to invite you flows from his false and Holy Spirit dishonouring-position. You acquiesce in that position.

I would say—No, I cannot recognise you in your position, and

Service and Fellowship.

209

as you could not invite me apart from that I must decline. Would any say, I am free; I cannot miss such an excellent opportunity: I would ask a question or two. Why do you go? To preach the Gospel, of course, and you expect or at least hope, that some souls may be saved through your preaching. Yes, certainly; and what will you do then? Will you leave your converts in a God dishonouring-system, or use your best endeavours to land them in their proper place? Leave your spiritual children there, and you prove yourself to be heartless as to what is dearest to Christ, viz., "The Church which is His body," and also to the best interests of your children in the faith. Should you, however, do your utmost to lead those to whom you have been used in blessing out from what is false and unscriptural, depend upon it, *you will not be asked again*. Another thing, how true is the maxim "Example is better than precept." Many who see you go to these places will be quite unable to see the fine distinction you draw between going to preach and their going to hear. You do the former and they do the latter, and too frequently go altogether. So to do some possible good you do a great deal of harm. You stumble the weak and cause them to fall. You condone the gravest dishonour to God the Holy Ghost, for whatever you may say, acceptance of an invitation to preach in a Church or Chapel so far sanctions the position of the Clergyman or Minister. He invites because he is the Clergyman or the Minister. He could not invite but for his false position.

Let us then keep clear, and work on Scriptural lines, and by Scriptural methods. You may say, things are so broken that the work is made most difficult. True, sadly true. But you are a part of what has failed, of what is broken, and you cannot escape it, and if you see God's mind in the Word as to the Church, face your circumstances with God; be you a Daniel, or an Ezra, or a Nehemiah. Weep before God and confess what is our common sin and shame. All true blessing is from Him. He can open doors. He can and will honour those who honour Him. Besides, work is not everything. You work as a servant. You have communion as a son. It is a sweet privilege

to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is far, far sweeter to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. If our usefulness seems curtailed by being faithful and true, our communion need not be. All the joys of heaven are open to us if we have but the energy of faith to enter into them. Those who do are the real helpers, and the very best of servants.

Ever affectionately yours in Christ,
E. R. W.

THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE FIRST BEAST OF REV. XIII.

IN Daniel's vision of the four great Gentile monarchies, ch. vii., the last one, the Roman is seen as an unnameable wild beast, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth," v. 7. It was to be "diverse from all kingdoms and devour the whole earth, and tread it down and break it in pieces" v. 23. A dreadful beast truly. In this phase, its history commenced about B.C. 753, and closed about A.D. 476. For about three centuries this mighty power held sway over "the whole earth." Unlike other Empires which have passed away, it is to exist again, but in a new form. Like the moon, it will rise to the full, wane for a time, then rise again and shine at its brightest, then be destroyed. For power, and blasphemous wickedness it will eclipse everything ever seen on earth before, and finally be destroyed; while its leader and head will be cast alive into the lake of fire. Awful end surely!

In its revived form as having "seven heads and ten horns" it has not yet existed. Daniel does not speak of its heads. He does tell us, however, that "the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten Kings that *shall arise*," v. 24; but he lets us know that it is at "the time of the end"; when the "little horn," an eleventh, who subdues three of them is likewise on the scene. The Apostle John makes this still more clear in Rev. xvii. 12, when he tells us "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive

authority as kings with the beast for one hour" (R.V.) It was still future in John's day.

That the Roman Empire will be revived in a future day is therefore an absolute certainty. That its geographical limits, however, will be the same as of old so that Britain *must* lose Ireland, etc., etc., as some have asserted, is open to very grave question. So far as I see from the Word, no information as to its geographical limits has been vouchsafed to us, and such assertions are better not made, they are mere matter of opinion. If Scripture reveals, we must listen and accept its teaching; if it is silent we do well to be the same. *When* the Empire will be revived is another question to which Scripture, I judge, furnishes no answer. For myself, I see no Scriptural reason why it should not be revived *before* the saints are caught up, although it is usually affirmed that it will not be till *after* the Church is removed. Affirmations, however, are one thing, proofs are quite another and that we would prefer to see. One thing at any rate is certain, viz., the Empire will be in existence after the Church has been taken up to be "for ever with the Lord."

From Dan. vii. 24, we learn that it will be revived in a ten kingdom form, symbolized by ten horns, as already noticed. Then we are told "another shall arise *after them* . . . and he shall subdue three kings." When, therefore, the "little horn" comes on the scene it is self-evident that the Empire is already in existence in its revived form. Turning to the book of Revelation we see that the first act of the Lamb after the Church period has passed, is to open the seven sealed book; and the first seal ushers on the scene a rider on a white horse to whom a crown is given, and who goes forth conquering and to conquer (Rev. vi. 2). I do not mean to infer that this action on the part of the Lamb takes place *immediately* the Church is removed, nor do I think it does. I merely refer to it as His first act when He commences His dealings with earth again, and because it marks out this important personage, this victorious conqueror.

The first seal, then, introduces on the scene this mighty warrior, and if we accept the thought of very many able

expositors, and I see no reason to reject it, that this is the *advent* of him who is afterwards seen and known as "the beast"—the Imperial head of the revived Empire—the "little horn" of Dan. vii., then it is quite evident that the revival of the Empire had already taken place *before* the Lamb had commenced to break the seals. And does it not seem every way likely that the victorious career of this mighty conqueror set forth in this first seal by John, is what Daniel predicted, "he shall subdue three kings," and *then* he becomes the Imperial head? I should judge we might safely infer this. The question is, does it fit with the rest of his history, or does it clash? If the latter, then, we may at once discard it. If it fits, that is sufficient and marks it as truth. This we must see as we proceed.

In Rev. xiii. 1, a beast is seen "rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems." Observe the word used here is *diadems* not crowns. (See N.T. and R.V.) A *crown* is a symbol of victory, or denotes the victor (see 1 Cor. ix. 25; Rev. ii. 11; vi. 2). *Diadems* denote Imperial power and rights (see ch. xii. 3, and xix. 12). The Imperial connection of these ten horns or kingdoms is thus seen by their diadems.

Referring to the crown in ch. vi. 2, some have thought that "this must be more than the chaplet of victory bestowed on the conqueror at the close of a successful campaign." Why? Because, we are told, "here the crown is given ere the victory is spoken of." But is that a valid reason? Is it not as easy to speak of the victor's crown conferred before the victory, especially in prophecy, as it would be to speak of the "Imperial and royal dignity conferred on this distinguished personage before he enters on his wonderful career of conquest," and, therefore, before he has obtained it? Surely. Besides, if Scripture had intended us to understand Imperial dignity given to him it would have used the word diadem, and not crown. The fact of its being given before the victory is surely to teach that it was the advent of a victorious person to whom victory was *assured*, and it is in keeping with other Scriptures as we shall see.

"Rising up out of the sea" would show that when this beast

appears in the form here seen by the prophet in Palmos, it is out of a restless, unsettled, revolutionary state of affairs. (Query—Does “the sea” always mean this in Scripture? Some seem to think and write as though it were confined to this. Or has it other meanings, even in Revelation, determined by the context?) The question naturally arises, at what period of the Empire’s existence does *this* event take place? Indeed, just here we might well ask several questions. (1) Is it the Empire in its *original* form as a ferocious and unnameable wild beast that is here seen? The answer to that, of course, must be—no, that is past and gone.

(2) Is it the *revival* of the Empire in its ten kingdom form, seeing somewhat similar language is used? No, for Scripture is silent, so far as we know, as to *how* or *when* that takes place, and there is so much in the chapter itself that would negative such a thought.

(3) Is it the *advent* on the scene of him who becomes its Imperial head and wields all its mighty power and influence, so that he is, as it were, the Empire personified? Once more I judge, we are compelled to say—no, because that event is symbolized in ch. vi. 2, by the conqueror on the white horse, as we have seen.

(4) Is it, then, this same Imperial head seen when he rises for the *second and last* time after he has had the death stroke with the sword, and his death stroke healed? (Rev. xiii. 3, R.V.) To this, I think, we may say,—yes! that is *the person* and that is *the time* symbolized in this chapter by the beast rising up out of the sea, proofs of which I shall give.

His character and conduct is symbolically set forth as a mixture of the three preceding Gentile Monarchies “The swiftness of the Grecian conquest—the leopard”; seen, I judge, in the rapidity of his conquests when he comes forth “conquering” and subdues three of the ten kings. “The weight of Persian oppression—the bear”—seen in his terrible and oppressive rule which culminates in revolution and civil war, and which eventually costs him for the time being, his position as Imperial head. “The Majesty of Babylonian greatness—the lion;”

seen in his rising up once more into unprecedented power and greatness spite of every opposition ; with the new and added phase of diabolical and blasphemous power received from Satan out of the abyss. All this we shall see more clearly, I trust, as we proceed.

If we further examine ch. xiii. we find that when he is seen coming up out of the sea, he has on his heads "Names of blasphemy." Now it is evident that this is not a characteristic of the Empire when it is first revived, inasmuch as the beast is dominated by Papal Rome—the false church, up to a certain point ; and, therefore, there is still some religious profession maintained by him, christless and empty though we know it to be. "Names of blasphemy" can only be applicable to the beast when Open Apostacy has taken place at, or near the division of the week, when he has thrown off the harlot, renounced all religious profession, and not only become an open blasphemous and apostate power, but compels all under his control, so far as he can, to become the same.

Then again, worship of the dragon and the beast (v. 5) only takes place after his deadly wound is healed. And it is clear that Satan does *not* "give him his power and throne, and great authority" at his *advent*, but when he comes up "out of the abyss," as ch. xvii. 8, puts it—a sort of resurrection morn—when he resumes his position for the second and last time of Imperial head of the Empire.

Moreover, it is not the Empire itself that is here seen as springing up once more and having this Satanic "power and throne and great authority" given to it. We can hardly connect such language with the Empire I think. Apply it, however, to the Imperial head of the Empire—to the beast as a person—the one in whom it is personified, if we might thus speak, and all is simple and easily understood. Even then it does not refer to the commencement of his career as the "little horn," which, as we have seen, is set forth in ch. vi. 2 ; because there he comes on the scene in the providential dealings of God as displayed in the seals. It can only be his second and final appearance as Imperial head that is contemplated in ch. xiii., and that is so.

In fact both ch. xiii. and xvii., I believe, view him only in connection with that period of his career, and the closer we examine those passages, the clearer this is seen.

Another important consideration that has to be taken into account is, there is nothing set forth at his *advent* which would symbolize "the sea," out of which he is seen to rise. There is no revolutionary state of affairs hinted at or symbolized. The ten kingdoms exist, as I have said, when this "little horn" springs up somewhere out of one of the ten, we know not where or from which; fights his way to victory, seen by "a crown was given him," subdues three of the ten at that time, I take it, and gains the Imperial position.

I would here note that some seem to think that this conquest set forth in ch. vi. 2 is "one of unchecked, brilliant, yet almost bloodless victories." On what this is based I know not. When he comes on the scene as the "little horn," as stated by Daniel ch. vii. 8, 24, there is certainly the very opposite to *bloodless* victories. We read that three of the horns are "*plucked up by the roots*," that "he shall *subdue* three kings." Surely such expressions as these would teach that there is violence, opposition, war, bloodshed; and so it is. Nor would "the bow" as a weapon militate against this, inasmuch as it was the weapon in those days for warfare at a distance in contrast to the sword for hand to hand conflict, and would necessarily be mentioned; no other was then known. In these days, however, other weapons have taken its place which will certainly be used at the time of the end, and answer to the symbol of the bow, *i.e.*, war at a distance, in contrast to hand to hand fighting, but the victories will not be *bloodless*.

If, then, the first seal gives us his advent, the second seal gives us an altogether different state of things, and we see anarchy, revolution, civil war, symbolized by the "red horse," with all its attendant horrors of famine and death as set forth by the two following seals. And may we not infer that it is here, under the second seal, that he receives the deadly wound—"One of his heads, as it were, wounded to death?" We must not dogmatise on these subjects, but I judge it is so. The rising of the masses

utterly destroys for the time being his Imperial position and power. It might appear to some rather early in his career for this to take place; but then we must not forget that we know not what length of time may elapse between the seals; and there is a passage which strengthens this thought, and also helps us considerably in our subject—I refer to the explanation given of the seven heads in ch. xvii. 10. We are told “they are seven kings, five have fallen, one is” (the Imperial which existed in John’s day), “the other (the seventh) is yet to come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space,” or “a little while.” Observe as the seventh head he is to continue only “a little while”; and this passage is important in understanding the subject.

At his advent he comes forth “conquering” and obtains the Imperial position. But as we see it is only for a short time, for the rising of the masses deprives him of it, and the seventh head or form of government—the revived Imperialism ceases for the time being. Then after a time, how long we cannot say, his “deadly wound” is healed, and we see him springing up into the Imperial position once more for the second and last time. It is *then* he receives his “power, and throne, and great authority” from the dragon in view of the last division of Daniel’s seventieth week with all its unparalleled horrors. Satan gives him as it were a resurrection, not literal I surely need not say, but as to his place of power; he “ascends out of the bottomless pit” or abyss, and eventually goes into perdition. Thus the last and diabolical phase of this mighty and marvellous Empire commences with the beast as its eighth head. “He went forth conquering and to conquer.” The first was true at his advent. The second will be true when he rises again into the Imperial position as we see he will do.

We must now examine another important passage in this connection, chap. xvii. 8, 11. “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition.” This is usually interpreted as meaning that the Empire existed, then ceased to exist, and will be revived again. But *is* this the meaning of it? I gravely question it. Indeed, I

unhesitatingly say no, such is *not* the thought—could not be, although, of course, it is none the less true that it existed, ceased to exist, and will exist again. But could we use such language in connection with the Empire itself and say, it “ascends out of the bottomless pit and goes into perdition”? Does the Empire as such go into perdition? We also read in ch. xix. 20, “the beast was taken and cast alive into the lake of fire.” Will that be true of the Empire? Each and all of these passages in this connection speak of “the beast;” and if we see that he is a person, and the head and representative of the Empire, then all is clear and consistent throughout; but to make it apply to the Empire as is so often done, is, I judge, to create confusion.

A more consistent interpretation and I think a more Scriptural one, I venture to suggest, is found in applying “was” to the revival of its Imperial form and assumed by the beast at his advent. Then “is not” would apply to the time when it ceases to exist in that form under the second seal. Then “and shall be present” is applicable to the time when he assumes for the last time the Imperial position and power as given by Satan. The expression is thrice found in this chapter; twice in v. 8, and once in v. 11, and is *characteristic* and applies not to the Empire but to the beast himself as its Imperial head. Indeed, the Revised Version puts it beyond question in xvii. 2; for it says, “and the beast that was, and is not, even *he is himself* an eighth and he goeth into perdition.”

Now if this view of ch. xiii. and xvii. is correct, as I firmly believe it to be, and the beast is viewed as the eighth head in those passages, we see how applicable the figure used, and how consistent the teaching of ch. xiii. 1, he “rises up out of the sea.” The dragon brings him up again for the last time out of that state of anarchy and revolution which had deprived him for the time being of the fruits of his conquest. No wonder “the whole earth wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast” (v. 4.) But how little they know the awful end of such a course!

We must remember that Daniel speaks of the doings of the

“little horn” in Jewish connection only; while here in Revelation the beast is seen in connection with Apostate Christianity; hence it is “the whole earth” that wonders at and worships the beast. Not the world, but the prophetic earth.

Another point of interest I would call attention to in ch. xvii. 9, 10. It seems to me there is a *double* interpretation purposely given there of the seven heads in connection with the two prominent actors in that chapter, and in order that we may the more clearly identify both. (1) “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth;” evidently setting forth the seven hilled city of Rome as the seat or capital of the one who *rides the beast*—the harlot—Papal Rome. (2) “And there are seven kings, five have fallen, one is, and the other is yet to come.” I take it that v. 9 is connected with *the woman* and speaks of the heads as descriptive of *where she sits and rules*; while v. 10 speaks of the heads as connected, not with the woman, but with the Empire, and as setting forth its seven forms of government or rule from its rise to its final destruction.

When the woman rides the beast as seen in ch. xvii. it is evidently before the commencement of the last division of the week, because she is thrown off at, or near that time, as I have already noticed. He is controlled by Babylon—the false church up to that point; then he throws off all profession, refuses to be governed by any religious power, and becomes the Apostate head of Apostate Christendom (2 Thess. ii. 4); hence when that event takes place we read “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, etc.” (see ch. xiv. 8 and xviii. 2.) The judgment or doom of Babylon is quite another thing and takes place subsequently under the seventh seal by the beast and his confederate ten kings just before the sounding of the seventh trumpet at the close of the week when the Lord appears. I think it is most important to distinguish between these two events, *the fall* and *the doom* of Babylon, as I think Scripture does.

There is also another point worthy of notice. Speaking of the ten kings in ch. xvii. 12, it does not say they *receive their kingdoms* at the time the beast comes into power. It could not say so, as they already exist when he appears on the scene. It

says they had not received their kingdoms then, *i.e.*, in John's day. But they receive "*authority* with the beast for one hour," *i.e.*, at the time he receives that authority they receive it also—a special given authority for the carrying out of God's will in connection with the judgment of Babylon (ch. xvii. 12, 16, 17). A mistake has been made by confounding their *kingdoms* with the special given *authority* for a specified purpose.

A difficulty has been raised as to the horns, and a curious theory invented to meet it. Because the little horn subdues three of the ten at his advent, and at the close there are still ten associated with him; it has been said that they are a different ten from the first. I judge this to be a great mistake. Chapter xvii. is characteristic I think; and when it says "the beast and the ten kings hate the harlot, etc.," the Apostle speaks from his own standpoint at the time, prophetically; and not as at the moment of time when it actually takes place. Ten horns characterise the kingdom from its revival to its destruction, and John looks at it in that way and not in any other. Of course, it is quite possible that the three subdued kings may once more be restored to their former position and power by the beast for his own purposes when he rises again and thus the literal ten be found complete at the close. But if there *is* a *second* ten, then there must in reality be eighteen; for there is the seven left to account for from the first ten, besides the little horn—a very unlikely thing, I should judge! Daniel saw ten, John saw ten; and whoever is on the scene at the time of the end will see ten, I judge, as composing the Empire, and no more.

There is very much as to other points and details which I have not touched on, and which will doubtless occur to the minds of students of prophecy. Much more could certainly be said, but space forbids at present. What a mercy the God of all grace has called us to His eternal Kingdom and Glory through the work of His beloved Son, so that we shall be with Himself before these solemn and awful events take place. May we be found walking worthy of Him who has thus called us till that day.

New Zealand.

WILLIAM EASTON.

WE have inserted the foregoing paper as we are in full accord with the writer in the general position taken up, viz., that the first beast of Rev. xiii. symbolises the Roman Empire. But we take exception to various statements. Our brother writes: "I see no Scriptural reason why it (the Empire) should not be revived *before* the saints are caught up, although it is usually affirmed that it will not be till *after* the Church is removed." Prophecy, of which the revival of the Empire is an integral part, is one connected whole, or scheme unfolded in the Scriptures, in which Israel and the nations as such, come up before God for special public dealing. Prophecy has for its object the establishment of the world-kingdom of Jehovah and of His Christ (Rev. xi. 15), hence *judgment* is as truly characteristic of Prophecy as *grace* is of Christianity. Now God is dealing with individuals and in view of soul-salvation, *then* He deals with nations and peoples governmentally. The principles which characterise Christianity are certainly not those which govern Prophecy. We demur, therefore, to our brother's statement that the revival of the Empire may precede the translation of the heavenly saints, as tending to mix up diametrically opposite principles.

The writer asserts again and again that the victorious Conqueror of Rev. vi. 2 is the little horn of Dan. vii., the Imperial head of the Empire. But where is his proof? He adduces none. Where does Scripture connect the rider on the white horse with the Empire or its personal head? It is mere conjecture. We cannot affirm the existence of the Empire in the Apocalypse, till we enter on the study of the trumpets in chap. viii. "The third part," ten times repeated, clearly points to the Empire as chap. xii. 4 shows. But to identify the Conqueror under the first seal with the personal head of the Empire is the merest assumption. It lacks that, which we are convinced our brother desires, Scriptural authority.

The writer further states that, "the beast becomes the Apostate head of Apostate Christendom, 2 Thess. ii. 4." But the Scripture adduced in proof of this statement, refers to the Antichrist or second beast of Rev. xiii. The first beast is the head of the apostate *political* power of the world, while his subordinate, the second beast, is the distinguished chief of the *religious* apostate system of that day. In our judgment, the writer in the foregoing brief quotation confounds the two beasts (Rev. xiii.), and their respective spheres of action.

There are other statements made which we deem confusing, but these we leave. Our brother's article is in the main helpful and suggestive, but should be read with a certain measure of reserve.—[EDITOR.]

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

THE Lord's explanation of the Parable of the Sower is found in each of the first three Gospels, Matt. xiii. 18-23; Mark iv. 14-20; Luke xiii. 11-15. There are points of difference in each, as each writer, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote just what was suited to that presentation of Christ which he was privileged to give. In order, therefore, to get the full truth, we need the three accounts. Let us proceed to notice wherein they differ.

Matthew calls attention to the parable, "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower." Mark adds, "The sower soweth the Word." Luke, however, tells us, "The seed is the *Word of God*." As we listen to Matthew, we think of the *sower*. With Mark it is more, what he sows, "the Word." But Luke is occupied with the owner of the seed—it is "the *Word of God*." Then it is Matthew only who informs us what the subject is, for although, as Luke has written, it is the Word of God, yet it did not comprise the whole of divine revelation. So Matthew writes, "When any one heareth the *Word of the Kingdom*;" truth then it was, but truth in season, just what was then called for; the King was already there, and we know how He was rejected and put to death, as Daniel had long before written—"shall Messiah be cut off, and have nothing" (Dan. ix. 26. See margin). The Gospel then proclaimed was that of the Kingdom. *Now* it is that of the Grace of God, but truth about the Kingdom is still needed. Hence, Paul preached *the Kingdom of God*, but not the Gospel of the Kingdom (Acts xx. 25, and xxviii. 31).

Results are looked for, but Matthew informs us that none are found where it is not understood, sown in the heart (in each Gospel), and should have been gladly welcomed, but understanding not, no fruit was brought forth. Mark speaks of those by the wayside, the ground too hard for the seed to enter, and Luke describes them as "they that hear." They hear, but do not understand, for the soil is so hard it cannot get really in. Next, Matthew tells us, "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth

away that which was sown in his heart." Mark writes, "but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." Luke wrote, "Then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved." Matthew describes the moral character of the one who catcheth away the word, "the wicked one." Mark tells us his name, it is Satan; but Luke says it is the devil. He is the adversary of God. "Your adversary the devil," Peter says. Luke adds a most important point, telling us his object, "lest they should believe and be saved." Reader, may we remember this solemn fact. There is one on the alert to rob us of the only means of salvation. He is no laggard. "He cometh immediately," Mark says. It should have been noted that Matthew uses the singular, "*He* that received," etc.; but Mark and Luke the plural, *these* and *they*. There is not much to remark in connection with the second class, the stony ground hearers. Matthew says, "Anon with joy receive it." Mark, "Immediately receive it with gladness." Luke says, "Receive the Word with joy." This did not prove to be a good sign then, and we may rest assured it is doubtful now. That which produced no deep exercise of conscience and no heart sorrow, did not last. Matthew says, "Yet hath he no root in himself." Mark, "And have no root in themselves." Luke briefly states, "And these have no root." Matthew and Mark use almost the same words, showing that when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, he or they are offended. Luke says, "Which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Another class are now brought before us, the thorny ground hearers. Matthew and Mark write, *unfruitful*; but Luke says, "and bring no fruit to perfection." Much of promise there may have been, but all was lost. Nothing ripened. Each tells in his own way how this came to pass. Matthew writes, "And the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word." Mark adds, "and the lusts of other things entering in choke the Word." But Luke defines these latter, for he says, "and pleasures of this life." Thus we have three great dangers: care, riches, and

The Parable of the Sower.

223

pleasures. The remedy for care is, "Casting all your care on Him for He careth for you;" riches—"Worthy is the Lamb to receive riches;" pleasures—seek Eternal ones; "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, and at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." And now we reach the last, the good ground hearers. Matthew describes one such, as "He that heareth the Word and understandeth it." Mark, "Such as hear the Word, and receive it." Luke, "Which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it." So Matthew's point is "understandeth;" Mark's, "receiving it;" and Luke's, "keeping it." Understanding, receiving, and keeping: all three necessary. Matthew next says, "which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Mark reverses the order, and says, "Some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred." But Luke says nothing about the quantity, but gives a beautiful touch, for he wrote, "and bring forth fruit with patience." Much or little? Who can tell? All will be manifested by and bye. The Word understood, and received in faith, and kept, and the life governed by it. So God and His glory are always to the fore, able thus to suffer and endure. May we, in very truth, bring forth fruit with patience.

E. R. W.

CONCERNING GIVING AND RECEIVING.

(*Phil.* iv. 10-19; 1 *Cor.* ix.; 2 *Cor.* viii. ix.; 1 *Tim.* v. 17, 18;
Gal. vi. 6; 3 *John* 5-8.)

THE subject before us is a delicate one and requires careful handling, so as to scripturally adjust the respective claims and relations of servants and saints, and yet maintain intact the direct responsibility of each to God. This we seek to do. Every Christian, and especially those who take a public place of service, should live and act outside the sphere of motives which generally govern the actions of men—fear and favour, frown and smile. This we can only do "as seeing Him

who is invisible." Where love is not in active exercise (1 Cor. xiii. 7), it is easy to impute motive and assign unworthy reasons, but to any such thought or charge, the writer is indifferent. A good conscience gives confidence and strength.

Consideration for the poor is a bounden duty at all times. "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good" (Mark xiv. 7). In both Testaments the poor are a recognised class. "The poor shall never cease out of the land" (Deut. xv. 11.) The struggle of life to obtain absolute necessities is becoming more acute. The spirit of combination has not only entered the industrial world, but is making such rapid strides, that large numbers of small traders find it impossible to hold their own; then trades' unionism with its tyranny, in its constitution and working, steps in between masters and workmen and hinders the latter exercising their individual freedom. The union must be entered and its laws submitted, else they are not permitted to work. We have no desire to write more strongly than the facts plainly warrant. But this arrogant controlling of individual freedom in work is the *first* stage in the future career of the beast's relation to commerce. "He caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. xiii. 16, 17). Christians in these unholy unions should solemnly ponder the Apostolic admonitions contained in those conscience searching verses, 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. You cannot have the poor, in the Scriptural sense of the term, connected with these worldly associations and unions. Honest poverty caused by physical inability to work, sickness, etc., appeal to our sympathies, and demands our generous aid. But Lord's people should increasingly appeal to, and depend upon the Living God. The cattle on a thousand hills are His, and the resources and wealth of creation are under his hand. He miraculously sustained Elijah, His servant, and provided for the desolate widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii.) He daily fed His people, of about

Concerning Giving and Receiving.

225

two millions, in the desert for forty years (Exod. xvi.) Better still, He gave His only begotten and well-beloved Son — the brightest and highest expression of His unwearied love (Rom. viii. 32). The age of miracles is past, but God Himself is with us, and in His tender care the poor and needy would do well to confide. If so they shall not, cannot be disappointed. *God is with us, and God is for us.*

Now we shall enquire concerning the temporal support of fully accredited servants of the Lord—men of gift, grace, and moral character, and whose work has been proved. Besides the general preaching of the Word by the persecuted and scattered disciples (Acts viii. 1, 4), there were special servants of the Lord whose work and service of love we read of, as Barnabas, Philip the Evangelist, John, Mark, Luke the beloved Physician; Paul, the indefatigable teacher, preacher, and writer; Timothy, and many others whose time and interests were fully devoted to the work. They were not called to it by man, they were not chosen by any church, nor ordained by presbytery. Ordination by Apostles, or by those duly commissioned by them, as Titus (Acts vi. 3; xiv. 23; Titus i. 5), were to certain local offices, as Deacons and Bishops. But gift given by Christ on High (Eph. iv. 8-12), was never ordained. A teacher needed no human authorisation ere he could exercise his gift—publicly, privately, and everywhere. An Evangelist was never ordained to go out and preach to the masses. We are thankful to know that at present the freedom of service, apart from ordination or official recognition, is more generally recognised and acted upon than at any former period of the Church's history. The spiritual labourers in Apostolic times were never sent out from college nor missionary institute. A divine call reached them, and they left the college of the Master gifted, strengthened, and fitted by Him. They entered the great harvest-field, going "*forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles*" (3 John 7), but freely giving to a needy world. They *never* appealed to the world for support. The spring of their devotedness, zeal, and self-denying labours was "**HIS NAME'S SAKE.**" Heart and soul were in the work. They loved it for their Master's

sake. Thus it was in Apostolic days. The labourers then were free, as led of the Spirit to minister, without stint or hindrance, "everywhere." The Holy Ghost controlled and directed the movements of the Lord's servants. No other authority save the Lord's was recognised; no other guidance save that of the Holy Ghost's. Such was Primitive Christianity then, such should be the order to-day. Many of these servants had no private means, nor property; some, as Barnabas had; others again, had a profession, as Luke. But *now*, as *then*, there are many devoted servants of the Lord whose ministry by voice and pen have been owned, men whose gift and spiritual power are unquestionable, absolutely without means of their own. Has God in His Word made provision for such? He has.

We read, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine." For the Scripture saith, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and the labourer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. v. 17, 18). Has this exhortation no present application? Has it become obsolete? Surely not. Then we are also enjoined to care for teachers who have no visible means of support, and thus thrown upon the love of the Church and saints. "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. vi. 6). Are we to incur the charge of availing ourselves of the help and teaching of servants of God, prize their ministry, yet selfishly ignore their temporal needs? We earnestly plead on behalf of those dependent servants of the Lord whose whole time and gift are devoted to the work. They might choose an easier path; they might occupy positions in the Church — positions of usefulness and honour, and in which a guaranteed salary would relieve them from care and pressure as to their maintenance and that of the family as well. But no, they prefer to walk the path of faith, making their wants known alone to the Living God, and serving those who are His. We have heard the heartless remark, "Oh it is good for the servant of God to suffer a bit." More shame to us to allow it. It is a selfish age. We know Christians of wealth

Concerning Giving and Receiving.

227

who indulge themselves and their families, but will not deny themselves a single pleasure or luxury which money can procure, and yet a trifle given to the Lord's interests measures their zeal for *Him who died for them*. Ah ! it is a selfish age.

A teacher is the Lord's servant, not the servant of the Church, nor of the saints. He must, therefore, look *alone* to his Master for supply of temporal needs. He may have to wait and suffer till the Lord appears on his behalf, but to God and to God only must he look, and *not* to the kind or wealthy. This is a prime lesson, especially in these times of weakness and selfishness. We press with increasing earnestness upon every dependent servant called to the work, to trust God alone for temporal maintenance, and on no account reveal circumstance of need to any human being. If brought into trying circumstances, keep your lips closed, save to God. On no account sacrifice your independence by personal appeal to any. God is your resource.

But each and all instructed in the Word, should remember that those servants of the Lord whose teaching by voice and pen is helpful to the saints of God, have bodily wants as well as their listeners and readers, and that while they live *by* faith, they cannot live *on* it. We could furnish some strange, yet true, tales of suffering endured by servants of God, whose ministry—oral and printed—has been a source of help and blessing to many, but whose temporal circumstances have been a matter of almost utter indifference, even to those who have benefitted by the ministry. Paul wrote, and that surely to the shame of the saints, "Even unto this PRESENT HOUR we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place" (1 Cor. iv. 11). What an honour to have lovingly and generously cared for the honoured Apostle ! What a loss to the saints in the day of the Lord's return ! We lay the duty, rather God does, on those "taught in the Word," of communicating of their substance to "him that teacheth." He is not your teacher, nor even, perhaps, the one who has taught you. "Him that teacheth" is to be a recipient of our good things, not bestowed as charity, nor as payment, but in generous appreciation of his work and in hearty

fellowship in the service. If a certain kind of teaching does not please, or is even in opposition to certain points we may hold, it certainly does not display catholicity of spirit, nor generous appreciation of gift, to withhold thereby our measure of temporal support. The servant, however, for he cannot please all, must quietly suffer, pass on in silence, serving *all*, even those who love him least (2 Cor. xi. xii).

The example of Paul who wrought with his own hands is oftentimes pleaded, but not surely to the honour of those who do so (1 Cor. iv. 12 ; Acts xx. 34). Earnestly does he plead his own *right*, and that of fellow-labourers for temporal support. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix). What a shame to the rich Corinthian Assembly that Paul, during an 18 months' sojourn and labour amongst them, had to work with his own hands! *That* shall be to their eternal loss. Paul voluntarily waived his right for temporal supply, because of the carnal state of the Assembly. He refused to act upon his undoubted right (verses 12, 15), but accepted help from individual saints (1 Cor. xvi. 17); all honour to *them*. If grace led the apostle to relinquish his right that was to his praise, but surely no upright mind would seek to take advantage of that.

Take again, the case of evangelists. They, as teachers, are the Lord's servants, and not the servants of men. A guaranteed salary by church or society is not only destitute of Scripture authority, but at once removes the servant from his place of absolute dependence on the Living God. But this consideration, *i.e.*, no settled salary, does not free the saints from their bounden duty, we do not say privilege, to lovingly and generously care for the evangelist, teacher, elder, or other dependent servant. "Do ye not know," says the indignant apostle, "that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" So much for the general principle true in Old and in New Testament times; then he states its application to evangelists in words so plain that by no ingenuity can they be evaded or nullified, "Even

Concerning Giving and Receiving.

229

so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 13-14). "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn" (v. 9)—twice quoted by the Apostle, here and in 1 Tim. v. 18. We have heard again and again the flippant remark, "Oh, if one is really called by God to the ministry of the Word, He shall care for him : his needs are sure to be supplied." True, but perhaps it would be better for *you* to do your duty fully, as the Lord ministers to His servants through and by His people.

The time was when Assemblies and many individual saints freely and generously ministered to the servants of the Lord. Is it so to-day? Assemblies of God's people are dwindling ; some of them merely existing. Need we be surprised? One practical mode of shewing interest in the Lord's work is by keeping in touch with the Lord's servants. Accept their free service ; neglect even to meet their necessary travelling expenses from place to place ; overlook the fact that their household expenses are running on ; forget that they have rent, rates, and others, it may be, depending on them (1 Cor. ix. 4-5), and you need not complain of spiritual decline.

It is becoming a common practice, and in some cases a recognised one, to minister to the Lord's servants *only* when they visit a place. It looks like payment for so much service done. Why not think of the servant on other occasions as well? Why confine the expression of love and fellowship on an occasional visit from a labouring brother?

In ministering to the Lord's servants whose right and title to maintenance is unimpeachable (1 Cor. ix. 4) it should not be based on the ground of a real or supposed need on the part of the spiritual labourer. Do not minister to him on the ground of poverty : money or help should be firmly rejected if given on that ground. If you are disposed to shew practical fellowship in the service of the Lord by ministering to any individual servant, do it with tact and feeling, heartily, and generously. Remember that his right for temporal support is unquestionable. God, not he, holds you to that. *He* requires that service from *you*. If the

servant waives his right as to temporal maintenance by the saints (v. 4) and marriage too (v. 5) good and well, but that is grace on his part. His rights remain, and your responsibility abides intact ; do not neglect it.

Systematic giving has been too much overlooked both by saints and Assemblies. Try the following, or some similar plan, for a time, and you will find that increased spiritual prosperity will be the result. Devote a portion of your income to the direct service of the Lord. Our own personal needs make terrible inroad on what, in many cases, should go to the Lord's work—pure and simple. Then Assemblies might have a Lord's day collection, say, once a month, for the work at home and abroad. Lively interest would thus be created and sustained, and saints and servants be brought into more direct touch with each other and with the work. We are satisfied that the most excellent results would follow our recommendation. The grace of giving should be encouraged on every hand, especially by the young amongst us. A selfish life is a wasted life. They should be taught to deny themselves. What a piece of selfishness to indulge every whim and fancy, while the work of God demands time, money, and interest. What, too, about eternity?

In closing, we once more press upon spiritual labourers, to preserve their independence by appealing to God alone on all occasions of need. But the saints, too, have their responsibility toward all dependent servants who labour in the word and doctrine. "The saints are bound to see that they should be supported without anxiety on their own part."—*Bible Treasury*, vol. x., 128. We are charmed with the combination of motives so skilfully interwoven in the Apostles' record of experience (Phil. iv.)—the neglected duty of the saints, at last aroused to a sense of their responsibility to the beloved Paul (v. 10), how all had wrought to the blessing and ripened experience of the servant (v. 12). What delicate and refined feelings and considerations (v. 15-19) are presented by the loving heart and powerful hand of Paul. Remember that a teacher is not all mind, nor an evangelist all heart. They have bodies as well as others. The meanness

of accepting their free service without a thought as to their temporal necessities, is deserving of the severest censure. May God arouse us all to our neglected duty. The principle of Mal. iii. 10, is of *present* application. May the grace of giving be increasingly cultivated.

COUNSELS TO A YOUNG MAN FROM AN OLD FRIEND.

WHATEVER view we take of the Bible as an inspired book, and however high we place it as the revelation of God, we cannot very well forget the human element in it. If holy men of God "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," the writers were, as Dr. Moule points out, holy *men* of God, and in the series of books that make up the Bible—annals, idylls, poems, prayers, memoirs and letters,—we find many a story of most human interest. All human longings, loves, hopes, wishes, friendships have been anticipated in the books we group together under one name. And the friendships of the Bible are as interesting and as helpful as any that have adorned the literature of modern days. "David had his Jonathan, Christ His John," says George Herbert in his "Church Porch," and though these are perhaps the most sweetly typical of the friendships of the Bible, there are others, from the somewhat one-sided friendship of Abraham and Lot, down to the times of Paul and Timothy, that are full of instruction for us, different though our times and circumstances may be.

It was, in the main, a faithful little band of friends who were associated with the Great Apostle of the Gentiles in his work and history. Dissensions and defections there were, for both he and they were human. But it is impossible to study the apostle and his work without coming upon those who helped him greatly, and for whom his warm heart had a large place. There was Luke, the beloved Physician, his companion and the

232 *Counsels to a Young Man from an Old Friend.*

historian of his journeyings and labours, whose evangel has even taken on it a strong Pauline cast ; there was Silas, who shared his prison at Philippi and joined in his praises ; that devout Levite, Barnabas, the son of Consolation, and not least, the youthful Timothy, towards whom Paul's feelings seem to have been those of friend, brother, and father.

We cannot attempt to go into biographical details. My purpose is merely to glance at some of the advice Paul gives to his young friend—his son in the faith—and to point out the fitness of that advice to young men of our own time. It must be sufficient to recall the fact that Timothy was the child of one of those mixed marriages so common among the latter-day Jews, his father being a Greek, though doubtless a proselyte, while his mother was a Jewess. From the absence of all other mention of the father, it has been assumed that he was dead, and that the boy was brought up under the control of his mother and his grandmother—both so honourably mentioned by St. Paul—from whom he derived a rather feminine type of piety. It is certain that, though he was indefatigable in his Christian labours, he was possessed of a delicate constitution—the much quoted passage, which must be taken as the sum total knowledge of the letters to Timothy possessed by many people—(I mean the passage that enjoins him to “take a little wine” for his stomach's sake)—is direct evidence of weakness. It would be straining inference to a breaking point if we assumed that every positive direction and instruction in these letters pointed to its negative—to some defect—in Timothy, yet it seems impossible to read these letters and to note the gentle yet persistent exhortations to a greater robustness of thought and action, without coming to the conclusion that constitutional weakness and the influence of his early up-bringing had wrought in him a somewhat shrinking, timid, disposition ; that he was a lovable man, doubtless yet with “the defects of his qualities” well developed. I fear the Epistles are not well known ; unhappily, in the present day there are many Christians who seem to think that they will find the “whole duty of man” in the Sermon on the Mount;—that, and the 14th of John for the dying bed,

Counsels to a Young Man from an Old Friend. 233

(though, incidentally, it was meant to give peace and cheer to the living) constitute the Biblical outfit of many. I must not therefore too readily assume a knowledge on the part of others of these Epistles, of their general texture and tendency, but let me mention in passing such phrases as the solemn "I charge thee," when St. Paul presses his points upon his young friend; "fight the good fight of faith," "be strong in the grace," "endure hardness as a good soldier." "Endure affliction," where, by the way, it is the same phrase as that translated "endure hardness," the apostle coming back to it, as though he feared a certain amount of feebleness, of effeminacy, in the man so dear to him. Hence also he urges his own sufferings and example; he speaks of the time being come when he was ready to be poured out as a libation; he had fought the fight—he had finished the race—he had guarded the faith, henceforth there was laid up for him the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him "in that day." "And not to me only" he adds, "but unto all them that love his appearing." By such methods—by direct encouragement, by modest statement of his own example, and the assertion of broad principles of divine grace and divine government, he endeavours to hearten his "own Son" in the faith.

One is sorely tempted to indulge in general considerations upon these two letters. For remember they are the "swan song" of the Apostle: they are the last—or at least, the last that survive—of the precious letters he wrote when, as "the Lord's prisoner," the spoken word was denied him. It was not that he was an old man, although two years earlier he wrote of himself as Paul "the aged," but, in years that we consider less than the "allotted span," he had laboured and suffered in the cause of Christ his Lord and Master as few have done, and he was old before his time. Moreover he was—and he knew it—face to face with death, not the gentle "dismissal" that aged Simeon asked for, but death by fang of beast, or edge of axe, or it might even be the robe of fire. But what of it? For him to live was Christ, yet to die was *gain*, and in perfect calmness of spirit he writes to the man who loved and served him well, and

234 *Counsels to a Young Man from an Old Friend.*

whom he loved with that peculiar Christlike love known only to those who have travailed in birth for souls of others, and have watched over them with a watchfulness that in character is divine.

But concerning *what* does he write? I grant that a casual reader, turning over the five pages that contain the two letters, might almost impatiently say, "What bearing have they upon present-day needs—upon the life and character of those who live and move and have their being at the beginning of the 20th Century? Here are the instructions for the ordination of bishops. But bishops are as rare as eagles, and only the Prelatic and Presbyterian churches are interested in *these* instructions. Here is guidance as to the choice of deacons—a useful body of men, but small in number compared with the members of the Church at large. Again, there are directions relative to widows old and widows young. There are pessimistic prophecies concerning days to come; personal reminiscence and personal greetings; but what is there for the average young Christian of to-day?"

Let it be granted at once, that, writing as the Apostle does, to the man who holds official relation to him and to the Churches, he speaks of many matters of official interest. But through all these instructions there run words of wisdom and counsel. Yet not to attempt a roving commission all over these two letters, I limit my attention—and yours—to the two paragraphs that comprise the 2nd chap. of the 2nd Epistle. Here the official element is well-nigh out of sight; the apostle speaks as an old man to his youthful friend, whom he addresses as his "son"—or rather, his "child." And these two paragraphs I would fain recommend to every young fellow as a *vade mecum*. There is a sturdy, manly noble ring about the words, with a note of battle in them as well as of patient endurance. If our Christian manhood were fashioned on the type described by the Apostle, there would be no room for the sneer implied in the phrase—"an Exeter Hall young man."

Only very briefly can we run over the points of these paragraphs. "Thou, therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that

Counsels to a Young Man from an Old Friend. 235

is in Christ Jesus." What you heard from me, commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others. The Christian should not be a sponge, simply absorbent, or a pond, holding stagnant the water it receives. He should be a channel to carry on the water of life to others; he should be in the line of the true apostolic succession, passing on "the deposit" to others, and letting others kindle their lamps at his light. Then, in three striking picture-phrases, the apostle indicates some of the characteristics desiderated in Timothy—and in you—the characteristics of soldier, of athlete, and of husbandman. As soldier, you should be wholly and absolutely surrendered to the will of Him in whose army you are enlisted.

"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs but to do and die."

Taken alone, the soldier's is not the highest type of character; the point enforced here is submission to another's will. The Christian submission is always along the line of "*reasonable service*."

Then as athlete—and the point is rather a strange one; we should have looked for some lesson of training, of self-denial, of earnest striving—as athlete, you are to "play the game" *fairly*. As husbandman it is indeed your right to partake of the fruits, but it is only as you *labour*, sowing in hope, and waiting in faith upon those processes of nature that are dependent altogether upon worlds other than our own. The keynote is *action*, not action haphazard, but regulated and informed by high ideals, for behind it all is the watchword, "Remember Jesus Christ." And so he passes on to speak of his own tribulations, and to lay down those axioms, trustworthy as God Himself, that if we die with Christ we shall live with Him; if we suffer, we shall reign; if we deny Him, He will deny us; if we be faithless, He abideth faithful—"deny Himself He cannot."

There come solemn warnings against mere disputatiousness, mere battling about words;—cautions against profane persiflage that eats into the soul as a gangrene. Is such a caution unnecessary in the present day, when reverence is at a discount, and sacred

236 *Counsels to a Young Man from an Old Friend.*

words are used out of all rightful connection not to "point a moral" but merely "to adorn a tale"? Some had erred, says the Apostle; some had made shipwreck of faith, though God's firm foundation stands—He knows them that are His, and "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." On God's side, His knowledge of His own is absolute and sure; on our side, continuance in unholiness creates a hopeless flaw in our "title" and assurance of salvation. Only when separated from unrighteousness and dishonour shall we be sanctified, and meet for the Master's use.

Then comes a word of warning that we may think strange, seeing that it is addressed to one who had given such good proof of his piety. "Flee youthful lusts." It is not the first time the apostle has spoken of personal purity to his young brother. "Be thou an example. . . . in purity." "Keep thyself pure." "Flee youthful lusts." We cannot think that the exhortation was not needed; nor on the other hand that it was a counsel of perfection; Timothy needed the word, we may be sure, and we need it. It forbids not only acts that would be condemned by the world; in the apostle's code of morals there was no room for what is euphemistically called the "smoking-room story," nor would he tolerate the habit George Meredith indicates in one of his characters, the habit of talking indecency, though so delicately that it would have been so indecent to notice it. Act, word and thought alike are to be kept sweet and clean with the salt of divine grace. For it is only with the pure heart that, affirmatively, we can follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace. Furthermore, the Christian must not be contentious; he must be gentle, ready to teach, correcting others if need be, but with meekness, if peradventure God may give repentance to those who oppose the truth, that they may be recovered out of the devil's snare, and brought captive to the will of God.

Such, very inadequately stated, is the advice of the veteran in the faith to Timothy—and you. Only those who honestly set themselves to act upon it know how difficult it is to translate these precepts into the act of every-day life. But we will recall

Counsels to a Young Man from an Old Friend. 237

the Apostle's watchword. During the Spanish-American War, "Remember the Maine!" was a watchword of lurid significance; "Remember Jesus Christ" shall be our watchword in our strife with sin in its myriad forms. We will "remember" Him, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, in His claim upon our worship and adoration. We will "remember" Him, our Master and Lord, in His claim upon our loyalty and devotion. We will "remember" Him, the only Mediator and Saviour, in His claim upon our love. Only so shall we be able to stand, and we turn the last prayer of St. Paul for Timothy into a prayer for our own selves. May the Lord be with our spirit: may grace be with us—Amen.

W. J.

AN ATTACK ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

"On chaps. xl.-xlviii. we can be somewhat briefer. Taking this collection for the moment as a unit, and putting aside all but historical considerations, we can no more dream of assigning it to Isaiah than of ascribing 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept' (Ps. cxxxvii. 1) to the authorship of David. There might have been a case for the Isaianic origin of 'Go ye out from Babylon' (xlviii. 20), if only the passage had run, 'Behold in the latter days my people shall go forth from Babylon.' There might have been a case for such an origin of 'Thus saith Yahwé to Cyrus' (xlv. 1), and of 'Our holy and our beautiful house . . . is burned up' (lxiv. 11 [10], if these passages had been introduced by 'Behold, I will raise up a king, Cyrus by name,' and 'In days to come Yahwé will send fire upon Jerusalem.' *No literary critic, however, would dream of supposing that the author of chaps. xl.-lxvi. was a prophet of the eighth century, who had become dead to his actual present, and lived again in imagination among men still unborn.*" P. 2203.—*T. R. C. Rev. T. R. Cheyne, Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at*

Oxford, Canon of Rochester.—ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA, Vol. 2. The Jewish nation, all Christian scholars and literary critics of recognised ability, up till the down grade chariot was set rolling down from Germany to England, have been in a dream in assigning chaps. xl.-lxvi. of Isaiah to that prophet!

The Professor's statement is a flat contradiction to the following New Testament quotations, which are expressly assigned to Isaiah, and from that very portion which the distinguished higher critic in his learned ignorance, pronounces a *dream* to regard as the production of a prophet of the eighth century: Matt. iii. 3; viii. 17; xii. 17-21; Luke iii. 4-6; John i. v. 3; xii. 38; Acts viii. 28-33; Rom. x. 16-20. Now, in every one of these texts the quotations are from the disputed portion, and in each case is ascribed to Isaiah. Here, then, is a conflict of testimony. The Professor voicing the critics says one thing; while the Evangelists, the Lord Himself, and Paul say the very opposite. Who are we to believe? How long are these traitors to Christianity to be allowed an official place in the Church? What are they—what is Professor Cheyne but a wolf in sheep's clothing? Why does he not act like an honest man, and go outside the pale of Christianity? Is it possible that Christians are found base enough to patronise a book which is simply and surely destroying faith in the Scriptures, and ruining and damning the souls of men. The ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA is a soul-destroying work. With an earnestness born of deep conviction, we solemnly warn our readers against this work. Is it not the same Professor who has had of late to apologise for an attack on the book of Ecclesiastes, in which he has been proved to be wrong in assigning to it a date long subsequent to the days of Solomon? The ENCYCLOPÆDIA is a bad book, and our readers should avoid it.

EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN TERMS EMPLOYED IN PSALM CXIX.

You ask what is the distinctive meaning of the words *commandments, judgments, statutes, testimonies, precepts, law*, in Ps. cxix.

COMMANDMENTS.—*Mitzvoth*, have, of course, for their subjects things which are enjoined on men, and so is often a word of general import. Abraham kept God's commands (Gen. xxvi. 5).

JUDGMENTS.—*Mishpatim*, are judicial decisions, and where God is concerned, His revealed decisions in matters for men, but not in this Psalm in His acts of judgment. So we read of Solomon's judgment respecting the two children. David asks for God's judgments to be given to his son (Ps. lxxii. 1). We read of the breast-plate of judgment (Exod. xxviii. 15), and the judgment of Urin and Thummin (Num. xxvii. 21).

STATUTES.—*Chukkim*, are decrees. In Ps. ii. 7-9, we have a decree about the Lord, and in Lev. vi. 18, in Heb. Bible it is vi. 11, a statute regarding Aaron and his sons.

TESTIMONIES.—*Edoth*, are God's attestations of Himself and of His will in the Word of revelation. So *Delitzsch*.

PRECEPTS.—*P' Koodim*, are orders for men's conduct for the most part. The word occurs only in the Psalms, and chiefly in the cxix. Elsewhere in Ps. xix. 8 (Heb. 9); ciii. 18; cxi. 7.

LAW.—*Torah*, is divine teaching.

In Ps. xix. 7-9 (Heb. 8-10), we have the *law*, the *testimony*, *precepts* rather than *statutes*, *commandment*, and *judgments* all brought in. In Gen. xxvi. 5, we have commandments, statutes, and laws, all spoken with reference to Abraham.—C. E. S., from *The Young Christian*.

“THIS IS YOUR HOUR.”—*Luke* xxii. 53.

This is your hour—Oh, dark and dismal hour,
 Marked on the dial of time—with human hate
 Linked with the power of darkness, all combined ;
 Man's dread accomplice in his natural state.

No blessed sunbeam casts its cheering ray,
 No silver lining tinged the gathering cloud ;
 The hell torn cloud of devilish human spite,
 Encircling heart and mind of that vast crowd,
 Coming with sword and staves and glittering spear,
 Fierce enmity, that knew no kindly tear.

Come, saint, behold the lover of thy soul,
 Whose gentle touch, His bleeding foe, makes whole.
 No wrathful word responds to hatred's hiss,
 No thunderbolt towards the traitor's kiss ;
 In all—the lonely, meek, obedient, One,
 Father, not My will, but Thy will be done.

Oh matchless grace, Oh majesty of love,
 Infinite tenderness so dearly proved ;
 All power and glory Thine—yet—laid aside,
 To purchase and redeem—Thy Church, Thy bride.
 Oh, perfect pattern of all perfect grace,
 Soon at Thy feet we worship and adore,
 Thy love, Thy work, Thy precious blood, our theme
 Of praise unending, here and evermore.

C. G. CHANDLER.

THE PSALMS.

AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE OUT THEIR SEQUENCE.

The Fifth Book Psalms cvii.-cl.

THE fifth and concluding book of the Psalms has in it very much of praise. At the close of the *fourth* book was a prayer to God to gather His people out from the nations (cvi. 47). He must do it. They cannot in their own strength. The fifth book then opens with that prayer answered—"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south" (cvii. 1-3). May we not assume that the prediction of Ezekiel (xx. 33-38) has been at length fulfilled; and also that the great trumpet of which Isaiah wrote (xxvii. 12, 13), has been heard, and has been responded to? And now the redeemed of the nation having thus experienced delivering mercy, various ways in which men prove divine mercy are by the Psalmist put on record. Brought into adverse circumstances, however different in character, crying then to the Lord, He delivers them out of their distresses. Nor does this concern the delivered ones only. For "whoso," writes the Psalmist, "is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the mercies (R.V.) of the Lord," exemplified as they are in vv. 8, 9 15, 16, 21, 31, 43. No circumstances herein mentioned put the redeemed beyond the reach of Jehovah's deliverance.

This book beginning then with the theme of divine mercy, or loving kindness, we have in different Psalms to the end of cxviii. a great deal about it, this last mentioned Psalm ending with the words of the first verse of cvii. Then the two Psalms which next follow, cviii., cix., continue to speak of it. In both of them it is David who speaks. Who more fitted than he to

treat of it? The former of these two, *i.e.*, cviii., is made up of the closing verses of Ps. lvii. 7-11, and lx. 5-12. Referring to these, we may see the advance here recognised on the previous condition of the saints. Both lvii. and lx. begin with recounting the low condition of David, which originally called forth the one and the other. Here all that is out of sight. Praise occupies the heart in the first part of cviii.; whilst in the after part prayer for help from trouble is still made, but with the certainty of ultimate success. He who hath led David unto Edom (10 R.V.) will give victory and tread down the enemies. Now this prayer coming in here need not surprise us. For much, as we must learn elsewhere, must go forward, in which the remnant of the nation will have deep interest, ere full millennial peace can be brought about.

We have briefly noticed this in our remarks on the *fourth* book of the Psalms. We would here in reminding our readers of this quote from the prophetic word, beginning with an extract from the prophet Isaiah concerning Edom:—"They, *i.e.*, Israel, shall fly on the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isai. xi. 14). Then, too, Idumea will be the scene of the Lord's unsparing judgment (xxxiv., lxiii). And as Balaam long ago foretold (Num. xxiv. 18), Edom, which refused in the days of Moses to give Israel a passage through his border (Numb. xx. 21), "will be a possession, Seir also will be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly." Further, Ezekiel can be adduced as a witness concerning Edom in a coming day (xxv. 13, 14)—"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God." Obadiah, too, has written (v. 18), "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of

The Psalms.

243

Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it." With these predictions before us need we wonder at the language of the one hundred and eighth Psalm, David's campaign in Edom being a foreshadowing, may we not say, of its judgment yet to be carried out? Edom was subjugated by David (2 Sam. viii. 14). Edom will be wiped out of existence by Israel when the two sticks of Ezekiel (xxxvii, 15-22) shall become one as he has foretold.

Next, as to the Philistines. The prophetic word concerning those persistent and often formidable enemies of Israel is not, as we have previously pointed out, at all reticent, for Zephaniah also writes of their future (ii 4-7) as well as Isaiah. "Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea coast shall be pastures (R.V.) with cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks. And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: for the Lord their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity."

Then of Moab and of Ammon the son of Cushi also wrote. "I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border. Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts. The Lord will be terrible unto them: for He will famish all the gods of

the earth ; and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the Isles of the heathen" (Zeph. ii. 8-11). None can say that all this has been fulfilled. Nehemiah must have acutely felt it was not, when Tobiah the Ammonite showed himself as an adversary against the building of the wall of Jerusalem ; and when men of the returned remnant had married wives of Ashdod, of Moab, and of Ammon (Neh. xiii. 23). Zephaniah looks on to the future, the time of Israel's full restoration and triumphant supremacy over the nations.

Another witness we would cite ere proceeding with the Psalms. Micah (v. 5, 6), thus writes, "And this man, *i.e.*, Christ, shall be the peace: when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders." Further the same prophet adds (8, 9), "And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many peoples as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off." What a future have we here of irresistible might in store for the oppressed, despised, and down-trodden people of Israel ! So, too, Jeremiah (li. 21-23), writing of Israel under the similitude of the Lord's battle-axe. Much then, how much, must go on upon this earth ere millennial peace can be enjoyed. Warfare will take place, and Israel will be the victor. In view of this we may understand the reiteration of part of Ps. lx, written by David when in the midst of conflict, and here (cviii), reproduced as ministering surely to the people of Israel in a coming time. Saints need hope as to the future. They profit by the remembrance of the past.

Now in all this that we have quoted, we have not referred to the invasion of the land by Gog, as described in Ezekiel xxxviii ; xxxix, an invasion only to be equalled, we believe, by that of

Gog, with whom will be Magog as predicted in Rev. xx. 8, 9 ; which, taking place after the millenium, will be Satan's final attempt to thwart the purposes of the Almighty. Of his latest attempt *before* millennial peace Ezekiel writes. His *final* attempt at the close of that period the Apocalyptic Seer has foretold, but on both occasions to be signally frustrated. Some would identify Gog of Ezekiel with the Assyrian of Isaiah, the king of the north of Daniel. From that we would express with diffidence our dissent, judging from the language of Gog foretold by the prophet (Ezek. xxxviii. 11). For a sense of security in the people of Israel without fear of invasion, as Gog states, could not we think be predicted of them under Antichrist, when the king of the North will over-run the land. Hence we view these two invasions as quite distinct, that by Gog, as we have said, being Satan's *last* attack ere the blessings of millennial peace will without further interruption be enjoyed. It has been said, and said truly, that the Lord will reign in the character of David, *i.e.*, subduing His enemies, ere appearing in that of Solomon, then there will be neither adversary nor evil occurent (1 Kings v. 4). Hence the Lord's return in power, set forth in the *fourth* book of the Psalter, leaves room for the condition of things contemplated in the *fifth* book, viz. : that the godly ones already in the land have not yet entered into their final rest, though all will be working for that desired consummation, when everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord (Ps. cl. 6). Nor must we forget certain intimations in the prophet Daniel as to those days. He writes of the king of the north who will "go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many" (Dan. xi. 44). But he shall come to his end (45). Now at what exact moment in time the Lord will deal with him seems not to be definitely stated,* though the destruction of his army will take place in the south of the land, as Joel writes (ii. 20). *Certain intimations* we have said. We have now spoken of one, we will mention another. Daniel specifies two dates, the one 1290 days, the other 1335 days (xii. 11, 12). On anything that

* Of the prayer for his overthrow—we have read in Ps. lxxxiii. But of the answer to it, as effected, that book of the Psalms makes no mention.

goes on between them he is silent. May the interval between these two have reference to the circumstances of the *fifth* book of the Psalter? At any rate we have quoted enough from other prophets to elucidate the language of the saints in this, the last book of the Psalms, as being in the land, but not yet at rest.

To return. We have now *three* compositions ascribed to David (cviii-cx). In the *third* book we had just one said to be by him (lxxxvi). In the *fourth* book we met with *two* attributed to him (ci; ciii). In the *fifth* book we find *fifteen* reckoned to the king. Another fact this is, which witnesses to some arrangement of the Psalter other than just a chronological one. In the first of the three above mentioned (cviii) rights over the land on both sides of the Jordan are asserted. "Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head" etc., (8). Conquest, too, of Edom is looked for (10), David's victory there being really the earnest of the future and final subjection of that country foretold by Ezekiel (xxv. 13, 14). This Psalm then ends with a prayer for help from trouble (12), and with an expression of confidence as to divine assistance (13), leading on to the two compositions of David which follow.

Mercy is needed, "for vain is the help of man" (cviii. 12). Hereupon we are told in the following Psalm (cix), of one character of the trouble; and in the succeeding Psalm (cx) we learn how the divine interposition can come about. The cry for help is addressed to God. And the reason for it is stated (cix. 1-5). Then follows a description of an individual who showed no mercy to the suffering one (6-19). To whom David, when he penned the words, referred we cannot say. But of Judas Iscariot we know—the Psalm speaks; for Peter (Acts 1. 20) applied verse 8 directly to him. Yet it is plain that the whole passage does not refer *exclusively* to the traitor. Others are contemplated as well. "*Mine* adversaries, and *them* that speak evil against my soul" (20), show—that a number are included, from whom deliverance is sought at the hand of the Almighty (21, 26).

Now, deliverance might come in one of two ways, either by taking the afflicted one out of this scene, or by dealing with the

enemies in unsparing judgment. Both of these ways are illustrated in the next Psalm (cx). God espousing the cause of His Son called Him to sit down at His right hand, till He should make the enemies His footstool. He took Him away from earth. Then the Son will espouse in a coming day the cause of His suffering saints, striking through kings in the day of His wrath, judging among the nations, filling the places with dead bodies, and striking through the head in many countries (or, over a wide land, 5, 6 R.V.). The connection, therefore, between these two Psalms (cix; cx) is very plain. God's answer to the treatment meted to His Son is seen in telling Him to sit at His right hand. God's answer to His suffering saints in a coming day will be the exercise of delivering power on their behalf put forth by His Son. But what scenes must go on ere peace comes about! What powerful enemies have to be dealt with! May we not then understand the appeal of the saints to their God?

And now, remembering the position of the Psalm (cx), placed in the fifth book of the Psalter, the Lord's return to reign being viewed as accomplished in the fourth book, what a subject for contemplation will it be for the godly remnant as they recall the betrayal by Judas of Him whom they will see with their very eyes commencing His reign at Jerusalem, and that after His session for upwards of eighteen centuries at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The exercise of His Melchizedek priesthood,—now future, will then be openly displayed, blessing His victorious people, as Melchizedek, blessed Abraham when returning from the overthrow of the four kings of the east. Striking through kings in the day of His wrath, they will be able to say is an accomplished fact; Antichrist and the head of the Roman empire judicially dealt with, to be followed by the end of the king of the north, who will previously have swept over Palestine with his hosts like an irresistible and overwhelming flood. With what depth of meaning will they be able to take up the language of Balaam saying "What hath God wrought?" (Numb. xxiii. 23).

And now there follow other three Psalms, each beginning, and how suitably after what we have seen, with "Praise ye the

Lord," or Hallelujah. The third ends with the same Hebrew word, "Hallelujah." This marks them off as a little series by themselves. God espousing the cause of the afflicted one in Ps. cx, it is quite in keeping with that to learn of the character of our God. So to this we are to be turned in Ps. cxi. In Ps. xix, we have learnt how God can be *known*, viz., by His works in creation, and also by His Word in revelation. In Ps. xxxvi, we have had the wicked man in his ways *contrasted* with those of Jehovah. Now we read in Psalm cxi, of the works of Jehovah evidencing *what He is*.^{*} His character is thus set before us. This is followed by cxii, which treats of the ways and the character of the saint, illustrating thereby what it is to be a partaker of the divine nature, that of which Peter writes (2 Peter 1. 4). Does the Lord's righteousness endure for ever (cxi. 3)?

So will that of the godly one (cxii. 3). Is the Lord gracious, and full of compassion (cxi. 4)? The same is predicated of the saint (cxii. 4). Hath God sent redemption unto His people (cxi. 9)? The righteous one hath dispersed, having given to the needy (cxii. 9). And so on. What then should follow the declaration of Jehovah's ways, but praise in accordance with the prediction by Malachi (i. 11), now at length about to be fulfilled (cxiii. 3).

In the days of the returned remnant's failure and feebleness, Malachi foretold that the Lord's name would be great among the Gentiles. Little then did that seem likely to take place. Now Messiah viewed as returned in power, His earthly saints taken up by Him for blessing, and opposing forces scattered to the winds, it will come about. And the despised and persecuted remnant of Israel will echo the language of Hannah in 1 Sam. ii. 8, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the needy from the dunghill; that He may set him with princes" (cxiii. 7). And Hannah's joy at being no longer barren, may be viewed as a foreshadowing of the blessing of women in Israel (9), when the

^{*} Ps. cxi, cxii, are, as we have already remarked (p. 61), alphabetical in structure. They are the first really perfect ones in this line that we have met with in the Psalter; but unlike others it is the *clauses*, not the different *verses*, which exhibit their alphabetical arrangement.

The Psalms.

249

Lord shall turn again the captivity of His people. Fittingly then does this Psalm end with "Hallelujah." Other Psalms in this book end in the same way (cxv. 18; cxvi. 19; cxvii. 2; cxxxv. 21; cxlvi. 10; cxlvii. 20; cxlviii. 14; cxlix. 9; cl. 6). And Psalms cxxxv; cxlvi; cxlvii; cxlviii; cxlix; cl. also commence with it. But till the Lord Jesus is viewed as having returned to Zion, this word "Hallelujah" is not found in the Psalter. Psalms civ. 35; cv. 45; cvi. 1, 48 being the only other places where in the whole collection it is found. We may look elsewhere in vain in the Old Testament for that word now so familiar to Christians.

And now we are to be reminded afresh of the past. A retrospect is often profitable. Israel were never to forget the wilderness journey, so the different stages of it were carefully recorded, and places that we cannot now recognise are thus embalmed in the Word as of imperishable remembrance (Numb. xxxiii). Nor were commotions of created things caused of old by the presence of Jehovah to pass into oblivion (Ps. cxiv). Idols could not make them. The presence of the true God can, and did. Both sea and land showed it. They will be moved afresh rejoicing at the Lord's return (Psalms xcvi and xcvi). He who is Jehovah will come back in power, and He is the God of Jacob (cxiv. 7). Hence follow two Psalms (cxv; cxvi) which tell by the mouth of saints of Jacob's race who is their God, and what He has done for them. Would the nations ask, where is their God? repeating that taunt hurled at them in past days (xlii. 3, 10; lxxix. 10), a taunt hard to bear, as it must have been, whilst waiting for deliverance? In the *second* book of the Psalter this is first expressed, when the godly one had been driven out from his home. But now, since the Lord has returned to Jerusalem, the faithful can reply to it; for there is a time to suffer reproach in silence, and a time to repel it. The time for silence had passed. Now they can reply. Their God is the true God, the God of heaven, and that is His dwelling-place. The gods of the heathen were visible indeed, senseless, helpless, lifeless things, unable to speak, to see, to hear, to smell, to handle, or to walk. Their votaries are like to them.

Not such an one is Jehovah. He is the living God. Hence Israel the house of Aaron, and all that fear Him are exhorted to trust in Him, who is their help and their shield. Of this third class just mentioned—those who fear God, we have read in Ps. xxii. 23, 25. It had been the divine purpose all along that from Gentiles a company of faithful souls should be called out (Deut. xxxii. 43; Isaiah xlv. 20-24). And now divine interposition on behalf of Israel viewed as being effected, the assurance of divine blessing can be expressed in favour of these three classes (12-13). How full will be their blessing who can say (14)? Yet earth, not heaven, will be their home, man's proper place of abode (16).

So far Ps. cxv. Then in cxvi. we have deliverance, which has been wrought, clearly and joyfully expressed. Deliverance they had experienced from death, which had threatened them (3-9, 15). Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints; so He had kept them from it. Of that which Ps. lxxii. 14. foretold, they had proved. Thanksgivings, therefore, would they render, and that openly in the courts of the Lord's House, in the midst of Jerusalem (12-19). But not content with that, in cxvii., the shortest Psalm in the whole Psalter, all nations and peoples are exhorted to praise the Lord for that which He has done for Israel, for His mercy manifested as great toward them, and for His truth which endureth for ever. The bright pictures, presented many centuries back by the prophets, are now seen to be descriptions of the realities taking place before their eyes (cxvii. 2).

But as God's truth endureth for ever, so doth His mercy. And this Israel, the house of Aaron, and godly Gentiles are called on to attest, saying "His mercy endureth for ever" (cxviii. 1-4). This refrain met with already in Ps. cvi. 1; cvii. 1, we shall meet with again in cxxxvi. David in his day, and the whole congregation with him, proclaimed it (1. Chron. xvi. 34). Solomon with the people in unison years later re-echoed it (2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 3). The returned remnant in all their weakness, when the foundations of the Temple were again laid gave expression to it (Ezra iii. 11). And by-and-by in full chorus will the returned,

and finally delivered, people confirm it. Suited language near three thousand years ago will be suited language for Israel for ever. Set *then* in a large place, who will make them afraid (cxviii. 5, 6)? Victory will be for them. And that which Isaiah (xii. 2) had predicted, echoing words from the song of Moses (Exod. xv. 2), will have been fulfilled (cxviii. 14). The day of which Isaiah wrote will have dawned, the day which the Lord hath made (24), as the rejoicing people will term it. The Lord come back, as He has said (Matt. xxiii. 39), gladly will the people welcome Him. The stone refused by the builders will be the head of the corner. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Ps. cxviii. 22, 23). Thus will they express themselves out of the surprise and fulness of their hearts. And "Jah," the victorious One (5, 14, 17, 18, 19), will they celebrate in their song, never-ending praise becoming these delivered ones.

Here this *Hallel*, *i.e.*, praise, as the Jews designate Psalms cxiii.-cxviii., terminates. These are sung in the family celebration of the Passover night; and they "are divided," writes Delitzsch, "into two parts, the one half (cxiii.-cxiv.), being sung before the repast, before the emptying of the second festal cup, and the other half (cxv.-cxviii.), after the repast, after the filling of the fourth cup, to which, the 'when they had sung an hymn' (Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26), after the institution of the Lord's Supper, which was connected with the fourth festal cup, may refer."

To return. We have read in Ps. cxviii. 19, 20, "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: this the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter." But who are the righteous? This question Ps. cxix. answers, illustrating that which will be true of Israel in the future, when the law shall be written in their hearts (Jer. xxxi. 33). So it begins, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with their whole heart" (1, 2). With this same word *blessed* commence Ps. i.; xxxii.; xli.; cxii.; cxxviii.

In other Psalms this appellation comes in descriptive of the saint in one way or another, for God's estimate of men down here is very different from that of the world. And now in this, the cxix. Psalm, we are to learn what are some of the characteristics of those really entitled to such a designation. In the first Psalm we read of one delighting in the law of the Lord. Here we see how fully that can be the case.

It (cxix.), the longest in the whole collection, is likewise alphabetical in construction. But differing from all others so termed, it is written in stanzas of eight verses, each stanza beginning with a different letter of the alphabet, but in proper alphabetical order. Then, too, each verse of the stanza commences with the same letter. It is one of the few perfect alphabetical Psalms, as the reader of the English Bible may see, the letter of the Hebrew alphabet belonging to each stanza being noted at its commencement. Into a detailed account of the different stanzas it would be foreign to our present purpose to enter. We can only notice a few points that may help in the consideration of Psalms which follow. Commencing with the supposition of a *company* who are to be faithful, the writer soon drops into the *first* person (4, 5), and then details his desires and experiences. With reproach and with contempt had he met; princes also had been talking against him (22, 23, 42). So he desires to be put not to shame (31). Derided, too, as he had been by the proud, yet he had not swerved from God's law (51). They forged a lie against him (69), and overthrew him wrongfully (78 R.V.) Pits, too, he has to say had they dug for him, and had almost consumed him (85-87). Princes, too, had persecuted him without cause, but his heart stood in awe of God's word (161). The wicked had even waited to destroy him (95); persecutors and opposers had been numerous (157). *

* In the cxix. Psalm we have several terms employed—*commandments, judgments, statutes, testimonies, precepts, and law*. "Commandments," *mitzvoth*, have for their subjects things enjoined on men, so is often used as a word of general import. Abraham kept God's commands (Gen. xxvi. 5). "Judgments," *mishpatim*, are judicial decisions, and where God is

The Psalms.

253

Such had been his experience. Of such trials to which saints may be exposed, he had bitter proof. Low indeed had been his condition, yet not so low as had been set forth in the second book of the Psalter ; when the saint, driven afar off, could not approach God's altar. Still it was all very trying. So to God he turns as his only but sure resource (41, 49, 76, 77, 81, 94, 173-175). Then in the series of Psalms which follow ; cxx-cxxxiv, called *songs of degrees*, or *ascents*, we learn of the saint coming out of the trouble to enjoy millennial peace ; for nothing short of that consummation is God's purpose for those of them who are to dwell upon earth.

Why these are called *songs of degrees* has given rise to varied conjectures. Bearing in mind their subjects and the gradual progression from trials (cxx) to millennial enjoyment (cxxxviii), we would view them as descriptive of steps in the deliverance, leading to, and ending in, the desired consummation of earthly peace and unclouded happiness here below, but only to be enjoyed when the Lord again dwells in Zion (cxxxii. 14). And as writing of saints born in sin, whilst Ps. cxx-cxxix treat of the political and social condition of the people, Ps. cxxx, cxxxi. treat of the spiritual condition of the saints in Israel at that time. Then as cxxxii foretells the Lord's return to Jerusalem never again to forsake it, the two remaining speak, the one (cxxxiii.) of the pleasantness of brotherly, unity ; the other (cxxxiv.) exhorts the Lord's servants who stand by night in the house of the Lord, to bless Him ; and its last words contain a prayer that He would bless them.

A future, and not a past application to Israel, must these Psalms

concerned, His revealed decisions in matters for men, but not in this Psalm in His acts of judgment. So we read of Solomon's judgment respecting the two children (1 Kings iii. 28). David asks for God's judgments to be given to his son (Ps. lxxii. 1). We read of the breast-plate of judgment (Exod. xxviii, 15) ; and of the judgment of Urim and Thummim (Numb. xxvii. 21). "Statutes," *chukim*, are decrees. In Ps. ii. 7-9 we have one about the Lord, and in Levit. vi. 18 we have a statute regarding Aaron and his sons. "Precepts," *P'hoodim* ; are orders for men's conduct for the most part. This word occurs only in the Psalms, and chiefly in the cxix. Elsewhere in xix. 8 ; ciii. 18 ; cxi. 7. "Law," *torah*, is divine teaching.

be viewed as depicting. Till the days of David God never dwelt in Jerusalem. After the Babylonish captivity He never dwelt in the Temple. Then it must be remembered, that after the death of Solomon, as the prophet Ahijah had foretold, the brotherhood of the twelve tribes was broken, to be re-established only in a future day (Ezek. xxxvii. 15-19). It is of this coming event that Ps. cxxxiii. treats. Now of trials the lying lips and deceitful tongue are mentioned (cxx. 2), the third kind of trial to which the godly will be exposed, as we have already learnt from Ps. vii. To the Lord the saint then turns as in cxix. 69, and expresses his confident assurance of help from the Creator of heaven and earth (cxxi). Thereupon an answer comes confirmatory of his confidence (3-8). To God's House then will he go, and his feet shall stand in Jerusalem, the central place for Israel (cxxii); and to the Lord he looks who dwells in heaven, for as yet in this series the Lord's return is not celebrated. And what we have read in cxix. 22, 23, 51, he experiences—viz., contempt, and scorning of the proud. Nor is he alone in this, others are associated with him. It is what the godly remnant are suffering, of whom he stands forth as the exponent (cxxiii. 2-4).

Further, great had been their danger, we next learn, when men rose up against them. They must have been swallowed up (cxix. 85, 87), had not Jehovah been for them (cxxiv. 1-5). But deliverance had come (6-8). Hence the blessedness of trusting in the Lord is experienced, and declared; for such are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved, seeing that the Lord is round about His people, from this time forth and for evermore. The issue therefore cannot be doubtful (cxxv.) For it they are viewed as waiting. Joy had filled their hearts, when their captivity was turned; and the very nations took knowledge of it, and spoke of the great things that Jehovah had done for them (cxxvi. 1-3). But all was not accomplished. So they plead for further deliverance. Sowing in tears they will reap in joy. A full harvest will be the result (4-6).

Counting on God's word, they learn to count on Him for everything, and now express it. For whether it be the building

The Psalms.

255

of the house, or the keeping of the city, or the strength and blessing which the children of youth can be to their families, all is from Jehovah (cxxxvii). They will have learnt after the last return to their land of the vanity of doing anything without the Lord's countenance. They will prove their powerlessness to keep the invader—the northern power out of the city. The Temple had been laid low (Ps. lxxiv.); and the city had been a prey to the enemy (Ps. lxxix.; Isai. xxix. 4; Zech. xiv. 1, 2). Daniel's predictions had come true (viii. 11, 12; ix. 27). All extraordinary watchfulness on man's part was in vain. God therefore would have the people to trust in Him, and to learn this from His bestowal of sleep, or as some would translate "in sleep," providing what was needful whilst they slept. Besides, when the arm of flesh should be needed God could provide it (cxxxvii. 3-5).

Next from the building of the house, and the keeping of the city, we are led on to that which will follow—the peaceful life of those that will then be fearers of the Lord (cxxxviii). "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with Thee" (1, 2). This is a blessing that will, we presume, be common to all the faithful then alive upon earth. And here follows a picture of family happiness in those days not met with elsewhere. Isaiah (lxii. 8, 9; lxxv. 21-23) has predicted the saint at that time enjoying the fruit of his labour, whether of his land, or of his habitation. But this Psalm, (cxxxviii. 3-6) allows us, so to speak, a look inside of the house. The wife and children are all there. No gaps in the family circle, no remembrances of some once there, but there no longer. Death has not invaded its precincts. Not a chair, not a place once filled, but now seen to be empty. For the Lord then dwelling in Zion, the words of cxxxviii. 5, 6 which follow become plain to us. "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children. Peace be upon Israel." Yes. But since Solomon's death till the days of Titus could that have been in its fulness expressed?

For how different has been Israel's past between Solomon's death and the present. The brotherhood broken, the interests of Israel and those of Judah became very divergent, the former keeping up the schism, and refusing to bow to the king in Jerusalem as long as the kingdom of Israel was in existence. And since that was overthrown has not what Moses foretold (Deut. xxviii. 30-33) been experienced to the very letter? And those to whom the land of Canaan belongs are strangers in it to this day. From their youth up, as Ps. cxxix. states, affliction has been the lot of God's earthly people. Sorely will they yet experience that, though not to be consumed (2, 3). But all is now viewed in this Psalm as changed. The righteous will rejoice and prosper, whilst the haters of Zion shall wither away like grass on the house-tops (4-8). Only of the future can we understand it.

But for the nation's blessedness there must be a suited condition of soul, evidenced by a real fear of the Lord. Of this we are reminded in the two Psalms which follow (cxxx., cxxxi). And when that day comes, the twelve tribes will be once more united under one head, and the Lord will have re-entered Jerusalem to dwell there for ever (cxxxii. 14). First entering the city in the reign of David under the symbol of the ark, He will be there again never more to forsake it. The conditional promise to David's descendants (12), forfeited long ago, God's oath to His servant (11) will yet be made good. The horn of David shall flourish, and the lamp ordained for God's anointed shall then burn with undimmed brightness. David's Son sitting on His Throne, and His enemies clothed with shame, on Him the crown shall flourish (17, 18). May it not be, as has been supposed, that the aged priest Zacharias in Luke i. 68-79 had this promise in his mind? When that is accomplished, David's Son and David's Lord reigning at Jerusalem, the theme of Ps. cxxxiii. will be fulfilled. The brotherhood between Israel and Judah, so long broken, will be restored (Ezek. xxxvii. 15-28). What then will remain, but to bless their God? So the priests and Levites, who will stand by night in the House of the Lord, are to bless Him; and He, the maker of heaven and earth, will bless them out of Zion (cxxxiv).

The Psalms.

257

Two Psalms which next follow, cxxxv., cxxxvi., take up the subject of the last Psalm, and furnish the Levitical company and the people, too, with true grounds for their praise. Jehovah, the Creator and the Deliverer of His people, is to be praised, for He has chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure (cxxxv. 4). As the God of nature He has displayed Himself (6, 7); and as the Deliverer of His people in the past He is ever to be remembered (8-12). His name, too, endures for ever, and His memorial throughout all generations (13). What He declared by Moses in His first message to Israel (Exod. iii. 15), will be found unchanged in days yet to come (cxxxv. 13). And what He promised by Moses in the song of Deut. xxxii. 36 will be found true to the letter, when He again takes up Israel (14). Between the days of Moses and that coming time what has taken place? Israel turned to idols, and forsook the one true God. Idols, what are they? Our Psalm, (15-18) now recounts that in language similar to Ps. cxv. 4-8. The insensate folly of idolators again emphasized, the Psalm closes with an appeal to the house of Israel, the house of Aaron, the house of Levi, and those who fear the Lord,—*i.e.*, the nation, the priests, the Levites, and proselytes to bless Jehovah, who now dwells at Jerusalem.

Thereupon in cxxxvi. comes the response to this appeal, each subject for praise being accompanied by the refrain "for His mercy endureth for ever." Then after recounting God's ways on behalf of Israel in the distant past, we read of that which has been, and will be true of them in the future. "Who remembered us in our low estate, and hath redeemed us from our enemies" (23, 24). With what deep feeling surely will they sing that, when restored to their land, never again to be driven out of it. Pouring out their hearts in thanksgiving, as they will, and remembering their low estate, it will not be forgotten that there was a time and circumstances when they could not sing to the Lord. Exiles from their land as they have been, and the nation still is, how should they sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Well, then, does Psalm cxxxvii. here come in, a contrast to the preceding ones, speaking as it does of that which is past (1, 2), whilst cxxxv., cxxxvi. foretell

that which is yet future. For if we suppose that the returned remnant under Zerubbabel found these two Psalms fitted in measure to voice their feelings, when the foundation of the House was laid again (Ezra iii. 11), the state of things supposed in Ps. cxxxv. 2 had not come about ; nor could they then have sung of deliverance from their adversaries (cxxxvi. 24) as the sequel to their history of that time proved (Ezra iv. 1). It is a free people, dwelling in the land of their possession, who can sing in the language of cxxxv. 12 ; cxxxvi. 21, 22, and not a company, though in their land, yet subject to the kings of Persia (Neh. ix. 36-37). But though Ps. cxxxvii. speaks of Israel's past, when in Babylon, it has a future application, as it asks for judgment on the children of Edom, for that, as we have already noticed, will be finally carried out by the agency of the children of Israel.

Opposition to God's earthly people, by whatever power manifested, will be finally dealt with by the Almighty when the time for His vengeance shall arrive. In the Old Testament, and also in the New, this can be seen. Amalek's conduct to Israel in the wilderness was visited on that people in the days of Saul and of Samuel (1 Sam. xv). In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. xxv.), the failure of the latter to minister to the Lord's brethren in their distresses will call down on them everlasting punishment. Centuries may pass, as in the case of Amalek, ere the judgment is carried out. Centuries, how many, have passed since Edom cried against Jerusalem, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7). God has not forgotten that. His vengeance will certainly overtake her. Both Ezekiel (xxv. 14) and Obadiah (18, 19) have foretold it. How soon may that prophetic word come true ! God's people are precious to Him, though He may have to deal governmentally with them. "For the Lord's portion is His people ; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 9).

Now follow eight Psalms, cxxxviii.-cxlv., all ascribed to the pen of David. His experiences being fitted to encourage the godly remnant to the end of their trials, the language of his heart, here put on record by the Spirit of God can suit them in their circum-

The Psalms.

259

stances, ere final deliverance and rest under Messiah becomes their portion. * This series begins with thanksgiving and praise to God (cxxxviii. 1), and ends with extolling and blessing God's name for ever and ever (cxlv. 1). And the thoughts of the son of Jesse here, as elsewhere, stop not short of millennial times; for the certainty of all kings of the earth giving thanks to God is expressed in cxxxviii. 4, 5. Past answers to prayer (3) give confidence as to future salvation. So this Psalm is full of trust in God who has magnified His word above all His name (2). God faithful to His word, David called, and He answered. If David could prove that, other saints may likewise. God's character is unchanging. Suited then is this Psalm to come in near the close of the book. Its tone of confidence may well inspire the saints to trust in God to the end.

Hereupon, we have in the Psalm which follows (cxxxix.) how a saint can come to be at home in the divine presence. The sense of God's omniscience, as well as of his omnipresence in the universe cannot provide that. Rather the contrary. God's eye on him is no comfort, but the reverse. From under that eye he cannot escape. Wherever he goes, to what place soever he might betake himself, that eye would still be on him (1-12). What then can minister relief? The answer to this is very simple, and very blessed. God's thoughts as revealed can do it. The Psalmist's thoughts about God have not done it. So up to v. 12 he is uneasy. In verse thirteen, however, he strikes a different note. And the first thing which ministers relief is the remembrance that God thought of him when in his mother's womb (13-16). That eye, which he finds is on him wherever he may go, that eye surveyed his frame when made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. "Thine eyes," he proceeds, "did see my substance, being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance (or, day by day) were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." The remembrance of this has quite changed his key. "I will give thanks unto

* No difficulty then need there be in the introduction of these Psalms near the end of the Psalter.

Thee (R.V.); for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ; marvellous are Thy works ; and that my soul knoweth right well " (14). He has got away from thinking about himself, and is now occupied with God.

Further, God's thoughts are precious to him. He is free now to be thinking on them. Not simply is it the remembrance of the survey of his frame when in the womb ; but God's thoughts about things, and the unfulfilled purposes he can, as revealed, enter into, as that little adverb "also" intimates. "How precious *also* are Thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand, when I awake I am still with thee" (17, 18). He would not have it otherwise. Thus free in spirit, who was oppressed before, he takes God's side against God's enemies (19-22), assured of their final discomfiture. Then the Psalm closes so differently from the spirit with which it opened. "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me" are the opening words. "Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (23, 24). Awake, he is consciously with God. We have dwelt a little at length on this Psalm because of the importance of its teaching for all time.

The next two, (cxl, cxli.) come as an appendix to the closing verses (19-24) of cxxxix. The former of these is occupied with the ways of the wicked against the righteous (2, 5), and supplications for God to deal with them in judgment (6-11), the whole closing with confidence about it (12-13). The latter Psalm, cxli., is a prayer for the saint, to be kept both watchful over his own heart and lips (3, 4), and to be preserved from the snares and gins laid to entrap him, for he cannot in his own strength keep himself (9, 10). Following, is a prayer when David was in the cave (cxlii.), in character with the desires of the two previous Psalms. We know how that prayer was answered. In the cave of Adullam he had reached his lowest condition (1 Sam. xxii.), and verses 4-7 of our Psalm express that. He emerged, however, from the hold with God's prophet and God's priest on his side, and from that

The Psalms.

261

time his fortunes began to rise, till they culminated in his sitting on the throne. "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name; the righteous shall compass me about; for Thou shalt deal bountifully with me" (cxlii. 7). Such was his prayer and his expectation, in which we know he was not disappointed, though his trials were not all at once ended, as Psalm cxliii. reminds us; in which the dangers are recounted to which he was exposed through the malice and persistent opposition of his enemy (3-4). Then follows a prayer for deliverance (7, 9), with a request to be taught God's will. "Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (10). The same spirit we see here displayed as we have noticed in Ps. cxli. Then he can ask boldly for rescue from trouble. "Quicken me, O Lord, for Thy name's sake; for Thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of Thy mercy (or, loving kindness) cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am Thy servant" (cxliii. 11, 12).

What follows? To whom has he addressed himself? To God, who is his refuge, his place of defence, and his shelter, "who," says David, "subdueth my people under me" (Ps. cxliv. 2). Reading this Psalm, are we not reminded of another, even the eighteenth? Compare cxlvi. 1, 2 with xviii. 2, 31, 34. But our Psalm, though introduced so late in the Psalter, was anterior in time to the other, as a comparison of vv. 5, 6, 7 with xviii. 9, 13, 14-16 plainly intimates. In cxliv. he asks for that divine intervention, which in xviii. he declares has been accomplished. But why this inversion of events, it may be asked. To this we reply, that Ps. xviii. is part of a series (xvi.-xxiv.) connected with the Lord, and describing the victorious career of the King, and that only; whereas cxliv. connects millennial blessing for the earthly people (11-15) with the King's deliverance. Hence it suitably finds its place in the collection near the close of the Psalter. And whilst the xviii. Psalm concludes with the thought of everlasting prosperity to David and his seed, Psalm cxliv. ends with the thought of the nation's happiness. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is the people whose God is the

Lord " (15). Millennial pictures are not infrequent in the Psalms. In this last book we have two striking ones. First a picture of family and social happiness (cxxxviii.) ; and the second, here, one of agricultural prosperity (13, 14).

Now comes, and how fittingly, David's Psalm of Praise (cxlv). It is the last of the alphabetical Psalms. The royal singer's voice we shall hear no more in the Psalter. His last utterance therein is one of unmingled praise. Jehovah is the king. His name he will bless, and praise for ever and ever. He is great. (3). He is gracious (8). He is good (9). He is righteous (17). Such is His character. Saul died, forsaken of God (1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16). David's last notes in the Psalter are notes of praise. Generation, too, to generation, shall praise God's works. Men will speak of His mighty acts ; the Psalmist will declare His greatness. What a change will come about in the world, when Jehovah, the King shall be a common subject of wonder and praise ! He is unchanging ; as His name, revealed to Moses, is His name still (8). Homage, too, and worship and praise, will yet be rendered ; all His works giving thanks to Him ; His saints blessing Him, and speaking to men of the glory of His kingdom and of His power (10-12). What a change, indeed, will it be, when this comes about ! "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endureth throughout all generations" (13). Thus sang David ; and Daniel, centuries later (vii. 14, 27) bore similar testimony. Nothing can shake that kingdom. None can outlive it. And He, of whom all this is said (3-13), ministers, as needed to His saints, and to every living thing. He hears, too, the cry of those that fear Him, and will help them, preserving all that love Him, but all the wicked will he destroy (14-20). The Almighty, who endureth for ever, and whose mighty acts men will declare, stoops to minister to those who fall, and to raise up those that are bowed down.

How full was David's heart, surveying in spirit a scene on earth when persecution shall have ceased, men's power for evil be annulled, and only the destruction of the wicked to be anticipated. Then, he closes. His last words in the Psalter we now read.

The Psalms.

263

"My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord ; and let all flesh bless His holy name for ever and ever" (cxlv. 21). When in the world's history, since the days of Noah, has such a consummation been known, as all flesh blessing God's holy name, and that for ever and ever? The wish, we can all understand. Will that come about?

The fulfilment of it awaits a coming day ; for the book of Psalms, as before remarked, is really prophetic. The day will come ; and the five Psalms which now follow (cxlvi.-cl.), the closing compositions of the Psalter, anticipate it, likewise. "All flesh" had David said ; for all flesh will yet be heard praising God. And now, in response to his last utterance, an individual saint leads the way (cxlvi.) "Praise the Lord, O my soul. While I live will I praise the Lord ; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being" (1, 2). Brought through fire and water, and landed in a wealthy place (Ps. lxvi. 12), as the godly remnant will have been, the folly of trusting to men demonstrated, and the blessing of trusting the Lord experienced, how cheerily, and how pointedly will the saint sing : "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God ; which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is ; which keepeth truth for ever ; which executeth judgment for the oppressed ; which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners ; the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind ; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down ; the Lord loveth the righteous ; the Lord preserveth the strangers ; He relieveth the fatherless and widow ; but the way of the wicked He turneth upside down" (3-9). What a character of our God ! We have quoted this passage at length. The ways of our God will be fully demonstrated in that coming time. And what the Lord when on earth displayed in the exercise of His miraculous power, will then be seen and owned to have been indeed samples of the power of the world (or, age) to come (Heb. vi. 5). And saints in that day will sing with an emphasis,

and a deep meaning known to them all, having been kept throughout the awful time of temptation and persecution, to the coming in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; coming, not just as a brief, a passing spectacle for men to wonder at, but coming to reign in Zion, and that, to all generations (10).

Thereupon, follows a Psalm in praise of Him who builds up Jerusalem (cxlvii.), taking pleasure in them that fear Him, and in them that hope in His mercy (11). But He is Zion's God, so Jerusalem must praise Him (12-20). Yet more, all in heaven, animate and inanimate, must praise Him (cxlviii. 1-6); and all on earth of living creatures, whether on land, or in the sea, as well as all inanimate creation here below will be called upon to praise Him. Kings of the earth, and all peoples; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men, and maidens; old men, and children, all must praise Him, who has lifted up the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints, even the children of Israel, a people near unto Him (7-14).

As Zion, mentioned in cxlvi. 10, is exhorted to praise her God (cxlvii. 12), so Israel, introduced at the close of cxlviii., are called on specially to rejoice in Him (cxlix.), and that in a new song. At the Red Sea, they had sung a song on the morning of their redemption from the Egyptians (Exod. xv). Now finally delivered from all opposing powers, they are to sing a *new* song in praise to their God. We have met with the new song in previous Psalms (xxxiii. 3; xl. 3; xcvi. 1; xcvi. 1: cxliv. 9); and with the exception of Isai. xlii. 10, this term in the Old Testament only appears in the Psalms, and that for Israel when looking forward to full and final deliverance. In the congregation of saints is that song to be sung, and surely in full melodious harmony, praising Jehovah, their Maker, and their King. For He, who Nathaniel saluted as king of Israel (John i. 49), will have come back to dwell in Jerusalem. Praise, then, becomes them (cxlix. 3-6), and the Lord now with them, executioners of judgment will they be, punishing peoples, binding kings with chains, and nobles with fetters of iron, thus fulfilling the prophetic word as to Edom (Ezek. xxv. 14), as to the land of Nimrod (Micah v. 6), and as to the

The Psalms.

265

nations (Jer. li. 20). Irresistible will they be, for the Lord of hosts will be with them. Who, just reading the opening Psalms of the Psalter, could have predicted such a future for them?

But the Psalter, closes not with that picture, inspiring to Israel as that surely will be. Another Psalm we have, to complete the collection (cl). In it, God only is mentioned as the object of all hearts. In heaven and on earth will this be true. In the sanctuary and in the firmament of His power will God's praise be heard, and that for His mighty acts, and according to His excellent greatness. Idols, utterly abolished, was a prospect before the son of Amoz (Isai. ii. 18). To that effected earthly saints will here look back. For but one object will there be for adoration. To no object of worship but One, will men turn, even to the true God, the living God, the everlasting God, the Former of all things, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Redeemer, too, and Saviour of His people.

What a day will that be! Trumpets, psalteries, harps, timbrels, stringed instruments, pipes, organs, loud cymbals, high sounding cymbals, all will be pressed into this service of praise. And yet more. That most melodious of all instruments,—the human voice, will be heard amid the sounding of trumpets and the clashing of cymbals lifted up in praise to the Lord. Shall we stop there! "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord" (cl. 6), so runs the Psalm. Cannot Revelation v. 13 give breadth to this, as every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them, John heard saying, "Blessing and honour, and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

With this exhortation to praise the Psalter closes. Praise to begin we read of, but never hear of its ending. Sighs, and groans, have often been heard on earth, and will yet make themselves heard. Tears, too, have flowed down many a cheek, and watered many a couch. Sighs, and groans, will one day cease upon earth. Tears, too, will be wiped from the face of saints in this scene. But praise will continually ascend from this at present sin-stricken world, when the trials and sorrows of saints will be matters of the

266 *Additional Thoughts on Service and Fellowship.*

past, all on earth at length basking in the blessedness of the reign of the Prince of peace.

In the first Psalm, we have seen two classes, existing side by side upon earth—the righteous and the wicked. In the second Psalm, we read of conflict to keep God's king out of His kingdom. Now, at the close of the whole book, conflict has ceased; the meek are inheriting the earth; and they that have mourned how fully are they comforted. So with "Praise ye the Lord," or Hallelujah, the Psalter ends, the key note thus struck for saints here below, till time shall be no more. God will at length have triumphed over all the efforts of the enemy. And the last sounds which fall on the ear are those two Hebrew words which have now become the property of all tongues. Hallelu-jah. In heaven they will have already been uttered (Rev. xix. 1, 3). On earth will they be taken up, and far and wide will they be heard, for "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isai. ii. 17).
C. E. S.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON SERVICE AND FELLOWSHIP. *

Every Christian has a work to do, and a place to occupy "till He come." We refer solely to the service and ministerial position of each one on earth. If by obedience, faithfulness, and devotedness, we create for ourselves a special place in the Kingdom (Matt. xxv. 14-23), how important that in all our relations with God and man, we have the certainty of doing the will of the Lord. Love, divine love, however, must be the spring of all service (1 Cor. xiii.), and not the desire of present, or future renown in the palmy days of the Kingdom. Love delights to serve, not self but others. True greatness consists, not in being served, but in giving one's self up to the help and blessing of others (Matt. xx. 26, 27). This is a complete reversal of the world's ways of thought, and mode of action.

* See articles on this subject in Nos. 12 and 13 of *Truth for the Last Days*.

***Additional Thoughts on Service and Fellowship.* 267**

Service *for* Christ should never be separated from communion *with* Him. Work and worship are, of course, distinct acts, but both should be maintained in due proportion in and by the same person. We are as Christians, both servants and worshippers. Now in the former relation, *i.e.*, as servants, we are individually responsible to Christ as Lord, whose servants we are. His commands *alone* constitute our authority. He is the Master of each one. To Him alone we look for our marching orders. We can neither walk nor serve in the steps and faith of others. Our service rendered to Him is necessarily a matter between the soul and God. Help, counsel, advice is, of course, another thing, and may be useful at times, but brotherly counsel must not supersede the Lord's authority or become an interference with the free movements of the Lord's servants; each one of whom must act in personal faith before the Lord, whatever others may say or do.

We have, undoubtedly, relations with others being fellow-members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii). But in regard to our service we are necessarily alone. In it, we may, or may not have extended to us the hand of fellowship. But whether given or refused, we must pass on each in his own way, serving Christ. In the Gospel of Mark, the Apostles are separately named; the conjunction *and* preceding the mention of each, and this notes the *individuality* of the service (chap. iii. 16-19.); whereas in the first Gospel the apostles are named in couples, the point being *fellowship* in the mission to which they were divinely appointed (chap. x. 2-4).

The commission to disciple the nations (Matt. xxviii. 19), to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark xvi. 15), to perfect the saints individually, and to edify the body collectively (Eph. iv. 11, 12), is stated in terms so precise and absolute that qualification or limitation cannot for a moment be entertained. The Lord meant the work to be done, and to be done by His servants, under His direction and supervision. "The nations," "all the world," "and every creature" define the universal extent of the charge committed to evangelists; while "the saints" and "the body of Christ" equally fix the limit of the service of pastor,

268 *Additional Thoughts on Service and Fellowship.*

teacher, and other ministers. But in order to reach the respective classes coming within the range of the gifts given by Christ on high, we are confronted with the fact that we are checked and hindered on every hand, owing to the multiplicity of divisions, and, strange to say, the main and most determined opposition to reach and minister to the saints of God everywhere, proceeds from the Church itself. The wolf (Satan—John x.) has scattered the sheep. Division is rife in the Church of God. With the numerous sects and parties *as such* we can have nothing to do, while, of course, loving and earnestly seeking the blessing of *all* who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

What, then, is our attitude to-day? We firmly, and unswervingly maintain, what we believe to be the *only* Church ground permissible to saints in a day of confusion, as taught in the following Scriptures: Acts ii. 42; Eph. iv. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 20-22; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26; xii; xiv; Jude 20-21; Matt. xviii. 20. We trust, through grace, never to surrender nor compromise the position laid down in these Scriptures, which are as relevant to-day as when penned. But in preaching and teaching here, there, or anywhere we in no wise accept the ecclesiastical position of any given company of professed believers, nor is such ever required of us.

We must risk the charge of repetition, by insisting upon the fact that we preach and teach simply as the Lord's servants, and we should have thought that such service, even amongst saints not scripturally gathered, would commend itself as the right thing to do. How otherwise can you reach them? Are saints because occupying an unscriptural position, to be denied the ministry of grace and truth through the channels appointed by Christ? We think not. Is your refusal to minister amongst such saints when asked to do so, according to the mind of Christ? We are satisfied that it is not. It seems to us, that there is considerable confusion in the minds of some beloved brethren, between church-fellowship and individual ministry, and it will be seen, we gather, that the key to the question before us lies in carefully distinguishing between these two things, viz., fellowship and ministry. A man with one or more ecclesiastical titles attached to

Additional Thoughts on Service and Fellowship. 269

his name may yet be a true servant of Christ. Both he and you are equally servants of the Lord. If he, or the party to which he is attached, invite you to fellowship with them—supposing the position to be an unscriptural one—the case is entirely altered. Identification with an unscriptural society or system is wrong, and without question should be refused firmly and graciously. Obedience to the Word is the first quality of a servant. Never compromise the truth in such cases. But why so slow to perceive that one's individual occasional service in Church, Chapel, Theatre, Hall, or other building does *not* identify you with the principles of the people meeting there? In the various professing bodies such service is not regarded as an acceptance of their denominational views or of their Church-system. An "Interchange of Pulpit" by ministers of different denominations is common enough, and yet no one entertains the idea that there is involved thereby acquiescence in the views held by the Church or party in whose building he may be preaching for the time. A Presbyterian does not become a Congregationalist by preaching in the pulpit or platform of the latter. We merely refer to the well known practice familiar to us all, to show that occasional service on request, in no wise identifies the preacher or teacher with any special views or Church-position. This the Christian-public mind fully appreciates, and as heartily owns.

"But what about the converts?" say some, "what about those to whom you have been the means of blessing in Church, Chapel, Mission Hall, or elsewhere?" Thank God for conversions everywhere and by whatever means effected (Phil. i. 15-18). Every true case of conversion is the fruit of God's Spirit, hence rejoice. If, however, persons are saved in a wrong place, by all means do your best to get them out of it. The same principle applies to believers benefited by your ministry. If hindered publicly in doing so, then do it privately. No one can hinder in this latter service. But remember that there are higher considerations, and more profound interests, than those relating to ecclesiastical matters. Individual Salvation, personal godliness, and an ever increasing and deepening knowledge of Christ and

270 *Additional Thoughts on Service and Fellowship.*

grace, are of greater importance than even getting souls right ecclesiastically, much as this latter is to be desired and sought after. We would also add, that pastors and teachers should step in and complete the work begun by the evangelist. Persons saved under open air preaching have to be searched out and helped, do the same for those converted or otherwise blessed under your preaching, whether in Church, Chapel, or elsewhere. But even if those saved under your ministry remain where they are, identifying themselves with an unscriptural Church-system they are saved for God, for eternity, for Heaven. What a blessing! Surely *that* is worth striving for, and the greatness of the object aimed at, but makes manifest how puerile are the objections to one's honest endeavours to reach and help souls wherever found.

It should be no question with the preacher or teacher *who* invites him to minister. God might induce the head of the Papal system to invite one to preach or teach in St. Peter's, Rome. We would thank God for the privilege and go and do the work; nor would our doing so be the acceptance of the Papal system in whole or in part. If one chooses to clothe himself in ecclesiastical attire, and add to his name ecclesiastical titles, let him do so, that is his responsibility, but it is nothing to us. If in his position he asks me to preach Christ in his Mission Hall, or Church, or Chapel, I in no wise accept his ecclesiastical position as a right one in acceding to his request. I assume that God led to this gracious desire on his part.

An evangelistic friend writes us thus: "I have been invited to preach to dying inmates of a house of ill fame, and as I knelt by the bedside of the poor fallen creatures, have blessed God for an opportunity and invitation to tell them of the precious blood that cleanses from all sin. Invited by the keeper of the den—could I refuse to go because she was a polluted vile creature who had asked me? *No*, indeed. Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

The man of Macedonia (Acts xvi.), and the rulers of the Synagogue (xiii.) were providential agencies in the hand of God for the furtherance of the Gospel. It is the same to-day. Occupation with such trifles as *who* invites to preach Christ, seems

Additional Thoughts on Service and Fellowship. 271

to us weak, and betrays a narrowness of spirit which we greatly regret, especially in view of the momentous mission committed to us. Some of our objecting friends put the matter from their point of view so strongly, that the only conclusion we can come to is, that hearers in Church and Chapel had better be left where they *are*, rather than be reached by a true Servant of God whose ministry might be the means of their eternal blessing. Shall we leave them alone? The evangelist or preacher who in the exercise of his high calling has preached in Church or Chapel to the blessing of souls, has done a work for God, even if the converts remain where they are. When persons come to our Gospel and other meetings they in no sense identify themselves with *our* ecclesiastical position. They come—and in this are right—to hear a servant of the Lord preach and teach Christ. Let every true servant in the Church of God but grasp the character and extent of his work as detailed in Eph. iv. 12, and he is sure to be lifted out of the region of cavil and objection. *Go on*, say we.

Some consider that service in Church or Chapel is condoning a grave dishonour to Him who loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Certainly not. The Church—the body of Christ—consists of the aggregate of *saints* on earth, not that of Churches or assemblies, such, *i.e.*, saints, are the object of His special love, and that is just what we desire to give witness to—the value of *all* saints as His Body and Bride, and whose blessing we earnestly seek. A true shepherd goes after the sheep.

Arguments drawn from the fear of stumbling weak souls are beside the mark. Be careful by all means. Do not either be a stumbling block, nor put a stone of offence before the weak and feeble. But you are not called upon to unnecessarily parade your Christian liberty to preach and teach anywhere before people. Go about your work wisely and graciously, and when, and where needful explain. But while all this, and more, is incumbent on you as the Lord's servant, solemnly remember that it is to *Him*, and not to brethren, be they weak or strong, that you are responsible in the manner and use of your gift. There is another question to which we would briefly allude. Our communion with

the Lord is put as a solace where public ministry may be denied us. If we cannot have the latter to the extent desired, we may have, however, no stint in fellowship with the Father and the Son ; there is no limit to *that*. But why put these two *i.e.*, Service and Communion in apparent opposition ? Surely a servant should not minister save in Communion ! God hath joined service *for* Him and fellowship *with* him, and what He has so closely and inseparably bound together, let not man put asunder. We must not allow of any divorce between these two, but cultivate both in ever increasing earnestness. The Holy Ghost is both the power to serve, and the energy of life and communion as well in the *same* person and at the *same* time. May God give us each grace and wisdom in our several pathways of service, that His glory and the blessing of Souls may be our aim and object.

NOT ENDED BUT SAVED.

How deeply important it is that every member of the human race, that is old enough to understand, should really know what they are as responsible creatures in the sight of God. Each one should earnestly desire to discover God's estimate of himself, for if we are to appear before Him, and to be judged by Him, it will not matter much what we may think of ourselves. What He thinks is the question. What is His standard of measurement ? What are His requirements ? Can we obtain clear and definite answers to these enquiries ? We can. Nor need we travel far to get the truth, for God has made all plain in His holy Word. You may not accept its statements, you may dispute, argue, reason, and so forth. So much the worse for you if you do. You may say, " It does not commend itself to my reason ; and I wont believe." Is your reason competent to decide ? You are a criminal ; you cannot decide in your own case. You cannot be the judge of what God should do.

He has said of the human family long long ago, and it is written almost at the beginning of the first book of the Bible, Genesis vi.

5. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The whole race, with the exception of Noah, his sons, his wife, and their wives, eight persons in all, were swept away in judgment by the deluge. One year and a week they lived in the Ark, chap. vii. 1. God said, "Come thou and all thy house into the Ark," chap. viii. 16. God said, "Go forth of the Ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy son's wives with thee." Why, the exception in their case? Were they different from all that perished? Of Noah, we do read, "that he was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God," chap. vi. 9. ; and in vii. 1, "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation ;" of Noah only is all this said. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was spared, and his family was also spared on his account.

Was he naturally and intrinsically good, or had there been some great change effected in him, so that his conduct differed from that of all those who perished. We shall see, for Noah evidently taught of God offered sacrifice, chap. viii. 21. We read, "and the Lord smelled a sweet savour : and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake : for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The spared remnant of the human family differed in no wise from those who had been swept away. It was useless to curse afresh, for no improvement could be effected ; the evil was too deep seated, it was ineradicable. Those living after the flood were no better in themselves, and Noah, who was a just and righteous man, soon exhibits self-indulgence, and loses control of himself ; in fact, gets drunk. The evil was still in him : From whence had come the righteous conduct already referred to? Any one taught of God knows well it was from a new nature and life which had been imparted to him, and not from any natural goodness.

The Lord himself unfolds this most important truth to a master in Israel, Nicodemus by name. The teaching in its fulness as then imparted was new, but the thing itself was as old as Adam and Eve. Cain manifests the evil of the nature within

him. Abel exhibits some traits of the new nature imparted to him by God. In each saint, both are found, sometimes the evil gets the upper hand, sometimes the good. David, for example, at times soars on the wings of faith and exults in the goodness of God, and under the guiding of the Holy Ghost penned blessed statements which have cheered and delighted millions since he passed away. Yet, even he, fell grievously, an actual adulterer, and morally a murderer. The good must be traced to God, and the evil to himself. Is there no redeeming feature? not one; tested by what God has a right to expect—nothing can be found; the history of man is black indeed. “They are *all* gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” This is the divine verdict given in Rom. iii. There is no difference. What a humbling truth. Who accepts it? Differences there are from a human standpoint. None from the divine. Circumstances may favour some; temperament others, but the evil is there.

Take the case of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus asking, “what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life;” pointed to the Commandments, he replies, “all these have I kept from my youth up, and Jesus beholding him loved him.” A fair, perhaps the fairest, specimen that human nature could produce. He had called Jesus “good Master,” but the Lord tells him that it was an error to connect goodness with man. None is good, but One, that is God. Here, then, we have the plainest testimony from the lips of One, who though a man was also God, that goodness could not be found in any mere man. The young man is tested. “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come take up the cross, and follow me.” Mark x. 21. Sad and grieved he went away. He did not know, either himself, or Jesus. Nor did he love his neighbour as himself. Had he done so it would not have been difficult to give what he had to the poor. A treasure in Heaven was too remote, and companionship with the Son of God had no charm for him. Never had any man a better opportunity afforded him. God, the only good, was

present, and offered to this young man the wonderful boon of companionship with Him; but in vain. Selfishness in what is evil governed him. True riches, all really worth the having both for time and for eternity, were to be had, but rejected.

Such is man, and such is every human heart. Cain hated Abel, and wherefore, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Christ was hated, and at last put to death. Man did it. Man privileged, highly favoured, religious, even the most choice specimen of mankind hated Christ and crucified Him, proving his own moral ruin, a depraved, ruined, God-hating guilty creature. What did God do? Genesis tells of what He did once, brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. It tells us also of sacrifice, in which God smelt a savour of rest, so that a repetition of the flood was never to be, but blessing instead is bestowed, a picture of the great sacrifice of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. In which God can, as it were, retreat and bide His own time for the dealing with the sin He so hates. And more, can come out in grace as the Saviour God. The hatred and evil of man's heart fully revealed in the death of Christ. And in that same death the heart of God is fully disclosed in the tenderest pity, grace, and love. What a God He is, and what a Saviour has He provided.

But is there Salvation? Yes, certainly. Need we cite proof, when all Christians admit it. Peter announces it in the Acts. Speaking of Jesus he says, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," chap. iv. 12. Paul, too, in answer to the question addressed to him and his companion, Silas, by the jailer at Philippi, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" replies, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 30, 31. Later still, when a prisoner at Rome, he tells the unbelieving Jews, "That the *salvation* of God is sent unto the Gentiles." Peter in his first Epistle i., 9, says, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Soul salvation, then, is a present thing, whilst that of the body is future. On believing in Christ the sinner receives the forgiveness of sins, and

is also justified by God, or as Rom. iv. teaches us, is accounted righteous. On what ground can a sinner be forgiven. Only through the blood of Christ, Eph. i. 7; 1. John 1. 7. Moreover, he is justified, simply, and entirely by that same precious blood. We are speaking now of the meritorious cause of justification. Salvation, then, is assured to the one who believes on Christ; a part of which he already possesses (that of the soul) but waits for the redemption of his body. So salvation, in its completeness, cannot be ours until the Lord comes. Who will, we are told, change this vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself. Phil. iii. 21. Salvation, then, is fully assured, for, writes the same Apostle, God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain *Salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him. 1. Thess. v. 9, 10.

Can being saved, and being ended, be regarded as the same? Can the latter be the equivalent of the former, or is ending the means of accomplishing salvation? We should, have thought ending was a complete denial of saving, and so it is. Yet, strange to say, this is what is put forward nowadays as advanced Christian teaching. 'The first man, it is said, is dead and gone, and by this is meant not Adam merely, but the entire race of which he is the head. Another statement is, "The responsible man is ended," and this is sometimes qualified by introducing the word *judicially* ended. Another expression is: God could not justify an ungodly man by the sacrifice of Christ alone; he is justified through being gone. We certainly have a right to expect from those who profess to expound the Word of God, that some clear proof will be afforded from the Word to prove what is advanced, especially when things are said which, to ordinary minds, appears to clash with its teaching, and reduces the truth of salvation to absurdity. Mysticism is not Christianity. Let us examine these statements. Is the human race dead and gone? If so, why offer salvation to any, for all must be beyond the possibility of obtaining it. There is no salvation for the dead.

No Gospel to be preached to them. If the race is gone, we would ask : Where? and the reply must be : Ended. Well, well. This looks like annihilation, and comes from a quarter where we should least expect to find it.

Adam, who alone is the first man, is dead and gone from the earth, but that is not what is meant, for no one in his right mind would affirm that the whole race is dead and gone in the sense that Adam is ; besides, Adam, though dead and gone from earth, still lives. Who will dare to deny it. "All live to God," said Jesus. Those dead to us still live to God. Death is not the end. Were it true that the responsible man is ended, then there is an end to responsibility, and men may do as they please. They need not repent, they are not responsible. Oh, but that is not fair, some may say. What is meant is that they are *judicially* ended, or as another has expressed it, *terminated*. Worse and worse, and it shows what a morass people get into when they leave the plain statements of Scripture and begin to reason and theorise. If the responsible man is judicially ended or terminated, there can be no further judicial dealing. Hence, eternal punishment is a myth, and the great White Throne before which all the wicked dead will stand to be judged, must be regarded as an old wives' fable, and Christ is not coming in flaming fire to execute judgment ; for what is terminated by a judicial process cannot again come up to be judged. So false is all this, that believers themselves must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10).

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. xiv. 12). Responsible Adam was in Eden, and equally so after he fell, but without the power or the will to meet it, *i.e.*, his responsibility. Responsible, we all are saved and unsaved. All creatures are responsible, at least all intelligent creatures are. Unfallen ones delight to do God's will, and saved men and women really seek to do the same. They are saved by Grace through Faith, but they prove the genuineness of their faith by their works. They practice righteousness, because they have been begotten of God. They love the brethren, because they have eternal life. And,

further, they have received the Holy Ghost, who empowers them to live to God. The new birth and the Holy Spirit are necessary to the doing of God's will. Man in himself cannot and will not do God's will. He will have his own way and please himself. Repentant ones confess, "We have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah liii. 6).

Thank God it is our duty to please Him, to own Him, to submit to Him, to worship Him, for we are responsible, and so we shall be when in glory; but what joy when the evil now in us shall be there no longer, and our everlasting delight will be to carry out all His good pleasure. Justified through being gone, is not only without the least support from Scripture (Paul knew nothing of it, and he is the great expounder of that truth), but is not even sense. Hang a man first, and then justify him. Justified by hanging is absurd. But we are said to have died with Christ. So we died with Him, we came to an end in His death. The first statement is true, but the deduction is false. Never does Scripture say that we died in Christ or in the death of Christ. The dead in Christ we do read of, but that refers only to those who are literally dead. Dead with Christ all believers are, but it is not true to say that we died in His death. Let us keep to the word. He died to save us. He bore wrath and judgment that we might never even taste it. But it is true that since He became the Head of a race, every member of that race partakes of the condition of the head of it. Christ died to sin. So have we. His condition now is ours, and we are to so reckon in practice, and thus get deliverance from the power of sin. Who was it that said, "I will cast all their sins behind my back, and I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy sins." Did He cast His people behind His back, or blot them out, bringing them to an utter end, as it is said?

No, no, thank God, the believer will be in glory, body, soul, and spirit, bearing then the image of the heavenly, as now he bears the image of the earthly. How false, then, is the notion that no part of the believer will be in heaven, only Christ. This would involve annihilation, and the denial of resurrection, and

make the truth of salvation a mere play on words with no solid meaning. We do not for a moment suppose that those who express themselves in the terms we have been commenting on, really intend to teach annihilation in any form, but it is the logical outcome of what is urged as advanced Christian teaching, and it is quite time that there should be a return to a more correct and scriptural way of putting things. E. R. W.

THE BAPTISM AND THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(*Matthew* iii. 13-17 ; iv. 1-11).

God does not take up His servants at haphazard, and send them raw and untrained about His work. Each one has his call and his training ; or, as we might say, his ordination and his theological course. The method of the ordination and the manner of the training may differ very much. In some cases, the voice of God may be heard in any of the hundred and one humdrum details of daily life ; in others, there may be a setting apart to special work in a special and unmistakeable manner. The discipline—the training—call it what you will, may be as diverse as the ordination. God's methods, in their wonderful unity, probably differ with each individual soul. The quiet of a placid life may serve God's ends as well as some moral and spiritual break-up that leaves its mark on both the face and the soul. Nor does time, as we reckon it, enter into this training ; days and hours are mere counters, and not current coin, in the spiritual world. The too-impetuous Moses was put back for 40 years of quiet wilderness life, before God gave him His commission to deliver Israel. It was only three days or so after Saul of Tarsus had received his call—three days of outward blindness, but of fresh spiritual seeing—that he publicly proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God.

We must not suppose that this training is always and necessarily painful—although the use of one and the same word to denote "instruction" and "chastening," is at least as old as the Greeks.

The almost forgotten Cowper, indeed, says "We learn in suffering what we teach in song," and I suppose our deepest and truest knowledge of God, and our surest insight into the meaning of those "riddles of Providence" that perplex all thoughtful men, have come to us at a time when the heavens seemed darkest, and our feet sank in deep mire, where there was no standing. Yet God speaks, not only in the earthquake, but in the still small voice; He leads His people not only through the Valley of Humiliation, but on to the delectable Mountains; if He blinds Saul of Tarsus with the brightness of the Heavenly Vision, He catches him up into Paradise to hear unspeakable words.

If this is God's method with His servants, we should expect that He will not depart from it with Him who was emphatically the Servant of Jehovah, although His Son. Jesus did not exempt Himself from the ordinary lot, and in the Scripture that we look at this morning we may see something of what I have called the ordination and training of the servant of God. More—much more, than this lies in the narrative; it touches some of the deepest and most difficult problems of theological study, but for our practical purpose this view of the Baptism and the Temptation will suffice us.

Thirty years of the Lord's life had passed—years of absolute silence from the time of His going to Nazareth, excepting the one incident of the Passover journey to Jerusalem. But the little world of Judæa was not asleep; the stern Baptist had come preaching his message of preparation and repentance, and all Israel wondered after him. Could he be the prophet foretold by Moses? Or Elijah? Or the Christ? His word was with power, and Jerusalem, Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan came to him, confessing their sins and being baptised by him in Jordan.

It should be noted that baptism was no new thing, when John came and practised it. It had been adopted by the Jews, as part of the ritual of the reception of their proselytes. It indicated, by figure, the dying to one condition of things and the rising again to another; in the case of proselytes the dying to heathendom and the rising to Judaism. But the nation, as a whole, had so far

The Baptism and the Temptation of Jesus.

281

departed from the "old paths" that the only true position before God of a pious Israelite was one of repentance and confession ; no longer the claiming of God's goodness on the footing of covenant relationship, but the taking up the position of Grace. It is one of the mysteries of the Gospel narrative that "the Holy One" should throw in His lot with the penitent in Israel. It was one of the things in which it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.

But it was not only that. It meant for Him the close of that old Nazareth life, with all the quietness, the sweetness, the holy joy and the holy labour that we associate with the household of Joseph and Mary. It meant His ceasing to be a private individual, and the conscious entering upon a public life—a life of disappointment, of rejection, of betrayal. It was not that the previous 30 years had been wasted or fruitless. Hidden from the world's gaze, that life had been open to the Father's eye, and as Jesus came up from the river the heavens opened to Him, the Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father's voice was heard, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." The verb that is used is not a verb present, but one that takes that *past* into account.

And so the Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled : "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek : He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound : to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." But full and ample though the ordination is, the training is not yet complete. That He may succour them that are tempted, He must suffer, being tempted. "Then," as St. Matthew says, "immediately," as St. Mark writes, He was led or "driven" into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. For 40 days He was there, alone and hungry.

Perhaps we do not sufficiently consider what an immense factor solitude is, in the temptations that beset the soul. It is not to the man in the crowd that the subtler forms of temptations come ; it is to the solitary man. I do not speak of the solitude

of waste places, merely ; the solitude of a great city is perhaps worse, when for some reason we are shut up within ourselves, and "I and my heart," to use the quaint phrase of Ecclesiastes, discuss all things under the sun, and find them to be but vanity and vexation of the spirit. For though man is as gregarious as a sheep, he is also so strangely self-contained, that though you rub shoulders with him, and think you know him pretty well, you can never know unless he wills to tell you, what is the true centre and pivot of his being—what, in a word, constitutes really his life. Add to such a solitary state some physical weakness—it need not be hunger—something that makes a man silent and moody, and Satan has the best of fields for his operations. Do we—by the way—keep our eye on such solitary ones, and take with us to them a breath of fresh air, and a sympathy that unlocks their heart, lest they be tempted above measure ?

Alone and hungry. Such was the condition of Him to whom but lately the heavens had opened in recognition of His worth. And "the tempter came to Him." There was a suggestion of kindly thoughtfulness in his opening remark—strangely reminiscent of the deprecating tone in which he began his conversation with Eve. "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." For the "if" there, is not the "if" of doubt : the original is perfectly clear on that. It is the "hypothetical if ;" and may be rendered "since." "Since Thou are Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." And why not ? As Son of God, the cattle on a thousand hills were His : the earth was His and the fulness thereof ; in the immediate future He was to put forth His power over nature for others ; why not for Himself now ? If David of old might without condemnation break the Mosaic law to satisfy his hunger, surely He, who was before all law, might do less than that. He might simply exert the powers latent in Him and stop that torturing pain ? But the answer is, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'"

I must say that I think this answer of the Lord has been

The Baptism and the Temptation of Jesus.

283

strangely misread. Many good people take it as though it means —“We have not only bodies to satisfy with bread, but souls to feed with the Word of God.” The statement is true, but what of its relevancy? What of it as a reply to this definite temptation? All is clear enough if the Old Testament passage is referred to: “He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna . . . that He might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” That is, Israel’s hunger and Israel’s fulness depended upon the word—the expression of the will—of Jehovah.

To put the position in a single phrase, Satan tempts the Lord to adopt the policy of the short cut. There is no sin in being hungry; there is no sin in longing to satisfy hunger. The temptation is not in the end, but in the means, and the answer of the Lord brands for ever as a lie the Jesuitical maxim that “the end sanctifies the means.” By the leading of the Spirit of God—by the will of God, Jesus was in the wilderness, and hungry. The question was, should He take Himself out of that leading—out of that Will—to gratify His own personal need? For the Lord, there was never any doubt; if He hungered by the will of God, it should be by God’s will and word that His hunger should be satisfied; the “when” and the “how” should rest with God. The directing Word of God was, for Him absolutely final.

There are few of us that have not known similar temptations. Solitude and hunger—not necessarily physical hunger—have given Satan an opening. There is hunger of heart, of mind; the tendency to sit and think of what “might have been,” to brood over misfortune that hits us unfairly; to imagine what greater and better things we might do if—if only things were otherwise than they are, and that may be otherwise, if we will only take ourselves out of God’s hands, and try the short cut. Our only refuge in such a temptation is to recall the Lord’s answer, “Not by bread only, but by every word of God.” The whole question is—Do we from the heart accept God’s will, God’s time, God’s method, for our deliverance?

But a more subtle temptation was in reserve. Taking Jesus into the Holy City, Satan set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, and said, "If Thou be Son of God, cast Thyself down ; for it is written, ' He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee ; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.' "

If the former temptation was levelled against Jesus as Son of God in His own personal needs, this touches Him in His relation to Israel as Son of David. The Psalm from which Satan quotes is one of the Messianic Psalms, distinctly prophetic of great David's Greater Son. It applied to the Christ—and to no other in its full force. The application by Satan was strictly pertinent. Moreover, had Jesus so cast Himself down from the Temple height among the worshippers crowding in the Courts below, His sudden appearance in such a way would have certified to them the fact that He was the one of whom the Psalm spake, while the current expectation would have been met, that the Messiah should head Israel from the Sanctuary and lead them into the blessings of the Glorious Reign. Again, it is the policy of the short cut. Christ will yet appear to Israel, will yet be welcomed by them, will yet lead them into blessing, but it is not by Satan's way. Yet we can see the suggested alternatives ; on the one hand the "sudden coming" to His temple, the welcome by the people, and His acceptance as the promised Messiah. On the other, rejection and scorn, betrayal and crucifixion, the waiting for long ages during which Israel should be a hissing, a bye-word, and a reproach among all nations. And remembering His love for Israel, and the passion and pathos of His cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets ;" His tears as He said, "If thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace." Remembering this, can we not see the point of the temptation, that not for Himself, but for others, this safe, short and easy way of reaching Israel's crown should be adopted? Yes, it was safe—the word of God was pledged to His safety ; it was short and easy,—a path unshadowed by the Cross, unstained by the blood of Gethsemane or of Calvary, but

The Baptism and the Temptation of Jesus.

285

—once more—it was not God's way : "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The promise of safe-keeping is in the path of obedience and of faith ; to attempt to fit such a promise to other circumstances and to other ways is simply to "explore " God (as the word really means)—and is not faith but folly. And not even Israel's well being and salvation from sore trouble, shall draw Him from that perfect Will of God that was His delight.

You and I, if we are honest, have to confess that we know something of that mental and moral jugglery by which we justify to our own consciences some action, or course of action, which we do, not for our own sake but for others' happiness and well being. It is a subtle snare. It leads us into dubious ways that (we tell ourselves) we would not tarry in on our own account ; but to stiffen our conduct and character would make us less useful, less helpful to others, and for *their* sakes we decide that, being on the pinnacle of the Temple, we will venture a little way down,—not the *whole* way, that would be going too far ! But for a little way, surely, we may hope that angels will hold us up. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord Thy God." To rest on His promise in the way of holiness and obedience is faith ; to plead it in disobedience is presumption, and presumptuous sins, even if done for others, have no forgiveness.

We pass to the last temptation, but our comment must be very brief. As Son of God, in relation to His personal need, Jesus had been tempted, and had resisted. As Son of God, in His relation to Israel—that is, as Son of David—He had again been tempted, and had overcome. As Son of Man, Head of this Creation, the Rightful Lord of the world, He might be vulnerable. And so, in some magical way, in "a point of time," to quote St. Luke's striking phrase, Satan shews the Lord all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. "All these will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." The end to be gained is greater than that in view in the previous temptation, but the terms are grosser—reverence to *him*. It exposed his identity ; it showed he was not the helper and forwarder of God's ends and purposes, but was what his name expresses — Satan, the

“Adversary,” and as such he was rebuked and dismissed. The world-kingdom shall be Christ’s in time, but by God’s ways and methods—ways that may seem to spell delay, and may be full of weariness and pain. Yet the end is sure. And “God’s own time is the best of all.” “Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.”

Temptations identical in details with those that assailed the Lord will never come upon us : temptations identical in principle beset us day by day. For the underlying principle of them all, as I have pointed out, is the taking our matters out of God’s hands ; our setting our will before God’s—choosing our time, our way, rather than His. All sin is the revolt from God’s Will ; all temptation is the inducement to revolt. If we had to stand alone against such subtle forms of sin, our case would be hopeless. But Christ has been along the road before us ; in all points He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin ; and the training He passed through, and the sorrows He endured, make Him the fit Helper of His tempted people.

The best commentary on the Temptation is found in the words of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews : “In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”

W. J.

EXOD. xxxiv. 33 ; 2 COR. iii. 13.

There is no discrepancy between these statements as to the veiling by Moses of his face. When we turn to the Hebrew of Exod. xxxiv. 33, there all is perfectly plain. “And Moses finished speaking with them, and he put a veil on his face ;” or as the Revised renders the first clause, “And when Moses had done speaking with them,” etc.

This is consistent with the rest of the passage. Seeing the skin of his face shining, Aaron and all the people were afraid to come nigh him (30). But Moses called them, and all came back, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with

A Question on Matthew xx. 1-16.

287

him in Mount Sinai. That done, he veiled his face. Then also in verse 34, after going in again to God he came out, and spoke to the people that which he was commanded. All the people again saw that the skin of his face shone. His communications to them ended, he again veiled his face.

Exod. xxxiv. tells of the *fact*. 2 Cor. iii. unfolds to us the *reason*. To Israel the fact of his face shining was of all importance. It told that he, the Mediator, had been a second time with God, representing the people before God, and that after the golden calf had been made, it showed by his face shining where he had been, and that he had been accepted by God. If he was accepted, the people, with whom as Mediator he was identified, were accepted likewise. That was the immediate lesson for them; and that Exod. xxxiv. makes plain.

By *why* he veiled his face Exodus does not tell us. That was reserved for Christian times. He veiled his face that "the Children of Israel should not look to the end of that which was abolished," so writes the Apostle (2 Cor. iii. 13). The glory of the former dispensation was *transient*, that of Christianity is *permanent*. But till Christian times the transient character of the former was not made known, hence, that the people should never see the glory fade away from his face, he covered it.

One understands, then, why the *fact* of his face shining is stated in Exodus, and why the *reason* of the veil comes out in 2 Cor. iii. He did not cover his face in consideration to the fears of the people. He only covered it when he had finished speaking, that none should see the glory there fade away. I would add that all the ancient Versions agree with the rendering I have mentioned above, and most modern ones also. C. E. S.

A QUESTION ON MATTHEW xx. 1-16.

We would call the attention of our correspondent to the moral force and application of the parable. It is not the salvation of sinners, but the service of saints that is in question. The sovereignty of God in calling *whom* and *when*, and in giving to one and all "whatsoever is right," is a truth of prime importance at all times. But the grace of God is also a vital element in the passage. Those called at the eleventh hour received the same as those who had wrought the whole day. To the former it was *grace*, to the latter *justice*. Who then dare complain? Observe in verse 8 "the *last* unto the first," also verse 16, "the *last* shall be first"—sovereignty and grace combined.

"THE MIDNIGHT CRY."

"They slept," the virgins slept
And slumbered on the way ;
Their lengthened watch they failed to keep,
And, self-indulgent, fell to sleep
Alas, a ready prey.

'Twas but the midnight cry
Unsealed their slumbering eyes,—
"Awake ! awake ! the Bridegroom's nigh,
"The precious moments onward fly,
Ye sleeping ones arise !"

This scene, O Lord, renew
Thy Church is slumbering on ;
The watchful saints, alas, how few,
And they who wait how feeble too,
And midnight almost gone !

O bid Thy saints arise,
The watchful hours restore.
Bid Thine their well trimmed lamps to take,
And for the loving Bridegroom's sake,
To slumber never more.

ALBERT MIDLANE.

THE UNCLOTHED, OR SEPARATE STATE.

What is after death? An important question, concerning everybody, did each one only know it. Only in one book shall we find an authoritative answer. God's word states explicitly, 'It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment' (Heb. ix. 27). But the judgment is future, whether for saints or for the ungodly. Saints will stand at the judgment seat (2 Cor. v. 10) when the Lord comes for His own. The finally impenitent will be judged a thousand years later at the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11-15). Between then, the death of the individual and the judgment, what is his condition? An important question indeed. But the book which tells us of the coming judgment, casts light on this matter also. Our purpose in this paper is to trace out something of its teaching as to the unclothed, or separate state.

Man is a tripartite creature. In this he stands alone in God's creation. No other created beings are like him, being possessed of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. v. 23). The spirit, the highest part of this complex creature—man, was received when God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. ii. 7). In this he stands out apart from all the beasts of the earth. Possessed thereby of an immortal spirit, he, whilst on earth has a mortal body—mortal as able to die; mortal, too, as liable to death, because he is a sinner, unless God preserves him from it. So we see, says the Psalmist, "that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish" (Ps. xlix. 10). And the preacher in agreement with that writes, "there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." All die. So far, men will agree, for daily experience confirms the truth of it. And the preacher, viewing the subject from man's point of view,

adds, "The living know that they shall die ; but the dead know not anything" (Ecclesiastes ix. 2, 5).

Is this last statement correct ? This question we might ask in vain apart from dīvine revelation. The body dies, when the spirit has left it. But what about the spirit ? Does that die ? It leaves the body, that we know. But we cannot see it. We cannot trace it. It is gone, but whither ? Does it sleep, as does the body ? Is it mortal like the body ? Does it, too, succumb to the power of death ? Or does it live apart from the body ? Questions these are of vital interest. Who will solve them ? Be it remembered, that in this matter we need, we desire, authoritative statements. Surmises, guesses, theories, won't do. Who shall enlighten us ? Here man's wisdom is at fault ; for what can it know by itself of another world, and of other states of existence ?

Just one book there is, and to it we have already referred, which speaks with definiteness, with certainty about it. And the teacher of the continued existence of the spirit is the Lord Jesus, in whose keeping are all the departed (Rev. i. 18). All the dead, He has told us, live to God (Luke xx. 38). A solemn announcement this surely is for the finally impenitent. Men at times have rushed into death to get free from troubles here. They leave this world by their own unauthorised act, to find themselves in the custody of the Lord Jesus Christ ; for He has the keys of Hades and of death. One from heaven has come, and told us of the unclothed in the other world.

The body sleeps. Does the spirit ? Is it in a condition of unconsciousness in the separate state ? Is it reduced to that by absence from the body ? Here, too, God's word guides us. It is not an unconscious existence. And in proof of this both the Old and the New Testament can be cited. Isaiah and Ezekiel in the former, and Luke and Revelation (vi. 9, 10) in the latter can be adduced as witnesses. Isaiah describes the commotion caused by the descent of the King of Babylon into the under world, called in Hebrew *Sheol*. "Hell (*Sheol*) from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming ; it stirreth up the

dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth ; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak, and say unto thee, art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?" (xiv. 9, 10). So in Ezekiel xxxii. 21, on the entrance of the King of Egypt to the same region, "the strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell (*Sheol*) with them that help him," etc. There is no unconsciousness there. The son of Amoz, and the son of Buzi, the priest, would dispel any such delusion. The teaching of Old Testament prophets is against the idea of the slumber of the soul.

Ere proceeding further with New Testament revelation, we would call attention to the Old Testament teaching as regards the difference in the lot of the righteous and of the unrighteous in the unclothed state. All the dead are viewed as in that region called in Hebrew *Sheol*, that term, as is evident from those prophets just cited, taking in what may be called the whole under world ; for the distinction, made in the latter revelation between death and *Hades* (Rev. i. 18) is not dwelt upon in Isaiah nor in Ezekiel. See Isai. xiv. 11, 18 ; Ezek. xxxii. 22, 25, 26, where clearly the whole person is viewed as being in *Sheol*. So that Hebrew word is rendered at times in our English translation by the *grave* (Ps. xlix. 14), the *pit* (Job xvii. 16), and *hell* (Isai. xiv. 9, 15). This last term, be it understood, is used in places according to its Saxon derivation as a hidden place, from *Helan* to cover. By and by death and hell (or, *Hades*) will be both cast into the lake of fire, the place of final punishment for the devil, his angels, and the lost of the human race.

But whilst *Sheol* is such a comprehensive term referring at times to the body as well as to the soul, even in the older revelation have we intimations of the separation at death between the mortal and the immortal part of man. David writes in Ps. xvi. (10), "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*Sheol*) ; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Here the body is referred to in the latter clause as capable of turning to corruption, and the immortal part of a man is intended in the first clause.

This, Peter makes plain when quoting the verse in Acts ii. 31. Then, too, Solomon knew of the separation of the spirit from the body at death, as he wrote, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it " (Eccles. xii. 7).

Can the Old Testament tell us more on this subject? It can. It has told us, as the Lord has interpreted for us, the bearing of Exod. iii. 6, that all the dead live to God. It has witnessed to us, that those in the other world do not slumber in unconsciousness. It has taught us of the separation of soul and body at death. Now, further, it intimates the difference in state in that world between the righteous and the wicked. Of the former, Isaiah writes, "He shall enter into peace ; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness " (lvii. 2). As to the wicked, that same prophet in that same chapter declares "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked " (21). Is that true? Or was it simply the unsupported supposition of the prophet? He declares that thus God speaks concerning the wicked. Shall we brush it aside as language inapplicable to this more enlightened age? Awful indeed is the statement if the words of the prophet are true. Who will confirm them? The highest authority in this matter, even the Lord Jesus Christ confirms them, as He lifted the veil for a moment, to show what goes on in the other world (Luke xvi). Different had been the condition of the rich man and Lazarus whilst here. Different, too, is their condition there. For Lazarus is at rest, viewed as in Abraham's bosom. But the rich man was in torments. Both are seen in *Hades*. Perfect peace for Lazarus, unmitigated torment for the rich man. The words of Isaiah were indeed true. Very likely the rich man had been accorded a sumptuous funeral. As for Lazarus when dead who cared for him? What availed however a sumptuous funeral for the rich man who was in torments?

Would any say this was only a parable? The Lord does not call it one. It certainly was intended to teach something, and that something as real, awfully real. So the Lord just lifts the veil, that we may see something of the intermediate state, the

body in the grave, whilst the unclothed spirit was in torments. No peace for the wicked, declared Isaiah ; no peace for a lost soul, attests the Lord. Torment, immediate and unmitigated, and with no prospect of cessation is its condition, ere called to stand before the great white throne.

And here the curtain drops on such an one. We read no more in the Word of the lost whilst unclothed. A silence this is, awful and solemn. But is there for such no future? Such will be raised at the end of the millennium to stand before the great white throne to receive their final doom. A second chance? Ah no. Resurrection unto judgment is the next step in that history. And let it be remembered, that the lost soul speaks of its condition. "I am tormented in this flame," are the words of the rich man himself (Luke xvi. 24). Unconscious? Asleep? Non-existent? Are these men's dreams about the future? The rich man can tell a different tale. Memory, too, survives there. He thinks of his five brethren, and earnestly desires a message from that world to rouse them, "lest," as he said, "they also come into this place of torment." Two petitions he made. Both were rejected. A drop of water to cool his tongue he craved, but craved in vain. A visit of Lazarus to his father's house he suggested. But that also was refused. God provides in His revelation sufficient guidance for the day. Let all take heed to that, then torment will never be their portion. How earnest had the rich man become for the welfare of his brethren, and that earnestness betokened the greatness of his sufferings.

"In torments" (23). Who says that? The Lord says it, in whose custody both the rich man and Lazarus were. Who could better speak with authority on this subject than He who has the keys of Hades and of death (Rev. i. 18)? "This place of torment" (28), so spake the rich man. The sufferings exist, that is plain. Who can avoid them? All the wealth of that man did not keep him from them. Dying he left all wealth behind him. He had nothing wherewith to purchase immunity from them. Prayer, too, on his behalf was hopeless.

How can any one be saved from them? The Scriptures tell us

God's revelation is sufficient, but that must be hearkened to and obeyed, whilst the individual is on earth. Moses and the prophets, if hearkened to, would keep the man's brethren from his awful, and irremediable condition. God's revelation for our day will, if hearkened to, effect the same. And the Lord, who tells of that man's condition, has told us how to escape it. "He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). Can that give security? He speaks again, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them everlasting life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (John x. 27-30).

We have said that of the lost we hear no more, till Rev. xx. 11-15, an ominous silence all must admit. No change, no improvement in their condition is even hinted at. But what about the saved? Isaiah has told us, that it is rest for them. That chapter in Luke (xvi.) intimates for such the enjoyment of peaceful repose. And now, further, revelation adds more to our knowledge about them. And to the Lord are we indebted for the first notice of their present condition. He who spoke of the rich man's condition in *Hades*, tells us also about the unclothed saints, as addressing the penitent thief. He said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). Unclothed would that thief be when he had died, but in paradise would he find himself with Christ. From the Lord, then, we learn how to view that part of the other world where saints are found. Paradise the Lord called it. And He it is who has first so named it. What bliss does this suggest! And with Christ. What peaceful rest and happiness must that secure them! But *then* the Lord was about Himself to die, and as a man to enter the unclothed state. In that state He is no longer, for He is risen. Can the unclothed saints be with Him now? Scripture answers this question clearly, distinctly. Absent from the body, such are present with

the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8). Immediate is this blessing for them. "To depart," says the Apostle Paul, "and to be with Christ is far better" (Phil. i. 23). True indeed must that be. And now with such revelation the veil that hides from us the unseen world here drops. Of the present condition of the lost we have learnt. The present condition of the saint we also learn. In each case their condition continues unchanged, till they are called forth in resurrection.

We have seen (Luke xvi. 28) that memory survives the change to the unclothed state. Is there then, it may be asked, any consciousness of that which is passing on earth? On this, though we have no definite statement in the Word, we may, we think, gather some idea. The body is the link of the spirit with earth. When out of it, we believe, that link is immediately broken. And this, we think, receives confirmation from I. Sam. xxviii. 15. Samuel, in that passage, asks Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" At rest in *Sheol*, to speak in the language of the Old Testament, he knew not, it would seem, what was passing upon earth till Saul told him.

Now this fact suggests another question: Can unclothed saints intercede for us? Is invocation of saints a Christian doctrine? No word is there in Scripture we believe to support it. Would any quote Job v. 1, in the Authorised Version, in support of it? Job xv. 15 teaches us who are referred to, viz., angels, called "holy ones," see Revised Version in each place. And the Greek Septuagint translates the Hebrew in Job v. 1 by "holy angels." Invocation of saints was not a doctrine which it supported. Then, when it is remembered that the saints are still unclothed, Scripture gives no sanction to the thought that in that state they can intercede for others. By-and-by, when raised and on high, the elders will be seen with golden vials which are the prayers of saints still on earth. Till the first resurrection takes place, intercession of saints for any on earth has, we believe, no place.

And for Christians such a doctrine is negatived by Colos. ii. 18, 19. All true Christians are members of the Body of Christ, and, therefore, are in the closest association with Him who is the

Head, "from which all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Putting any creature as an intermediary between the Lord Jesus and us, would be for us the not holding the Head, and a forgetfulness that we are members of the Body of Christ, through whom by one Spirit all such have access to the Father (Ephes. ii. 18).

C. E. S.

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY; OR, HOW TO BE USEFUL IN GOD'S ASSEMBLY.

(1 Cor. xiii)

This chapter occupies a peculiar place. It is really an interruption in the argument of the Apostle. If chaps. xii.; xiv. are a witness to the strength of mind, to the powerful intellect of the mighty apostle of the Gentiles, this chapter shews no less that his heart is as big as his brain. Verbal inspiration and the character of the writer are quite in keeping. The scholarly mind of Paul, the living heart of John, and the practical character of James are each reflected in their distinctive books, and yet all in fullest accord with the fact, that this, and the other Scriptures, are verbally inspired. We refer, of course, to the original books and Epistles.

In the pre-eminently Church-section of the Epistle (xi.-xiv.), we see the Apostle throwing himself into the scene of turmoil and disorder which then reigned amongst the saints in the commercial capital of the Roman province of Achaia. He boldly, yet wisely grapples with the state of things. He rebukes, argues, and corrects. But evil in no wise soured the temper or hardened the heart of the Apostle. His affections were moved. His heart throbbed with an overmastering and all powerful love. That love must have an outlet, and so it pours itself out in this "poem" — every line and word of which is but an echo of the heart of the Living God — for *Divine* love is its grand theme. Why is this

chapter so rarely read in public? Why so seldom studied and prayed over in private? Is it because it convicts us of our sad lack of that holy and self-denying love of which the chapter treats, and thus revealing even to ourselves our moral littleness? In the exercise of practical Christianity, of which love is its kernel and strength, we are far behind the Apostle. In this chapter we have unfolded in a series of masterly and energetic sentences, the activity of the Divine nature which is love. If the Apostle in gift, in power, and in intellectual ability towers over the mass of fellow-disciples in all ages, we *may*, at any rate, equal him in largeness of heart, in broadness of sympathy, and in fulness of divine affection. The "more excellent way" may be trod by the weakest and the most illiterate of God's people. But everlasting life must be the known and enjoyed portion of the soul ere the "walk in love" can be entered upon. The life *within* must precede the walk *without*. The saved alone can put on the character of God. Men in their natural state as sinners, can no more exhibit the traits of divine love than they can create worlds.

The last verse of the previous chapter reads—"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." The "best gifts" are those specially designed for the spiritual growth and edification of God's saints. Gifts of power, as tongues, healings, &c., are morally inferior to those which directly aimed to promote the blessing of God's people. The gifts of power were of a temporary character, and meant to carry intellectual conviction to unbelievers of the truth of Christianity (1 Cor. xiv. 22); whereas, those of a permanent character, were meant to act upon the soul and conscience of believers, and to build up the saints in the ways of God.

We but affirm the truth of the chapter, when we insist upon the superiority of love. Look at that man of distinguished gift, of commanding influence in the Church! His abilities are unrivalled, his scholarship is unquestionable, his eloquence is the theme of the press and the talk of the multitude, and yet, there is a something *far* more excellent than all these and more

combined—a path of service and usefulness *you* may tread, and which outshines the most brilliant combination of gift ever witnessed. To display the character of God in His Assembly and to His saints, is indeed a distinguished honour, and one, moreover, within the reach of the feeblest, of the meanest, and of the least instructed of saints. The youngest believer walking in love may be more useful than the most gifted. It is but the few who are fitted for public service. To preach in the world, and to teach in the Church, are gifts to be coveted. But here is a more excellent way—the way of love. O what possibilities lie before each child of God! Here is a path not requiring gift or intelligence, or intellectual power. It is the walk of love, it is the display of the character of God. The traits of divine love here dilated on, in a way worthy of the subject, constitute in their combined exercise the **MOST USEFUL** and, without doubt, the **MOST NEEDFUL** service in the Church of God. If the truth of this chapter had been livingly expounded and expressed in the Corinthian Assembly, the corrective and regulative portions of the Epistle would never have been penned. No need of them. The applicability of love, and that under all circumstances, on all occasions, and at all times, cannot be too strongly pressed—only be it borne in mind that divine love is holy in its character. It makes no compromise with evil, and it is very jealous. Its qualities are both passive and active. Here the former predominate.

We enter, therefore, God's Assembly when gathered as such to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xviii. 20), and according to His Word, through the gateway of divine love. We take our place amongst God's assembled people (1 Cor. xiv.), but we do so breathing the holy atmosphere of love (xiii.)—steeped in it, so to speak.

The first three verses assert the superiority of love over the most brilliant gift, profound knowledge, mighty faith, unbounded generosity, and devotedness even to death. All and more are worthless without love. O how far-reaching! How condemnatory of the distinguished theologian, of the learned scientist, of the public benefactor, and even of the martyr who

would go to the stake rather than deny his principles. Without love, "*I am nothing.*" The motive power is divine love. The characteristic principles of all Christian life and service are faith, hope, and love, but the highest and eternally enduring of these is love. The three are needed on earth, but love alone of these reigns in Heaven—its native home and sphere of enjoyment. Where are we as to this? The exercise of divine love would check many an evil in its incipient stage, might arrest many in the first step of a back-sliding career, and cover over a mass of practical inconsistency common to all. What a startling statement! You may have the eloquence of the impassioned orator, or the tongue of an angel, you may be able to sway thousands to alternate tears and smiles, but without love you are but a piece of sounding brass—a noise, that is all. You may have prophecy at your finger ends, your knowledge universal in its range and profound in its depth; the mysteries of creation and revelation lie open to your mental gaze, but without love all, all are utterly profitless. The monuments of your faith in stone and brick may cover many acres of ground, and orphan and widow bless your honoured name, but without love it profits *you* nothing. Your benevolence may profit the widow and orphan, but it in itself profits you nothing spiritually. Your generosity may exceed anything ever known, and your public and private benefactions be the marvel of the age, but without love you are reduced to a cipher. Ah, there is a great gulph between God's estimate of things and man's. O how searching is *this* word of God! How overturning of human judgment!

Then from verse 4 till 7, love's characteristics are pointed out which are mainly of a passive kind. It is here we are tested. The energy of faith in a Moses and Elijah commands the admiration of men, but the quiet character of love in the daily life of the humblest Christian is the morally grander sight of the two. Love and faith are sisters, and should never be separated, but love is the elder of the two.

"Love suffereth long and is kind." It can bear a great deal, it can weather many a storm and stand many a strain. It is

often sorely tried, and taxed even to its utmost. Is this first and fundamental character of love expressed in your life and mine? Are we ready to take offence? Quick to resent a supposed or even a real wrong done to us? It needs two to make a quarrel. Then love is kind. It does not harbour a vindictive feeling, but shows kindness instead of requiting evil for evil.

“Love envieth not: love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” The temporal or spiritual prosperity of others is not a matter of envy, but rather of rejoicing. The usefulness, gift, or place of another excites no feeling of malice, but rather one of joy. Love delights in the advancement of others, and is neither blind to the qualities nor slow to express approbation of them in others. “Love vaunteth not itself,” it does not force itself on the attention of others. It is quiet and unobtrusive, not arrogant and self-assertive. “Is not puffed up,” it does not set itself up as an object. It is a quiet and hidden power in the soul. It is the nature of God in the Christian. It does not desire publicity (Mark i. 35-38). Love is satisfied within itself, for God Himself in whom we rejoice is its strength and object.

“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own.” Love is not rude nor uncourteous. Boorishness in a Christian is unpardonable. There is no excuse for rude behaviour. We have known men and women in the lowest ranks of life saved, and exhibiting in their life the grace and courteousness of Christianity. Natural amiability and divine love are often confounded, but they are wide apart as the poles. Love “doth not behave itself unseemly,” is a statement which many of us would do well to translate into every day life, and exhibit in our intercourse in the home circle, in the Church, and in the world. “Seeketh not her own.” Selfishness characterises no inconsiderable class of Christians. Their are those who constantly bewail the supposed absence of love in others—a class of persons who want to be loved, and look for it, and grumble because it is not lavished upon them. But where in the Divine Word are we told to look for love? We are to give it. The

The More Excellent Way.

301

more we give the richer the return. The way to *get* love is to commence at once and give it. Expecting love instead of giving it is utter selfishness. Our path is exemplified for us: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). May the mantle of the Master fall on us each one!

Love "is not easily provoked, thinketh (rather *reckoneth*) no evil." We ought to be indignant at evil, and feel it deeply, for all sin is an insult to the nature of God, but the feeling of anger, right enough in itself, must not be prolonged (Eph. iv. 26). Love may be provoked, but not to hasty words or deeds. Love is not easily (or quickly) provoked, especially where self or personal reputation is concerned. The practical blotting out of self, and love of, and service to others, make up a life beautiful to witness; such a life can be lived in this world. "Love *reckoneth* no evil." It does not put the worst construction upon an act or word. We are naturally ready to impute evil on the slightest ground, or on mere suspicion—more ready to reckon evil than good. Then if an unkind or even unrighteous act has been done to us, why not like our adorable Master, commit ourselves and our cause to Him who judgeth righteously, and who will, in His own way and time amply vindicate? (1 Peter ii. 23).

Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth *with* the truth" (see margin verse 6). Divine love is here witnessed in operation both negatively and positively. It does not find pleasure in evil—the doer of which may be even a personal enemy—but rather mourns over it. It manifests true nobility of character, when one can not only frankly forgive a personal wrong, but feel *with God* regarding it—for all sin is an insult to God. It is good when we can, through grace, look at evil not as it affects *us*, but as it affects *Him*. But while love cannot rejoice in evil—which would be to deny its true character—it does rejoice "with the truth." The truth is being actively spread abroad, and love rejoices in its wide dissemination. In every Christian denomination certain truths are held; in no body of Christians on earth is the whole truth of God embodied. The Church at

large is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). Love, therefore, delights to look around on every side, and abroad to the utmost limits of Christendom, and thank God for every truth held, and every witness to it, supposing, "he followeth not with us." The methods employed, and the agents used, may not be such as in faithfulness to God's Word, we can personally or collectively identify ourselves with, but we heartily and unfeignedly rejoice in the wide circulation of the truth—love goes with the truth. O how this lifts us out of mere ecclesiasticism, out of our littleness, giving us a divine breadth of thought, which, may we increasingly cultivate.

"Beareth (or *covereth*, see margin) all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." The greater part of our Church-troubles spring from the neglect of this very wholesome and much needed quality of love—a love which covers and not exposes every little inconsistency in the life of others. We are no more perfect than they. Love should cover, not expose. Love "believeth all things." Unless there is the clearest evidence to the contrary, believe the very best. Appearances may look bad; the case may be a suspicious one, but unless evil is unmistakeably evident, put the best possible construction on the word or act. A suspicious nature is prone to find fault, and often finds itself judging wrongly. Were this quality of divine love in constant exercise, it would preserve from many a mistaken thought of persons, from many an unrighteous judgment of certain actions, and would in itself prove a preservative in our intercourse with fellow-believers. It "hopeth all things." Spite of abounding iniquity it hopes for God's intervention. Love, too, instead of being occupied with evil so as to be depressed and weakened in the inward springs and sources of action, looks on cheerfully to the bright future. Love "hopeth all things." It counts upon things turning out for the best, as undoubtedly they shall under the governing hand of God. He has not abandoned the world to the devil, much less the Church. The wolf (Satan) may rage and ravage amongst God's people (John x. 12). But God has determined beforehand the limit of his power. He is not allowed to devour,

but to scatter the sheep, yet hope looks forward rejoicingly to the day when Christ the Shepherd shall gather His sheep and lambs from the earth, and seas, and graves, from mountain and valley. Happy re-union! Blessed coming meeting! (1 Thess. iv. 17). We question if the Lord's personal return were a settled question of practical hope in our souls, and a deeply enjoyed one, too, had Satan not been permitted to break up friendships, destroy Church-fellowships, and scatter and divide loved saints and brethren. Satan's cruel work shall not simply be undone, but positively be turned to account for the deeper and richer blessing of the saints of God. Hope expects this and counts upon it. But now we come to the last named quality of love—the fifteenth in the list: "endureth all things." The gardens of Cæsar, the dungeons and horrors of the Inquisition, the fires of Smithfield, and every imaginable cruelty which could suggest itself to a depraved nature are witnesses to the endurance of love. It has its source in God Himself; it derives its strength from Him, and hence endures, and even triumphs where the strength of nature breaks down. "The greatest thing in the world" is undoubtedly divine love. It is the greatest moral power in existence.

"Love never faileth: but whether prophecies, they shall fail; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall vanish away" (verse 8). Love can never grow old, can never be out of place, is ever in season. In public and private intercourse it is indispensable. On all occasions, in all meetings, and at all times, the exercise of divine love is needful. "Love never faileth." Its perpetuity is assured. There cannot be a moment nor a circumstance in life in which love can be dispensed with. It is the spring of devotedness, the motive for service, and the life-breath of the Church. Prophecies shall *fail*; tongues shall *cease*. The former refer to the close of the Church's sojourn on earth; the latter intimate the cessation of these and other signs of power after they had served their purpose. Knowledge — which in our time-condition is necessarily defective, limited, and in every respect partial — "shall vanish away" — but love endures for ever. Everything

else is as a passing dream. Truth is learnt slowly, laboriously, and but in part. The truth itself has been fully and absolutely revealed. In this there is not, nor can be development, but in the process of learning it there are measures and degrees of attainment; but at the best it is in "part," not the whole (verse 9). The revelation of the truth is perfect, our apprehension of it is defective.

The future and the present state is then contrasted in character and continuance. The future is a perfect condition, the present necessarily an imperfect one. When the glory-state has come, when physically (Phil. iii. 21) and morally (1 John iii. 2) we bear the image of Christ, then the present condition, limited and imperfect shall cease, but love shall never die (verse 10). Love is as old as the life of God and as enduring as God Himself. In God the love is causeless; in us it needs its object which is God Himself; He, too, is its strength.

Then the Apostle caustically remarks on the infantile condition of the Assembly at Corinth, and enforces his argument with an illustration applied to himself, so that these vain-glorious saints might the more readily judge their childish ways, put them away and think and act as men, *i.e.*, full Christian growth. Tongues and sign-gifts of power (1 Cor. xiv. 22) were matters of display and pride. They used God's gifts, not for profit, but to minister to their conceits. As men, as Christians of full growth, they should have valued more highly all that tended to their spiritual edification, while, of course, not despising—far otherwise—all and every sign of power (verse 11).

"But *now* we see through a glass darkly; but *then* face to face" (verse 12). 'The polished brass mirrors then in use only gave a shadowy outline of the figure; such is the present. The scene through which we pass is one of shade and shadow. Imperfection is stamped upon it. "But then face to face." *Now* the scarcely perceptible lines and lineaments are *then* filled up. "Face to face" is the blessed contrast to the dim reflection of the mirror. *Now* it is the twilight, *then* the sunshine, *Now* it is the rising cloud, *then* the cloudless sky. *Here* the temple is raised, *there* it is completed. The image of Christ and the

earnest of the future are ours now, but how feebly that image is reflected, and how poorly is the glory apprehended. What a contrast—"Face to face;" all perfect. There the flower fades not, nor does the gold grow dim. The light shall never go down. There shall be no night. "Now I know in part." The rich lore of scientific and revealed treasures are only known in part. Of the five hundred and eighty-seven European languages, in which the mind of the twentieth century is expressed, how limited the accumulated stores of knowledge—not even one branch of science brought to perfection. "I," said the colossal mind of Paul, "I know in part." But the future is confidently anticipated, a future not characterised by limitations and measures as now. "Then shall I *know*"—not learn. Intellect and the capacity to apprehend shall be fully developed, and the Spirit of God acting unhinderedly, the almost infinite sources of knowledge shall be open to us. Our perfected Christian manhood shall embrace within its range the Works of God, the Ways of God, and the truths and principles of Creation and of Revelation. We shall "know" then, as perfectly as we are "known" now (verse 12).

"And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (verse 13). Thus we have named the three great cardinal subjective truths of Christianity—the inward powers of life and energy, and savour, too, of Christian progress and service (1 Thess. i. 3). Without them Christianity is robbed of its moral power and fragrance. Faith substantiates the present and future, and makes all real to the soul (Heb. xi. 1). Hope lives in the yet unseen, and triumphs in the sure accomplishment of all that God has promised (Rom. viii. 24, 25). But love is the display of God's nature in the midst of evil (1 John iv. 7), hence the greatest of these life-motives is love. If the practical springs of Christianity in the soul are absent, the man is powerless; communion with God is gone. What a loss!—an irreparable one! "Now abideth faith, hope, love." All combined are needful, if our Christian life is to be sustained. But the two former are not required in Heaven. Their exercise

is bounded by death or the Coming. But love in Heaven exists and reigns in its native sphere.

This then is the more excellent way—the way of love. Its practical display in the Assembly is a service to which all may addict themselves. Here is a path of service which the humblest may tread; an elevated path surely, because it is the reflection of God's own nature. It is the shining forth of God in His character through His saints. To our younger brethren especially, would we commend the devout study of this chapter, and to all its practical exemplification in every day life. The exercise of divine love as here portrayed would place the most illiterate a head and shoulders morally higher than the most learned and gifted. God's nature displayed in God's Assembly would be a power which would transform, and mould, and polish many a rough stone. The greater part of our trouble in Assemblies, here and there, is owing to the absence of this essential element in individual and Church-life. May God grant that each may strive to walk in love's "more excellent way," and so be abundantly useful in God's Assembly.

BECAUSE I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO.

(John xiv. 19).

In a few words I may remind you of the circumstances in which these words of the Lord Jesus were spoken. It was at the Holy Supper Table, just before His "Exodus" from this world. The shadows that had fallen over all His life were becoming darker, "the sorrowful way" was about to be trodden, and the end was at hand. The hatred of the priestly party had deepened into open and active hostility, one of His own disciples was playing into their hands and had already left the Table to betray Him; the crowd that less than a week before had acclaimed Him with "Hosannas!" would soon be clamouring for His life, and even those whom He had called to Himself and who truly loved Him, would leave Him alone, going every man to his own way. We could not wonder if in such circumstances

Because I Live, Ye Shall Live Also.

307

His words had had some note of depression, or even of despair. For He knew the way He was to take, the rejection, the mockery and more, the forsaking of God. But neither depression, despair, nor repining are to be found in any word He spoke. What impresses one so profoundly and constitutes such overwhelming evidence for the truth of the narrative, is the calm air and manner and words of the Lord when face to face with the great betrayal. Yet it was not the temper of a Stoic, of one who cultivates an unnatural repression of all human emotion; nor was it contempt of pain and suffering; nor the fierce exultation that turns even plain men into heroes when they are face to face with conflict and peril. "Nothing that is human is alien from me," was the saying of a Pagan author, a saying that finds in Christ its truest fulfilment; for forsaking and pain touched Him in heart and body in deeper measure than they have ever touched any others.

But, as I have said, all through His words at that last Supper there ran a note of calm and peaceful joy, and face to face with death, He spoke of Himself as ever living. "Because I live ye shall live also." He looked beyond the Cross and the Grave, not only to Resurrection but to Glory, and in a sense anticipated His words to John in Patmos:—"I am He that liveth and became dead, and behold I am alive for evermore."

In a word, though His death was before Him, so also was His resurrection, for that, as well as His dying, lay in the will and purpose of His Father. All along, when speaking of betrayal and death, He spake also of His rising again, though the slow hearts of His disciples wondered what this saying should mean.

To-day, in outward show at least, Christendom celebrates the rising from the dead of the Lord Jesus. And though we are by no means bound by days and seasons, by feasts and festivals of the Ecclesiastical year, we may be thankful that as each year rolls on, emphasis is placed upon this glorious truth that Christ is risen and lives. We speak much and rightly of "the finished work" of Christ, meaning that which He wrought upon the Cross, but even that work would be of no avail if Jesus

were "now sleeping in a lone Syrian grave," as a modern man of letters has put it. He died,—about that there is no dispute—He either rose or He did not rise, there is no other alternative. And the Apostle Paul does not hesitate to stake Christianity and all its blessings upon the truth of the Resurrection: "if Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins."

I have no thought of entering upon a discussion of the evidence for the Resurrection. This is abundant enough to satisfy any but those who have a wish not to believe, though very few people, perhaps, realise how strong those evidences are.

Nor do I desire to look at what may be called the theological aspects of the Resurrection. I state some of them in a few words, and pass on. For example, St. Paul tells us that Jesus the Son of David was demonstrated to be also the Son of God by His resurrection. He tells us in a passage I have already referred to, that if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, those who have fallen asleep are perished, and we are of all men most miserable. He told the scornful Greeks of Athens, that the resurrection was the proof and pledge of judgment to come, when God would judge men by a Man, Jesus. In speaking of its bearing upon ourselves, he teaches that we have died to sin, but have been raised again with Christ that we may live unto God in newness of life. The resurrection is the proof of the acceptance of Christ's work, and of our acceptance in Him, for He was raised again on account of our justification.

These and other truths that spring from the resurrection have abundant testimony borne them in the Scriptures, and are a source of joy and of power to the believer. And may I say in passing, that there would be infinitely less Ritualism and Sacerdotalism among Christians if the resurrection were more clearly apprehended, for these are based upon the idea of an unfinished work. They set before the soul a Crucifix with the sufferer still upon it; Scripture points us to a vacant Cross and an empty grave.

What I desire briefly to speak of is the Resurrection from the standpoint of the Lord's words:—"Because I live, ye shall live

Because I Live, Ye Shall Live Also.

309

also." We are not all called upon to stand up in defence of the Gospel, and have not all examined the grounds of our belief in the Resurrection; we cannot all be even amateur theologians, but we all have our lives to live, and what I want each reader to ask himself is,—how does the fact that Christ is risen and now lives affect my life day by day?

If I have believed in Christ, and have put myself into His hands with a true surrender, I have received the gift of a divine life in Christ. The word of Christ still holds true,—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life.” No other condition is attached, though I need not say that “simple faith” in Christ (as it is called) is no light thing. It means our acceptance of and surrender to Him, it involves, as the late Canon Liddon has pointed out, the perception of our understanding, the assent of our will, the love of our heart. But this life, divine in its character, may exist in us, stunted and dwarfed, just as the natural life in many of us seems but one removed from death. “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,” in full measure with all its true joy and emotions, all its fruitful activities of love and service. And this can only be through our hold upon the Risen Christ, in the Spirit’s power, which is more than the mere looking back upon the historical Jesus, who, eighteen hundred years ago, was “nailed for our advantage to the bitter Cross.” He is the same, the Jesus Who took the little ones in His arms, Who fed the hungry, Who cleansed the leper and raised the dead. The same, but no longer subject to the limitations of His earthly life, but so living that you and I, with our needs, our troubles, our sins, so different and yet so alike at the heart of them, may come into touch with Him and be touched by Him.

I want our souls to appropriate the joy not only of the “dying love” of Christ, as we speak, but of His *living* love—to know not only that He died for me, but that He lives for me and in me, “my life as well as my law,” as a learned and devout author writes, “my secret of energy, my power to do His will.

He lives in me, He carries out His glorious life, in true measure, through me."

"But," it may be said, "is there not more than a touch of mysticism in this? Is it not sentiment of the 'vaguely devotional' kind?" It is not mysticism, unless by that be merely meant that it is a spiritual truth that needs spiritual discernment for its comprehension. It is intelligible to faith, that "sixth sense" (as Dr. John Watson has called it) that discerns, weighs and trusts "the evidence of things not seen." It is not vague, any more than are the great laws of nature, gravitation, cohesion and the like, for though these are enrolled on no statute-book they are demonstrated in action day by day. That mysterious, indefinable, elusive thing we call life is known only by its manifestations, its actions. The recurring miracle of Spring is upon us. Out of the silence and deadness of Winter there have come the singing of birds, and signs of life in myriad forms in tree and flower. The almond (the "Hastener," as the poetic Hebrew called it, as being the first to wake from the sleep of winter), has burst into blossom, the elms flush red in the sunlight; the tender green buds are putting aside their little brown coats, and on every hand the white and yellow flowers of Spring may be seen. One would smile at the suggestion that these things come without a cause and in obedience to no law. Behind them all lies silent, secret life. And just as truly, behind all the myriad forms of Christian activity, Christian graces, and Christian suffering, there lies the law and power of its existence, the present, living Christ. What explains the missionary activity of the Church? What sent Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, along the South of Europe, evangelising the Gentiles? What sent William Burns to China, in more recent days? John Williams, missionary and martyr, to the South Sea? James Hannington, missionary and martyr, to Uganda? But time would fail to tell of the countless hosts that have loved and laboured and suffered for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, not only in "the regions beyond," but in pestilential slum and alley in our own great cities and towns. Moral miracles have been wrought, in making the timid and

shrinking to be brave for Christ, in turning the impure to holiness of life, in making the proud humble, the arrogant meek, and in bracing up to dignity and manliness the mean spirit. These things do not causeless come. Nor is the explanation to be found merely in the echo of teaching uttered centuries ago, nor in the example of an obscure Life lived in an obscure Roman province, a Life that ended upon a Cross, and (if the Resurrection be a myth) in failure. That Resurrection and the present glorified Life are, in fact, the sufficient and the *only* explanation of the things whereof we speak—the transformed and sanctified lives of individuals and the existence and the manifold activities of the Church at large. The brightest, sanest, and holiest of Christians agree in ascribing all that is best in them and in their work to the present action upon their hearts and lives of the Risen and exalted Christ.

But very few of us are called to live great lives. "The trivial round, the common task," is a phrase that sums up our years. We are not called upon to do great things, nor even to endure great temptations. Many of us find our lives one constant conflict with little things, the enforced companionships, say in business, of those with whom we have mentally and spiritually very little in common,—home life that is a perpetual worry, with its never-ending watchfulness to "make both ends meet;" or it is the lot of some never to feel really well. Are these burdens that we must bear alone? Nay, "because I live, ye shall live also," and the life that Christ gives and lives in us can be abundant in all gracious peace and joy in the frailest of bodies and the humblest of circumstances. A legal maxim says that the law takes no account of very little things: that is not God's method in His laws of nature or of grace. It is the same life that works in the trunk of some giant tree as in the tender bud on its extremest branch; the same law of gravitation that stretches its unseen hands across the vast spaces of our universe and controls the falling of a pin. I have seen God's rainbow of covenant and promise, not only on the broad heaven, but in the spray thrown from the walls of a grimy city hall, as it was being washed down with a fire hose. And our lives, insignificant

in our place in God's catholic Church as some unseen bud in a huge elm, are vivified, enriched, and empowered by the life that throbs not only in its greatest members, but in Christ Himself; our circumstances, cloudy, grey and dull as they seem to be, may be beautified by graces that, rainbow like, depend upon another world, where Christ is. Using the expression reverently, we may say that Christ in all His love and all His power is available for our use, in the circumstances, trivial or otherwise, that make up our life.

One other word. This truth may well have a steady, sobering, even a humbling influence upon our minds. For in keeping with the divine economy, the divine sparingness, in the use of means proportioned to a desired end, no gift of grace or power is bestowed as a religious luxury, to be used or left alone as we please. "Because I live, ye shall live also," has its converse in "Without Me ye can do nothing." And Easter-time, with its message of life and hope, its tidings of victory over death, brings to us a reminder of our need and casts us upon Christ. We *cannot* do without Him. But He lives for us, with us and in us, and in the knowledge and enjoyment of this, life with its trials and death with its mysteries, may be faced bravely, hopefully, trustfully.

W. J.

EARTH'S COMING JUBILEE.

This planet of ours is certainly the most wonderful in the sisterhood of worlds. The centre of the solar system is the sun. Ancient astronomical science regarded the earth as the centre with the sun, moon, and stars revolving around it. The immobility of the earth, its central position, and the daily revolution of the heavenly bodies around it in circular orbits, were considered unquestionable facts. Christianity with its facts, principles, and truth is a fixed system in which there is not, and necessarily cannot admit of development. Science is simply the discovery of forces and principles which exist, and which are co-eval with Creation itself, and then making an

orderly arrangement of these facts and principles. But it must ever be borne in mind that the secrets of Nature were there before their discovery. God is the Creator and Designer, while the creature is but the discoverer. There are vast fields of enquiry yet unexplored in all departments of Nature—physical and moral.

The earth is not the centre of the solar system, nor is man the object of God's vast system in which material creation, grace, and glory form one magnificent whole. Christ is God's object and we revolve around Him, and whatever importance we have, whether as created or saved, it is derived from Him—what would the earth be without the sun? What would we be without Christ? The former would be a huge waste, a physical wreck; the latter a moral ruin.

We gather that the millions of stars discovered by telescope and photography, and the millions not yet brought within human observation, are inhabited. The moon is an exception; without an atmosphere, without air and water, and absolutely without sound and without sign of life, apparently a physically ruined world and, of course, the conditions are such that no life known to us could exist on its surface. But on the other hand, Mars, our nearest neighbour is surely a peopled world? From its north pole downwards, the channels dug are so vast, and show such evident design in their construction, that we are almost irresistibly led to the conclusion that Mars is inhabited by a race of beings, strong, skilful, and exceedingly powerful. The earth, as we know, stands between Venus and Mars. These two are our nearest neighbours. Venus is nearer the sun than we are, while Mars is further off. The nearest planet that revolves round the sun is Mercury—"the messenger of the gods," so termed by the Ancients. Its face is ever turned towards the sun. A lesson surely for us! Then Venus—a little smaller than our earth—is both "the morning star," and "the star of the evening." But little is known of Venus because of its brilliancy, hence no satisfactory telescopic-examination is possible. As to the vexed question, Are the stars inhabited? We shall know with certainty when with the Lord, and not the least of Heaven's

interesting occupations will be to know (not learn 1 Cor. xiii. 12) by personal visits to these worlds all about them and about their inhabitants. For that we wait. "They shall walk with me in white" (Rev. iii. 4).

But passing from the consideration of the planetary system—the most elevated of sciences—notice one fact. There are fixed stars at such an immense distance from us, that it is computed hundreds of years would be required for a ray of light from them to reach us. The sun is about 95 million miles distant from our planet, and it takes eight minutes for a ray of light to travel that inconceivable distance. One gets staggered at the vastness of these things ; such distances baffle the mind of man to form anything like an adequate conception of. But beyond the almost infinite distances of the fixed, and other stars, we have a sight. The whole of the heavenly bodies are beneath the throne of Jehovah, at whose right hand sits JESUS—the purger of our sins—His descent from God's right hand to the air (1 Thess. iv. 17) shall occupy not eight minutes, but in the time comprised in "the twinkling of an eye," including, too, our gathering to Him.

But we ask—What makes our world a subject of such thrilling interest? Why should it in the solar system occupy such a unique and magnificent place, and centre of interest? We are apt to forget this. We forget that God the Creator has singled out this world of ours, has sanctified it, separating it from its millions of sisters—larger and grander far than our earth. Why is this? It is not because of its place in the heavens, not because of its size, not because of its physical configuration, not because of its brilliancy, nor because of its relation to the sun—the centre of the solar system. Let us gather up and group some of the reasons why God has so graciously thought of this our planet, and as we do, may we worship and adore.

God is the Architect and Creator of the vast terrestrial and vaster celestial systems. Of the latter no details are given, but this we do know that Christ the Son created all things, all things, all seen and unseen, thus a brilliant witness to His power and wisdom, and all were created as a witness to His

glory. But particulars are given of the creation of this planet. God Himself planted a garden in it. Here in the midst of its bloom, and beauty, and fruit God placed the man, and then in the cool of the day came down and walked, holding intercourse with His creature, the terrestrial lord of the scene. In this earth, too, the patriarchs walked and meditated. Here stupendous acts of divine power have been wrought. Here God has bared His arm in judgment in Egypt and at the Red Sea. Here He prepared a morning meal for His beloved people for 40 years. Here the torrent of Jordan was arrested till the Ark went down, and the people passed over. Here the illustrious monarchs of Israel, as David and Solomon, reigned. Here the Hebrew harp was swept to the glories of the coming day. Here the bards of Judah sang their joyous notes, and celebrated in anthem—grand and strong—the grandeurs of Messiah's reign. But beyond all this, *here* the Son of God was born. Bethlehem received Him, Jerusalem crucified Him. Here He lived, walked, talked, loved, wept, and bled. His cross and tomb are with us. The adoring gaze of angels rested here ; and they have occupations and services toward the heirs of salvation, which no other world can claim. This planet has an intensely thrilling story. This glorious orb has a Saviour, has a Cross, and has a Bible, and no other has.

But what is the present condition of the world? Has it stood in its pristine beauty? No. It has been dragged down to ruin. It is shorn of its original beauty; its glory is dimmed; its excellency has been cast down. Its ruin—physical and moral—has been brought about, not by its own will, but by the will of its lord and head (Rom. viii. 20). It groans in pain; sob, tear, and sigh tell their own tale. There is agony everywhere; in the heights and depths there is one universal groan. O what a sight for Heaven! We hear the wail of the wounded and dying on the battlefield. The muffled cry of the tortured victim in the underground dungeons of the cursed Inquisition enters the ears of the Lord of Hosts! He, too, heard and took note of the hellish proceedings in the gardens of Nero, as on either side of the beautiful walks and chariot

drives, the Christians, smeared over with oil, were set up as burning torches, and thus served as objects of brutal delight to the Emperor and his nobles. What a seething mass of wretchedness! This planet lies bleeding at every pore; its heart is broken. The very animals share in the universal wail, expressing themselves in the minor key. But the story is going to be reversed. Christ is about to hush the wail and groan, and dry the tears of men. Earth shall thrill with a new joy exceeding that on the day of her birth, when she took her place in the sisterhood of worlds. The consecrating footstep of Jesus, and His sceptre laid on the scene of sin and sorrow shall create a great calm for a 1000 years. Earth's jubilee is at hand.

Two great associated facts characterise the coming era of blessing: the Lord's personal reign and the confinement of Satan in the Abyss for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 1-6). What a day! The throne of the Lord in the heavens over the earth in splendour and greatness surpassing anything ever before seen or heard of. Nations and kings shall bring to it their wealth and glory (verses 24, 26). A grand time, surely, when Israel and the earth shall rest at length from their long, long sorrow of many centuries under the heavenly overspreading canopy of light (Isa. iv. 5, 6). Around the throne above, the aristocracy of heaven—the redeemed—with cherubim, seraphim, and angel are gathered and "there is no night there," no bursting heart; the street of gold, the jasper wall, the gates of pearl, a high and everlasting noon, no artificial light as the candle, no borrowed light as the moon, no supreme light as the sun, for God and the Lamb are the light thereof. We shall take our part in that unsullied scene. The throne on earth shall be established in righteousness and characterised by grace and power, for the reign on earth shall be priestly and royal in happy combination (Zech. vi. 13). The throne and temple set up in connection with a beautified and restored Jerusalem (Isa. lx.) will attract the nations (Jer. iii. 17). The vice-gerent of the King of kings, a lineal descendant of the Royal David, will sit on the actual throne and enter the actual temple then firmly set up on earth

(Ezek. xlv; xlv). The nations shall yearly gather to Jerusalem (Zech. xiv). Wonderful times these, when the Lord Himself shall, with *all* His heavenly saints—an innumerable host—and with *all* His angels—countless as the sand on the sea-shore—tread once more the Mount of Olives—the last spot of earth touched by His blessed feet. Then war shall cease, for the Prince of Peace has come, and the weapons of war are broken (Hosea ii. 18), or burned (Ezek. xxxix. 9); or adapted for agricultural purposes (Micah iv. 3). Happy times when the long continued feuds of the east shall be buried, and the kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, and Israel shall take rank and precedence in the millennial earth (Isa. xix. 24, 25). An enlarged Palestine of 300,000 square miles, stretching from the Nile on the west to the Euphrates on the east, and up towards Damascus (Gen. xv. 18), with the tribes of Israel arranged in straight parallel bands across the face of the country (Ezek. xlviii), and all the people righteous and their children's children as well (Isa. lix. 20, 21) and the land held in perpetuity (Ezek. xxxvii. 24-27)—intimate a grand and certain prospect for saved and happy Israel. Then the earth at large shall yield its increase (Ps. lxxvii. 6). “All the earth shall worship Thee and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing unto Thy Name; Selah” (Ps. lxvi. 4). The bare and rugged mountains shall be crowned with rich and luxuriant vegetation (Ps. lxxii. 16). So abundant the fruit and harvests of millennial days that the ploughman shall tread close on the heels of the reaper (Amos ix. 13).

The expulsion of Satan from the heavens (Rev. xii.) is followed three years and a half after by his deportation to the bottomless pit, or abyss (xx. 1-3); a thousand years afterwards he is finally consigned to his eternal abode—the lake of fire (verse 10). A millennium with no Satan to tempt, and the Man of Calvary, publicly and personally reigning, with the heavens and the earth in closest fellowship and touch (Hosea ii. 21, 22; Rev. xxi.), is a magnificent prospect, and one as sure as it is grand. But the story of the earth is not yet told. “And I,” said the Seer of Patmos, “saw a new heaven and a new earth, for

the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1). The present earth, the scene and theatre of divine and human display, has served its purpose. It has witnessed the Cross and the Glory of Christ. Now for eternity it is re-made suitable for eternal conditions. There is no withered leaf, no hurricane to sweep across its beautiful surface, no restless sea to dash upon its cliffs and shores. Its inhabitants shall weep no more, shall die no more, cry and sorrow no more; pain, too, shall be for ever banished from the beautiful earth. God shall come down and dwell amongst men. The new heaven, the abode of the heavenly saints, and the new earth, the dwelling of the earthly people, shall both respond the character of God as light and love. Worlds of perfection! Worlds of everlasting joy! O the grandeur of these eternal scenes! No pen can trace, no mind conceive, no tongue tell what the new earth shall be. O to be there! O to walk the streets of the eternal earth, with an eternal noon-day sun overhead, and to go out no more. But Heaven shall claim us, for the everlasting distinction shall be then as now carried out, for I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*. Earth's coming Jubilee is nearing. Come, Lord, come quickly!

W.

FORTY WRESTLERS, OR FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH. *

When the Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Christians in Armenia, the Thundering Legion was stationed at Sebaste. Forty men in that Legion declared themselves Christians, and were sentenced to be exposed naked all night on a frozen pool—for it was winter and bitterly cold. In a house on the edge of the pool a large fire was kindled, and food and wine and a warm bath were

* The foregoing may be had in tract form at 6d. per 100, or 4s. per 1,000, from W. H. G. BLATCHLEY, 27 LANCEFIELD STREET, QUEEN'S PARK, LONDON, W.

prepared under the charge of Sempronius, a centurion, and a guard of soldiers ; and it was announced to the forty, that if any of them left the pool and entered the house, they would be considered to have denied Christ. So night came on, and the keen wind from Mount Caucasus made the citizens close their windows and doors more tightly, and heap up the fuel on their hearths. And on the frozen pool were the forty warriors, some standing lost in prayer, some walking quickly to and fro, some already sleeping that sleep which only ends in death. And ever and again, as the hours went slowly by, they prayed :

“ O Lord, forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee ; grant that forty wrestlers may receive the crown of victory.”

And now, as the cold grew more intense, one of the forty could endure no longer ; and he left the pool and came to the house where Sempronius and his men were keeping guard. But still the martyrs' prayer went up to heaven :

“ O God, forty wrestlers have come forth to fight for Thee ; grant that forty wrestlers may receive the crown of victory.”

And the prayer was answered. Sempronius, the centurion, was touched by his comrades' bravery. He declared himself a Christian, and took his place upon the frozen pool. And when the cold had done its work, and forty corpses lay upon the ice, forty glorious spirits, with Sempronius among them, entered into the presence of the King.

JUDGMENT AND CONDEMNATION—

do not mean the same thing. Condemnation is future and final. Judgment precedes it (1 Cor. xi. 32). In John iii. 17, 18, 19 ; v. 24, read *judge*, and *judgment* (R.V.) Neither the believer as to his person, nor his sins, shall ever come into judgment. But who says this? Who dare make such a bold statement? The Judge Himself. Read John v. 22, and Acts xvii. 31, and you will see that Jesus is the appointed Judge of all. He it is who presides in the Court of Justice. Now, He it is who says, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word and believeth on

Him that sent Me *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). The *Judge* acquits those for whom as *victim* He died. As the Sacrificial Victim He bore our sins on His own body on the tree, now on the ground of righteousness He freely gives life to all who believe. Then there is no condemnation, but the words of the Holy Ghost are, "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 1)." How can it touch us if we are in Him? But if condemnation is future why read "*now* no condemnation"? Why not say "*then* no condemnation." Ah! but we ask why keep back the good news till then? What a blessing to know that "*now* there is no condemnation." None now, and, of course, none for ever. The point is that the very thing which the world so dreads, so fears, judgment and condemnation, no longer exist for those who believe (1 John iv. 17).

OUR NEEDS.

There are needs too deep for human utterance. There are wants we cannot name. At the grave of Lazarus the Lord groaned—His groans in the funeral march to the grave were His prayers, hence He said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou *hast* heard Me" (John xi. 41). Now the Spirit in us is behind these groans of ours (Rom. viii. 26). God who searches the heart, searches yours and mine, and finds the action of the Spirit *there*. God answers that, and not foolish requests, nor even our foolish way of presenting right desires. Thus God in Heaven and the Spirit in us act together in meeting our need and helping our infirmities.

GOD'S GREAT PLAN.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). In this full and comprehensive expression "*all things*," we must not think of *sins*, but all the trying and varied circumstances of life—all its deaths, its disappointments, its

sorrows, its trials—large or small. There is no separate interests in one's life. *All* work together, and for good. Life is like a tangled web, *you* cannot unravel it. God holds the key of life. He alone is Master of the situation. All is clear before Him. "He knows the way He taketh," Ah! say some, "I do not understand, I cannot comprehend His ways." No, but He does. He has the plan before Him, and you in your life are part of that holy and beautiful design. Just wait till you stand on the battlements of Heaven, wait till you tread its terraces, then you shall have God's plan unfolded before your gaze with your part and place in it; and the result will be everlasting triumph in what God has done, and what God is!

THE APPROACHING JUDGMENT OF CHRISTENDOM.

It is a deeply solemn thing to realise that one belongs to a system which stands responsible before God for ages of failure and unfaithfulness, and upon which, in consequence, the judgment of God will soon descend. Yet how feebly is this soul-subduing thought entered into by the children of God in general! Many are so occupied with their own immediate surroundings, that the fact of their belonging to *the Church of God*—a corporation nearly nineteen centuries old as a witness for God—has little, if any, place in their minds. Others, alas! though truly born of God, have become so infected with the spirit of the times that positive expressions of Laodicean complacency are frequently to be found upon their lips.

Now God would have His own spiritually intelligent as to the true position of affairs at the present moment. We are not living in the first days of the Church of God, but the last; a fact which should, of itself, suggest the most serious considerations to the mind. What is the character of this Church of God, whose earthly history is drawing to its close? And what was its testimony and responsibility as set up by God at the beginning? It has often been pointed out that the Church has been introduced parenthetically into the ways of God. Israel's deep failure as

God's responsible witness in the midst of idolatry, and, above all, their rejection of Messiah, has necessitated the complete setting aside of that nation for the present. Not until Christ appears in glory will Israel again truly have God's testimony committed to them. During the interval, while Christ sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High, the Holy Spirit is present on earth engaged in the formation of the Church of God. The very day of His descent from heaven (Acts ii.) witnessed the inauguration of the new system—a spiritual one in contrast with Israel's national one. The saints on earth (at first merely a remnant from among the Jews) became at once the body of Christ and the house of God, though the doctrine of these was not unfolded until some years later. What freshness and power characterised the new testimony! What Divine love amongst the saints, what renunciation of the world, what zeal in the propagation of the truth, even in the face of fierce persecution!

The Church was responsible to maintain its testimony unimpaired until the end. In manifested unity and love, in separation from the world, and in bold confession of all the truth committed, should the Church have continued. Faith should have carried her triumphantly through all the vicissitudes of wilderness life, and over all the obstacles raised up by the enemy. It is vain to remark that everything that God has ever entrusted to man has failed in his hands, and that every dispensation has ended in Divine judgment. This, while true, in no way mitigates the failure of the Church, who, with more light from God, and greater privileges than were ever before possessed, has her own distinct place of responsibility, and must be held accountable accordingly. Her public position as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15), necessarily involves judgment from God if the testimony is not faithfully maintained.

The failure soon came. He who loved the Church with a peculiar affection, at an early date had to blame the Corinthians for being full, and reigning before the time (1 Cor. iv. 8); he had to deplore the defection, through lukewarmness and love of carnal ease, of all the assemblies in Asia (2 Tim. i. 15); and he also

found it necessary to instruct his beloved child in the faith as to the path of individual faithfulness when evil should become rampant (2 Tim. ii.) Jude speaks of ungodly men having crept in unawares, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4); Peter warns of false teachers bringing in damnable heresies (2 Peter ii. 1, 2); and John of Antichrists, who had once companied with the Apostles themselves, but who had gone out, manifesting their true character (1 John ii. 18, 19). A little later, we find the Lord Himself complaining, in His messages to the churches, of the forsaking of first love (Rev. ii. 4), of the harbouring of men holding the doctrines of Baalam and of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. ii. 14, 15), and other and even graver evils.

In view of all this (and how much more might be added !) how solemn is the Spirit's word in Romans xi. 22 : "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God, on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." In this chapter the professing church is looked at as having taken Israel's place on earth as the possessor of privileges from God. If faithful, the result should be blessing; if unfaithful, the same cutting off that Israel has experienced should follow. Who will pretend that Christendom has continued in God's goodness? The Protestant points disapprovingly at the glaring errors and gross corruptions of Rome; and the Romanist, with good cause, directs his scorn at the divisions of Protestantism, and its relinquishment of what it once professed, the faith of the Bible. What room is there for boasting on the part of any?

What then is coming? Just what the Spirit says in Rom. xi. : "Thou also shalt be cut off." Or, as the Lord Himself expressed it in Rev. iii. 16 : "I am about to spue thee out of my mouth." Only ignorance would plead the Lord's promise in Matt. xvi. 18 : "The gates of hades shall not prevail against it"—as militating against this, the Lord there simply guarantees the durability of His own handiwork. His judgment of human responsibility is another matter altogether, and is plainly dealt with in other Scriptures. The professing church has failed as deeply as Israel,

and shall be judged as truly. There is, however, this difference between Israel's rejection and the rejection of Christendom ; that, whereas for the one there is to be a restoration in grace at the end, for the other the judgment is final and irrevocable. Solemn thought !

Does this in any way endanger individual salvation? By no means. The passage already quoted from Matt. xvi. is sufficiently explicit as to this. God's judicial dealings with Israel did not touch the salvation of true children of faith ; nor will the approaching judgment of Christendom affect in any way the eternal security of all who are "in Christ." Nothing can annul, or even weaken, the infinite grace of God in this respect. What comfort for the man of God while painfully exercised as to the evils around him !

What should be the practical outcome of what we have been considering? First, God would have His true hearted ones feel and confess the sins of the Church as their own. Daniel furnishes us with a fine example of this spirit. Though, personally, a holy man, he poured out his heart to God in touching confession concerning the sins of his people, justifying God in all His governmental dealings with them. He made no attempt to individualise himself, but kept before his soul that he belonged to God's people, and was, therefore, a part of that body which had so grievously failed. In like manner, let us remember that *we belong to the Church of God*, the most privileged witness that God has yet set up, and withal the most guilty. Such a thought keeps the soul humble and unpretentious.

Secondly, God would have each exercised soul walk wholly apart, in individual faithfulness, from the public evils that will presently bring down His righteous judgment. Let us beware of all the streams that will shortly pour their waters into the foul pool of the apostasy. While cultivating fellowship with all who conscientiously seek the glory of Christ, and while seeking the deliverance of all others as far as possible, may we be kept free from moral, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical corruption, that we may walk in holiness before God with robes unspotted.

W. W. FEREDAY.

RIGHTEOUSNESS: DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

There is not a subject *apparently* more difficult than that of righteousness. Books and treatises without number have been written on it, and theologians in all ages have crossed swords over this knotty question. What is the result on the whole of centuries of wrangle and strife? Persons are as muddled and confused about it as ever, and a subject which in itself is simple has been so tortured and twisted in polemical dispute, that a clear exposition of the doctrine of righteousness is an imperative need of the day. Righteousness is the necessary basis of God's dealings with saint and sinner; the ground, too, on which grace gloriously sways its sceptre (Rom. v. 21); and the superstructure on which all Christian life, progress, and service repose. It underlies every position and relation of life. Righteousness is the keystone of the arch of divine revelation. Hence, a more important theme can scarcely be thought of, and it will be readily admitted that a mistake on this subject so vital to all, may seriously affect the soul's relation to God, as also our responsibilities to others.

Righteousness is a relative term—that is, it involves dealings or relations with others. The simple idea in the word is what is *right*. This consideration will simplify a study of the subject, because whatever additional shades of meaning there may be, and however variously applied, the root-idea in every passage is that of a state of *rightness* in reference to God or to man. We might define it as *consistency in any given position and relation which a creature occupies in regard to others*.

1. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (Rom. iii.), signifies God's consistency with His nature, His character in freely and perfectly justifying a sinner believing on Jesus. Now this, it will be observed, cannot be imputed. It is *God's* righteousness, not *man's*. The question of imputation does not occur in this chapter at all, nor in any passage where the term "the Righteousness of God" occurs. In chapter iii. of the Romans, after the

demonstration of the personal sin of Jew and Gentile (verses 1-19)—for human righteousness there was none (verse 10)—we have the revelation of the righteous ground on which God can, and does, freely justify a guilty sinner. God acts rightly ; in perfect consistency with His nature in so doing. How very simple, therefore, yet withal profound, is this Pauline expression “the Righteousness of God” when divested of certain theological meanings usually ascribed to it. As used by St. Paul in chapter iii. of the Romans—for he alone of the sacred writers of the New Testament employs the term—it is the sure repose of the soul. We may remark that the phrase, “the righteousness of Christ,” is not once to be met with in the Holy Scriptures. The substitution of this latter for the scriptural term, “the Righteousness of God” has done much to mystify the subject in the minds of many of God’s dear people. “The Righteousness *which is of God*” (Phil. iii. 9) shows a verbal difference from that in Rom. i. 17 and iii. 21, 22. But the difference is not in words merely. In Phil. iii. 9, the apostle is contrasting two kinds of righteousness ; that which is of, or *from* the law he would not have ; whereas that which is of, or *from* God he desires to possess.

2. RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED (Rom. iv.) In this chapter we have righteousness reckoned or counted to one who in himself is destitute of it. Of this Abraham is the great illustration (verses 3, 13-22), while David describes its blessedness (verses 6-8). It would be an immoral action for king or magistrate to declare a man right who was wrong. In point of fact, a judge cannot justify, or declare judicially right, a *proved* offender ; he may pardon, but he cannot justify. God alone can justify a sinner. He alone can impute righteousness to one who has it not. It is not putting a quantity of righteousness *in* a man. It is simply holding, or regarding as a righteous or just person—one who, again we repeat, is not so either in nature or practice. *How* God can do this, chapter iii. has fully informed us. Righteousness imputed supposes that one (else why reckon it ?) is destitute of it. There is not the slightest thought in

the chapter of conferred inward righteousness. It is simply a man who in himself is wrong being counted right. Christ bearing the judgment of God, and God believed on who raised *Him* from the dead, explain it all. The reader will observe that "righteousness" occurs eight times in the chapter, and further that the words "of God" are not added in a single instance. "The Righteousness of God" is nowhere said to be reckoned or imputed; but "righteousness" simply, is put to the account of a guilty person believing on God. God is as righteous in justifying as in punishing, as consistent with the claims of His nature in doing the one, as the other, hence the imputation of God's righteousness is a moral impossibility. It is God's righteousness, *is* and ever will be; part of Himself we may so say, but displayed in relation to His creatures.

"Imputed Righteousness" is not accurate thought or language. Righteousness in itself has not the character of imputation, as the foregoing expression would imply; but righteousness imputed or reckoned is another thing, and it is of this that chapter iv. of Romans treats. We may also observe that the righteousness of one cannot be put to another's account. If you could transfer one person's righteousness to another, then one is left destitute of it. If my being right in my relations to God or man, as the case may be, could by any possibility be put to another's account, then clearly I would be found *positively* wrong. What then of the common theological phrase, "The Imputed Righteousness of Christ?" Will it stand the test of Scripture? Incorrectness in this vital subject affects both the *person* and *work* of Christ. If "The Righteousness of Christ" be put to our account, then it leaves Him without it, or unrighteous; on the other hand, if by the vicarious obedience of Christ to the law, we are declared righteous, then clearly His death is in vain (Gal. ii. 21). If personal and vicarious righteousness by law-keeping or obedience in life is ours, then "justified by blood" is a nullity. Thus both the person and work of the Saviour (unconsciously, no doubt) are called in question by this unscriptural doctrine. How important, there-

fore, to "hold fast the form of sound words." It is *law-breakers*, not *law-keepers*, who, believing on Jesus are accounted righteous by God.

3. WE, CHRISTIANS, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM (2 Cor. v. 21). Christ on the *cross* was made sin for us; now on the *throne* He is the righteousness of God, *i.e.*, the perfect expression of it. The grandest, fullest witness of right on the part of God is expressed in setting Christ at His own right hand—crowned and glorified. What a marvellous exhibition of the righteousness of God is witnessed *up yonder!* But that is not all, for we, too, as "in Christ" are practical living witnesses of it. He, for the moment, was made sin for us, that we might *become*, continuously, the righteousness of God in Him (see R.V. 2 Cor. v. 21). We confess we are amazed at the greatness of the grace; too much for such as we to receive, but not too much for God to give. We cannot point to the exalted place of angels as an illustration of God's righteousness; we must look at the yet more exalted place of saints as "in Him." By-and-bye the heavens will "declare His righteousness, and all the people (peoples) see His glory" (Ps. xcvi. 6). *When and how?* At the second advent of Christ into this world, accompanied by all His heavenly saints, and by their revelation in glory with Him. What a witness to God and to His ways towards His people!

4. PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS IN EVERY-DAY LIFE (Titus ii. 12). This is a large subject, and covers every relation and position in life. Do what is right to God and to your fellows. Faithfully and minutely fulfil every obligation of life, whether as a saint, servant, and worshipper of God; as a man, master, servant, and citizen in the world; as a husband, father, child, or wife in the circle of social relationship; and in the use of all that which God has entrusted you with, as health, time, talent, money, power, gift, etc. To be righteous is simply to *be* right and to *do* right towards God and towards man. But where are we to learn practical righteousness? Where are we to learn the full extent of our obligations to God and to each other? How are we to be supplied with motive and power to act rightly

Eternal Life—A Present and Everlasting Possession. 329

in all things, at all times, and in all relations? For this we must turn to the Word of God. It is there only we find life's duties fully unfolded. Not only so, but we are also directed to Christ as the grand and constraining motive, and to the Holy Spirit as the power by which practical righteousness is effected. We would press upon one and all the necessity of being consistent in every relation of life. Action in keeping with each respective relation gives us the practical righteousness demanded from one and all. Where this is lacking the soul is exposed to the attacks of Satan—our determined, wily, and ever-watchful foe (Eph. vi. 14), and leaves one weak, powerless, and unfruitful in service.

If we are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. i. 11), and wait through the Spirit for its hope, which is glory (Gal. v. 5), we must be prepared to "follow righteousness" (2 Tim. ii. 22) in all things, all relationships, and everywhere, and never to sanction evil on any plea whatever. "Of two evils choose the least," is an utterly false principle. A holy path to tread, a clean place to dwell, a good conscience in exercise, there *must* be unless you belie the nature of God, and sacrifice at the shrine of expediency, of numbers, of supposed usefulness, of an ecclesiastical unity—the practical righteousness demanded from every saint and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ETERNAL LIFE—A PRESENT AND EVERLASTING POSSESSION.

Eternal life is frequently confounded with eternal existence, and with immortality. All responsible creatures eternally exist, but all have not eternal life, this latter being God's gift to believers only (Rom. vi. 23; John v. 24; iii. 36; 1 John v.) Unbelievers "shall not see life," yet they shall exist, for it is added, "the wrath of God abideth on *him*." Thus life and existence are distinguished. Then, in common parlance, we speak of a man as merely existing, while of another, we say, he

330 *Eternal Life—A Present and Everlasting Possession.*

enjoys life. Nor must eternal life be confounded with immortality, *i.e.*, not subject to death. God alone has Immortality as to its source and independent possession (1 Tim. vi. 16). Angels, too, are immortal (Luke xx. 36). Immortality when applied to believers refers alone to the body when raised or changed at the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54). Need we add, that the soul of man is immortal, although the mere word is not applied to it. This is proved from Matt. x. 28. Men can kill the body, hence it is mortal; they cannot kill the soul, hence it is immortal.

Eternal life, therefore, is necessarily distinct from either eternal existence or from immortality. Neither angels nor unbelievers are said to have eternal life. The former are immortal; the latter eternally exist. For the miserable state of the wicked after death and before their resurrection, see Luke xvi. 19-31; for their condition after resurrection and in eternity (see Rev. xxi. 8). Life in its nature, what it is cannot be defined. The vital principle in man, in the dog, and in the plant is a problem which has baffled the keenest research of the scientist. Every possible test has been applied to discover what life is, but in vain. We know that life exists by its characteristics. Man in his manifold activity, the plant in its foliage and growth, the bird as it skims through the air in its lofty flight, and the denizen of sea and river in rapid movement, all declare the existence of life in their respective spheres. But the inward vital force, which impels to action and which we term *life*, can neither be seen, heard, touched, felt, or recognised by any of the senses; in fact, our senses are simply characteristics of life; *these* direct to a governing principle, but what it *is*, neither Scripture nor science informs us. There is spiritual life and natural life, we know of no other, and both are undefinable. It has been said that John xvii. 3 supplies us with a definition of eternal life, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee (the Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." But eternal life was ever in THE WORD as a Divine Person (John i. 4),

Eternal Life—A Present and Everlasting Possession. 331

and ever with the FATHER (1 John i. 2), hence to define spiritual life as knowing God and Jesus Christ is absurd. The very fact that it was ever in the Word, ever with the Father, co-eval with the existence of each of the Divine Beings, makes eternal life an absolutely unknown thing in its nature, and hence incapable of being defined. Its character and action toward us through grace, we do know something about. We understand John xvii. 3 to teach that eternal life is needed ere any one could know God and Jesus Christ; without it the knowledge of God is impossible. You must have a new nature in order that God may be rightly known and enjoyed.

All believers, irrespective of time and Dispensation, have eternal or everlasting life, both *in* the Son, and *in* themselves; in the Son as its source (John i. 4; 1 John v. 11), and in themselves as derived and dependent upon Him (John v. 24; x. 28). The positive gift of eternal life implanted in the soul of believers, has been denied of late by a certain mystic sect—true saints, we doubt not. It has been contended that Old Testament believers were born of God, but had not eternal life! Can you conceive of birth without life! The expressions of delight in God, of obedience to Him, and of dependence upon Him so common in the lives and experiences of saints of old, unmistakeably point to the existence and activity of a spiritual life or nature in them. The roll-call of the illustrious dead, in Heb. xi., evidences, without doubt, that believers of old had, must have had, eternal life *in them*, for its issues are plainly enough declared in those acts and deeds of faith which have formed a stimulus to believers ever since.

That eternal life is actually and positively *in* believers, the following Scriptures abundantly prove—John iii. 15, 16, 36; iv. 14; v. 24; vi. 47, 53, 54; x. 10, 28; 1 John iii. 15, &c. We have it in the Son, and we have it from Him in ourselves.

The revelation of eternal life awaited the coming of the Son. He is *the word of life*, the perfect expression of it in His Person and ways (1 John i. 1). The term eternal life occurs but twice in the Old Testament, and in both instances in millennial

332 *Eternal Life—A Present and Everlasting Possession.*

connection (Ps. cxxxiii. 3 ; Dan. xii. 2). But, we would again repeat, that while no formal statement affirms the existence of eternal life in Old Testament Saints ; yet they had it, for no one could be in vital relationship to God without it. It was always in the Son for them, as for us.

Eternal life is but rarely mentioned in the Synoptical Gospels, and only then as a *future* thing : see Matt. xxv. 46 ; Mark x. 30 ; Luke xviii. 30. In John's Gospel and first Epistle eternal life is generally spoken of as a blessing *presently* possessed and enjoyed by believers ; chaps. iii. ; x. of the Gospel and chaps. iii. ; v. of the Epistle amply confirm our statement. But John also shows that the bodies of God's saints shall share in the blessing of eternal life (chap. v. 29 ; vi. 39-40). Both Paul and John present eternal life as a matter of promise ; to Christ (Titus i. 2), and to us (1 John ii. 25). Paul while assuming that believers have eternal life *in them*, yet nowhere affirms it, but writes of it as future (Rom. v. 17). Thus eternal life is spoken of as a thing *in* us now, and yet future, and to be fully enjoyed in a scene in keeping with its character.

We may remark that, while life for the soul has been brought to light in the Incarnation and Ministry of our Lord (1 John i. 1), the revelation of life and incorruption as applied to the body is through the Gospel, *i.e.*, the death and resurrection of the Lord. "Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10, R.V.)

To briefly sum up. The Psalmist and the Hebrew Prophet Daniel, tell us that Jewish saints on earth in the millennial scene will have and enjoy in Judea eternal life ; while the Lord Himself informs us (Matt. xxv.) that Gentile millennial saints on earth shall also share the same blessing. John teaches, in repeated statements, of priceless value, that believers now have eternal life, in the Son and in themselves. Paul treats of it as a future blessing.

It only remains to add that spiritual life and eternal life are, of course, the same. "Eternal" is applied to life, because in itself, you

cannot predicate of spiritual life, either beginning or end; it is eternal. "Eternal life" and "everlasting life" are used interchangeably (John iii. 15, 16). The same Greek word expressed both, but the latter term is the more fitting one in its application to us, because in us it has a beginning, but shall never end, hence *everlasting*. In itself it is, of course, *eternal*, having neither beginning nor end.

Eternal life is needful for the soul's enjoyment of Christ, and delight in all that is holy, and good, and heavenly. When a soul is quickened of God, born of him, *then* He only and truly begins to live, and *that* is termed ETERNAL LIFE.

NOTES, EMENDATIONS OF THE SACRED TEXT, Etc.

Our Blessed Lord either cites or refers to passages in the Old Testament Scriptures more than *four hundred times*.

Dr. Maclaren, of Manchester, has affirmed that "a great critic of documents may be but a poor judge of facts."

"The New Testament is *enfolded* in the Old, and the Old is *unfolded* in the New."

That distinguished novelist, Mr. Charles Reade, says—"The truth is that Jonah is the most beautiful story ever written in so small a compass. As to the leading miracles which stagger some people who receive other miracles, these men are surely inconsistent. There can be no scale of the miraculous. To infinite power it is no easier to pick up a pin than to stop all the planets in their course for a time and then send them on again."

"The hammer of Science had not broken the smallest fragment from the rock of ages."

There is a clear and distinct issue raised between certain so-

334 *Notes, Emendations of the Sacred Text, &c.*

called "higher critics" and the Lord of Glory. If Isaiah chapters xl-lxvi. is not the work of that prophet, as they say, then the blessed Lord (John xii. 38), the Evangelist (Luke iv. 17-20), and Paul (Rom. x. 16-20) were either grossly ignorant, or untruthful, for each declare Isaiah—Israel's favourite prophet—to be the writer of that very disputed portion. The issue is certain, either the critics or the Lord are at fault. The statement of the critics is in direct contradiction to the affirmation of the Lord of Glory. We repudiate the former ; we accept the latter.

There are about 960 passages in the New Testament cited or referred to from the Old.

Looking *to* Christ is *Salvation*. Looking *at* Christ as our *example*. Looking *for* Christ as our *hope*.

The insertion of the definite article, *the*, preceding a word marks its speciality ; its omission makes the subject characteristic :—

<i>AUTHORISED.</i>	<i>NEW TRANSLATION.</i>
"By <i>the</i> resurrection" Rom. i. 4. (<i>i.e.</i> , to Christ's own.)	"By resurrection" (<i>i.e.</i> , to the fact in general.)
"By <i>the</i> law" Rom. iii. 20, 28, 31, (<i>i.e.</i> , that given by Moses.)	"By law" (<i>i.e.</i> , in general—as opposed to works.)
"In the Church" 1 Cor. xi. 18. (<i>i.e.</i> , specific application).	"In assembly" (<i>i.e.</i> , in assembly character.)

"Accepted in the Beloved" is not sound doctrine. "Taken us into favour in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). It is not the acceptance of a sinner that is in question.

"It (the Sacrifice) shall be accepted for him" (Lev. i. 4), not *he* in *it*, but *it* *for* him.

"The day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thess. ii. 2) should read

“The day of the Lord is present.” The corrected reading alone explains the meaning of the passage.

Omit the word *gladly* from the text of Acts ii. 41.

Omit *the* before “flesh” in 2 John 7. Our authorised version would imply that the Incarnation of the Lord was the special truth denied by some, whereas it is His Person in general that was denied. His divine nature by some, His human nature by others. He who came in flesh *i.e.*, in true and holy humanity was denied.

Dr. Macmillan, once Moderator of the Free Church General Assembly, said, “The hammer of Science had not broken the smallest fragment from the rock of ages.”

PENTECOST (*Acts ii.*)

The door was shut ; the saints within
 Were waiting for the promise given ;
 The world went on ; its noise and din
 Were rising up from earth to heaven.
 Yet there they waited, outside all
 The earth could yield, or earth afford ;
 Nor ceased they on His Name to call,
 Their loving, though their absent, Lord.
 They waited long ; in faith they prayed ;
 Their love was fervent, hope was strong ;
 It mattered not that God delayed,
 They knew that He would give ere long.
 He heard ! He gave ! The house was filled !
 And every soul a power received ;
 The Holy Spirit, as He willed,
 Rested on those who there believed.
 Nor rested only, might was given ;
 They spake with tongues, and spake with power ;
 Wondrous, indeed, the gift from heaven ;
 Mysterious ! yet most blessed hour.

The Church was formed ! The Spirit here,
 As sent of Christ, the Eternal Word,
 Baptized in one God's children dear ;
 A habitation for their Lord.

The Church was formed ; amazing thought !
 Onward earth's current heedless ran ;
 The world knew not, nor cared it aught,
 That God had come so near to man.

Yet there, within those doors fast closed,
 The mystery of God was known,—
 The mystery which till then reposed
 Within the heart of God alone.

The "mystic Man"—the Bride was formed,
 The new creation there arose ;
 A strange new fire the bosom warmed,
 A wondrous vista was disclosed.

Heaven linked with earth ; the creature man
 Indwelt by God, and Spirit-sealed ;
 Ah, never since the world began,
 Had such a mystery been revealed.

Grace, faith, and love, and power combined,
 Now one with Christ, doth God supply,
 As each now fills the place assigned,
 To witness for their Lord on high.

They spoke ; the Spirit's power was there
 And thousands heard, believed, and lived ;
 God's new creation, wondrous, fair !
 Enlarged, as each the Word received.

Still, still extending ; calling forth
 From the poor world the saved and free,
 To witness to the Saviour's worth,
 And heavenly citizens to be.

Completed soon, then called away,
 Up to her proper place above,—
 The Bride, the Church, for e'er to be
 The trophy of *eternal love*.

ALBERT MIDLANE.

THE CRITICS : SHALL WE FOLLOW THEM ?

Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament is the title of a book of which Professor George Adam Smith is the writer. As the Professor of Old Testament language and literature in the Glasgow College of the United Free Church of Scotland, his book has made a stir in that denomination, and has caused a feeling of considerable alarm in the minds of members of that community. Into that controversy we have no call to enter. How far the teaching of his book conforms to the standards of that communion is a question, of course, for its members to debate and to decide. But as a unit in the assembly of the Living God, and a member of the Body of Christ, one must feel interested in the subject of the volume, as being professedly a guide, a help to preachers in the present day. For the Professor seeks to bring his readers face to face with a vital question of our time, may we not call it, viz., the conclusion of critics on the Old Testament Scriptures, as against the opinion of the authorship of different books of that volume held by students and devout readers from apostolic times.

The critics! How these words may tend to loosen from their moorings souls not established in the faith. Who should venture to differ from the conclusions at which such learned people have arrived, for learned Semitic scholars we must own many of them to be? Then some might think we must accept them as guides in such an important investigation, if we would be abreast of the teaching of the day. But linguistic learning and Semitic scholarship are not all that are needed where God's Word is concerned. The Lord's words to the Jews may well be remembered, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of (rather, from) myself" (John vii. 17). To understand the things of God we must be taught of God. Learning, scholarship all should value, but with the teaching and guidance of the Spirit we cannot in this matter dispense.

What can Professor Smith tell us of critical conclusions? "With critics," he writes, "there has been a distinct reaction of late in favour of admitting the personal reality of Abraham" (p. 107). According to our author then those, who had followed earlier critics in questioning the personality of that patriarch, were led in that matter astray. Clearly then even critics can go astray, and lead astray, and the teaching of that class in one age may be repudiated in the next. Then if we admit the personality of Abraham on the ground of the general agreement as to it of critics to-day, how shall we be sure that we may not have to change front on the morrow, if taught then just the opposite? Are we driven to rest on the conclusions of critics in this matter, and so be tossed about like shuttle-cocks at the whim of that class? Have we not undoubted authority for that patriarch's personality beyond the reach of criticism to upset? For certainly we need no school of critics to assure us of it ere we accept it, nor their whole collective company to declare it. The testimony of God, the witness of the Son, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit shall be *our* authority for it. No higher authority can there be than this. With no greater certainty can we be assured of it.

"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod. iii. 6) is a divine attestation of the personality of the father of the faithful. And to this the Lord Jesus bore testimony in the Gospels as being the word of God spoken to Moses (Mark xii. 26 ; Luke xx. 37), adding, God "is not a God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live unto Him." A real person was, and is, Abraham. Then of that patriarch's personality the Lord Jesus Himself affirmed, when He said to the opposing Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it, and was glad" (John viii. 56). No one among them doubted of their forefather's existence. Then the Spirit of God by the Apostles Peter (Acts iii. 25 ; 1 Peter iii. 6) ; and Paul (Rom. iv. 1, 3, 9 ; Gal. iii. 6-9) testifies to the same effect. It is well for the critics if they admit the personality of Abraham ; but who, with the inspired word in their hands, should allow them-

selves to doubt of it? Who need the critics to assure them of it?

Then we learn (p. 151) that E. Meir, Winter, and Budde reckon Jud. v. 31 to be a later addition to the song of Deborah. With that Prof. Smith does not agree. Against Isaiah ix. 6.; xi. 1-5, we read strong reasons have been adduced (p. 160). Our Professor, however, does not agree with them. Again, "most modern critics," we are told, view Isai. liii. as a personification of the righteous and suffering remnant of Israel (p. 167). From that Professor G. A. Smith dissents. Were we then as to that chapter following most modern critics we should in the judgment of our author go astray. But who is right? How can we be sure whom we should believe? God, we can indeed say, has not left His people in doubt as to it. And if we find ourselves on this occasion in agreement with the Professor, it is because we are authoritatively taught by the Word of God, written by the Evangelist St. John. He has plainly declared to whom chapter liii. of Isaiah refers, quoting in connection with the rejection of the Lord Jesus the first verse of that well-known portion, "But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him; that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, Lord who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John xii. 37, 38). That arm was Christ (Isai. li. 9). Then Philip the Evangelist opening up that chapter to the Ethiopian eunuch met his inquirer's question, of whom did the prophet speak? by preaching to him Jesus from that same scripture. John was an Apostle. Philip was under the guidance of the Spirit (Acts viii. 29). These are trustworthy teachers. Can the critics on their part present any such credentials? Most modern critics therefore may err. It will be perilous blindfold to follow them.

Then we are informed that most critics (p. 174) assign Isai. xxxiii. 21, 22, to some disciple of that prophet. Who he was is not told us. When and where he lived is not by our informant disclosed. But we are at this point in the Professor's book learning to distrust the judgment of even most modern critics, unless

confirmed by unquestionable authority. Does this savour of presumption? We can quote, as we have seen, the Professor in support of such a step, though on this occasion we are left, it appears, without a word from him to tell us what is his mind about it, and so to guide his readers. Meanwhile, as we discover a want of unanimity of judgment on the part of the critics, and those who would plead for them, we need not be dismayed when they are quoted before us, nor need our belief be disturbed, that the son of Amoz, the writer, we believe, of the four preceding woes (xxviii.-xxxi.), was the writer of this one (xxxiii.) likewise.

So far as we have gone it becomes manifestly permissible, and at times right, to differ from the judgment of most critics. The critics criticise the inspired Word, and the reader is to sit in judgment on their conclusions. In other words, man is to decide for himself what he will believe, and what he will refuse. Where is God in all this? Where is any recognition that the sacred volume differs essentially from all mere human records, the divine Word having characteristics peculiar to itself? It can quicken the soul (1 Pet. i. 23). It can enlighten and make wise the simple (Ps. xix. 7, 8). It discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12). And the Lord's word, if not listened to by the creature when in life, will judge him at the last day (John xii. 48). Is there any real sense in the conclusions of the critics? The words of the Living God are treated by them as if they were the words of a mere man. Are we to come to that?

But, there are conclusions of critics to which in the judgment of the Professor there is no help for it but submissively to bow. "Present criticism," we read, "has tended to confirm the impossibility of proving any given Psalm in our Psalter to have been by David" (p. 87). Simple folk may well demur to this with 2 Sam. xxii. before them. "Now with the time of Samuel," we are told, "we at last enter real indubitable history" (p. 77). But this composition just referred to is found near the end of the second book of Samuel, so must be well within the bounds of "real indubitable history." And the eighteenth Psalm of the Psalter is evidently the same composition as that of 2 Sam.,

though with some variations. At any rate, then, this Psalm in the Psalter, met with also *in real indubitable history*, must be, as stated in both places, a song by the sweet Psalmist of Israel. So whilst we may not be able to certify to the authenticity of all the Davidic headings of Psalms, of this one we must believe that we have clear proof. "Only a fondness for doubt can lead any one," writes Delitzsch, "to doubt the Davidic origin of this Psalm, attested, as it is in two works, which are independent one of another."

Then what shall we say of Ps. xcvi, when we read in 1 Chron. xvi. 23-33 that it was delivered by David into the hands of Asaph and his brethren on the occasion of the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem? It is not said to be by the king, but who can affirm that it was not? For no hint have we that David delivered that day to Asaph and his brethren any compositions not really his own. And now, we would submit that simple folk may more than just demur to the Professor's sweeping announcement, having inspired authority to reject it. For as to Psalms cx. and xvi. we have distinct averment of their Davidic authorship. The Lord Jesus in the Gospels silenced all objectors and questioners in the Temple court, by calling attention to the cxth Psalm as a witness to His own divinity, and a witness by David in the prophetic spirit, who lived about ten centuries before the incarnation. In the three synoptic Gospels is this recorded. To quote from one will here suffice. "Whilst the Pharisees," writes Matthew, "were gathered together, Jesus asked them saying what think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? They say unto Him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matt. xxii. 41-45). And in one respect Luke is more precise, as quoting the Lord's words he writes, "David himself saith in the book of Psalms" (Luke xx. 42). If David had not really written the words quoted by Christ, there would have been no point at all in the Master's reference to the Psalm. All depended on their really being the

words of the royal Psalmist. And if he wrote them, as the Lord declares, that whole Psalm, it will be seen, must have been penned by David. Would any demur to the accuracy of the Evangelists in this matter? They must establish against the authority of uncial M.S.S. in the three Gospels, that what has been handed down by them is a mistake. That we believe is a task beyond the critics' power to accomplish.

Then as to the xvith Psalm, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, addressing the company come together on the day of Pentecost, quoted from that Psalm, to show that the Lord's resurrection had been foretold, and thus decided the matter as to its Davidic authorship for any who may need it, by saying, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins He would set him on His throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption" (Acts ii. 29-31). Again we have to ask, what point could there be in Peter's reference to David if he was not the author of that Psalm? Then, too, Peter affirmed the Davidic authorship of Ps. lxix., in Acts i. 16-20; and the whole company in iv. 25. quote in addressing God the second Psalm as written by the king of Israel. At that time there was no doubt that some Psalms in the Psalter were written by David. A little later we find Paul of the same mind (Rom. iv. 6; xi. 9). Sufficient surely are these proofs of the untrustworthiness of the Professor's announcement. And we might ask, have the New Testament Scriptures, and even the words of Christ Himself, no authority with the critics of the Old Testament? Psalms ii; xvi; xviii; xxxii; lxix; cx were certainly by David.

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and teachers have been the authorised channels to communicate or minister God's truth in Christian times. John the Apostle thought that Isaiah had written chapter liii. of that prophet. The Apostle Paul was under the impression that Isai. lxv. i. was by the son of Amoz.

Peter thought Moses had predicted the coming of the Lord Jesus as the Prophet like unto him (Acts iii. 22); and Stephen had the same impression (vii. 37). Matthew also believed that Isaiah wrote chapter liii. of his book, as well as that which he quoted as the prophet's words (Isai. xlii. 1.), and recorded in chapter xii. 17 of his Gospel. Luke (iii. 4.), believed that Isai. xl. was really written by the prophet. And the Lord read in the Synagogue at Nazareth out of the book of Isaiah (lxi. 1, 2.) a portion which it is said now never proceeded from that prophet's pen! Were all, the Lord included, under a delusion, which critics of our age are now at work to dispel? For Moses, they would assure us, never wrote Deuteronomy, and Isaiah xl.-lxvi., could not have proceeded from the son of Amoz. To an unnamed, and unnameable evangelist of the exile are we indebted for those beautiful chapters (p. 162).

Startling, indeed. But the Professor has much of which to instruct us. "We are uncertain," he tells us, "whether any written law has reached us from Moses himself" (p. 139). And "criticism," we read, "has already removed from many of the Prophets large portions of the books which bear their names" (p. 217). Nor have we bottomed the subject yet, for our author prepares us for fresh discoveries looming, it would appear, in the distance. He does not forget "that we (*i.e.*, critics), have entered upon a more thorough analysis of these books which may issue in further subtractions of the same kind" (p. 217). To what shall we come, when the critics have finished their work? No extant written law of Moses! No Psalms from David!

The early chapters of Genesis "in their framework were woven from raw material of myth and legend" (p. 92). Genesis iii. is a "prose poem of the fall" (p. 93). The man who composed that chapter "was the acute and faithful reader of his own heart" (p. 94). Surely simple folk may well ask—If critics are to lead us, have we any reliable Old Testament at all? In the meantime, where are we to stop; for the final consensus of criticism has not yet appeared? (p. 217). For that, it seems, we must still wait, but whilst waiting we may indeed think, shall we

ever get it? So here, in the twentieth century of the Christian era, we are still to be in doubt as to what is really comprised in the Old Testament. But meanwhile a word of comfort is offered us. "This absence of history from the chapters (Gen. i.-ix.), this fact that their framework is woven from the raw material of myth and legend, cannot discredit the profound moral and religious truths with which they are charged, any more than the cosmogony of his time, which Milton employs, impairs by one whit our spiritual indebtedness to *Paradise Lost*" (p. 92). What shall we say of such an announcement? Does any one view *Paradise Lost* as an inspired writing? Is it real, authentic history? Does anyone dream that it is a revelation from God?

The Word of God and *Paradise Lost*, think of the association!! Raw material of myth and legend! Is this the character of the Word of God? How did Israel acquire this myth and legend? Whence came it? The Professor is prepared to enlighten us. "Critics are now generally agreed that the traditions reached Israel at an early age, and that along with other elements of Babylonian legend and mythology, they underwent considerable modification and gradually became, when, perhaps, all memory of their true origin was lost, part of the folk-lore of Canaan. The process gradually extended through many centuries before the authors of these chapters of Genesis used them for a higher purpose" (pp. 91, 92). The *authors* of these chapters! Who were they? Who can tell? Who will tell? Here, Professor G. A. Smith, who has conducted his readers to such an embarrassment, forsakes them, only assuring them, "nor (it is hardly necessary to add) does the legendary character of these stories altogether destroy their historical value" (p. 92). Historical value! Is that all we gather from them?

But, there is a book professing to speak the truth, which directly conflicts with such a nebulous hypothesis. The history of Adam and Eve just myth and legend! Paul thought differently, and taught differently. Eve to him was no legendary character, nor the history of the fall a myth. Adam was a real man, and the first man (1 Cor. xv. 45). Eve was a real woman, and the

temptation by the serpent a real though sad history (2 Cor. xi. 3 ; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14). The story of Cain and Abel a myth ! John the Apostle teaches differently (1 John iii. 12). Abel's blood *was* shed we can say on the highest authority (Matt. xxiii. 35). And the record of his sacrifice and its acceptance we are taught is reliable and instructive history (Heb. xi. 4).

Coming down the stream of time we read of the translation of Enoch. A mere legend is this ? Was he a mythical person ? Jude acquaints us (14, 15) with the words of his prophecy, and Heb. xi. 5 assures us of the reality of his translation. Then the story of the flood confronts us (Gen. vi-viii) ; what can the Professor state about it ? Writing of the creation and the flood he tells us, " We are ignorant of the time at which the Hebrews received these stories," founded, as we are to understand, on Babylonian legends. Then as to the shape in which these chapters in Genesis have come down to us, we read, " in their Biblical form they exhibit so many differences from the Babylonian, as to make it probable that the materials were used by the writers of the Pentateuchal documents only after long tradition within a Hebrew atmosphere " (p. 62). What room is there for the thought of divine revelation in all this ? A Babylonian legend the source of information, and the materials of it used by the Pentateuchal writers only after long tradition within a Hebrew atmosphere. Is such a conclusion sober truth, or is it the dream of men who reject the thought of verbal inspiration ? Granting that the Babylonian legends of the flood, and that of Creation are of older date than the days of Moses, does that confirm the allegation that Gen. i., vi-viii. are Semitic products based on Babylonian materials ? God, of course, knew of these legends. What then more proper, when Israel as His people were commencing their national existence, than that He should by Moses put on record the real history of creation and the true story of the flood, the cause of it, the nature of it, and the issue of it in the preservation in the ark of Noah and his family ? The Babylonian stories would show that the history of the flood was no myth. But reading the two accounts surely

anyone could see to which should be given implicit credence. The Babylonian legend of the flood is polytheistic in character. The History in Genesis is essentially monotheistic. Was the knowledge of the One True God evolved out of the story of many Gods?

Can we then call the Mosaic account a myth, of course then of no historical authority? It is very precise in its details. Do men commonly give implicit credence to details of a myth? Now the Spirit of God by the prophet Isaiah distinctly avers that the flood was a real fact. "This is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee" (Isai. liv. 9). Then, of that Patriarch's personal existence Ezekiel was sure, as he wrote by the Spirit of God of him in connection with Daniel and Job (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20). Twice over, too, does Peter refer to the flood as real history (1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5), and each time mentions Noah by name. To the fact of the deluge and its awful results the Lord Jesus has borne witness (Luke xvii. 26, 27; telling us, too, who more fitting, what men were about in the old world, till the flood came and took them all away.

Myths, legends are these ante-diluvian histories? How clearly does the New Testament bear witness to their credibility. Abel, Cain, Enoch, as well as Noah, have a place in New Testament Scriptures. Matt. xxiii. 35; and Heb. xi. 4 have preserved a record of Abel. The former passage from the mouth of the Lord Jesus keeps in memory his death; the latter by the Spirit recalls God's acceptance of his sacrifice. Then of Cain, 1 John iii. 12; Jude 11, perpetuate the story of his wickedness. And Enoch's faithful walk, service, and translation (Heb. xi. 5, 6; Jude 14, 15) are facts never to be forgotten. Call these histories legends if anybody will. Such must reckon with the Author of the inspired Word, who presents them to us as veritable history. And as for the flood, the Lord Jesus has drawn a lesson for all from its suddenness, to warn all of the suddenness of His return to earth to reign (Matt. xxiv. 37). He would teach all of the historical

value of the Mosaic account of Gen. vi.-viii. Peter likewise attests it (2 Pet. iii. 5, 6).

Then the book of Jonah, we are told, "is not real history, but a sermon in the form of a parable upon the great evangelical truth, that *God has granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life*" (p. 89). Is it not strange that if Professor G. A. Smith is here correct, the Lord Jesus never intimated it? He referred to the history of Jonah, affirmed thereby that it was *real* history, and made mention of the two wonderful events in that book—Jonah in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, and the effect on the Ninevites by his preaching just for one day. He drew lessons from them for the men of His day (Luke xi. 29-32); but mentioned nothing of events in the then future Christian times, *i.e.*, subsequent to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. What the Lord dwelt on the Professor passes over. What the Lord did not even hint at is presented to us as the legitimate teaching of the history. But how suggest a lesson from that which was not real history?

Again, "Take," we read, "the different stories of the origin of the name of Bethel. It is impossible to believe that these came from the same hand" (p. 47). We cannot see the impossibility. Jacob when *alone* at Luz (Gen. xxviii. 10-22) on his way to Padan-Aram called it Bethel. God, in xxxi. 13, appearing to Jacob in Padan-Aram, acknowledges and endorses the name that Jacob had given to the spot. But who else was to know of the change of name by which it was to be called? This was provided for in xxxv. 9-15. Jacob now returned to it, no longer alone, but with a *large company*, publicly called the place Bethel. All with him were to recognise the change of name. Very natural was this. So of his name of Israel. Given to him when *alone* with the angel (Gen. xxxii.), arriving at Bethel God appeared unto him and called his name Israel. Now in the midst of his company, no longer alone, his new name was openly declared. These two supposed difficulties are surely easily explained, and the argument sought to be founded on them has no substantial support from the narratives.

It becomes evident that following the critics of the Old Testament we must set aside New Testament teaching, as in the case of Jonah, and repudiate the direct statements of inspired Scripture. Nay, more, we must be prepared to hold that the Lord Jesus could be, and was mistaken, and asserted as fact what never happened. Truly we shall have much to unlearn. The volume, too, of the Old Testament will shrink into small, and who can yet say into how small, dimensions? For Deuteronomy, we are told, did not come into force till B.C. 621 under king Josiah (p. 66); and "Pentateuchal legislation was not in existence in the time of the Judges, or of the earlier Kings" (p. 60). Of Isaiah, too, we are told that chaps. xl.-lxvi. were the product of some unknown writer, who lived a good while later than the era of the son of Amoz (p. 162).

Shall we accept the critics in opposition to Prophets and Apostles, and even to the Lord Jesus Himself? Shall we place these last in one scale and all the critics in the other, and find, as we do so, that the critics outweigh the others? Are the whole company of critics agreed on that which is declared? Can they truthfully claim for themselves what David, Paul and John could say of themselves? Are they prepared to challenge the truthfulness of the Master Himself? David affirmed that the Lord spake by him, and His word was on his tongue (2 Sam. xxiii. 2); and his "tongue," he elsewhere said, "was the pen of a ready writer" (Ps. xlv. 1). St. Paul tells us that he and others spake in words which the Holy Ghost taught them (1 Cor. ii. 13). What critic would dare to affirm that of himself? St. John claims special attention to his teaching, as he unhesitatingly writes, "He that knoweth God heareth us" (1 John iv. 5). Then the Lord declared of Himself, "We speak that we do know" (John iii. 11). And Peter, writing of the Prophets in general, states that "holy men of God (or, men from God) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). Which of the critics could affirm that of himself? Certainly all could not, for they do not all agree.

Now to turn to Deuteronomy. "The written law of Israel,"

we read, "in the three forms in which we possess it, cannot have been the work of Moses or of the Mosaic, or immediately post-Mosaic age, but must be assigned to a much later date" (p. 52). This is plain speaking. So Deuteronomy, to use a common expression, must go by the board. It did not come into force till B.C. 621 (p. 66). Where was it previously? Now let us remind the reader of a principle, as we believe it to be, in God's dealings with men, viz., that at the outset, or in the early days of a divine movement God communicates for those concerned what is suited for them to know. In Eden this appears as he warned Adam and Eve against eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of all other fruits they might freely eat. The fruit of that was alone debarred to them. No further revelation was required. Keeping God's command they would live, transgressing it they would die. We know the result. God at the outset had issued this command; and Eve in her reply to the serpent expressed her full cognisance of it.

The next great movement was after the flood, when Noah and his family, the only ones spared of the human race, were to multiply and replenish the earth. Fresh regulations were therefore vouchsafed. The sweet savour of the sacrifice rising up to God, He blessed Noah and his sons, an act for man never repeated after the creation of Adam and Eve. The fruits of the trees, of which Adam and his posterity were deprived by the fall, were given back. Flesh, too, without distinction was granted them, blood only being forbidden. And the sword of government was now placed in man's hand (Gen. viii. 21; ix. 6). All this, that little company of eight heard as they stood around the altar. Before there was any dispersion they were acquainted with the revelation for their day.

Years rolled by, and Abraham was called out to be a pilgrim and stranger upon earth. To him new revelations, but those just suited for the pilgrim, were vouchsafed. It was this time a revelation about his inheritance, and a revelation about God. He started on his pilgrimage to reach the land. Reaching Sichem he learnt that Canaan was the land; and dwelling there God

spoke to him saying, "I am the Almighty God ; walk before Me, and be thou perfect " (Gen. xvii. 1). To Abraham the father of the faithful was this first made known. A stranger in the land of promise, moving amongst people of different nationalities, though all descendants of Ham, God revealed to the patriarch that He was the Almighty, and therefore could, of course, protect His servant. This revelation suited for the patriarchal and nomad life, Isaac evidently treasured up. For when Jacob was to leave his father's house to go to Haran, a lonely traveller with nothing but his staff, his father remembering surely the revelation vouchsafed to Abraham, said to his son "God Almighty bless thee" (Gen. xxviii. 3). No more suited revelation of God for those times could there be, than that which Abraham had received. The promise of the land God confirmed first to Isaac (xxvi. 3), and then to Jacob (xxviii. 13) ; for as yet there was no written revelation to which they could turn. Then that revelation of God as the Almighty, Jacob remembered, when sending his sons with Benjamin on their second journey to Egypt. "God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin" (xliii. 14). The old man evidently felt in his soul the value of that revelation first communicated to his grandfather Abraham, when called to walk as a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth. Thenceforth after Jacob, with the exception of Exod. vi. 3, and Numb. xxiv. 4, 16, that name of God is no longer found in the Pentateuch.

The next divine movement was the calling out, not now of a family as in patriarchal days, but of a nation. Further revelations were then given. God's name, Jehovah, was to be a special one for Israel, privileged, if they had only remembered it, to witness for the one true God against idols, "I am Jehovah " (Exod. vi. 2) was the divine announcement. And, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah " (Deut. vi. 4) was the repetition of it. Two Jehovahs, independent the one of the other there are not. In addition to that, the law was now given them by Moses (John i. 17), a code completed ere the law-giver died, and all that was needed for Israel, till the Prophet, like unto Moses, should appear.

Coming down to Christian times we see the same principle at work. To the revelation of God as Almighty and Jehovah was now added that of Father ; and all that Christians need of divine revelation for their walk and guidance was given in apostolic times. Nothing further in this dispensation is to be looked for (Rev. ii. 25 ; iii. 11 ; Jude 3). The Apostle Paul had the service entrusted to him to fulfil the Word of God, as he declared and explained in Col. i. 25-27.

Would any here enquire, how does this bear on the question of Deuteronomy? We will explain. There were three covenants made by God with Israel during the lifetime of Moses. The first was made at Sinai. To this Israel were a party, and if kept by them rich blessing would have been theirs (Exod. xix. 5, 6). Soon broken by the making of the golden calf, Israel as far as they were concerned, had forfeited all favour. God then in grace made another covenant with them, and this time an unconditional one, by which He bound Himself to bring them into the land (Exod. xxxiv. 10-27). On the strength of this covenant the people entered into Canaan. But entering into the land, and continuing to enjoy it, are two very different questions. On what terms could they hope to continue in the land? Here the *third* covenant, that was made in the land of Moab, comes in (Deut. xxix. 1). On the observance of this (xii.-xxix. 1) to which Israel were a party (xxix. 9-15), they would prosper and prolong their days on the earth for ever (iv. 40 ; xxviii. 1-13).

If the critics are right, Deuteronomy, according to some, appeared in the reign of Manasseh, according to others it only came into force in the reign of Josiah, B.C. 621. Then for upwards of *eight hundred years* after the death of Moses the people had not vouchsafed them the terms on which they could continue in the land. And only after the captivity of the ten tribes, and when, too, because of Manasseh's sins Judah must go into captivity (2 Kings xxi. 10-15), the conditions on the observance of which Israel could continue to enjoy the land were made known. Is this credible? Would that be like our God? And be it remembered that only in Deuteronomy is found that third covenant of which we have spoken.

If Moses, then, did not write the covenant made in the land of Moab, what a break there was in the needed instruction for Israel. And if he did not put it in writing, as Deuteronomy declares he did (xxxi. 9), difficulties rise up impossible to solve. There is a phrase, which is met with in that book about thirty times, and elsewhere in the law once or so, characterised by the Hebrew word *hayom*, *i.e.*, to-day, or as the A.V. often renders it, "this day." Moses is introduced as saying, "this law which I set before you this day;" "commandments which I command you this day" (iv. 8, 40), "the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day" (v. 1), "words which I command you this day" (vi. 6). See, too, iv. 26; vii. 11; viii. 1, 11; x. 13; xi. 8, 13, 27, 28, 32; xiii. 18; xv. 5, 15; xix. 9; xxvii. 1, 4, 9; xxviii. 1, 13, 14, 15; xxix. 12; xxx. 2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19; xxxii. 46. If Deuteronomy does not give us the real words of Moses, but only conjectures of a scribe some eight centuries later, what imposition did that anonymous individual practice on his countrymen! To speak in plain language, the repetition of "this day" was the repetition of a lie. But believing that Deuteronomy was really the work of Moses, his words and his writing, we can see how the Holy Ghost provided beforehand by that one Hebrew word, *i.e.*, "this day," a safeguard against the dreams of critics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of our era.

Would any suggest that the frequent use of that one Hebrew word in Deuteronomy confirms the supposition of a different author than the law-giver? Simple folk may well ask what confidence could we have in the statements of the writer putting words into Moses' mouth, and fixing the date when he uttered them; yet well knowing that he was only presenting to his countrymen what, living eight centuries after the law-giver, he thought Moses might have said?

God acted towards Israel as He had on previous occasions, and as He has done in apostolic days. He communicated, ere Moses died, all the law that they were to keep, till the Prophet like unto Moses should appear.

We have said difficulties impossible to solve rise up as we ponder over the suggestions of the critics. We are told that Pentateuchal legislation was not in existence in the time of the Judges, or of the earlier Kings (p. 60). Was it in existence in the days of Joshua? What would the critics answer? What, we may ask, would Scripture tell us? God's words to Joshua, just after the death of Moses, speak of the book of the law as in existence, and known to Joshua (Josh. i. 8). Then he spoke of it at the close of his life, addressing the elders gathered together as "the book of the law of Moses" (xxiii. 6). And that book he must have had in his hands when addressing the people at Shechem, who then and there openly declared that they would obey God. On the strength of that declaration the aged leader made a covenant with them, and wrote it in "the book of the law of God" (xxiv. 26). The book of the law was therefore in existence. And the book of Deuteronomy was owned as part of it. For Joshua years previously had assembled all Israel between Ebal and Gerizim, had erected an altar on Ebal, and there wrote upon stones a copy of the law of Moses, which the law-giver wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. "There was not a word," we read, "of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" (Josh. viii. 31-35). Where was to be found this commandment of Moses? Only in Deuteronomy xi. 26-32; and xxvii. 1-26. Deuteronomy then existed in Joshua's days, and was owned by him and all as part of the law of God by Moses. It was at Shechem that God first announced to Abraham that to his seed would He give that land (Gen. xii. 7). And after the lapse of upwards of four centuries and a half the people there met and read what we may call their title-deeds to the land.

But no Pentateuchal legislation in the days of the earlier kings!! Was this the case? Then David, Solomon, Asa, and Jehoshaphat were all under a delusion. They thought they had the law of Moses (1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Chron. xiv. 4). Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord (2 Chron. xii. 1); then he must have

had it. And Jehoshaphat sent of his princes and of Levites to teach in Judah, and they "had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people" (2 Chron. xvii. 7-9). Shall we view all this as myth and legend, or regard it as sober history? Then if the book of Deuteronomy only came into force 621 B.C., how was it that king Amaziah, whilst putting to death the murderers of his father, spared their children? What made him act thus? The chronicler tells us that he followed in that what was "written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded saying, 'The fathers shall not die for the children, nor the children for the fathers, but every one shall die for his own sin'" (2 Chron. xxv. 3, 4). Where is this found? Only in Deuteronomy xxiv. 16. Did Amaziah know and act on a law which only came into force nigh two centuries later? Will it be said, that is only the Chronicler? The writer of 2 Kings xiv. 5, 6 relates the same.

Was the book of the law enlarged as time went on, or additions made to it subsequent to the death of Moses? There is no hint of that, and of this we can adduce a witness, whose testimony surely will be accepted. The prophet Ezekiel, himself a priest, who born in the days of Josiah, and dates his last prophecy in the seven and twentieth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, knew of no addition to the law of Moses subsequent to the law-giver's death, as he shows by his words in xx. 10-12. The book of the law had been then completed. Revelations by prophets came from time to time, but no addition to the law. David instituted a service of song, but he did not incorporate that in the book of the law of Moses. His institution of music in the Temple service is mentioned (2 Chron. xxix. 25; Ezra iii. 10; Nehemiah xii. 24); but as Ezra iii. 2 compared with verse 10 shows, it was distinguished from the law of Moses.

As far as we have gone, the Old Testament does not bear out the dictum of Professor G. A. Smith, but distinctly refutes it. Pentateuchal legislation was in existence from the first, however the people failed in carrying it out. And that legislation included

among the books of the law—the book of Deuteronomy as we have seen. And now ere leaving the subject of the Mosaic authenticity of that book, let us ask what the New Testament can tell us about it. That is as much entitled to be heard as the conclusions of the critics. As much? We must say, far more. The New Testament is composed of inspired writings, inspired by the Spirit of God. We shall find it on this subject by no means reticent. The Jews of that day, Apostles, Evangelists, and the Lord Himself all bear testimony to its Mosaic authorship. The Pharisees approaching the Lord on the question of divorce, were asked by Him, What did Moses command you? And they at once replied, “Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away” (Mark x. 4). Where was this found in the law? In the book of Deuteronomy, and there only (xxiv. 1). Was that really a Mosaic exactment? What an opportunity, if critics are correct, for the Lord to have told them that Moses never wrote such words. By His answer, however, He has settled that question beyond dispute. “For the hardness of your heart,” He replied, “he *i.e.*, Moses, wrote you this precept” (Mark x. 5). What they had quoted, therefore, was not just a tradition, however carefully preserved. The words of Deut. xxiv. 1. were the words that Moses had *written*. The Pharisees by their answer expressed their belief that Deuteronomy was written by Moses. The Sadducees, too, the other great school of the day, were of the same mind, as they approached the Lord with their question as to resurrection, prefacing it with the statement, that “Moses wrote unto us” (Mark xii. 19), and quoting Deut. xxv. 5 about the levirate marriage. The Jews, then, whether Pharisees or Sadducees, were of one mind about Deuteronomy, however much they differed on other vital points. Then Peter (Acts iii. 22) and Stephen (vii. 37) held the like view, as they quote Deut. xviii. 18 as the words of Moses.

But we can carry the case further. The Lord in the Gospel of John v. 46, 47, said, “Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” Moses then wrote

something, and that something was in existence in the Lord's day. Has it been lost? We know it has not. Moses wrote, too, of the Lord. Where shall we find that in the Pentateuch? We think the Lord's word indicates it. "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" He had said. Was He not referring to Deut. xviii. 18, which foretold the coming of a Prophet like unto Moses, to whom they were to hearken? But, writes the Professor, "We are uncertain whether any written law has reached us from Moses himself" (p. 139). That may be his conviction. Ours, who believe the New Testament as well as the Old, is very different.

To refer again to Isaiah we are told (p. 53), that chapters xl-lxvi. were not by the son of Amoz. "These chapters nowhere claim to be by Isaiah, and do not present a single reflection of his time. But they plainly set forth, as having already taken place, certain events, which happened from a century to a century and a half after Isaiah had passed away: the Babylonian exile and captivity, the ruin of Jerusalem, and the devastation of the Holy Land." Such is the indictment. What can be said to the contrary? The opening of the book presents an answer. It is called, "The *vision* of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (i. 1). Only two other prophetic books are described as *visions*; viz., that of Obadiah, and that of Nahum. The former was a vision concerning Edom, the latter a vision concerning Nineveh. This description then should arrest attention. Now a prophetic vision to be vouchsafed depended, of course, only on God who gave it. And a vision could depict events as if actually passing before the eye of the prophet, so that he would describe them as if actually taking place. Prophecy gives a *history* of that which is to be. A *vision* presents certain things as present to the gaze of the individual so favoured. It becomes then, not a question of what the prophet might surmise, but only of what he saw. The moment we recognise that the book is a *vision*, there can be no difficulty in events being described as actually taking place, though it may be centuries

before they come to pass. The prophet, then, in the case of a vision sets forth what he sees.

Now did Isaiah's book end with xxxix. 7, 8, what a lugubrious ending would it be, predicting the captivity of Hezekiah's posterity to become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon, and no more. Was that to be the end of the royal house? Was that condition never to be reversed? Chapters xl-lxvi. assure all of Israel's final blessing. Then who was the writer of those chapters if Isaiah was not? Who knows? The critics do not. It would be an anomaly in God's ways in prophetic books for the writer not to be identified by name. Every really prophetic book is authenticated by the writer's name. Why was the name of the supposed writer of chaps. xl-lxvi. withheld from the reader? When did God send a written message by no one knows who? If we cannot name all the messengers God sent of old, the people of the day in which they appeared well knew them. Who knew, who saw, who heard this unnamed individual? We may ask this, but ask in vain. Till, then, the existence of the supposed writer is cleared up, we may quietly and confidently rest in the belief that it was Isaiah the son of Amoz who wrote that long portion.

And this we think will be confirmed as we mark the arrangements observable in the book. A cursory glance at it shows that it is divided into two great parts, separated by the historical chapters xxxvi-xxxix, which recount events of Hezekiah's reign. The first part i-xxxv. gives us the prophetic outline of events in connection with Judah and Jerusalem to take place from the days of the prophet to those of the Lord Jesus. The second part (xl., lxvi.) describes more the moral dealing of God with the nation to form the remnant, that will inherit the promises, and dwell in the land under the rule of the righteous King.

These two great parts of the book are further subdivided into sections, chapters i-xii.; xiii-xxvii.; xxviii-xxxv, each portion of which ends with gladness or praise; and chapters xl-xlvi.; xlix-lvii.; lviii-lxvi, each of which ends with warnings about the wicked. This feature we can understand. For where it is a question of that which Jehovah will do on earth for His people, a scene of

brightness will be witnessed, and praise will be the fitting utterance of the heart. But where the moral condition of the people forms the subject of the prophecy, since all will not be converted, words of warning about the wicked form the suited conclusion. God warns the ungodly in the latter part, the praises of His people are provided for in the former part. The book is a consistent whole.

We have endeavoured thus far to show from the book itself, that the Isaianic authorship of the whole is by no means improbable. We can now advance further, reminding the reader of the irrefragable evidence, for those who listen to the Lord Jesus and to apostolic teaching, that Isaiah was the writer of the sixty-six chapters in which in our Bibles the book is divided. Matthew three times in his Gospel confirms the common belief of the writer of xl.-lxvi.; as he quotes the prophet by name in iii. 3; viii. 17; xii. 17. Luke thrice over attests the same (iii. 4; iv. 17; Acts viii. 28, 30). John has no doubt about the writer of the second part (i. 23; xii. 38). John the Baptist, too, believed it, as John the Evangelist tells us (i. 23). Paul also averred the same (Rom. x. 16, 20). And to this we may add the witness of the Lord as recorded in Luke iv. For when there was handed to Him in the Synagogue at Nazareth the book of the prophet Isaiah, He opened the book to read to the assembled congregation (Isai. lxi. 1-3). Authority, then, of the highest kind, and to which no critics can lay claim, must be held as settling the question. No other individual ever came forward even to assert, much less to prove, that he was really the writer. From the days of the son of Amoz to those of the Lord it was believed by all who possessed the book that Isaiah was the writer. What Scripture teaches, what it asserts is, we may be sure, the safe and the true ground on which to rest.

Our space is limited, otherwise many other points could be noticed. Such, for instance, as the way God is presented (p. 136). Neither becoming reverence for Him, nor for the Lord Jesus, characterises the lectures. We would conclude with a few remarks on the way the Lord Jesus is presented in these pages. The Spirit of God testifies of Him (John xv. 26), and

glorifies Him (xvi. 14). How do critics speak of Him as evidenced by Professor G. A. Smith? On p. 11 we read that Christ took for granted its, *i.e.*, the Bible's, fundamental doctrines about creation, about man, and about righteousness; about God's Providence of the world, and His purposes of grace through Israel. "*Took for granted.*" What does this mean? We have been told (p. 92) that the framework of the early chapters of Genesis is woven from raw material of myth and legend. Did the Lord, He who is the Word of God, take for granted the framework of myth and legend, and treat it as the inspired word of God? He describes Himself as the faithful and true witness (Rev. iii. 14). He spoke, He declared that which He knew (John iii. 11). Was that compatible with taking for granted what we are told was woven from myth and legend? If Professor G. A. Smith is right, did the Lord know the origin of those early chapters? Yet who can doubt that He did.

Again we read, "To many other observances of the Law, Christ showed by His neglect of them, or by His positive transgression, a high superiority. He touched the leper, and did not feel Himself unclean; He reckoned all foods as lawful; He broke away from the literal observance of the Sabbath law" (p. 14). Is this a true picture of the Lord Jesus Christ as He walked about upon earth? Let us hear His own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, 'Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled'" (Matt. v. 17, 18).^{*} These are the words of One, of whom we are told, that He was a transgressor of some of its precepts. Was that compatible

^{*}On this we read (p. 12), "If, as most critics allow, the second of these verses (18) be a genuine utterance of our Lord." What critics doubt it we are not told. But we receive it not on the authority of critics. No uncial MS. it seems, which has that portion of Matthew's Gospel, omits it. Ancient versions as the Vulgate, and Jerome's version exhibited in the Codex Amiatinas, and the Peshito-Syriac all have it. The testimony in its favour seems overwhelming. Neither Tischendorf, ed : 8, nor Tregelles doubt of it, nor Westcott and Hort either.

with His words near the close of His life, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you, do and observe" (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3)? Did He enjoin such an observance on others, and yet be Himself a transgressor? "Which of you," He could say, challenging hostile Jews, "convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46). St. Paul writes of Him as one who "knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21); and St. John declares "In Him is no sin" (1 John iii. 5). Professor G. A. Smith asserts that He was a transgressor. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all," writes James (ii. 10). The Lord Jesus guilty of positive transgression of some of the observances of the law!! Is this what we are to believe? Irving taught that the Lord had a peccable nature, but did not sin. Professor G. A. Smith presents Him as guilty of positive transgression of the law. Could such an one, who must then have needed a sacrifice on His own behalf, have been as a Lamb without blemish and without spot, of which St. Peter writes (1 Peter i. 19)? What Christian could think that of the Holy One and the True (Rev. iii. 7)? Had He transgressed the law in a matter which seems not to have been transacted in a corner, how was it that the Jews, who were on the watch to accuse Him, never brought that up against Him?

For when was it that we are given to understand He transgressed an ordinance of the law? The reference given us in a note is to the cleansing of the leper (Matt. viii. 1-4); but without pointing the reader to the Mosaic law which the Lord is said to have transgressed. Now the authority of the law the Master maintained on that occasion by sending the cleansed leper to the priests. Had the Lord first transgressed it? The leper blazoned abroad the story of his cure. Multitudes thereupon sought the Lord to hear and to be healed of their infirmities (Luke v. 12-15). Did they run after an open transgressor of the law?

Next we read, "He reckoned all foods as lawful," and Mark vii. 15; Luke xi. 37; x. vii are given as authorities. Not one of these support the statement. Luke xi. 37 certainly does not. Mark is equally wide of the mark. And Luke x. 7 refers to hospitality shewn the seventy by Jews, for they went not on that mission among Gentiles, going to the cities, etc., in the land to

which the Lord would go. They went therefore among Jews, who as Peter teaches speaking of himself (Acts x. 14) did not eat anything common or unclean. Then as to the literal observance of the Sabbath law, what the Lord refused was obedience to the traditional teaching engrafted on it, which never came from God. Men by their traditions would have hindered the outflow of divine mercy on that day. The Lord's teaching on such occasions silenced all outward objections to His acts in grace. The Lord's character, aspersed by the quotation we have given, is effectually cleared as Scripture is allowed its testimony.

In that same paragraph from which we have quoted we read that, "He, *i.e.*, the Lord, left no commands about sacrifice, the Temple worship, or circumcision, *but on the contrary by the institution of the New Covenant, He abrogated for ever these sacraments of the Old.*" The italics are ours. Strange it is to read of the abrogation *for ever* of the Mosaic ritual, whilst Ezek. xl-xlvi. remains uncanceled and unfulfilled. Stranger still to read of the Lord's institution of the New Covenant. It has not yet been made, as Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34 makes plain, but will be made in a coming day with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah, not with Christians. We call attention to this to show the need of verifying such allegations instead of blindly accepting them. Two more quotations must suffice, 1st, "There are other parts of the law upon which He, *i.e.*, the Lord, turned with spoken condemnation" (p. 20). "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do," etc. (John v. 19). Thus He spoke of Himself. Did He turn with spoken condemnation on God's revelation by Moses? 2nd, "The Lord did not count the whole of the Old Testament as equally divine" (p. 29). How does this square with His word on the day that He rose, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him (Luke xxiv. 44). The threefold division of the Old Testament the Lord here endorses, but makes no exception of any book in that volume as not equally divine.

He who would follow earlier critics in certain matters, as Professor Smith has informed us, would be led wrong. He who would follow the critics when they conflict with New Testament teaching, we learn from perusal of his book how such an one would be led wrong. To the Scriptures of truth must we keep, the only infallible guide for this day. C. E. S.

WHY DO I PRAY ?

A GLANCE AT SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS.

PERHAPS no question is so easy and yet so difficult of answer by the Christian as the one that heads this paper. It is easy, if he sets himself to state the reasons from Scripture and experience that satisfy himself. It is difficult, if he attempts to reply to questions, alleged to be philosophical or scientific, that beset the subject of prayer. I shall make reference to some of these further on. For the present, I answer my question, without concerning myself very much about the difficulties referred to.

I should explain that by "Christian," I mean one who from the heart has accepted the Lordship of Christ, and holds the Scriptures to be the revelation, in many ways and manners, in varying degrees and intensity of light, of God Himself. Such a man would find his only embarrassment in making his choice from the wealth of Scripture statements that constitute his warrant for prayer. He is not limited to scattered, isolated "texts"; prayer as duty and privilege runs well-nigh from cover to cover of the Bible. From Old Testament history he may find instances of prayer offered and answered; the prophets are rich in exhortation and encouragement. The Book of Psalms was the Prayer-book of the Lord and His apostles, and though Calvary and Pentecost have made our position very different from that of the Jew, it is so entirely a book of the heart, speaking of common needs and common experiences, and throbbing with the primary spiritual emotions, that Christian prayers and liturgies are saturated with its thought and language. Its intimate, tender communings with God are part of the Christian's heritage, and perhaps no passage of Scripture more feelingly answers the "Why?" of our question than does the phrase in David's song of deliverance: "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Ps. xxvii. 8).

When we pass from the Old Testament to the New, with its fuller light and dearer relationships, we do not find that it convicts the Old of error, or intimates that saints of a by-gone age had stretched vain hands to God. Just as History, Psalm and Prophet of the Old Dispensation bear witness to trusting hearts and a trustworthy God, so do History, Epistle and Apocalypse in the New give their three-fold testimony. By precept and example

the Lord Jesus Himself taught that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." His own example is decisive for the Christian. We read that on one occasion He went into a solitary place a great while before day, and there prayed (Mark i. 35). At another time He continued all night in prayer to God (Luke vi. 12). The great crises of His life were preceded by prayer. Gethsemane was hallowed by His blood and supplications; the first word on the Cross was a prayer for His enemies; the last was a quotation from what I have said was His prayer book,—the prayer of committal from the 31st Psalm: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

And as with the Lord, so with the disciples instructed by Him and taught by His good Spirit, prayer held a most important place, in both practice and teaching, no matter what the personal idiosyncrasies of the disciples might be. Peter, the man of action, bids us cast all our cares on God. James, the practical, says "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." John, the man of meditation and spiritual insight, says in one of those passages of calm certainty that distinguish his writings, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Paul, who combines the man of affairs with the dogmatic theologian, writes to the Philippians, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." What rest has come to many a troubled soul through acting upon the apostle's words!

It would be impossible, as it is unnecessary, to set out except very briefly (as I have done) the Scripture evidence for prayer. It is woven into the whole texture of the book; the subject is never argued nor explained; the practice is never apologetically justified. It is assumed that prayer is the life and breath of the soul, the natural (if the word may be allowed of a spiritual act) up-reaching of needy yet trusting hands to God.

As to the practice of the early Church, the historian of the "Acts" says, "They continued in the breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). One wonders a little curiously whether the historian of our own day would describe the practice of the Churches, Established or Free, in such terms.

Why Do I Pray ?

For the Christian, the subject of prayer is no longer an "open question," or one upon which he needs to retain "an open mind." Scripture, (in which I include the teaching and example of Christ), the experience of millions who have lived and died in the faith before him, and his own experience, constitute a weight of evidence that, for him, closes the subject. Gainsay it who will, "that which hath passed betwixt God and my soul," to use a phrase of George Herbert's, counts in this matter, and a man cannot forget deliverances granted, light given in darkness, comfort in sorrow, uplifting of heart in times of depression, without being disloyal to God and to himself.

I venture to quote here, as being far better than anything I can write, some lines by Archbishop Trench :—

" Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make !
What heavy burdens from our bosom take !
What parchèd lands refresh as with a shower !
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower :
We rise, and all, the distant and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak ; we rise, how full of power !
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care ?
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us His prayer.
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ?"

That is no solitary experience and testimony. Among others there has come down through the centuries a distich of Hebrew poetry, not less beautiful, not less convincing.

" They looked unto Him and were lightened
And their faces were not ashamed " (Ps. xxxiv. 5).

It is an experience not reserved for poets alone. It comes into the common, prosaic life of common-place individuals, of men whose days are spent in the stress and storm of life, of women whose work is never done, and whose anxieties are perhaps keener than those that afflict men. It is an experience that does not depend on culture, except the culture of the soul ; it needs only the trusting heart and the knowledge that God is true.

Why Do I Pray ?

365

I am conscious of stepping upon altogether lower ground when I base a reason for prayer on the instinct that exists in every man's heart. Yet we may devote a few lines to the consideration of that instinct. Like the consciousness of sin, it is found the wide world over. I dare affirm if you take any man and put him into a sufficiently perilous place, his instinct is to pray. He may set his teeth fast together and crush the thought, but generally the cry wells up from his heart, and "lips say 'God be pitiful!' that ne'er said 'God be praised!'" In storm, shipwreck, battle and other deadly peril, men lift helpless eyes to God. As an illustration, I refer to the experience of the correspondent of *The Morning Post*, during his recent escape from captivity at Pretoria. "I had scarcely slept," says Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill, "but my heart beat fiercely, and I was so nervous and perplexed about the future that I could not rest. . . . I found no comfort in any of the philosophical ideas which some men parade in their hours of ease and strength and safety. They seemed only fair-weather friends. . . . I prayed long and earnestly for help and guidance. My prayer, as it seems to me, was swiftly and wonderfully answered."

Perhaps I may be allowed another illustrative passage from a somewhat unlikely source. Dr. Conan Doyle, in his story, "The Tragedy of the Korosko," brings his narrative up to the point where some of his characters, a party of Nile tourists, escape from the hands of the Soudan Dervishes, to whose tender mercies others were left. At the invitation of a not very happily drawn character, a minister, "either a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist," the rescued prayed for the others. "So they knelt together among the black rocks, and prayed as some of them had never prayed before. It was very well to discuss prayer and treat it lightly and philosophically upon the deck of the Korosko. It was easy to feel strong and self-confident in the comfortable deck chair, with the slippered Arab handing round the coffee and liqueurs. But they had been swept out of that placid stream of existence and dashed against the horrible, jagged facts of life. Battered and shaken they must have something to cling to. A blind, inexorable destiny was too horrid a belief. A chastening power, acting intelligently and for a purpose, a living, working power, tearing them out of their grooves, breaking down their small ways, forcing them into the better path—that was what they learned to realise during those

days of horror. . . . Could such a power be deflected by any human supplication? It was that or nothing—the last court of appeal left open to injured humanity. And so they all prayed, as a lover loves, or a poet writes, from the very inside of their souls, and they rose with that singular illogical feeling of inward peace and satisfaction which prayer only can give.”

I do not quote Winston Churchill or Conan Doyle as theologians, or as being in any sense authorities; they simply voice a common experience, a common confession. Prayer wrung from the soul in such circumstances does not denote anything as to spiritual condition; in its kind it seems to be very like the cry of the ravens, which, Scripture says, God hears. Perhaps we cannot call it *Christian* prayer at all. For this supposes a knowledge of Christ, and of God’s relationship to us in Him; what I here speak of is merely the invocation of “a Higher Power,” and is based on the relationship God holds to this world as Creator and sustainer, whose tender mercies are over all His works. My point is this—that in every heart touched by need there is the instinct of prayer, prayer for help and deliverance only it may be, but Scripture and human experience assert that over and over again such prayers are heard and deliverances are wrought. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses.” “Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee.” Alas! that the next clause is often so soon forgotten: “and thou shalt glorify Me.” But so far as the matter goes, this inborn tendency, this instinct, is on the side of prayer.

When we leave simple statement and move on to discussion, it is well to point out that the subject of prayer cannot be dealt with *in vacuo* and detached from other great truths. Bound up with it are important questions concerning the nature of God, the relation He holds to the world at large, the doctrine of Providence, the possibility of revelation, the action of finite mind on the Infinite, the credibility of the Scriptures, the results of sin, the guidance of the Spirit, the intercession of Christ, and so on. It is impossible to discuss these in a paper like the present; I can only refer to them, to indicate the wide extent of subjects bound up with the question that heads this paper. As to some of these indeed, we can only act upon the ancient Rabbinical counsel, “Teach thy tongue to say ‘I do not know.’” It is a truism that the more we know and the more extended our range of thought

and observation, the more hopeless seem the limitations of our knowledge. A Kaffir or a Patagonian has not a hundredth part of the difficulties and questions that beset an educated European.

Some startling point we must have, and in writing for Christians there should be no need to begin at the remote point that would be adopted by a Professor of Apologetics in a course of theological instruction. As a fact, I should not care to argue as to the effects of prayer with an avowed unbeliever, for in the consideration of the subject and of such as are indicated above, there is need for *something* that on his own shewing he knows nothing about, or denies the reality of—namely, a spiritual quickening of his nature by God. The man of mere natural instinct—one who “has not the Spirit of God” (a qualification that differentiates the Christian from the non-Christian), can no more understand the spiritual truths involved than a deaf mute could understand a paper on enharmonic modulation, or a blind man could properly criticise theories of light and colour. In fact, a denial of Christian truth by the man who is merely “soulish” and non-spiritual (to use the language of Jude’s Epistle) irresistibly recalls the case of the Irishman charged with theft, who being told that three witnesses would be called to prove they saw him take a certain article, replied that he could bring thirty to prove they did *not* see him take it.

But even among Christians, where we may make large assumptions as to spiritual facts, there are wide divergencies in inferences from those facts. “It hath ever been the lot of Truth, like the Lord of it, to be crucified between right hand and left hand thieves,” says an old Puritan writer. His language is not complimentary, especially as we all claim to be “seekers after truth.” But let that pass. In a Christian community, no matter how small, there will probably be found some who err by excess of faith, shall we say, and others who err on the side of defect. I have known of those who contend that to pray more than once about any specific object is to doubt God. The matter being laid before Him, should be left, they say, in faith in His hands. That view need not detain us. If their faith rises to such a height, by all means let them enjoy it; but when they allege want of faith in those more ordinary mortals who, being burdened or perplexed, go again and again to “the throne of grace” on the same matter, it is allowable to remind them that thrice did St. Paul pray for the removal of his affliction, and thrice did the

Lord Jesus ask that if it were possible the cup might pass from Him. "He went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words," is the simple, unadorned narrative of the Evangelist.

Others there are who to some extent deprecate specific prayer, and assert that the real point to be aimed at is our *attitude* toward God, the constant exercise of a spirit of dependence for mercies, help and guidance, and of thanksgiving for good received from Him. With them, definite prayer, especially about the small details of life, comes in for condemnation analogous to that meted out in certain quarters to "the letter," as distinct from "the spirit" of Scripture. The Psalms (which, one would have thought, favour the idea of detailed, particular, prayer) are made to support the view by its frequent calls to the soul to "wait" upon God. That the attitude of the soul is of supreme importance, one not only does not doubt but affirms with most strenuous conviction. Yet when "waiting" is played off against "praying," we begin to look askance at the contention. It becomes a matter of psychological interest—and a great deal more. For among us humans, an "attitude" of soul that never incarnates itself (if the word may be allowed) in speech, a "waiting" of heart that never expresses itself in words, is remarkably likely to wither to nothingness by a sort of mental atrophy. It is true that with poets and novelists the passion that through adverse circumstances is never declared always burns the more fiercely.

"Fire that is closest kept burns most of all,"

" . . . She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,

Feed on her damask cheek ; she pined in thought."

So says Shakespeare. But in the common life of ordinary mortals the love that might be, but never is, confessed, will soon not be worth the confessing. And the Christian who never goes through the articles of his creed as a true "act of faith," never makes profession of his love to his divine Lord and Saviour ; never puts into definite prayer the longing and desires of his soul, runs great danger of soon having neither creed, nor love, nor desire. That was true philosophy of Thackeray's : We sow an act, we reap a habit ; we sow a habit, we reap a character. In prayer, as in other things, acts pass into habits and habits into character, and the prayerful *character*—in other words, the

Why Do I Pray ?

369

"waiting" soul—depends upon its precedent definite acts and habits, which can never be thrown aside like a childish garment outgrown. "In *everything*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "Casting *all* your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

Another view is that prayer is unnecessary, because God is our infinitely loving Father, knows all our needs, and has no occasion to be constantly reminded of them by us. The late Canon Kingsley, of whom one speaks with the highest respect, but whose strong point was certainly not his theology, refused to read the prayer for rain on the ground that it was an impertinent dictation to God. We are in His hands, the theory runs; what is good He will give; what He sees fit to withhold will not be given for our clamouring. It is difficult to restrain a feeling of impatience at this modern limiting of prayer. For our knowledge of God as a God of goodness, of love, of tender and merciful compassion, we are indebted entirely to His revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. Nature, "red in tooth and claw," as Tennyson has it, speaks with sadly uncertain voice; the consideration of the moral facts and phenomena of life (*e.g.*, the existence of evil, the inequality of men's lot, the seeming triumph of wrong over right, and so forth), constrain some who would fain read these facts otherwise, to the conclusion that we cannot thence infer the existence of a God, good, loving, and omnipotent. I repeat, Scripture is our only warrant for that faith. But the same Scripture is constant in its call to earnest, particular prayer—in its assurance that God not only hears, but wills to be enquired of. I do not understand the method by which acceptance is made of the Scripture doctrine of God, while its doctrine of the Will of God is set aside. Here is the Lord's statement of the benevolent, fatherly character of God: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to *His* children?" So should the verse run, according to the advocates of the view I refer to. Unfortunately for their contention, it is: "How much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him." The injunction follows upon the heels of the triple direction to "Ask," "Seek," "Knock."

But more serious ideas have invaded our Churches. Rightly or wrongly the view seems to be gaining ground that Nature is

yielding up all her secrets, and discloses such an unbroken reign of law, of sequence of events, of cause and effect, as to make impossible any interposition by God in answer to prayer. It is asserted in triumph by the opponents of Revelation, it is feared by many a Christian, that prayer is a mistake, seeing that the world and all its phenomena are governed by invariable laws. "Evolution holds the field!" was the statement I heard from a pulpit, and as *some* read evolution, there is not in that theory any room for God's interpositions in grace. Nor is there much relief to the *heart* in the counter-statement that all that is being "evolved" must originally have been "involved" by God. It puts God too far off; it makes Him the originator but not the immediate controller of passing events—a God out of reach, Who has excluded Himself by His own laws from present, personal touch with the joys and sorrows that go to make up our life. One recalls the passionate yet trustful cry of David: "Be not Thou far from me, O Lord; O my strength, haste Thee to help me." Little would it comfort him to be told that the circumstances of desolation and distance were part of what was "involved" at the beginning of all things, and that God had reserved to Himself no way of "bringing near His salvation."

In the crises of life, in the sorrows that are the heritage of us all, in the time of sickness and of bereavement, in that most poignant moment when the coffin-lid shuts out of sight the face of "our dear dead," we need a present God, a present Saviour, one who is acting in and by the sorrowful, testing circumstances.

"My heart did heave, and there came forth 'O God!'

By that I knew that Thou wast in the grief

To guide and govern it to my relief,

Making a sceptre of the rod.

Hadst Thou not had Thy part,

Sure the unruly sigh had broke my heart"—*Geo. Herbert.*

So speaks the faith of old-fashioned days, and of those who do not mind the reproach of being thought old-fashioned. Yet that comfort of leaning upon God, of knowing that He is acting for good and holy ends, of "pouring out our heart before Him," and of counting upon Him for strength, for succour and deliverance, is denied us by theories that give up to changeless, mechanical, inexorable law the events that touch us. It is impossible that prayer should be answered, we are told, for like miracles (now quite discredited!) it would involve "a breach" of

Why Do I Pray?

371

natural law, a "violation" of invariable laws, an "interference with the laws of nature,"—the which is quite out of the question.

Now this is an objection that appeals to our so-called practical English mind. Other difficulties may have a more or less academic character: this, if well-founded, cuts at the root of prayer. God, we may be sure, will not "violate" His own laws, or commit "breaches" of them to please or to ease us. But—to "interfere" with them? That is something quite different; strange to say, we do it every day and all day long! Our mechanical inventions, our methods of treatment of disease, are all instances of interfering with, of manipulating and harnessing natural laws. Expansion is the law of heat; in our steam engine we interfere with this law, and make it to be literally a hewer of wood, a drawer of water and general drudge. Two ragged little urchins wander into a wood. "Catch!" cries one, and throws to the other a chestnut that has ripened, and, obedient to laws of nature, has fallen to the ground. The chestnut cuts an arc through the air, gravitation exerting from the first its downward "pulling" force and finally overcoming the upward impulse imparted to the chestnut by the boy's muscles. The nut begins to fall, and before it touches the ground the other boy has caught it, and in the act has "interfered" with the law of gravitation. Yet neither does earth crumble nor heaven fall; in fact, no more mischief is wrought than when on a certain occasion a misguided individual spoke disrespectfully of the Equator. If we at a thousand points can touch, and within limits, control the forces of nature and interfere with the working of its laws, can we believe that God has reserved to Himself less power? In a former generation the view was current that God having fully equipped the world with all necessary and inherent laws, stood apart. "Having with infinite skill constructed the world and set its powers a-going, He thenceforth held Himself aloof from His workmanship, a mere spectator, unmoved, never interposing. Hence, prayer was folly; belief in revelation, miracle, redemption, was to the man of culture in those days an idle dream." Of late years the point of view has changed. The world is now thought of as an organism, a growing developing organism, and the energy by which it is sustained and by which it advances is immanent, indwelling and ceaselessly operating within it. "This living, energising power within the Universe is necessarily restrained within the course of Nature, and can exercise no activity except

along the lines of wonted working." These quotations I have made from an address recently delivered by the Rev. Dr. Walter Ross Taylor, the then Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, and I cannot do better than give his comment upon the view. "We reply that this limiting of a power which Mr. Herbert Spencer himself defines as 'an infinite and eternal energy' is as preposterous as it is presumptuous. We prefer the logic of the centurion, when he argued that he, although a subordinate, had only to speak the word and those under him would go his errands, much more would a word suffice on the lips of Christ. To point us to an omnipotent and omnipresent Being who has yet no freedom, self-bound within the limits of His ordinary modes of action; Who has given us, His creatures, intelligence and freedom, enabling us to modify the action of natural forces, bending them to our will, and using them for our purposes, yet may not Himself control or modify them; Who has given us an ear to hear, a heart to feel, a hand to succour when distress appeals, but may not Himself interpose to rescue or assist—this, by whatever juggling with words it may be supported, is neither science, nor philosophy, nor common sense; beneath the philosophic phrases we hear the tone of him who says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

In point of fact, there is undoubtedly not a little "juggling with words" on the part of those who most airily rule God out of His world, and substitute for His continuous action mechanical law. It may not always be conscious jugglery. It is perhaps a case of being mastered by words, rather than being master of them. The trained scientist probably knows what he says and whereof he affirms when he talks of government by natural law, but in many cases his imitator adopts his words but does not adopt his thoughts, and confusion is made between things that are, one would think, obviously distinct. For a law is something quite other than the power that acts on the lines of the law; law supposes and requires legislator and administrator. The command, "Thou shalt not steal," is incorporated in the statutes of this country, but those of us who have suffered at the hands of thieves, know only too well that the broken law has no swift, automatic method of avenging its majesty. It needs administration. And just as truly in the natural world does law need its administration and its power for action.

To observe the regular, invariable, related sequences of natural

things—to infer from those sequences a rule of action, and to call it by the highly rhetorical name, “a law of Nature”—then to speak of that law as though the efficient cause of those sequences had been reached, is to confound rule with force, and process with power. For behind the observed phenomena of nature lies the *power* that makes each “cause” (itself produced by a long chain of antecedents) give its resulting “effect.” What is this power? “The forces of nature.” Does that answer our question? Are we any nearer knowledge and light? What is “force?” “That which tends to produce motion.” Which description, definition—call it what you will—tells us nothing about the nature of the thing, and leaves us as much in the dark as ever. In a sentence, the efficient cause, the force, the power that works along the line of rules observed and called “natural law,” is still a secret, is still “inaccessible.” “However far we get back,” confessed a scientist to the late Mr. J. N. Darby, “we get to a blank wall at last.” But Scripture, without professing to teach science, shows us that the wall is not “blank,” but has windows through which we catch more than a transient glimpse of the glory of God, who by His Son made the worlds, and by Whom they consist. “In the beginning, God” The secrets of God’s acting and the methods of His operations may be beyond our knowledge, but not even what passes as “science” has closed the door of prayer to the soul that knows, and trusts, and loves God. At what point God may interpose, what secret springs He may touch in answering His people’s prayer, we cannot say, but He who “sits upon the circle of the earth, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in,” is He Who bids us wait upon Him, and in that waiting we shall renew our strength, we shall mount up with wings as eagles, we shall run and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint.

But prayer involves a great deal more than the mere question whether God can or cannot, will or will not, hear us and grant us the petitions we have desired of Him. We come to Him as creatures to the Creator, as needy to Him who is able to succour, as children to a Father. But we come also as those whose needs are too often the result of their own sin, as creatures who have rebelled, as children who have not, as they ought, either loved, or desired, or done the Father’s will. In a word, all our days have been and (alas! that it need be said) will be tainted by sins of

defect and commission, and this taint of sin comes into our prayers and our holiest occupations. Hence deep moral questions of state of soul and of spiritual discipline are involved. We pray for relief in circumstances into which we have been brought by our own sin, or by the sin of others. The consequences of our own folly make us cry out for deliverance, yet if the relief and deliverance were granted at once, we might miss of the spiritual discipline that underlies all God's ways with us. The results of the past cannot be ignored : the future must ever be kept in view. He might be a fond, but he certainly would be a very foolish parent, who, at the first tear of his child, removed the thing that distressed the little heart. It is with tears that our children learn to read ; infinite drudgery and real pains are incurred in the training of eye and voice, ear and hand, in fitting them for life and its labours and delights. Harder still are the lessons by which they learn self-denial, self-sacrifice, thoughtfulness for others, sympathy, tenderness. Yet a wise discipline remembers the past and keeps the future in view ; from a wider experience and a larger outlook than our children possess, we know that culture of mind and of character can be carried on only by what to them appears to be unnecessary pains, and for their sake we seem to shut our hearts to their sighs and their tears. We seem, I say ; for their sorrows are a burden to us, and at times we are weakly tempted to ease matters for them, but that we know it would be to their loss. Do we wish to think of God as an easy-going parent, who at our clamour removes us from the school to which He sees fit to send us ?

And so many a petition, that seems to have been asked in vain, has a reason for the refusal. Not that we always know the reason ; if we did, there would be little demand upon our faith—and let us remember that faith in God rather than sight is the characteristic of the Christian life (2 Cor. v. 7). We know God, but we do not always know the reason of His actions. At times, it may be, we suspect a reason, though we refuse to recognise it even to our own hearts. At others we are in the dark, and can only fall back upon our trust in God and say, "He doeth all things well." Thrice did St. Paul pray that his "stake in the flesh" might be removed, but the only answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). That a petition should be answered in our sense is no proof that it is asked according

Why Do I Pray ?

375

to the Divine Will, or that the Divine blessing rests upon our scheme. "Thou saidst, 'Give me a king and princes.' I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath" (Hos. xiii. 10, 11). "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls" (Ps. cvi. 15). On the other hand, what gracious lessons have come to the soul through what has seemed the most crushing refusal. Many a man looks back to nights of watching beside his dying child, when he almost hoped the little one would be taken to end its torturing pain. For prayer seemed unavailing; God was "silent" to him (Ps. xxviii. 1), and faith and unfaith made his soul their battle field. And when the little life ebbed out in the cold, grey dawn, and Death was in the home as he had never been before, and Sorrow became a closer companion than in days past, the riddle of it all seemed so insolvable, that the only refuge for the heart was a dumb acceptance of an unintelligible will. "I was dumb . . . because Thou didst it" (Ps. xxxix. 9). Others there are whose lot is grinding poverty, or perpetual pain, or the recurring disappointments that crush all hope out of life. Prayer is in vain; or the answer that seems on the point of being given is snatched away; hope revives only to be quenched, while the hands fall listless and the heart well-nigh breaks. Does God mock? Is His arm shortened? Has He blundered? For some do not hesitate to say that He has, and to our physical and mental sorrow is added the torturing suggestions of unbelief. For we see no purpose, no plan, no evidence of power, no token of love, in the ills that assail. And the chilled heart recalls, though it may not concur in, the words of the so-called sceptic of the Old Testament, "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked" (Eccles. ix. 2). Happy the man who in such circumstances still retains the trust of the Psalmist: "O my God, my soul is cast down within me, . . . all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day time, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life" (Ps. xlii. 6-8). We remember the words of the Lord Jesus, though it may be we divert them from their primary meaning, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (Jno. xiii. 7). The "hereafter" may be soon; it may come after many years; we may have to wait for the unfoldings of eternity. But seeing that God is training us for this life and not only for eternity, I

think we may say that He usually lifts the veil from His mysterious ways, even in this land of shadows, for "the meek will He teach His way." And in the "hereafter" of Christ's promise, come it soon or late, the soul discerns some of the lessons of God's schooling, and sees that though some particular prayer has not been answered, desires have been awakened that otherwise would have slept; sympathies have been quickened, perils have been avoided, and deep longings of the soul have had their answer even by that refusal.

Who is there of us that has not been confronted with the question, put with animus unfriendly to our faith, "Have you ever had any answers to prayer?" And when we look to our reply, of what sort are the answers that chiefly come to mind? *Not* the sort that would be considered a valid argument by our objector. We think of spiritual deliverances, of guidance in times of keen perplexity, of quickening when our "souls cleaved to the dust," of such relief and uplifting as are spoken of in Trench's lines quoted earlier in this paper. We may indeed tell of prayers offered for others, and, we should say, heard; of the awakening to spiritual life of careless souls, of restoration of those who had gone astray, of preservation of those who were in deadly spiritual peril. But even these instances, though dealing with matters external to ourselves, do not satisfy those who come as men in Christ's day came to Him and said, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." What is demanded from us, as from Him, is something material, something more definite than so-called "spiritual" things. This is indeed the sense in which the word "prayer" is generally used by those who speak against it; it is limited to asking for things material. "Tell us something that we can hand on for investigation on the lines adopted by the Psychical Research Society—something we can test!" In that spirit the suggestion was made that two hospitals should be founded: in one the treatment should be prayer and no medicine; in the other medicine and no prayer. Faith should follow results! Even with Gideon and his fleece in mind, remembering, too, Elijah and Mount Carmel, instances that *seem* to sanction such a method of test, we say that a more unspiritual suggestion could hardly be imagined. It may be said to be an investigation in a truly "scientific spirit," but God is not a subject for scientific experiments—you cannot "test for" Him

as a chemist "tests for" arsenic. He does not yield Himself up to such coarse and material analyses. To put Him to the test in an unbelieving spirit is to be guilty of the forbidden act of "tempting" God. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). And experiments of such a kind ignore some of the conditions, and therefore are not scientific. They leave out of sight vast questions of moral health and spiritual discipline, and God is hardly likely to forego these to satisfy even a Tyndall or a Huxley. They reduce God's relation to man to one affecting bone and muscle ; whereas He is the "Father of spirits," "the God of the spirits of all flesh." Eating, drinking, clothing are things that the Gentiles seek after, says the Lord ; "but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

It is not the case that the Christian is unable to advance any instances of material deliverance and bodily escape in answer to prayer. Recovery from sickness, the being brought back from the gates of death, deliverances in flood and field, abound both in Scripture and in subsequent history, but how are these "proofs" received by the objector? They are put down to an exaggerated estimate of the need ; the relief is attributed to the increase in medical knowledge and skill, or to the chance escape, against which must be set the catastrophes that befall godly, praying men.

Is it, then, not possible to demonstrate what is called the efficacy of prayer? In plain English, it is not. But, it should be added, it is one of the subjects that in the nature of things do not admit of demonstration of a mathematical kind. This is the case with all questions of a moral character. Life bristles with such ; we could not give formal proof about them, any more than we could give formal proof of our own existence, yet do we not go in doubt all our days. The sense of trustworthiness that brings men together into partnership in commercial life is based on moral certainty or belief, not on demonstrable facts. The more intimate and sacred trust of plighted troth and wedded life rests on evidence of the same character, yet as long as the world lasts, men and women will marry and be given in marriage, and none but the cynic will scoff because neither of the contracting parties has had absolute demonstration of the other's fitness for the position. In like manner, though the fact of revelation and the great truths that are its burden lie outside the category of

demonstrable things, yet God has not left Himself without witness, and the evidence that accompanies them is sufficient to carry conviction and certainty to the heart.

It may be said—it *is* said, in fact—that the function of prayer is to bring our mind and will into harmony with the Divine will, and that no objective, external effects follow it. Let us grant at once that all prayer should be made in expressed or tacit subjection to the will of God, and that our will should be brought into harmony with His is one great end of prayer. But that its action is merely a reflex one, and that there is nothing more, is opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture—and of experience. “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” “If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.” These are two of the promises of Christ to His people, and nothing could be wider in scope than the language He uses. I need not support the promise of Christ by the language of even His apostles. The spiritual instinct and the practical experience of praying men are against this limited view; the wide range of Christian litanies, liturgical or extempore, embodies the faith and the experience of the Church that prayer by A for B is heard of God, though B is perhaps prayerless. And though men may speciously say that this view of prayer emphasises the divinely appointed *means* by which the will is brought into harmony with God’s, the soul shrinks from it as from a sham.

Another point of real difficulty and perplexity to many Christians is this: How can my prayer—the petition of a sinful, finite creature—affect the purpose and will of God? Does He “who changes not” alter His mind and intention, and do what, but for our prayer, He otherwise would not have done? If not, —if in any case the event would have happened—what need is there to pray at all? The unbelieving thought too often steals into our hearts at moments of rejoicing in supposed answers to prayer, that the event that gives us joy would have happened just the same, even though we had been as prayerless as a statue.

I do not know of any real reply to such questioning, but in relief of doubt that may be caused by it, it may be pointed out to the Christian that the difficulty is only on a par with others that lie in the Christian revelation. Difficulties based on abstract

conceptions of God as Absolute, above all conditions of time and space, knowing neither past nor future, to whom all is an eternal now—ideas of which we have absolutely no grasp—ought not to outweigh the facts of His revealed promise to answer our prayer, or the moral certainty we possess that events, unlikely in themselves and quite beyond the probabilities of the circumstances, have come to pass in answer to direct petition. And, as mentioned, the difficulty is only one of a class. How can we reconcile the atonement of Christ for all with the fact that not all will be saved? Or the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” with the full responsibility of men in acts which brought those very counsels to pass? How can we hold that man is free to love, to will, to choose, while believing that without Divine grace and help He cannot choose the good? How can we harmonise the Christian belief that Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, is in His Nature True God and True Man—Divine and Human? Yet, without being able to account for, or to explain, these things, thousands hold them as their faith for living and dying.

As to the atonement, we frame our theories and cast them aside as inadequate: we cannot hit on anything to account for all the facts. But as Isaac Taylor, a deep thinker of a former generation, said, so long as there are souls convicted of sin, so long will there be those who believe in the Atonement. Yes, believe in it, and rest in Christ and His work in the atonement, although they cannot understand it, or justify God's acts in it at the bar of their reason.

Or who can give a solution of the apparent contradiction between the purpose of God and the free agency of man? It is wholly beyond our grasp. The utmost we can do is to recognise that where the Infinite touches the finite, and the Eternal the temporal, there must be what looks like contradiction, or to suggest, as Dr. Moule in effect somewhere does, that these lines of truth that seem to us quite parallel, would, if viewed from a true standpoint, be seen to radiate from and converge upon one common centre—the eternal God. And so with the allied subject of the divine sovereignty and free will. Men may talk learnedly of Augustinian and Pelagian theology, of Calvinism and Arminianism, but the most learned soon finds himself in company with Milton's angels, who

“Reasoned of will, fixed fate, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

A man knows from Scripture and intuitively that his will is free, real, and his own. But the Christian has no difficulty in adopting Miss Havergal's lines,

“ Had He not loved, He had not drawn us so ;
Had He not drawn, we had nor will nor power
To rise, to come,”

for the thought is simply that expressed by the Lord, “ No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” And in all the movements of his heart God-ward—the repentance and faith that first brought him into living relation with God, and in renewed acts of consecration and self-surrender—he acknowledges the gracious leading and constraining love and power of God. Yet it is *his* faith, *his* glad surrender, the out-going of his own heart and personality, and is no mere result of irresistible, overwhelming constraint. But the solution of it? *Solvitur ambulando,—cum Deo*, adds a learned writer, reverently and truly.

As to the Divine and Human Natures of Christ, I cannot do better than give a translation of a passage from Athanasius, quoted on the title page of a work on the Deity of Christ, written by a member of the Society of Friends (Joseph John Gurney), seventy years ago—“ I know that He is truly God, from heaven, impassible (*i.e.*, not liable to suffering). I know that He was of the seed of David, according to the flesh, a man, from earth, and passible. I do not enquire how the same (Being) is both passible and impassible, how God and how man, lest, while I busy myself about the *how*, and am investigating the *mode*, I should miss of the good that is set before us.”

All this may seem somewhat discursive, but I point out again that the question of the action of our prayers upon the Infinite purpose and will is of the same class as those here briefly touched upon. And the counsel of Athanasius as to the Person of Christ is one that holds good for prayer also. While busying ourselves about “ the how ” of prayer, we may miss of God's good gift. Perhaps the adoption of his counsel will be called an abdication by reason of her functions. But the heart has its logic as well as the mind, and not less so has conscience. Intuitions of heart and conscience are swifter, and often surer, than the most painstaking mental operations. Reason has still left many problems unsolved, and in “ the deep things of God ” there must

Why Do I Pray ?

381

be mysteries that will wait for eternity before they are transformed into "open secrets." A former Moderator of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, preaching some time since in Croydon, made the remark that the man who believed only what he fully understood, would have a very short creed. Blessed be God, though we may not be able to construct a satisfactory philosophy of prayer, the *fact* of prayer—access to God, and communion with Him, prayer in the largest sense—remains, and is ours.

It is not within the scope of my paper to deal with the Bible teaching upon prayer. In an earlier passage of this paper I have referred to the limited sense that is put upon the word by those who "seek a sign" in the shape of answer to prayer. They mean merely a petition for something—generally tangible and material. But a study of the Bible terms associated with prayer convicts such a sense of paltriness, for prayer includes worship and adoration, praise and thanksgiving, penitent confession and humiliation, supplications and intercessions, and that spiritual intercourse and "commerce with the unseen" the Scriptures speak of under the name of fellowship or communion. The prayers of the Bible run through the whole gamut of physical need and of spiritual desire—from the petitions of Pharaoh that punishment might be averted or removed, to the prayers of St. Paul for those to whom he wrote. I quote one of these at length : it may be that it strikes a higher note than is customary in our supplications :—"I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. iii. 14-19).

It will be seen that prayer is far more than a merely perfunctory act. The formal repetition of set phrases, whether liturgical, or stereotyped from frequent repetition, is no more real prayer than are the revolutions of the praying wheels of Thibet. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working," is the Revisers' rendering of the passage more familiar in the form given by the Authorised Version—"The effectual fervent prayer

of a righteous man availeth much " (Jas. v. 16). The sentence is a difficult one to translate, and a third version (that by the Rev. T. S. Green) may help to the sense of the passage—"Very powerful is a righteous man's entreaty in earnest suit." The main drift is evident—that a man's whole soul must come into his prayer if it is to reach the throne of God. For it is a solemn act ; it is the approach to God Himself, in the name of His Son, and as guided and taught by the Spirit of God.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost" is the searching phrase used by Jude in his Epistle, and I suspect that it rules out many an impressive litany that echoes along pillared aisle and vaulted roof ; many a rhetorical pulpit-prayer, such as the American reporter described with perhaps unconscious satire as "the most eloquent prayer ever addressed to a Boston audience ;" many a slipshod act of "private devotion" when through sheer force of habit we mentally, but mechanically, run through an accustomed list of names and needs. Prayer may be wedded to music, in psalm and hymn and spiritual song, and lose nothing of its urgency as prayer ; it may be elevated in thought and language, as so many of the Bible prayers are. But when either art or oratory predominates, when appeal is made to the ear by emotional music or sonorous phrase, the prayer sinks to the level of "vain repetitions." As to private devotion, speaking generally, the more earnest the spirit, the more intense the longing of soul that finds expression in prayer, the more simple and direct are the words. The Gethsemane prayers of Jesus, deep as was their pathos, were but a few most simple sentences. And notwithstanding the free and dear relationships between God and the soul possible since the Cross of Christ, we do well to remember the words of the ancient preacher : "God is in heaven and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few." Not less than the disciples do we need to say, "Lord, teach us to pray ;" not less than the apostle do we need to recognise that we know not what to pray for as we ought (Rom. viii. 26). We have to learn that in all our petitions there should be more than a sense of supposed need ; our thoughts and desires must be illumined by God's good Spirit in order to be in accord with His Will ; there must be the acceptance of that holy Will. And to this end, Scripture is linked up with prayer in the closest connection—not as a storehouse whence to draw dignified and telling phrases, but as a revelation of God's Will, a guide and

Why Do I Pray ?

383

directory and stimulus whereby our thoughts and desires are intelligently guided and controlled, and the love of and delight in prayer is fostered and deepened. Every Christian conscience will bear witness that with the neglect of Scripture as God's message to the soul, comes the death of prayer as the soul's response to God.

When Mr. W. T. Stead was making his collection of "Hymns That Have Helped," he wrote to (among others) Grant Allen, asking if he would mention any such. The reply ran, "I do not remember that any hymn, or, for the matter of that, any text of Scripture, maxim, or line of poetry, was ever of the least use to me. . . . I never needed help, other than physical or monetary. My own philosophy has always amply sufficed me." Doubtless the gifted writer would have added had the question arisen, that he never needed to pray—it is implied in his answer. One goes back with melancholy interest to this reply, now that the writer of it has passed away, and his literary friends (*e.g.*, Mr. R. Le Gallienne) are endeavouring to prove, in spite of his avowed beliefs—or unbeliefs—that he was unconsciously a Christian. I do not intend to play off against Mr. Grant Allen the views I have quoted from other literary men (Winston Spencer Churchill and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) as to the inadequacy of one's philosophy in the real conflicts and strain of life. I come back to the question with which I began, "Why do I pray?"—and avow for myself that no philosophy I am acquainted with is adequate for what I know of my own needs. I pray because of such needs; because I am conscious of defects and deficiencies, of sins, of "coming short" of God's glory, as well as of transgressions—the "stepping across" the limits imposed by His Will. I am conscious of lack of power wherewith to meet the temptations, the difficulties and the duties of life. The Bible everywhere assumes or states that this is true of every man. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23). But it also everywhere casts us upon God for forgiveness of sins, for strength for conflict, for guidance in perplexity. The deepest needs of heart and soul are met by the promises of God, but this meeting of the soul and its God does not take place in a world of dumb silence. God, Who has come near to us in human form, looking out at us from human eyes, would have us draw near with human speech, in actual words making known our needs and our desires.

Nor is this all. Men are conscious, at least in their best moments, of capacities higher than anything on earth can satisfy. "God hath set eternity (Ha-Olam) in their heart," says that strange moralist of the Old Testament (Eccl. iii. 11), from whom I have quoted more than once, and Time, with all its wealth and fulness and possibilities, leaves the heart aching with a sense of "vanity and vexation." And when the words "Eternity" and "God" pass from mere verbal counters by which we denote certain mental abstractions into realities with which we personally are linked—"Eternity," towards which we tend, and "God," in whom we live and move and have our being—the heart needs to be "on speaking terms" with Him who is "my God" and "my portion for ever." No finer word has been written than that of Augustine of Hippo: "Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te." (Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee). "Till it rest in Thee"! Here, in brief, is the purpose of Revelation, the bringing weary, sin-distraught man to that rest in God of which God speaks alike by Legislator and Prophet, but chiefly by His Son. "Come unto Me. . . and I will give you rest." And can we believe that that rest and joy is reached and enjoyed without out-pouring of heart, in prayer, in trust, in affection? It is unthinkable; it is impossible.

Needs and capacities of nature and of heart are met by the gracious invitations of God. "Seek ye My face." And His sure word has had abundant confirmation in the experience of those who have sought Him—an experience not to be gainsaid by theoretical and academical "difficulties" inherent in prayer as a subject of discussion. Above all, the Christian heart rests in this—that in His life on earth prayer distinguished the "Son of Man." "Who in the days of His flesh," says the apostolic writer to "the Hebrews," "when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His piety, Son though He was, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 7, 8). And in His faith, and following in His footsteps, the Christian will pray till his needs come to an end in the fulness of the presence of God, and the supplications and petitions of this night of trial and perplexity change to the song of thanksgiving and triumph in eternal day.

W. J.