

WORDS IN SEASON.

“A WORD SPOKEN IN DUE SEASON, HOW GOOD
IS IT!”—*Proverbs* xv. 23.

1894.

(ISSUED DURING 1893.)

ABERDEEN: JAMES GAMMIE, 44, CHAPEL STREET.
BRISTOL: E. R. WILLS, 10, FERNBANK RD., REDLAND.
EDINBURGH: J. S. FERGUSON, 23, SCOTLAND STREET.
LONDON: W. BLATCHLEY, JUN., 27, LANCEFIELD STREET,
QUEEN'S PARK, W.
MONTROSE: DAVID DOUGLAS, 87, MURRAY STREET.
READING: MRS. HOWARD, 14, MILMAN ROAD.
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA: T. H. CLEMENTS, STAN-
LEY STREET, BRIGHTON.
CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND: JOHN S. POLSON,
165, TUAM STREET.

EDITED BY
W. RICKARD, WESTERN MOUNT,
DERBY.

I N D E X .

	PAGE.
A Fast	W. B. 280
"All Things"	EDITOR 28
Altar of Burnt Offering, &c.	G. C. 101
An Only Son	C. E. S. 82
Blind Man of Jericho	J. E. B. 113
Bride, the Lamb's Wife	(EXTRACT) 148
Christ and the Church	J. H. I. 320
"Come unto Me"	B. P. O. F. 197
Corporate Unity	J. N. D. 257
Crumbs from an Old Note-book	J. R. 176
Defilement for the Dead	(EXTRACT) 286
Difficult Times, Lesson from Ezra	A. C. H. 107
Elijah	D. S. 313
Few Thoughts on Elijah	W. E. 61
Few Thoughts on John xiii.	G. C. 345
Few Thoughts on Lazarus	G. C. 191
Food of God—Savour of Rest	G. C. 42
"Forsaken the Right Way"	W. B. 349
Fragments	McLEAN & G. V. W. 255
God and His Saints	EDITOR 342
God's Communications in Grace	(EXTRACT) 293
God's Counsels of Grace	EDITOR 181
God Speaking in Dreams	W. B. 75
"He marvelled"	A. C. H. 31
Hermann Warszawiak and the Jews	(REPORT) 260
Incidents, Illustrations, &c. 29, 59, 89, 119, 149, 179, 209, 239, 269, 299, 329, 355	
Jedidiah	A. C. H. 301
Jewels of the Lord	EDITOR 224
Law and Grace Exemplified.	C. E. S. 135
LETTERS OF INTEREST—J. N. D.	57
EDITOR	118
J. N. D.	177
P. H.	352
Light before the Sun	J. G. B. 284
Luke xviii. 1-30	J. E. B. 13
Manna (The)	J. R. 203
Ministry of John	C. E. S. 4, 33, 91, 151, 216, 243, 271
Ministry of Jude	C. E. S. 305
Mission of the Comforter	J. N. D. 234
"No Man Knoweth the Son, but the Father"	J. N. D. 2
Notes on Psalm xxii.	G. V. W. (?) 228
"Not My People"	W. B. 47

	PAGE.
Paul's Prayers	(EXTRACT) 202
POETRY—	
Adoration	R. H. 88
A Pilgrim Song	EDITOR 319
Christ All in All	ANON. 250
Himself	" 231
Israel's Feast	" 207
On Earth, in Heaven	EDITOR 257
Psa'm xxiii.	EDITOR 341
Rest in the Lord	ANON. 328
Song of Triumph	" 56
The Day that Knows no Night	EDITOR 112
The Father Glorified	R. H. 256
The Father's Love	R. H. 298
We shall All be Changed	E. C. W. 328
Worship	R. H. 51
Promises and Prayers	SPURGEON 238
Priesthood	J. G. B. 204
Rights	W. B. 52
Service in Closing Days	W. E. 295
Sins of Ignorance.	W. B. 129
"So Great Salvation"	D. S. 211
Spirit of Sacred Poetry	(EXTRACT) 139, 166
The Christ of God, the True Centre of Union	J. N. D. 78
The Lord's Last Visit to Jerusalem	J. E. B. 331
The Perfecting of Faith	D. S. 251
The Shepherd and His Own Sheep	EDITOR 161
"Them also which Sleep in Jesus"	G. C. 232
Three Aspects of Grace	EDITOR 241
To Opened Ears	ANON. 324
Whatsoever ye do in Word or Deed, &c.	EDITOR 71
Word in Season for To-day	G. V. W. 1
Zacchæus and the Blind Man	J. E. B. 121

J. E. B.—13, 113, 121, 331. J. G. B.—204, 284. W. B.—47, 52, 75, 129, 280, 349-
 G. C.—42, 101, 191, 232, 345.
 J. N. D.—2, 57, 78, 177, 234, 257.
 EDITOR.—28, 71, 112, 118, 161, 181, 224, 241, 257, 319, 341, 342. W. E.—61, 295-
 B. P. O. F.—197.
 A. C. H.—31, 107, 301. P. H.—352. R. H.—51, 88, 256, 298.
 J. H. I.—320.
 MCLEAN.—255.
 J. R.—176, 203.
 SPURGEON.—238.
 C. E. S.—4, 33, 82, 91, 135, 151, 216, 243, 271, 305. D. S.—211, 251, 313-
 E. C. W.—328. G. V. W.—1, 228, 255.

A WORD IN SEASON FOR TO-DAY.

THERE is a Man, a glorified Man, sitting now on the throne of God in heaven—that Man is Jehovah's Fellow. To Him, God, the Holy Spirit, has borne testimony in the Scriptures; to Him He calls the sinner's attention; to Him He guides the eye of faith of each believer, and there He will fix it. For He, the only begotten Son of the Father, is the sole One on whom and on whose life and works as Saviour, God, even the Father, can rest in complacency.

In Him, and through His life and death, resurrection and ascension, the sinner can now, through faith, find rest with God in His glory, and receive the free gift of the Holy Spirit, and grace to be full thereof and walk therein.

Men and brethren! permit one whose name is not worth naming (save as found *in* Him) to beseech you to think of Him—for His sake who has claims over you, and for God's sake who is a jealous God, and who insists on the claims which He has recognised in the Son of His love being recognised by you, own Him *alone* as worthy. He is the only Man worthy of God's thinking about. But He is worthy—for His name of Jesus means "Jehovah-a-saving."

Do not, I beseech you, go on setting one fallen man's name against another fallen man's name, sinners' names against sinners' names, as you have done in your intercourse about questions in which the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit alone should be cared for and the honour due to God. You have done so till you seem to me to have well-nigh forgotten the Sinless Man, the One who, because He knew no sin, could be made a sin-offering, and who was made and did make Himself such, that so, through faith, we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Unconsciously, it may have been, at first, you have been setting *one merely human name against another*

merely human name, until the name of "Jesus," and the revelation in it, has been forgotten amid talk about men and their doings and claims, which are of as little worth and meaning as would be any letter from the alphabet (as an M, or a D, or a W), in comparison with that blessed Person (Jesus) and His works.

The Spirit has thus been grieved and quenched among you ; and blindness, and the fervour of party spirit has got sway among you, and a heavy fog of mystification broods over your actings ; humbling is it to think of this.

It is a poor sinner in himself, and not a prophet, who writes to you ; but, in the light of the Sinless Man (Peerless and without equal, He !) ; 'tis one who fears lest—*under that cloud of mystification* which rests upon you as a company—there be another Spirit (not man's) far more subtle than Ahitophel's of old—far less scrupulous than he, and at his rear, dangers as to the *honour* of Christ. For if His name be used by any as a cover for darkness and evil, and the name of "the Church" be used as the name of a place where those on earth, who are indifferent to Christ's honour and to holiness, in faith, doctrine, morality, or walk, may congregate, His name is put to shame and the Holy Spirit dishonoured.

Would that I were mistaken as to your danger. If not, may God give you deliverance, and victory over every lie and delusion of the Wicked One. So prays yours, in brokenness of spirit, G. V. W.

"NO MAN KNOWETH THE SON, BUT THE FATHER."—Matt. xi. 27.

"OUR precious Saviour was Man, as truly as I am, as regards the simple abstract idea of humanity, but without sin, miraculously born by divine power, and more than this, He was 'God manifest in flesh.'

“ Now having said so much, I entreat you with all my heart not to try to define, and to discuss the Person of our precious Saviour. You will lose the savour of Christ in your thoughts, and you will get in its place only the barrenness of the human mind in the things of Christ, and in the affections which belong to them. It is a labyrinth for man, because he works from his own resources. It is as if one were to dissect the body of one’s friend, instead of delighting in his affection and his character. In the church, it is one of the worst signs I have met with. It is very sad to get into this way ; very sad that this should be shewn in such a light before the church of God and before the world. I would add that so deep is my conviction of man’s incapacity in this matter, and that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus, that I am quite ready to suppose that even while desiring to avoid it, I may have fallen into it, and thus may have spoken in a mistaken way in something which I have said to you.

“ That He was truly Man, Son of Man, dependent on God as such, and without sin in that condition of dependence—truly God in all His ineffable perfection—this I hold, I trust, dearer than life. To define everything is what I do not presume to do. ‘ No man knoweth the Son, but the Father.’ If I find anything which weakens one or the other of these truths, or which dishonours Him who is their subject, I shall oppose it with all my might, as God may call me to do so.

“ May God grant you to believe all which the word teaches with regard to Him, Jesus. It is our food and sustenance to understand all which the Spirit has given us to understand, and not to seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define, but to adore on the one hand, and to feed upon the other, and to live in every way according to the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

J. N. D.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

JOHN the Evangelist was the son of Zebedee, and Salome, the Virgin's sister. Of his father we have but one incident noticed (Matt. iv. 21 ; Mark i. 19, 20). A fisherman on the lake of Galilee, to which calling he had brought up his two sons, he was a man of some substance, having hired servants working with him (Mark i. 20). At the call of the Lord his two sons left him, and, as far as we know, with his full consent, to be followers, and subsequently apostles of Him whom Zebedee must have known was the child of the sister of his wife.

For Salome, it is pretty plain, was the Virgin's sister. By that latter designation John introduces her as one of those present at the crucifixion (John xix. 25), mentioning three persons besides the Virgin, viz., her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas (as we should there read), and Mary Magdalene. Matthew (xxvii. 56) describing the same group, but reversing the order, mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. And Mark clears up to us the mystery of the one unnamed by his fellow biographers, as he introduces the three watchers who stood with the Virgin at the cross as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome (xv. 40).

Of Zebedee, as we have said, but one incident has been preserved. He remained in his boat, keeping evidently to his calling, though his sons left him to go after the Lord. As regards Salome, more details are supplied to us. She first appears as asking with her two sons for the places of special honour for them in the kingdom ; and from Matthew's gospel (xx. 20, 21) it appears that she was the speaker on that

occasion. We next read of her as present at the crucifixion. Then, after the Sabbath was past, ere a second night enshrouded the tomb in which the Lord's body was laid, she was busy with Mary Magdalene and the other Mary in buying sweet spices, that they might come and anoint the body. And very early in the morning of the first day of the week, at sunrise she went off to the tomb with her companions (Mark xvi. 1, 2) for that purpose. That service, as we know, was unneeded. Yet their unabated love to the Lord they were permitted thus to manifest, a fitting sequel to the proofs of deep attachment to His Person rendered by them in ministry to Him when in life (Luke viii. 2, 3 ; Matt. xxvii. 56). Service to the dead One they had contemplated. Service entrusted to them by the risen One was that to which they were to be called. Their constancy shown by their errand to the tomb was to have its reward, in their being heralds to the disciples of the joyful news of the Lord's resurrection. Nor that only. For, leaving the garden with the message from the angel, and on their way to the city, the Lord Himself met them, and entrusted them with the commission to tell His brethren to meet Him in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 10). Salome, Joanna, with Mary the wife of Clopas, and others whose names are unknown to us, formed the company to which that appearance of the Lord was graciously vouchsafed. Henceforth, Salome with the other women disappear from the pages of Scripture, save that we gather from Acts i. 14 that she and they continued steadfastly in prayer with the apostles and other brethren in the upper room, waiting between the Ascension and Pentecost for the outpouring of the Spirit, at which they must have been present, and in which they also shared. Were they forgotten then? Did their names sink into oblivion? No ; service for Christ is never forgotten ; and these women are proofs of that. For it was years after His death that the Spirit of God by the evangelists embalmed their

names in the Scriptures as sharing in imperishable remembrance.

John's parents, then, are by no means unknown to us. Zebedee's willingness to forego the accustomed help of his two sons at the call of Christ, and Salome's readiness to minister to Him, speak to us of those who gave to Christ, the one what was asked, the other what she could.

Of their son John we have now to speak. He must have been comparatively young when called to the apostolate, and he proved himself on the morning of the resurrection to be more active than Peter, for he outstripped him in their running to the tomb. He died at a good old age, outliving all the apostles, having survived to the reign of Trajan. So writes Eusebius on the authority of Irenæus.

In common with others of the twelve we know nothing of his early years. He first appears on the sacred page as a disciple of the Baptist; and it was whilst in his company, and by hearing his testimony to the Lord as the Lamb of God, that he left him, and, with Andrew, a fellow disciple of the Baptist, spent that day with Christ. "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" was their question. "Come and see," was the immediate response. "They came therefore and saw where He dwelt; and they abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour" (John i. 39, 40). That interview resulted in a change in the current of John's thoughts. He left the Baptist to be a disciple of the Messiah, or Christ. Gathering to the Lord had now commenced. Andrew sought out his brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus. Links were being formed, which subsequent years, doubtless, only strengthened. For Peter and John became companions, apostles, and fellow workers in the gospel. Going with the Lord to Cana of Galilee, and invited to the marriage feast at that place, John witnessed with others the miracle of the water turned into wine, by which Jesus manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him

(John ii. 11). That festive day concluded the eventful week* in which the future evangelist first became acquainted with the Lamb of God.

At Jerusalem, subsequently, with the Lord, he must have witnessed the miracles wrought there, and doubtless was present at the first cleansing of the Temple (John ii. 13-25); for he remembered after the resurrection the words addressed by Christ to the Jews on that occasion (ii. 22). In the Master's company, as he passed through Samaria and Galilee, he must have become acquainted in measure with the woman to whom the Lord had spoken at the well; and, in common with his fellow disciples, he doubtless saw the crowd coming out of the city to see that Man who had told the woman all that ever she did.

The imprisonment of the Baptist having about this time taken place, the Lord's ministry, as related in the three Synoptic gospels, commenced. And one very early act of His was to call the sons of Zebedee, with Simon Peter and Andrew, to follow Him, and to become fishers of men (Matt. iv. 12-22; Mark i. 14-20). Henceforth, to be one of the Lord's constant attendants was his privilege; and shortly afterwards he was numbered amongst the twelve with his brother James, who probably, as the elder, is always (Luke viii. 51; ix. 28 excepted) mentioned first. To be with Christ, and destined to be sent out to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and to have authority to cast out devils, was the path marked out for him (Mark iii. 14).

*The different days are definitely marked in his gospel. On the *first*, the Baptist answered the question of the priests and Levites sent to interrogate him (John i. 19-28). On the *second*, he bore witness to the Lord as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, and also as the Son of God (29-34). On the *third*, John, Andrew, and Peter became acquainted with Christ (35-42). On the *fourth*, Philip and Nathanael (known probably afterwards as Bartholomew) joined the company (43-51). Three days after, making up the week, was the marriage in Cana of Galilee (ii. 1).

To three distinct and important moments in John's life we have now referred, viz., that of his first meeting with Christ; next, when summoned to forsake his secular calling to follow the Lord; and lastly, when called with others to the apostolate. As a saint, as a disciple, and as an apostle he comes before us; and now as an apostle he formed, with his brother James and with Peter, that inner circle of the twelve privileged to witness the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration on the mount, and the agony in the garden. Yet of none of these events does he say one word in his gospel. But an especial favour, peculiar to himself, he mentions, and he alone. He was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John xxi. 7), and was privileged to lean on His breast at the last paschal feast (John xiii. 23-26), and at Peter's instigation he inquired of the Lord of whom He spake. "Lord, who is it?" was the question. "He it is for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him," was the answer. And the Lord having dipped it and handed it to Judas, who probably had not heard the question and the answer, John must have learnt at once that the son of Simon Iscariot was about to betray the Master. "It is one of the twelve that dippeth with Me in the dish," had been spoken in the audience of all. Peter instigating John to enquire more particularly, the Lord answered John as privately as the question had been asked.

The disciple whom Jesus loved! What a designation! Of what favour does this speak. And surely we may say of him, that he fervently loved the Lord. For he entered into the court of the high priest's house on the night of the Lord's apprehension (xviii. 15). He was found, too, at the cross during the hours of the Lord's crucifixion; and the only apostle, it would seem, who kept near it. The others, as far as we know, were absent. All four evangelists note the presence of faithful women. Of men, no one is named save John (xix. 26), to whom the Lord, when dying,

entrusted His mother to be cared for. Confidence was imposed in him, and he evidently was not entirely destitute of means ; for he led away the Lord's mother, a widow doubtless, and a sorrowing woman that day (Luke ii. 35), to find in his house her home, and to be tenderly cared for to the end of her life.

"The disciple whom Jesus loved!" Had we nothing more about him but these few words, we should have concluded that his must have been a beautiful character, and he himself a devoted follower. Such, indeed, he was. Surnamed, with his brother James, Boanerges, *i.e.*, Sons of thunder (Mark iii. 17), burning zeal for the Lord characterised him. Of this Luke (ix. 49, 54) has preserved two examples. Beholding one casting out devils in Christ's name, John forbade him, "because" as he said, "he followeth not with us." The answer of the Lord was instructive and helpful for all time. "Forbid him not ; for he that is not against you is for you." How often has that been ignored, and disastrous consequences have resulted. Let us mark here the true reading. "He that is not against *you* is for *you*."* Room should be given to such to work, and no hindrance placed in their way. The other occasion, mentioned only by Luke, arose from the refusal of Samaritans in a certain village to receive the Master. Indignant at such an affront, John—and here he was joined by his brother James—asked if they should call down fire from heaven and consume them. The Lord turned and rebuked them. Then, bowing to the rejection, He went to another village. Teaching here again comes out for disciples of Christ ; so the Master's word in the first instance, His action in the second, are full of meaning.

Zeal for the Lord then, it seems, characterised John ; and it must have been something of that same feeling

* Where it is a question of Christ, the Master's words are, "He that is not with Me is against Me" (Luke xi. 23). There can be no neutrality in that.

which prompted his brother James and himself to announce their readiness to drink of the cup of which the Lord was to drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized (Mark x. 38), prepared, they thought, to go through anything for or with Him.

Further, a desire to learn from the Lord John evinced. In common with the rest of the twelve he had sought for an explanation of the parables (Matt. xiii.). On another occasion, with Peter, his brother James, and Andrew, he asked privately concerning Jerusalem's future, of the approaching destruction of which he and others had just heard (Mark xiii. 3). That desire to learn was fully met in the opening up of the future, of which the three Synoptic gospels have a full, though in measure a varied account.* In John's gospel it is all passed over unnoticed.

Of special service during the Lord's life on earth one instance only is recorded, and that by Luke (xxii. 8.), who informs us how, in common with Peter, he was selected to go to Jerusalem, and there prepare in the upper room for the last Paschal feast. These two, companions on this occasion, remained companions even after the former's sad fall. Their companionship, as we have remarked, began very early; and it continued, for all we know, uninterrupted to the end of life. He introduced Peter into the court of the high priest's house, speaking on his behalf to the door-keeper, who perhaps would not otherwise have admitted him (John xviii. 16). Then on the morning of the resurrection they seem to have been together, when Mary Magdalene told them that the sepulchre she found was bereft of its occupant. Both ran off at once to it, found the body was not there, and returned to their own home (xx. 2-10).

* Into the differences we cannot of course here enter. Should any desire to look into them, they will find the subject taken up in *From Advent to Advent*, pp. 238-241. E. Marlborough & Co., 51, Old Bailey, London, E. C.

And again, though in company this time with others, they were together on the lake of Galilee, when the Lord, after their night of fruitless toil, addressed the company of fishers, saying, "Children, have ye any meat?" A miraculous draught following on their obedience to the Master's word, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find," John discerned, and told Peter, that it was the Lord (John xxi.). Called to dinner, and ministered to, in common with the rest, on that occasion by the Lord, John was present when Christ publicly restored Peter to his place of service, and heard, in response to Peter's question, "Lord, what shall this man do?" the answer, misinterpreted by some, though evidently understood by himself, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

In gospel times we find these two together in work and in ward. Entering the Temple court at the hour of prayer—the ninth hour, Peter healed the lame man, and, in company with John, addressed the concourse of people brought round them at the report of that which had just taken place. Apprehended by the Temple authorities and placed in ward till the next day, they faced with boldness the Sanhedrin on the morrow, and refused compliance with their orders (Acts iii., iv.). Persecution thus beginning, and culminating in the death of Stephen, Peter and John visited Samaria, recently evangelized by Philip, and conferred on the converts, by imposition of their hands, the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they returned to Jerusalem, after preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans (Acts viii.).

From this time John disappears from the pages of the Acts. His brother James, killed by Herod, the first martyr among the apostles, the sacred historian passes on to the work of Paul in labouring among the Gentiles, in which John had no part. We know, however, from Paul's epistle to the Galatians (ii. 9), that he was present at Jerusalem, and was esteemed as a pillar there when, with Barnabas, Paul went up

by revelation to confer with those in the metropolis. In common with James and Peter, John on that occasion gave the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas, acknowledging that they were specially called to labour among the Gentiles. Later on, and this is the last fact recorded of him in the Scriptures of truth, he was banished to Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus (Rev. i. 9).

With the way Peter preached the gospel we are made familiar through the labours of the historian in the Acts of the Apostles. Of John's preaching, or teaching, not one utterance has come down to us. The same, however, cannot be said of his written ministry. That is the fullest and most varied of any writer of Catholic epistles. A gospel, three epistles, and the Revelation all proceeded from his pen.

He begins his gospel with speaking of the Word who was in the beginning. He does not close the Revelation, till he has predicted, and prophetically described the return in power of the One whom he saw expire on the cross. This is followed by the announcement of the eternal state, when evil shall have been banished to the lake of fire, and the new heavens and new earth shall appear, never to be defiled by the hateful presence of the devil. His ministry therefore embraces within its limits a great space of time, and, whilst providing suited truth for Christians, it will surely be found in measure to minister encouragement to saints who will be found on earth after the rapture.

What experiences, too, were his. Beginning his intimacy with the Lord during the ministry of John the Baptist, he witnessed the gradual growth of the movement, till it reached its highest, palmiest days at Pentecost, and for a short time after. With the freshness and fervour of the early disciples he was of course well acquainted. But, ere he died, he witnessed sad declension in the church. A Diotrephes refused to receive him, and many antichrists were already

abroad, and godly people had to be put on their guard against those teachers, who did not bring the doctrine of the Christ. Was all, then, to fade away like a flower cut down by early frost? No. John wrote of the final defeat of the enemy, and of the full and everlasting triumph of the cause of God and of truth, and with him every heavenly saint will witness that blessed consummation.

C. E. S.

LUKE XVIII. 1-30.

THE Lord opens this chapter with a parable, which He spake unto them to this end, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint"; and irrespective of the example of the judge and the widow given here, we may recall, as the particular feature of this Gospel, the way in which Jesus has been presented at all seasons as the obedient Man and the devoted Servant, and the dependent One in prayer. This reference to Jesus praying may suffice to recall the instances, and value the grace, that not only taught the disciples how to pray; but now that He is about to leave the world to its own ways, and to repeat "the times of Noah and of Lot" as to evil and violence (and the unjust judge, with the disciples in it, oppressed like this widow), whither could He lead them, or on what could He cast them, but in confidence upon God's power by prayer, and in dependence upon Christ's grace, in sympathy and succour?

Solomon had written beforehand of this unjust judge, and the city in which he dwelt, and the widow that cried day and night, when, as "the preacher," he said: "I saw moreover under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. And I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." Further, as to the tears, and the

oppressor, and no comforter, he wrote: "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the hand of the oppressor there was power. Wherefore I praised the dead that are already dead more than the living which are yet alive."

"The Wisdom of God" was Himself walking through the world now, and letting the light from the candle shine into the world's city, and upon the unjust judge; as He had just before been doing in the rich man's house, who had "the unjust steward therein" accused of wasting his lord's goods. Injustice, and evil abounding, amidst all the relations of life, be it in the socialism of the world before the flood, as in the days of Noe; or be it in the civilization and progress of the world since the flood, as in the days of Lot: be it in the Lord's house, with the unjust steward; or as here, with the unjust judge in the city, are the closing scenes of the world's manhood, with God's elect in it, who cry day and night to Him.

This is the picture which the hand of the Lord Jesus sketches upon its wall in the days of their eating, and drinking, and revelry, and forgetfulness of God and men; saying, "There was in a city a judge, which feared not God nor regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adverse party. And he would not for a time: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor respect man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."

The lighted candle is held closer to man's heart and ways, now that his refusal of Christ is determined and accepted. In fact, these two chapters have been variously occupied: first, by presenting the great external world to view in its youth-time, before the flood; and when it has become old and grey-headed, as in the coming day, "when the Son of Man is

revealed"; and last, by showing what men themselves would become in this self-same world, not only in outward actions, but the lighted candle detects what the unjust steward "said within himself," when all fear of God was gone and respect for men lost. Moreover, this eighteenth chapter adds the case of the unjust judge, and what he said likewise "within himself" in the day of his power. Self and selfishness rule in the unjust steward and in the unjust judge, and make both in their respective places the corruptors not only of truth and righteousness, but the corruptors of their own minds and hearts morally, by the tyranny of self and what each said "within himself."

Mark the stages in this apostasy from the claims of God, and the rights of a fellow creature and neighbour. The unjust steward's object was (by the sacrifice of all fear of God and respect for men) that his lord's debtors should receive him into their houses, by the corruptions he had practised; the unjust judge is moved to action that he may escape the trouble and annoyance of the widow who comes to his house, and lest by her persistence the importunate woman should weary this judge.

Thus does the Lord shew what the world would be during His absence in heaven, and till He should return; as also what man in the place of trust, like the steward, would become; and what man in the place of power, like the judge, would be. Moreover, fear of God was gone from before their eyes, and there was no regard for man in the heart, nor respect for Him in the conscience. What a state of men and things! And *this* is "the present evil age," or the world in which He would leave His disciples for a little while; and the world in which God's elect likewise are, who wait to be avenged, and who cry day and night to Him; and He bears long as to them! Nevertheless, Jesus says, "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?"

And here the Lord reaches "faith" again, of which He has more or less spoken, as to its increase among His disciples; its patient expectation as to the kingdom, and the Son of Man's days; or of its endurance under pressure of adverse circumstances, like the widow; and its confidence in God, that He will put down all oppression, and avenge His elect ones speedily. Nevertheless, when the Lord comes, will He find this grain of mustard seed upon the earth? Jesus has sown it, and now He leaves it there, to prove, as it grows, that adversaries and adversities do but give to faith the opportunity of feeding upon them, and of saying they are bread for us to the wavering or the feeble ones.

"And He spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." And now, Jesus brings the candlestick into the Temple, and casts its light upon men who are professedly before God, and detects, as He had done in the steward and the judge, what they say "within themselves"—either for increased condemnation as the Light searches the thoughts and intents of the heart; or else, to shine upon the man who smote upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me the sinner." Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax-gatherer. "The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself thus, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

May it not be thought, that if the Temple service and its worshippers be at all changed from that day to this, it is that the high-class men, who are content to compare themselves with others (and even then to make a blunder), and thank God that they are not like them, have greatly increased in number all around; and that the low-class sinners are rather crowded out of the Temple into the highways, to find the mercy

of God towards the outcast flowing out for them in other places?

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me the sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.” So here we find the law of grace, in the healing of a sinner’s guilty conscience before God, in the full exercise of His mercy—as we had just now “the law of the leper” in the day of his leprosy, and “the law for the priest in the day of the leper’s cleansing,” that he might again take his place in the midst of the camp.

An attentive reader of these sayings of Jesus, and, much more, any disciple who follows Him through “the lanes and the streets” in search of the poor—or from the streets, into the various houses where the lighted Candle has been set to give its light—or from the Father’s house into the city—or from the city and its oppressions into the Temple—and again out of the Temple, in company with the man that would take no other place before God than “*the sinner*”—must see how the grace of Christ has been guiding our feet into His own paths. And where has this blessed Jesus brought us at length? but to know the God who justifies (in the midst of abounding evil and religious pretensions) the man who “would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven,” and to accompany this man to his house, in the light and joy of the grace and the mercy which had made the man what he was, and his house what it was to be, as the dwelling-place of peace! And what are the laws of the house in the day of the sinner’s going down to it, in the knowledge “that it is God who justifieth,” yea, rather, “it is Christ who died, and is risen again?” “Every one,” the Master says, “that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;” for every virtue, and every grace and form of moral beauty, naturally takes its present character from the rejected and lowly Saviour.

Perfectly in keeping with this new principle of discipleship is the next action of the Lord of the kingdom during the days of the Son of Man, come not with outward show. "And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them; but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them." For as yet they were not perfect, as their Master, in the secret that the rich and the wise, and the great and the mighty, could not begin the kingdom, or enter into it, in its present forms and laws—that is to say, "it cometh not with observation." So Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

They might have remembered, in the early history of the commonwealth of Israel, how that after its establishment by the hand of Moses, as "the King in Jeshurun," it declined at his death, by "the evil generation;" and then revived under Joshua, with another generation, from whom the reproach of Egypt was rolled away; but only to fall completely away from God, into the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, as in the times of the Judges. If the disciples, or the rulers, asked further upon this matter, how Jehovah began the kingdom after its corruption and fall, when the ark of God had been taken by the enemy's hand, and Ichabod was written upon Israel, they must have known that it began with Samuel as the little child, and with his mother's song. Yea, even though Saul was the first of the kings, and anointed by Samuel, yet it was to mark the will of the people in his choice; and though he were head and shoulders taller than the tallest, it only proved how far he was away, as the man in the flesh, from the little son in the family of Jesse, whom God was preparing as "the man after His own heart," and that should in his own proper season supersede Saul, and consign him to the witch of Endor, as the king from whom God had departed, and answered not.

The order of God in grace and redemption is this, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second;" and this was first shown in the two Adams—then in the old and new covenants with Israel—and now between Saul and David, and the setting up of the kingdom after Ichabod (for its glory had departed with the generation after the flesh in that day), in the mother and her little Samuel, given up wholly to the Lord. Nor has this order of God been departed from, touching the King and the kingdom of God, when Jesus was born; on the contrary, the manger was its fullest confirmation, and the mother and the young Child became the starting-point of another history—confirmed by the angels too—if the earth was ready, and would respond like Simeon, when he took the Babe in his arms, and carried Him in the Temple of God! All this grace and goodness at the Incarnation have occupied us in these precious chapters, which have opened out to us the ways of Jesus, the born King at Bethlehem. And now that He is rejected by the nation, and going to accomplish His decease at Jerusalem, He maintains the order by grace and redemption, and sets it up in resurrection power and glory in the heavens, and makes the little child again the law and rule of the kingdom; and says, "Verily I tell you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." None can be in it as yet bodily and personally, though we are born into it, and belong to it, as really as when it and ourselves are manifested, in the day when the Son of Man is revealed from heaven as the lightning. Till then the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; because Christ, its Head and King, has been rejected from the earth, and is hidden in the heavens. And the disciples were thus instructed in its great moral principles by the little child, and what it was in spirit, too, to be the least, that the greatest might be produced out of the lowest room, and know it to be the birthplace for the Highest!

It is beautifully in keeping with this, to follow the Lord Jesus into the company of a certain ruler who asked Him, saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" But neither life, nor the kingdom, can come by inheritance, for then it would be after the order and genealogy of a Pharisee of the stock of Israel, to "whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Still, if the ruler is upon the old order of flesh and blood, and the splendid blessings written in the catalogue just quoted from Paul in Rom. ix., Jesus meets him on that ground, and says, "Why callest thou Me good? none is good, save One, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not commit adultery, &c. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up."

We need recall at this point the blessed instruction which Jesus gave to the disciples in chap. xii., when He walked through it, and went before them as the eternal Life, and shone out in all the brightness of its unsullied light, according to the new place He had taken in chap. x. and its corresponding testimony "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and 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." Here it was that Jesus came to the hour of His own joy, in the new position, as in heaven, out of which He saw Satan fall like the lightning. But more than this change of place from the kingdom was the wondrous revelation that followed, and according to which the Church is now gathered, in the power of eternal life, through the Holy Ghost. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son;

and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." In this character, and according to these relations of the Father and the Son, and with a testimony which led them into the outside place with Himself in the present enjoyment of heaven, instead of the earth, He was passing before them and with them in Luke xii. He had even (as will be remembered) brought them into association with Himself as "going away" to the Father, and connected them with Himself in the new and blessed hope of His return; yea, even girding their loins, and putting lamps into their hands, and oil in their vessels with their lamps, that they should be in every respect as men that waited for their Lord. Moreover, like "the Spirit of the Lord" in the prophecy of Isaiah, which blew upon the glory of man, and declared all flesh to be grass, so Jesus, in fact, had blown upon the life of man, and said "Thou fool" to him who had most reason to congratulate himself, and bid his soul take its ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Eternal life was in Himself, and with the Father and the Son, and it was this Life, which in chap. xii. blew out every other, and gladly led the disciples away into its own sphere of delights above with the Father, and into the sphere of rejection below with the Son of God's love.

This young ruler was not upon this ground of grace, and of the Father's love to the Son, or the Son's love for the Father (and it behoves us, in passing, to challenge our own hearts as to their standing only in *this grace*), as the only relations in which eternal life can live and be at home by the Spirit of adoption. Under the old economy of flesh and blood, and as therefore under the law of works, whose standard was the highest good that man as man could reach, the young ruler applies this to Jesus, and salutes Him as "Good Master." Where had this young ruler been, and in what school had he graduated? But the presence of Jesus makes everything manifest, whether of good or evil, and shews it

is either in season or out of season ; and I rather judge He marks this interview as right in its place, as between the young ruler and the law of good and evil as given by Moses and the Jehovah-God of Israel, which was "still holy, and just, and good," but not in keeping with the present position of the kingdom and its rejected Messiah, about to be offered up. Measured by the standard of good and evil, or weighed in the legal balances of Moses, he was blameless, as was Paul touching the righteousness of the law ; yea, as Matthew tells us, "Jesus loved him." And be it so. Nevertheless, Jesus had more love to him than this, and sought to bring him down into the littleness of the little child, by telling him of one thing which he lacked ; and so He puts him upon the new path of Luke xii., where eternal life (as we have shewn) was doing its work with the disciples, amongst whom He now puts them to walk and learn as they. Indeed, what is the heavenly ground of the twelfth chapter, but a living exemplification of "one thing thou lackest ;" next, sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor ; then, thou shalt have treasure in heaven (where neither moth nor rust can corrupt) ; and lastly, Come, follow Me.

Jesus had supplied the "one thing" lacking to His disciples at that time, and now He put the young ruler in the same path of changing the earth for the heavens, with the Son of Man, and of selling—and giving—in order to lay up treasure, and so making to himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. But he could not change his position from Adam to Christ, or from the earth to the heavens, as a present thing, or disencumber himself, to get as small as the little child, and thus enter into the kingdom, as losing his life in this world, that he may keep it unto life eternal ; for these were the paths of eternal life now as known in Jesus.

"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful : for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he

was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !” For all who would follow a rejected King must needs go with David by the way of the Cave, and accompany Jesus *now* by the decease from the Mount ; nor think it hard if the times of Solomon glory, and riches, and fame are postponed to the second coming of the Lord. The young ruler could not enjoy his riches with Christ and the kingdom in this dispensation, for Messiah was to be cut off, and get nothing for Himself ; but it led on into life, and the eternal life which was in question by him. He went away very sorrowful with his riches, and lost the joy of forgetting what was behind, and pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, with Paul.

The Lord said, “ How hardly ;” and the disciples inquired, “ Who then can be saved ? And Jesus said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” And here was the difference mainly between this young ruler and Paul afterwards, to whom the Lord appeared, after He had gone up into heaven, in a light above the brightness of the sun, and filled him with the Holy Ghost, as the power for companionship and testimony to Him in the world which had cast Him out. The young ruler was seeking eternal life ; Paul had received it in the risen Christ, and was united to Him at God’s right hand, in the power and anointing of the Holy Ghost.

Communion with the ascended Lord, and union with Him in life and a new nature, as born of God, and indwelt by the Spirit, are the endowments necessary for a walk with Jesus as the rejected One in this world as it is, and without which it would be impossible with men. It is the mighty power of God, which is to usward who believe, that makes it possible to take up the cross and follow Him. The young ruler, brought up under the former economy of Moses and the law, had to do with Himself according to the

words, "*Thou* shalt, and *Thou* shalt not ;" and he had kept all from his youth up—he had done the good and avoided the evil. What lack I yet? was his challenge! The young ruler was a man, on the ground of man, and alive where men dwell, and in the midst of blessing on the earth; for he was very rich! Paul was a man, but a new creature in Christ, on the ground of eternal redemption, and united to the Last Adam in heaven—old things were passed away and all things were become new, and all things were of God.

There is none good, but One, that is, God, was the measure and height to which Moses carried his worshippers and encouraged them. "Come with us," he said to Hobab, and we will do thee good, for the Jehovah hath spoken good concerning Israel." The psalmody of Israel also, in the times of David, the anointed of the God of Jacob, was founded upon "He is good;" and after this manner He was celebrated in Solomon's reign, when the Temple was filled with the glory. "The trumpeters and the singers lifted up their voice with the instruments of music, saying, For He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever." In Creation, and created things in the earth and the sea and on the dry land, each day's work was good, and God saw that it was good, was the stamp of His satisfaction put thereon. In Providence too, and by His covenant with Noah, confirmed by the bow in the cloud, all proclaimed aloud "that God is good, and doeth good." Redemption brings in other elements and notes of music, as the song which Moses and the children of Israel sang unto their Jehovah at the Red Sea. The ministry of Moses necessarily took this as its character, viz., "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush," for it maintained the eternal relations between God and man as of the earth, earthy; and they were blessed in the good land, which He had promised to Abraham and his seed for ever.

The young ruler was nourished and brought up in this economy for the earth, which displayed itself by milk and honey, and riches and honour in its King and the kingdom ; nor was this ruler out of tune with Solomon, in the times of prosperity and peace. But Jesus had come down from the Mount of His transfiguration, and had deferred His personal glory, and the outward manifestation of His kingdom in power and great glory ; yea, He had accepted His rejection upon the earth, and it was to such an One as this that the young ruler had come. The Messiah of Israel had given up for a while the earth, and His place upon the earth, for another position in heaven, which He would reach by His decease. Would this young ruler keep Him company, and do the same ?

Why callest thou Me good ? Jesus rejected was not as yet the Head of the system on the earth, whose outward show would verify the promises of ancient days, "That God is good to Israel," and witness to the prophecy, "Thy people also shall be all righteous ; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified." The Messiah had come to gather Israel together, that they might eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and keep their feasts in the appointed times with the One that is good, and doeth good to Israel ; but they would not come, and with one consent begged to be excused.

Would the young ruler give up the outward good for the second coming, and accept the wrong and bear the evil with the cut-off One in this present day, and have nothing, like the good Master ? Would he change a place below for another above, and postpone the millennial days of Solomon, and the throne, and its greatness for Christ and the cross, and have treasure in heaven, where thieves break not through nor steal ? What a moment for this young man, and what a question for each of us ! But he turned his back, and went away "very sorrowful." And if there

be a sorrowful man upon the earth now, and a man whose sorrow sits heavy upon him, and grows heavier day by day, it is the man who walks away with this ruler to enjoy the good things, that come richly from the One that is good ! Man on the earth, and of the earth, cannot take up the evil and drop the good, or share the wrongs of a rejected Christ, by taking up the cross and following Jesus outside the world that has rejected Him. This young ruler went off to his possessions without the Messiah, who had nothing for Himself. But Jesus cast Himself and His disciples upon the *possibility of God*.

Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee. And He said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." A doctrine like this, and ways such as these, which comprise a refusal of the natural relations after the flesh and the good things of this life, can only get warrant from the great Teacher and His own cross, as rejected by men out of the world. What would have been ingratitude to the God who is good, and doeth good to Israel, and considered as an abandonment of the privileges in which they boasted, and treated as disobedience by Moses under the statute law perhaps, even unto stoning with stones, becomes, by the change of Christ's own position, and cutting off from His own kindred and nation, the highest possible act of present obedience. Yea, if God did not, in gracious power on His part, make "it possible with men" to be thus identified with Jesus *now*, both as regards the path on earth and the place He has taken in heaven, with men (such an uprooting as this, and such a planting in the sea) would be impossible. This, we may add, is the grand and distinguishing difference between Judaism, where all was good and great, up to the throne and glory of Solomon, in the kingdom

of God, and Christianity, in the day of the Messiah's rejection and cutting off, when He bears the cross to Calvary. He leaves to those who "follow *Me*" to take up, and carry their cross after Him, in a walk out of this present evil world, and its evil, into heaven in company with Him, who is already there. And the Lord grant that none may go away "sorrowful," and prove themselves enemies to the cross of Christ, by making a god of their belly.

Shall we ask, after this, what does Jesus mean by "manifold more in this present time"? What! but having part with Him in His own joys and delights, where He is gone to be with the Father—whom no man knoweth but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him—and to set up the kingdom, neither in Hebron, no, nor yet in Jerusalem, but to begin it anew at the right hand of God, and in due season to bring down the new Jerusalem, as a Bride adorned for her husband, out of the heavens. "Manifold more in this present time" is communion with the Father and the Son, in a well-known and conscious enjoyment of the love wherewith we are loved; and, may be, even made the sweeter because seasoned by the world's continued persecutions! A "part with Me;" and doubtless a blessed one, when understood and carried out in real fellowship, as Peter afterwards did, when under the anointing of the Holy Ghost in power, as "a witness of the sufferings and a partaker of the glory to be revealed."

Jesus bequeaths *this* "part with Me" to His own, as a peculiar and distinguishing gift from all else, as the elect of God; and reminds us of the patriarch, who, when departing, said to Joseph, "I have given *to thee* one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite, with my sword, and with my bow." Thus it is with us (if we were only full enough of His love, and with Himself) who are called out to be with Joseph, or with Jesus, in the days of His "hiding" from His kindred after the flesh, and before the day comes on when the Messiah will make Himself known

to His brethren. He will quiet all their guilty fears in that hour, and put a different interpretation upon good and evil than the law of God by Moses could ever sanction. It is this we wait for. J. E. B.

ALL THINGS

Are of God (2 Cor. v. 18).

Are for your sakes (2 Cor. iv. 15).

Are yours (2 Cor. iii. 22).

Work together for good (Rom. viii. 28).

Are of God, the Father (1 Cor. viii. 6).

Are by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. viii. 6).

Are given into His hand (Jno. iii. 35).

Able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. iii. 21).

Done all things well (Mark vii. 37).

All things which Jesus did (Luke ix. 43).

Christ to have the pre-eminence in all things (Col. i. 16-18).

Made all things for Himself (Prov. xvi. 4).

Worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. i. 11).

All these things are against me (Gen. xlii. 36).

In all these things we are more than conquerors (Rom. viii. 37).

Count all things but loss (Phil. iii. 8).

All these things shall be added unto you (Mat. vi. 33).

All your things done with charity (1 Cor. xvi. 14).

All things without murmurings (Phil. ii. 14).

In all things showing thyself a pattern (Titus ii. 7).

Grow up unto Him in all things (Eph. iv. 15).

Obedient in all things (2 Cor. ii. 9).

Told Him all things (Mark vi. 30).

All things naked and opened (Heb. iv. 13).

All things are possible (Mat. xix. 26).

God in all things glorified (1 Peter iv. 11).

AN angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave,
legions of angels can't confine me there.—*Young*.

LOOKING UP.—Mr. Astor, once fording the turbulent Vasquehauna on horseback, became so dizzy as to be near losing his seat. Suddenly he received a blow on the chin from a hunter, who was his companion, with the words, "Look up." He did so, and recovered his balance. It was looking on the disquietude below that endangered his life, while *looking up* saved it.

THE VALUE OF KNOWING EASTERN HABITS is greatly over-estimated. The wonder of the Bible is its superiority to age, clime, or race in the main; and there is a real danger, especially in our day, of losing the kernel in excessive attention to the husk of local and temporal surroundings, and the like.

ATHEISM is the characteristic of our day. On the sentiments, manners, pursuits, amusements, and dealings of the great body of mankind lies written in broad characters *without God* (Atheists) *in the world* (Eph. ii. 12).—*Cecil*.

MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION (Eph. ii. 14).—Parkhurst believes Paul alludes to the wall or stone "palisade," as Josephus calls it, which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews, and which was inscribed with Greek and Roman inscriptions as to the purity required by the law, and cautioning strangers from approaching.

SEETHING A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK (Ex. xxiii. 19).—The impropriety of this is in its being unnatural and revolting—an outrage on tender and kindly affections.

1 PETER IV. 6.—I understand by "They that *are* dead," saints who had died, and, while living, had heard glad tidings by which they lived unto God, "according to God in the Spirit." The chief difficulty is in the words, "Judged according to men in the flesh." Having regard to the character of the chapter, as seen in verses 1, 2, and, again, the 12th and following (treating 3 to 11 as a parenthesis), I believe the expression to refer to persecution, and perchance martyrdom. The Gospel preached had this double end in view, that the saints who received it might as men be condemned by men, resisting unto blood like their Master, witnessing for Him a good confession in the flesh, and, moreover, live according to God in the Spirit. See *Phil.* i. 29.

A SUFFERER SAID, after six years of pain and confinement to her bed, "I longed to go to heaven that I might be happy, but the Lord has brought *heaven down to my bed*, for I am so happy, so full of His presence!"—"Old Jonathan," 1881.

A VERSE WORKED ON A "SAMPLER."—

Jesus, permit Thy gracious name to stand
As the first efforts of an infant hand;
And, while her fingers o'er the canvas move,
Engage her tender heart to seek Thy love;
With Thy dear children may she share a part—
Write Thou Thy name, Thy love, upon her heart.

—*Sarah France* (1798).

ACTS VIII. 37.—This verse is undoubtedly spurious; omitted in New Translation and in Revised Version.

EAR—EARING (Gen. xlv. 6; 1 Sam. viii. 12).—To ear is to plough, and earing means ploughing. Earth was formerly spelt *ear-eth*, i. e., ploughed land; "arable" means *ear-able* land.

THE BIBLE IN MACEDONIA. —At a town in Macedonia, a Greek Bible was sold three years ago by a colporteur to two brothers, aged 65 and 62 years, who lived under the same roof, and were simple labourers in vineyards. They with their families read the Scriptures together, rarely omitting a single evening, and soon the light began to dawn upon them. They saw that the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the Virgin, nor any saint or angel, was the Author of salvation and the proper Object of our trust and love and confession. They now began to speak freely to their neighbours, going with their Bibles on the Lord's day to the public square, and declaring that pictures, festivals of saints, tapers, candles, fasts and pilgrimages, and all ceremonies for the dead were without any authority from the Bible, and therefore unacceptable to God; that the only holy day was the Sunday, the day of our Lord's resurrection, and that it ought to be kept truly holy to God, and not profaned with intemperance and other sins. On the colporteur's return they warmly thanked him for the treasure he had brought to them, and the Bible Society that sends the light of truth into all the world. They have removed all idolatrous pictures from the walls of their houses; although it appears that their wives have secreted them in their trunks, fearing lest they should be destroyed. Thus again, "God is choosing the poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath prepared for them that love Him."—A. T.

JOHN X. 14, 15 is correctly translated thus, "I am the Good Shepherd, and I know those that are Mine, and am known of those that are Mine, as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. See New Translation; compare Revised Version.

DAYS OF CREATION (Gen. i. and Ex. xx. 11).—There is nothing in Genesis i. to justify a spiritualization (or extension) of the term "day." The definition in verse 5 is imperative that natural days are in view, as also in Exodus xx. 11.—C. D. Ginsburg.

ISAIAH II. 2.—This seems to signify the supremacy, in the last days, of Mount Moriah as the centre of Jehovah's worship, as Mount Zion was, and will be, the seat of royalty given in the grace of God after man's king had failed. The city of the Great King is the destined metropolis of the world during the Millenium, when all Israel shall be saved, the Gentiles learn war no more, and Jehovah's house be a house of prayer for all people.—W. K.

THE END OF THE BATTLE.—"Hush!" said his mother, "his mind is wandering; he thinks he is in battle." But Heaven is listening to the young officer's last words. "To the front! To the front! My Shepherd leads the way. Higher! Higher! Higher!" Then his well-known Leader gave the word, "Come up higher," and he fell asleep.—S. C. M. A.

THE POWER AND ACTIVITY OF EVIL.—Let us observe concerning evil how much more power than good it has to produce its effect and to propagate its nature. One drop of foul will pollute a whole cup of clear water, but one drop of pure has no power to appreciably improve a cup of that which is foul. Sharp pain in a tooth or toe will make the whole man miserable. But, on the other hand, if the body generally be suffering, an easy tooth or toe will cause no perceptible alleviation. May this put us on our guard against that which is evil.

“HE MARVELLED.”

KNOWING, as the Lord did, what was in man (John ii. 25), it may, at first sight, appear remarkable that He should ever have marvelled at any thing. Yet three times in the Gospels we meet with the words which appear at the head of this paper, though they have reference to two occasions only.

The first occasion was when the Centurion came to Jesus to plead on behalf of his paralytic servant (Matt. viii. and Luke vii.). “Lord,” he cried, “my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” To that appeal for mercy came the ready answer, “I will come and heal him.” But placed in a position of authority himself, and accustomed to have his authority respected, the Centurion would pay all deference (not to say reverence) to the authority of Him whom he acknowledged Lord, and replied: “Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Divine teaching had revealed to him that He whom he addressed was the Word, who became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; that the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John i.); that on His *fiat* the universe had come into existence; that when He uttered His voice, all created things, animate and inanimate, must yield obedience; that disease and even death must submit to His behests. Nothing short of this was really implied in the prayer of this man of faith. True, at that time, as now, His voice often fell on ears which heeded it not; but such disobedience, though offering no justification for it, served only to bring out, in bolder relief, the wondrous grace which ever marked His glorious character. For a man who was not only a Gentile, but also an officer of that army of aliens which held possession of Israel’s beautiful land—God’s gift to His beloved people—to come to Jesus confessing Him Lord, and acknowledging to the fullest extent the authority of His word, was truly a most excep-

tional thing. There was no faith like this to be found in Israel, where the Lord had a right, so to speak, to expect it. Human language fails to convey to our minds a sense of the joy which such an exhibition of faith in His Person and in His word gave to that blessed One's heart; and thus it is written of Him that "He marvelled."

The other occasion on which these words occur was during His sojourn in "His own country," and among people who were intimately acquainted with Him (Mark vi. 1-6). He had astonished them by His wisdom and mighty works, but they had hid, as it were, their faces from Him. He was despised, and they esteemed Him not (Is. liii.). To them He was only "the carpenter, the Son of Mary," spite of what He said and did. Their natural minds, while finding much to admire in such matchless wisdom and such marvellous works, had failed to discover the real glories of His Person. To faith alone are these revealed. The beauties and marvels of that wondrous life, as outwardly displayed, must, surely, call forth from even natural hearts astonishment, admiration, and ecstasy; but *emotions are not faith*. The former are evanescent; the latter is eternal. Emotions please the carnal senses; faith pleases God, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. xi. 6). To admire or delight in our blessed Lord's words and works is one thing; to have faith in His Person is another. John's disciples had witnessed many acts in which majesty, might, mercy, and love were displayed; but the grand lesson for them and their master to learn was this: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (Matt. xi. 6). To be offended in the lowly and gracious Jesus was to evince a total absence of faith in Himself. Such a want of faith was here manifested—"they were offended in Him" (Mark vi. 3, R.V.); and "He marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark vi. 6).

"He marvelled"! The faith of the Gentile and the unbelief of His own people most deeply affected Him.

What joy in the one case ; what sorrow in the other ! And do *we* not marvel as we watch Him in all His loving and gracious ways ? Note His readiness to come in answer to faith (Matt. viii. 7) ; and how observable is His reluctance to go, despite the unbelief of His people (Mark vi. 5). He would linger around scenes where His Person was unknown and His Lordship ignored (such was His love) ; while He would retrain from entering the abode of one who both knew His Person and owned Him Lord (such was His grace). And to faith, so precious to His heart, He would mete out, from the exhaustless stores of His love, a full recompense : “ Go thy way ; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour ” (Matt. viii. 13). While unbelief must measure, if it can, its loss, in the words : “ He could there do no mighty work ” (Mark vi. 5).

Truly, we may add :—

“ We wonder at Thy lowly mind,
And fain would like Thee be,
And all our rest and pleasure find
In learning, Lord, of Thee.”

A. C. H.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

THE AIM OF HIS GOSPEL.

ERE looking into John's epistles, it will help us in the consideration of them if we bear in mind the two purposes he had in view in writing his gospel. They are stated by himself : “ These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name ” (John xx. 31). Turning to his first epistle we learn, and again from himself, the object there was in penning it. We quote his words, following the better reading : “ These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who

believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 13. *New translation*).

His first epistle may therefore be viewed in the light of a supplement, and an important one, to his gospel, carrying on a subject treated of in the former, viz., that of everlasting life. By the gospel his readers were to learn how they could get it. By the epistle they could know that they really possessed it. By believing on Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, they would have it. And only of such now can it be predicated that they share in it. Hence truth about the person of Christ, as well as about life, it was needful to set forth in the gospel. John has done this, and in a manner peculiar to himself. And first, as to the *person* of Christ, we are furnished with a threefold testimony, viz., that of John the Baptist, that of Christ Himself, and that of the Father.

The Baptist's testimony is presented first. His ministry ended ere that of the Lord's public ministry in Galilee had begun (Matt. iv. 12 ; Mark i. 14). To the Baptist He was the Christ, the Lamb of God, the Son of God. Greater, then, He was than John, and the latter assigns a special reason for it. Though He came after John, He was preferred before him, for He was before him (John i. 30). He had an existence before His incarnation. Moreover, His shoe latchet John was not worthy to unloose. The lowliest service to Him, the greatest of those who had been born of woman, was not worthy to discharge. The child, as men would say of very poor parents, was far, far above John, the son of Zacharias. Of His holiness, too, John could speak, for he saw the Holy Ghost like a dove descend on Him, and rest on Him. The Spirit of Holiness could find a resting place on earth, but only on Him who had just been baptised of John, and who would in due time baptise with the Holy Ghost. His increasing greatness, too, he gladly declared to some of his own disciples, zealous for their master's fame. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Cheerfully

did he cede the first place to Christ. He had witnessed the departure of two of his disciples to follow the latter. Very probably he knew of others who had joined His company. But in no way was he jealous of the Lord's increasing greatness. He joyfully proclaimed it.

With the record in the third chapter of the gospel the Baptist's testimony to the Lord concluded. From chapter iv. to chapter x. we have the Lord's own public witness of Himself. As the Messiah, the expected One, He announced Himself to the woman at the well (iv.). As the Son of God, He addressed the unbelieving Jews at Jerusalem (v.). As the Son of Man, He spoke to the multitude in the synagogue at Capernaum (vi.), offering to satisfy all who would come to Him (35), and earnestly inviting people in the Temple court at Jerusalem to come unto Him and to drink (vii. 37). Further, He presented Himself as the Light of the world (viii. 12 ; ix. 5), and proved it by giving sight to one who had been born blind. Then, in the presence of Pharisees, He declared Himself to be the true Shepherd, who would lead out of the fold of Judaism all those who were really His sheep. Further, as the Good Shepherd He would die for the sheep:

In chapters xi. xii., the testimony of the Father is adduced, first in the raising of Lazarus (xi. 41, 42); and then by His voice from heaven in response to the appeal, "Father, glorify Thy name." On both these occasions the Lord addressed God as His Father; and on the second the Father spoke in answer, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (xii. 28). He owned Him thus as His Son.

The evangelist's first purpose in writing his gospel is, then, well carried out. To the other purpose in writing it we must now advert, viz., "That believing ye might have life through His name." The important subject of *life* comes, therefore, before us.

Life everlasting is mentioned in each of the Gospels,

though in the three first comparatively rarely, and always in them in connection with the future. In John's Gospel it is treated of both as a present blessing and also as connected with a future state—soul blessing now (vi. 47), blessing for the whole person of the saint in the future (v. 29 ; xi. 25 ; xii. 25). At times spoken of simply as life, at others as eternal, or everlasting life, there is no difference between them. Life, *i.e.*, spiritual life and everlasting life, are one and the same. Of this, John iii. 36 may be adduced as proof: "He that believeth on the Son hath *everlasting life*; he that believeth not (or rather, obeyeth not) the Son shall not see *life*; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Turning now to the development of the subject by the evangelist, we are taken back to the beginning—the eternity of the past, and learn of One then existing—the Word in whom was life (i. 4). He is called "The Word," and in Revelation xix. 13 "The Word of God," because by Him God has been expressed, both in display of creative power, and in grace. In Him, then, was life. It was always in Him, the Word. And as there never was a time when He did not exist, for in the beginning was the Word, so there never was a time when in Him there was not life. Who could conceive of the Word without it? Now, when we speak of the Word, we speak of one Person of the Godhead, not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, but the One whom we know as the Son. Yet, speaking of Him as the Word, we speak not of Him as the Son, though He is the Son. As Son, He is the Son of the Father. As the Word, He is the Word of God. From all eternity He existed; and from all eternity as distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost, we have to say that "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). For man there is no spiritual light apart from this life. Without it man is in darkness, and walks in darkness (1 John ii. 11). Hence the

importance of those words of Christ, "I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

Man therefore must be a recipient of this life, for he has it not as a source in himself. So we learn next of a *characteristic mark* of those who now have received it. They are all believers on the Son of God. For "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should have eternal life." And this is the revealed will of God. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 14-16). Of blessing through believing, the first quotation assures us. With the alternative, and there is but one, the second quotation acquaints us. The reference to the brazen serpent intimates the urgency of the need. From temporal death the bitten Israelite could be delivered. From the second death the believer on the Lord Jesus is for ever saved. So this chapter of the gospel fittingly closes with words we have already quoted: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (iii. 36).

The next point opened up is, that it is the *Son Himself who now imparts it*. In the midst of a hostile crowd the Lord revealed this. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (v. 21). The Jews had just sought to kill Him, because He made Himself equal with God. He let them know that life, spiritual life, they could only receive from Him, and as He should be willing to impart it. He quickens whom He will. Men, then, are absolutely at His mercy for the receiving of life. He quickens. Those on whom He thus acts cannot have had spiritual life previously. They were dead; and as creatures who

had failed in their responsibility, they were dead in sins (Ephes. ii. 5). He quickens!

And now He announced, in a fuller way than He had done to Nicodemus, the blessed result of believing the testimony of God. "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" (v. 24). Here let it be remarked, that *life* and *everlasting life* are viewed again as the same. To the ruler of the Jews the Lord had described the class of people who enjoy this life—believers. Here, having just declared that He quickens whom He will, He speaks of them as hearing His word, and believing Him that sent Him. Hearing His word—for He speaks to the soul—and so quickens the individual.

But *when*? Of that we next learn. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (25). He was quickening at that time. He is quickening still. He speaks, and souls hear; and able is He to do this. "For as the Father hath life in Himself; even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (26). Here the Father is again introduced in connection with the teaching about life. He quickeneth the dead, the Lord had said. Here He declares that the Father hath life in Himself, and hath given the Son to have life in Himself. Life is in the Father. One could not conceive of the Father without it. As in Him, He can give to the Son to have it in Himself. The Son, then, has it in Himself as a source, and gives it to others. All believers on Him have this life; but of none of them can it be said that they have life in themselves—it is for them in the Son. So, as we read elsewhere, "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 12). To get it we must go to Christ, and nowhere else. For, as He told the Jews at Jerusalem, "Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40).

He who quickens was then on earth. Now further teaching is unfolded. He is "the bread of God," "the bread of life," "the bread which came down from heaven," "the living bread," of which all who are partakers have everlasting life; but this involves His death. For, to profit by "the true bread," we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Hence not only incarnation, but death, the death of the cross, was needful; and all sharing now in everlasting life must acknowledge this. For the Lord's announcement, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you; he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life" (vi. 54, 55), shuts the door against spiritual blessing for any who refuse to be indebted to His atoning death. And here we learn that the teaching about the bread from heaven involves the truth of *the resurrection of the body*. For the body as well as the soul of the believer is to share in everlasting life. So four times over in this chapter (vi. 39, 40, 44, 54) the Lord declares, "I will raise him up at the last day." Of resurrection by His voice of power He had spoken in chapter v. 28, 29, distinguishing there the resurrection unto life from the resurrection unto judgment. Here in chapter vi. He announces who can share in the former—those who now eat His flesh and drink His blood, *i.e.*, feed on Him as dead—such live for ever (58). The whole person of the saint is to share in this blessing. With this, the Lord's discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum comes to a close.

We are next to hear of the *perfectness* of this blessing communicated by the Lord, and of the *abiding condition* as well as the *security* of all who receive it. Addressing the Pharisees at Jerusalem, who had gathered round Him after He had opened the eyes of the man born blind, He told them that He had come to give life to His sheep, and to give it to them abundantly (x. 10). Of the sheep He spoke, His sheep—a class amongst men—for there were those

present who were not His sheep. Such were known by this, that they did not act like His sheep, for they did not hear His voice and follow Him. Life abundantly He spoke of—life in all its fulness—life to which nothing could be added to complete it, His sheep would ever possess. But more. In chapter iii. 16, He had stated the alternative, which is either to perish or to have everlasting life. Now, walking in Solomon's porch at the feast of the dedication, He assured all both of the imperishable condition of His sheep and of their everlasting security: "They shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand" (28). No perishing of life from within—no separation by external power from the grasp of Christ. And in proof that temporal death cannot destroy this life, the Lord's words ere reaching the grave of Lazarus may be quoted: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (xi. 25, 26). Those of His sheep who pass into death before He comes will be raised—those then alive will never die.

And now, with the closing words of chapter xii., the Lord's teaching about life, addressed to the Jews, comes to an end. "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (49, 50). The Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. xviii. 18, 19) thus ended, as far as John's Gospel gives it, His public testimony in Israel.

But for disciples, for those who like Peter had proved that the Lord had the words of eternal life (vi. 68), there was more to be revealed. So replying to Thomas, in answer to his question, "How can we know the way?" He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (xiv. 6). *Christ is for us the life—our life.* It is in Him, as a source for us.

Paul taught this (Col. iii. 4), and John affirms it. "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son: he that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 11, 12).

Just one more lesson on this important subject, and the teaching about it in John's Gospel concludes. It is found in the Lord's prayer to His Father (xvii. 2, 3). Authority being given Him to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given to Him, the Lord said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." It is only as possessing this life we can show that we *practically know* the true God, and Jesus Christ. Without it we can neither really know the One nor the Other.

Thus the last teaching in the gospel about life is the starting point really for the teaching about the display of it in us in the epistle. This passage, therefore, is a connecting link between the gospel and the epistle.

A few remarks ere closing.

In all that has passed before us, it should be noted that we have no definition given of life. What is life? we may ask, but ask in vain. As with physical, so with spiritual life, what each is no man can define. That lies, as far as we know, beyond man's ken. If we ask, *Who is our Life?* the answer is furnished us—Christ is it (John xiv. 6; Col. iii. 4). It has been displayed in Him—He is it. But *What is life?* remains a question unanswered.

Next, we would call attention to the importance of observing the scriptural way of describing it. When speaking of it in relation to the Father, the Word, or the Son, it is, we believe, called simply *life*; when speaking of it as manifested to men, or possessed by them, it can be described as *everlasting life*. To this 1 John i. 2 offers no real exception if we follow the Revised Version: "The life was manifested, and we

have seen it, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal *life* which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Once is it called the *life of God* (Ephes. iv. 18); but never is it termed *divine* life. The *divine* nature and *eternal* life—in these distinct ways are the nature and the life characterised. Again, remembering that the Father hath life in Himself, we shall be kept from using a phrase which has become current of late—"Personality of life." Life is not a person, though it has been manifested on earth in a Person. And, further, since the Father hath life in Himself, any teaching about it will be erroneous which does not provide for the admission of this truth. On this, however, we will not here enlarge. Scripture teaching about life we have sought to set forth without controverting unsound doctrine about it.

In our next, on the *ministry of John*, we hope to look into his first epistle. C. E. S.

FOOD OF GOD.—SAVOUR OF REST.

Gen. viii. 21; Lev. i. 17; ii. 2; iii. 14, 15, 16, &c.

WHAT hallowed subjects for meditation such words as these are, opening up to us, as they do, the value in His sight of that which formed the chief feature in the altar of burnt-offering and its sacrifice; or, may we say? the infinite value of that Sacrifice once offered—the cross of our ever blessed Lord. How blessed to contemplate, and, as knowing that there is that which ever abides in its own intrinsic excellence; that, too, which He would ever have before them, as Exodus xxix. 38 onward would set before us; that which was food indeed for God, with the blessed results there set forth—God meeting there with the children of Israel, sanctified with His glory, dwelling among them, their God. And so, too, for our souls' peaceful rest and comfort in such a day as the present. What glimpses and shadow-

ings forth of such things God gives in His most precious word, scattered here and there. A few of such might be profitably pondered—a little comfort perhaps gathered, as sorrowing or tried ones, we pass along our heavenward journey, passing along upward to where He is who has gone before, but, withal, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.

Do we get one such hallowed scene in that moment of Abel's offering to God "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof"? Surely, full of deepest interest this was for himself at such a time—the time of Cain's fruit offering—not only as in connection with it "the Lord had respect to Abel"—accepted him; precious this was—but reaching onward as it did, and shadowing forth that One offering by which saints now are perfected for ever. May we not well say, "Savour of rest," "food of God;" though here again, Whose rest? but His, whose rest had been disturbed—broken in upon by sin. So He began to work anew to produce that in which He could find delight—a soul that could own Him in setting forth before Him that which gives Him rest. What a moment this, in the midst of the ruin sin had caused.

Again, may we not pass on in time's course to the day of Genesis viii.? The flood had been. Noah at the word had come forth out of the ark. Judgment had done its strange work; and now Noah erects an altar, and offers a burnt-offering, and the Lord smells a sweet savour, or, as in the margin, a savour of rest. He would not curse the ground any more for man's sake, though the imagination of man's heart remained unchanged. He had smelled that sweet savour.

Again, we pass on to the day of Gen. xxii. Wondrous and precious moment this was in Abraham's history. There had been other seasons of deep moment to him, as when the burning lamp passed between the pieces—Abraham in a deep sleep—the God who had called him out from Ur of the Chaldees, had blessed him, now covenanting that, though his Seed should

surely have to know the iron furnace, yet He would bring them forth from thence. Another season of precious moment, when, as the friend of God, he, blessedly privileged, intercedes for the guilty cities of the plain. But here, the heir given back to Him who first gave him, the one in whom all the promises rested, shadowing forth the true Heir, the One Promised Seed, accounting (for he had said, *I and the lad* will go yonder and worship, *and come again* to you) that God was able to raise him up from the dead. Two things are here: Isaac passes through death (figuratively) into possession of the promise of the inheritance; yet for himself one is provided to be offered in the stead of him—the ram caught in the thicket by his horns. Does this shadow forth anything to us of the One who was to come? Nothing, we may venture to say, in such things happen by chance. And in that mountain of His holiness, “One of the mountains which I will tell thee of,” this ram was stayed in his progress and pathway of adequate power. Does this shadow forth to us the One who was to come, manifesting as He passed along power in goodness, for virtue oftentimes went forth of Him (see Mark v. 30; Luke vi. 19, viii. 46), as well destroying the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8)? What a thicket was that in the midst of which He passed on His way. Can *we* understand what such a word means—revealing this world as it was known by Him; manifesting goodness, grace, and power? and yet but thorns and briars, with all that they tell, and that, too, where culture had been most bestowed! “What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it?” (Isa. v. 4). Why all this tangled state of things? *Can* it be improved? Ah, “that which bears thorns and briars is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned;” and so God in Christ, with reverence may we say, could not so meet it; the appointed One was stayed in His progress to pass on to the altar, there offered a burnt-offering, “in the stead of.” Yes, Isaac’s being offered by Abraham was Abraham giving all back

again to Him who first gave. But one, "in the stead of," must be found for Isaac himself, he on that altar could not be a sweet savour to God. There was but One who ever fully answered that mind and heart of infinite holiness, who, if there was an offering of savour of rest, must fully answer His nature and claims; and that One He provided (in type). Abraham had said He would. How full such things are, and full of deepest meaning for us. A Lamb without blemish and without spot—the Lamb of God—but as here the Ram stayed in the thicket, and now, as that Ram, was taken and offered in the stead of his son. What a moment for Abraham and Isaac this was—surely never to be forgotten by them. And as the fire of that sacrifice ascended, carrying up to God the sweet odour of that offering, what ground for holy communion and worship! Who was over all this? The word to Abraham, "Take now thy son"; the three days' journey; the fire and knife; the "My father," the "My son;" thus the sweet savor of that provided ram caught by the horns—all, surely, point to that gracious provision, that offering up, that sweet smelling savour (Eph. v.).

And so Abraham *and Isaac* returned from *that mount*. May we not say when God has had that savor of rest, the food which He loved, how thoughts may thus travel onward to that later day of Israel's history, to that scene pointed out to be the place for the "footstool of His feet" (1 Chron. xxviii. 2), the house for Him to dwell in. Who could build a house for Him, seeing the heaven of heavens could not contain Him? How should they, the created things, contain the Creator? Yet would He be pleased thus to dwell, and again here to receive that odour of sweet smell a willing people might render. And this, too, in connection with what appeared to be Satan's triumph, as the adversary, provoking the beloved servant to number those who were to be as the stars of the sky and the sand by the sea shore (Gen. xxii. 17; Deut. i. 10, x. 22), but in

this only securing his own defeat. He appeared to triumph, and "the angel of the Lord stretched out his hand over Jerusalem;" but the word went forth, "It is enough." Judgment's strange work once more passed, and, in its stead, in the place of the wheat threshing (1 Chron. xxi. 20), (see Isa. xxviii. 29. Does this remind of the corn of wheat and fine flour?), the offering up of that sacrifice, the burnt-offering, and the blessed answer of fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt-offering, thus pointing out the place for that altar where sweet savour offerings should arise with all their grateful odour to Him who appointed it; telling thus, again and again, of *that One offering*.

Again, we may pass on to a yet later day in that history so wonderful, and to another mount, when another scene passes before us (1 Kings xviii.)—one left alone, as he says (1 Kings xix. 10-14), though seven thousand were hidden. A sad and sorrowful day this was in that history so full of interest: Baal in place of Jehovah—yet His people. Famine overtakes them, and those two mark out the land between them to seek water for horses and mules. What thought in Ahab of Jehovah in this? No turning to Him; no owning of the hand which smote them; no seeking His face; and yet—His people; and He was about to give them the needed blessing of rain upon their land, which for three years had been withheld—drought and barrenness, instead of plentiful harvests and a joyous people with hearty thank-offerings owning His tender mercies unailing.

But we are now directed to Mount Carmel, to those twelve stones according to the number of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel—the one bullock, the water, the fire from above which consumes with acceptance (see Ps. li. 19) the whole burnt-offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, the water licked up—and this in connection with "that thou *hast turned their hearts back again*." Departure *in heart* and then in ways had marked them, but now in connection with

that sweet savour offering He would accept them, turning their heart back again, giving them the plentiful rain, blessing from above ; and not as Egypt, “when thou wateredst it with Thy foot” (Deut. xi. 10-12) ; looking on to that day when the twelve tribes shall be again one people (see Ezekiel xxxvii. 15 to 28) ; and many other such like precious indications of His gracious purpose toward such a people), when individually acceptance known, the curse removed, no more drought or barrenness—that dwelling-place for Him, the house of prayer for all nations.

Satan bound, a willing people long enjoying the works of their hands, the earth yielding her increase, the heavens and earth gathered into one (Eph. i. 10), uniting in one harmonious song, Worthy is the Lamb ; and then, too, giving forth in joyful worship to Him upon that altar, in that house and that Zion, that which tells of all, that precious sweet savour offering—that food of God. When that day dawns, “He will rest (be silent) in His love”—hearts—His, theirs, and ours too, as with Him who loveth us—full to eternal satisfaction and to His eternal praise !

G. C.

“NOT MY PEOPLE.”—*Hosea* i. 9, 10.

WHEN Gentiles in the flesh, we were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. A people then not owned of God in any special way of close relationship ; yet He, all praise to Him, faithfully caring for His creatures—then as now giving seed-time and harvest, shower and sunshine, alike for just and unjust—giving returns to the labourer in bread to sustain for which he would hunger again and again, and again and again would our blessed God minister to the need of His creatures in His appointed way. The children had bread, the blessed Lord declared, not to be taken away and cast

to dogs; but He cared for dogs as well as sparrows, and crumbs should be for these. There was need there and One who could meet it; urgent need, but the cry was not for bread, but mercy of the Lord. "Send her away" was heard, away to her misery, the companionship of her child grievously vexed with a devil, herself helpless to rebuke or remove that which so solemnly tormented; but she had laid hold of Him who is mighty as well as meek and accessible. "Help me" was the piteous cry. What a cry to answer; what a request to grant! How worthy of Him and that place in the Word which records the cry of a poor, wretched woman who found mercy of the Lord, through taking her true place before Him.

There was a time when it could be said of us, "Uncircumcision; aliens"; and that there be no boasting, we are called (Eph. ii. 11, 12) to remember this. Children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, we are called upon to remember we were without Christ, without hope, without God in the world, that the riches and glory of the grace of our God may shine in all its luminous splendour to His praise. It is good to be thus reminded; thanks to God for the reminder. What self-judgment, what check upon pride and high-mindedness is here.

A few brief months ago a living picture, portrayed in its solemn reality, was before me. A knot of people had just reached the wharf to join a vessel bound west—far, far away from the land of the fathers of these people—who answered so exactly to the description, "Disowned of God;" "not My people." They could tell of their ancestry, at one time their relationship with the blessed God, who would receive at their hand in His grace a sacrifice from their flocks and herds, would bend His gracious ear to their cries, would give them victory at times over their foes, and would shew in a thousand ways His care, make manifest He was for those whom He was pleased to call "My people."

Alas! what a change!—shoeless, homeless, without king or country, and being farther removed from that land of desire where had been altars, temple, house of prayer. The hands now hanging down; for to lift up hands to God, absence of wrath and doubting and some sense of the endorsement of His precious Name is necessary, that petitions reach Him and have their answer. Hands soiled, a people guilty of the rejection of God's Son, and who said, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” How inexpressibly sad is such a picture! No blame attaching to God, no breakdown on His part—the failure was and is still with those called the people of God.

Are we not sensible of lack, of carelessness, of wanderings, of hewing out to ourselves cisterns which can hold no water? Do we know how to use aright our privileges as those who are in relationship with God, whose fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ? being away as to our state of soul from our blessed God who gave His Son, so as to be unable to make happy approach to Him with our offering, with our requests, to ask of Him for grace and wisdom, light and understanding, to walk through this world in the footsteps of Him who honoured and glorified Him every step of the journey. Neglecters, neglecters; how solemnly have we sounded the words in the hearing of our poor unsaved friends. But are they not sharp in their reproof to us, as His provision and requirements have been so slighted by His saints, who fail as they of old failed to continue stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers? Is not the rest of God worth labouring to enter into? May I and you get down before Him. Woe is me, for I am undone! as we think of solemn departure from the Word of our God, the ways of our blessed Lord; pleading at times restoration without repentance; omitting our responsibilities while taking all the privileges; going to get a good time, instead of that which is so unspeakably

precious, offering to Him the sacrifice of praise continually. The blessed God look down upon His poor flock; may we, indeed, learn of Him to use aright such rich provision a dependent people require, so as to honour and glorify Him who is absent, the residue of our pilgrimage through this world. Oh! may we revere Him and cleave to His Name, cherishing God's thoughts of Him as we contemplate whose blood it is whereby we are made nigh to God; and may those words go to our hearts, "The children of the living God" (Rom. ix. 26). Once "having no hope," now *having hope* in connection with that Divine centre and associated with that blessed Person, the Christ of God; hopes not to be dashed to the ground, but to be realised. Do we not joy to know the One who endured the cross, and whom we shall soon see and praise in full?

W. B.

"THEY (Corinthian saints) had the sound of the truth ringing in their ears; and, assuredly, there are few sounds sweeter than the liberty of the Christian. But what is more liable to abuse? They had abused power to self-exaltation; they were now turning liberty to license. But there is a solemn fact, which none can afford to forget, as to both power and liberty—that *without responsibility* nothing is more ruinous than either. Herein lay the sad failure of these saints. In the sense of responsibility they were utterly wanting. They seem to have forgotten completely that the Lord from whom the liberty had come is the One in whose sight, and for whose glory, and according to whose will, all power was to be used."—*Extract Lectures Introductory to Pauline Epistles.*—W. K.

AS a wen looks worse on a beautiful face and a skull on a bank of snow, so is sin in the church of God most uncomely and loathsome.—*Guthrie.*

WORSHIP.

JESUS, Thy ransomed ones draw near,
 Worship and praise to render here ;
 Owing in Thee, their sovereign Lord,
 Worthy of all to be adored :
 Worthy that to remotest zones,
 Of all created space, the tones
 Of holiest worship should resound
 In echoes of sublimest sound !

Worthy, for ever worthy, Thou,
 That Godhead glories crown Thy brow ;
 Worthy, in majesty divine,
 On God's eternal throne to shine :
 Where, now installed at His right hand,
 Wielding His sceptre of command,
 Heaven's denizens rejoice to see
 God manifested, Lord, in Thee.

Worthy, because in heavenly grace
 To earth Thou cam'st, a sinful race,
 To free from Satan's tyrant thrall,
 And back to truth and God recall ;
 Who, urged by him along the road
 Of base departure from their God,
 Plunged, reckless, onward to the doom
 Of death, and hell's unfathomed gloom.

Worthy, because, our souls to save,
 Thou did'st the cross, the curse, the grave
 Thyself endure, with all the load
 Of sin, beneath the wrath of God,
 On our behalf, that we might rise
 With Thee to glory 'bove the skies,
 In resurrection treading down
 The tyrant, spoiled of prey and crown !

Worthy, because in Thee shone forth
 God's moral glory, here on earth,
 As erst not e'en in heaven had been
 God's infinite perfections seen—

Truth, justice, holiness, at one
 With grace and mercy, on the throne—
 Sinners from guilt to justify ;
 God, in the act, to glorify !

Worthy, thrice worthy, Christ of God ;
 Our Saviour, our Redeemer, Lord :
 Object of heaven's exulting praise,
 Theme of its holy, joyful lays.
 We too, with laud of loftiest sound,
 Would spread Thy glories all around ;
 Tribute of praise divine would bring
 To heaven's and earth's triumphant King !

R. H.

RIGHTS.

HOW numerous a class are those who have claims to make, rights to assert, wrongs calling for redress, &c. It may not be unhealthy to look at matters and see whether all are as real as they at first appear, and how far we are correct in pressing for satisfaction. Men came to the infallible One to seek His defeat, to bring Him by word or deed into collision with one named Cæsar. The One who taught rightly the way of God had this question put to Him, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" But He perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? Shew Me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, "Cæsar's." And He said unto them, **RENDER THEREFORE UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS WHICH BE CÆSAR'S, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS WHICH BE GOD'S.** What questions are raised here of deepest moment to every creature. Rights—and those who assert them. Friend, what are yours?

We may find how limited our thoughts and interests are, how frequently they begin and end with self. But though we may have rights, others have also. Let us see to it that His direction is not missed and

that Cæsar has his due, and the claim of the blessed God is not left out.

How insupportable the thought: an intelligent, responsible creature of God, lost, bankrupt, undone, away from God, under Satan, powerless and helpless; and you tell me of claims I cannot meet, you tell me of responsibilities I cannot discharge. What shall I do? Ah, yes, it is true I have pressed my petitions for less work and more wage, I have put in my claim for injuries sustained, I have thought of what I ought to get; but I never thought of God who gave me being. What shall I do? He has a claim, a righteous claim, and a right to command now all men everywhere to repent.

Emperors, kings, queens are fitting occupants for thrones; magistrates are set as dignitaries not to be despised, who, as God's ministers, wield the sword of justice, having officers at their bidding to preserve order or punish the riotous and unruly; masters and parents have their distinctive claims; servants and children have their part to render. How many and varied claims might here be instanced. How much trespassing, failure, shortcoming would be disclosed did we but ply the question of rights, and press it home upon consciences, in order to lead our fellows to broken-heartedly come to this, "I have sinned;" I am the sinner.

Wages! wages!! wages!!! cries the labouring man, with the sweat upon his brow. The wages ever at fault. I must have more. Look how wealthy my master is getting. More wages are asked or demanded; less work next; and so the discontented murmur on, and toil for the bread that perishes, leaving untouched that Bread of which a man may eat and hunger no more. But there will be no dispute as to inequality, the pay and rewards for deeds done in the body; the divine balances will test in all accuracy thought and intent, motive and issue. He perceives the craftiness; He knew what it was to be met and have His rights

challenged ; but God has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained ; and the assurance is, He hath raised Him from the dead. Impossible that His Word should fall to the ground ; this Judge does not die or err. There will be no excuses of absence from the unrepentant and unbelieving ; no cry of unfair ; no word of injustice ; no thought of unrighteousness. There are wages that have not the image of Victoria, with their different classifications of value in bronze, silver, and gold : the wages of sin—
DEATH.

Do you see your right to this and more—that unbending judgment, the outpouring of God's wrath? Oh! how slow to put in claims like these, to own our right to death and judgment at God's hand. There was one in extremity who rebuked a railer and owned he was getting his rights, but cast himself upon the mercy of Him who died the Just for the unjust. Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we, indeed, justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom. The lips that never parted to make answer to Herod, with his men of war, opened with such certainty of expression to the poor repentant thief by His side, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Have you heard whom He has been confessed? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is rock foundation, the confession of His blessed Name ; and He has said, On this rock I will build My assembly, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it. Have you heard or seen His word telling of rights, and has there been response to this, "As many as received Him to them gave He the right to become the children of God, to them that believe on His Name"? What goodness of God using forbearance, not cutting us down in our sins, but granting repent-

ance and remission of sins and the knowledge of Christ, who introduces into favour; the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Much is unfolded in this: "Why persecutest thou Me?" Christ on high; His own confessing His Name below belong to Him, are His, joined to Him; no human arrangement or trick of the enemy can prevail. There is One Body—mysterious now, but soon to be manifest, which will mark the wisdom of our blessed God, who lets us know by grace He saves, and no flesh shall glory in His presence.

W. B.

"YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD."—What is the meaning of the word temple? Our associations with this word are largely of a material kind. A house, an edifice, bricks, stone, ornament, and splendour at once occur to us. But let us go to the fountain head, and study the word in the light of its primitive idea. It belongs to a large family of words. The root is *tem*, and signifies *cut*. *Templum* means a portion cut off. The Roman augurs, when they wished to observe the heavens, went forth with the sacred rod in their hands, and marked out there-with a portion of the sky, Whatever passed within *that portion* was the subject of their augury. This was the "templum," the separated space, cut out of the blue heavens for sacred uses. Thence the word came to be appropriated to any enclosed spot separated to sacred uses; thus to sanctuaries, houses of prayer, &c. The fundamental notion, then, is not construction, but *separation*; the severance of a certain portion for higher use and honour than the rest enjoyed; separation to God or to His use.

SOCRATES said of his enemies, "They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me." How much more truly may they say this whose life is hid with Christ in God!—*C. Buck.*

A SONG OF TRIUMPH.

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”—*Rev.* i. 5, 6.

I GO from grief and sighing,
The valley and the clod,
To join the chosen people
In the palace halls of God.
There sounds no cry of battle
Amidst the shadowing palms,
But the mighty song of vict'ry,
And glorious golden psalms.

CHORUS.—Oh mighty song of vict'ry,
Oh glorious golden psalms;
Oh peace that's after conflict,
Amidst the shadowing palms.

The army of the conquerors,
A palm in every hand;
In robes of state and splendour
In rest eternal stand.

Those marriage robes of glory,
With His most precious blood,
He bought them for His people,
Made righteousness of God.

The Lamb of God has saved them
From hell's deep sea of fire,
The Lamb of God adorns them
In spotless white attire.

The Lamb of God presents them
As kings in crowns of light,
As priests in God's own temple,
To serve Him day and night.

Salvation, strength and wisdom,
To Him whose works and ways
Are wonderful and glorious,
Eternal is His praise,

The Lamb once slain who liveth,
Alive forever more,
The Saviour who redeemed us,
Forever we adore.

ANON.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

BOSTON, U.S.,

SEPT. 27, 1874.

VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I trust God is keeping you very near Himself, and that He maintains the freshness of His grace and of His love in your soul. We need to be constantly renewed. Without that, spiritual energy does not keep up. "They shall renew their strength," it is said, "like eagles;" and it is not progress in knowledge which effects that, although this is profitable for teaching Christians, and even for rendering the gospel which we preach more pure.

What is of moment is the keeping of oneself near God. There love maintains itself and grows; His love in our souls, which finds its activity and its comfort in exercising itself towards poor sinners and towards the saints. Thus one seeks the glory of the Lord in them, and their own well-being.

God gives you to enjoy Himself; but God reveals Himself, not only as infinite blessedness in Himself, but also in the activities of His love, in which He finds His delight; and when His love is shed abroad in our hearts we enjoy, assuredly, what He is: but this love is active towards us by His grace. *Activity*, unless refreshing itself in His communion, may be sincere, but will degenerate into routine, and into a habit of acting, and is even dangerous; the soul is then far from God without being aware of it. But in His love dwelling in Christ, and His word dwelling in us, we can count on an answer to the requests we address to Him in our hearts.

Here I do not see much movement in souls; what there is does not turn away from human ways in the Christian path, and presses them to activity not Scriptural. The state of the Churches is truly scandalous. Pious souls groan; but where are instruments to be found to guide them in the good way.

God has raised up several. Several ministers even have left their systems ; but it is a drop of water in a wide sea, and there is a great effort to keep souls in the various systems, while taking advantage of the light which brethren have and preaching their doctrines. They do not even conceal it. One of the most active, who has visited Europe, told ministers there that they could not keep up with brethren, if they did not read their books ; but he was doing everything he could to prevent souls leaving their different systems, called Churches. It is a new wile of the enemy.

Thank God, that does not discourage me. I have seen that God is above all that ; but it is an additional difficulty. If there is activity of grace with brethren, it is another victory to carry off. He also tries to hold them by presenting a false perfection as an object to attain, which is none at all—where Christ, the precious Saviour, is terribly veiled.

The harvest is great, and the labourers few. We know where we have to go to to have them. May God give us to do it with faith !

Study the Bible, dear brother, with prayer. Seek the Lord there, and not knowledge—that will come too, but the heart is well directed in seeking the Lord ; the eye is single, and then the whole body is full of light. Greet affectionately all the brethren. My earnest wish is that they may be very near the Lord, and the Lord very near them ; not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind. Christ is all. The more one travels on down here in His ways the more one feels it.—Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

LOVE, the true love of God, is the love of His truth, of His holiness, of His whole will. The true love is that which reflects itself in obedience, and stirs and purifies the conscience.—*Vinet.*

BISHOP BUTLER'S DYING WORDS.—He called for his chaplain, and said, "Though I have endeavoured to avoid sin, and please God to the utmost of my power, yet, from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am still afraid to appear before the Moral Governor of the Universe." "My lord," said the chaplain, "you have forgotten that Jesus Christ is a Saviour." "True," was the answer, "but how shall I know that He is a Saviour for me?" "My lord," is it not written, "him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"? "True," said the Bishop, "and I am surprised that, though I have read that Scripture so often, I never felt its virtue to this moment; and I now die happy."—*Leisure Hour.*

THE STRENGTH OF JACOB (Gen. xxix. 10).—*He* alone rolled away the stone; from verses 2 to 8, we infer that it was usual for *several* to do this together. This is shown again in the angel having to wrestle with him (xxxii. 24, 25).

BIBLE OR NO BIBLE, the world is in a state of departure from God. Bible or no Bible, man is a sinner and unable to stand before the God who judges sins and sinners. But the Bible alone in its own inimitably simple, holy and dignified way, tells the truth as to how sin came in. Scripture alone sets out the truth so profoundly that the deepest plummet has never sounded it, so helpfully that the least draught has ever refreshed a truly thirsting soul.—*B. Treasury.*

THE HEALING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.—While our Lord was on His way to the house, the woman pressed up to Him, laid her hand in faith on the hem of His garment, and was healed. It was just so that the Gentiles apprehended Christ by faith, when the errand on which He came was to seek and save His ancient people, the Jews. The maid was twelve years old, and for twelve years the woman had been afflicted. The life of the one exactly equalled the affliction of the other; and when the one died, the healing of the other came in. Exactly so was it with the Jew and the Gentile; the former rejected, while the latter are before the Lord in blessing. The woman had spent all she had, and only grew worse; and so with the heathen nations, they had derived no benefit from the philosophers and other teachers who had undertaken their cure, but had rather grown worse, until their case was hopeless. But when they betook themselves to Christ, pressing up to Him and snatching the blessing by force, laying the hand of faith on His garment, they derived healing and health from the very Fountain of life and immortality. Meanwhile the daughter of Jairus died. "Why then is not the health of the daughter of My people recovered?" (Jer. viii. 22). Shall she lie lifeless for ever? Not so. "Believe only, and she shall be made whole" (Luke viii. 50). Christ entered the ruler's house and restored the maiden. The same divine Lord will yet take the daughter of Judah by the hand, and she shall revive. And oh! "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15). He who conquered death is coming, and when He shall have reached the ruler's house, and put the people forth, and gone in where the maid is lying (just as we read of Joseph [Gen. xlv. 1], "There stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren"), He will take her by the hand and her spirit will come again, and the maiden shall arise straightway (Mark v. 42; Luke viii. 55—compare Ez. xxxvii. 5, 6).—*Dean Burgeon.*

A HUMAN PRIESTHOOD on earth for Christian people is apostacy from the truth of the Son perfected for ever, and ministering on high according to power of indissoluble life ; it is to rehabilitate the defunct Aaronic order, disannulled because of its weak and unprofitable nature ; it is virtually to deny the very gospel of salvation, which announces to all who believe that the blood of Jesus at once blots out their sins, and brings themselves nigh to God in a constant nearness far beyond what the sons of Aaron and Aaron himself ever enjoyed (Heb. x).

"DISCERNING OF SPIRITS" (1 Cor. xii. 11).—This special gift was exercised in judging not men, but doctrine. Paul applied it in the highest sense to the false teaching at Galatia, Corinth, Colosse, &c. ; but all brethren are bound to try the spirits whether they be of God.

"OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY—all things are become new."—Not as if old things were not still within and around, but that faith is now entitled to see and speak according to the precious thoughts and counsels of God in new creation.—W. K.

PSALMS LIX., LXIX., LXXIX.—These are regarded as vindictive Psalms. They give us Christ's associations with the godly Jews. Hence deliverance for them is connected, not with going up to meet the Lord in the air, and their enemies being left behind on earth, but with the appearing of the Son of Man in power and glory, and the judgments which destroy their adversaries.—W. K.

"BORN OF GOD."—It is impossible for any such to perish. The weakest saint shall win the day, though earth and hell obstruct the way.

CREATION AND NEW CREATION.—Because Thou hast made me, I owe myself to Thee ; but now, seeing that Thou hast made me anew, what do I owe to Thee ? Thou madest me with a word ; but Thou hast made me anew with many words, and deeds, and sufferings !"—*Bishop Andrewes.*

MARTYRDOM.—What wonder that the servants should die for the Lord who is good, when the Lord died for the servants who were evil !—*St. Ambrose.*

CHRIST REFLECTED IN US.—A muddy pool, a cracked and spoiled mirror, will not reflect a distinct and pure image.—*Archdeacon Hare.*

ORIGIN OF THE WORD, BIBLE.—The Greeks called the papyrus on which the ancients wrote, "byblos." The earliest Christian writers, using the Greek language, spoke of the Holy Scriptures as "biblia," the books. It was afterwards adopted as a Latin singular, *the book*, and "biblia" appeared in English as "the Bible" some time after the Norman Conquest.

THE BLESSING OF THE GENTILES (Gen. xxviii. 14).—Notice the "West" placed first. Does this point to the spread of the Gospel in the Gentile world, Westward ?

MULES IN THE WILDERNESS (Gen. xxxvi. 24).—Hebrew yémâm, hot springs bearing this name, certainly not mules.

BIBLIOLATRY.—Some people use this fine long word, which, they say, is a sin—only a kind of idolatry, Bible worshipping. Now I am not at all afraid of this *in any wrong sense*. I quite allow you to worship it ; I am only afraid you will not worship it enough. It is God's own Word, inspired by Him ; and we owe to it the same reverence which we owe to Himself (Psalm cxxxviii. 2).

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ELIJAH.

IT is striking, the apparently abrupt way in which Elijah enters upon the scene in 1 Kings xvii. The brilliant days of David and Solomon were ended, and the abominable idolatry of Jeroboam had been increased by Ahab, "who did more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (1 Kings xvi. 33), when this stern reprove of wickedness confronts the sinful monarch with those startling words, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (xvii. 1). No information is afforded us in the Old Testament of his previous history or occupation. He is introduced like a lightning flash; pronounces the impending judgment of God on the guilty king and nation, and is gone.

But if little or no direct information about him, previous to his public appearance, is vouchsafed to us in the Old Testament, as we have remarked, we may legitimately infer and gather up a good deal from the names in the history that has been given us, for names in Scripture are not without signification. His own name itself speaks volumes to the opened ear,—Elijah, *i.e.*, My God is Jehovah. How striking! In the midst of the gross darkness, idolatry, and apostacy of Israel, there stands forth one, a contrast to them all—yea, a contrast too to the seven thousand *secret* worshippers, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, nor kissed him, (xix. 18)—stands forth openly and boldly, proclaiming by his separation from the people and his denunciation of their sin, as well as by his name, that to him, at least, if to none others, Jehovah was his God. What a name! And what a character in such a dark day! How refreshing to read it. How much that is worthy of our imitation.

If, however, his introduction on the scene is sudden and startling, we may rightly infer that there had been a previous preparation for it, and that the right

moment had arrived—the needed power had been given—the boldness to announce his message had been vouchsafed, as it was at a subsequent period to a few humble followers of a despised Master (Acts iv. 29-31); and then this recluse issued forth from his solitude. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Ps. xci. 1). And this secret place—this holy ground where Elijah was alone—intensely alone with God, was the college, the training home where he learnt his lessons, found his strength, and came forth to the dismay and discomfiture of the idolatrous worshippers of Baal, and to add fresh lustre to the glory and praise of the grace of the Jehovah of Israel. A mere man, and a weak man too, was Elijah, but a *dependent* man, and therefore “a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master’s use,” to show forth, not human, but divine power. May we never forget that the place of *dependence* is still the place of *power*; and as we are conscious of our own weakness, and therefore of our need of dependence, the power of Christ will tabernacle over us (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10).

But we are not left merely to *infer* that there was a previous preparation. The Apostle James by the Holy Ghost reveals to us that ere Elijah came forth with his prediction of drought, he had prayed, aye, and *prayed earnestly* (James v. 17). Who can tell the struggles of that holy man, as alone with God he agonized before Him and pleaded, maybe days and nights, ere the answer was given! How he felt the dishonour done to the God of Israel by the abominable idolatry of His people! How he confessed their sins, bewailed their apostacy, and in his indignation and zeal for the honour of Jehovah besought Him for the power to seal the clouds and stay the dew and the rain in order to bring the people to their senses and return to their God. Elijah was “a man of like passions with ourselves.” He was not an angelic being. Would to God we were more men of like faith with

Elijah—not to work miracles to astonish the world but to live more in the power and enjoyment of ordinary every-day Bible Christianity—separate from evil to God, so that our lives and our words might have more weight with those around, and that they might see that we “abide in Christ.”

Notice, too, the wording of the first verse of our chapter. “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.” How this brief sentence must have struck home to the heart of the monarch! How pregnant with meaning for us. There is a verse in the Psalms which will help us to grasp the force of this expression—“Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters; and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us” (Psalm cxxiii. 2).

Let us picture to ourselves an Eastern house. The master and his guests recline at table, while the servants stand where they can see their master, or be seen by him. A wave of the hand, a movement of the head or the eye is enough for those watching servants, and the will of the master is done instantly. They stand before their master. They wait upon their master. They watch the movements of their master. They obey the behests of their master. Ahab was familiar enough with all this, hence the words of Elijah must have struck home to him, “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, *before whom I stand.*” Here he was confronted by one, whatever his outward appearance might be like, who was the messenger of the Lord God of Israel—who stands before Him—receives His orders and runs His errands, and is now delivering a message direct from heaven to him.

May we not say this is the crying need of ministers of Christ to-day? “The secret place of the Most High” is the college for them. To stand in His presence is the attitude which should characterize them. With opened eye, watching Him who has said :

“I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be not as the horse or as the mule, which need bit and bridle” (Ps. xxxii. 7, 8). With opened ear, saying, “I will hear what God the Lord will speak” (Ps. lxxxv. 8). Then might we expect Him to do what He did for some of old, “Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke xxiv. 45). Then would they preach “the Lord Jesus.” Then would “the hand of the Lord be with them, and great multitudes would believe and turn to the Lord” (Acts xi.). The Lord send this.

To-day, alas, many so-called ministers of Jesus Christ are mighty at debate on temperance and social topics; or great at lecturing on the lives of eminent men, &c.; but not mighty in the Scriptures, or renowned as soul-winners. And though greeted with many a cheer and round of applause by the worldlings on the public platform, methinks they will miss the “well-done” of the Master at the judgment-seat.

Let me not be misunderstood, however, in this. Temperance and other social topics, &c., each and all have their place. Aye, and have no end of advocates, so we need not fear their decease for want of champions; but why should men of God whose business is to save souls, snatching them as brands from the burning, and preparing them for the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, be leaving such important work to take up that which, at most, betters men for earth, but still leaves them exposed to the danger of eternal hell? May God wake up His servants, and make us each and all more truly Elijahs in our entire dependence on Himself, and our stern, uncompromising refusal of and separation from everything unsuited to Him, independent of the thoughts of those around us, and even at the expense of being called narrow-minded and bigoted by those who float with the tide. It will pay best spiritually, both here and hereafter. “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream;” therefore let our dreamers of better times for working men, and the

“good time coming,” apart from the cross, crown, and throne of the beloved Son of God, tell their dreams, spin their theories, and receive their applause. But “he that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?”

Elijah’s mission to Ahab is now accomplished, and to his proper and accustomed place does he once more retire—the presence of his Master, to hear again fresh instructions; not this time for the king, however, but for himself. His prophecy will affect himself as much as others; and now he must learn, as his forefathers had learnt before him in Egypt, how “the Lord can put a difference” between those where, humanly speaking, there is none nor likely to be any. He must learn, too, that each call for public service demands at its close a fresh retirement into secrecy and hiding with God, there to judge all the activities of the flesh; there to use the sentence of death; and there to learn afresh the resources of a gracious and all-powerful God for those who “stand before Him” in conscious weakness, and who are ever ready to say, if asked, “Who will go for us? Here am I; send me.”

Lessons such as these Elijah is now called upon to learn. Lessons such as these all true servants of Christ have to learn to-day. Woe unto those whose appearances in public are not balanced by their retirement in private—who are mere second-hand dealers out of truths which cost others much study, with prayer and strong crying and tears, as they sat beside the brook Cherith, which is before Jordan. Not that it is wrong to *deal out* what others have *dug out*; but we must see that we make it our own in the presence of God first, then use it as a treasure committed to us to enrich others. “Truth must not be packed up in little parcels, and labelled, and put on the shelf,” to show how much we know, but used, and by using it increases. The wise man tells us “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that which withholdeth more than is meet, but it

tendeth to poverty." It is the liberal soul that is made fat; and "he that watereth shall be watered also himself;" while "he that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him" (Prov. xi. 24-26).

The word of the Lord now comes to Elijah: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan" (ver. 3). The word Cherith means *Separation*. This is just what I have been setting forth. Elijah is called from publicity in service before men to retirement in secret with God; and while others are feeling the effects of the drought, in the place of separation he is to learn the kindness of God, and how He can provide.

Yet in all this there was testing for Elijah. Was he not dependent? Was it not that his very name announced that his God was Jehovah? Then God would have him in "the place of separation" beside Jordan (death), and learn in a practical way the resources he had in Jehovah when all human cisterns were dried. He should drink of the brook and be fed by the ravens. But this could not be his continual portion. Were that the case, the lessons of Cherith by Jordan would be lost, and this must not be so; thus we read, "and it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up" (ver. 7). Elijah's faith had to be tested by the gradual disappearance of that which had hitherto supplied him with what sustained life. Both Separation and Dependence are to be really learnt.

How trying must it have been to see the gradual drying up of the brook! In the absence of faith, how appalling! But for the man of God, it was but another occasion for the strengthening of faith and witnessing a fresh proof of the unceasing and untiring care of that One who had already ministered to him in his place of separation, making the very voracious and unclean ravens his waiters to carry his morning and evening meal. What lessons Elijah must have learnt at Cherith! How he must have proved what others had proved before him, "Thou wilt keep him in

perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." What divine and perfect ways on the part of Jehovah with His servant !

But the dealings of God and the lessons of the prophet were not to end here ; there was much more to be learnt. The mastering of one lesson is merely the qualifying for another, and more difficult one ; and all who prove apt scholars in the school of God find it to be so. There is no standing still, we must go on ; and so we find it in the history of Elijah. "The word of the Lord came again to him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there ; behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (ver. 8, 9). Now the meaning of Zarephath is, *a workshop for melting and refining metals* ; and the prophet next finds himself in the crucible in God's workshop, to be melted down and refined, that the refiner's image might be the more clearly seen (Mal. iii. 3).

The mere fact of a *widow* woman ministering to him was nothing in itself, as she might have been a person of rank, and wealth, and ability to do it. But when he reached the city and found that the widow was on the verge of starvation herself, and gathering sticks to bake the last handful of meal for herself and son ere they laid down their weary bodies to die, it must have been a severe test to the prophet. But Elijah's God was Jehovah ; and his cheering words to the widow proved once more that his faith was strong and bright as ever—yea, stronger. The barrel of meal, or rather handful of meal in the barrel, and the little oil in the cruise (ch. xvii. 12) should not only support him, but the widow and her son as well ; and, moreover, "until the day that the Lord sendeth rain."

God *had* said to him, "I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (ver. 9) ; but He did not say, "Till I send rain on the earth." But Elijah had taken a grip of God, and his faith could now count on Him to shew what He could do in man's extremity.

Notice here what a lesson we are taught by the prophet. "Make me thereof a little cake *first*" (ver. 13). God must ever have His portion first. It was so in the offerings. And here God, in His representative, must be served first. Do the saints of God think of this? Does God get His portion first in all the good things wherewith He blesses them? Or does our intense selfishness and greed lead us to accept and enjoy all without a thought of the Giver, or whether He has servants He would have us minister to, and concerning whom He is saying, "Make Me a little cake first?" Saints would do well to think of this.

What wonderful lessons were learnt day by day in that house as they found the meal and the oil still the same, we may well imagine! But they were to be privileged to see greater things still—more wonderful forth-puttings of the power of God; and the very weapon of the devil—death—was to be turned aside, and life brought in to the scene of death. Might we not say, affording us also *a picture* of "life and incorruptibility brought to light." Was this not the crucible for Elijah? Was it not a severe testing? Surely it was! A lesson, too, he had not previously learnt; and again he resorts to prayer, the expression of the dependence of the creature. Again he is heard. Again faith triumphs, and death is annulled for the widow's son, and lessons learnt by all, which doubtless called forth praises to Him who, while testing His servant, was blessing those who succoured him. And in the midst of these dark and perilous times, Elijah's "Fear not; . . . for thus saith the Lord" may well come home to our consciences and hearts, reminding us that though we are at school, it is God's school, and though the lessons are sometimes hard and painful, yet they are worth learning; and, like Israel of old, it is to "do us good in the latter end" (Deut. viii. 16). The Saviour *we* have to do with is One who has conquered death, and in resurrection says to us, "Fear not: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold,

I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18). It is a living Saviour. And we, risen with Christ, are freed from our guilt and state as children of Adam, have a new life in Christ, a new power in us—the Holy Ghost, and a new object for our hearts' affections—the living Christ of God, and all God's dealings with us are but manifestations of the wisdom and skill of the Divine Workman to secure His own highest glory and our greatest good. May we not be afraid to trust, and learn our lessons.

Chapter xvii. is Elijah in retirement. He is seen with God, learning his lessons preparatory to his coming out into more public testimony and service, His dependence is manifested, his faith is tested, and the goodness and power of Jehovah is manifested. In chapter xviii., God sends him out to shew himself to Ahab, and to give a *public* testimony to the fact that Jehovah was God in Israel—Elijah His servant, and that he had done all these things at His word (ver. 36). We therefore see this man of God in the place of power. Fearlessly he goes to meet that wicked king. The sense of the Lord's presence and that we are doing His will always gives a holy boldness.

What a contrast we have here to the trembling, half-hearted Obadiah. Ah, there are many Obadiahs in this day—Christians who endeavour to serve God and mammon; who fear the Lord, but who continue in questionable associations, and refuse the place of separation. May we be preserved from this.

How magnificently does Elijah stand forth here for God. The whole nation is away from Him. True, there were 7,000 which had not bowed the knee to Baal, nor kissed him. But no one knew them but God. Had they been like the prophet, what a power they might have been in Israel. They were the Lord's, but missed the privilege of openly standing for Him in the darkest and cloudiest day of the nation's history, and had to see one man with that honour conferred upon him. Blessed be God, "the

Lord knoweth them that are His"; how much better when all are so living for Him that others know also.

Think of Elijah being so bold as to mock those hundreds of prophets of Baal! Was he not afraid they would cut him with their knives instead of themselves for mocking at their God? No. Jehovah was his God, and Israel was to be convinced too that He was their God still, spite of their miserable failure and apostasy, and the fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice was to put that beyond all dispute.

How strange to turn from that grand scene of triumph over idolatry, and find in the very next chapter that bold man running away from the face of a woman! Like another bold servant of the Lord at a subsequent period, who was frightened by a woman into denying his Master. Alas! what is man! What are we, any of us, if the eye is turned from Christ? "The flesh profiteth nothing." We know the text; but have we learnt its meaning? Poor Elijah in his fainting fit prayed to die—asked God to take his life—courage failed and faith too for the moment, and he requests to die, and God took him at his word. At least He removed him from earth, but in a glorious way. He came on the scene like a flash—he leaves it in like manner in the whirlwind and chariot of fire. He stood before the Lord God of Israel at the start—he is carried up at the close to be in heaven with Him for ever. What a remarkable life—what a fitting close!

May it be ours to be more like Elijah in our faith, and courage, and testimony, till at last we hear the shout, and are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and be ever with the Lord. Much more there is of deepest interest in the detail of the history of this man of God. May God interest hearts and lead them to consider it, and find blessing in so doing.

W. EASTON.

New Zealand.

“WHATSOEVER YE DO IN WORD OR DEED,
DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD
JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD AND
THE FATHER BY HIM.”—Col. iii. 17.

THERE is great force in the word “whatsoever ;” its compass is so wide, so all embracing ! That which “whosoever” signifies as to persons, “whatsoever” signifies as to things. It draws everything within its net, catching up everything for Christ. Having been ourselves, by the grace of God, picked up by His “whosoever” (John iii. 15, 16), we have thenceforth to bring His “whatsoever” to bear upon all that comes in our way, on our path to the glory. The things which we say, the things which we do, these sum up our activities. Saying and doing make up the major part of our existence—the occupation of our waking hours. It is these that the Spirit of God here brings to a divine touchstone—the Name of the Lord Jesus ! It is a very simple, but easily applied and very effective test of the true nature of things, determining their real value in the sight of God. As His redeemed ones, the Lord has privileged us to bear His Name. We are not our own, but we are bought with a price. Therefore has He entrusted us with His reputation, as it were, in the world ; that we should stand for Him, should live unto Him, should witness for Him, should serve and follow Him. How is this to be done ? In two ways—in word and in deed. In acting then in each and in both of these ways, we must take care it is so done as to be in character with and for the glory of the Name which is above every name.

The name stands for the person. Its equation is Himself. The Lord having redeemed us, has brought us to Himself, and made Himself our portion. That is to say, richly as He has blessed us—and how could He have blessed us more richly ?—yet He stops not there ; but above and beyond all blessing, makes the Blesser ours ! “The unsearchable riches of Christ”

grandly indicates with what He has endowed us ; but how much more *is He*, the unsearchable Christ Himself ! It is He who is ours, and it is we who are His, and thus He gives us His Name in which to speak, and in which to work, and in which to worship. Word, and work, and worship are all found in the verse before us. If we are gathered together according to His word (Mat. xviii. 20), and in His presence, it is also in the unction and power, in the grace and plenitude of His Name. If we are in prayer together it is the same ; every petition if by the Holy Ghost, and every act of worship, breaking of bread and the like, everything in short which is a spiritual act before God, fails to find acceptance with Him if it be not in the sweet savour of that all prevailing Name. Gospel work, in like manner, must not, cannot, run on any other line than this, "in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

Thus we find the apostles spake boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And how strikingly does that Name stand out in the case of the impotent man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" is uttered on the steps of the Temple ; and instantly, one who had been a cripple from his mother's womb is "walking, and leaping, and praising God." And when explanations have to be given they are found in this, "His Name, through faith in His Name, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." And that so notable a miracle had been done at the threshold of the Temple by employing some name or other was evident to the priests and rulers, for they challenged the apostles (Acts iv. 7) saying, "By what power or by *what name* have ye done this ?" This opened the way for Peter's noble reply, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole." This verse incidentally establishes what we have said, that the Name

stands for the person, as Peter says here, first, "by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," and afterwards says, "even by Him." Nor does the apostle close his testimony before the Sanhedrin without adding, "For there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." But in spite of that blessed testimony, the unbelieving heads of the people command the apostles "not to speak at all nor teach in the Name of Jesus." They refused and repudiated and, so far as they could, obliterated that Name which is above every name.

Here let me make a remark which will strike a responsive note in every true heart. How much we deplore in our own service and testimony, whether amongst saints or sinners, the little fruit there is for God! May it not be a salutary enquiry whether we have not a clue to this in the fact that we do not give to the Name of the Lord the place it ought ever to have? the place it is imperative that it should occupy? Whatever be the character of our service, whatever kind the gift, we have to remember that we are identified with Him. Unless we practically and prominently put Him forward, and consciously and constantly put ourselves in the background, the Holy Ghost is grieved and the work of the Lord is hindered. How often and how deeply is the servant of the Lord discouraged in his work! He addresses the saints, and each hearer seems to think it is suited to others rather than to himself, closes his Bible, consults his watch, &c. Or he makes an earnest appeal in preaching the gospel, but it makes no entrance into the conscience or the heart; like the point of an arrow upon a stone wall, it is simply deflected. Or his ministry may be of a more personal character; he visits some disaffected brother, and would be thankful to wash his feet in the water of the Word, and to wipe them with the towel of brotherly love. But he makes no headway—he is repulsed, and retires discomfited and discouraged. In all this the

fault may be in the material rather than the workman, and we who are the hearers should look well to *that*.

On the other hand, is it not incumbent upon the servant, seeing that he serves the Lord Christ whose word can never fail, to ask himself secretly and solemnly, whether the failure is not due to this—that he has not accentuated to his own soul that his labours are worthless, and worse, that he is indeed as one that beateth the air, unless he definitely and distinctly connects his service with the Name of the Lord Jesus? It was surely but *an early* lesson they had learnt when the seventy disciples returned to their Master, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name" (Luke x. 17). But that it should be a never-forgotten one is clear from the fact that one of the highest commendations which the overcomer gets in Philadelphia is found (in this day of heartless and aggravated dishonour to it) in the Lord's words—thou "hast not denied *My Name*" (Rev. iii. 8), while the sweetest promise the Lord gives him as to the future is, "I will write upon him *My new Name*" (v. 12). What, beloved saints, is the true remedy for all the sorrows and all the reproaches that have overtaken us but to make much more of Christ than we ever have done; as those who can never make enough of Him, and are unable to repress the value and the sweetness of His adorable Name?

And lastly, there is this also, "*Giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.*" Is not this, too, a suited accompaniment of all service, *the spirit of worship*? "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Have we not been filled to overflowing? How can we hold our peace? If we preached the gospel, if we ministered to the saints as *overflowing vessels*, who could not but speak well of Christ and commend Him, shewing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous

light, would there not be much more point and much more power in every winged word ?

May that adorable One whose we are, and whom we serve, give these things more vivid reality to our souls, that we may be polished shafts in His quiver.

GOD SPEAKING IN DREAMS.

WHEN comforters turn accusers, how sorry the consolation ! Trials how good which test and lay bare many hearts. Friendship when worthy of the name but develops and gathers strength, although frail mortal man's helplessness is displayed, in the presence of pain and suffering. But God known, a very present help in trouble, is approached to succour those in need ; and this fellowship in prayer, when the balm of the apothecary avails not, how real, how blessed ! Fellowship with God : enjoyers of this may still find in their waiting upon Him wonderful communications as to His purposes, and serve as messengers and interpreters, revealers of secrets, unfolders of visions of the night, or the pains by day and night which keep visions far away ; yet it is God's speech to be heard and understood, though language is not expressed any more than by the unuttered speech heard universally, as in Psalm xix.

“Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour ; mine adversaries are all before Thee. Reproach hath broken my heart ; and I am full of heaviness ; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but I found none.” Then again to turn to Job xix. 21 : “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends.” Ah, merciless man, cruel to a degree, ready to impute evil to the spotless One ; hypocrisy to Job. The Psalmist would cast himself upon Jehovah, and have Him deal with His servant according to His mercy and teach him His statutes. I am Thy servant ; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies. “Blessed the merciful, for they shall find mercy.”

We find workings similar to what that member gave index in the hearing of Elihu, in Job xxxii. and xxxiii., until his youth is well-nigh forgot as his anger kindles against Job himself, as well as his friends, in vindication of God. It is not appearances or circumstances that lead to a right conclusion. Let us no longer, therefore, judge one another ; but judge ye this rather, not to put a stumbling-block or a fall-trap before his brother. There is pride and conceit so repulsive to our God in these already common conclusions to which we come, we look upon a Job in all his external loathsomeness and thank God we are not as he, and forget to pray for such, or fail to enquire what it means. Ah ! we are missing too much, I am assured, the pains and the patience of that blessed One we call Father, who would hide pride from us, who would bring us down, down, down, taking all the ornaments away, and showing us to abhor that which He abhors, and to cherish that which is precious in His sight.

It may sound pious and wise to interpret that the suffering of the afflicted is because of God's displeasure and some deep hidden sin of man ; barbarians can argue thus, as a viper is seen clinging to the hand of Paul ; but oh ! how sad when we breathe and express the barbarian spirit, and miss, although having abundant revelation that He is the Father of mercies, One who deals in mercy and in grace, and disciplines in love for present profit and fuller blessing.

How unnatural, for mother to behold suffering child and betake her to some superstitious witch to banish some supposed evil spirit, when maternal care, patient watching, gentle nursing are called for. How unspiritual for a child of God to find a refuge from seeking His face in coming to the conclusion that his brother or sister is to be treated as a leper ; though it be a matter of sin, if it be not unto death, he shall ask for his brother, and life shall be given for those who sin not unto death.

Experimental learning by hard experience is not

the only way our God has of imparting instruction. "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed ; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." This teaching is not limited to the household of faith. Belshazzar required an interpreter, and one was found. Pilate's wife, too, said, "Have thou nothing to do with that Just Man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him." As individuals we are afflicted, and corporately too we need instruction and pride being hid from us, and we kept from our purpose, not fainting when rebuked of Him. How full of instruction is this. Every word of God is pure. Instruction given when man, frail or strong, is inactive and asleep upon his bed ; instruction when he is laid aside, until his bones, not hitherto seen, show themselves ; at His feet, seeking His face, quiet, subject, His Word sweet to the taste, His will and purpose desired ; thus we learn of Him who is meek and lowly. But how little do we know intelligently and in communion the purpose for which His hand is upon us : few are the Elihus burning with zeal for God, who put a key in our hands to unlock that which is at present apparently so clothed in mystery. God's dealings in grace, God's dealings in love with His own, correcting for faults as well as keeping from them by layings aside, and with what purpose? "Withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." Though it take scattering, and calling Satan to serve in this work of affliction and chastening, no mistake does He make. He knows the way He taketh, and no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly ; and though there be a bowing to the earth under infirmity of many years' duration, He can make the crooked straight ; and as to those who have by habit learned to look down and around, He can direct their

gaze upward ; and as we behold the One in all His beauty and glory, we abhor ourselves, cease from ourselves, from our attainments, from knowledge which puffs up, to edify by following, ministering, and rejoicing in Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever !

W. B.

THE CHRIST OF GOD, THE TRUE CENTRE OF UNION.

THE cross may gather all, both Jew and Gentile ; but they are gathered *to Christ*, not to the cross ; and the difference is a most important and essential one, because it is of all importance that the person of the Son of God have its place. Christ Himself, not the cross of Christ, is the centre of union. The two or three are gathered to His name, not to the cross. Scripture is uniform in its testimony as to this.

But further, where saints are gathered in unity, without any questionings, they have the truth and holiness to guard. It never was, nor, I trust, ever will be, the notion of brethren, that the truth of Christ's person, or godliness of walk, was to be sacrificed to outward unity. It is making brethren of more importance than Christ. And even so, love to the brethren is false ; for, if true, it is, John assures us, "love in the truth, and for the truth's sake." Supposing a person denied the divinity of Christ, or the resurrection of His body, still declaring his belief in the cross ; supposing he declared his belief in the cross and resurrection, but declared it was only a testimony of God's love, and no substitution or expiatory value in it, as many of high reputation now do, is all this to be immaterial ? I shall be told that no true believer could do this. In the first place, a true believer may be seduced into error ; and further, the test offered becomes thus the opinion formed that a man is a true believer, and not the plain, fundamental truth of God and His holiness.

If it be granted that the gathering is round the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is quite true ; but what person ? Would it be equal if He were owned to be God, or if it were denied ? If He were the Son, the object of the Father's delight at all times, or if He were a man or really risen from the dead ? If it be said, All this is supposed, then neutrality is a delusion, and denies itself. For what I insist on is, that I must have a *true* Christ, and that I am bound to maintain the truth of Christ in my communion. I am aware that it is stated that we can deal with conduct (with morality), but not with these questions. But this is just what appears to me so excessively evil. Decency of conduct is necessary to communion ; but a man may blaspheme Christ—that is no matter : it is a matter, not of conduct, but of conscience. It is hinted, that perhaps, if it be a teacher, he may be dealt with. In truth, the apostle desires even a woman not to let such a person into her house. It is not therefore so difficult to deal with. Just think of a system which makes blasphemous views of Christ, which may amount to a denial of Him, to be a matter of private conscience, having nothing to do with communion ! And here is the very root of the question.

I affirm that that is not a communion of believers at all which is not founded on the acknowledgment of a true Christ. Where the truth as to this is commonly held and taught, I may have no need for particular enquiry. But that is not the case here. If I find a person even in such a case denying the truth as to Christ, communion is impossible, because we have not a common Christ to have communion in. But here all faithfulness is thrown overboard. No call to confess a true Christ is admitted : it is a new test or term of communion !

We are to meet as Christians ; but a man is not a Christian in profession who professes a false Christ. I cannot judge the state of a person's heart while his profession is false. I may hope he is only misled,

but cannot accept his profession. If wholly or not willingly ignorant, it is another matter; but we have to do with the case where, heretical views being held, they are declared to be matter of private conscience; that a false Christ is as good as a true one, if a person's conduct is good. We can judge only of the last. Now this principle is worse than false doctrine; because it knows the falseness and blasphemy of it, and then says it is no matter. I do not own such meetings as meetings of believers; for fundamental error as to Christ is there immaterial for communion—a matter, not of conduct, but of conscience.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Suppose a person held that Christ was a mere man, and quoted the passages to prove it that God raised Him, and made Him Lord and Christ, would he be received? If not, you do try whether a man has the faith of God's elect; otherwise a Socinian is admissible as a believer, or you make *your opinion* of his being a believer the test, entirely independent of the faith of Christ. It is said, You can only require a person to say he receives all in the Scripture. The supposed Socinian would accept such a test at once. They do so. Why should you ask even that? A man may be a believer, and a rationalist in theory—sad as such a thought is—and not accept all the word of God, and say, I am a believer in the cross. You have no right to make a difficulty! If after this you object to any doctrine, or insist on any truth, you have not even Scripture to lean on against his denial of it. Scripture says, “Whom I love in the truth,” and “for the truth's sake.” The other principle says *that* is no matter. You think the person spiritual, a believer. The truth of Christ is no matter; a false one is just as good!

I add no human document to the divine; I make no term of communion besides Christ. God requires

that those who have blasphemed Christ should not be admitted. I am told that it is a matter of conscience, &c., and people cannot read doctrines to know whether He is blasphemed or not. These blasphemers have been received deliberately and avowedly, upon the ground that no enquiry is to be made; and therefore the plea of additional bonds or terms of communion is all dust thrown in the eyes. Is it a new term of communion to affirm that faith, faith in a true Christ (not a false one) is required for communion, and that blasphemers of Christ are not to be received? That is the true question. If persons think they are not safe in *reading* the publications, how are they safe in fellowship and intimacy with those who have written or refuse to disown them? I confess I do not admire this argument. Simple believers do not hesitate, reasoning minds do. Ask a true-hearted believer if Christ had the experience of an unconverted man. He would soon say, I will have nothing to do with one who says that. A reasoning mind might make it a mere matter of personal conscience. Is the truth of Christ's person and His relationship to God a variety of judgment on a particular doctrine? Here is the whole question: *value for Christ, and the truth as to Himself.*

Definitions are not required; but that when blasphemous definitions have been made, the blasphemers should be refused. Is it the Shibboleth of a party to reject such doctrines as, that Christ was relatively farther from God than Israel when they made the golden calf; and that He heard with an attentive heart the gospel from John Baptist, and so passed from law under grace? Or is it faithfulness to Christ to extenuate them by saying, that in such deep doctrines we shall not express ourselves alike?

It is not real love to the members, nor love for Christ's sake, to despise Christ so as to bear blasphemies against Him. The truth of His person and glory is a test for those who are faithful to Him. I

cannot talk of liberty of conscience to blaspheme Christ, or have communion with it. Christ, not opinion, is the centre of union ; but I never meant, nor do I mean, that a true Christ and a false one were equally good as a centre, provided people are amiable one with another ; for this means that union is man's amiability and the denial of Christ. What do I want of union, if it be not union in Christ, according to the power of life, through the Holy Ghost ?

The business of those united is *Christ's glory*. If Christians ever unite on a condition of that not being essential, their union is not Christian union at all. I have no reason for union but Christ, the living Saviour. We want no union but that which makes Him the centre, and the all and the hope of it. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren ;" but to make this a plea for indifference to Christ's personal glory in order to be one with him who, calling himself a brother, denies and undermines it, is, in my mind, wickedness. J. N. D.

AN ONLY SON.

"GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). In these words was first made known the greatness of the gift, coupled with the greatness of the need. The gift was the gift of God's only begotten Son. The need was indicated by the awful position of responsible and immortal creatures, from which nothing they could provide could extricate them. And the gift was the expression, and we may say the measure, as far as it can be measured, of the love of God.

"God is love." So wrote the same apostle who recorded these words of Christ, and twice over did the Spirit by him affirm it (1 John iv. 8, 16). Once did he write, and once only, "God is light" (1 John i. 5).

Twice we read, "God is love." Thus the Spirit would seem to emphasize this for our hearts' joy.

Now love, where it really exists, manifests itself. It is necessarily active. How has God, then, manifested His love? He gave His Son is the answer, an answer furnished by the revelation vouchsafed us by the Son of God Himself. Into the midst of a world of sorrow and suffering, from which none of us are exempt, the Son came and revealed God's love to sinners. God gave His only begotten Son. He had but one—the only begotten. The very term negatives the thought of two. He spared Him not. This truth, so often confessed, is yet, perhaps, but very faintly apprehended. Let us see if Scripture may not minister to us an increased sense of the greatness and fulness of such love.

First, let us see from the Word in what light God regards the giving up of an only son. We turn to the history of Abraham on the mountains of Moriah, when about, at the positive command of God, to offer up Isaac, his son. The two—the father and the son—had journeyed from Beersheba to the appointed spot, reaching it on the third day dating from their departure. Up to that time, though the father had prepared everything to carry out the divine command—the knife, the fire, and the wood—he had evidently kept the dread secret in his bosom as to the victim he was to kill. Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Gen. xxii. 7) failed even to draw it forth. Everything arranged, the willing victim—who had carried the wood on his shoulder, reminding us of Him, of whom he was a type, who bore His own cross—that victim was bound without resistance, and laid on the altar ready for death. Submitting to his father's will, he was about to die. But a voice was heard calling the patriarch by name, "Abraham, Abraham!" It was the voice of the angel of the Lord: "Lay not thine hand on the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou

fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me" (xxii. 11, 12). "From *Me*." Then it was God who spoke, so often mentioned in the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord. Created angels there are in myriads, but this was not one of them. Abraham's obedience was tested, was proved to be real. His son, his only son, he had not withheld from God. The test to which the patriarch was put was no small one, and God acknowledged that, as He said, "Seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." There was nothing Abraham had that he would keep back, if willing as he was to give up his son.

But a second time God spake to him. He would have Abraham to know how much He prized that willing surrender of his son. Great indeed, again we say, was the surrender. We learn now in what light God viewed it, by the assurance of the blessing vouchsafed to that parent. No fuller blessing, none indeed so full, did any of the patriarchs receive. As a creature, it was of course for Abraham to obey. But God has put on record in His Word what He thought of that obedience. And as we read that history, and learn what was said to the patriarch when he stood beside his altar on the mountains of Moriah, we surely see something of what it must be in God's eyes to give up His only begotten Son. God could rightfully demand that sacrifice from Abraham; none could have claimed it from God. Obedience Abraham manifested, as he bound Isaac his son on the altar. Love God displayed, in giving His only begotten Son to die on the cross for us.

Next we may enquire in what light does man view an only begotten son. Examples of this we meet with in the gospel of Luke.

Drawing near to the city of Nain (Luke vii. 11-17), with His disciples and a great multitude, the Lord met a great company coming out, and carrying for burial the dead body of a young man, the bereaved

mother following as chief mourner. Evidently her loss had evoked in that little place widespread sympathy. Her loss, indeed, was great. It was her son, her only son; she had no other. He had died. He, to whom she might naturally have looked for support in her old age, had been taken from her. Much people accompanied her; their sympathy was general and real, and not mere passing verbal expression of it, coming forth from those whose hearts had not been really touched. Evidently people felt for her. It was no ordinary bereavement; it was the death of her only son, her only child. What her feelings were is not stated. How people felt for her we learn by the crowd which was with her. The death of her only son was a sorrow indeed.

Turn we to another incident (viii. 41, 42). This time it is a father, anxious to avert the death of his child; so to the Lord he went. Prostrate before Him, he unburdened his heart. "My little daughter," so we read in Mark (v. 23), who has most likely preserved the very utterance of that anxious parent, "lieth at the point of death; come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed: and she shall live." "My little daughter." Do not these words intimate something of what he was passing through—deep anxiety with the prospect of near bereavement?

Such was the suppliant's petition, as, at the feet of Christ, he sought relief. Now Luke tells us, what the other evangelists do not, that the sick one was the ruler's only child, a daughter. The delight, doubtless, of both the parents, and the sunshine, very probably, of that house, was at the point of death. Urgently did that father plead with the Lord. Surely the fact that she was his only one added intensity to his appeal, that, if possible, his little daughter, his only one, might be spared to the mother and to himself. We know the end. Death claimed her, as it had previously first claimed the widow of Nain's son. But in both cases its cold hand was removed by the power of the Lord

Jesus Christ. The widow got back her only son; Jairus rejoiced in the bringing back to life of his only daughter. In each case it was their all.

To a third instance in the same gospel (ix.) we would briefly advert. Again it is a father who comes to seek the Lord's gracious help. The story was a sad one. He had a child, an only one, but possessed by a demon, and that from his early years. Moreover, no one could exorcise it. "Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him;" so said the afflicted parent (Mark ix. 22) as he detailed his sorrow to the Lord. Heavy, how heavy must have been the trial. Could the Lord give relief? To Him as the last resource the father had come, and he urged his case with all the fervour of a parent's love. And to press it all the more he said, as Luke records, "Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son; for he is mine only child" (ix. 38). His only son! How he prized him, afflicted in this way though he was. Doubtless he felt that plea would call forth the compassion of the Lord. His only child! And thus afflicted! What a heavy burden had he to bear! What heart with any feeling but would commiserate him. What efforts would he make to be relieved of that trial. He did not appeal in vain. He who planted parental feeling in that father's heart was there. The only begotten Son of God was present. The father received what he desired, and his only child was delivered for ever from the thralldom of that demon at the word of Christ. "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him" (Mark ix. 25) was the word of command. Demoniical possession is a real thing. The demon obeyed. The child, that man's only one, was free.

In what light men regard an only child Luke abundantly illustrates. The evident compassion of the multitude at Nain: the attitude of Jairus, at the feet of Jesus: the afflicted father's almost despairing appeal, "If Thou can'st do anything, have compassion

on us, and help us" (Mark ix. 22), each separately, and all collectively show what is thought of the loss or the affliction of an only child. And to these instances, as well as to Isaac in Heb. xi. 17, that same Greek word, *monogenes*, is applied, as is used of the Lord, the only begotten Son of God (John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9). Precious indeed was the daughter to Jairus. Precious is the Eternal Son to the Father.

Now passing from actual facts to a parable, we see and must own what is the conduct befitting those to whom an only son is sent. It is the parable of the husbandmen which teaches this. Servant after servant had been sent to get the fruit of the vineyard, but in vain. What steps could the owner take? The last resource was to send his son. In the gospel of Luke (xx. 13) we have the owner described taking counsel with himself: "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him." And that son Mark describes in the following words: "He had yet one, a beloved son; he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" (xii. 6). To send *his son*, after such repeated evidence of opposition and hostility on the part of the husbandmen, was grace indeed. Did it disarm them? It ought to have done that, as all will admit. It did not. They took the heir, knowing that he was the heir, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Judgment necessarily and righteously must overtake such sinners. They had slain *the son*. The application of that parable we all understand. To send the son was a great favour. To kill him was a great sin.

Now God has sent *His Son, the only begotten*. What emphasis is laid on that in the following passage, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent *His only begotten Son* into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent *His Son* to be the propitiation for our sins." The Father sent *the Son* to be the Saviour of the world

(I John iv. 9, 10, 14). Again, "reconciled to God by the death of *His Son*" (Rom. v. 10). And once more, "He that spared not *His own Son*, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). With what confidence should our poor hearts be inspired as we remember God has given *His Son* for us! What assurance about the future the remembrance of that gift is calculated to impart!

C. E. S.

 ADORATION.

JESUS, most holy ;
 Seated victorious ;
 By God, so glorious,
 Made Christ and Lord,
 Heaven's light and centre ;
 Centre of blessing,
 Centre of worship,
 By all adored.

Choirs of blest angels,
 Thy throne surrounding,
 Ever resounding
 "Praise to the Lamb" !

Joy in beholding
 Ever unfolding
 In Thee the glories
 Of the "I am !"

Cherubim wondrous,
 Living ones ever,
 Ceaseless in service,
 Worship Thee, God !
 With voice unwearied
 Ever acclaiming,
 Ever proclaiming
 Thy praise abroad.

And Thy redeemed ones,
 Standing yet nearer,
 To Thy heart dearer
 Than any there,

Sound forth the story
 Of highest glory,
 Thee their Redeemer
 Glad to declare.

Like many waters
 On the shore breaking,
 Echoes awaking
 With ceaseless roll ;
 High rise their voices
 In anthems swelling,
 Praise that comes welling
 Up from the soul.

Their crowns of glory—
 Crowns everlasting—
 Willingly casting
 Down at Thy feet ;
 Worthy, Thee only
 Ever attesting,
 And manifesting
 Gratitude meet.

Jesus, *our* Saviour,
 We, too, now worship ;
 Our tribute likewise
 We now accord ;
 We, too, now know Thee ;
 We, too, now love Thee ;
 We, too, adore Thee ;
 Christ, God, and Lord !

R. H.

"WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS."—I would seek no more to make me happy for evermore, but a thorough and clear sight of the beauty of Jesus my Lord.—*S. Rutherford.*

"NOT BEING MYSELF UNDER LAW," needs insertion in 1 Cor. ix. 20—see R. V.

DAVID'S FIVE STONES.—It has been suggested that the five stones represented the Pentateuch, out of one book of which (Deuteronomy) our Lord, in His temptation, defeated the adversary.

DEBORAH, THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.—She ends her days with Jacob and his family, and the aged woman was buried beneath Bethel, under an oak, and the name of it was Allon-bachuth, the oak of lamentation. *That* must have been no common sorrow—no ordinary grief—which imposed a name on a hitherto unknown locality; a name which carries with it to this hour the memory of a patriarch's tears and the mourning of his household! Ah! ye who read the Bible *fast*, and do not care for the little details of the story—ye who think scorn of the humbler characters, and perhaps have never taken the trouble to gather up the first and last links of the story and to clasp them together, recognising the exquisite beauty, the tender outline of personal devotion and reciprocated love, ye are at least invited to note that in the annals of the chosen family, second only to the burial of Jacob himself, is the burial of his mother's nurse, in respect of the mourning which attended it.—*Dean of Chichester.*

THE FLOOD.—In Gen. viii. 4, we read, "Yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we may assume that the seven days were a *week*, of which the last day was a Sabbath. That on a Sabbath Noah should have rested from his work might have been expected. The flood began on 17th day of 2nd month (verse 11), and, if that were a Sabbath, a careful analysis of the Scripture will show that *on the same day of the week* (1) Noah and his family entered the ark. (2) The flood began. (3) The ark rested on Ararat. (4) The water ceased to prevail over the earth. (5) The raven and dove were sent forth. (6) The dove was sent forth and returned. (7) The dove was again sent out, but returned no more. (8) The ground dry and the covering of the ark removed. (9) Noah and family left the ark. And from the commencement of the flood until that last event was exactly 365 days.—*Ibid.*

"AND I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR" (Rev. ii. 28).—The sun, when it rises, summons man to his busy toil, but the morning star shines for those only who sleep not as do others—for those who watch as children of light and of the day. We shall be with Christ doubtless when the day of glory dawns upon the world; but the morning star is before the day, and Christ not only says "I am . . . the Bright and Morning Star," but "I will give . . . the Morning Star." He will come and receive His heavenly ones before they appear with Him in glory. May we be true to Him in the refusal of present ease, and honour, and power! May we follow Him, taking up our cross and denying ourselves daily! He will not forget us in His day, and He will give us, ere that comes, the Morning Star.—*The Revelation, W. K.*

THE HISTORY OF MAN started afresh in the eight saved through the flood, being appointed by God, who blessed them to be fruitful, and to multiply, and to replenish the earth (Gen. ix. 1). With God known to them as a God of power, of mercy, and of judgment, all three exemplified in the history of the flood, they were to start forth on the mission entrusted to them, having first stood around the altar erected by Noah, as worshippers in common of the one true God. . . . But He who is, and ever must be, the proper Object for the creature's heart, ceased through the creature's wilfulness (and who can say how soon?) to have His right place in that heart.—W. K.

BIBLE OR NO BIBLE, the world is in a state of departure from God. Bible or no Bible, man is a sinner, and unable to stand before the God who judges sin and sinners. But the Bible alone in its own inimitably simple, holy, and dignified way tells the truth as to how sin came in. Scripture alone sets out the truth so profoundly that the deepest plummet has never sounded it; so helpfully, that the least draught has ever refreshed a truly thirsting soul.—*B. Treasury.*

STRIKE OUT THE I.—“I cannot say ‘I have fought a good fight,’ but strike out the ‘I,’ and read a good fight has been fought by His grace, and to Him be all the glory.”—*E. R. Conder on his deathbed.*

THE LAST DAYS.—“Even a clergyman has been found to encourage spiritualism by exhibiting spirit photographs in the vestry of his church, instead of denouncing all dealings with evil spirits as the word of God so explicitly commands.”—*Rev. J. J. B. Coles, London, July, 1892.*

“SUNDAY STARVATION is a palpable fact in many churches and chapels.”—*Extract of letter.*

PAPAL TEACHING.—Every year I live I hate Roman Catholicism more intensely! This is her teaching: “Thou, Mary, art the only hope of sinners.” “Oh, lady, in heaven we have but one advocate, and that is thyself.” “We often more promptly get what we ask by calling on the name of Mary than by invoking that of Jesus.” “Mary so loved the world as to give her only begotten Son,” &c. The fact is, Romanists are worshipping a goddess as much as any heathen.—*Rev. G. C. Grubb.*

“WOE TO THE MAN who preaches because he is a preacher, and not because he loves Christ.”—*C. Spurgeon.*

PREDESTINATION.—Toplady relates of King William III., that Bishop Burnet expressed surprise “how a person of his Majesty's piety and good sense could so rostedly believe this doctrine.” The king replied, “Did I not believe absolute predestination I could not believe in God. For it would be most absurd to suppose that a Being of infinite wisdom would work without a plan, for which plan predestination is only another word.”

CHRIST ALONE THE ABSORBING OBJECT.—When a Spanish artist who had painted “the Last Supper” found that his friends were occupied with admiring the beauty of the cups, &c. on the table, he exclaimed, “Ah! I find what a mistake I have made by thus diverting your eyes from the figure of Christ,” and with that he took his brush and blotted them from the canvas, that the strength and beauty of the central Object might claim their gaze. Thus should everything which would hinder our beholding Him in the glory of His Person and work be cleared out of the way.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

LIGHT.—I *John* i.-iii. 10.

THE first epistle of John is unique in character. Like that addressed to the Hebrews, it begins without any salutation, or even the name of the writer, and it launches out at once into its subject. Differing, however, from the Hebrews (xiii. 18, 19, 23), it has no personal reference of any kind. It begins like a treatise, yet we learn that it is a letter (ii. 12, 26, v. 13)—a letter suited for Christians in any age, and of varied spiritual attainments. The desire of the writer in penning it was twofold. He longed that his readers should have that fulness of joy which he knew through fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (i. 4); and he wished that all believers on the name of the Son of God might, through reading his letter, know that they had everlasting life (v. 13). Hence of this life, and of the display of it in the Lord Jesus Christ, he writes.

Remembering that the subject of life is so fully treated of in the Gospel of John, we can readily understand, perusing this epistle, that it is a counterpart of the gospel. If the former tells us how anyone may get everlasting life, this letter teaches us, as we have already stated, how each one may know that he possesses it. Hence there is no real difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that he who, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, penned the gospel, is the one who, by the same Spirit, indited this epistle. No one, as far as we know, was so suited in all the apostolic company to write it as John—the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who had very close intercourse with the Word of life when He walked about among men.

Of the *Word of life* he writes. For in this way does he designate the Lord Jesus. In the gospel he

presents Him as the Word, the One by whom God has been expressed; in the epistle he introduces Him as "the Word of life," the One by whom life has been expressed. In the gospel he writes of the Word as being in the beginning; in the epistle he writes of the Word of life as that which was from the beginning. Are we to view these terms, "in the beginning" and "from the beginning," as identical in meaning? We think not. For John writes of One whom he and others had seen with their eyes, had looked upon, and their hands had handled. So we take it by this phrase he referred to the Lord as incarnate, and not to His pre-existence. To the beginning, therefore, of the Lord's manifestation on earth he refers his readers, as elsewhere (ii. 7, 24; iii. 15; 2 John 5, 6). Yet, as the second verse—a parenthetical one, we believe—tells us, the life expressed by the Word of life is the life—the eternal life that was with the Father, and has now been manifested unto us. Hence of the pre-existence of the life we are carefully taught, though the manifestation of it in the person of the Word of life took place only in time. And John declares what he had seen and heard, that his readers might have fellowship with him, whose fellowship was with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Such fellowship ministers fulness of joy.

With these preliminary sentences he enters on the subject of the epistle. And now, remembering the Lord's words in John xvii. 3, we would view that verse as the text, and the epistle as the sermon on it. In accordance with that, John begins by testing the reality of the profession of *fellowship* with God, and of *knowledge* of *Him* and of *His Son* Jesus Christ (i. 5—ii. 6). For manifestly there cannot be fellowship, that is communion, with One whom we do not know. Of the divine nature, therefore, he necessarily treats, and tells us, in a way no one else had formulated it, *what* it is as displayed in God, and *how* it has

been displayed and can be displayed in man upon earth.

And first of God. God is light (1 John i. 5) and God is love (iv. 8). The treatment of these two subjects will be found to divide the epistle into two parts (i. 5—iii. 10 and iii. 11—v. 12).

He begins with light, which is the opposite to darkness; and tests the reality of the profession of being in it, and of walking in it. God is light, and His Son has declared that (i. 5). Hence, pretension to fellowship with Him whilst walking in darkness is vain. It is illusory. He who walks in that which is contrary to the nature of God cannot, it is evident, have fellowship with Him.

Now of this darkness, of which we are here reminded, the Lord spoke. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," He told Nicodemus (John iii. 19). This shows man's moral state and desire since the fall. To meet that, and to minister to any in darkness He came, as He said: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (xii. 46). Again, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (viii. 12). For there is no spiritual light in man apart from everlasting life. Light and darkness are, of course, antagonistic. Now, since God is light, one walking in darkness cannot whilst so walking have fellowship with Him who is light. Pretension therefore to it, under such circumstances, is really a lie; and such an one does not practise the truth.

On the other hand, if walking in the light, as God is in it, nothing allowed that would cloud it, "we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Needful is the remembrance of the cleansing efficacy of that precious blood, and God here graciously speaks of it. For without such an assurance, how could any one who knows that he has sinned (and who is there who has

not?) walk consciously in the light, where nothing that is contrary to God can remain concealed? We need that blood yet—that alone. Nothing more is wanted. It cleanseth from all sin.

The mention of sin brings up another pretension. *Would any say they had no sin?* With this the apostle deals in no hesitating way. Such deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. Freedom from sin's presence we can none of us know whilst alive on earth. Was that a snare only in apostolic times? Do we not now sometimes meet with the startling statement, that the old man is dead and gone? Those taking up such a theory should ponder well the apostle's words just noted, "We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (8).

Provision made as above for those walking in the light (7), a direction now follows for any believer who has sinned. Confession must be made. But "if we confess our sins, He (*i.e.*, God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (9). Forgiveness and cleansing are both needed. The former, on real confession, will be accorded; the latter will be supplied.

Would any say they had not sinned? John deals with this class in a summary manner. Such make God a liar, for He says that all have sinned (Rom. iii. 23). Moreover, God's word is not in them. How effectively are these pretenders silenced. Are we, then, to settle down with the conviction that we cannot help sinning? Again John speaks: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 1, 2).

To enjoy fellowship with the Father and with the Son is God's desire for His people. So, if that is interrupted by the failure of the saint, we have the provision for that one's restoration to communion.

Confession on his part, and the advocacy of Christ on high. Of the former, John has already written ; of the latter, he now writes. The Advocate takes up the cause of the person before the Father. We should mark the term here—*Father*.

It is not the service of the High Priest in making atonement that is needed, but advocacy with the *Father*. And why *Father* here? Because it is a child that has sinned, and he is to be assured that the link of relationship remains unbroken. Just when a doubt might spring up, and the person question whether he is still God's child, the word comes and assures him that his relationship with God has undergone no change. He is still His child. An Advocate, then, we have in heaven, Jesus Christ the righteous. So He can always be heard by virtue of what He is—righteous.

This revelation is peculiar to John. As we read in the Hebrews of the High Priesthood of the Lord, and there only ; so we read in this epistle of the present advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ on high for the people. A word in John's gospel (xiv. 16)—*another Comforter*, or Advocate, for it is the same word in both writings—intimated that the advocacy of the Spirit would not supersede that of Christ. And now we learn under what circumstances the Lord acts in that character, viz., when we have sinned.

But more. Of the cleansing efficacy of the blood we have been taught (i. 7). Here we are reminded of the propitiation made by it on our behalf, and of its abiding value. "He," writes John, "is the propitiation for our sins." He has perfectly glorified God by His blood, put once for all, as it were, on the mercy-seat ; and the value of propitiation so made abides for ever. Moreover, its far-reaching value is to be remembered,—"*For the whole world.*" Not for the *sins* of the whole world : then all would be saved, which we know will not be by any means the case. But God is so perfectly glorified by that blood that, as far as His nature is concerned, it could avail for the whole world.

What enables Him in righteousness to be gracious to one sinner could enable Him to be gracious to all.

The reality of *communion with God* tested, the reality of a *knowledge of Christ* is next taken up, in accordance with the order in that verse in the gospel (xvii. 3) above referred to. To know about Him as the Christ of history is one thing; to know Him by sharing in everlasting life is another. It is of this that John here treats, as he writes, "And hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." Obedience to His commands is a test of really knowing Him. Profession as to this without obedience manifested shows that the one who vaunts it is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, "Whoso keepeth His word," a wider thought than commandments, "in him verily is (or, hath been) the love of God perfected." That is, there is nothing in that one to hinder the full enjoyment of God's love. Enjoying it, the individual knows that he is in Christ. Of *knowing* Him (ii. 3), and *knowing* that we are *in* Him, John has now written. A further thought is here added—that of *abiding* in Him. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk as He walked." Christ is the example and standard for the saint. For He is our life, and the life He gives us is everlasting.

But walking as Christ walked leads on naturally to another subject, that of brotherly love, or the contrary, as a test of being in the light. Of an old commandment John now writes—*old*, because given by the Lord before His death (John xiii. 34); yet *new*, being "true in Him and in you," he adds, "because the darkness is passing away, and the true light now shines." It was true *in* Christ and *in* them, for they all, as real saints, partook of the divine nature, which is love. He who is the light is also the life. None of us can be in the light without also sharing in the life. To profess, then, to be in the light, and yet to hate one's brother, *i.e.*, a Christian (for of spiritual relationship is John writing), is to be in the darkness

still. Moreover, that one also walks in it. He has never really been converted. But where the contrary is known, *i.e.*, love to a brother, such an one abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

On obedience and love John insists for the saint. Both were manifested by the Lord when on earth, displaying by them the divine nature. *Light* and *love* are the characteristics of that nature revealed in God. *Obedience* and *love* are the ways in which the divine nature can be displayed in a man. And under obedience we here include practical righteousness. Both obedience and love were perfectly displayed in Christ. They are to be manifested in us. For to Christians, and to them only, is John here writing, and tells them, using a term of endearment, that he writes because their sins were forgiven them "for His name's sake." All believers in apostolic days knew they were forgiven, the youngest as well as the most advanced. Yet there was growth among them, and hence different classes. To each he now speaks, and arranges them in three classes (ii. 13-27), calling them respectively, fathers, young men, little children. This last term, different from that we meet with in ii. 12, 28, has respect to age in Christian growth, contrasted with the others above mentioned.

To the first class—fathers, the apostle has no admonition to offer. They knew Him—Christ who is from the beginning. As with Paul, writing to the Colossians (ii. 8-10), so with John, there is nothing beyond Christ nor above Him for the saints to reach.

The young men, however, needed admonition. They were strong, the word of God abode in them, and they had overcome the evil one (ii. 14). But there was the world with its seductions. Against that the apostle warns them: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." By the world, then, John means an orderly arranged system,

which has its origin not from the Father. Against created things he is clearly not writing. They were of God. Against that which is not of the Father he does write, and tells us of characteristics of it—lust and pride, “lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life.” Eve was ensnared, in principle, by the things of the world (Gen. iii. 6). The Lord refused the temptations of the devil, analogous to those to which Eve had yielded (Luke iv. 1-12). And He resisted, a lesson indeed for us, on the authority of the written word of God.

Between the world, as John describes it, and the Father there is nothing in common. He who loves the former cannot love the latter. Moreover, and this was and is a very important consideration, “the world passeth away (compare I Cor. vii. 31) and the lust thereof.” It has but a transitory existence. Not so he that does the will of God. He abideth ever.

Turning next to the little children, those young in the Christian life, he warns them against teachers who would mislead them. For as young men naturally are in danger from the world, little children naturally are more in danger of following any who would seek to lead them. So with little children in the faith. Hence he warns them, and does it by the reminder of three things—first, the *time* in which they lived; second, that which they *knew*; and third, that which they had *heard*.

As to the *time*. It was in character the last hour; and though *the* antichrist had, and still has, yet to appear, there were many antichrists whereby they knew it was the last hour. Apostolic doctrine those just named evidently refused. They had gone out of the Christian assembly, demonstrating thereby what they really were. Apostasy had in spirit begun. Now those young in the faith were not to be taken by such people, nor to be troubled by their defection. For—and he now reminds them of what they *knew*—they knew “all things,” having received

the unction from the Holy One—the gift of the Holy Ghost. Hence they knew the truth, and that no lie is of the truth. Now, those who denied that Jesus was the Christ were certainly liars. And *the* antichrist will deny both the Father and the Son. So, adds the apostle, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father,” and (for the words printed in italics in the Authorized Version are really part of inspired Scripture) “he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (23). How much depends on acknowledging the Son! We cannot confess the Father, and yet deny the Son; for, as the Lord said when on earth, “He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him” (John v. 23); and “He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also” (John xv. 23).

Lastly. To what they had *heard* are they now directed: “Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father” (1 John ii. 24). Development of Christian truth is here excluded. From the beginning, of which John writes, Christian doctrine has been communicated, and these little ones had heard it. There was nothing more to wait for; and, the unction abiding in them, they were not dependent on teachers, so as to be driven about by every wind of doctrine. Yet they were not independent of apostolic teaching. John was teaching them in this epistle. Needful is this for all to remember, and never more than in a day like this, that all true Christians have received the unction—the Holy Ghost—and so are held responsible to judge for themselves what is truth and what is not, in subjection, at the same time, to apostolic teaching contained in the written word.

Having completed his instruction for the little children, the apostle turns back to address all believers together (ii. 28, 29), using the same term of endearment that we have met with in verse 12. His

desire for the faithful walk of all is now set forth ; namely, that they should abide in Christ, so that if He should be manifested, and He certainly will be, John and other labourers should not be ashamed before Him at His coming, by their professed converts proving to have been unstable. And he adds, " If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is born of Him," *i.e.*, God (29).

All men, then, are not born of God. John will, therefore, now write a little on the distinguishing marks of two families of men—the children of God and the children of the devil (iii. 1-10). These are distinct. Those in the latter never, that we read of, change into the other. Of three classes of Christians he has written. To these two families he will now draw attention. Every one that practises righteousness is born of God. Now this relationship to God is a fruit of divine love ; and whilst this blessing is common to all believers on earth, the world knows them not, even as it knew Him not. As yet, too, what we shall be in person is not manifested. We must wait for His manifestation for that. Then we shall bear His image. Meanwhile, the characteristics of God's children should be seen in each one of them, and the hope of seeing the Lord Jesus should have a sanctifying power over them, each "purifying himself even as He is pure." How the holiness of the Lord's person is carefully guarded. He, pure. We, because not pure, have to purify ourselves. Hereupon the apostle proceeds to point out the marks of these two families. Those of the former do (or, practise) righteousness. Those of the latter do (or, practise) sin. The habit of each is stated. But none, be it remembered, are called in Scripture children of the devil, till they have proved themselves to be such by their acts (John viii. 44 ; Acts xiii. 10). All of Adam's race are by nature children of wrath (Ephes. ii. 3), but not by natural generation children

of the devil. Persistent and final opposition to God demonstrates who are such.

The marks of those not of God having been stated, viz., not practising righteousness and not loving the brethren, we are led on to the great subject to which the second part of the epistle is devoted—that of brotherly love. So here we must pause, leaving the consideration of that for a subsequent paper.

C. E. S.

“THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING.”—
 “INSIDE THE VAIL.”—“OUTSIDE
 THE CAMP.”

IT is good to remember that, in almost every instance mentioned in Scripture, the altar of burnt offering was for that which should be sweet savour to God, food for God, that which should tell of the infinite preciousness of His own beloved Son as the One precious perfect offering in death. Thus, if it be the burnt offering, as in Lev. i. 8, 9, 12, 17, it is *sweet savour* unto the Lord, and wholly burnt. So the meat offering, the memorial burnt on the altar of burnt offering (ii. 2, 3, 9, 10; vi. 15, 16); and in this guarding with jealous care the holiness and purity of that which was offered and eaten, it was *not* to be baked with *leaven*. And so again with the peace offering (iii. 3, 4, 5)—“the fat that covereth the inwards, all the fat that is upon the inwards, the two kidneys and the fat that is upon them,” all taken away and burnt on the altar *upon the burnt sacrifice*, an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord. It has been remarked, in *almost* every instance; and when we turn to the sin offering, in chapter iv., there we find a difference, though even there, in ver. 31, we find this word: all the fat (of the sin offering of one of the common people) taken away *as the fat of peace offerings*, and burnt on the altar *for a sweet savour* unto the

Lord. In chap. xvi. 25, the fat of the sin offering is burnt upon the altar. Comparing this with chapter iv. 8, 9, 10, 19, the fat is burnt upon the altar, but there is *no mention* of its being *sweet savour* unto the Lord ; not that there was or could be any question as to its character. *Most holy* is what is said of it in vi. 25, and this is emphasised in verse 17, in what is said of the meat offering ; it (the meat offering) is *most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering.*

That there is a meaning in all this we may be quite sure, for no part of God's blessed word can be without meaning or profit for His people (2 Tim. iii. 16). It is said in Lev. iv. 11, 12, 20, 21, and also xvi. 27, "The bullock must be carried forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out and there burnt." The *blood* of the sin offering which is thus burnt is carried into the most holy place (as Lev. xvi.), sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, and also the altar of sweet incense, while in iv. 6, 7, 17, 18, it is sprinkled before the Lord, and some of it put on the horns of the altar of sweet incense ; while as to the sin offering, the blood of which was *not* brought into the holy place and sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, it was *not* to be carried forth without the camp and there burnt, but, as still being most holy, it was to be eaten in the holy place. See Lev. vi. 25-30 ; and also x. 17, 18—"ye should indeed have eaten it."

Turning, then, to Heb. xiii. 11 : "for sin" is mentioned as being the occasion of the burning outside the camp. He who knew no sin "was made sin" for us ; not simply as many precious Scriptures testify—"bare our sins in His own body on the tree ;" "bare the sins of many" (Isaiah liii. 12 ; Heb. ix. 28)—but as Heb. ix. 26, "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." It was surely this which pressed upon His spirit when in the garden He prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from Him. He surely knowing full well the terrible character in God's sight of what sin was, and as surely full well

knowing, as He alone could know, how intensely solemn and awful must be that judgment which God must visit upon any who might be thus dealt with, and none but He could be thus “made sin,” for none but He was in His own person infinitely holy. “He knew no sin.” The Father could own Him as “My beloved Son.” “The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” “All the angels of God worship Him.” How suitable, then, such words as are recorded in Matt. xxvi. 42, “If it may not pass away from Me except I drink it;” and in ver. 44, “Saying the same words,” in view thus of *all* that sin was, and which He knew it to be, and all the holiness of that judgment. And yet in view of all, how blessedly perfect His submission and obedience—“Not My will, but Thine be done”—not any halting or hesitation here. Fully, blessedly, perfectly bowing to His Father’s will, He leaves that scene where He had been alone with His Father in receiving the cup, to drink it at the cross, as, in John xviii., He comes forth and can say, “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?”

Have we not thus, as on the cross—sin and its judgment—in Him a reason as to the silence as to sweet savour, while, as has been pointed out, guarding most carefully the perfect holiness of the One “made sin”? May we not thus in our mind pass outside the camp, and there witness what was being done—the fire of divine, holy judgment consuming utterly that which was “made sin”—sin’s judgment there poured out—sin condemned; and yet also there judgment exhausted? So we may fully by faith rest upon this great truth—sin, death, and judgment behind the believer. Knowing that as He was “made sin”—“made a curse”—he (the believer) has no more to say to these; but turning to the altar,—sins borne—peace made—the fat of the sin offering (that which was eaten) identified with the fat of the peace offering (Lev. iv. 31, 35), and that again identified with the

burnt offering (Lev. iii. 5, 9, 10, 11)—all marked off and linked up as sweet savour to God, food of God. Well, may we exclaim, what food for God when He bore His people's sins, when He made peace by the blood of His cross; thus, too, laying the basis for reconciliation of all things (Col. i. 20), as also redemption (1 Peter i. 18-21; Eph. i. 7). For, as we may thus see, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ covers both the altar of burnt offering and the clean place outside the camp; both are here seen. Psalm xxii. 1, Matt. xxvii. 48, with other Scriptures tell the one; while John x. 11, 15, 17, 18, Matt. xxvi. 53, 54, also with many other Scriptures, surely speak the other; and the cross was that where both these found their expression—thus covering both the altar and clean place; the fire on the altar consuming with acceptance that which was offered thereon (as Ezek. xx. 40, 41; xliii. 27); the fire of divine judgment consuming outside the camp. As to the one, we know surely it is passed, exhausted; while as to the other, the fire on the altar was never to go out, it was ever to be burning on it morning and evening. Day after day, *that* fire of acceptance was ever thus to be the burnt offering, with its accompanying meat offering, and often identified with it the peace or thank offering; all these surely of that which was indeed sweet savour, or, may we say, savour of rest; while, as to judgment of sin, it may be well to remember the holy, jealous care as to Him who was "made sin." Where the burnt offering was killed, there the sin offering likewise (Lev. vi. 25); where the ashes are poured out (vi. 10, 11)—of the burnt offering—in the clean place outside the camp, "there should the sin offering be carried forth and burnt on the wood with fire where the ashes are poured out." Once more as to the altar—"no leaven was to be burnt on it." Evil cannot be identified thus with that altar of sweet savour, with that food of God (Lev. ii. 11).

And now what blessed results flowing from that perfect work once accomplished—the blood and the

rent veil—access thus into the holiest. What holy scenes open up to us here; believers, previously far off or near (Eph. ii.), thus privileged to enter that holy presence; not simply to tread those hallowed courts where the priests of old alone walked (see Ezekiel xliv. 17-18; Zech. iii. 7), nor simply to enter into the holy place, the place of the golden altar, the place of holy service (see Heb. ix. 6), but as cleansed worshippers by the blood, through the rent veil into the holiest of all. What has not His death accomplished for those who believe? What holy, blessed privileges are now theirs! to worship in the most holy—to serve in the holy place, the light of that glory shining forth through that rent veil, filling His house, His habitation, through the Spirit (Eph. ii., 22; 1 Cor. iii., 16); yet, surely, service to be before Him in all the preciousness of that sweet incense from the golden altar; thus in His holy habitation to be privileged to serve, and yet again permitted to tread those hallowed courts, and knowing and enjoying the blessed privilege as partakers of *that* altar (1 Cor. x. 18; Heb. xiii. 10); the saints' blessed, holy portion, to feed in those holy dwellings upon that precious food; their allotted portion, whether it be in connection with the meat, peace, or sin offerings, that of Himself, who loved us, and gave Himself for us; the memorial of the one, and all the fat of the other, on the altar—for, as learning and enjoying the portion given us, it will surely follow that we do not intrude into that which God alone can fully know and enjoy—thus so blessedly privileged to worship as worshipping in the Spirit, *having no confidence in the flesh*: for if no leaven was to be burnt on the altar, neither was any honey; and so as to serving, and walking, and feeding. How suitable, then, those words (as having thus access into the holiest, and having an altar, as having title to eat thereof), “Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

This, surely, carries our thoughts back to the "clean place outside the camp,"—the holy, chastened remembrance of Him "made sin," bearing the weight of that divine judgment. Then besides, He suffered without the gate. He could say, "They that sit in the gate speak against Me, and I was the song of the drunkards" (Ps. lxxix. 12). Those who ought to have judged righteous judgment, condemning the guiltless; and He enduring such contradiction of sinners against Himself, committed Himself unto Him that judgeth righteously (1 Peter ii. 21-24). And we are exhorted to consider Him in the one, "lest we be wearied and faint in our minds;" and exhorted to follow Him who did so commit Himself, by committing the keeping of our souls in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator (1 Pet. iv. 19). Thus, whether outside the camp, it is "unto Him;" and if it be reproach for Him, how gracious to hear Him say, "They persecute Him whom Thou hast smitten, they talk to the grief of Thy wounded ones" (Ps. lxxix. 26); and surely it is good to remember, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. i. 29); but also to remember that, to sanctify with His own blood, He suffered without the gate, that, as His sanctified ones, going forth "unto Him," the language of that beloved servant of the blessed Lord may be more and more the language of each believing one: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20); "for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come;" and "offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually" marking each.

G. C.

GOD will either keep His saints *from* temptation by His preventing mercy; or *in* temptation by His supporting mercy; or find a way for their *escape* by His delivering mercy.—*Mason*.

DIFFICULT TIMES.

A LESSON FROM THE BOOK OF EZRA.

GOD'S people, from the most remote ages, have had difficult times to pass through. This, we know, was due partly to their own folly, and partly, by His grace, to their desire to be faithful to Him and His word. Living, as we ourselves are, in "perilous times" (2 Tim. iii.), it may not be un instructive to glance at a past day of difficulty.

God had allowed the people on whom He had set His love to be carried away captive to Babylon. They had persisted in their wickedness, had mocked His messengers, despised His words, misused His prophets, and therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; He gave them all into his hand. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire. . . . And them that escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi.)

What a scene of desolation and woe must Jerusalem have presented after such a work of destruction! Well might the prophet exclaim, "Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" But Zion, though only a heap of ruins, was yet loved. Her people, now captives in a foreign land, still sighed for her, and wept over the remembrance of her. "The voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride" had indeed been taken from them. The moaning wind might sweep, with magic touch, across their harps, now hung upon the willow trees, and soothe their aching hearts and broken spirits with a symphony of sadness. In vain might their captors

ask for one of the songs of Zion. "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" No: Zion wasted, desolate, with its glories all faded, was dearer to their hearts than all that Babylon could give. Visions of a brighter day, it may be, pierced the gloom and darkness which then encircled them. Prospectively, they might have looked on to that time when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Is. xxxv. 10). For He who of old proclaimed Himself "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty," loves thus sweetly to sustain the hopes and cheer the hearts of His people. Truly, He was the God of all comfort to them of old, as He is to us now to-day.

The days of their captivity ended, they return to Jerusalem. How the hearts of those old men, bent with the weight of years, must have sunk within them as with memories unimpaired they looked around upon that mournful spectacle of their glorious temple levelled to the ground; those majestic walls which screened them from the attacks of their enemies,—battered and broken; their homes swept away; all traces of many a cherished spot gone; and resting under those mouldering heaps was the dust of many a loved relative or friend. What sadness, too, must have filled the heart of many a younger man and woman amongst that throng of returned captives, as they, for the first time, beheld that city of their fathers: that city of which they had so often heard with rapturous delight from loving lips then closed for aye. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy," speaks a deep, unquenchable love. What of Him, then, my reader, of

whom they knew nothing, but of whom *we* can say : "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" ?

But were these sorrows, well-nigh overwhelming, to prevent them from worshipping God in the way He had directed them? Certainly not. The temple was to be re-built despite rubbish, ruin, wretchedness, or weakness. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil" (Jer. xxix.), reveals the tender heart of our God for His own people, let them be ever so unmindful of Him and His love. He would come to their assistance, for could not He, to whom the earth and all its fulness belong, dispose the hearts of any of His creatures to do His bidding—be he Jew or Gentile, be he potentate or peasant? He therefore stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to build Him a house at Jerusalem (Ez. i. 1). The difficulties, great as they were, were one by one removed. Offerings were freely given (Ez. ii. 68), unity prevailed (iii. 1), and the foundation of the temple was laid. And though "the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever," was again heard (see Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11; and Ez. iii. 11), yet tears and smiles broke forth as that oft-repeated refrain ascended to Him whose ear is never weary of hearing. Under different circumstances had these same words formed the burden of their fathers' song (1 Ch. xvi.; and 2 Ch. v. 13). They had been the presage of victory in a time of trouble (2 Ch. xx. 21), as they had been, and would be again (Ps. cxxxvi.), the expression of hearts bowed in worship and adoration. How becoming, then, those tears; though God's eternal goodness should, and must ever be, a source of delight to His people. Who of us in this day would be unmindful of the dishonour we have done to His Name? Who, with any zeal for the Lord, but must sorrow over our declension, and the ruin and confusion into which we are brought by our own unhappy

ways? Should not our minds revert with some sense of shame to Pentecostal times, as did the minds of these ancient men turn to that temple which had been filled with the glory of the Lord? (iii. 12). Yet, withal, the Christ of God is our unchangeable delight; amid our sorrows we can sing pæans to His praise.

Before, however, worship could be established according to the mind of God, the temple must be completed. Its foundation had been laid, and the edifice was in process of erection; but being a work of God, enemies were not lacking; and in such strength did they come that, for a time, the work ceased. But God's eye was upon the elders of the Jews (v. 5), and, at this juncture of affairs, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah came upon the scene with words of sweet encouragement to urge on the people to the work. The work renewed, the watchful enemy was quick to hinder; but all his obstruction ended in procuring for them (the Jews) freedom from further molestation; and in due time the house was finished, and with joy was its dedication kept. Little did Judah's foes think that their plans and their plottings would culminate in the joy of God's people! And still less did the enemy of our souls contemplate that, through death, our blessed Lord would destroy him who had the power of death, the issue of which would be everlasting salvation to all who believed on His name. All praise and glory be forever rendered to Him!

But with all this blessing, their difficulties were by no means at an end. The wall still remained in a broken condition, and enemies on all sides abounded. Under such circumstances must that separation be maintained by them, as becomes the people of God? Can *no* allowance be made with all these difficulties surrounding them, and after seventy years' exile among a strange people? None whatsoever! For the greater the difficulties and dangers, the greater the necessity for cleaving closely to Him who alone can

lift them out of their troubles. And what care was exercised to maintain that separation ! (see ii. 59-62 ; iv., x. 2, 3 ; vi. 20). The secret of all their sorrow and confusion was indifference to the fact that they were God's people, and, as such, must be a separate people. Now that they had snapped those links which bound them to the stranger, and dissolved every unholy alliance, they could turn to God and find their joy in Him, and He His joy in them. They "kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy : for the Lord had made them joyful" (vi. 19-22). "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone." The mournful music of woe is quickened into jubilant strains of triumph. "The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness ; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride," are once more heard in Judah's capital. Happy, indeed, is that people whose God is the Lord. But though the clouds of sorrow were so soon to drift again across the sunny sky, as the closing chapters of this book to o plainly tell, yet cannot we of to-day cull from these gracious ways of our God towards His beloved, though erring people, some deep and precious lessons for ourselves ? We have the counterpart of Ez. vi. 19-22 in 1 Cor. v. 7-8 and 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. Would that we took more heed to it, and sought more earnestly for strength to maintain it. How many difficulties should we be released from ; how many trials escape. The sighs and murmurs of our desponding hearts would then form but a prelude to bright and blessed rhapsodies of praise. But let our circumstances be what they may, cannot one and all exclaim with Ezra of old, "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him" ?

"O wondrous love ! He ne'er forgets
 The objects of His tender care,
 May chasten still, while sin besets,
 To warn and guard them where they are."

A. C. H.

THE DAY THAT KNOWS NO NIGHT.

THE Father's home of light
 Our dwelling shall become ;
 And we in heavenly radiance bright
 Shall rest with Christ at home !

What joy to see His face !
 What joy to hear His voice !
 Then shall the glory of His grace
 Make every heart rejoice !

O longed-for home above !
 O longed-for scene of light !
 The boundless ocean of His love,
 The day that knows no night !

Sweet thought for saints on earth !
 Sweet thought for souls with Him !
 (Each ransomed one of heavenly birth)
 —*The glory nought can dim !*

List, list the welcome sound !
 Awake, ye saintly dead !
He calls to earth's remotest bound,
 The shadows all have fled !

“Come, come ye all to Me !
 Come, meet Me in the air !
 Come from the earth, the grave, the sea,
 Eternal glory share !”

Responsive shall we rise
 At His assembling word,
 “And own ourselves the Saviour's prize,”
 “For ever with the Lord !”

O crowning grace of grace !
 The joy of joys is this !
 To gaze for ever on His face
 Is heaven's supremest bliss !

THE BLIND MAN OF JERICHO.

Luke xviii. 31-43

THE decease which He is now about to accomplish, and the grace which it must bring in, has laws of its own, and for the glory of God too—so that actions, when viewed in this light, and upon “this candlestick in the house” of His resurrection, are put into new associations, and yet another signification. Like Joseph said to the brethren who sold him and rejected him, so will Jesus say in the day of grace and of the coming glory: “Fear not, for am I in the place of God? but as for you, ye thought evil against me, yet God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” All these changes and transpositions of good and evil, earth and heaven, Moses and Christ, law and grace, flesh and spirit, the first man and the second Man; Adam, the beginning of this groaning creation, and the ascended Lord, the Beginning of the creation of God; all these things, both new and old, depended upon His decease, which Jesus has fully upon His heart with God.

“Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished.” And now He passes before us in the perfection and height of His own moral greatness; for who but He could concentrate and embody in His own person and ways the total of the “all things” which God had determined beforehand, and spoken by the prophets concerning *this* Son of Man? Perfect before God, as thus viewed in the height of His beauty, by the obedience of His holiness to every word of prophecy and promise. He is equally perfect in lowliness and submission to the hands of His accusers. For Jesus adds: “He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge

Him, and put Him to death : and the third day He shall rise again." But He passed away thus into a range and region of His own, where as yet they could not hold their fellowship after these patterns, though the path did not stumble them, as a hard saying, nor His example make them afraid, as it did the young ruler. Nay, they had left all to follow Him. Nevertheless, "They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them. neither knew they the things which were spoken." For, like the three of them whom Jesus took up the Mount to see Himself in the temporary glory, and proved their incompetency for such an acquaintance by falling asleep, so now again they betray their moral inaptitude for intimacy with Him in His sorrows. Yet, in either case, His love would have the disciples with Him.

"His face was set steadfastly to go to Jerusalem," when He passed through a certain village of the Samaritans, as knowing "the time was come that He should be received up," as stated in chap. ix., after He had come down from the Mount, to change His path ; and from that chapter to this (xviii.), everything Jesus had said or done revolved in accordance with His own change, as we have noticed. He has been there in spirit with His disciples.

And now "it came to pass, that as He was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging : and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." He declines to encamp before Jericho (as Joshua did in the day when the Lord's hosts were led forth to make themselves a great name upon the earth, and to take possession of the good land of Canaan, by driving out the inhabitants thereof), and thus proclaim the kingdom in power. In that time of Israel's espousal with the Lord, there was not one feeble person among them, and sickness and disease

could have no title amongst them ; for Jehovah dwelt in their midst, and travelled with them by the fire and the cloud, by day and night, to find out a resting-place for Himself and them. Yea, "I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself," were the loving words and ways of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

Strange things have happened since that day of their inauguration ; for sad and strange reverses of judgment have fallen upon them, under the righteous government of God, because of their rebellion and wickedness as a nation, with which the name of Jehovah was bound up, in the sight of the Gentiles. A greater than Joshua was now standing before Jericho, and in the midst of a disgraced and defeated people—as witnesses of the rise, and decline, and fall of a Theocracy ! What do the people say and think of Him, whom the heavens have given forth and announced as their Saviour ? "Ichabod" was written on the nation since the days of Joshua, when the walls of Jericho fell down flat before the Ark of the Sanctuary, and the waters of Jordan rolled themselves back as in a heap, as the priests' feet touched their brim. "Lo-ammi" had been declared by the prophet Hosea, long after these Ichabod days, and God had carried them away into Babylon, and driven them out of Immanuel's Land and the city of Jerusalem.

What does the Messiah-Jesus say as to these realities between God and themselves, now that He is come to preach the kingdom of God too. Does He take to Himself His great power, and act for their deliverance as Moses did, with the rod of God in his hand ? No ; for this would be to wink at their national sins, on account of which this relationship with Jehovah had been broken up. Can He not exchange the rod of Moses for the sword and spear of Joshua, and command the sun and moon to stand still in the heavens, while He is destroying all the kings and breaking up the adverse kingdoms of their

enemies? No; for this would be to condemn the righteous Judge of the earth, who had dispossessed them, and sold them into the hands of their oppressors. Can the Messiah listen to the voice even of His disciples, who wanted to command the fire to come down out of heaven, as the prophet Elijah did, to consume all those who would not prepare the way for Him? No; for these were not the present ways either of the pillar or the cloud. What will Jesus do if He refuse the rod, and the sword, and the spear, and the fire from heaven? In what other ministry can He enter and pass through Jericho? He can clothe Himself in the spirit and power of Elias, and use His divine power in grace for their salvation and their healing. This was the character of Elisha's ministry when "he tarried at Jericho," and distinguishes it from the fire and power of Elijah. "And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of Jericho is pleasant, as my Lord seeth; but the water is naught and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein; and they brought it to him." Could the greater than Elisha be wanting in the like grace and power of healing, now that Elisha's Lord tarried at Jericho? Most surely not, for He must act in the grace that abounds over the curse that was pronounced upon it, and stand still (like the sun and the moon did, only not in destruction, but in mercy) at the call of the blind beggar at the walls of Jericho.

"And they which went before, and they which followed, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him." "The new cruse and the salt" of Elisha's prophetic day are more than fulfilled in this day of the Son of David, and doing their work to perfection upon what is "naught and barren." "And when the man was come near, Jesus asked him, What wilt thou that I shall do for thee? And he said,

Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee."

What was this ministry brought to Jericho—and not only so, but to enter in, yea, and pass through, and find a home there, and dwell in the cursed city with the publican, and bring salvation^o to the house of Zaccheus—but the new cruse and the salt so graciously and perfectly applied by this Jehovah-Jesus, that the man immediately received his sight, and used it in the first place upon Jesus, whom he followed, glorifying God. In this, too, Elisha had caught the spirit of his Master, and "went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters: there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." Jesus is carrying Himself in this same spirit of grace and power with Elisha, and going forth to the spring of the waters; certainly not to repeat the prophet's action by the salt, and a "Thus saith the Lord," but in His personal title and right, as the greater than the Son of David, to say "Receive thy sight," and to make the blind beggar who followed the trophy and the witness of the healing virtue which Jesus had brought. Nor is this all, for the land was not any longer "to be barren;" and thus "*all* the people when they saw it gave praise unto God," in token that their mouths were set at liberty, as well as the eyes of the blind beggar opened. May we not likewise say, that "the scarlet-line from the window of Rahab's house" was no longer needed as in Joshua's day, any more than the faith of the harlot who hung it out, inasmuch as both the line and the faith were excelled and exceeded (like the new cruse and the salt of Elisha) by these ministrations of the Son of David, and the faith which credited Him for the sight to behold this Jesus of Nazareth. "Thy faith hath saved thee," from the lips of the Saviour, needed neither the scarlet-line nor the new cruse; for a greater than Joshua was here, and in a more excellent ministry than Elisha's, though witnessed and foreshadowed by each and all of them together. J. E. B.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

Am I justified in standing aloof from "open" brethren in gospel work?

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The question you raise resolves itself into this—Is Christ and what is due to His glory to be secondary to the blessing of souls? For my own part, I could not put Him into any subordinate place. What separates us from "open" brethren is, that *their position* is identified with deliberate dishonour to the person of Christ, perpetrated forty-five years ago, and never acknowledged or retracted to this day. If I join hands with "open" brethren in gospel work, I virtually signify that I am willing, while so engaged, to ignore or to condone the sin of which they were guilty—in a word, I indicate that I think more of my service than I do of Him whose servant I am! His word is, that I am not my own, but bought with a price, that I should live unto Him who died for me and rose again. And again, "Ye serve the Lord Christ." And moreover, as to co-operation in service, there is that word, "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" Thus, I think there are the clearest grounds for concluding that service must give place to what is due to the Master. I cannot have communion in service, or that which is least, if my allegiance to Christ precludes my communion with such saints in that which is greatest; for "he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad," and I could not say that "open" brethren are gathering *with* Christ, though they may claim to be doing so, and doubtless believe it too. I hope this will meet your enquiry.

4th March, 1893.

W. R.

THE HEAD is the only begotten Son of God, and His body is the Church.—*Augustine.*

DAVID'S FUTURE GLORY.—To see this through the dark cloud of his present circumstances needed faith, and this some, as Jonathan, had. To confess him needed love; and this Jonathan had too, wonderful love. But to go forth to him, to bear his reproach and to share his sufferings, needed something more, needed a true judgment of the whole system which cast him out, whatever its present wealth and power. This Jonathan had not. At first he stripped himself for David, even to his sword and his bow; but we find him at last using his weapons in companionship with Saul, and he was stripped of them by the Philistines. Solemn lesson! Whatever the Christian reserves for himself and the world, falls into the hands of the adversary. Christ can keep for him, he cannot keep for himself (2 Tim. i. 12.).—*Bible Treasury*.

EVERY possible variety of character, of position in life, of attainments, and even of religion and race, was united against Christ. As He said, "The world hath hated Me." What a power there must be behind all that is seen to bind together such discordant elements, and to maintain to the present moment such a unity as this; a unity that is appalling to think of in the light of Calvary; a unity from which it needs omnipotent grace to detach a single soul.—*Ibid.*

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WORDS OF ESAU AND JACOB (Gen. xxxiii. 9, 11).—Esau: "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself." Jacob: "Because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough" (margin, *all things*). Jacob was more than content; he was grateful to God. Esau had enough and knew it. He had more than Jacob, but he accepted his gift!

THE REVISED VERSION.—In the "Lord's prayer" in Luke the invocation is cut down to a single word, and two important petitions expunged. The doxology is expunged in Matthew, thereby no doxology being left. In Luke the prayer never had a doxology. In the account of the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda in John's gospel, the descending angel, the troubling of the water, and the effect of it have been obliterated. The passages on which doubt is thrown by a marginal note saying, "Many ancient authorities omit them," are of still more serious import. Misgivings are thus instilled into minds as to the only account we have of the agony and bloody sweat; as to the words, "Father, forgive them" on the cross; as to the ascension in Luke; and as to the Supper, "which is given for you" and "which is poured out for you;" while still graver doubt is thrown on the last twelve verses of Mark.

"THERE IS A LAD HERE."—Dean Burgon preached a remarkable sermon from these words only. Of course the eyes of all the lads were on him while he pointed out that nothing was too insignificant for the Master's use. Even this poor lad's poor provision served to feed 5000.

SACRIFICES.—I do not mention privations as if I considered them *sacrifices*, for I think that the latter word should never be applied to anything done for Him who came down from heaven and died for us — *Livingstone*.

PUT THOU MY TEARS IN THY BOTTLE.—Tears are the inheritance of our eyes; either our sufferings or our sins are ever calling for them, and there is One only who can dry them.

THE DEATH OF PARENTS.—It was possibly when David heard of the death of his father and mother in Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3) that, smarting under this experience, and with a reference to the office of the “gathering host” in the march through the wilderness (whose duty it was, coming in the rear of the tribes, to take up and carry forward any sick or infirm who might have dropped from mules and caravans without being noticed), he sang those sweet words of consolation, put into his mouth by the Holy Spirit, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will gather me” (Ps. xxvii. 10, margin).—*Dr. Goulburn.*

PAUL’S SCOURGING.—The whip consisted of three thongs and thirteen strokes, made “forty stripes save one.”—*Macknight.*

“FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE.”—Call me what thou wilt, says the believer, but speak not ill of my Beloved. Plough these shoulders with your lashes, but spare yourselves the sin of cursing Him! Ay, let me die: I am all too happy to be slain if only my Lord’s most glorious cause shall live.—*Spurgeon.*

ATTRACTIVE FIELDS OF LABOUR.—All hills at a distance look blue and romantic. When we reach them, they are none the less difficult to climb.

EUDOXUS was so affected with the glory of the sun that he thought he was born only to behold it. Much more should we judge that we have been born of God to behold and delight in the glory of His Son.

CHRIST WHEN HERE cured many a disease, but he never smoothed a wrinkle, nor converted an old man into a young!

A SAVED NEGRO once said, “When I left de rebel ranks and crossed over to de Lord’s army, I tore up de bridge behind me, and I be now fightin’ with de Captain dat’s never lost a battle.”

ALEXANDER, being asked how he had conquered the world, replied, “by not delaying.” Let us not delay. The Lord is at hand.

NONE can ever enter heaven by law-righteousness. God hath nailed this door up that people may not attempt the impossible. Like the way to India by the north pole, you get frozen to death before you are half way there.—*Gurnall.*

CHRIST IS SO WILLING to receive sinners who come unto Him that He does *not even reject the devil’s castaways!*—*Whitefield.*

IT IS TRUE, and always will be true, that if a sincere Christian should apostatise, he could never be converted again. The reason is obvious. He would have tried the only way of salvation, and it would have failed! Whether this ever occurs is quite another question.—*Barnes.*

A LITTLE ROPE will hang a great thief; a little dross abase much gold; a little poison infect much wholesome liquor; a little heresy corrupt much sound doctrine; a little fly spoil all the alabaster box of ointment. And thus the smallest sin against God apart from His mercy will damn our souls to all eternity.—*P. Boskieri.*

A SCOTTISH MARTYR taking God at His word exclaimed at the place of execution, “I challenge Thee, O Lord, by Thine own promise, that Thou perform and make it good unto me, who call for ease and mercy at Thy hands.”

GOD HAS DETERMINED that everyone shall die a malefactor who refuses a Mediator.

ZACCHÆUS AND THE BLIND MAN.

LUKE XIX. 1-28.

THIS chapter ought not to be separated from that preceding, as it continues the account of the cursed city into which grace had come to heal its waters "that were naught," and to look up into the tops of its trees for fruit. "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature." The man who had risen up and built this city was under the curse of Joshua, when the ark of the Lord was passing through to destroy Jericho and all its inhabitants, which curse fell upon Hiel the Bethelite, who laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord which He spake by Joshua the son of Nun. Neither Elisha, the man of God, nor Jesus, the Son of God and son of David, are following the ark of the Lord after that pattern of destroying power in their respective ministry; but otherwise: for the grace of Christ, as the Messiah, had opened itself out by words and works in the blind beggar on its wayside to give him his eyes, and to save him; and now this same grace is about to distinguish itself towards one of the chief, a man who was rich; for from the tops of the sycamore to the highway-side, grace gathers its pleasant fruits, and out of the city that was cursed!

If any would learn the grace and the kindness of God towards men by Jesus Christ, it can only be after this style of the blind beggar and his cry for mercy to the passer by, who carried it for the destitute and needy one, and who even "stood still" at his call! On the other hand, any who are not moved by their wants and necessities, as this beggar was, but who are led by their curiosity "to see Jesus who He was,"

cannot escape His loving search, or their own blessing; nay, for the littleness of stature which led this rich publican to run on before, and climb the sycamore tree, did but put him into the path of Jesus, for the Son of David "was to pass that way" too! "And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully."

The grace of Christ gratifies itself by its own discoveries, as well as the discoveries of others; whether it be by having eyes, like the man who wanted "to see Jesus who He was," or having no eyes, like the beggar, who cried to Jesus for sight that he might follow Him. And these activities are very blessed, as reciprocated between ourselves and the Lord in this day, as well as then. "Make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" are still the winning words and ways of this friendly Son of Man, who seeks our company, and desires to make Himself at home with us, and us with Him. Alas! such intimacy is thought strange in these days by those who measure their distances, and maintain them by the proprieties of life, as known and adopted in *their* world.

"And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Was this the reason why Zacchæus sought to justify himself before them in the presence of his guest, as though he was not yet acquainted with the objects and services of this Jesus of Nazareth? Be this as it may, he stood and said unto the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold;" so that he appears to stand for a moment with Rahab on the ground of works, when, according to the eye of the Spirit, the apostle James united her faith with her works, saying, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and

had sent them out another way?" And, again, James challenges some in his day, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" The Rahab of Jericho, and her scarlet line—the Abraham and Isaac in the earlier day of promise and faith—this Zacchæus, whether viewed in action of running before and climbing up the sycamore tree, or as making haste to come down, and receive Jesus in the joy of faith, is not without his justification by works. But Jesus exceeds the apostle James on this matter, as he had excelled the prophet Elisha at Jericho, with his new cruse and salt; and identifies Zacchæus in relationship with the head of the family of faith, and shows Himself at the same time by His actings in the publican's house to be also greater than our father Abraham, by saying to him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

It is in this ministry of power and grace that Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, giving sight to the blind, and the fulness of the mercy for which he cried; or bringing salvation, with Himself as the Saviour, into the house where He enters; justifying Himself from first to last, if needs be, by His own title and mission, "for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He has rolled away the reproach from the city, and turned its curse into a blessing; He has given one and another to drink of that living water, whose springs are beyond all healing, and which heal all who drink of them; and has established mercy and truth on the wayside, and brought righteousness and peace to kiss each other in the house of the chief of the publicans. Nor is this transformation of Jericho complete till our ears catch the vindication of God, by the tongue of the blind beggar, and from the voices of all the people (beyond the shoutings of the Israelites, and the trumpets of the priests before its walls, in the day of its proud defiance of Joshua and the host of the Lord), "glori-

fyng God," and with united hearts and voices "giving praise unto God," and so changing the barrenness of the land of Jericho into a fruitful field, even as the garden of the Lord.

May we not say, as those who know this Saviour, and the salvation He carries with Him wherever He goes, that these springs flow as full and fresh as ever to any in Jericho or the wide world, who have the faith of the beggar; or who can make ready to receive Him into the house, and the more "joyfully" and unreservedly, because upon His own invitation to be welcomed as a guest!

"And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Alas! how far off was Jerusalem from the Messiah who was coming nigh to her—how far away in heart and mind from Him whose loving heart and spirit had brought Him to her gates, if she would but lift them up to the King of Glory that He might enter in: else, he must speak of her in a parable, touching both the King and the kingdom of God, and its appearing. "He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return;" for He has got "the decease" to be accomplished in Jerusalem, and the time when He should "be lifted up," between Himself and this appearing. How could it be set up immediately, seeing they had refused it when presented to them in His own person, and by the testimony of the twelve, and afterwards of the seventy? No; there is the parable "of the far country" to be learnt, in reference to Himself and where He was going; even as there is still "the far country" and where they are (like the prodigal, who had his portion of goods and wasted them in riotous living) to be learned by them.

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come;"

for they in like manner must take the relation and place of servants to "the nobleman," if they are not ready to pass into the kingdom "as citizens" with their King. Nevertheless, according to the determinate counsel of God, everything is thus removed away out of the range of mere legal responsibility, and the outward government of Jehovah as "the Judge of the whole earth," and by "the decease" is founded on the end of man in the flesh, and the beginning of the Second Man by ascension to "the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens," as Head of the new creation of God. This change was now about to be carried out in relation to the kingdom, as well as to all the other positions between man and God. They would revolve with His; and as the earth, and Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, the appointed centre of God for this world, refused to turn round on its axis, the heavens would readily begin "the times of refreshing and restitution," by receiving Christ up into them till the day of His second coming, when the nobleman will return. "His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, We will not have this man to reign over us," and have forfeited the kingdom and their municipal rights in it, by their rejection of Jesus and their betrayal of its King.

"And it came to pass when he was returned, having received the kingdom, he commanded these servants to be called," &c.—for these are the relations and the responsibilities under which all stand to Christ during this present time of His rejection and absence in the far country—that on his return "he might know how much every man had gained by trading." The ten servants had received ten pounds, and each traded with a pound. So "the first came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful over a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." So in like manner, and after the same measure, to the second servant, who had understood

the obligation and meaning of the word and of the terms, "Occupy till I come," who had gained five pounds. Another came, saying, "Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith to him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant."

Does not this parable, by its moral order, tell us that unless we begin our lessons of grace in the company of Jesus "come nigh unto Jericho," we shall be unprepared for communion with Him when "He comes nigh to Jerusalem" to show the way into the kingdom? Must we not begin with Him, and He with us, as the blind beggar, and be set in perfect liberty with Jesus as to the mercy He brings; and as before God, "to praise Him and give glory to Him"? Yea, need we not morally learn, as Zachæus, the height and the depth of the salvation and the good cheer that Jesus brings into the house, that we may become intimate together, and learn His manner and ways by receiving Him joyfully? What else than all this does He mean, when He tells out His own heart, "Come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house!" If we are not prepared, and anointed after the manner, at the entering in of Jericho, and by the loving words and ways of that wonderful day in the house, how can we come outside, to walk with Him in the strange path of His rejection, and in the yet stranger one of the cross, instead of the crown? How else can any get into the place of loyal citizens, except by the personal affection which makes us such, in true loyalty to the despised King while in the far country? How else can any fulfil the responsibilities of the pound, or the charge, "Occupy till I come," except as the heart is moved by the love which whispers to us, "Much more in My absence," and makes the feet to run in the ways of His commands:

Yes ; the steps that He bids us take with Him, and which He takes with us, from the highway-side where He first stood still, and said, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ? do but guide into the house of Zacchæus, and its intimacies with Himself, who delights to find a home in the company of the publican and the sinner. If we quit that house with Him, and go nigh to the city of Jerusalem, His parable does not condemn, or greatly disturb our hopes of the immediate blessing of His presence with us in the kingdom, if He tell us the secret of His decease and the far country. Nay, it is only by taking these steps with Him that any can accept the responsibility, and go back into the place of servanthip a little longer, as being better suited to Himself as the departed One, and ourselves as waiting for His return ; for His ways are ours, whether now or hereafter. We may yet add to this the fact, that association with Him out of the city into the far country does but complete the path of this nobleman, and gives to the servants who occupy till He comes the only true idea of their nobility, or of what is fit and noble in service, as still taking the character of the trading from Himself where He is, and matching it to a shade.

Whatever activity does not get its spring and its quality from Jesus at the right hand of God, rejected but accepted, will need "the salt and the new cruse" from the hand and ministry of the Intercessor in heaven for healing. All else is, and will be pronounced to be again, as in Elisha's day, "naught" as to the product, and "barren" as to the producer. Yea, the absence of every right link of connection with the nobleman and the service led the wicked servant to charge his lord with injustice, and to call him personally an "austere man;" and, alas! this is what many still think of the path, and of the service, and of the Lord who calls into present association with Himself out of the world, as the separated One

in heaven and the rejected One on earth. "The bank," and its legal usury—or, what is far worse, "the napkin"—may tell now, and make manifest when the nobleman returns to take account of his servants, where such are as to the pound, and what will be the further result. Nothing can make the one pound into ten but the grace of Christ which opens up the "spring" of service from His own breast, and bids it flow from one far country, where He now is, into another far country, which has rejected Him and cast Him out. It is this ministry and such trading that makes green and verdant the garden and the plantings in this Jericho-world, which in itself lies under sin and death, and where all else in its entire length and breadth is "naught and barren," though the creation itself be "pleasant enough."

And Jesus said unto them that stood by, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds; for I say unto you, that unto every one who hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." This servant had forfeited even what he had received, and was unfaithful not only in the responsibility of a servant, but condemned out of his own mouth, upon the far deeper matter of all love for his master. Surely, we may uncover these roots for common profit, and say he had never walked with Jesus of Nazareth from the entering in of Jericho, through the house, or out of the city and the kingdom into the far-off country, with the One who is gone thither to receive it, and all things in heaven and earth from that height! and in that power and authority to return, and establish and order the whole world for the glory of God, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In that day He must travel with His sword upon His thigh, and act in the power of righteous judgment, as Joshua did; and so Jesus says, "But those Mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before

Me." For it must be in this way, and according to these laws of righteousness, that the kingdom of God must be established, at the return of the Messiah from the far country.

Jesus of Nazareth passing through the world in such grace and consideration, and after the pattern which we have witnessed, as we have kept His company, did not convert the world; and though He sought to win men's hearts to God, by the love of God and His own, "yet for His love they became His adversaries." Nor would "testimony by word of mouth" reach their consciences, though He spake as never man spake. Only an elect remnant follow Him out of the camp, and outside the world, in hope of His return.

Nothing could reach this collapse of the world and its enmity, but redemption by His own blood out of the state and condition of fallen men. So, "when He had thus spoken, He went before, ascending up to Jerusalem," that He might give Himself up to the work of death and resurrection, which would accomplish their present deliverance and final blessing.

J. E. B.

SINS OF IGNORANCE.

"AND if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. v. 17).

We come to the precious Word of our God self-judged, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings. How the Holy Ghost through the apostle Peter leads up in chapter i. to this desire for the pure milk of the Word, to the end there might be growth in grace and in the knowledge of Him, and that entering upon our service to God in our relationships to Him and one another, to His praise, as the elect according to the

foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently ; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away : but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Who that has ears to hear could fail to have awakened an hungering and thirsting after that He putteth to us upon such an announcement? Have we tasted that the Lord is gracious? Has it been good? Then to keep ourselves in the love of God, to continue in this grace, must be wise. Another apostle met the argument suggested from beneath, that if grace abounded where sin abounded we might continue in sin. By no means. How shall we (says the apostle by the Holy Ghost) that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Rom. vi.). Sad that we should cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of; yet so it is. There are pernicious ways, unsubject hearts, uncircumcised ears, and reproaches reach Him through the carelessness of those who professedly bear His Name; His own called Antinomian because of grace abounding, or taking in a carnal way the privileges and joys common to the household of faith without exercised consciences as to corresponding responsibilities. "Holding faith and a good conscience," says the apostle; those who failed in this, as Hymenæus and Alexander, were delivered unto Satan, to be taught by discipline not to blaspheme.

There were sins forgiven and blasphemies, but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness (Mark iii. 28-30). "Father, forgive them ;

for they know not what they do." There were sins of ignorance provided for in past time, also for those committed since God was manifest in flesh, the most shocking to our sense blindly, yet with one accord with zeal and vehemence they selected for release Barabbas, rejecting Jesus Christ. Ignorance does not screen them from their sins, so enormous; but God in wondrous grace has heard His cry (He always heard that which He addressed to His Father), "Forgive them." "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." They were not kept in ignorance; light was thrown upon a matter so dark and awful as their murder of God's Son. Upon their very door-step, under their very eyes, works were done so marvellous that the question was raised—yes, raised—but answered before it was asked, beyond the wonder that Peter saw upon the faces of the multitude. The fact of the matter was, God had glorified His Son Jesus, the One who had glorified Him on the earth. Sin had come in, and its effects were manifest even to the very gate of the temple at which the impotent man sat; his impotency demonstrated it. As we think of His Name, His presence, and all that is becoming, there will not be anywhere near that to see or that to remember of the ravages sin has made. The enemy may seek in an Ananias and Sapphira to introduce evil beyond the door-step, and pass off as a good work of the Holy Ghost that which was a lie to Him. The Word prospers, however seemingly interrupted, and the Name of the only Saviour-God is more than ever published by those who bear His Name, confess Him, and count themselves happy men for the privilege of suffering for Him.

"But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man

strong, whom ye see and know ; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." On this disclosure, words are spoken ; but oh ! think of yourself in such a position with God's witnesses about you, telling home that which could not be gainsaid or contradicted, that the Prince of life had been killed ; and there was the fact told that He was that, for He was raised from the dead, and liveth evermore. By His witnesses in grace words came from on high to a people concluded under sin, out of the way : all had sinned. But it is not a cry of vengeance. They don't find the elements melting with fervent heat, but the call to repent—that sins might be blotted out. What a Saviour ! What resources !! O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !!! Space for repentance given to a guilty people, as well as to those now who bear His Name (Rev. ii. and iii.), and have His Word.

Did not Stephen enter, as taught of Him, into the fearfulness of this sin being laid to their charge ? and do we not get in Saul of Tarsus an answer to his spirit-breathed request ? What a blasphemous man was Saul ; and, inasmuch as God's grace reached him, what occasion for him to burst forth in thanks ; and, seeing he was a chosen vessel, no wonder he is led to beseech Timothy to abide at Ephesus, and charge some that they teach no other doctrine, or give heed to fables and endless genealogies, and to instruct us that the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. Sound doctrine, sound words, he would approve and utter according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which he was entrusted. Thanks reach Thee, blessed Lord Jesus, from him, who enabled and counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry ; who was before a blasphemer, and a perse-

cutor, and injurious : but he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. He obtained mercy, that in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. There is still the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers, still the blessed God to whom the elders had been commended, and the word of His grace. This gives us Timothy again in that place for Him to care for the doctrine and commit to faithful men ; but, alas ! as then, so now, some turned aside.

And how we do need to remember them which have the rule over us, and have spoken unto us the Word of God. . . . Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time : casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you. Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. It would seem we have lost the pattern, as though there were no directions in the Word for a day when a rapidly increasing mass swell the number who will vote for the Man of sin. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, . . . in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. Thou (Timothy) hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions ; . . . but out of them all the Lord delivered me."

What grace! Do we not well to bow and humbly confess before Him what debtors we are for His past and present interest and service? To think of provision for sins of ignorance of such a character as just touched on here. Not a creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Seeing then we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help. Also Heb. x.; and how solemn. No provision for wilful sin. May our hearts enter more into the jeopardy of others; not so much concerned about our own safety and comfort in a scene of trouble, but by love serving and provoking unto love and good works. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. No more sacrifice for sins. No victim's blood shall be found to cover those sins of wilfulness; for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

No more sacrifice—no place of repentance—never forgiveness. Words so solemn stir us up to own that in the gospel much more is embraced than a mere assent implies. May there be for writer and reader having fellowship with the apostle in prayer, and bowing our

knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith ; that we 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 we might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages. Amen.

W. B.

LAW AND GRACE EXEMPLIFIED.

2 Kings iv. 1-7.

A WIDOW of one of God's faithful servants, reduced to the greatest straits through poverty, cried to the prophet Elisha. The exigency of her position she discloses. Her husband was dead, her creditor was pressing his claim, and her two sons in consequence were about to be sent into slavery. What should she do? Her husband's fear of the Lord, when living, she recalls to the man of God ; but that will not appease the creditor, nor mitigate the righteous demands of the law. The claim she admits, its validity was incontestable, the proceedings too of the creditor were unimpeachable (Ex. xxi. 2 ; Lev. xxv. 39). He might have been merciful—that rested with him—but none could challenge his right to exact what was his due, and the law which he put into action knew no pity. Her position was a sad one—she felt it ; and turning to the prophet in her distress, she confesses by her very action her hopelessness of meeting the difficulty.

An apt illustration this of the position in which the

remnant of the Jews will find themselves in a future day, with the claims of the law pressing on them, the consciousness that the claims are just adding to their misery, without the power to discharge them, and free themselves from the penalty they had incurred. This is a position they will be in ; but one in which we have never been placed by God. See Gal. iii. 13, 24 ; Eph. ii. 15 ; Col. ii. 14 ; where the condition of the Jew, as distinct from the Gentile, is clearly marked. But though we have never been so placed by God, if we would value aright His grace, we must apprehend the helpless, wretched condition of being under law. Hence, whilst the position of the widow does not correspond to the one we were in as children of Adam, we can get instruction from it, as we see how grace worked on her behalf. The prophet attends to her cry ; but ere he tells her what to do, he draws out from her the poverty of her condition. To this question, as to what she had in the house, she mentions but one article, a pot of oil used for the purpose of anointing. Short was the catalogue of her possessions—one pot of oil ! Well might she cry for help whose earthly goods could be so easily summed up. Had this pot of oil been of value, would she not have sold it ? But it appears to have been an object worthless in the estimation of the creditor, and of no account in her own. He had not seized it—she had not disposed of it ; the value both of them set on it is thus manifested. She was to learn, and others were since her day, that an object of little account in the eyes of the world is just that by which full deliverance can be effected. What use could this pot of oil be to her now ? This might have been her thought, as both Jews and Gentiles have underrated the Lord's death on the cross. The Jews required a sign, the Gentiles sought after wisdom, but the apostle preached Christ crucified—to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; but

to those who are saved, whether Jews or Greeks, Christ, God's power and God's wisdom (1 Cor. i.). The judgment of both herself and her creditor as to the value of the article being elicited, the ground is cleared for God to work.

The prophet bids her to borrow abroad vessels of all her neighbours, empty vessels, and not a few ; and then, with closed doors on herself and her sons, she was to pour out into all of them, and set aside those which were full. To these directions she faithfully adhered. Had she reasoned about them, she would probably not have done what he bade her. Who ever heard of vessels filled without the needful liquid to pour into them? But faith does not reason, it counts on God, and is obedient to His word. With closed doors they went to work. God's dealings with the soul are often in secret, for there must be personal and heart work ; the effects appear openly afterwards. With closed doors, then, they worked, and found that the word came true. All the vessels were filled with oil. How much would flow Elisha had not told her ; but she found, as souls do, that the reality surpassed the anticipation. That little pot, previously of small account in her eyes, supplied oil for all the vessels ; none remained empty, nor even half filled. She poured in the vessels as her sons brought them to her ; she stopped only when they were filled with oil. She could count how many vessels she had borrowed. She learned afterwards the value of what she had got ; but there was one thing she never knew, and that was, how much oil could have flowed out of the pot. *She never fathomed the depth of God's resources. She never drained the fountain of her blessings.* The vessels being filled with oil, she acted aright in telling the prophet to whom she had opened out her grief of the abundant supply she had obtained.

Should not all recipients of grace acknowledge to Him, to whom they are indebted for it, what it is He has given them? Elisha, hearing of what she had

received, told her what use she was to make of it. "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." The legal claim must be met. That Israel, too, will find in a future day. The widow could never have met it. She had felt all the pressure of it, and the anticipation of the consequence which must flow from it. She now was to have her deliverance from the burden, not by repudiating it, but by having the debt paid in full. "Pay thy debt," said Elisha. He acknowledged the legal claim. To have acted otherwise would have been to condemn God's word, which sanctioned the creditor's right. God's word was upheld, and the widow relieved. The claim was met—the creditor was satisfied—and the sons were free. But was this all? It was all she had wanted; but would it have sufficed? We can answer, No, it would not. The claim simply met could not ensure her against a similar trouble hereafter, nor could it have provided for her every-day wants. Her capability to keep out of debt remained, as far as she was concerned, unaltered. She had not been able to keep out of trouble. She had no more power to preserve herself from it, if only the debt was discharged. How little souls understand so living a fact! But God knew what she wanted. He gauged the measure of her need; but He estimated, too, her capability for the future; so the prophet tells her, "Live thou and thy children of the rest." That by which the debt had been cancelled afforded maintenance for her and her children as well.

Here this history closes. All was from God—for grace is from Him. She had learnt what her condition was, and that she had nothing to give; she finds what it is to receive. The claim was met, and she lived on the provision of God's grace. Surely the application is plain. He by whom the debt alone can be cancelled is the One on whom she should ever after feed.

C. E. S.

THE SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

CHRISTIANITY, in Sweden, dates its rise in the ninth century. Anschar, the "Apostle of the North," who waged successful war against the old Scandinavian paganism, died in the year of grace, 835.

"Four centuries after the times when the people of Milan first sang the hymns of Ambrose; nearly three centuries after Augustine visited the English; a hundred years after the Venerable Bede passed his tranquil life in the monastery near Wearmouth, translating the New Testament into Anglo-Saxon, and chronicling his own times,—in Sweden, Christianity was carrying on its first conflict with heathenism."*

It was not, however, until seven centuries later that its light streamed into those northern regions, and warmed the hearts of that rock-bound people by the recital of the story of the Cross. The Moravian missionaries laboured with the Greenlanders in vain, until they rehearsed that all-potent theme. Like the action of the solar rays on the frozen seas, they soon found that the Cross of Calvary has power to melt the heart, although as cold and hard by nature as their own ice-bound coast.

Spegel, Archbishop of Upsala, wrote a paraphrase on part of the Sermon on the Mount, of which the following stanzas form part of an English version, by Mrs. Charles. He was born A.D. 1645, and died 1714; was contemporary with Paul Gerhardt, and, like him, a great hymn-writer.

We Christians should steadfastly ponder
 What Christ hath so graciously taught;
 For He, who would have us His freemen,
 Would see us retain in our thought
 How little things earthly are worth,
 Let those who heap treasures on earth,
 The heavenly prize leave unsought.

* Mrs. Charles.

All nature a sermon may preach thee ;
 The birds sing thy murmurs away,—
 The birds, which, nor sowing nor reaping,
 God fails not to feed day by day ;
 And He, who these creatures doth cherish,
 Will He fail thee, and leave thee to perish ?
 Or art thou no better than they ?

The lilies, nor toiling nor spinning,
 Their clothing, how gorgeous and fair !
 What tints in their tiny robes woven,
 What wondrous devices are there !
 All Solomon's stores could not render
 One festival robe of such splendour
 As the flowers have for every-day wear.

God gives to each flower its rich raiment,
 And o'er them His treasures flings free
 Which to-day finds so fragrant in beauty,
 And to-morrow all faded shall see.
 Thus the lilies smile shame on thy care,
 And the happy birds sing it to air :
 Will their God be forgetful of thee ?

Christianity is the patron of all that is cheerful and hope-inspiring, while its native language is that of psalm and song. If "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart," surely the Christian should gather the golden harvest.

Let us listen to one of the prison-songs of the saintly Madame Guyon, whose melodies, despite their mysticism, are very charming ; for example :—

Nor exile I, nor prison, fear ; love makes my courage great ;
 I find a Saviour everywhere, His grace in every state.
 Nor castle-walls, nor dungeons deep, exclude His quickening
 beams ;
 There I can sit, and sing, and weep, and dwell on heavenly
 themes !

Her first imprisonment by the Romanists, on account of her proclivity to Protestantism, was in 1688, in a convent. Some seven years afterwards she

was again imprisoned, it was in the Castle of Vincennes ; and, in 1698, she was taken to the Bastille, where she was confined four years, and then banished to Blois.

From the French of C. Malan, we have these beautiful lines :—

No, no, it is not dying, to go unto our God ;
 The glowing earth forsaking,
 Our journey homeward taking along the starry road.

No, no, it is not dying, heaven's citizen to be ;
 The crown eternal wearing,
 And rest unbroken sharing, from care and conflict free.

No, no, it is not dying, to hear the precious Word,
 " Receive the Father's blessing,
 For evermore possessing the favour of the Lord."

In the sixteenth century there was no evangelist, among women at least, more active in the cause of pure Christianity than was the Queen of Navarre. " The goodness of her heart, the purity of her life, and the abundance of her works, spoke eloquently to those about her of the beauty of the gospel."* She wrote some religious verses and ballads, to which many of the nobility of France owed their first religious impressions. The following is a translation of one of her pieces :—

Who would be a Christian true, must his Lord's example
 follow ;
 Every worldly good resign, and earthly glory count but
 hollow :

Honour, wealth, and friends so sweet,
 He must trample under feet ;
 But, alas ! to few 'tis given
 Thus to tread the path to heaven !

With a willing, joyful heart, his goods among the poor
 divide ;
 Others' trespasses forgive ; revenge and anger lay aside :

* D'Aubigné's Reformation.

Be good to those who work you ill ;
 If any hate you, love them still ;
 But, alas ! to few 'tis given
 Thus to tread the path to heaven !

He must hold death beautiful, and over it in triumph sing ;
 Love it with a warmer heart than he loveth mortal thing ;
 But, alas ! to few 'tis given
 Thus to tread the path to heaven !

This is one of Fénelon's hymns (1651-1715) :—

Living or dying, Lord, I would be Thine !
 Oh, what is life ?
 A toil, a strife,
 Were it not lighted by Thy love divine.
 I ask not wealth,
 I crave not health,
 Living or dying, Lord, I would be Thine !

Oh, what is death,
 When this poor breath
 In parting can the soul to Thee resign !
 With patient love
 Her trust doth prove,
 Living or dying, Lord, I would be Thine !

Throughout my days,
 Be constant praise
 Uplift to Thee from out this heart of mine ;
 So shall I be
 Brought nearer Thee :
 Living or dying, Lord, I would be Thine !

It is a singular and noteworthy fact, that neither France, Switzerland, nor Scotland possesses, like Germany, any hymn-literature born of the Reformed Church, either Lutheran or Calvinistic. The Church at Geneva used David's Psalter, and so did Scotland ; and so the Scottish Church still cherishes her rugged Scotch version of them, "with all the sacred associations which two centuries of such a church history as that of Scotland has gathered round the song of to-

day, mingling it with echoes from mountain gatherings, and martyrs' prisons, and scaffolds, and joyful death-beds : probably no hymn-book could be ever one-half so musical or poetical to Scottish ears and hearts, as those strange, rough verses."*

The following is from the Italian of Dante, whose glowing and gloomy pen seemed to linger so spell-bound over the terrors of the lost.

The King of kings, whose goodness knows no bounds,
 In recompensing ills His servants bear,
 Makes me discard all anger, care, and grief,
 And to the court of heaven direct mine eyes ;
 And while I muse upon the glorious choir
 Of citizens, who dwell where all is pure,
 In praising my Creator, I, His creature,
 Am more inflamed with love, the more I praise ;
 For if I contemplate the promised bliss
 To which my God invites the Christian race,
 For me there seems nought else to be desired.
 But, friend beloved, for thee I truly grieve,
 Who disregard'st the life and world to come,
 And lovest, for a shadow, bliss secure !

We present part of one of the hymns of Savonarola, the Romish reformer and martyr of Italy, thus anglicized by Mrs. H. Beecher Stowe :—

Alas, how oft this sordid heart hath wounded Thy pure eye !
 Yet for this heart, upon the cross, Thou gav'st Thyself to die.

Burn in my heart, celestial flame, with memories of Him,
 Till, from earth's dross refined, I rise to join the seraphim.
 Ah, vanish each unworthy trace of earthly care or pride,
 Leave only graven on my heart the Cross, the Crucified !

One of the fine sonnets of Michael Angelo, one of the most celebrated men of Italy (born 1474), we subjoin, translated by Dr. Wordsworth :—

* Mrs. Charles.

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
 If Thou the Spirit give by which I pray ;
 My unassisted heart is barren clay,
 That of its native self can nothing feed.
 Of good and pious works Thou art the seed
 That quickens only where Thou say'st it may.
 Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
 No man can find it : Thou, blest Lord, must lead.
 Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
 By which such virtue may in me be bred,
 That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread ;
 The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
 That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
 And sound Thy praises everlastingly !

The following sonnet is a translation from the Spanish of Lope de Vega (born at Madrid, 1562), by Longfellow :—

Lord, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
 Thou didst seek after me ? that Thou didst wait,
 Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
 And pass the gloomy nights of winter there ?
 Oh, strange delusion, that I did not greet
 Thy blest approach ! and oh, to heaven how lost,
 In my ingratitude's unkindly frost,
 Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon Thy feet !
 How oft my guardian angel gently cried,
 " Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
 How He persists to knock and wait for thee ! "
 And, oh ! how often to that voice of sorrow,
 " To-morrow we will open," I replied ;
 And when to-morrow came, I answered still, " To-morrow."

This sonnet, anglicized by the same elegant pen, is from the Spanish of Francisco de Aldana :—

Clear fount of light ! my native land on high
 Bright with a glory that shall never fade !
 Mansion of Truth ! without a vale or shade ;
 Thy holy quiet meets the spirit's eye.
 There dwells the soul in its ethereal essence,
 Gasping no longer for life's feeble breath ;

But, sentineled in heaven, its glorious presence
 With pitying eye beholds, yet fears not, death.
 Beloved country ! banished from thy shore,
 A stranger in this prison-house of clay,
 The exiled spirit weeps and sighs for thee !

This remarkable ode to the Divine Being, by Derzhavin, who has been styled the Russian Pindar, is luxuriant with ornament and imaginative power. This poem has been translated into several European languages, and also into the Chinese and Japanese.

O Thou Eternal One ! whose presence bright
 All space doth occupy, all motion guide ;
 Unchanged through Time's all-devastating flight,
 Thou only God ! there is no God beside.
 Being above all beings, Mighty One,
 Whom none can comprehend, and none explore ;
 Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone ;
 Embracing all ; supporting, ruling o'er ;
 Being whom we call God,—what know we more ?

In its sublime research, philosophy
 May measure out the ocean deep, may count
 The sands, or the sun's rays ; but, God ! for Thee
 There is no weight nor measure : none can mount
 Up to Thy mysteries : reason's brightest spark,
 Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try
 To trace Thy counsels, infinite and dark ;
 And thought is lost ere thought can soar so high,
 E'en like past moments in eternity !

Thou from primeval nothingness didst call
 First chaos,* then existence ; Lord, on Thee
 Eternity had its foundation : all
 Sprung forth from Thee, of light, joy, harmony,
 Sole origin : all life, all beauty, Thine.
 Thy word created all, and doth create ;
 Thy splendour fills all space with rays divine !
 Thou art, and wert, and shalt be, glorious, great,
 Life-giving, life-sustaining Potentate !

* "First chaos"—this may be questioned.—*Editor.*

Thy chains the unmeasured universe surround,
 Upheld by Thee, by Thee inspired with breath,
 Thou the beginning with the end hast bound,
 And beautifully mingled life and death !
 As sparks mount upward from the fiery blaze,
 So suns are born, so worlds sprung forth from Thee !
 And as the spangles in the sunny rays
 Shine round the silver snow, the pageantry
 Of heaven's bright army glitters in Thy praise !

A million torches lighted by Thy hand
 Circle unwearied through the blue abyss ;
 They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,
 All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss.
 What shall we call them ? Piles of crystal light,
 A glorious company of golden streams,
 Lamps of celestial ether, burning bright,
 Suns lighting systems with their joyous beams ?
 But Thou to these art as the noon to night.

Yes : as a drop of water in the sea,
 All this magnificence in Thee is lost :
 What are ten thousand worlds compared to Thee ?
 And what am *I* then ? Heaven's unnumbered host,
 Though multiplied by myriads, and arrayed
 In all the glory of sublimest thought,
 Is but an atom in the balance ; weighed
 Against Thy greatness, is a cipher brought
 Against infinity ! O, what am I then ? Naught !

Naught ! yet the effluence of Thy light divine,
 Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom too ;
 Yes ! in my spirit doth Thy Spirit shine,
 As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.
 Naught ! yet I live, and on hope's pinions fly
 Eager towards Thy presence ; for in Thee
 I live, and breathe, and dwell ; aspiring high,
 E'en to the throne of Thy Divinity.
 I am, O God, and surely Thou must be !

Thou art !—directing, guiding all,—Thou art !
 Direct my understanding then to Thee,

Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart ;
 Though but an atom 'midst immensity,
 Still I am something fashioned by Thy hand :
 I hold a middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth ;
 On the last verge of mortal being stand,
 Close to the realms where angels had their birth,
 Just on the boundaries of the spirit-land !

Creator,—yes ! Thy wisdom and Thy word
 Created *me*. Thou source of life and good,
 Thou Spirit of my spirit, and my Lord !
 Thy light, Thy love, in their bright plenitude,
 Filled me with an immortal soul, to spring
 O'er the abyss of death, and bade it wear
 The garments of eternal day, and wing
 Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,
 E'en to its source—to Thee, its Author there !

Gabriel Romanovitch Derzhavin, author of the above, was the most distinguished lyric poet of Russia, was born in 1743, and died in 1816. His far-famed "Address to the Deity," for wealth of imagery, grandeur, and sublimity, is said to be unsurpassed by any known ode. Its mastery of language, and splendour of conception, are its distinguishing characteristics.

The following well-known lines on the "Celestial Sabbath" have been translated by Bowring from the Russian :—

The golden palace of my God,
 Towering above the clouds, I see ;
 Beyond, the cherubs' bright abode,
 Higher than angels' thoughts can be :
 How can I in those courts appear,
 Without a wedding garment on ?
 Conduct me, Thou Life-Giver, there,—
 Conduct me to Thy glorious throne !
 And clothe me with Thy robes of light,
 And lead me through sin's darksome night,
 My Saviour and my God !

THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.

THE Bride is the city, but that bride is also the *Lamb's* wife; and although reigning with Christ may be common to *all* saints of all ages, yet being made "kings and priests *unto God and His Father*" may be peculiar to the saints of the church period; and when we have this sort of kingship and priesthood introduced, as in chap. xxi., we have the Bride represented as the city, therefore the city must be the *Christian* bride, not the Jewish wife.

When we read, "Unto Him that loved us (how like to Eph. v.), and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father," is not *His Father* said because the *kingdom* on earth (Matt. xiii. xxv.) is about to be introduced, subdued and administered by His Son the Man of Glory, who had got there because He had been the Lamb of Calvary? (Heb. ii.) And He is seen in view of having all things put under Him, crowned with glory and honour as the Melchisedec-King and Priest-ruler; and when He is displayed in glory and honour it is in the city of Rev. xxi. where He has His kings and priests with Him. It is the throne of God and the Lamb that is there displayed, but as associated with the Bride, the Lamb's wife—the glorified church, as I take it. No other class of saved ones could, with any appropriateness, be termed the Bride, the Lamb's wife, because:—

1st, Israel is always represented as the married wife; the church as the espoused one—the Bride only the Lamb's wife, after she is no longer on earth. Israel is the wife under divorce, and put away in the meantime, and to be received back on her repentance; and—

2d, The word *Lamb* is representative of *rejection*, and only the church could suffer with Christ and, as His affianced bride, occupy His place as rejected in this world. No other could be *Arnion's* (the rejected Lamb's) wife; for in no other age was there a rejected Lamb to be rejected with.

3d, Also as a third thing, the false bride—the harlot—is surely the harlot of this *Christian* period, not a Jewish adulteress; and if she be the *Christendom* harlot, then the true *bride* must be the chaste *Christian* woman, or there would be no correlative contrast; for what is the false fornicating *Christendom* a travesty of but the pure church of God that shall come out of the awful defection, as "The Bride, the Lamb's wife?"—*Extract of Letter.*

GOD'S truth must put people's hearts to the test. It is not merely something I have to learn, but it *proves* me.

AND here is the great, moral, present value of prophecy. I see the frightful fall at the end, and can trace the stream that runs down to it. Perhaps the way is long and winding, and the river does not seem so perilous ; but look a little lower down, where the word of God lifts up the misty veil which shrouds the future, and behold the fatal speed with which all who float there are engulfed to their utter destruction ! There are many currents connected with the world, and I may not see, in their sources and first flowings, the full extent of the evil which is the inevitable result. In prophecy God graciously shews me the end from the beginning ; so that, if I heed it not, I am dishonouring the warning of His love, who would have me "knowing these things before."—*The Revelation*.—*W. K.*

FAITH IN TO-MORROW, instead of in Christ, is Satan's nurse for man's perdition. It is dangerous to dress for another world at the looking glass of this world. But for sin death would never have begun ; but for death sin would never end. Trying keeps you away from God ; trusting brings you to Him. They cannot go together. Trying always fails ; trusting always succeeds.—*Hofmeyer*.

GOD COULD PART WITH HIS SON, but not with His truth. Nor could He withhold the former without sacrificing the latter.—*John Bate*.

THE ANIMALCULE ON MAN.

AN animalcule in my blood
Rose up against me *as I dreamed* ;
He was so tiny as he stood,
You had not heard him though he screamed.

He cried, "There is no man !"
And thumped the table with his fist,
Then died—his day was scarce a span—
That microscopic atheist.

And all the while his little soul
Within what he denied did live.
Poor part, how could he know the whole ?
And yet he was so positive !

For all the while he thus blasphemed
My (solar) system went its round,
My heart beat on, my head still dreamed ;
But my poor atheist was drowned.

And so but yesterday I heard
A man cry out, "There is no God !"
And as he spake the silly word,
I saw the mighty Master nod.

Thereat, new-born, a million spheres
Sprang up like daisies in the sod ;
But still to ani-man-cule ears
The ani-man-cule cried, "No God !"

—*Richard Le Gallienne*.

IN DEVIZES Market Place is a monument commemorating summary judgment on a woman who, as soon as she had called upon God to strike her dead if what she said was a lie, fell dead on the spot.

THIS LITTLE WORD, FATHER, conceived effectually in the heart, passeth all the eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero, and of all the rhetoricians that ever were in the world.—*Luther*.

THE CHIEF PROOF, after all, that the Bible is good food is the eating of it. The healing efficacy of a medicine when it is used is the demonstration that it is good. Now, the world has been eating the Bible as it never ate any other book, and the Bible has been saturating the views of the ages as they were never saturated by the food derived from any other volume; but there is no spiritual disease that you can point to that is the outcome of Biblical inculcation. We all feel sure that it would be better than well for the world if all the precepts of this volume were absorbed and transmuted into the actions of men.—*Joseph Cook*.

NOT A MACHINE.—God might have made sin and sorrow impossible, but then He would have made a machine and not a man.

THE GREAT TEMPTATION to which we are more or less exposed is that of losing sight of God in the ordinary actions of the day.

KNOW ye that ye are just as near heaven as ye are far from yourself and from the love of a bewitching world.—*S. Rutherford*.

LOOK UPWARD for the grace needed now, and forward for the rest that remaineth.

GIVE ME THE MAN who judges *one* human being (himself) with severity, and every other with indulgence.—*George III.*

WITH EVERY EXERTION, the best of men can do but a moderate amount of good; but it seems in everyone's power to do incalculable mischief.—*W. Irving*.

WITH SAINTS AS WITH CINDERS.—If the burning coals be scattered far apart they soon become cinders, but if brought together the fire of one preserves that of the others, and the glowing coals often ignite those that lie near.—*Francke*.

COMMUNION.—This is not with a doctrine, nor with a sentiment, nor with a tradition, nor with a mythical ideal, but with a real, living Person or persons; our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and one with another as His saints.

DROPPING INTO HELL!—After a severe illness a collier returned to work at pushing waggons, when he fell and hurt his chest. Getting up he began to push with his head, on which he was called to by a comrade that that was not the way to send them along. His reply was, "If I push another I hope I shall drop into hell!" As soon as he had uttered these words *he fell dead!* Oh! what a sensation ran through the men in the pit when in a moment the transgressor passed into eternity!—*J. S.*

SWEAR NOT AT ALL (Mat. v. 33, Jas. v. 12).—The question here is not in the least a judicial oath before a magistrate, &c. Heaven, earth, Jerusalem, a man's own head, were familiar oaths, not such as were used when God's authority was introduced. Hence the Lord, though silent previously, answered the high-priest when adjured by the living God (Mat. xxvi. 62-64).—*W. K.*

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

LOVE.

I *John* iii. 11—v. 21.

IT has been well remarked that holiness is the necessity of God's nature, and love is the activity of it. Of *love* John will now therefore treat, and of that form of it called brotherly love, to which Peter also refers, distinguishing it, as the latter does, from love (2 Pet. i. 7). In the dealing with this subject by John, we are again reminded of the Lord's words (*John* xvii. 3), referred to in a previous paper. For both of the Lord Jesus and of God he will write, adducing the former as the fullest example of love to which we Christians can turn, and reminding us of what the latter has done, furnishing us thereby with the ground on which love should be displayed in each one who believes.

"This is the message which ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (I *John* iii. 11). The former message was that God is light (I *John* i. 5); this, that we should cultivate brotherly love. Both were from the Lord Jesus Christ. And for this last we instinctively turn to *John* xiii. 34, the first place in Scripture where we read of this brotherly love. Love to God and to one's neighbour the law enjoined. On love to enemies the Lord had insisted very early in His ministry (*Matt.* v. 44). But not till the night before His crucifixion did He give this command—a new one, for disciples to love one another. Much indeed would they come to need it when the Lord had been crucified, and the world openly manifested its hostility to all bearers of Christ's name. So Christians of all nationalities, and of all races, were thus to act. A relationship had been formed by the new birth, connecting all true saints together as children of God; so they were each and all to love one another as brethren. For a family there is on earth, limited only in numbers to those who have

been quickened by the Son of God, individuals of which are now found in various parts of the earth; and all its members are to be embraced by each in the bonds of true brotherly love.

But where shall we turn for a perfect illustration of love? What a history is that of man! What ruin has sin caused! For an example of hatred to a brother we need only descend one step in the long line of Adam's descendants. We have in Cain the first, and the earliest possible example there could have been of brotherly hate. He slew his brother Abel, "because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John iii. 12). Such is fallen man if left to himself. Cain had not been reared in squalor, and in moral degradation, like too many in our day. We see then in him what sin can produce apart from evil example, or defective moral training. "Marvel not," then, writes the apostle, "if the world hate you." It is the spirit of Cain coming out against the children of God. But these last know for themselves that they, once dead in sins, and abiding in death like those who hate them, have passed from death unto life, because they love the brethren. The activity of the divine nature—love working in them, evidences that they share in everlasting life (John v. 24). For there must be life for the nature connected with it to be manifested. And, whilst it is the nature which characterises the creature, it is by the possession of life, and by its working, that the nature is displayed. "He that loveth not abideth in death" (1 John iii. 14). Such an one has never been born again. One who hates his brother, we learn, is a murderer, and in him eternal life is not abiding (15).

But where, again we may ask, can we find a perfect example for us to follow? It must be a man, and one who has been in the scene in which we all are. There is but One. And far down in the stream of time must we descend, ere we find that One, even to the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God. "Hereby

know* we love," writes John, "because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (iii. 16). Cain took Abel's life. The Lord Jesus laid down His own. Hatred of his brother the former manifested, and without just cause, as God told him. Love amidst the greatest and oft-repeated provocations the Lord displayed. Now, adds the apostle, addressing all as little children, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Where this is really the case, the individual may know that he is of the truth, and can assure his heart before God. Should his heart condemn him, God knows more. But, if it does not condemn him, he has confidence towards God, and will receive answers to all that he asks, because he keeps His commandments, and does what is pleasing in His sight. Would any ask, what are the commandments referred to? John tells us, viz.: believing on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and loving one another, as He gave us commandment. Thus obedient, the Christian abides in Him, and He in him. And now something fresh is declared: "Hereby do we know that He abideth (or dwells) in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (iii. 23, 24).

Of several blessings true of Christians John has reminded us. We are in Christ, and can know it (ii. 5). We are forgiven all sins (12). We have an unction from the Holy One (20). We are children of God (iii. 1-2). We have the Spirit given us (iii. 24). Now the mention of this last introduces a digression from the subject of love, on which John is writing. He has to put Christians on their guard against evil spirits, which would feign themselves to be the Spirit of God (iv. 1-6). Most needful was the caution then. Needful is it still.

In that day there were manifestations of the Spirit

* So Revised Version, which in its choice of "know" keeps closer to the original.

of God, and in much power, such as we have not now. These were notably displayed at Corinth. But where God works, the enemy would try in some way to introduce what tends to corruption. So the apostle Paul furnished the Corinthian Christians with an infallible test, by which evil spirits, speaking by an individual, might be detected. "No one speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed (or, anathema), and no one can say Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Any one, then, attempting to minister in the assembly of saints in the energy of an evil spirit could be thus detected.

The apostle John writes to put saints, wherever they may be, on their guard, not only against false ministry in the Word, but against the working of evil agency in any form. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." What activity on the part of the enemy! *Many* false prophets had gone out. The apostles were passing away, but many false prophets were at work. What a state of things on earth! The tares were abundant indeed. How simple souls were in danger of being deceived. A test therefore is given by which the simplest could be preserved from seduction. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God" * (1 John iv. 2, 3). The acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus in 1 Cor. xii., the confession of Him come in flesh, these are the tests by which evil spirits could be detected. No evil spirit in the pages of inspiration calls Jesus Lord. No evil spirit confesseth Him come in flesh. It is not, however, the historical fact that is referred to, but the acknowledgment of and submission to Him who has come in flesh, that is the point here with John. Anti-

* So we should read those verses.

christ will refuse to confess Him *coming* in flesh (2 John 7); for he will declare that he himself is the Christ. The spirit of antichrist is seen in refusing confession of Him *come* in flesh, refusing to submit to Him. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Now those false prophets they had overcome by divine strength working in them; for those to whom John wrote were of God—truly born of God—whereas the false prophets were of the world. As of the world, of which John had previously written (ii. 16), they were received by it, and hearkened to by it; for it loves its own. The apostles were of God. Those who knew God heard them. Hence the spirit of truth and the spirit of error might be easily distinguished. Confession of Jesus Christ come in flesh, and the hearkening to apostolic teaching—“heareth us,” wrote John—demonstrated where was the one and where was the other.

This settled, resuming the thread of his subject, he exhorts Christians to the exercise of brotherly love, basing his exhortation on a new ground to that furnished in the previous chapter. There he shows to what a sacrifice it might call a believer. Here he teaches why we should love one another. “For love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love” (iv. 7, 8). If born of God, we necessarily partake of the divine nature. It is in us. We cannot be children without it. Further, we cannot know God without it; “for God is love.”

Love, when real, necessarily manifests itself. How, then, has God manifested His love? He has done it in a double way, meeting our twofold need as sinful creatures. We were dead; we needed life. We, too, had sinned; we needed propitiation to be made for our sins. Both these needs have been met. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into

the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Divine love embraced those who had no claim on it, seeing that they had never loved God. And that love stopped not short of the surrender of the only begotten Son to die for us. A greater proof of love God could not have given. We gladly own He has provided no less. For sinners, for the undeserving, God sent Him. Hence, adds our apostle, drawing out for his readers the fitting and important deduction, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

Here we must pause to examine some phrases peculiar to John. One we have noticed in a previous article. Keeping Christ's word, God's love, we read, is perfected in us (ii. 5). Here, loving one another, His love is perfected in us (iv. 12). The divine nature in each case is active and dominant. For as we have previously remarked, by obedience and love that nature is displayed in us. Hence, when these conditions are fulfilled, there is nothing to hinder the full enjoyment of the love. In this way it is perfected in us.

Then of God abiding in us and we in Him, the apostle also writes. Let us collect the passages the better to grasp them. "He that keepeth His commandments abideth in Him, and He in him. And we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us" (iii. 23, 24). Next, "If we love one another God abides in us" (iv. 12). "And we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (13). Further, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." "And he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him" (15, 16). We *know*, then, by the Spirit that we abide

in God, and He in us. We *show* it when we keep His commandments and love one another, and confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and also when we abide in love.

Another thing may be noticed. We read in the gospel (i. 18), "No one hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Here we read (iv. 12), "No one hath beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abideth in us and His love is perfected in us." The only begotten Son has declared God—made Him known to men on earth. The Christian knows that God, whom he has never seen, abides in him, if he loves his brethren.

Who can share in such a favour as God abiding in him? The answer comes with no uncertain sound, that it is true of saints of all nationalities. "For," writes John, "we have beheld, and bear witness, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." What the Samaritans at Sychar expressed (John iv. 42), John in his epistle endorses. The Son was sent to be the Saviour of the world. "Whosoever," then, "shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God." Such an one keeps the commandments, so must be abiding in God, and God in him (1 John iii. 23, 24).

Of God's love manifested in the past the apostle has written (iv. 9, 10). But that love is a present reality for every believer. Of this we are to be now assured. "We have known and believed the love God hath to (or in) us. God is love." For the second time does John write this. Once, and once only, he wrote, "God is light." Twice we read, "God is love." Surely the Holy Ghost would impress this forcibly on every heart: "God is love." He has shown it in the past. He would have Christians to enjoy His love in the present. And, if God is love, it necessarily follows that "he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." It must be so. And, abiding

in love, that love is perfected with us, nothing hindering our enjoyment of it ; so that we can have boldness in the day of judgment. Looking on to the future, and remembering how we have failed as responsible creatures, the thought of that day presents, nevertheless, no ground for uncertainty or fear, because as "He, *i.e.* Christ, is, so are we in this world." He is past judgment, having gone through it for us. We are past it too, as believing on Him, and as in Him. Believers on Him shall not come into judgment (John v. 24), and for those who are in Him there is no condemnation (Rom. viii. 1). To fear the judgment shows the state of the believer. He is not made perfect in love ; for perfect love casteth out fear. How perfect then is the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ ! Whoever trusts to it may be assured that he will never come into judgment, being as to that as Christ now is.

Was there love naturally in us ? This is settled in a few words. "We love, because He first loved us." And now (iv. 20) a test is applied as to loving God. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, he cannot love God whom he hath not seen." If a man *say*. Pretension is frequently dealt with in this epistle (i. 6, 8, 10 ; ii. 4, 9), for mere lip profession will not do. Practice must go along with the profession if the latter is to be accepted as true. Now brotherly love is enjoined. To exercise it is a matter of obedience (iv. 21). But more, it should naturally, as we may say, flow out in consequence of Christians being partakers of the divine nature. Do we ask who is our brother ? "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." All such are our brethren. "And whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of Him" (v. 1). Hence one cannot love God, and hate one's brother.

But now a guard may be needed, and it is supplied. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For

this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous" (v. 2, 3). A spurious brotherly love might gloss over much for peace sake, as it might be urged. This is not genuine Christian love, for this cannot be dissociated from obedience to God. How simple is the test! Would any speak of the difficulty of acting thus? The apostle reminds us that "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." The inculcation, or the abetting of spurious love does not come from God. It is the fruit of that spirit of evil which is of the world. Now faith gets the victory over the world. And the individual overcomer is known by this, that he believeth Jesus to be the Son of God. The world rejected Jesus. It crucified Him, who is the Son of God. Belief as to the person of Jesus should settle the question for the Christian as to the world, and stimulate him to overcome it.

Jesus is the Son of God. This is an integral part of the Christian faith. Now He came by water and by blood. His coming was in the power or virtue of these two. Speaking of this, John evidently refers to that which he witnessed, when the Lord's side was pierced by the soldier's spear (John xix. 34). And the symbolical teaching it affords is really explained in 1 John iv. 9, 10. He came in the power of water and in that of blood. For we needed the cleansing action of a new life, as well as propitiation to be made for our sins. Life and propitiation, we have learnt, are provided for us through the love of God. Both were seen in figure to flow forth from Christ when dead. And the Spirit has recorded it. Hence there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. But to what are they witnesses? The eleventh verse of this chapter states it. "This is the record (or, better, witness), that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." For when dead, the water and the blood flowed forth. Temporal death could not destroy the life

which was in Him, and in Him for us. Now "he that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." To Him must men come to have it, as He declared at Jerusalem (John v. 40). He, then, that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself, viz., he has the eternal life, of which God witnesses that He has given it us, even that which is in His Son.

John's purpose in writing this epistle is now accomplished (1 John v. 13). A few remarks are appended. He had spoken in 1 John iii. 22 of receiving an answer to prayer for whatever we have asked. He now reminds his readers that, if they ask anything according to the divine will, God hears. And if He hears, they may know that they have the petitions that they have presented. Is, then, unlimited desire to ask permitted us? No. "If any one see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." In a similar connection James writes (v. 14, 15), where sickness has come in. But, adds John, which James does not, "There is a sin unto death. I do not say that he shall pray for it." Of such the Corinthians had proof in those who slept (1 Cor. xi. 30). And, indeed, at Corinth, there seems to have been examples of both the classes of sins here distinguished. For many were weak and sick among them, and many slept. Of this last character of sin, Ananias and Sapphira are examples.

Then, reminding us of the impeccability of the new nature, in that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," he concludes his letter, carrying us back in thought by his closing words to John xvii. 3: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true (*i.e.*, God), and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ." For in this way are we in the true One. Then he adds, "This the true God, and eternal life." With the true God presented to him, let each believer keep himself from idols.

C. E. S.

THE SHEPHERD AND HIS OWN SHEEP.

THE first 30 verses of John x. are brimful of instruction as to the Shepherd and the sheep. Let us, in prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God, seek to gather up something therefrom for our own souls. This parable, or "word by the way," is designed to set forth one of those gracious relations (for they are various) which the Lord holds to His saints, each of which is full of characteristic blessing.

It is He who is set forth as the Shepherd of the sheep. The lambs and the sheep form the flock of God. Our attention is first directed to the entrance He made into the FOLD. The Jews were God's earthly people, and for an earthly people there was an earthly fold provided; to that fold the Lord came. Unlike the thief and the robber who scales the wall that he may steal, and kill, and destroy; unlike the hireling who, in the hour of danger, fleeth because he careth not for sheep; unlike the wolf who catcheth and scattereth the sheep—the Shepherd enters by the door of the fold (accredited by the word of God, that is), and takes possession of the sheep and the lambs for Him. God's Shepherd had entered according to God's word into God's fold, and taken charge of God's flock. The entrance had been made in the divinely appointed way, and all was in divine order, that all things might be fulfilled "which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms" concerning Him (Luke xxiv. 44). But why has He entered the fold? This is an important question, and the answer is simple, because the time has come for it *to be superseded*. God has superseded the sheepfold by the promised Shepherd; the Stone of Israel.*

The sheep need no fold while the shepherd is with them; if he leave them for the night the fold affords them temporary protection, but when he returns to his loved and valued flock he *leads them out*. How

* In last clause of John x. 16, for *fold* we should read *flock*.

the sheep rejoice to hear his voice ; how they leap in answer to their names as he calls them ; and when he puts them forth, going before them, how gladly they turn their backs upon the fold. *It* had no voice for them to hear ; *it* had never called their names ; *it* had never gone before them to conduct them to green pastures and to waters of quietness. With what alacrity, to return to the Antetype, would "*His own sheep*" follow the Shepherd as He went before them!

But observe the significance of this expression, "*His own sheep.*" Does it not suggest that a special class is here distinguished from the rest? The mass were those who were nationally "sheep," and who were addressed by Him and heard His voice when He had come "according to the Scriptures," His way being heralded by the porter (John the Baptist). But we should hesitate to say they were "His own sheep ;" for had they been, He would have known them and called them by name, and have put them forth and led them out, and they would have followed Him ; none of which things He and they did. They were "His own" according to John i. 11, but not "His own" according to John xiii. 1. Mighty difference ! and thus they clung to the barren walls of the sheepfold, rigid and insensible as their own hearts, and they let the Shepherd of Israel break His heart over them to no purpose. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 37-39).

Blessed be His Name, it was not to rebuild and to fortify the walls of *the sheepfold* that He came, though truly enough God had been its Architect ; but, as our dear little ones sing—

“He died for the *sake of the flock!*”

His heart was bent upon the lambs and the sheep of the flock of God! Of the hireling it is said, “whose own the sheep are not.” It could not be so said of Him; for they had been given Him of His Father, and were His both by title and by service. Happy indeed, and doing prosperously, are the lambs and the sheep of that flock over which is no hireling hand, for the crook is held by Him who is Shepherd and Sheep-master also, and of whom we gladly and gratefully testify, He gave “His life for the sheep!”

So far as to *leading out*; but now as to *leading in*. Inasmuch as “they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them,” He now speaks with renewed gravity: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am *the door* of the sheep;” and again, “I am *the door*: by Me if any man *enter in*, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” Here is suggested all that is ours, *by* and *with* and *in* Christ! How good to be without the fold because we are within the flock; how much better than being inside the camp is the being inside the veil; how much better than being in “the city of solemnities” (that killed the prophets) is the being in “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem!”

But it may be said, what does the going in and out signify, and how is that to be? This I understand to set forth that the flock is not thenceforth located at “Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage,” but has come to the Jerusalem above, which is free. It is the liberty of the Spirit of God—holy liberty; going in for communion and out for service; that liberty of sonship which the Holy Ghost promotes in the hearts of the lambs and the sheep.

But it is time we spoke of the abundant blessing bestowed by the Shepherd. He says, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly;” and again, “I give unto them eternal

life." It is important we should reject the word "more," for it is not in the original, and it withers the text. He came to give His life *for* the sheep that He might give life, and that abundantly, *to* the sheep; and that life as eternal as He Himself, an imperishable life, the imperishable gift of the Shepherd to the sheep.

Having run over what is characteristic, and blessedly so, of the Shepherd, let us mark what is said of those sheep which are *His own*. (1) They are called by name. Each sheep is as much called by name as each apostle was; by which we mean that the sovereign and effectual call of divine grace is distinctly a personal thing. Each is individually called and—wondrous grace—known by name before God! It answers to the fact which illustrates it, viz., that in eastern countries the shepherd knows each sheep by its name as actually as he thus knows his kinsfolk or his neighbours; and if it wander, or lag behind, the sheep hears its name called, and thus is restored to its place in the flock. Let us not think lightly of this happy feature of His own sheep; they are called "by name." (2) They are led forth, because they *are* sheep (grace having once for all wrought this), from every human enclosure which is, at its best, but a sorry substitute for the presence of the Shepherd. (3) They follow Him whose voice they know. He knows them and they know Him, thus they follow Him; but a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. When the Lord called Mary by name at the sepulchre, being one of His *own* sheep she knew His voice, and, turning herself, said, Rabboni; and when the Lord said to the apostles, "Children, have ye any meat?" the beloved John knew His voice. "It is the Lord," he said; the voice was enough, and it swayed their hearts to Himself. (4) They are saved, and they find pasture. A sheep must be constantly feeding, or it famishes. If it is off its food, it rapidly runs down. And so is it most decidedly with us. The spiritual health will rapidly decay of

him who loses appetite for the word. May the Lord administer a tonic, "a word by the way," when such is our case. (5) They have life, abundant and eternal; the life which is Christ Himself, and by which alone we live unto God, and shall ere long, by effusion of His grace, live with Him too! the eternal life of the eternal Son of the eternal Father! What a heritage, possessed by the lambs and the sheep of the flock of God! And, finally, if we possess eternal life, (6) eternal security is ours too; we can "never perish," for we are jointly and severally secured in the hand of the Son and of the Father! None can snatch even the feeblest lamb out of the Son's hand, nor out of the Father's hand! Such is the eternal security of the whole flock of God, every lamb and every sheep being held secure against every assault; for who can withstand the arm of omnipotence?

It only remains to point out the amended text of verses 14, 15: "I know those that are Mine, and am known of those that are Mine, *as the Father knows Me and I know the Father*" (New translation). How blessedly is the knowledge of the sheep by the Shepherd and of the Shepherd by the sheep here declared to be commensurate with the perfect knowledge which the Father has of the Son and the Son has of the Father. What joy thus to know Him and thus to be known of Him who has laid down His life for the sheep! And how thankfully can we accept the fact that we have no fold now, when we remember that this is because we are never without *Him* who has superseded *it*, and whose cheering word to every lamb and every sheep is, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee!" How much beyond the sheepfold, how inconceivably much more, is He who is the Shepherd of the flock of God!

As Christ is the pattern of all our graces, so He is of our glory also, for it will consist in being made like unto Him.—*Dr. Owen.*

THE SPIRIT OF SACRED POETRY.

FROM Mrs. Bevan's book, "Sketches of the Quiet in the Land" (J. F. Shaw & Co.), we have made the following selection of the hymns of G. Tersteegan, German pastor and poet, 1697—1769. Our readers will see that he was one of the sweetest and most spiritual of the German poets.

The race of God's anointed priests shall never pass away,
 Before His glorious face they stand, and serve Him night
 and day ;
 Though reason raves, and unbelief flows on a mighty flood,
 There are, and shall be, till the end, the hidden priests of
 God,
 His chosen souls, their earthly dross consumed in fire of
 love—
 In flame their hearts ascending reach the Heart of God
 above ;
 The incense of their worship fills His temple's holiest place,
 Their song with wonder fills the heavens, the glad new song
 of grace.

To learn and yet to learn, whilst life goes by,
 So pass the student's days ;
 And thus be great, and do great things, and die,
 And lie embalmed with praise !

My work is but to love and to forget,
 Thus small, despised to be ;
 All to unlearn—this task before me set ;
 Unlearn all else but Thee !

There is a balm for every pain,
 A medicine for all sorrow ;
 The eye turned backward to the cross,
 And forward to the morrow.

The morrow of the glory and the psalm
 When He shall come ;
 The morrow of the harping and the palm,
 The welcome home.

Meantime in His beloved hands our ways,
 And on His heart the wandering heart at rest ;
 And comfort for the weary one who lays
 His head upon His breast !

Am I not enough, Mine own? enough, Mine own, for thee?
 Hath the world its palace towers,
 Garden glades of magic flowers,
 Where thou fain would'st be?
 Fair things but false they are,
 False things but fair—
 All shalt thou find at last
 Only in Me.

Am I not enough, Mine own? I for ever, I alone,
 I, needing thee?

Child of the eternal Father,
 Bride of His eternal Son,
 Dwelling-place of God the Spirit,
 Thus with Christ for ever one ;
 Dowered with bliss beyond the angels
 Nearest to His throne,
 They, the ministers attending
 His beloved one :
 Granted all my heart's desire,
 All things made our own ;
 Feared by all the powers of evil,
 Fearing God alone ;
 Walking with the Lord in glory
 Through the courts divine,
 Reigning with Him, wondrous story !
 Christ for ever mine ;
 Say, poor worldling, can it be,
 That my heart should envy thee ?

Stillness, midst the ever changing,
 Lord, my Rest art Thou ;
 So for me has dawned the morning,
 God's eternal now.
 Now for me the day unsetting,
 Now the song begun ;
 Now the deep surpassing glory
 Brighter than the sun.
 Hail ! all hail ! thou peaceful country
 Of eternal calm ;
 Summer land of milk and honey
 Where the streams are balm.
 There the Lord, my Shepherd, leads me
 Wheresoe'er He will ;
 In the fresh, green pastures feeds me,
 By the waters still ;
 Well I know them, those still waters !
 Peace and rest at last ;
 In their depths the quiet heavens
 Tell the storms are past ;
 Naught to mar the picture fair
 Of the glory resting there !

Hath not each heart a passion and a dream?
 And each in saddest skies some silver gleam?
 —And what have I? An endless heaven of love,
 A rapture, and a glory, and a calm ;
 A life that is an everlasting psalm—
 All, O Beloved, in Thee.

How good it is when weaned from all beside,
 With God alone the soul is satisfied,
 Deep hidden in His heart !
 All else for ever lost—forgotten all
 That else can be ;
 In rapture undisturbed, O Lord, to fall
 And worship Thee.
 No place, no time, 'neath those eternal skies
 How still, how sweet, and how surpassing fair
 That holy calm in glades of paradise,

And, as in earliest days, God walking there,
 I hear His voice amidst the stillness blest,
 And care and fear are past ;
 There I lie down within His arms at rest
 From all my works at last.
 How good it is when from the distant land,
 From lonely wanderings and from weary ways,
 The soul hath reached at last the golden strand,
 The gates of praise !
 There, where the tides of endless love flow free,
 There, in the sweet and glad eternity,
 God's still, unfading NOW :
 Ere yet the days and nights of earth are o'er,
 Begun the day that is for evermore—
 Such rest art Thou !

One with Christ, within the golden city,
 Welcomed long ago,
 When for me He passed within the glory
 From the depths below.
 Still the gladness of that blessed welcome,
 Mystery of that kiss,
 And of the meeting of the Son and Father,
 Floods my soul with bliss.
 That sweet welcome mine, and mine for ever
 That eternal home,
 Whereunto when, these wanderings all over,
 I shall surely come.
 There my heart is resting and is joyful
 With a joy untold—
 Earth's dark ways lit up with that fair glory
 Gleam like street of gold.
 Words of blessed greeting as I wander
 Fall upon my ear ;
 (As a song aloft in palace towers,
 Deep and sweet and clear,

Steals at midnight over him who saileth
 On a lonely sea,
 Then I know I near that blessed country
 Where He waits for me.
 God, our Father, waiteth there to greet me,
 Child of His delight ;
 In the well-beloved Son presented,
 Faultless in His sight.
 Loved with that wealth of love that fills the heavens,
 With eternal song—
 Weep not, weary heart ; how short the sorrow !
 And the love how long !

In Him we live, in Him we move : seek not thy God afar ;
 He is not prisoned in a height, above sun, moon, and star,
 But thou through strange dark lands hast strayed, and
 wandered far from Him ;
 And therefore He, O soul, to thee, is distant and is dim.
 Lord, I was in the far-off land, I loved from Thee to stray,
 And when unto myself I came, a swineherd far away,
 One moment, then the welcome sweet, the kiss, the Father's
 home ;
 Far distant was the distance ; to Thy bosom I had come !

Thou Life of my life, blessed Jesus,
 Thou death of the death that was mine,
 For me was Thy cross and Thine anguish,
 Thy love and Thy sorrow divine.
 Thou hast suffered the cross and the torment,
 That I might for ever go free,
 A thousand, a thousand thanksgivings,
 I bring, O Lord Jesus, to Thee !

For me hast Thou borne the reproaches,
 The mockery, hate, and disdain,
 The blows and the spitting of sinners,
 The scourging, the shame, and the pain ;
 To save me from bondage and judgment,
 Thou gladly hast suffered for me ;
 A thousand, a thousand thanksgivings
 I bring, O Lord Jesus, to Thee !

O Lord, from my heart do I thank Thee,
 For all Thou hast borne in my room :
 Thine agony, dying unsoled,
 Alone in the darkness and gloom ;
 That I in the glory of heaven
 For ever and ever might be ;
 A thousand, a thousand thanksgivings
 I bring, O Lord Jesus, to Thee !

His priests are we, before Him day and night
 Within His holy place ;
 And death and life, and all things dark and bright
 We spread before His face ;
 Rejoicing with His joy, yet ever still,
 For silence is my song ;
 My work to bend beneath His blessed will,
 All day, and all night long ;
 For ever holding with Him converse sweet,
 Yet speechless, for my gladness is complete.

PILGRIM SONG.

Come, children, on and forward !
 With us our Captain goes ;
 He leads us and He guards us
 Through thousands of our foes ;
 The sweetness and the glory,
 The sunlight of His eyes,
 Make all the desert places
 To glow as paradise.

Lo ! through the pathless midnight
 The fiery pillar leads,
 And onward goes the Shepherd
 Before the flock He feeds ;
 Unquestioning, unfearing,
 The lambs may follow on,
 In quietness and confidence
 Their eyes on Him alone.

Come, children, on and forward !
We journey hand in hand,
And each shall cheer his brother
All through the stranger land ;
And hosts of God's high angels
Beside us walk in white ;
What wonder if our singing
Makes music through the night ?

Come, children, on and forward !
Each hour brings nearer home !
The pilgrim days speed onward
And soon the last will come.
All hail ! O golden city !
How near the shining towers !
Fair gleams the heavenly palace,
That radiant home of ours.

On ! dare and suffer all things !
Yet but a stretch of road,
Then wondrous words of welcome,
And then the face of God !
The world, how small and empty !
Our eyes have looked on Him ;
The mighty Sun has risen,
The taper is but dim.

Far through the depths of heaven
Our Saviour leads His own—
The Mightiest and the Fairest,
Christ ever, Christ alone ;
Led captive by His sweetness,
And dowered with all His bliss,
For evermore He ours !
For evermore we His !

Allured into the desert, with God alone, apart,
There spirit meeteth spirit, there speaketh heart to heart ;
Far, far on that untrodden shore, God's secret place I find,
Alone I pass the golden door, the dearest left behind.

There God and I—none other ; O far from men to be !
 Nay, midst the crowd and tumult, still, Lord, alone with
 Thee :
 Still folded close upon Thy breast, in field, and mart, and
 street,
 Untroubled in that perfect rest, that isolation sweet.
 O God, Thou art far other than men have dreamed and
 taught ;
 Unspoken in all language, unpictured in all thought ;
 Thou, God, art God—he only learns what that great Name
 must be,
 Whose raptured heart within him burns, because he walks
 with Thee.

Stilled by that wondrous Presence, that tenderest embrace,
 The years of longing over, do we behold Thy face ;
 We seek no more than Thou hast given, we ask no vision
 fair ;
 Thy precious blood has opened heaven, and we have found
 Thee there.

O weary souls, draw near to Him ; to you I can but bring
 One drop of that great Ocean, one blossom of that Spring ;
 Sealed with His kiss, my lips are dumb, my soul with awe
 is still ;
 Let him that is athirst but come, and freely drink his fill !

Sweet shades and fields that glow with summer flowers,
 How dear are ye to me ;
 Naught seen in you but tender grace revealing,
 How fair Thy thoughts must be.
 How soft the breathings of Thy love, Lord Jesus ;
 I rest my heart on Thee.

All, all that buds and blossoms and rejoices,
 Hath my Beloved made ;
 His wisdom and His tenderness and gladness
 Told forth in leaf and blade ;
 All moves unto the music of His power
 That fills the woodland glade ;
 But heaven and earth in all their radiant glory
 To Him are midnight shade.

Lord Jesus, Thee to meet, and to adore Thee,
 I sit here all alone ;
 To drink afresh the river of Thy pleasures,
 Who art mine all, mine own,
 And lose myself, and find that Thou art only ;
 Beside Thee naught and none !

Alone with Thee to dwell, O my Beloved,
 Is heaven on earth begun ;
 Whilst vanity of vanities outwearies
 All hearts beneath the sun ;
 Above the midnight and the noonday glory
 Our resting-place is won,
 And heaven in heaven through all eternity,
 Our pilgrim journey done !

THE CROSS AND THE VICTIM.

Still ! O soul—the sign and wonder
 Of all ages see—
 Christ, thy God, the King of Glory,
 On the cross for thee ;
 From the Father's glory come,
 Wandering soul, to bring thee home.

Wouldst thou know if Jesus loves thee ?
 If He loves thee well ?
 See Him suffer, broken-hearted,
 All the pains of hell—
 Smitten, bearing in thy room,
 All thy guilt and all thy doom.

See Him of His God forsaken ;
 Hear His bitter cries
 Rise unanswered through the darkness
 Of the silent skies ;
 See the fountain of the Blood,
 Shed to bring thee home to God.

Mine the sins, O mighty Saviour,
 Laid by God on Thee—
 Sin's eternal condemnation
 In Thy cross I see ;

In Thine agony divine
See the wrath that else were mine.

See the conquest and the triumph
Thou for me hast won ;
Justice satisfied for ever,
All God's pleasure done ;
Thus, O smitten Rock, from Thee
Life eternal flows to me.

Unto me, the base and guilty,
Flows that living flood ;
I, Thine enemy, am ransomed
By Thy precious blood.
Silent at Thy feet I lie,
Lost in love's immensity !

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

To heart and soul how sweet Thou art,
O great High Priest of God !
My heart brought nigh to God's own heart
By Thy most precious blood.

No more my countless sins shall rise
To fill me with dismay—
That precious blood before His eyes
Hath put them all away.

My soul draws nigh with trust secure,
With boldness glad and free ;
What matters it that I am poor
If I am rich in Thee ?

Forgotten every stain and spot,
Their memory past and gone,
For me, O God, Thou seest not,
Thou lookest on Thy Son.

Is all a dream ? Thou canst not lie,
The Spirit and the blood
Proclaim to sinners such as I
The boundless love of God.

They tell Thy love so deep, so free,
 They tell the Father's heart—
 Not what I am, or I must be ;
 They tell me what Thou art.

Come, weary sinners, great and small,
 The open door stands wide ;
 Thy blessed heart that welcomes all,
 O Lamb of God who died !

Man earthy, of the earth, as hungred feeds
 On earth's dark poison tree—
 Wild gourds, and deadly roots, and bitter weeds ;
 And as his food is he !

And hungry souls there are that find and eat
 God's manna day by day ;
 And glad they are—their life is fresh and sweet ;
 For as their food are they !

CRUMBS FROM AN OLD NOTE BOOK.

IMPORTANT to remember that worship goes on only in heaven. *God* is worshipped in Spirit and in truth ; and the true tabernacle, even heaven itself, is the place where He is worshipped. There we are only as redeemed—there the preciousness of the blood of Christ (which has brought us there) is known—there God is enjoyed and delighted in, in all His holiness ; that holiness having removed our sins by the stroke on the Son of His love. The Spirit is the power ; thus we have access, through Him, by the Spirit, to the Father.

Note that Peter preached Christ in Acts ii.—God's delight in Him, and the people's guilt in denying Him—and *this* preaching of *Christ* pricked them to the heart. He did not preach that *they* should be pricked to the heart, or *should be anything* ; but he lifted up *Christ*. The Holy Ghost made it an arrow of conviction.

J. R.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

. . . THE common notion is that brotherly love is charity, and, indeed, its most perfect form. This is a mistake, as this passage (2 Pet. i. 7) shews. That brotherly love is a precious fruit of grace is most true—precious in the heart that is filled with it, and precious in its mutual development; but it is not charity. We are told to add to brotherly love charity. The reason is simple: in brotherly love brethren are the object; and though, when genuine and pure, it surely flows from grace, it easily in us clothes itself with the character which its object gives it, and tends to limit itself to the objects with which it is occupied, and be governed by its feeling towards them. It is apt to end in its objects, and thus avoid all that might be painful to them, or mar the mutual feeling of pleasantness of intercourse, and thus make them the measure of the conduct of the Christian.

In a word, where brotherly love ends in itself, as the main object, brethren become the motive and governing principle of our conduct; and our conduct as uncertain as the state of our brethren with whom we may be in contact. Hence the apostle says, "Above all these put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." And another apostle, "And to brotherly kindness, charity." Now, charity is love; but will not this seek to exercise brotherly kindness? Undoubtedly it will, but it brings in God. "God is love." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Hence it brings in a standard of what true love is, which mere brotherly kindness in itself never can. It is the bond of perfectness; for God, and God in active love, is its measure. Brotherly kindness by itself exists in virtue of the conscious presence of God; hence, whatever is not consistent with His presence, with Himself, with His glory, cannot be borne by the heart which is filled with it. It is in the spirit of love

that it thinks and works, but in the Spirit of God, by whose presence it is inwardly known and active. Love was active in Christ when He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers;" in Paul when he said, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

Charity, because it is God's presence, and that we feel His presence, and look to Him in it, is intolerant of evil. In mere brotherly kindness, the brother being the object before my mind (and, if God's presence be not felt, we do not realise it, nature coming in so easily, and here in its most unsuspected and kindly shapes), I put man before God, smother up evil, keep kindness going; at any rate, so far exclude and shut out God. Charity is His active presence, though it will be in love to man; but it gives to God all His rights. He it is that is love, but He is never inconsistent with Himself. His love to us was shewn in what was the most solemn proof of His intolerance of evil, the cross. There is no true love apart from righteousness. If God is indifferent to evil, is not righteous, then there is no love in grace to the sinner. If He abhors evil, cannot suffer it in His presence, then His dealings with us as sinners shew the most perfect love. If I have ten children, and they go wrong, and I say, "Well, I am to shew love to them," and I take no account of their evil ways; or if some of them go wrong, and I treat them as if there was no difference to my mind in their well-doing or evil-doing; this is not love, but carelessness as to evil. This is the kind of love looked for by unconverted men, namely, God's being as careless as to evil as they are; but this is not divine charity which abhors the evil, but rises over it, dealing with it either in putting it away or in needed chastenings. Now, if God were indifferent to evil, there is no holy Being to be the object of my love—nothing sanctifying. God does not own as love what admits of sin.

London, February, 1859.

J. N. D.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (Mat. xiii. 24, 31, &c.).—It here denotes the rule of the heavens, not in power and manifestation as predicted by Daniel, but in patience and mystery while the Lord is on the Father's throne, the rejected King. The parables of this chapter set forth the entire state of things here below while Christ is above—His work and the enemy's respectively, the field being the world.—*W. K.*

THE SHEEP OF CHRIST must really follow Him; not in *profession* only; not in *intention* only; but in *deed and in truth*. "He that is not *with Me* is *against Me*."

THE SECRET OF STRENGTH.—"The word of God abideth in you" (1 John ii. 14). This is the source and secret of strength.

BETWEEN GOD'S PURPOSES and His promises there is this difference, that while both are gold, the one is that of the mine and the other that of the mint, prepared and impressed for currency and use.—*Jay*.

GOD'S ANSWER to all man's hard thoughts of Him is, "I have *given you My Son!*" and His answer to all man's lofty pretensions is, "You have *crucified My Son!*"

BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING.—At the battle of Maccabee, an officer who had been doing good service came up and said, "Sir Charles, we have taken a standard!" The General looked at him, and made no reply; but, turning round, began speaking to some one else, upon which the soldier, thinking he had not been heard, repeated, "Sir Charles, we have taken a standard!" Sir Charles then turned sharply upon him, and with a thundering voice said, "*Then go and take another.*"

OUR FATHER'S EYE.—A youth was pressed to go to the circus, and was offered the entrance money; but he refused. Being urged again and again, he replied, "No, because after I had been I could not look my father in the eye, and now I can." How careful should saints be not to lose the blessed enjoyment of communion with the Father.

GOD IS NOT NOW IMPUTING SINS, but offering the hand of reconciliation. But will He not judge those who *reject* His "Message of love come down from above?" Yea, assuredly, as indeed Rev. xx. shows. How could it be otherwise to him who rejects the grace which *now* stands ready to blot out everything written against him?"

HEBREWS x. 26 does not say there remaineth no more mercy for sinners, but "no more sacrifice for sins." No other is needed, but that abides in its infinite value, and he that wilfully sins in the face of the fact that a remedy and refuge is provided, is guilty of a sin from the punishment of which there is no escape.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST (Matt. xii. 31; Mark iii. 29) consisted in attributing to the devil the works of the Father, which were wrought by the Lord Himself in the power of the Holy Ghost.

IN SOUTH AFRICA, one Lord's day morning, some Christian converts were disturbed by a marauding party who had determined to attack the village for plunder. Moshew, a converted chief, in answer to his enquiry as to what they wanted, was told, "Your cattle; and it is at your peril you raise a weapon to resist." "There are the cattle," he answered, and with that returned to his place in the meeting. All kneeled in prayer to God. This so abashed the ruffians that they withdrew, taking nothing.

IN ALL SIN there is some bait, some apparent good, some expectation of pleasure or profit, or some gratification of malice and hatred. Enticement prevails and guilt is contracted.

WHEN THE GREAT DUKE, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, was in India, an officer dining at the mess was sporting his infidel statements. Sir Arthur, desirous of checking this, asked, "Did you ever read *Paley's Evidences*?" Receiving a negative reply, he said, "Well, you had better read that book." This led Colonel S. to obtain a copy which he carefully read, and became convinced of the divine origin of Christianity. Not stopping there, he read his Bible, and found it to be a revelation from God of mercy to his soul, and he believed unto salvation.

"THE PRISONER OF THE LORD."—One of the witnesses of the truth imprisoned in the Marian persecution wrote, "A prisoner for Christ! What, is this for a poor worm? Such honour have not all His saints. Both the degrees which I took in the university have not set me so high as the honour of becoming a prisoner of the Lord."

GRANDEUR OF DIVINE LOVE.—Rowland Hill, endeavouring to convey some conception of divine love, suddenly cast his eye heavenward, exclaiming, "But I am unable to reach the lofty theme! Yet I do not think the tiniest fish that swims in the ocean ever complains of being unable to compass the immeasurable depth of the mighty deep. So likewise I plunge, with my puny capacity, into a subject which I shall never be able fully to apprehend."

WATCHING FOR THE MORNING.—August 1, 1830, was the day of the emancipation of the West Indian slaves. The night before, many never went to bed. Thousands assembled at their meeting-houses engaged in prayer and praise, while waiting for the first streak of the light of that day on which they were to become free. Some were actually sent to the hills from which they might obtain the first glimpse of the coming day, intimating, by a signal to their brethren below, the dawn of that day which was to make them men; no longer to be mere goods and chattels, but men with souls created to live for ever. How eagerly they watched for the morning! We sometimes *sing* that "We expect a bright to-morrow," and we sometimes *say* "Even so, come Lord Jesus," but does not the eagerness of these poor slaves put our hearts to shame who have so much more blessed a hope than they?

THE HARDENING OF THE HEART.—One who had moved in fashionable society and was related to persons of rank, had led a dissipated life, committed heavy forgeries, and was lying under sentence of death, being visited by Dr. L., who sought to reach his conscience, was thus answered: "Sir, I appreciate your motive. I am not ignorant of the truths you state. In my youth I was the companion of some dignitaries of the Church, whose example had no good effect upon me. You speak of multitudes of sins, but I see that you are but little acquainted with iniquity. I could unfold to you such depths of iniquity as would make you stand aghast. But I am not now about to become the pusillanimous creature that calls for pity and mercy, when I know it can never be shown me. I *cannot* feel, and I *will not* pray. You see that stone slab; it is an image of the insensibility of my heart to every impression you are striving to make." And so he died! And "after this the judgment."

GOD'S COUNSELS OF GRACE.

"We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Thess. ii. 13, 14.

IN this Scripture we have the past, the present, and the future: God's eternal choice, the effectual call of His grace, and the ultimate glory. It is the Lord "who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv. 17, 18). Let me, then, urge my reader's attention to the grounds upon which the apostle felt bound "to give thanks alway to God." In verse 3 of the first chapter we have similar language in a totally different connection; there his thanksgivings were *because of them*, because of what he found in them, the exceeding growth of their faith and the aboundings of their love! But how different is it here; "*because God*," and all three of these things, yea, everything here, is based upon it. We are, in a word, introduced into that new creation wherein "all things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 18). Let us with holy and reverent minds look into the subject as being deeply desirous of vindicating God against the aspersions of men, and of helping those who have difficulties.

The apostle was writing to Thessalonian believers; but through him the Spirit of God addresses us to-day. And I ask myself and I ask you, Does your heart joyfully accept every word of this without question and without qualification? Let us in this connection look at Ep. ii: "God, even when we were dead in sins, hath *quicken*ed us;" and again, "We are His workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus." This is not the gospel, I grant; it is not addressed to man's responsibility, but it is the eternal truth of God for those who know Him. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; the gift of God" (ver. 8). And

here note that, while in no degree impeaching the statement often made that faith is the gift of God, I would suggest that what is here said to be that gift embraces not merely the faith that saves, but the salvation which is by grace and through faith. That salvation is all and altogether of God, God's gift.

Eternal life when we were dead in sins; new creation when as of the Adamic creation we were ruined and condemned; and salvation from eternal wrath—each and all of these, with infinitely more when glory dawns—are only to be apprehended and accounted for by that blessed declaration being accepted, "BECAUSE GOD HATH FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION." Thus it is we find the Lord saying, "No man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John. vi. 44). As He had also said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (iii. 6, 7). Let the reader consider, then, Does a man become born again by an act of his own will? Does he quicken himself? Does he new-create himself? Does he save himself? Surely the very nature of Scriptural language plainly establishes that the work is *entirely of God*. Salvation is of the Lord, and for this reason and no other, because His purpose was to save.

But how, I may be asked, do you reconcile man's *responsibility* with God's *sovereignty*? My answer is, I find no antagonism, and consequently have nothing to reconcile. So far as I learn from Scripture, each stands perfectly clear of the other. God's creatorship involves His sovereignty; man's creatureship involves his responsibility; nothing of the one clashes with anything of the other. God is absolutely sovereign; man absolutely responsible.

But, it may be said, if there be no difficulty on the side of man's responsibility, is there not as to his *free agency*? How, for instance, are we to reconcile with

this the Lord's words, "No man *can come* unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him?" I answer that the Lord also said, "Ye *will not come* to Me that ye might have life;" each of which Scriptures throws light on the other. Man is perfectly free to come, and is invited and is urged to come, but he has an evil nature and a corrupt will; he loves darkness rather than light, and is therefore morally incapable of coming; in a word, he has no heart for Christ. His will is unfettered; he is undeniably a free agent; but he has to confess, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to *his own way*" (Is. liii. 6).

Thus we find that freedom of will in a fallen creature involves freedom towards evil, and towards evil we have every one turned. In any accurately balanced magnet, there being a bias towards the north, whatever oscillations there may be the needle points only northward; and the more delicately it is suspended, though the more it oscillates, the more certainly will it indicate the bias which governs it. But man has a conscience, which by the goodness of God he got at the fall, a vestige of testimony for Him which every man carries in his breast; significant witness of his responsibility, although morally fallen. Every intelligent creature, fallen or unfallen, is a responsible being. To be otherwise he must divest himself of his creaturehood. Angels, as intelligent creatures, were responsible, but we read of those who left their first estate; they sinned untempted, and became rebel angels; while of others we read as "elect angels"—thus God's sovereignty in election was manifested as to them. Under responsibility, equally alike, some fell and others were kept, the latter by the sovereign election of God. Innocent man was responsible; fallen men are responsible. Each and every man has elected or chosen to do evil; God has elected or chosen from such to save whom He will. Every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty

before God (Rom. iii. 19). Righteously, therefore, He might have punished all in His wrath. Conscience testifies to every man that he has *wilfully* sinned; his own conscience accuses him, and will be his accuser throughout eternity. Left to himself, though a Saviour has been provided *for all* that all might be saved, and a sacrifice of *infinite* value offered and accepted, every man would have perished!

It has been said, "Why should He not have given every one *an equal chance*?" I answer, *He has*; and were there nothing more, each and every man would equally have perished. "Ye will not come to Me" would have been manifested as to every soul of man, though never so earnestly and persistently besought to turn to Him. But in such an issue, where would have been the eternal display that "*God is love*"?

Again it is urged, that if salvation rests with God, and God is love, why should He not *save more*? If this argument could be reverentially urged at all it might be carried further, why should He not save *all*? But where then would have been the eternal witnesses that "*God is light*"? His mercy and goodness, His love and His grace, must be eternally displayed on the one hand; His righteousness, His holiness, and His truth, together with His eternal abhorrence of sin, must be eternally displayed on the other. To this end, some must be saved and some perish, and we know that this is so. Therefore it resolves itself into a question of numbers, the proportion of the one to the other; and shall we who know not even what that proportion is, have the temerity to suggest that we could have ordered it more for His glory than His own divine wisdom has done?

But, amongst the various objectors, some there are who find an *arbitrariness* in this which they consider would be a blot upon the character of God! Have they ever read Romans ix.? Does not God, as it were, there permit Himself to be taken to account, that He may answer every cavil and stop every mouth?

There is no unrighteousness with God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.) God were not God were He not sovereign. Does not every earthly monarch, in one way or another, find it essential to vindicate his sovereignty? He pardons rebels; he liberates prisoners; he mitigates sentences according to his own clemency. Shall the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords have less absolute exercise of sovereignty than they? Shall He be impugned by His creatures if relentless towards some He is not relentless towards all, or pardoning some does not pardon every one? Who are they that would arraign God, and have Him to act according to their poor finite conceptions of how He should conduct Himself towards men? "What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, *even us!*" (Rom. ix. 22-24). How wonderfully significant is every word! God was *willing* to shew His wrath, *willing* to make His power known; and He will do this by those vessels of wrath whom He had *endured* with *much longsuffering*, but who were self-fitted for destruction. On the other hand, *that He might* (here comes in His active intervention in blessing, not in the other case in cursing) make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy (not which were self-prepared, but) whom *He had afore prepared unto glory*, even us! Surely every word vindicates God, and magnifies His exceeding grace.

But if men are morally incapable of turning to God, *why then preach* the Gospel? God Himself shall give the answer. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). "We are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. iii. 9). "We are unto God a sweet

savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish; to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 15-16). "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. x. 15). Beautiful to whom? *Beautiful to God!*

Here I would point out that God has in a variety of ways manifested His sovereign election, for "God is love." I have already pointed out that there are elect angels. Recent investigations in astronomy indicate that there are not less than 500 millions of heavenly bodies, many immensely greater than this earth; yet He *chose* this tiny globe for the display of the exceeding riches of His grace! And when families were found here, He *chose* Noah and his family as objects of His preserving care! In like manner He *chose* Abram and his family. And when two children of Rebecca were in the womb, He *chose* one and refused the other; and when there were nations on earth, He *chose* Israel to be for Himself, though a stiff-necked and rebellious people, but "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Still further, "They are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children" (Rom. ix. 4-7). So Ishmael was rejected and Isaac taken; Esau rejected and Jacob taken. "Even so then at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5).

And when a new creation was to be formed and displayed, we hear the Lord Jesus say, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." "I pray for them: I pray not for the world,

but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me" (John xvii. 6, 9, 11). "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (xv. 16). Surely every word teaches the sovereign election of God of a people for the eternal glory of Christ, His Son! Thus we read Acts xiii. 48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" and in Eph. i. 4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." And this brings us round to the Scripture which heads my paper, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." To His eternal praise, be it said, He has seen fit thus to glorify Himself as a Saviour-God through the work of His beloved Son, for us whom in eternity He had chosen, and whom in time He effectually called, that He might ultimately glorify us together with Him.

In 2 Cor. v., we find it explicitly stated that Christ "died *for all*" because all were dead; then we are told of some "which live," and it is said He "died *for them*." Thus in one way His death was for all who were dead, and in another way it was for them which live. There is no conflict in these statements. He was a *Propitiation* for all, whether believers or not. He is a *Substitute* for all who believe. In their place and in their stead He bare the judgment due to their sins, became their sins-bearer before God! Scripture never says that He bare the sins of all. All those whose sins Christ bore are for ever cleared from them before God; all those who die in their sins are judged for them at the great white throne, and are never cleared from them in time or eternity.

Why should God, some have blasphemously said, create men *only to damn them*? I answer, *He has never done so*. He has created all men for His own glory; they sinned and came short of it. Then He gave a Saviour, that all men through Him might be saved. This is illustrated in Luke xiv. by the great

supper, which sets forth the aboundings of His grace towards those to whom the message of His love and mercy goes out. But they all as one began to make excuse! First there was the inviting in, but *not one came*: how solemn! Then follow the bringing in and the constraining to come in, by which means only the house is filled. Does this manifest injustice to those who were invited only? Who would venture to say so? The narrative clearly shows they had no appetite for the feast; each turned to his own way, and followed the bent of his own heart, caring not for that which satisfies God's heart, and which in grace He had provided for theirs!

But it has been said that men are born with an evil nature, and why should God punish them for what *they cannot help*? I answer, *He never will*. No man, woman, or child will be in eternal punishment for his or her evil nature. Nothing in Scripture indicates that any will suffer in hell on account of "original sin," as it has been termed. We are born with an evil nature, I grant, but I plead that every man has sinned wilfully; in other words, he *could* help sinning, and yet sinned. The evidences of a sinful nature are seen in a babe, but I could not say that a babe sins; and He who came to save the lost (Matt. xviii. 11), which a babe is, and died unto sin, is an actual Saviour for every such child who passes into His presence before coming to years of responsibility. Every sinner who has come to years of responsibility has to admit that he has sinned wilfully, that he *could* have helped it and he *would not*, and thus, if honest, he is self-condemned.

But it is said there is *partiality* with God; His ways are not equal. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. ix. 20, 21). Shall man possess this power over the clay which he never created, and God's

title to do as He will with such creatures of clay as we are, be denied to Him who has created us? What man stigmatises as partiality is really divine sovereignty, and to challenge God's sovereignty is to deny to Him the exercise of the first of all the rights of God. It is man endeavouring to make God amenable to considerations which only have place properly amongst men. God is God, and cannot consent to be subjected to human judgment.

Again, it has been objected that "whom He will He *hardeneth*." This objection also has been met by God Himself in the above words. But let us remember that this Scripture supplies but two examples of individuals against whom God's anger had been displayed. "Esau have I hated" is a quotation from Malachi i. 3, not written therefore until he had fully manifested that he was that profane person "who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright" (Heb. xii. 16). And Pharaoh's heart was not hardened by God until in his craft and his cruelty he had made the lives of God's chosen people bitter with hard bondage;—"all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour" (Ex. i. 14); and, moreover, he had slaughtered their male children with relentless ferocity (verse 22).

This sovereignty of God, be it emphatically noted, is the foundation of all eternal blessing, whether to the elect angels, to Israel as a nation, or to the heavenly saints. Had Israel been left on the pure ground of responsibility, God's wrath must have destroyed them for the sin of the golden calf, but it only became the occasion for God to display His *sovereignty* when, after the intervention of Moses as type of Christ, the true Mediator, He proclaimed, I "will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Ex. xxxiii. 19). Had we been left upon the ground of responsibility only, we must also have been swept away in judgment, for "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 12). But then for us also has God

come in, in the sovereignty of His grace, to justify the ungodly unto His own present and eternal glory.

And if we go further than this, questioning His eternal decrees, we are met by an impassable barrier ; we know not what the divine decrees are, nor their objects. This only we know, that those inscrutable decrees *hinder no man* ; in no respect do they interfere with his liberty. So long as he is in his sins, he can know nothing about them. Let him but believe, he will find that God has decreed his eternal salvation. The doctrine of reprobation as to those who perish is alien to Scripture. The doctrine of God's sovereignty exercised in blessing is the *door of hope* for every sinner : " For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified " (Rom. viii. 29-30). What a magnificent vista of present and eternal blessing is opened up here for every soul that accepts His word that *God is for us* ! And if He is so, it is in the sovereignty of His grace according to these eternal counsels.

Finally, I would ask my reader to reflect on the moral government of God as Supreme Governor of the universe. Had He, who has taught us that He is able to cast both body and soul into hell, permitted men to believe that because He was mighty to save He would therefore save everyone ; because He was rich in grace He would shew grace to everyone, what a licence for wickedness would this have been—what a premium upon every sort of sensual indulgence ! No wise or good king would dream of removing the moral restraints which preserve his subjects from crime ; how much less could a holy God on His own part open the flood-gates of sin and iniquity to the utter destruction of His moral government, and the ruin of the creature's relation to his Creator. " O the

depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33-36.)

A FEW THOUGHTS ON LAZARUS.

John xi., xii.

WHAT thoughts pass through the mind as this name is brought to remembrance—thoughts of Him who was the Resurrection and the Life as He pursued His pathway in the midst of a scene of sorrow, suffering, sickness, and death; death reigning as it had done from Adam to Moses, and so from Moses onward, and He the life, with life in Himself; at times (as John iv. 46-53), staying death's onward course; at others, not preventing sickness ending in death. Thoughts arise as to what it must have been for Him to pass through such a scene. Ever one with His Father; never a movement but in perfect consonance with the Father, and yet ever in blessed perfect subjection as working the works of Him who sent Him. So that in this scene in John xi., whether it were acting or remaining quiet, all was blessedly perfect; and as one scene after another is pondered, how precious the glories that shine forth!

How hearts have glowed and derived comfort from such a portion of the blessed word as they thought of Himself there, whether with the disciples, or Martha, or Mary, or at the grave; there coming, with tears of truest sympathy and groans that cannot be fathomed by the mind of man, but with that voice which, while calling out of the grave, did so with life-giving power.

One may well ponder such a scene in some of its

parts with deep interest—the abiding, for instance, “two days still in the same place where He was ;” or, again, “Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met Him.” What does this convey, the abiding two days where He was ? It would appear to carry our thoughts back to that scene in chap. x. where the Jews took up stones to stone Him, and with whom He reasons somewhat ; but, on their again seeking to take Him, He leaves them, and goes “away again beyond Jordan, where John at first baptised ; and there He abode.” And it is to such a place, with all that which remained of that ministry of the axe being laid to the root of the trees (Matt. iii. 10), and baptism thereupon in Jordan, “confessing their sins” as those who owned the righteousness of such a judgment as to all God’s ways with such a people, that He by John Baptist needs to call to repentance. So here, if any would resort unto Him, it must be *there*, and with such memories as such a place suggests. And we read, “Many believed on Him there” ; yet, as to that ministry of John and that call to repentance, the Jews as a people turned a deaf ear, “the Pharisees rejecting (or frustrating) the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” Yet we read with comfort, “Wisdom is justified of all her children” (Luke vii. 35).

Further may we say, this abiding two days still in the same place where He was reminds of other days and other scenes, where it is said (Isaiah xxx. 15-18), “In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength : and ye would not. But ye said, No,” &c. Then verse 18 : “And therefore will the Lord wait that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you,” &c., reminding too, as it surely does, of that other scene : “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” (Matt. xxiii. 37). And so sickness goes

on ; death takes place ; corruption sets in ; and He waits till it does ; and so we may say the waiting or the acting is ever in fullest subjection and oneness with His Father. And then He says, " Let us go into Judea again ;" and so He who was the Resurrection and the Life goes to awaken him out of sleep. His disciples cannot understand this ; no, nor Martha, who, when He says, " Take ye away the stone," says, " Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." But before this there had been the previous waiting. Martha meets Him, goes to call Mary secretly, and Mary comes where He was (" Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met Him"—verse 30), with just the same heart-broken utterance, " Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died ;" and thus, whether the disciples, or Martha, or Mary, or the Jews, all manifested this one thing,—bondage under the power of death, utter hopelessness, the end of all as to man.

For this He had waited. It must be so if He, the Resurrection and the Life, was to be glorified. Sin must reign unto death ; and, may we not say ? it points on of necessity for Him to His own death, yea, and His own resurrection too ; so that life for us should not only be Himself, but, as it surely is, life in resurrection, where the " all things of God" (2 Cor. v. 17, 18) find their sphere and activities. And so when all are manifestly under the power and dominion of death, He, who alone remained above its power (for He was the Life), yet in truest sympathy, and withal causing Himself to utter those deep groanings as He came to the grave, could then express Himself: " Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me, and I knew that Thou hearest Me alway ;" and so with that voice of power called, " Lazarus, come forth ;" and thus in resurrection Lazarus is before us a living witness of the life-giving power of the Son of God.

What a picture this is—those grave-clothes removed—of every saint of God now, even as the man born

blind when he had washed was a living testimony to Him who gave him sight (ch. ix.), and that in presence of those who could say, "Are we blind also?" and to whom He had to say, "Ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (ix. 41). In John v. 25 the Lord could say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Dead ones indeed we were, till He, the Resurrection and the Life, called with His voice of quickening and life-giving power; and now the saint of God is here amid the present scene of death and where death reigns, a living one, as Lazarus in figure witnesses, of His life-giving power.

This leads us on to further matters of deep interest. If it manifested forth His glory as Son of God, it also gave occasion for that remarkable counsel when His death was planned (ver. 53); and afterward that further consultation to put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus (xii. 10, 11). A question may here arise for our hearts—and suffer it to be put, that it may come home to writer and reader alike: do *we* so live as to give by our lives that witness for Him as that others may be led to believe on Him? There is nothing said of Lazarus *doing* anything or *saying* anything to cause either the consultation, on the one hand, or the going away and believing on Jesus on the other. All that we have is that he lived, and *thus* shewed forth Christ's power to His praise, though it gave occasion for the hatred and malice of man's heart against Him. This reminds us of those precious words of the blessed Master: "*Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.*" "If the *world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the*

world hateth you" (xv. 16-18, 19). Need this surprise us? May we count it joy to live Christ, and in *suffering for Him* count *that* joy too. He had called them and chosen them, *therefore* they became the objects with Him of the world's hatred. The world's hatred against Christ is thus manifested toward those that are His: and does not this continue? Let 1 John iii. 13 supply the answer: "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."

Lazarus seems, also, to have been a sort of gazing-stock (John xii. 9). "The Jews came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also; a something or someone to be looked at, gazed upon, wondered at. Ah, well, it might be so in some sort—a scene of death all around, and one raised up out of death, *living now* in a scene of death, a living one. And here, may we not ask? what is the world, with all that is in it and of it, but one vast scene of death—death and corruption everywhere; and saints of God, *God's living ones*, in it, but not of it; for so He, the blessed Master, has said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world?" He, the heavenly One (John iii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 48), and they, heavenly ones, though not as yet bearing the image of the heavenly. They will do; "For we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2).

But one more scene in this precious portion at Bethany. There they made Him a supper. Martha served; "but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." *With Him* is here said—at this supper made for Him. This for Him—in full view of all that was about to take place, the wickedness of man, the power of darkness; the hour, as to which He says, "For this cause came I unto this hour;" the hour when, in order to the much fruit to be brought forth, He must die; that hour when He would lay down His life for the sheep, and He lays it down and He takes it again, and this according to His Father's command, and "Therefore doth My Father love Me;"

and also the hour of the Son of Man being glorified and God "glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." What scenes thus open up to us; what an intimation that, as connected with that box of ointment of spikenard very precious, kept against the day of His burying; what calmness and repose was His; what a contrast to what was taking place outside—yea, and in the breast of Judas Iscariot.

Once more to notice these things—man's hour, the power of darkness, the weakness of the disciples; but, as to Him, perfect obedience to His Father's will: "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do" (xiv. 31); and also, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep" (x. 15). Perfect love to the Father thus fully manifested, the prince of this world coming and having nothing in Him—may we not say, what a moment for that supper; and Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. How He loved to have *His own* with Him; and Lazarus was one of them. How simply full this is; one feels there is nothing to add to this.

Perhaps one may be borne with if being reminded of oneself, and so passing to others, a word of the blessed Lord spoken much later on—the word of "the faithful and true Witness;" for "He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself:" "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, *I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.*" He also says: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne; *even as I also overcame*, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. iii. 20, 21). Thus, surely, carrying our thoughts back to the time when, as the faithful Witness, *He was the Overcomer*—light amidst darkness—the *obedient One* in the midst of those who professed to be "Abraham's seed," yet not doing the works of Abraham (John viii. 39); also professing to be

children of God (41), but doing the deeds of their father (44); professing to see, but needing anointed eyes (John ix. 40, 41; Rev. iii. 18). What a correspondence thus between the day of the Lord's sojourn here and the time of Laodicean lukewarmness: He overcame and is set down; him that overcometh will I grant to set *with Me* in My throne. He will acknowledge thus. (See, too, Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8, 35, 36, 37). But meanwhile, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will *sup with him*, and he *with Me*." How gracious of the Lord *thus* to express the desire of His heart—communion with Him thus; and this, too, ere the time of public acknowledging comes.

May each and all "*His own* which were in the world" so answer to Him—live Christ—esteem it a privilege to suffer reproach for Him—and, in the midst of surrounding and increasing darkness and corruption, be more simply as those who, being "light in the Lord," walk "as children of light," and know and enjoy the holy privilege of Himself graciously coming in to "sup with him, and he with Me." "A little while"—"Surely, *I* come quickly. Amen." G. C.

"COME UNTO ME."

"COME"—surely one of the most precious words ever spoken by the Lord Jesus when in this world. Nevertheless it is sad that He had, and still has, to use such a word in addressing men, for it plainly shows that they are at a distance from Him,

"FAR OFF"

(Eph. ii. 13), at an immeasurable distance, and all are equally so. The educated, refined, and outwardly religious man is as far off as the degraded savage, the bloated drunkard, the blasphemer, and the atheist.

It was not always so. God walked with Adam in the garden of Eden and communed with him in the cool of the day. What, then, is the cause of this

separation? Ah, the reason is not far to seek. One little word of three letters tells the tale—SIN. Sin has come in,—that which is hateful to God, which can never be in His holy presence, for He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. i. 13). Adam when in the garden was innocent, that is, perfectly pure from sin, but directly he yielded to it, God drove him out, and cherubim with a flaming sword prevented his return. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Is. lix. 2) were the words of the Lord by His prophet, and are as applicable to the world of to-day as to the Jews of old. Ah, no! the sinfulness of man cannot meet with the holiness of God without man's being swept in judgment from His presence.

This blessed invitation given by the Lord, tells us, however, more than the fact that we are away from Him by nature. It also tells out the love of His heart and of God's heart in seeking to do away with that distance and have us

BROUGHT NIGH

(Eph. ii. 13). Just think, dear unsaved one, God wants us to be in heaven with Him for ever. That God should desire us to be brought to Himself (1 Peter iii. 18) is truly amazing, when we think that we, by our sins, deserved to be shut out into the eternal darkness of the lake of fire.

But before that distance could be done away, sins must be done away. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). Death alone could meet the demands of God's righteousness. But God in love sent One who has gloriously met every claim that justice could raise. How? "By the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26) on the cross at Golgotha, for there He bore the judgment of God against sin. There He died, "the Just for the unjust" (1 Peter iii. 28).

So, looking onward to the work of the cross, He could say,

“I AM THE WAY,

the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me.” The person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are like a mighty bridge spanning the infinite space that separates man from God.

None can plead that their sins have been too great or too many, for that precious blood “cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John i. 7). Let us suppose that some kind gentleman advertised that he would give a suit of clothes to any poor person who would come for them. Would you not wonder if you saw some very ragged man standing outside the gentleman’s door, wishing to have the new clothes, but at the same time refusing to go in because he was too ragged? Why, the poorer and more ragged he was the more closely would he answer to the conditions of the generous offer. So the more sinful the sinner, the more deeply he will be able to drink of the grace of the Lord Jesus, for it is *sinners* that He receives (Luke xv. 2), nay, *invites* to come to Him. When here on earth He loved to gather them round Him and pour into their ears the tale of His Father’s love and grace, and even at this moment up on His throne, in sweet compassion, He bends down to poor sinners and pleads with them to come.

COME AS YOU ARE,

for God does not require any preparation on the sinner’s part.

“All the fitness He requireth
Is to know your need of Him.”

“All things are now ready” (Luke xiv. 17), for all has been done that need be done for your soul’s salvation. Christ has come to this world, died for sinners on the cross, risen from among the dead, ascended up to heaven, and is now glorified at the right hand of God. His position there in the glory clearly shows that

every requirement of divine justice has been fully and finally settled by what He did on the cross.

Then let the language of your heart be:—

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,
O! Lamb of God, I come!”

A poor woman lay dying. Some one went to see her, and after enquiring as to her illness, asked if she were saved. Her face beamed with joy as she eagerly answered, “Oh, yes! I came to Jesus last week, and oh! He took me! He took me! and I am so happy—so happy! Isn’t this a brand plucked from the burning!” Can you, dear reader, truthfully say—

“I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad”?

If not, then just while you are reading these words, come to Him; for, says Jesus, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John vii. 37).

COME NOW.

Come while God is waiting in long-suffering, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter iii. 9). Come while Christ sits on His throne, “exalted to be a Prince and Saviour” (Acts v. 31). Come while the Spirit is striving, for God has said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen. vi. 3). Come! oh, come now! for now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2).

What blessing will be yours if you accept His invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28). Yes, rest—what this world knows nothing about (Is. lvii. 20, 21)—rest to your guilty conscience as to the sins which hang like a heavy burden on your soul,

and from which none can relieve you but the Lord Jesus Himself. He says, moreover, that "he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35). Not only will He give peace to your troubled conscience by His finished work, but in His person there is to be found real happiness for the heart. "At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore," wrote the Psalmist (Ps. xvi. 11). Christ Himself at the right hand of God is the eternal spring of pleasures for those who have been saved by His grace.

Then having come to Him, you may "follow His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21), who desires His sheep to follow Him, saying, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23). He will give grace and strength if we look to Him who "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). May you, dear reader, if saved, be kept with all of us who belong to the Lord, walking in the Spirit, working for God and waiting for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who has "delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

But if, dear unsaved one, you are determined to cling to this world and its sins,

IF YOU WILL NOT COME

to Christ that you may have life (John v. 40), then know that in a future day, when grace has gone and judgment has taken its place, when He who is now the Saviour will be the Judge, you will hear these awful words, "Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke xiii. 27). The door of mercy will then be closed for ever, and it will be too late to cry to Him. There will be no admittance then. No gospel invitations will be sounded out to the lost in hell. No Saviour will call. No Spirit will strive. For guilty sinners now in this world there is a way to

heaven, but there will be no way from the lake of fire to heaven—only a great gulf fixed, and the condition of the soul for all eternity will be also unchangeably fixed.

“ God’s house is filling fast,
 ‘ Yet there is room !’
 Some guest will be the last,
 ‘ Yet there is room !’
 Yes ! soon salvation’s day
 To you will pass away,
 Then grace no more will say—
 ‘ Yet there is room !’ ”

Oh, then, dear reader, if still unconverted, come to the Lord Jesus Christ; come *as you are*, and come NOW. B. P. O. F.

PAUL'S PRAYERS.

IN the epistles of the apostle Paul, we may find five prayers for the saints, which follow in remarkable order:—

1. In Ephes. i. 15-23: Fundamental principles of truth are shown;—the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. In Ephes. iii. 14-21: The family relationship, knowing the love of Christ;—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. In Phil. i. 9-11: Practical walk and blessing.
4. In Col. i. 9-14: A present deliverance and redemption.
5. In Thess. i. 11-12: Counted *worthy to suffer*.

We thus perceive a beautiful succession in these prayers.

IT takes all our learning to make things plain, and in teaching we learn.

JOHN XVII.—He speaks the words for joy (ver. 13); He gives the glory for perfecting (ver. 23); He declares the name for love (ver. 26).

THE MANNA.

1st. It was not for redemption or salvation ; that was found in the blood. It was not to *give* life ; that was found in eating the flesh and in drinking the blood of the Son of Man—*i.e.*, faith in His death.

2nd. Not the produce of the wilderness ; there was *no food* found there for a redeemed people. It was bread from *heaven*. It came out of heaven. Only what comes *from* heaven sustains on the way *to* heaven.

But again. It was not the produce of *their toil*, no more than the blood of the Lamb was. They were sheltered by faith ; so they have to *live* by faith—to live by what comes from heaven.

In feeding on the manna we have communion with God, who *gives* it fresh, and who blesses it to our use. O the inward refreshment and strength found in feeding on the manna—that blessed One given of God to be our delight and joy, aye, and to be our *companion* on the way. It is not *merely* to *admire* Jesus ; but the heart that feeds on Him knows His love. The disciples found that Christ was one to follow and *be with*. Blessed Lord! dost Thou seek our company ?

Exodus xvi. 16.—Take ye every man for them that are in his tents. Christ would have the head of a family see that those in his house were fed with Christ. Feed them with the Word.

Note. When in the true spirit of a Christian I have got *my joy*. And more, I have a *ministry of joy for others*. Suppose it is rejected, does that rob me of my joy ? Far from it. It gives grief for their sakes ; but it makes Christ to be all the more precious. Others will receive them. God stirs up by trials to seek rest in Christ and in pilgrimage.

J. R.

PRIESTHOOD.

THE 25th of Numbers, together with the 8th and 9th of Leviticus, gives us somewhat of a complete view of priesthood ; and the 13th of John will fall in company with a meditation on these chapters. The Epistle to the Hebrews is, as we know, rather the New Testament writing upon this subject *in its details* ; but I speak of these chapters as giving us a perfect view of it in *its great outline*.

In Numbers xxv., we see the *title* on which the office of priesthood rests. It is illustrated in the person of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Aaron himself had been "called" into this office on the eighth day, the resurrection day—the day that was afterward to put the Son into the same office. But Aaron does not, in his history, illustrate the *ground* or *title* on which his office rests. He did not exercise zeal on the behalf of the glory of God, and the redemption of Israel, ere he received his office. He was *called* to it, but he did not *acquire* it. Phinehas acquired it. The Son acquired it, like the true Phinehas, and was then called to it, like the true Aaron.

Phinehas turned away the righteous wrath of God from Israel. He made atonement. He was zealous for God, in entitling God to let mercy, in His dealings with His guilty, self-destroyed people, rejoice against judgment. He enabled God to be just, while He was a Justifier. And this God owns as zeal for Him ; for *it was doing for Him the very thing He desired*—affording Him a way whereby He might, in full consistency with His own glory, bring back His banished ones—enabling Him, and entitling Him, to gratify His love without sacrificing His honour. This is a blessed sight, not only of the work on which the priesthood rests, but of the heart of Him who accepts that work with zeal and delight. And all this is a shadow of Christ on the cross, and of our gracious

God. Phinehas went through this work of atonement of his own heart. Moses did not require it of him. It was the motion of his own spirit, because he had a zeal for God, and for the salvation of Israel, according to God's desire. What a shadow of Christ! What a secret about priesthood! Phinehas gained the priesthood, the covenant of grace (precious title for the priesthood), by this zeal, and the atonement it made. *Atonement was the ground of priesthood*, and he who made the one entitled himself to the other; such was Jesus.

The title to this office being thus acquired, it remains to be seen in what *character* this office is now to be exercised, and who the *person* is.

The garments of Aaron are the mystic witnesses of this, and come, in their time and place, to satisfy us on this matter. We read of them in Leviticus viii.: the brodered coat, the robe of blue, the ephod, the girdle, the shoulder-stones, and the breast-stones, and lastly the mitre, elucidate these garments. They tell us of the person of Jesus, that He was perfect man, in all the various, unsoiled perfections of the nature He had assumed. Such was the brodered coat. They tell us that He was a heavenly man also, though simply and truly born of a woman. Such was the robe of blue. They tell us of the unity of the same person, though with these two natures, divine and human. Such was the ephod, where the gold was found in company with the fine twined linen, the purple, and the scarlet, and the blue. Having thus the *person*, we then learn the *characters* and *virtues* in which this blessed, wondrous person exercises His ministry. The girdle tells of His service, that He has given Himself to this priestly ministry, and owns it as that for which He is continually set in the sanctuary of God. The stones on the shoulders and on the breast, bearing as they severally did the names of the tribes of Israel, tell us that our priest has imparted both His *strength* and His *affections* to us—that "His love is as great as

His power, and knows neither measure nor end," and that therefore our blessing is sure ; for as none can gainsay the title of such an one to act for us, so none can question His competency, or our salvation, under the hand of such an Advocate, in whom power and love thus meet together for us. The golden plate on the fore-front of the mitre, then, lets us read the light, the unsullied light, in which we appear at all times in the presence of God—that it is nothing less than unspotted clearness itself, such as the person of the Son carries, and such as the Throne of God cannot but recognise. "Holiness to the Lord" is inscribed there, as the names of the tribes are inscribed on the breast-stones and the shoulder-stones. The elect dwell in the light, rest on the strength, and are happy in the love of God in Christ Jesus. If the priesthood be exercised on the ground of atonement, it is exercised by such a person as these mystic garments thus present to us. What has been the counsel of God, what the energies of God, what the affections of God, about us, wretched, worthless sinners ! These garments were put on the priest in Israel, before he was called into office ; and when we look at the Lord Jesus, the true Aaron, we see that He was wearing them in spirit all His life. He was the perfect, heavenly man, the divine man, the God man, from His birth, as I need not say, giving witness again and again, through all the activities of His life, that He was serving His saints, imparting His strength and His heart to them, and in a way and measure cleansing them, being fully accepted of God while serving them. In John xiii., however, His ministry on earth being now over—His public ministry—and He in retirement with His elect, He is seen anticipating His ministry in heaven ; that is, His priestly ministry in the sanctuary, which He was then soon to enter, and which God had pitched, and not man. Accordingly the supper is over. As we saw in the history of Phinehas, atonement sustains priesthood ; so here, in

the history of the true Phinehas, we see the same. The washing of the feet follows the supper—the one being significant of the priestly service of Jesus in the heavens; the other of His sacrifice, His atoning, reconciling service on earth. And then He is seen ascending this heavenly sanctuary with all His mystic priestly garments upon Him. He is the God-Man in His person. He has the priestly girdle upon Him. He has the breast-plate upon Him, loving His saints unto the end, ever carrying them in His heart. He has the golden plate on the mitre upon Him; for He imparts, under God's own eye, His own cleanness to them. He shows Himself after this manner, by anticipation, as already in the heavens; and what comfort to faith flows from this, that He who is ascended there is the One, the very One, who had been all through His life here acquainting us with Himself! We know Him as He is by knowing Him as He was. Blessed to tell it; and all we want is simple faith to believe and enjoy it. And the issue of all this service is glory. His priesthood shelters and assures us till we reach the Father's house, as we see in John xiii. He washes their feet at the beginning and at the end, introducing them to the Father's house. Heaven is now a sanctuary for their purifying, till it becomes a home for their dwelling.

M.S. of late J. G. B.

ISRAEL'S FEAST.

“With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”—*Luke xxii. 15, 16.*

LORD! 'twas Thy heart's desire,
Thine Israel's feast to share,
Ere Thou wouldst suffer and expire,
The nation's guilt to bear.
Nor Israel's crime alone
The mercv-tide must meet;
Thou didst for Gentile sins atone,
God's counsels to complete.

Thus, to the faithful few
Reposing in Thy Name
(Ah, to one dark intruder too),
Didst Thou Thy death proclaim.
Beside the Paschal Lamb,
That night in shadow slain,
The antitype, the great I AM,
Fortells His righteous reign.

There badest Thou farewell
To every link with earth ;
There sounded nature's funeral
knell,
Ere Thy new era's birth.

Rejected of Thine own,
O'er whom Thy heart doth
yearn,
Thou to Thy holy Father's Throne
Didst in His time return.

No more may earth detain
The true Unleavened Bread,—
Her bitter herbs tell out His pain,
Who liveth and was dead.

No more Thine ancient vine
Hath fruit, O Christ, for Thee;
Until the kingdom, doubly Thine,
Declared in power shall be.

Yet do Thy words remain
In every widowed heart ;
Thou Jesus, who wilt come again,
Our life in glory art.

Our Passover art Thou !
We love to keep the feast,
Thy joy, Thy peace, our portion
now,
Though lowest we, and least.

Thine own exceeding grace
Rose all opposings o'er ;
Thy blissful presence is the place
Where now our cup runs o'er.

Wrath's awful cup was Thine,
God gave it Thee to drink :
Nor could Thy filial love divine
Beneath His provings shrink.

" *Before I suffer,*" so
Thou spakest to Thine own ;
Ah ! what our hearts can never
know
Didst Thou endure alone !

Thine offering to God
No finite mind can scan ;
And yet Thy Name declares abroad
Thy love to God and man.

Thy mystic body, Lord,
Thou givest us to eat ;
Thine own thanksgivings we have
heard,
With Thine, our musings meet.

The cup,—Thy blood outpoured,
Thou bidd'st us all to take ;
For ever be Thy Name adored,
All thirst therein we slake.

Thou reignest in our midst,
We live to reign with Thee ;
And, yon celestial hosts amidst,
Thou still our ALL shalt be.

Thy covenant made new,
Established in Thy blood,
Shall save Thine earthly people,
too,
And bring them back to God.

The heavens Thou shalt hear,
And they shall hear the earth ;
The seed of God, with holy fear
Shall feast in holy mirth.

Then, then shall earth rejoice,
With corn and oil and wine ;
And subject wholly to Thy voice,
Proclaim the glory Thine.

Anon.

HOLINESS is the symmetry of the soul.—*P. Henry.*

THEY that are most holy, most refined, and most purified, may as soon be in the dirt as the weakest Christians ; and so far as I can see, Satan's design is against them most. I am sure the greatest sins have been committed by the greatest saints.—*Bunyan.*

CHRIST LEARNT.—“I cannot say that I have not so lived that I should now be afraid to die; but this I can say, I have so *learned Christ* that all fear of death is gone.”—*Stephen Marshall, 17th Century.*

PEACE WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE!—Sinner, is your peace sickness-proof? Is it death-bed proof? Is it judgment-proof?

CHRISTOPHER SMART.—It may interest our readers to learn that to him we owe some of the finest verses, as the poet Montgomery declared them to be, in the English language—

Tell them “I AM,” Jehovah said
To Moses, while earth heard in dread;
And smitten to the heart.

At once—above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,

Replied, O Lord! Thou art.

THE MISSING LINK.—In an article in the “*Revue Scientifique*,” Professor Virchow says that, in spite of statements to the contrary, no traces of the “missing link” between man and the lower animals has been discovered either in the physical organisation of modern savages or in the most ancient of human skulls.

A GOD all mercy is a God unjust.—*Young.*

DESIGN IN CREATION.—In Richard Owen there passed away one of the great men of science who have maintained the harmony of the works of creation and the words of revelation. Sir Isaac Newton was the leader of this band, wisest interpreter of God’s works, and reverent student of God’s Word. Herschel and Dalton, Brewster and Faraday, Sedgwick and Forbes, were among the many who kept up the “philosophical succession,” in days before the “eclipse of faith” in our age of agnosticism, unbelief, and materialism. Owen, the pupil of Cuvier, held the same views, and never stooped to depreciate the “argument from design” as taught by Paley, and by the authors of the *Bridgewater Treatises*, such as Whewell, Chalmers, and Sir Charles Bell. Lord Kelvin and Sir George Stokes need alone be named among the living representatives of “the old school,” of which Sir Richard Owen was a noble example. He remained to the last ever a humble, modest, and devout searcher after truth in every department, while so many were mistaking theories about material things for true wisdom and philosophy. Here is the concluding paragraph of his work on the “*Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton*.” “In every species ends are obtained, and the interests of the animal promoted, in a way that indicates superior design, intelligence, and forethought, in which the judgment and reflection of the animal never were concerned, and which, therefore, we must ascribe to the ‘Sovereign’ of the Universe, in whom we live and move and have our being.”—*Leisure Hour.*

THE LORD JESUS touched the leper and He touched the bier, and yet He was undefiled. He had God’s relationship to sin. He knew good and evil, but was in divine supremacy over it; knowing such things as God knows them. Had He been other than He was, these touches would have defiled Him. He must have been put outside the camp, and gone through the cleansing the law prescribed. But nothing of this kind do we see in Him. He was not an unclean Jew. He was not merely undefiled, He was *undefilable*.—J. G. B.

HAPPINESS.—“I never knew a person whom one could really call happy who was not sincerely religious.”—*Andrew Lang.*

DEVOTEDNESS.—God had to compel us to “come in,” for in the stubbornness of our evil hearts we would rather perish than come to His Son; but there are two things He will never compel any man to do. He will compel none to take, as Mary, a place at the feet of Jesus; this must come from a heart devoted to His person. Nor will He compel any to meet Satan in conflict; this can only be by devotedness to Christ’s interests.—“*Help and Food.*”

“HAVING NO HOPE” (Eph. ii. 12).—Harlan Page asked one of his young men, “Shall I put you down as having hope in Christ?” On getting a negative reply, “Then,” said he, very tenderly, “I will put you down as having no hope.” He left him, but that was enough, for God gave him no rest till his soul got peace by the blood of the Cross.

HUMILITY did not make the Baptist contemptible; when he refused the name of a prophet, the Lord said he was more than a prophet. Moses, the meekest of men, was the greatest upon earth. David said, “I will be more humble yet, and lowly in mine own sight, yet thou and thy maids shall honour me.” Christ ceased not to be a King in being a Servant, nor to be a Lion in being a Lamb, nor to be God because He became Man, nor to be a Judge because He was judged. So a saint loses not his honour by humility, but shall be honoured for his humility, as the Son was honoured when He was humbled (Luke xv. 18-25).—*H. Smith.*

THE HEART OF THE LORD JESUS was more softly moved to mercy, more meekly patient, more sweetly submissive than any human heart that ever sorrowed among the loneliest solitudes of earthly affliction!

SELF SACRIFICE.—Two sailors were floating on the deep, when a rope was flung to one, who exclaimed, “Fling it to Tom, he is just going down; I can last some time longer.” Tom was rescued, and the rope was then flung to the generous tar only just in time to save him.

PITY is a man’s best armour, but his worst cloak.—*Bunyan.*

AN ARTIST satisfied with his transcript of his ideal makes no further progress. A sculptor was found sunk in reverie before his masterpiece; when asked why he was so sad, he replied, “Because I am satisfied with my work. I have embodied my ideal, and thus the limit of my capacity is reached.” God has put before us His own ideal, the Man in the glory of God; so that we might find constant stimulus, yet ever have to say, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after.”

“WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY.”—A visitor from London was shown by a gentleman in the country the chapel attached to his house. “What a glorious kitchen this would make!” said the visitor. “When I make a god of my belly,” replied his host, “I will make this chapel into a kitchen.”

JOYS ARE OUR WINGS; sorrows are our spurs.—*Richter.*

THE CELEBRATED HAYDN was conversing with some distinguished persons on the best method of restoring exhausted mental energies. One said he had recourse to a bottle of wine, another that he went into company. Haydn being asked, said he retired to his closet, having found that nothing exerted so happy and efficacious an influence on his mind as prayer. Haydn was no enthusiast.

“SO GREAT SALVATION.”—*Hebrews* ii. 3.

WHY speak of salvation in this manner? Because it “began to be spoken by the Lord.” In the past God spoke to Israel “at sundry times and in divers manners”; but “in these last days,”* we are told, He has spoken in the Son. God Himself spoke upon earth; not an angel or a prophet sent from God with a message, but God Himself. How important then must be the communication!

Angels, the highest order of created beings, cannot stand and be compared with the Son. He has inherited a name of greater excellence—He is the Son of the Father. He had the right to go and sit down, on the right hand of the Majesty on high after the purification of sins was accomplished. Who but a divine person could do this? Who but One who was co-equal with the Father could be asked to sit on the right hand of the throne of God until His enemies were made His footstool? Thus the dignity and glory of the Person who first set forth this salvation gives greatness to it that nothing else can.

But it is “great” because of the depth of the humiliation the Son went into. He became a man; He was born in this world, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The work accomplished in His death and blood-shedding requires no repetition, inasmuch as everything required for the glory of God has been secured, and the one coming to God by Him is perfected for ever. We are sanctified by His blood, and the sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one.

This salvation is “so great” because of the condition those were in to whom it came. Scripture (the only writing which gives us the truth) informs us as to their state. Romans iii. describes their guilty con-

* The Jewish days—not the last days of 2 Tim.

dition. No exception, among men of any nation or class, to the terrible judgment there pronounced by God. The rich and the poor, the young and the old, the wise and the foolish are all on one level here. God has pronounced His estimate or judgment of all : "There is none righteous ; *no, not one.*" Yet this salvation is sufficient. It is of infinite value. Our sins are great, though not innumerable by God. But the efficacy of the blood is infinite ; "it cleanseth from every sin."

Eph. ii. sets forth another condition in which man is viewed by God. He is by *nature* a child of wrath ; he is dead in trespasses and in sins ; he has therefore no life in which to live to God. He is alienated from the life of God, and walks in the vanity of his mind (iv. 18).

We learn, too, from the Word that it is a completed salvation. "By grace ye *are* saved, through faith," we read (Eph. ii. 8). "Who *hath saved* us, and called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. i. 9). "According to His mercy He saved us" (Titus iii. 5). The testimony of Scripture to the believer is simple and complete. We are already made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. i. 12). Salvation in this aspect is entirely outside us, grounded simply on the victory of Christ. Still we have to keep in mind that Scripture speaks to us of a continuous character of salvation ; always going on while we are in this body.

The child of God has trials of various kinds in the wilderness to overcome. Here we would remark that the afflictions which all who are "Christ's own" become more or less acquainted with, are allowed and sent of the Father to exercise our hearts, in order that we may be weaned from the world and led more truly to "seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." The Father does not afflict willingly or grieve the children of men, and He allows us to say that these things are

grievous, not joyous. How little do we understand His end! At one time it may be to discover the pride of our hearts to ourselves, and at another to secure our withdrawal from companionships and lines of conduct which do not please Him.

Our great High Priest is on high to save us to the end—to lift us above the barriers which come in our way, and to encourage our hearts amid the sorrows of the wilderness, which otherwise would impede our progress. This part of our subject is of immense interest and value for our journeying days. The weakness of man—of the child of God (for he is still "a fallen creature," notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary)—has to be practically learned, in order that we may have no confidence in the flesh.

Important Scriptures in this connection must be noted. I refer to Phil. i. 19 and ii. 12. In the first, salvation evidently, in Paul's mind, was that Christ might be magnified, not the getting out of prison. His being there had turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel, and he looked for Christ's will concerning him to be maintained, counting on the prayers of the saints and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ to this end. In the second Scripture, those he addressed were not in prison, but equally with Paul they needed to keep before them the working out of their salvation as they came in contact with influences hostile to the good pleasure of God. He drops a word before them to keep them in daily dependence on God, even that it was God who wrought in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

The book of Job furnishes us with blessed instruction as to God's dealings with a saint in order that He may hide pride from His child, and that he may know death and resurrection inwardly, and thus truly boast in God and not in the creature. We dislike and can easily point out the workings and activities of flesh in our brother and sister, but see it very dimly in ourselves. But God is able to bring us to His mind.

Jonah, too, has lessons for us. We see in him another child in the school of God. He had to learn that he had no more claim on God's salvation than the heathen around him ; and into "the belly of hell" he had to go to learn the blessed truth that "salvation is of the Lord."

Then there is salvation from our enemies—from those who speak against us wrongfully. Salvation is often delayed through God using the malice of men to chasten us and correct us as to things He sees displeasing to Him. We are ready to meet the evil done to us by evil in some other way. We do not take it patiently. The psalmist (iii.) sees God only. God is between him and the foe ; he can therefore lie down and sleep, and at the right time he awakes. God sustains him ; and in *communion* he is learning that salvation is of the Lord.

This was proclaimed to Israel on the banks of the Red Sea, when nothing was in sight to encourage them. They were ordered to "Fear not : to stand still and *see the salvation of the Lord.*" The children many a time since have found their God intervene on their behalf as a Saviour. Often since the days of the exodus they had cause to echo the blessed words, "Salvation is of the Lord ;" and now in these days, when what was type, or temporal deliverance, has been superseded by the presence of the Saviour God upon earth giving Himself up to die that we might be justified by His blood, and therefore saved from wrath, we say, Salvation is great—so great we cannot comprehend it—yet by His rich grace we have been apprehended by it.

Jonah learned it down in the depths, with the weeds wrapped about his head. He is brought by God into conditions out of which none but God can deliver him. He forgot his own mercy, and in pettishness judged God, instead of justifying and magnifying His name that where sin had abounded grace did much more abound. Poor Jonah

failed to delight in the mercy of God flowing to the six score thousand souls who could not discern between their right hand and their left, and much cattle.

But we may not close without giving a distinct place to the crowning act in this “great salvation” for which we wait.

We are waiting for the Saviour to put forth His power on these bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like to His body of glory. He is coming to sweep the graves for the dust of His own, and change those who are alive. What a moment! a living hope, surely, founded for its activity on the blessed fact of His love toward us when we were enemies, which is displayed to us in His cross, blood, and death, and realised to our hearts by the in-dwelling Spirit of our God. Until this moment arrives we shall have sin in us. The only way we shall get *free from sin* is by falling asleep, or being changed at His coming.

May the gracious Lord revive our souls, and concentrate our thoughts meantime on the will and ways of Him who is coming for us.

Thus we have seen salvation presented to us in the Scriptures of truth:—

1st. As an accomplished salvation.

2nd. As connected with the exercises the soul passes through in learning what it is in itself—learning also *how* to trust God when the enemy rises up against one, or the battles of the Lord have to be entered; and,

Finally, we have seen salvation as that for which we wait, when at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God we shall rise to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with Him.

All, be it remembered, resting on the love of God seen in the Son bearing the holy judgment of God that was against us.

Thy Word, O God, declares that “the glory of Thy King is great in Thy salvation.”

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

2 JOHN.

THERE are two short epistles which are commonly accepted as proceeding from the pen of the apostle and evangelist, John. Looking into them, that judgment about them will, we believe, be confirmed. For, remembering the two great subjects of the first epistle, viz., God is light and God is love, we can trace in these two which follow, the application to individual Christians of teaching already inculcated under those two heads.

Obedience and love are the manifestations of the divine nature as displayed in man. Obedience to the divine commands is inculcated in the *second* epistle. Love is encouraged in the *third*. A lady is the apostle's correspondent in the former, Gaius is that in the latter.

The elect lady John addresses; for we believe that it was to a woman and to her children that he wrote, and not to any church, or assembly, under the designation of a woman, as some, not to say many, have thought. Paul wrote letters to individuals. John might well do the same. And although we do not know who the lady was, nor where she lived, we believe that several considerations will make it not only reasonable, but pretty evident, that to a woman, not to an assembly, the evangelist now addressed himself.

For, first, the salutation, "Grace, mercy, and peace," resembles those elsewhere addressed to individuals, seeing that "mercy" is introduced when writing to them, but is never elsewhere brought in when addressing an assembly.

Next: if the lady is meant to personify an assembly, who are her children of whom John makes mention? Children of an assembly is a thought elsewhere unknown in Scripture, and, we venture to

think, quite foreign to its teaching. A mother church is a phrase with which we moderns are familiar; but the thought of the assembly, or church, being a mother is, we feel sure, quite opposed to true church teaching. The assembly of Christ, or of God, is viewed as the Bride of the former, but not yet His wife. And a local assembly, as that of Corinth, is spoken of under the figure of a chaste virgin espoused to Christ (2 Cor. xi. 2). To speak of the assembly, whether viewed as comprising all Christians, or viewed as referring only to a local company, as already married, would be to upset distinctive church teaching. The heavenly Jerusalem is called our mother (Gal. iv. 26); but that is not the Christian Church.

Again: whilst brotherly love is enjoined on saints, where do we read of love to an assembly being taught in language such as John uses (5)? Were John and the assembly to love each other? Is that what he meant in verse 5? Was that the commandment from the beginning?

Remembering, then, that the Church is a Bride, not yet a wife, and never called a mother, we may be kept from a mistaken notion that under the "elect lady" some local assembly is addressed, and then be puzzled to find out who are her children, *i. e.*, those connected with her by the birth tie; for to such does John evidently refer.

To a Christian lady, and a mother, though perhaps a widow (for her husband is not hinted at), and as responsible for those whom she allowed to enter her house, the apostle indites this short letter; including, as we see, her children, whom with her he salutes as follows: "To the elect lady* and her children whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that

* Some have thought that the Greek word translated *lady* is really the individual's name, *Cyria*. We keep to that which the English versions have accepted—"lady."

have known the truth ; for the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." The truth dwelt in John and in them. The Spirit who is the truth (1 John v. 6) was in them. The word of God dwelt in all Christians who were as young men (1 John ii. 14). They had the witness of God within them as to eternal life, for they possessed it (1 John v. 10). To those thus blest—this lady and her children—he sends apostolic salutation in truth and love from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, adding, what is peculiar to this epistle, but is in character with his purpose in writing, "the Son of the Father ;" for on the doctrine of the Christ he is about to lay great stress.

Her children he notices ; for he had found some of them walking in truth, "even," he adds, "as we have received a commandment from the Father" (4).

She had evidently trained up her family well, and they were giving evidence of their sound Christian education. Care and watchfulness, however, were still needed ; not only for her children, but also for herself, because of the dangers around. So the word came, "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I write a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk (or, should walk) after His commandments. This is the commandment, That as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (5, 6). Christian love was to be displayed ; true brotherly love, as enjoined by the Lord (John xiii. 34), that commandment which could be called at the same time both old and new. Old, with reference to the date of its first promulgation ; new, as true in Christ and in all real Christians (1 John ii. 7, 8). Now the manifestation of Christian love was inseparably connected with walking after God's commandments (2 John 6) ; and these commandments could not be observed, if the lady held not the truth about God's Son, Jesus Christ (1 John iii. 23). Very important

was this, and how needful for our day! Needful was it for the elect lady and her children, seeing that many deceivers had gone forth into the world who confessed not Jesus Christ coming in flesh. Confession of Him, the coming One, they refused. And that refusal is still witnessed. So this letter to one to us unknown, may come to hearts in the nineteenth century as a word for our day.

In the first epistle of John we have had mention of those who confessed not Jesus Christ *come* in flesh (iv. 2), reminding us of the Lord's incarnation. Now he writes of those who confess not Jesus Christ *coming* in flesh (2 John 7). For what can be said of no one else, can be affirmed of Him. He has come in flesh, and He will come again in flesh, and that to the confusion of the Antichrist of the last days. So writes John, he that confesseth not Jesus Christ coming in flesh is the deceiver and the Antichrist. It is what that person will do; for, assuming to be the Christ, he will, of course, refuse to confess the coming One, the Lord Jesus. The spirit of that was abroad then.

What activity was displayed by the enemy. *Many* deceivers had gone forth into the world. We see here, what Church history has indeed confirmed, that the great battle rages round the truth in connection with Christ, either that which concerns His Person, or that which has reference to His atoning death. In the Eastern part of Christendom the great enemy, in early days, sought to corrupt true teaching about the Person of the Lord. In the Western part of Christendom, the great contention has been about the efficacy and all-sufficiency of the one sacrifice of Christ.

Now to the doctrine of the Christ, as made known in apostolic days, there was nothing to be added. Of this the lady was reminded, being warned against deceivers who were abroad in the world. So the apostle, in pursuance of this, exhorts her and her

children to be watchful, that they should not lose the things that they had wrought, but that they might receive a full reward.* To the judgment-seat of Christ, evidently, John here refers, putting them in remembrance that they must stand before it, and desiring for them all to receive a full reward.

In view of that, and of the condition of things around, the fruit of anti-Christian teaching, he writes very plainly, that "Whosoever goeth forward, and abideth not in the doctrine (or, teaching) of Christ, hath not God." Christian teaching for some people was not enough. They desired development in some form or another. Something better—something beyond Christianity. But there is nothing for us beyond or above it; for as Paul reminds the Colossian saints, the Lord Jesus Christ is the *Head* of all principality and power. There is nothing that man can attain to above Him. Moreover, in Him dwells all the *fulness* of the Godhead bodily, and Christians are *filled full* in Him. There is nothing, therefore, beyond Christ (Col. ii. 9 10). And with this John's teaching elsewhere is in full accord, as we see by his address to the fathers in the Christian faith, to whom, as knowing Him that is from the beginning, he had nothing to add.

Now in whatever guise the temptation to listen to development of Christian doctrine is presented, it is to be resisted, and unhesitatingly refused, whether it be by adding something to the revelation, engrafting novelties upon it, or whether it comes in the form that Christianity is played out, and something better can be offered. Of those who advocate such tenets, the apostle plainly and decidedly declares they have not God. In the doctrine of the Christ we must

* The reading of this verse is somewhat uncertain. We give what the best textual critics have adopted, that presented in the *Codex Alexandrinus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, "That ye lose not," &c., *i. e.*, the lady and her children. If the A. V. is followed, the meaning would be that John desired their steadfastness, that he should not lose his reward, analogous to that which we read in I John ii. 28.

abide. Those who do abide in it, and those only, have both the Father and the Son, *i.e.*, can have living fellowship with both.

Careful, then, was the lady to be, and responsible was she for those admitted into her house. A woman though she was, she was a Christian, and hence must act like one, for she had the unction of the Holy One, and knew all things (1 John ii. 20). And no specious excuse of showing love could be admitted as a valid plea for receiving these who, going about, were really deceivers and underminers of the truth. And this, be it remarked, John writes, not to a local elder, but to a lady. What, it might have been said, put such responsibility on a woman? Yes, John could have answered, faithfulness to God, to His Son, and to the truth was looked for from every believer, whether man or woman. So he writes in the most positive manner: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (*or, teaching*), receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed (*or, give him greeting*); for he that giveth him greeting is partaker of his evil deeds" (10, 11).

John had specified in verse 7 a particular form of evil then current. Here (9, 10) he writes in a comprehensive way, as to any who brought not the doctrine of Christ. In many ways might that be corrupted. The exact form of error at one time is not by any means always the same that it will assume in a subsequent age. Hence the importance of this comprehensive statement—the doctrine of Christ. Whoever subverted that, whoever did not bring that, the lady was unhesitatingly to refuse. It might seem hard to lay this burden on a woman. But, if she had the privilege of entertaining those who went about ministering, she had the responsibility of which she could not divest herself of being careful who she admitted within her doors. Their authority to minister might not lie within her province to decide. To the teaching they brought she was not to be indifferent.

An itinerant ministry was not unknown in those days. Teachers evidently went about as they were led, and saints in different places opened their doors to receive them. No one could rightly claim that such were intruding on the privileges and on the sphere of any teacher domiciled in the place. Teachers were Christ's gifts to *men*, raised up, and sent forth as part of the instrumentality used by the Spirit for the perfecting of the saints, which was effected, as far as these instruments were concerned, by the work of the ministry, by the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephes. iv. 12). Where Christians were found, there was part of their field of labour, if directed by the Holy Ghost to occupy it.

Hence teachers might visit places in which they were personally unknown. Perfect freedom there was for that. But the responsibility of receiving them by showing them hospitality was not to be overlooked, or to be discharged in a perfunctory manner. What the doctrine was they brought, became an important question. Was it the doctrine of Christ, or was it not? That was a matter of real concern; and the lady was held competent to decide it. Then the gravity of receiving any, whether teachers or not, who brought not that doctrine is set forth. "He that biddeth him God speed (or, gives him greeting) is partaker of his evil deeds" (11).

These words, "*his evil deeds*," are of special importance. We can all understand that any in the position of that lady might have pleaded kindness as the reason for entertaining such, whilst professing, and truly, entire lack of sympathy with the doctrine brought; urging, in mitigation of the apostle's displeasure, that they had not imbibed the heresy, but were as sound in the faith as John himself. Would that have satisfied him? We know it would not. In his eyes it was not on the part of the lady a question of her sympathy with the doctrine. *Deeds*, not *doctrine*, John would have said. By extending hospitality to

that person she would partake of his evil *deeds*. The lady's orthodoxy might be, and in this case evidently was, unquestionable. John raised no doubt as to that. But he warned her solemnly, that bidding such an one God speed would make her partaker of his evil deeds. To receive such a person was, in John's eyes, a very serious matter indeed.

We have said that the lady was held responsible to judge of the doctrine. Now where could she learn what was true, and what was false? It was the doctrine of Christ that she was to be careful about. One book only is there which could authoritatively tell about that. By the Scriptures of truth, then, was she to be guided. Men's ideas might be far astray as to that. By the divine word, as taught by the Spirit, she was to judge, and is here held responsible to do it.

A "partaker of his evil deeds." With these words ringing as it were in her ears, the apostle concludes. The elder had delivered his message. He had done. His pen he laid down. To paper and ink he will have no further recourse. He hoped shortly to see her. Much had he to say, but he would reserve all that till they met. The question, however, on which he had written called for immediate dealing. Hence this letter.

Whether the lady and John did ever meet we know not. If they did, what passed between them has not been handed down. But we must for ever be thankful for this letter written by the pen of the loving apostle John. It instructed and authorised that lady to reject any overtures for extending her hospitality to those who brought not the doctrine of the Christ, that she might avoid implicating herself. Is she the only one who was intended to profit by its teaching?

C. E. S.

The Lord did not say, Go and sin no more and I will not condemn thee, but, Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.

THE JEWELS OF THE LORD.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels” (Mal. iii. 16, 17).

I DON'T know that anywhere in the Old Testament we have a more interesting and instructive picture of the true of heart than in this short Scripture. We see the little remnant of saints as distinguished from the unregenerate mass of the nation; and how sweet, and happy, and refreshing a sight it is! These are they that gave the Lord His true place; they had a holy reverential fear of Him. He was exalted before them, and they glorified Him! Nor only this, they *thought upon His name!* How truly blessed is this! We read, “He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous” (Job. xxxvi. 7), and “He will keep the feet of His saints” (1 Sam. ii. 9). But this goes much further; and, moreover, a special character of blessing is unfolded because of the faithfulness of these godly ones. The Lord testified of them that they feared Him, and thus spoke often one to another. Moreover, they *thought upon His Name.* Out of the abundance of their hearts they spake to one another, and what they said was of interest to the Lord. He hearkened, or listened, to what they spake concerning Him and His ways; His counsels, His covenants, His promises, His commandments, His ordinances, His judgments, His deliverances—above all, the Messianic hopes that He had put before them by His prophets, when redemption should come unto Israel and the Day-spring from on high should visit them!

But not only were they blessed by having Jehovah listening to and hearing the communications which passed between them touching the glory of the God of Israel, but God put very peculiar and special honour upon them, in causing a book of

remembrance of these things to be written *before Him*—thus putting these communings of theirs one with another upon record. Just as earthly monarchs caused the annals of each reign, and the sayings and doings of these potentates to be cut in tablets and inscribed upon pillars with an iron chisel for remote generations to decipher, so did God in a much more imperishable way record before Himself that which outweighed in His estimation the mighty deeds of the mightiest of men, even the words of His faithful servants when they spake one to another in the fear of the Lord. Nor must we fail to observe that it was not some special event, some exceptional occasion, that was contemplated in the prophet's words, but they "spake *often* one to another;" but no matter how often, the Lord's hearkening and hearing was assured to them, and the Spirit of God was with them as a divine Recorder before Jehovah of what they had expressed one to another. Nor was this everything; the Lord read their thoughts, looked right into them, and read them through and through, and He testifies by the prophet that they *thought upon His Name!*

How beautifully does that disclose to us how the Lord feels and appreciates the estimation which our hearts have of Him. His Name stands for Himself, His person; and every loving, worshipping, glorifying thought we have towards Him, though we might never be able to form it into words for any human ear to hear, or human eye to see, His heart apprehends and appraises as of priceless value to Himself!

And what does the last clause teach us as to all this? Why, simply as can be, just this, that such saints, so occupied, are most precious in His sight—"they shall be Mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, when I make up My jewels." As an earthly potentate decks himself on state occasions with the insignia of his high estate, and the symbols of his supreme rank, so in the day of His manifested glory as the God of Israel, the King in

Jeshurun, will Jehovah deck Himself with those saints who in the day of His rejection made His interests superior to everything else, speaking often one to another thereof, and thinking upon His Name. Beloved, is there no lesson in all this for us? And consider how scanty were their privileges as compared with ours. How little was revealed, and how little was there apprehension for!

But let us look at another picture, four or five centuries later. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). The Lord had met His rejection; had suffered and died; had risen and ascended; and had sent down the Holy Ghost. It is the day of Pentecost. No less than 3,000 gladly received the Word of the Lord by His apostle Peter; and this is the Holy Ghost's testimony of them. That divine Recorder has given us this sketch of early Christianity, the newly inaugurated thing that from that day to this God has been bringing His saints into. Alas! "How is the gold become dim? how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!" (Sam. iv. 1, 2). Are we not humbled when we recognise from whence we have fallen? Where now is this *stedfast continuance*? Can it for a moment be identified with the coldness, carelessness, and indifference that characterise saints to-day?

And mark its fourfold character: stedfast continuance in the apostles' doctrine, the apostles' fellowship, the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

First, the doctrine. As John wrote, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us" (1 John iv. 6). The apostles' doctrine was what they taught by the Spirit of God, and what in our case answers to it is *the Word of God*.

That stands first, to be stedfastly continued in. Not as though having our souls saved was everything, but holding fast the faithful word, as we have been taught, that we may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers " (Tit. i. 9).

Then there is the apostles' fellowship, which also was to be stedfastly continued in. The opposite of this is what we see in Barnabas and John Mark (Acts xv. 36-39), and again in 2 Tim. i. 15. The fellowship of saints is, however, ours to-day, and should be sedulously cultivated in every way ; no opportunity should be lost of promoting and furthering fellowship. The meetings of the saints are a means provided for this by God, and we should take the fullest advantage of the opportunities they present.

Then, also, we should continue stedfastly in breaking of bread. It is the primary act of fellowship, the expression, which is first and foremost, of the communion of saints ; yet how much is it neglected ! How many who fully own the scripturalness of its being observed weekly at least, break bread once a fortnight only, or perhaps once in three or four weeks. Where, where is the *stedfast continuance* ?

Then lastly, "in prayers." And here, perhaps, more than in anything else, we have to take our place in confession before God ; only confession becomes us. Alas ! how much and how grievously do many of us in this offend God ! If the empty bench that we ought to fill could speak, would it not testify against us ? The Lord present ; His saints absent ! Not a quarter perhaps of those in fellowship found on their knees before Him at the hour of prayer ! Some not there once a month ; some not once a quarter ; alas ! some never seen there from one year's end to another ! Where, where is the *stedfast continuance* ?

Most blessed and bounteous is the provision which God has made for us in His grace, and most grievous and God-dishonouring is the slight we put upon Him by despising the privileges He has given us. We

have the Word of God and the Holy Ghost, and the presence of the Lord, and gifts for edification, and the fellowship of saints; and as to all these things, the vacant places on Lord's day morning, and at the Scripture reading, and at the prayer meeting, and at the brother's fellowship meeting silently witness against us before the Lord. May He stir us up to that holy diligence and marked appreciation of His presence and blessing which would honour Him and bring tides of blessing to us. "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30). Let each one of us ask himself, Am I one of the jewels of the Lord with which He will deck Himself in the day of His glory?

NOTES ON PSALM XXII.

EVERYTHING in the beginning of this Psalm is letting down, and at the end there is everything lifting up. There is suffering and joy, but the former chiefly. The Person standing before us here is distinctly the Lord Jesus. There is a difference between this Psalm and what we have in Isaiah liii. and in the gospels. In Isaiah we have the blessed Lord as a Lamb set before us; but it is taken up with the special object of shewing the different feelings of the persons who had to do with Him. Some were cleaving to Him, others turning away from Him. In the gospels we have the historical fact of His sufferings; and in each of the four gospels there is something distinctive connected with the narrative. In Matthew the Lord is connected with Israel as the seed of Abraham, and there is the quotation from this Psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," when He was on the cross. In Mark, the Lord Jesus is set forth as the Servant, and the same words are quoted. Luke takes

Him up as the Son of Man, and he does not quote the words. There is peculiar repose in John, and there we have the Lord more in His divine character.

Finding the quotation from this Psalm in Matthew and in Mark, and not in the other gospels, seems to give a clue to the character of Christ's sufferings as the Heir of Promise and as the faithful Servant in the hour of suffering. In the Psalms it is sufferings themselves that are shewn. You see there the inward feelings, the deep tide of woe that rolled in on His soul. (The heading of the Psalm has a meaning—"The hind of the morning." The hinds go forth in their timidity in the morning, the harbingers of light ; but disappearing as soon as day breaks. If anywhere in the Old Testament light breaks out, we have it in this Psalm.) In the gospels we have everything that was done to *insult* our blessed Lord ; but that was not the bitterest part of His suffering, and all that He suffered from *men* would only leave the question of *sin* untouched as regards *God* and *one's own conscience*.

Sin has been committed before the infinite God. Wherever there has been sin there must be judgment. If I look into Scripture, I find the character of God is perfect holiness. If He who is perfectly holy has to do with the sinner, what must be the consequences ? Into however small a compass I bring my sin, it has been *done against an infinite God*. When do we see what sin is ? Is it in the ungodly high-priest who blasphemed the Son of God ? Was it in the Gentile ruler who sanctioned the crucifixion ? No ; it was when God's judgment was poured on Him for man's sin. He stood as the Sin-bearer, and it is there only we get the true measure of sin. When there made sin for us, He had not one single ray of light from God to strengthen Him. He represented sin before God, and the sustainment He had always had from God now ceased to flow.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?"
These words have quite a different meaning in Christ's

mouth to what they have in any other. Have not you even used this language when God was really drawing you by His own love? but you were afraid to come near to Him; and are not you ashamed to think of it? But it was very different in *Christ's experience*. (One may often feel afraid to take up the language of Scripture as one's own; it seems too large for the true expression of one's inward state. If one says, "I love the Lord," how one immediately feels ashamed of his love.)

The word "Eloi," &c., in the quotation, is expressive of nearness—"My God." It is not Hebrew, but Syriac. This expression, coming forth to Him who was always so near, has deep force in it; and the only moment in which He could be forsaken of God was this, when He was taking our sins upon Him. He was always in the full sunshine of God's favour, for He was *holy*. Christ could have been no *victim* if He had not been holy and separate from sinners. Nothing shews the perfect purity and holiness of the Lord like this Psalm. A Jewish rabbi has called it a Psalm of repining. True, indeed, there was a deep agony of soul when He said, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring;" but almost immediately afterward He vindicates God: "But Thou art holy." What a state poor Job was in while waiting for God; but such is the contrast of Christ here, as though He had said, "I have taken this place of bearing sins before God, and I *ought* to know what the award is." There was a spring in Himself that enabled Him to say, "Though Thou forsakest Me, I will not forsake Thee." Thus the essential purity and divine perfectness of what He was stood out in all that depth of humiliation. What a contrast we should exhibit in such circumstances! If we have nothing *from* God, we have *nothing*.

G. V. W. (?)

HIMSELF—HIS WORD.

WE saw Thee not when Thou did'st come
 To this poor world of sin and death,
 Nor e'er beheld Thy cottage home
 In poor, despised Nazareth ;
 But we believe Thy footsteps trod
 Its streets and ways, Thou Son of God !

We stood not by the empty tomb
 Where once Thy sacred body lay,
 Nor sat within the upper room,
 Nor met Thee in the open way ;
 But we believe that angels said,
 Why seek the living 'mongst the dead ?

And now that Thou art throned on high,
 And thence Thy waiting saints dost bless,
 No ray of glory from the sky
 Doth shine upon our wilderness,
 But we believe Thy faithful word,
 We soon shall see our coming Lord.—*Anon.*

HE who has felt the sweetness of mercy will fear to offend it.

EXTRACT.—A point that is but little noted (so far as I have seen), is that certain brethren deny the essential divinity of the Holy Spirit, unwittingly but most strongly. Their "administration," if I may so use the term, is pointedly that. What the Spirit does in a meeting is *only local!* That is the true essence of their position, and any fellowship we have with them corporately, or by receiving at the Table any *who abide with them*, dishonours the Spirit of our God. It is this that makes them so different from those in sects, to my mind. The pith and power of the unity we enjoy and confess is that which they with emphasis repudiate ; while their liberty of ministry, so far as it exists among them, is a show of honour to Him which all the more misleads.—*Letter to the Editor, March 27th, 1893.*

"THEM ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS
WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM."

I Thess. iv. 14.

MIND and heart too may turn with comfort and refreshing to such a word as this; the kernel of which seems to be that there is a time fast approaching when God will bring forth Him whom the heavens have received, though the One whom men and the world refused—casting out His name as evil, doing everything that man could to stamp out the remembrance of such an One from the earth—but who now is set down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. What an exhibition of man's heart! What a setting forth of God's thoughts about Him!

John xix. seems to present to us some analogy and contrast too. "Pilate brought Jesus forth" (verse 5), and gave his testimony concerning Him, "I find no fault in Him," though the soldiers had already mocked Him, plating a crown of thorns (the testimony of the curse—Gen. iii. 18), and robed Him in purple, and had said, "Hail! King of the Jews"—mocking Him who was that in truth. God also had already given His testimony, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," besides His testimony in every word and work, speaking and acting as He did in His Father's name—thus the Father's acknowledgment and authority stamped on all He said and did. "Pilate brought Jesus forth;" and God is going to bring Him forth from the heavens, and, as He said, "He will come in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels," thus coming in the full glory and authority of that Father.

"Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe." "When the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, Crucify Him, Crucify Him." What a reception; and from His own people too—David's Son and David's Lord. But it

was their hour, and the power of darkness. How manifest this was. They would have none of Him: "Away with Him;" but—God is going to bring Him forth. The heavens will open, and He will come forth, with His robes of glory so befitting Him and the many crowns. Glory and excellent majesty His; God, His God, heralding His advent with "Every knee shall bow to Him; every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Yes; it is blessedly sure and certain, for He died and rose again. As connected with His rejection and return in glory, men shall say to the rocks and mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; but as connected with this, that "He died and rose again," He will come forth who is His people's joy in glory, and beauty, and excellent honour—the day of God's public vindication of Him, His public testimony that this is the One whom He delights to honour.

Nor will He come forth alone. This word (1 Thess.) says, They who have fallen asleep through Jesus "*will God bring with Him.*" What an answer to confession of His name here. What an answer to suffering with Christ here: "If we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together." What comfort for these dear Thessalonian saints, not to sorrow as having no hope; and yet as to the meeting the Lord, those who remained till He come should not prevent, or go before, the sleeping ones, but all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. *With Him*: what fulness here: accompanying Him as God's vindicated One, but still with Him—glorified together; yet He in all things having pre-eminence, for "He shall be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe." What joy to Him, then, in the day of His joys, who was the Man of sorrows; the heavens and the earth uniting in one full burst of praise, "Worthy is the Lamb"—Lord of all—everlasting glory His; and oh! how blessed and precious, His own with Him.

Oh for one's soul more to enter into—be governed by—and walk in quiet, restful confidence, as waiting, watching, and, it may be, if we know our privileges, suffering for and with Him as entering into and enjoying the blessed power of such a hope.

“ With angel hosts attending
 In myriads through the sky,
 Yet, midst them all, Thou only,
 O Lord, wilt fix the eye ! ”

G. C.

THE MISSION OF THE COMFORTER.

JOHN xiv.-xvi.

THERE are two ways in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of in chapter xiv. and in the two last verses of ch. xv. In ch. xiv. it is the *Father* who sends the Holy Ghost in Christ's name ; in ch. xv. it is *Christ* who sends Him. In ch. xiv. He is putting us in relationship with the Father ; in ch. xv. and in the beginning of ch. xvi., you have the revelation of the glory of the Son of Man ; towards the world in ch. xvi. ; and towards the saints in ch. xv. ; looking up in xiv., and looking down in xv. and xvi.

In the beginning of ch. xiv. He is comforting them about His going away, and the first thing He mentions is, that He is coming back again to receive them to Himself ; and He shews them that in virtue of what He was down here on this earth before the Holy Ghost came, they knew where He was going, and they knew the way.

In this second part the Holy Ghost would become the Comforter, and they would know what they could not know while Christ was upon the earth—“ At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” When the Comforter was come was the point. Christ could not abide with them. He

had to do the work of atonement and go away ; but this other Comforter would abide with them—" Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive."

That is never said of Christ, for He was presented in the world to be received, and they would not have Him ; but there He was. (One sees the fruit of it in the disciples.) " Seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but *ye* know Him," and the reason is that He abides with you, and is *in* you. That is in contrast with Christ, for He could not abide, and though He was *with* them He was not *in* them. He will be *in* you, which I cannot be while I am down here.

Ver. 18.—" I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you." That's in spirit. It's put together in Rom. viii. By the Holy Ghost we see Him by faith—" Because I live, ye shall live also." Christ being our life, because He lives we live, and before we can die spiritually He must die.

" If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His," he is not in his place as a Christian. Egypt was Israel's place, but God had come down and taken them up, the blood being on the doorpost ; but they were not *with* God till He brought them *out of Egypt*.

The leper was washed before He was anointed. You must fit the knowledge you are bringing in to what is there already. Salvation is a positive actual deliverance out of the state I was in before.

The Holy Ghost gives me the consciousness of my relationship with the Father, and is the earnest of the inheritance which I have not got at all ; I am going to get the inheritance.

The Christian is a person who has got the Holy Ghost between Christ's first coming and His second. The work is perfect, for it has saved me, and put me in acceptance with God ; but I have not an atom of the glory yet. I look back and see all the value of the cross, and for the present I am in Christ, and what have I got ? God can't be in me, and not give me a

number of other wonderful things besides. Of course it must produce a wonderful effect.

Till Christ as Man went into heaven the Holy Ghost never came down on earth. Till He went and presented His blood, and took man's place, the Holy Ghost could not come down as a witness of it. . . .

The Church is founded upon the denial of Judaism.

I don't know I am "in Christ" till I am sealed with the Holy Ghost: I may know I am forgiven. When I talk of my guilt, I talk of what I have done; but when I talk of being lost, I talk of what Adam has done. I know I am in Christ by the Holy Ghost which He has given me. Are we all that God would have us according to His thoughts of Christ?

Where am I to find righteousness now? I will tell you: there is a Man sitting at the right hand of God; He deserved it, and God has set Him up there. The world will never see Christ again except in judgment. It is God's righteousness instead of myself. I get the Lord Jesus Christ giving me the transcript of what the law is—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. Christ has come, and He has glorified God, and has shown what God is at all cost; it cost Him His life, and drinking that dreadful cup, He has shown what God is, and perfectly glorified Him, and that in the place of sin. When He was made sin, that was the very time when obedience was perfect, and love was perfect, and all that God was in His righteousness and hatred against sin and love for the sinner.—"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

He sets Christ as Man at the right hand of God. Now you go and imitate God. What is your example? Christ. You must give yourself up entirely, because Christ did. If they were always grieving the Spirit the Spirit must occupy them with their own state, and very well He does, too!

If I say I am in Christ, I say Christ is in me, and my business is to show out Christ, and nothing else.

It is having Christ always before us, and really walking in the presence of God. The great secret is to be more with God than anybody, and if not, we shall go astray. The moment I get away from the conscious presence of God, self has a certain place; whereas, if I am really in the presence of God, I am nothing. I am more what I am before Him, than what I am in His power for others. You are not competent to discern the will of God if you are not with Him: "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." If power rests upon me, that does not put me in the presence of God as to my conscience or heart. It may be for others, but we have to be before God Himself, or else we shall never keep straight; and for that we must be in the path of God for Him to lead us. I cannot realise God's presence out of the path of His will. The instant we lose the sense of dependence we are in danger. Obedience and dependence, those are the two living principles of the new man. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

I also get another principle to help us through, and that is, *confidence* in God. I cannot depend if I have not confidence. We do need confidence, or we have not courage to go through sacrifices, if I have not confidence in God's faithfulness. It is everything; whatever I do, I ought to do it as serving Christ—"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." I believe the presence of the Holy Ghost is important in the whole path.

In this part of John you don't get sovereign grace dealing with the sinner. What you get is the Father dealing with the children. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him," &c. If a man love Christ, he will keep His commandments, and then there is all this manifestation of Christ to him—"We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." All this is connected with Christian responsibility. I could not abide in Christ if I was

not there (*i.e.*, "in Christ"). The Lord keep us in His presence, and give us the consciousness of it, and enjoyment through the Holy Ghost !

J. N. D.—1873.—*Notes of a reading.*

PROMISES AND PRAYERS.

A PROMISE is like a cheque. If I have a cheque, what do I do with it? Suppose I carried it about in my pocket, and said, "I do not see the use of this bit of paper, I cannot buy anything with it." A person would say, "Have you been to the bank with it?" "No, I did not think of that." "But it is payable to your order. Have you written your name on the back of it?" "No, I have not done that." "And yet you are blaming the person who gave you the cheque! The whole blame lies with yourself. Put your name at the back of the cheque, go with it to the bank, and you will get what is promised to you."

A prayer should be the presentation of God's promise endorsed by your personal faith. I hear of people praying for an hour together. I am very pleased that they can; but it is seldom that I can do so, and I see no need for it. It is like a person going into a bank with a cheque, and stopping an hour. The clerks would wonder. The common sense way is to go to the counter and show your cheque, and take your money, and go about your business.

There is a style of prayer which is of the fine practical character. You so believe in God that you present the promise, obtain the blessing, and go about your Master's business. Sometimes a flood of words only means excusing unbelief. The prayers of the Bible are nearly all short ones; they are short and strong. The exceptions are found in place of peculiar difficulty, like that of Jacob. As a general rule, faith presents its prayer, gets its answer, and goes on its way rejoicing.—*Spurgeon.*

JUST BEFORE SUNSET one who had quarrelled with a friend knocked at his door. On his opening it he started back; he was astonished to see who was his visitor, and to hear him exclaim (remembering the word, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath"), *The sun is almost down!* This unexpected salutation softened the heart of his friend there and then, and he answered, *Come in, brother, come in.* What a happy mode of reconciling brethren and redressing their grievances.

IT IS BETTER TO BE HUMBLE THAN HUMBLED; safer to be humble with one talent than proud with ten; more desirable to be a humble worm than a proud angel.

SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN.—"Is she a Christian?" asked a missionary of a convert who was speaking unkindly of another. "Yes, I think she is," was the reply. "Well, then, since the Lord loves her, cannot you?" The rebuke told, and the fault-finder withdrew. Some days later the same convert, speaking of another, was again asked by the missionary, "Is she a Christian?" In a half-triumphant tone she replied, "I doubt if she is." "Oh, then," he rejoined, "you and I should feel such tender pity for her soul as to make any harsher feeling quite impossible."

SECURE SINNERS: of these there are two sorts; the vaunting, who are confident in their own righteousness; and the callous, who are insensible to their own wickedness.—*Bishop Hopkins.*

REAL CHRISTIANS should walk as warily in the world as a person of quality richly attired would do amongst a multitude all sullied and bemired.

REFUSING THE LIGHT.—A woman returning home late at night in a thunderstorm from a castle on a high cliff having a rapid river at its base, was entreated to stay till next day, or at least to take with her a lantern, for the night was "dark as pitch." She refused to do either. Her body was next day washed to the shore of that swollen river. How many are, like her, utterly insensible to their danger, saying, "I am not afraid; I shall do very well!" Refusing the light of God's grace and truth, there can be no escape—they perish in their sins.

HATING GOODNESS.—A dying man sent for a "minister" that he might confess the unjust calumnies and abuses that he had often cast upon him; and, being asked what had led him into this, said, "It was merely this; you were a good man, doing much good too, and therefore I hated you. Is it possible for such a wretch as me to find pardon?"—*Dr. Cotton Mather.*

THE CARCASE AND THE EAGLES (Mat. xxiv. 28. Compare Job xxxix. 30).—The apostate part of the Jewish nation will be as a lifeless carcase when divine vengeance falls at the end of the age.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.—God speaks so as to be understood. More than a figurative reference to the body in Luke xvi. 23, 24 must not be understood. In Rev. vi. it is said that the souls of them that were slain cried with a loud voice, and white robes were given them; yet evidently, as in Luke xvi., it was the intermediate state.

HAVE YOU ALL YOU NEED?—A friend said this to an old woman dying in an Oxfordshire village. *God loves His Son too much to leave me in need of anything,* was her beautiful reply.

IF THIS REALLY HAPPENED, said an infidel when Is. liii. was read to him, I AM SAVED. From that moment his heart was given to Him who had saved him. He worked for years for God, and, falling asleep, said, *I am going to be for ever with Jesus!*

"LORD, SHOW ME the things that are foolishness to me." This was the first prayer of a French atheist studying for priest's order in the Church of Rome. A Testament had been given him, and he opened it at I Cor. ii. 14. He went home to pray. He is now a preacher of the Gospel, and a witness to the power which opens blind eyes and makes the deaf to hear the voice of God.

GOD IS THE CENTRE OF GRAVITY for all spiritual life. If force be used we may be diverted from our centre; but the simple, childlike soul will return to its equilibrium, letting go all that draws it aside.

THEY WANDERED IN THE WILDERNESS (Ps. cvii.).—A Christian is not a *wanderer*; he is a *pilgrim*. A wanderer is a tramp, a slave of circumstances—no certain path, and no certain destination. But we have both in Christ through redemption: a home and a path to it; a city and a way there. He is the way, and in Him we have a home. As a journey makes us value the home to which we return, so in the path to heaven we gain competency to enjoy it. But when a Christian is out of communion, he is a wanderer indeed!—*B. C. G.*

WOULDEST THOU KNOW that the matters contained in the Word of God are *real* things? Then never read them for mere knowledge sake. Look for some beams of Christ's glory in every verse. Account nothing knowledge that is not illuminated with some revelation of Himself to thy soul for nearer *communion with God*.

HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER!—A mother and her three children were clinging to the wreck of the "Bohemia," when she exclaimed that she *must* let go and be drowned. "Hold on a little longer, mother. Jesus walked on the water and saved Peter, and perhaps He will save *us*." These words of her little girl so strengthened her that she held on a few moments more, and with her little ones was rescued by an approaching boat.

THE REVELATION OF GOD'S CHARACTER is the ground of His precepts. "Be ye holy, *for* I am holy." "Let us love one another, *for* love is of God." "Be ye merciful, *as* your Father is also merciful." "Forgiving one another, *even as* God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

NEVER BE IN HASTE except about your soul's salvation (if unsaved), and (if saved) about doing the will of God: see Gen. xix. 15-17, and Ps. cxix. 60. "Wait on thy God continually" (Hosea xii. 6). "Wait thou only upon God" (Ps. lxxii. 5). "Blessed are all they that wait for Him" (Is. xxx. 18).

GOD WILL PUT UP WITH MANY THINGS IN HIS CHILDREN, bearing with their mistakes, and even their waywardness; but one thing He will not put up with, and that is a *second place*. How vain our efforts to please Him if we give Him not the first place! He is a jealous God, and will not brook a rival in our hearts.

PRAYER hinders no work, and work prospers on prayer.

CONTENTMENT.—Where did Paul learn this lesson (Phil. iv. 11)? Not at the feet of Gamaliel, but *at the feet of Christ*.

THREE ASPECTS OF GRACE.

WHEN the Lord was about to leave His own in a world from whence He was cast out, He graciously encouraged their hearts by assuring them that He was going "to prepare a place" for them and would return to receive them unto Himself, that where He should be they might be also! Words more touching and more tender, more powerful and more precious, were surely never addressed to suffering, sorrowing hearts. They would ever and anon recur to the memories of those who heard them first as they do to ours as being full of deepest pathos and of sweetest solace; as powerful to invigorate as they are precious to gladden, the hearts of His pilgrim followers.

"The Lord has Himself gone before" is now and again on our lips; oftener, I trust, in our hearts. He is our Forerunner, and His presence in the glory is the promise and the pledge of our location there. He has gone to prepare our place there, and He returns to conduct us there. Everything for us is designated and determined according to the place He occupies. Had He never left the glory we had never had our path brightened by one ray of heavenly light, but our only portion would have been the blackness and darkness for ever! Had He not become a Man, and as a man a Servant, and as a servant humbled Himself to become obedient unto death—the death of the cross, we had never, never known what it is to be vessels of mercy! But the place He took on the cross *placed us* before God as objects of His eternal grace.

Then He took a place on the throne, the Father's throne, and He is crowned there with glory and with honour! But was that for Himself? Truly to Him it was the guerdon of the travail of His soul as to His personal worthiness. And truly it was to the Father the coveted moment of Psalm xxi.: "Honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon Him. For Thou

hast made Him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance." But what a moment it was for us also! "Wherefore He saith when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and *gave gifts unto men*" (Eph. iv. 8). "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God *for us*" (Heb. ix. 24). Not more truly for us the Sacrifice on the cross than for us a Priest within the holiest, yea, that Great High Priest who bears our names upon His breast and upon His shoulder.

From this flows for us that holy intercession with God which keeps us from being submerged in the mire of this world, and sustains us in testimony for Himself spite of the infirmities, the hindrances, and the temptations which beset or assail us in our pathway through it. For if we are steadfast where we are, or hold fast that which we have got; if in the evil day we stand, and against the forces of evil we withstand, it is from first to last all due to the prevailing intercession of Him who has gone to appear before the face of God for us! And, on the other hand, should we sin and then with stricken hearts confess it, proving thereon that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," is it not from first to last because we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous? If the place He took here was grace to us, surely the place there speaks of grace added unto grace (John i. 16); in the one it was grace to the sinner, in the other it is grace to the believer—grace to the faltering, fainting, failing pilgrims bound for the Father's house.

But there is yet another aspect of grace, of which the apostle Peter speaks, "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 13). For His cross and His Father's throne are not the only places or positions that the eternal counsels require Him to fill. As our High-

priest He is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heavens;" but, said He, in the day of His refusal, to the earthly high-priest, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Ere that day of His power dawns, when His enemies shall be shivered to pieces like a potter's vessel, we shall fill with Him the prepared place in the Father's house, shall sit with Him upon His throne, shall be glorified together with Him. "He who to His courts shall greet thee, greets thee with a well-known love." Then shall it be *granted* to the Bride to "be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints" (Rev. xix. 8). This, then, is "the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The first aspect of grace has to do with Christ's place on the cross—grace to the sinner; the second with His place within the veil, exercising priesthood and advocacy—grace to the believer as a pilgrim below; the third has to do with His place on His own throne—grace to us as glorified together with Him. O how little have we fathomed the *unsearchable riches of Christ!*

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN :

HIS LETTER TO GAIUS.

3 JOHN.

AGAIN the elder takes up his pen. This time he writes to a man and names him—Gaius the beloved, whom he loved in truth. Anything more about him than what we may learn from this letter, we know not. Gaius was no uncommon name in the New Testament. We meet with four of that designation, and all active in Christian service. One, a Macedonian, had travelled with Paul to Ephesus in company with

Aristarchus, and at the time of the great tumult was with his companion taken forcible possession of by the excited multitude (Acts xix. 29). Another Gaius we read of, as a native in common with Timothy of the district of Lycaonia, in Asia Minor. He, too, journeyed with Paul, and formed one of the company who left Greece with him on that last journey to Jerusalem of which we have any record (Acts xx. 4). Another Gaius is honourably mentioned in connection with Corinth as the host of Paul and of the whole church (Rom. xvi. 23). He is probably the same one of whom that apostle writes as baptized by him on his first visit to that city (1 Cor. i. 14).

Our Gaius was evidently distinct from all these, and was, we may well believe, a convert of the apostle John (3 John 4); and, like his namesake of Corinth, was noted for his hospitality. So these two men served the Lord, and helped on the work by opening their houses for His servants. Two of that name, as we have seen, travelled with Paul. The two others were distinguished by their large-heartedness in the places where they resided. For possessed, we may suppose, of means in which some, if not many, were deficient, they used them in hospitably entertaining strangers and labourers in the work.

It is nice thus to see different people engaged as each was fitted in furthering the work of God. Very possibly neither Paul's host nor John's correspondent ever opened their mouths in ministry of the word in the assembly. Preaching or teaching may not have been that for which either of them was qualified. They did, however, what they could, and though their names are not inscribed on the roll of eloquent preachers of their day, they are honourably mentioned in the sacred volume; whilst the full record of their faithful service awaits its public disclosure in that hour when they will stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and each receive his reward according to that which he has done.

A convert, as we have said, of the Elder, the latter loved him with true Christian love—even love in the truth, and thus writes of him as he did of the elect lady and her children. But, addressing Gaius, he three times in this short letter styles him “beloved” (2, 5, 11). To the elect lady he made use of no such endearing term. Surely we may mark in this an example of that propriety which should characterise Christian intercourse between the sexes. The apostle’s love for the lady was just as true, and probably as warm as that to Gaius. It was genuine Christian love to both. But whilst he could with perfect propriety call Gaius “beloved,” he refrained from thus addressing her. Careful, indeed, were the apostles in all things lest their ministry should be blamed (2 Cor. vi. 3). To this neither Rom. xvi. 12 nor Philemon 2 are exceptions. In the former, Paul writes *of*, not *to* Persis. In the latter, the true reading is “the sister,” and not “beloved.”

With a wish John begins his letter. “Beloved, I wish (or, pray) that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, as thy soul prospereth” (2). To few perhaps could he have written thus. But what commendation of Gaius! Was he burdened with a weakly body like Timothy (1 Tim. v. 23)? John does not state that, though his words might, though not necessarily, imply it. Was John over-estimating the faithfulness of this man? He gave ground for what he had said, adducing the testimony of brethren; who, having been where Gaius lived, brought John a good report of his son in the faith. He walked in the truth. Admonition therefore, founded on past failure, had no place in this letter. Encouragement to persevere in his course it was open to the apostle to impart. This he does.

Gaius had been hospitable to servants of Christ. To brethren from other places, who visited where he lived, his door was thrown open, and that whether previously known to him or not, thus manifesting

true Christian love. "Beloved," writes John, "thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and those strangers" (as we should read) "which have borne witness of thy love before the church" (5, 6). It was his joy then, evidently, *thus* to act. It was a service that he had taken up and carried on, and, it would seem, in the face of local opposition. Before, however, noticing the opposition, the apostle exhorts him to set forward those strangers on their journey after a godly sort, adding a weighty reason for such a service, because that for the sake of the Name (as we should read) they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles, or heathen. "We, therefore," adds John, "ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to (or, fellow workers with) the truth" (7, 8).

These two short epistles from the pen of the Elder, we may here remark, give us a little insight into the carrying on of the work by Christians at that time.

First. Believers went about visiting those settled in different places, and hospitality was wont to be extended to them by such as had the means and a heart for it likewise. Teachers, too, might thus move about, and evangelists also; and some of these last, as we see here, on their way to fields of labour amongst the heathen. To receive such, and thus to be fellow workers with the truth, was permitted to those whose circumstances or whose avocations necessarily fixed them in some one place.

Second. The gospel was free to those to whom it was preached. So evangelists to the heathen went forth taking nothing from them. Temporal gain was not the object. Salaries, evidently, these true-hearted servants had not. They went forth taking nothing from the Gentiles. They went forth, too, claiming no contribution from any of the Christians. Without money and without price was the gospel preached. Freely those evangelists had received, freely they gave. Yet as freely was the opportunity allowed to Gaius to minister to their needs, and thus to help on

the work. So, both in the case of these evangelists and in the case of Gaius, grace was displayed. They ministered freely to the unconverted—Gaius could as freely receive them into his house and send them well equipped on their way. Happiness surely reigned within his doors, and doubtless he got refreshment to his spirit by intercourse with devoted servants of Christ. A cloudless sky, we might say, was enjoyed under his roof.

Could the enemy allow that to continue? He would do his best to becloud it, and he found a willing instrument in Diotrephes, whose name has ever since been synonymous with clericalism and ecclesiastical despotism of a very advanced type.

Of him the apostle now writes. "I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words, and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (9, 10).

To the assembly John had written, not to Diotrephes. Was the latter offended? He had no right to be, if he was. Paul wrote to assemblies about matters which concerned them. John might well do the same. What was the tenour of that letter we cannot say. But, viewing the mention of it here in connection with the subject on which the Elder was writing, there is nothing improbable in supposing that it had reference to the subject of receiving labourers in the word, strangers to the place.

"Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." Clericalism had early reared its head in the Christian Church. The effect of it is to centre authority and action in individuals, instead of recognising the rights of the assembly. "Receiveth us not!" To think of it! Diotrephes, whether an elder or not we have no means of know-

ing, would not receive the apostle John! Full of pride, and inflated with self-importance, he was gathering round himself, acquiring pre-eminence over the rest. One of a number, he would make himself head over them all, and get them to register his decrees. Clericalism, which has since exercised such a withering influence over the church of God, was budding, and apparently vigorously. Its origin, however, betrayed itself, as Diotrephes sought to strengthen his position by prating against the apostle with malicious (or wicked) words. Of women addicted to the practice of tattling, Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 13). To that same practice this man resorted. How often has it been sought to advance party work by such means. Success may seem for a time to attend it. In the end it gets exposed; and where the work of God is concerned, it will in His time meet with merited reprobation and defeat; of that we may be assured. So, if smarting under it ourselves, let us learn from John to exercise that patience which, under great provocation, he exhibited.

He had power, it is true, which we have not. But, like Paul, he was slow to use it. True greatness, when combined with spiritual wisdom, can afford to wait, though ready, when called on, to act with decision and power. What a man was that Diotrephes! How patience must have been tried! For, not content with his treatment of the apostle, neither did he receive the brethren, but forbade them that would, and cast them out of the church. Imperious, autocratic, and vindictive, in these lights he displayed himself, and evidently the mass of the people acquiesced in it. The decrees of Diotrephes were to be obeyed, or excommunication would follow. *He* forbade. *He* cast out of the church. Where was the assembly's responsibility? It was surrendered. Where was assembly action in all this? It was lost. If this went on in apostolic days, can we wonder at the arrogance of some in these days? But whether it be

Diotrephes, or the Bishop of Rome, or any in a more restricted sphere, all such action, as John here exposes, is a denial of the responsibility and of the power with which, by God, the assembly has been invested.

Sorely must the true-hearted in that assembly have been tried by such arrogance and high-handedness. Excommunication is no light matter when its power is rightly exercised. But it can be only rightly exercised in the absence of an apostle when enforced by the assembly. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). And even when attempted by the assembly, unless heaven is really on its side, it is but a *brutum fulmen*, i.e., a senseless thunderbolt. In heaven it must be ratified to have any real validity. Now, in heaven nothing will be ratified which savours of unrighteousness, or is the fruit of mistaken zeal or of ignorance.

In this state of matters described by John, we can well believe what this letter must have been to Gaius, and to any like-minded. Diotrephes should not have it all his own way. If John came, apostolic power would deal with the crying evil. Till then, Gaius was to continue at all cost in the path which he had pursued. And now comes a word of admonition needed and suited: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (11). It is just at such a time that we can value a reminder like this. For the heart is apt to resent known evil, and especially when it touches one's self. After this follows a recommendation of Demetrius. He had a good report of all, and of the truth itself, and to those testimonials John appends his own (12). But who this person was, and where he lived, and whether he was the bearer of this letter to Gaius, who was to extend to him hospitality, are matters for the clearing up of which we must wait.

Now the Elder winds up his letter in terms very

similar to those with which he concluded that to the elect lady, substituting, however, the mention of *pen* for *paper*, wishing Gaius peace, conveying too the salutation of friends, and asking Gaius to salute for him those who could be thus designated in the place where the latter lived.

Short, but useful, are these two apostolic letters. In the former, the door was to be resolutely barred against anyone who brought not the doctrine of Christ. In the latter, the door was to be opened wide, to receive and to help on their way true servants of Christ. We see too, in both, that intercourse was kept up with Christians in different places by the visits from time to time of labouring or other brethren. One assembly on earth, one family too, which should have one great object and purpose—the furthering of the kingdom of God—such was the spirit that was to animate true-hearted saints.

John's epistolary communications here close. His written ministry was, however, to continue, but in a different channel. To that we hope to call attention briefly in our next.

C. E. S.

CHRIST ALL IN ALL.

THOUGH I be nothing, yet for me
 Omnipotence availeth ;
 My nothingness the very means
 Whereby His might prevaileth.

Though I be nothing, yet through me
 All things Thou, Lord, canst do ;
 The excellency of the power
 Is Thine—the glory too !

Though I be nothing, I rejoice
 To find my all in Thee ;
 Not I, but Christ for evermore
 Be all in all to me !—*Anon.*

THE PERFECTING OF FAITH.

HEBREWS XI. contains a long list of instances where faith was perfected; that is, where the will of God ruled and guided the saint in certain parts of his course in the world.

The history of Abraham furnishes us with that which is specially remarked upon by the Spirit of God as of this character. To a portion of that instructive history let us turn for a little.

Abraham, after he had refused fellowship with the King of Sodom, is met by the Lord with "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward." It would appear that, at the moment, the immensity of this assurance did not prevail over every other consideration, and he asks, "*What wilt Thou give me?*" but, on his being brought forth abroad, and asked if he could count the stars, he got the word from Jehovah, "So shall thy seed be." It is then written of him, that he believed in the Lord, and righteousness was imputed to him.

Abraham, however, got impatient, and Ishmael comes on the scene, and would be a rival to the son, and heir of all that belonged to Abraham. The day when Isaac is to be weaned (*Gen. xxi.*) arrives, and Hagar's child mocks. Whatever may have been the personal feeling of Sarah in the matter, she gave utterance to the word that was taken up as being in accordance with the mind of God, "The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." He must go. Abraham demurs to this treatment; but God tells him that Sarah is right, and he must do as she said: "for *in Isaac* shall thy seed be called."

Now we come to the testing of the very inmost depths of Abraham's heart. Ishmael must go—he cannot share with Isaac; and *Isaac must be yielded to God*—the heir must go into death, and God, the Shield

and the exceeding great reward of chap. xv., alone fill Abraham's soul.

Chap. xxii. opens with God saying to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Terrible moment! He must do it himself. He responds at once. We read that "he rose up early in the morning, and went unto the place which God had told him." No special time is mentioned; but faith knows only the present.

The distance he had to travel was considerable; for we read that, "on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off." We have no hint that he wavered—no wish to turn back. He might have had opportunity to have returned, but there is no thought of such a thing. How well, too, he kept his secret. "I and the lad," he informs his young men, "will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." The act he was on his way to execute was too serious to allow him to make it a subject of common conversation. How often we lose ground by conferring with flesh and blood on matters which can only be rightly entered on and finished as we are kept alone with God.

Worship surely it was when alone, under the eye of God, Abraham surrenders his son, his only son whom he loved, to God. God was *everything* to him. He had all in God—the living God—the God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. We do not read he said anything when they came to the place, until the Lord called to him out of heaven, "Abraham, Abraham:" then he said, "Here am I." To surrender an only son, to put him on the altar, required much nearness to God. He *was* near. His name had only to be called, and the response directly comes, "Here am I."

We have remarked that he said nothing. When worship is real, there are not many words. There

cannot be. When the soul is possessed by God, much that otherwise would be uttered is prevented. The wise man cautions us against being hasty to utter anything before God. He advises that our words be few.

But Abraham has triumphed. Faith in him has been perfected, as the apostle James tells us (chap. ii. 22). It was at this unequalled moment in the history of a man of like passions with ourselves that the Scripture we read in Gen. xv. was fulfilled: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (verse 23).

A good many years had elapsed between that night when he was asked if he could count the stars, and the putting of Isaac on the altar; but it is in connection with what took place in chap. xxii., we read that the Scripture recorded for us in chap. xv. was fulfilled. Faith was perfected.

Jacob, too, furnishes us with a record of the perfecting of faith. It is narrated in Heb. xi. in four short lines. But thank God for the verse.

Very likely some of us will find that we never worshipped until we come to die—that supreme moment when God and His Son, our Saviour, become *everything* to us. Jacob could speak well of God in caring for him and redeeming him from all evil. Many things he had to say, and said of God's mercy to him; but it is "when he was a dying he blessed both the sons of Joseph and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

Yes—he believed God *then*—his faith entered into the purposes of God for the seed; and though Jacob had a poor record as to his days upon earth, he surrenders his spirit in worship. God was everything. He knew himself in the presence of the "I Am." He there takes a retrospective view of his past, willing, may we not say?

“To see each transgression,
And judge it, ere he goes.”

What a presence for us to be in—the “I Am,” who required no counsellor to aid Him in the arranging of His plans, and no one to help Him in the accomplishment of them.

D. S.

FRAGMENTS.

“I AM that I am” was the glorious Name under which God introduced Himself to Israel. God over all—none by searching could find Him out: He would be God, and take His own way: and He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy, and would have compassion on whom He would have compassion. God is God.

“By the grace of God, I am what I am,” was Paul’s joy: it is mine; may it be thine, too. But, then, how different the force of the sentence when applied to him and when applied to me. Compare word with word, and you will see this only the more forcibly. And yet in both applications, the finger points out to *reality*, and what is owned is owned *as it is*.

“God is God.”

“And I am a poor sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

Never, until we get to reality—never, until we let things *be as they are*, can we possibly have rest. And the beauty of the gospel is, that it puts God as God, and myself, just as I am, blessedly together; and it applies all that He is to me, and identifies all that I am with Him according to the worth of the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of God.

HE ascended to officiate as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. We are expressly told that "if He were on earth, He should not be a priest," *i.e.*, He could not on earth complete the service answerable to His appointment as high priest; and the reason is given, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts "according to the law, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." The law appointed no earthly priesthood but one, which was restricted entirely to the tribe of Levi and order of Aaron; but Christ having sprung of the tribe of Judah, had no appointment to the service of the earthly sanctuary, and so could not be an high priest on earth. He, indeed, suffered on earth as a sacrifice for sin; but the mere slaying of the sacrifice did not complete the atonement even under the law. In order to this, it was necessary that its blood should be brought within the veil into the holiest of all, and there sprinkled upon the mercy-seat after having offered the incense: and this was a service peculiar to the high priest. Jesus could not thus officiate on earth, there being no holy place appointed for Him there in which He might offer His gift and sacrifice.—*McLean on the Commission.*

NOR can I doubt, with Paul's writings in my hand, that the unsearchableness and the glory of the One that had revealed Himself to him, gave that vividness and that power to all Paul's thoughts about sin-bearing on the cross, atonement made in heaven, acceptance, &c., which is so peculiar to himself among the writers of the New Testament. But Saul knew *Who* was in heaven, and what was in *His* heart, and mind, and ways, ere he knew any one office of the Blessed One, either down here or up there—past, present, or to come.—G. V. W., *Present Testimony, New Series. Vol. I., p. 23.*

THE FATHER GLORIFIED IN THE SON.

FATHER of light ! in whom no shade is found
 Of varying purpose, change, or swerving round ;
 Whose counsels from eternity still roll,
 In path majestic, onward to their goal.

Thou hast decreed, throughout th' eternal day,
 Thine uncreated glory to display
 In form that Thy created ones may scan—
 All Godhead's glories manifest in Man.

Thy Son, who, to unfold Thy moral worth,
 Quitted the heavens, descending here to earth ;
 Took manhood, human lot, and sinners' doom,
 Yielding Himself to death and to the tomb.

Raised by Thy power, and glorified on high,
 Him soon on earth as well Thou'lt glorify ;
 That all upon the thorn-crowned Head may gaze,
 Radiant in glory, centre of all praise.

What joy ! what joy the heavenly host shall fill ;
 What rapture through each blood-washed soul shall thrill,
 As Thy behests through endless cycles run,
 Thy glory manifested in The Son !

R. H.

HEB. VI. 13, 20.—This warning being given (see preceding verses), the Holy Ghost presents to their view the glorious certainties which God has given for the hope of His own—hope founded on God's promise and oath, and secured in Christ within the veil, whither He has entered as our Forerunner. This is how the grace of God acts towards the saints ; it sustains their faith and their courage by directing their gaze to the things which are before. If godliness declines, there is a temptation to go back to works, to return to Judaism, which can give no help, but which on the contrary is a plague in the heart—yes, in the very heart. But Christ seen in His fulness and glory, this gives fresh energy to faith.—*Coll. Writings, J. N. D.*

ON EARTH.

THERE is no river without falls and shallows
 No rose without its thorn;
 No ocean without tidal waves and billows;
 No year without a storm.

There is no life without its many sorrows;
 No crown without a cross;
 No joyous day, but marred by sad to-morrows;
 No gain without a loss.

ERNEST CLARKSON.

 IN HEAVEN.

BUT there the river of God's pleasure flows,
 The Rose of Sharon blooms;
 No storm, no tempest His blest presence knows,
 Nor cloud of sorrow looms!

Eternal life with God's eternal Son,
 No morrow e'er can dim;
 The crown and kingdom which His cross hath won
 His saints shall share with Him!

That day of cloudless light, unfading joy,
 No shadow e'er shall cross;
 Ecstatic praise shall be its blest employ,
 All gain without a loss!

Added.

 CORPORATE UNITY.

THE presence of the Holy Spirit united all believers, Jews and Gentiles, into one and the same body.

I Corinthians xii. makes the doctrine of the word perfectly clear with regard to this. The body of Christ on earth is composed of individuals and not of churches. Now there is only unity in the whole; there is none in any local assembly if that assembly be detached from the whole as a whole.

The object of the present effort is the desire of being independent, of doing one's will without sub-

mitting to the discipline of the Church as one body. Mr. — says as much. Each assembly being independent, united only by one faith and one worship, has the power of judging the acts of discipline of another assembly! Then the unity of the body does not exist. The action is the action of an independent church, has no reference whatever to the whole, is not binding upon other assemblies or other Christians. A person may be put away by one assembly, and another assembly may receive the one who is put away. The without and the within are not the world and the Church of God: all that is lost. It is the within of a little voluntary and independent assembly, which only exercises its discipline in relation to itself. It is very evident that the without and the within of 1 Corinthians v. is not only the without and the within of a particular assembly, or else the wicked person might be outside at Corinth and within at Ephesus. The epistle carefully teaches the unity of the body on earth, and recognises no local action except in that unity. Look at disciplinary action from another point of view and you will see the enormous difference of the principles, and how this system of independent churches destroys the truth of scripture on this subject. What is the true force, the true source, of authority in discipline? The presence of Christ; not that this discipline is the act of a voluntary society which excludes one of its members from its bosom, but it is the act of an assembly according to God, gathered to the Name of Jesus and acting in His Name and by His authority, to maintain the holiness which is connected with that Name. Now the independent church is only a society which acts for itself; another assembly may judge what it has done! There is no trace in this either of the unity or the authority of the Church of God.

Is a flock, then, bound hand and foot in these cases if another assembly has acted hastily? *Not at all.* Just because the unity of the body is true and recog-

nised, and that with regard to discipline the members of that body which are gathered elsewhere take an interest in what passes in each place, they are free to make brotherly remonstrances, or to suggest some scriptural motive ; in a word, they are capable of all brotherly activity with regard to this. If it be an independent assembly, it does not concern it ; it has nothing to do with looking into it. If these things are done in the unity of the body, every Christian is interested in what is passing. It may happen that the discipline of an assembly is not recognised ; but then it is rejected as an assembly, and the presence of Jesus giving authority to its acts is denied—a very grave thing, but one which may happen. Mr.— has entirely falsified the unity of the body, and wishes for independent churches and a unity of faith and worship, the whole of the churches forming, according to him, the unity of the body. The word knows nothing of this system. The reader may judge of it by reading I Corinthians xii.

The point which is really at issue is of great gravity for the Church of God : Can an assembly be corrupted ? We have broken with what we have considered insults and blasphemies against Christ. Up to that point there had not been any great difficulty ; some painful things, but decided without much delay. But here is an assembly which receives those that we had excluded as being blasphemers. Could one go on with that assembly taking the Lord's Supper with those excommunicated people ? This is the first question. For my part, I could not do so, and those who received them, knowingly and willingly, were not a "new lump" (I Cor. v.).

The question is no longer Bethesda only, but, Can an assembly which knowingly admits grave errors be recognised as an assembly of God ? and can those who are accomplices in the matter be regarded as innocent, because they are not themselves blasphemers ? In 2 Timothy ii. we are charged to purge

ourselves from vessels to dishonour. Do we purge ourselves if we are in full communion with them? 1 Corinthians v. and 2 Corinthians vii. decide the question for me as to the condition of those who support evil without being personally guilty.

J. N. D.

HERMANN WARSZAWIAK AND THE LORD'S WORK IN NEW YORK.

THIS is a development of the Hebrew New Testament Distribution.

"Mr. Hermann Warszawiak was born in 1865, in Warsaw. His father, son of the Lipnoer rabbi, is a wealthy merchant in the Polish capital, and his mother, of the well-known rabbinical family of Gurah, which is the head of the Jews of Eastern Europe. His early life was spent, as with many orthodox Jewish children in Russia, mostly in the study of the Talmud and other Hebrew literature. But, being of priestly descent, his father was especially anxious to make the boy thoroughly acquainted with the Book of Leviticus; and this was, under God's mercy, the means of leading him to the 'Lamb of God,' for, when deep in thought on this book, he became convinced that there is no forgiveness of sins but by an atoning sacrifice. He once asked his father, 'Why do we not offer sacrifices now-a-days?' His father said, 'Because we have no Temple.' 'How, then, do we get forgiveness for our sins?' 'Because we do pray for it,' was his father's reply. However, this did not seem to satisfy him, as he asked: 'Dear father, didn't our forefathers always pray, and yet offered sacrifices for atonement for their sins?—and, dear father, it isn't at all written, if any soul shall sin he shall pray for his sins, but if any soul shall sin, then let him bring for his sins a young bullock, without blemish, for a sin-offering, and his sins shall be forgiven.' His father said impatiently he did not like so many questions, adding we might again offer our sacrifices when Messiah appears. 'When will that be?' he earnestly asked. 'Oh, you must not ask so many questions!' was the reply. From that time his deep desire was to find out the true way of atonement, for pardon from God. On a visit to his uncle, the chief Rabbi of the Chassidim (Saints of Israel), under whose supervision he was to pursue advanced Jewish studies, he was received with the solemn text of Amos, 'Prepare to meet thy God.' These words became printed on his heart, and his desire was to become as holy as his venerated uncle. Thinking he would thus be prepared to meet his God, he punished himself by fasting, praying to God to forgive his transgressions, and sought to obey all Jewish laws, as well as the commandments. But painfully as he observed all the commandments he could, and the more he did so, he felt in his inner heart he was a sinner in the sight of God. Indeed, he had no rest. He felt the need of atonement and sin-offering, but there

was none. On this point he said in his baptismal address, 'No one who knows my family history can doubt that I was brought up piously, and I cast my lot, heart and soul, with the Chassidim, studied diligently the Talmud and the Holy Scriptures, for I wanted to become righteous and holy, but the transgression of the law taught me that I was only a lost sinner, as every day, in one way or other, I transgressed the law.'

"After a few years, having finished his studies, he married a rich Jewess, the daughter of a banker in Lodz, Poland. The young son-in-law (for he was then not fully eighteen) was treated with much respect and consideration because of his rabbinical and priestly descent, and lived in luxury. His father-in-law had a beautiful synagogue in his own house. Hermann was preaching there almost weekly, and began earnestly to study and to examine fully the books of Moses and the prophets, and there he got glimpses of salvation for his burdened conscience. He began to see Israel's Messiah, whom Isaiah sets forth as 'wounded for our transgressions' and 'bruised for our iniquities.' This and like passages were the most favourite 'themes' of the young preacher. His preachings and teachings created deep interest among many, but also much anger. The finger of scorn was pointed at him as an apostate, and he was compelled to leave his wife and two children and return to his father at Warsaw. But the good seed had taken root, and must needs grow. He made acquaintance with some earnest Christians, from whom he also got a copy of the New Testament in Hebrew, as well as Christian books and literature. After he had visited some relations in different cities, and come in contact with Christian workers, he stopped at Breslau. The first Lord's day he thought, 'you are a free man now, go into a Christian church and hear about Messiah.' He being in the way, the Lord led him. He walked down the promenade till he was attracted by a placard announcing a sermon by the Rev. Daniel Edwards, the venerable missionary to the Jews.

"He entered, stood near the door—and was thrilled by the heartfelt prayer to which he listened, and the sermon on Jno. x. 16, 17. After the sermon he asked a young man if he could give him the address of the preacher. 'Oh, yes, that I can—but come and speak to him now.' And soon he found himself taken to the heart of one of Christ's servants. Mr. Edwards and Mr. Warszawiak sat down, Scripture in hand, and for three hours the aged teacher answered the questions of the anxious inquirer. At that time he had no thought of becoming a Christian, being the last man to bring sorrow and disgrace on his loved mother and on his large and honoured family connection, but an insatiable desire to know the truth possessed him. Though he knew it not, Jesus Himself followed him, and so every Scripture that Mr. Edwards quoted did its work. He could not refrain from hearing more; he vowed never to speak again to the missionary, but could not keep his word. For three months the daily searching into Scripture, and comparing of New Testament with Old, went on, the instruction being in the Hebrew tongue, which gave it tenfold force to this son of Israel. At the end of that time not only was his mind satisfied, but his heart was won for the Lord Jesus Christ—the way unto the Father, in whom at last he had found peace with God. Then came a terrible struggle.

"Must father and mother, brothers, sisters, property, good name, yea, even wife and children, be forsaken to win Christ, and be found in

Him? His physical strength was prostrated; he lay on a sick-bed, nigh unto death; but in that solemn hour Christ won the victory, and he said to his friend and teacher, 'Now I am ready; baptize me to-morrow if you will.' Accordingly, on October 6th, 1889, he was baptized, a number of Jews and Jewesses being present. He gave a powerful address before baptism, in German, which has been published.

"Mr. Edwards hoped to retain him in Germany to be his fellow-worker among the people of Israel; but in a few days the news of his baptism at Breslau spread to Poland; his relatives determined they would leave nothing undone to get the young man into their power—there was nothing for it but immediate flight. Mr. Edwards hurried him off to Scotland, commending him to the kindness of the Jewish Committee of the Free Church, and of two or three private friends. The first joy of deliverance from sin and assured salvation in Christ was upon the young disciple when he landed in Edinburgh, bleeding and torn with the struggle that had broken every earthly tie; and the six months spent there in great seclusion, lest his enemies should discover where he was, were also months of much suffering and crying unto God—'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' 'persecuted, but not forsaken,' 'cast down, but not destroyed.' During this time he learned much through secret prayer, study of the Word, and the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Wilson; won life-long Christian friends, and acquired just enough English to profit by attendance on classes when again the summons came, 'Arise, and go hence,' and within three days the home in Edinburgh, plans for the future, and sympathetic friends were left behind, and he is crossing the ocean to America.

"In New York he visits among his people who live on the East side of the city most assiduously. Into hundreds of homes he has been over and over again, and in this way he has carried the Gospel to them in their houses and factories. But, besides this, he addresses them every Saturday, and there are assembled hundreds of eager listeners. *The largest male audiences this city affords are now to be seen listening to him.*

"In addition, he has three hours each day for private conference with any who want to speak to him. Many hundreds come for this purpose. It is safe to say that in these ways he sees more Jews on the subject of religion than any ten Jewish missionaries in the world. I make these strong statements knowing them to be true, and because I want our Christian friends to realise that we have here *no ordinary work for this people, such as we have been accustomed to.*

"To see him sway his large audience, when we know their mercurial nature, and realise that among them there are always those who would be glad to break up the meeting, is a wonderful thing. And when you realise that he preaches to them that the Messiah has already come, and from their youth they have been accustomed to think that this is the basest falsehood, the wonder increases.

"But I have said enough for the present to impress you with the fact that we owe it to God to inform ourselves about this, and so I will proceed to give you some idea of 'the work' as he describes it.

"When I arrived in New York in 1889, I did not expect so great a work as it has pleased God to do through my poor instrumentality. Landing from the SS. 'Teutonic,' I intended to proceed to Philadelphia on the following Monday where Scotch friends had advised me to go,

and had no wish whatever to stay in New York. But God planned differently. The day after landing I was asked to preach the glorious Gospel to a small Jewish audience, and at the close found a few of my countrymen greatly astonished to hear me speak as I did. But they were respectful, and told me of others of my acquaintances, whom I resolved to visit. In doing so I was impressed with their great interest. In fact, among my first visits something very striking happened. Visiting Mr. and Mrs. M—, old friends from Warsaw, he was first surprised to see me, and asked what brought me to New York. While we talked together he sent along his wife (I supposed to bring some refreshments), quietly telling her to let the Warsaw people know that Mr. Warszawiak is here. In about an hour the room was almost filled with Jewish acquaintances. True, I spoke about a good many things, but at last the truth in Jesus which so filled my heart sprang out, so that all other subjects dropped but the one about Judaism and Christianity. As I spoke with love and reverence of my dear Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, one man shouted out, 'I knew it. Didn't I tell you? I heard that he had become a Christian.' And when they all looked at me in hope that I would deny it, I stood up and confessed: 'Yes, brethren, I am a Christian, and do fully believe that this Jesus of Nazareth is the only Christ, our Messiah.' Some, hearing this, left the room; others became more interested, and anxiously asked if I had not some place where they could hear more about the new faith I had embraced. During our talk I found out that there are more than 200,000 Jews in the city of whom many are from Warsaw. By all I saw and heard I felt that a great interest could be awakened, and a good work done among my dear brethren if I should stay in the city and hold open meetings. Returning to my room, I cast myself into the arms of my dear Saviour, asking Him to lead me in His way.

"Having testimony from the Jewish Committee of the Free Church (who so kindly sheltered me while suffering persecution from my father) and introductions to several ministers in New York, I went to see them, and Dr. Hall arranged an interview for me with Dr. Schaussler, who put at my disposal the class-room at 280, Rivington Street, in the centre of the Jewish population, to hold meetings with the Jews. I then sought to work here before going to Philadelphia. From the start I had great encouragement, and much hope for the salvation of souls. Sixteen attended our first little meeting, but all seemed to be enlightened with the truth in Jesus, showed to them from their own Scriptures. So interested were they, they brought about sixty to the next meeting.

"I began right away as a simple preacher and true friend of the Jews, especially of those attending our meetings, by visiting them in their homes or at their workshops. Indeed, I was anxiously watching to talk with them, and show them that I am their friend and seek for their welfare only. Of every man I called upon, first I tried to find out who are his friends and where do they live? and so one by one I soon got a book full of names and addresses, now over 10,000. And I did visit my poor lost brethren as much as ever I could—in fact, sometimes all day long. Nothing could keep me back from visiting my dear, poor people, and such is the case even now. Many a sight I witnessed, which would break a strong heart. Oh! how often did I call on a poor Jewish friend when his wife met me at the doorstep with a 'Hush!

hush! I have just got to sleep my poor little child, and if she awakes she will cry for bread. I have had nothing whatever to give her since yesterday. Oh, she breaks my heart.' Often have I called on a family in the heat of the summer, and found them all lying on the floor without any food, looking nearly dead. They cried, 'Oh, we are the greatest sufferers among men, and this heat and the poisonous atmosphere of this tenement house (I guess about 100 people within its walls) will take away our last breath.' And when I visit the same people in the month of February their children are nearly freezing and are still without food, clothing, or coals, and count themselves as the greatest of sufferers. Often did I meet people who desired to hear the message of joy I had for them. But how could they, when famishing with hunger, beloved Christian reader? Here I shall not speak of all I saw, neither shall I write down the details of so many cases, which surely would melt the heart of every reader. I pray that the Lord may make plain to His dear children their duty towards this people, from whom they have received the Bible, the Saviour, and much that is alike dear to all of us. But as I found an entrance to the *poor* Jews with simple loving words of our dear Jesus, so, in course of time, many of the *rich* Jews have sought to know me, and our meetings have been largely attended by both. Most of those whom I saw during the week's visitation came on Saturdays to the preaching, as an interest had already been awakened. What encouraged me most was to hear how many there were quietly talking together at the close of the meetings. 'Well, don't you think he preached to-day a convincing sermon? and I believe in every word he spoke. Why! he proved everything he stated from our own Bible. I wish our Rabbis came to hear him.' Such, and the like, we heard many among our audience speaking to new comers.

"We did not long stay in the class-room, but were obliged to move into the large Sunday-school hall, where nearly 500 people could be seated. Soon this hall was also filled with Jews, Saturday by Saturday, and became too small for the great crowd of Jews upon whom God in His infinite grace had already poured the spirit of inquiry, making them anxious to hear our preaching, and when once within the walls many become thirsty for the water of life, and nearly all the many hundreds present, even those who might not at all have had any interest in religion, pay deep attention to the preaching. The building is nearly packed every Saturday with from 600 to 800 Jews, and, as a rule, 200 to 300 of them come a full hour before the meeting to secure seats, and read, during their waiting, some of the gospels, sermons, tracts, etc. which we circulate at the meeting. Often a few hundred had to leave without finding access, especially after an announcement that at the next meeting a discourse on the doctrine of Christianity will be delivered. There is no disorder in our meetings. All pay attention, and are respectful throughout. If a new comer should speak for a moment to his neighbour, or to try to interrupt me, he is warned by the Jews near him to be quiet. The work not only constantly increased at the Saturday afternoon meetings, but I soon saw the necessity for holding week-night meetings for those who are indeed anxious to know Christ. For this purpose I gave Monday and Friday nights, from eight to ten o'clock, but soon was obliged to hold meetings *night after night*.

"As dear brother Leonhard's German congregation have their prayer-

meetings on Wednesday night which a good many of our Jews like to attend, I tried to hold an after meeting with them, and finally arranged the public discussion for this evening. One must be an eye-witness to know what profit these discussions are. Many a hard orthodox Jew's eyes have been opened to look upon our crucified Saviour as 'the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.' Many have learned to trust in the blood of Christ as the atonement for their sins, praise the Lord. A very thick book could be written from the questions which I have been asked by my Jewish brethren. This is not the place to detail them, but I mention the first ten questions asked in our last public discussion. 'Why don't you Christians keep the law and commandments of Moses? Didn't Jesus Himself preach in the great Sermon on the Mount—which is indeed the greatest sermon ever a man preached—"Whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven?" and did not He say, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil?"' After he had received an answer, one said: 'How could you make us believe that the true Messiah has already appeared, when it is written in our Prophets, that in His day nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more? Now see how many wars we have had since the time of Christ?' The next man said: 'You Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and born of the Holy Ghost. How could God have a Son? and how could a man be born of the Holy Ghost?' After I had answered the inquirer, and proved it to be a *fact* that Jesus is the Son of God, and God His Father, another arose, and said: 'Well, then, if you say that Jesus was God's Son, and God His Father, why does not Jesus on the cross call Abba, Abba, lama sabachthani?—My Father, My Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me? instead of Eloi, Eloi, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' And then he said: 'You believe Jesus to be God Himself. Why then does He call on the cross to a God? Are there two Gods?' He had not yet received his full answer, when another said: 'I am a learned man, and have thoroughly studied the question about Jesus, since I heard you first preach, and my mind is nearly altogether changed, but what you have just answered this brother with your Trinity doctrine I am unable to understand, and I think I will never believe it. Why! is not it clear enough in our Bible (Isa. xlv. 6) "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God," or, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God?"' After I had answered him, I asked if he would read my pamphlet, 'The Trinity of Jehovah,' if I gave it to him. 'Oh, yes, sir,' he said. 'Will you not give me another copy to send to my brother in Pittsburg, who is a very learned man? I have written him a good deal about you, and the great mass of our people who come to hear your sermons on Saturdays.' A man with shame said, 'Dear Missionary, I am not at all learned; I think I have never learned anything except my trade (I am a tailor); I know I am a sinner in the eyes of God. I heard you often preach that God is willing to forgive any man's sins if he accepts Jesus Christ, and now I wish to ask, will God forgive my sins too if I accept Jesus? And, if so, how can I accept Him? I mean to say, what have I to do to be convinced that I have accepted Him?' A dear converted Hebrew brother, instead of asking a question, begged me to allow him to speak a few words in the way of questioning the

audience why they do not accept the great love of God, clearly once manifested to us. The next questioner anxiously desired to know two things—first, how could I prove to him that Isaiah liii. and the passages like it, speak of Jesus of Nazareth? And, if I proved this, he would like a clear explanation why our forefathers, who were more religious and learned than present-day Jews, did not accept this Jesus as the true Messiah. The next man asked what hour was Christ crucified; and then added, ‘It is well known that He was crucified on a Friday morning, but while Mark xv. 25 says that they crucified Him in the third hour, John xix. 14 says that Jesus stood before Pilate about the sixth hour of the same day?’ After I had answered, he asked a many more questions; among others: ‘Why is it written in Acts vii. 14 that when Joseph called his father Jacob and all his kindred, they were seventy-five souls, while Moses (Gen. xlii. 26) writes that all the souls were sixty-six?’ or ‘Why Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 8, said, “Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three-and-twenty thousand;” while in Num. xxv. 9, is written that “those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand?”’ The next man simply asked, ‘Men and brethren, what is the use in denying and refusing that Jesus is the Messiah, when we could trust Him and live in peace? Have we any other than this One to whom we could point as our Messiah? Or is there any hope at all that our Messiah might still come? Why, it is well known that there are no more of the family of David, and we all know that Messiah must be a son of David. I do believe, dear brethren, that this Jesus, the Son of David, is our only Messiah, and I do feel a great change in my inward heart since I believed on Jesus. Oh, how sweet, how calm and peaceful I feel in my heart since that very day, when I heard Him say, “My son, thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven.”’

“I then began, with much prayer, the work of distribution of the Hebrew New Testament, and rented a store, selling to those who would buy, or giving away to those who had not means to pay. Soon we had 5,000 copies distributed into the best hands possible, receiving the name and address of the holder of each book. Up to the present time we have placed over 13,000 copies. One day, Mr. R—, a Jewish bookseller, called on me to ask if I could grant him a dozen or two of the New Testaments in Hebrew. I said, ‘Why do you want so many? You can find in a single copy the whole story about our dear Saviour just as well, cannot you?’

“‘Oh, yes, of course,’ he said; but I have a book-store, and could give away a good many for you.’

“‘Are you a believer in, and follower of, our Lord Jesus?’ I asked.

“‘No, sir, I am not,’ he answered. ‘I do believe Jesus was a great man, a great reformer; but He was not our true Messiah.’

“‘Well, then,’ I said, ‘I shall give you at present only one copy for yourself, and when God will be gracious to you, and open your eyes concerning Jesus, His Son, you might then try to give the book to others, but not now.’ He said he did not want that, because he had one for himself already, and so he left me. After about five minutes, he called again. ‘Look here,’ said he, ‘suppose I pay for a dozen or two, will you then give them to me?’

“‘Oh, yes, sir,’ I said.

“How much do they cost?” he asked.

“Twenty-five cents apiece, sir.”

“But I heard that you give the books away for nothing.”

“Oh, yes, I do, sir; but not to booksellers, two dozen to one man.

“Well, I see,” he said. “But I could not pay you twenty-five cents a copy. I will give you two dollars for two dozen.”

“And how much will you charge the Jew who may buy it from you?”

“I do not know,” he said; “any price I can get for it.”

“Well,” I said, “you first tell me the story of what brought you here to buy the book, for I know that not one of our Hebrew booksellers would at all wish to have the New Testament in his store, and I will see what I can do for you.”

“Will you? Will you give me them for nothing?” he said. “And then I will tell you all about it.”

“We will see,” I said.

“He began. ‘One day a young fellow dropped into my store, and, laying on the counter a parcel of books, asked me, ‘Sir, don’t you want to buy these new Hebrew books?’”

“‘I opened one of the books, and found, to my astonishment, that it was the Christian’s New Testament. ‘Get out,’ I said, ‘or I will kick you out in a moment.’”

“‘He quickly picked up his parcel, saying, ‘Never mind; there are many Jews who would like better to read this than all your other books, and I’ll sell you the lot for a quarter of a dollar.’”

“‘Get out, or I’ll kill you,’ I shouted, as I ran round the counter to put him out of the store. He was smarter than I, and ran off with the books. The story might have ended here, but a day later a man came in and asked if I had not the Hebrew New Testament. I said, ‘No; I don’t keep such books.’”

“‘Do you know where I could get it?’ he asked.

“‘No, I do not.’”

“‘I am sorry,’ he said. ‘I am very anxious to get a copy, and would gladly pay even a dollar for one.’”

“‘Oh, let me alone,’ I said, ‘I have not these books.’ Only a few hours later another called for the same thing, to whom I gave the same answer. Next morning, a fine-looking man entered and asked if I had not the Hebrew New Testament, with the story of Jesus the false Messiah. I said, ‘I am sorry I haven’t. A good many have asked already for it. Why do you all want this bad book?’”

“‘I don’t know that it is bad,’ he said; ‘I heard that a great preacher had come from Warsaw, and is preaching much about it. My friends told me that it is a most interesting book. Yes, sir, I heard that a good many are asking for it. I would gladly pay you half-a-dollar, or even more, to get it; could you not procure one?’”

“‘This went on for days. Many anxiously asked for the book. Soon after, the young man who came with the books at first passed my store. I asked him if he still had the books he had offered me. ‘No, sir,’ he said, ‘Mr. M——, of Division Street, gave me half-a-dollar for them, while you wanted to kick me out for offering them to you. I tell you there are more Jews wanting to get and read this book than any other in the world.’”

“‘Well, then, I’ll buy a few from you. Can you bring me some?’”

““I think I could,” he said, and an hour later he brought a bundle. I believe they were the same lot he offered me at first, for which I paid him half-a-dollar. I then wrote a new Hebrew sign and put it in my show window—“The Latest Story about the Christian’s Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, in the Hebrew Language, has just arrived, and is on sale here;” and before an hour had passed, I had, in fact, sold the four copies I had procured, while a fifth man, accompanied by a Jewess, asked for “The Latest Story.” To him I said that he must call again, as my case was not opened yet. A good number more demanded them, so that I was soon obliged to take the sign from the window. I was now eagerly on the look out to catch the fellow with the books, till I found out that they all came from your mission. Now that I see what a great number you have to dispose of,” he said, looking at my book-cases, “I want to get as many as I can, for I am sure I can sell them at a good price to our Jewish people. You know,” he said, “I can’t sell a Hebrew book to anyone but a Jew.”

“‘Of course, you cannot,’ I said, and then I offered him twenty-four for two dollars.

“‘Give me a hundred,’ he said, ‘and I will give you five dollars,’ which I did.

“Before I gave him the books I stamped on each that this Gospel is preached at 280, Rivington Street, every Saturday afternoon. Since then this Jew has distributed a good many, and has made a good business of it, too, but, blessed be God, it was the means of bringing in many hundreds of curious listeners who, after a while, became interested in the truth of Christ. I do hope to be able to distribute this blessed book to almost every Jew in the United States.

“The blessing the Lord has graciously bestowed upon our work has led many to enquire, ‘Dear brother, what must I do to be saved?’ They came at first to my private rooms, but soon the number so increased that my landlady said that unless I find some office for my many callers, I shall be obliged to leave her house. I think between 200 and 300 have received Christ Jesus as their personal Saviour and made confession of faith. Thirty-five have been publicly baptized. I do not think this is the right place to write of the conversions of those who have been led to Christ, and have been baptized, although each is in its way wonderful, but will only say I cannot praise the Lord enough for their faith and steadfastness. I am especially glad for those who have given up their lives to the service of Christ altogether, of whom two are already preaching the Gospel. I am sure we should have been able to baptize twice the number, as there are many dear brethren of whom I and others are convinced they are true converts; but we are fearful when we know the persecutions they would have to suffer while we have so few friends in this country. And the deepest prayer of my heart is that God would awaken many a dear Christian heart to become interested in this His own work among His own earthly people.”—*Special Report on the Jewish Work of the New York City Mission.*

THE CHILD OF GOD, in the strength of Christ, can perform any service, make any sacrifice, and endure any sufferings for His Name's sake.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.—In the days of persecution, a pious but poor widow used to say she would never want, for God would supply all her need. Being taken before a cruel judge for attending the worship of God, he taunted her and said, "I shall send you now to prison, and how will you be fed?" "From your table, if it be God's will," she said. And so it came to pass, for the judge's wife being present was greatly pleased, and sent her food all the time she was in prison.

THINKING ABOUT CHRIST keeps the bad thoughts out. Occupation of heart with Christ promotes conformity to Him, and this will be complete only when we see Him as He is. But as a measure filled with grain has no room for chaff, so a heart stored with Christ is preserved from evil and folly.

BEHOLDING THE GLORY (2 Cor. iii. 18).—This does not mean a single act, but a life-long occupation. Then the illuminated become illuminators, to "give out" the light (2 Cor. iv. 6).

TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND copies of the Scriptures were issued last year from the depôt of the Bible Society in Rome.

"YOU ARE ON THE SHADY SIDE of seventy, I expect?" was once said to a mature Christian. "No," was the reply, "I am on the sunny side; for I am on the side nearest to the glory, the light that never was seen on sea or land."

IS IT POSSIBLE for man to gaze at the starry heavens and behold the wondrous mechanism, the splendid constellations wheeling silently and majestically through space with undeviating regularity, with unchanging order, each huge mass keeping its own appointed place in its own appointed orbit, without jostling or confusion, and yet doubt the existence of a Creator? Alas, some persons in this age of sense and science profess to calmly believe that there is no need for the hypothesis of a God in order to account for the beauty and the grandeur, for the unutterable magnificence and wonder of the scene! "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

WHO WOULD NOT courageously enter that combat where there is a certain reward for him who conquers, and a certain conquest for him who fights?—*Grotius*.

"ARE YOU NOT AFRAID, MOTHER?" was asked of an old lady during an earthquake. "No," was her answer; "I rejoice to know that I have a God who can shake the world" (Heb. xii. 26-28).

LEAVE TO-MORROW with Him whose love is as great as His power. "Did I not die for thee? Do not I live for thee? *Leave Me to-morrow.*"

CLAUDIA, the wife of Pudens (2 Tim. iv. 21), is supposed to have been a British princess, protégé of Pomponia the Christian wife of Alus Plautius, Roman commander of Britain, and that through her, Christianity was introduced into this country ages before the landing of Augustine and his monks on the shores of Kent.

EPHESUS, one of twelve Ionian cities in Asia Minor in mythic times, situate in a fertile plain between Miletus and Smyrna, from which city it was distant 140 miles. It became the great emporium for Asia.

COLOSSE was a city of Phrygia, on the river Lycus; Hierapolis and Laodicea were near to it. It was close to the great road that led from Ephesus to the Euphrates. There dwelt Philemon and his slave Onesimus, also Archippus and Epaphras. It stood about three miles from the modern city of Chonas.

GALATIA, a small mountainous district of Asia Minor, between Bithynia and Cappadocia.

IRON is first mentioned in connection with the six cities of refuge, where it is said that if one smites another with an instrument of iron he is a murderer. The second time it occurs is in describing the bedstead of iron which was that of Og, King of Bashan. Then follow spears, yokes, and chariots.

"THEY PASS BEST over the world who trip over it quickly, for it is but a bog; if we stop we sink."

DANIEL v. 7, 29: "third ruler." Nabonides was first; his son Belshazzar second; Daniel *third*.—*Dr. Tryon Edwards*.

AN OLD MAN living on a lonely moor being asked if he was not afraid, answered, "Never, for faith closes my door at night, and mercy opens it in the morning." And a blind man being asked if he was not afraid to get about, answered, "No, I am taken care of, someone helps me along. *God sees to me.*"

GOD'S CARE.—He that feeds the raven will never starve his saints. "She is a living sermon" was said of one, aged, paralysed, helpless, yet filling the household with the fragrance of her sweet cheeriness and patience. "You have more than you can carry" was said by his brother to a little boy whose open arms were receiving parcels from his father. "*Father knows* how much I can carry" was the trustful reply.

THE ROMAN SENTINEL amid the ruins of Pompeii stood at his post until suffocated, grasping his weapon, though the earth quaked beneath him; his remains were found there after fifteen centuries had passed, just where his duty had called him. Shall *we* lay down our weapon because we do not get on comfortably with certain brethren, because we are not sufficiently appreciated, or because we have worked enough in the past? God can win the fight without us, it is true, but are we capable of deserting our Captain's side? No, *no*, NO.

"ALL BRIGHT ABOVE!" were the words of one waiting his dismissal from the body. We can always be sure of this, "It is bright, and only bright above!"

"My bark is wasted to the strand

By breath divine,

And on the helm there rests a hand

Other than mine."

THE SAINTS ARE THE JEWELS OF GOD! "Highly esteemed are they by Him, and dear are they to Him. They are comely with the comeliness He puts upon them; He is pleased to be glorified in them, and they are a royal diadem in His hand. He regards them as His own proper goods, His choice goods, His treasure laid up in His cabinet, and the furniture of His closet: the rest of the world is but lumber in comparison with them."—*M. Henry*. Because we are saints we have fellowship with God; because we are brethren we have fellowship one with another.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SEER.

OF all the New Testament writers who enter on the realm of prophecy, John is essentially *the* prophet of the dispensation. Sixteen prophetic books go to swell the canon of the Old Testament. Just one—the Revelation—forms part of the canon of the New. In that, like the prophets of old, John gives his name. By whom the historical books of the Old Testament, subsequent in date to the Pentateuch, were compiled may in part be a subject of debate. But no nameless prophet has left behind him a written collection of his prophecies to be received by later generations as inspired. We know the names of all of them, though beyond that we know little of some of them. Not thus is it in the case of the New Testament prophet, as we have pointed out in a previous paper in this volume (pp. 4-131).

Now one of John's great subjects is life—spiritual life. It is a feature of his ministry throughout. How this can be obtained by any now his gospel unfolds; how it should be displayed by Christians his three epistles open up; and in the Revelation, we see that none abide in blessing who are not partakers of it. Well might the Lord, then, say to the multitude, "Work for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27). For all who have made a name on earth, and whose deeds are embalmed in the pages of human history, kings of the earth, and great men, and rich men, and chief captains, and mighty men, with bondmen and freemen, if they have not whilst in this scene come to share in it, are found at the end of that book gathered together into one place, their final place, in accordance with their everlasting destiny—even the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev. xx. 15).

In what follows, we purpose to trace out this link between the Revelation and the rest of John's writings; and though a great, the far greater part of the book is occupied with predictions as yet unfulfilled (vi.-xxi. 8), it is not our purpose to enter on interpretations of the seals, trumpets, or vials. Much has been written on all that. Volumes have appeared on the Revelation, setting forth the views of the different writers, whether preterist, futurist, or a mixture of both. For the present, whilst avowing our belief that the opening of the seals, etc. is still future, we leave that line of things on one side. Should any desire to seize the plan of the prophetic part (vi.-xxii.), we would refer them to an article entitled "The Revelation," in volume vi. of *Words in Season*, p. 205.

Perusing its pages, the blessing of enjoying eternal life is seen continually. We read therein of the *tree* of life (ii. 7; xxii. 2, 14, 19*), of the *water* of life (xxi. 6; xxii. 1, 17), and of the Lamb's *book* of life, in which the names of those who shall possess it were written before the foundation of the world (xiii. 8; xvii. 8; xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27). All such, if heavenly saints, will enter into that personal condition which will befit them to eat of that tree and to drink of that water, when they have experienced the change of which 1 Cor. xv. 51 speaks. For that tree of life and that water of life will be found in the paradise of God. Of this we first read in this prophecy, which is described as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" (i. 1); and at its close the Lord authenticates it as a revelation from Himself to the churches (xxii. 16). For them it was given, and John was commissioned to write in a book what he had seen, and to send it to the seven churches in pro-consular Asia here expressed by name.

* This is the right reading here—*tree*, not *book*, of life.

Into three divisions, let us remind the reader, does the Lord divide the book ; for He told John to write the things which he had seen (i.), the things which are (ii., iii.), and the things which shall be hereafter (or, after these), which are found in iv.-xxii. 5.

What he had seen was the Lord in His millennial character, both God and man, answering as God to the description of the Ancient of days in Dan. vii. 9, x. 6 ; and as man, speaking of His death and of His resurrection. " I am the First and the Last, and the Living One: and I was (or, became) dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades " (Rev. i. 17, 18). Thereupon follows the account of the things that are—the churches, to which John was to send this book ; after which come the things which shall be hereafter—the history of things on earth after the rapture, displaying the powers of evil in conflict with the power of God and persecuting His saints, till finally banished from heaven and from earth.

Recurring to the seven churches, we have a letter addressed to the angel of each, referring to the condition of things in each local assembly, and ministering the suited truth for each of them ; yet truth, also, for the help and profit of all of them, as the words, " He that hath an ear," etc. (ii. 7), met with in each, sufficiently indicates. It is the ministry of Christ for saints in all ages of the church, if found in conditions similar to those described. These different churches were, of course, all existing in John's day, and are taken up severally in an order in which the apostle might have visited them, travelling along high roads ; starting northwards from Ephesus through Smyrna to Pergamos (or Pergamum), and then turning southwards by Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia, to Laodicea.

The order, however, in which they are named is found also to be prophetic, furnishing us with the salient features of the church's history from the time

of John to the coming of Christ. So, just as the blessing of Jacob's sons by that patriarch (Gen. xlix.) gives us the *political* history of the nation to the millenium, and as Levit. xxiii. furnishes us with their ecclesiastical history to the eternal state, so these seven epistles give seven different phases of church history up to the rapture. A few remarks elucidating this may be helpful.

In Ephesus, there was decline in the freshness of first love. In Smyrna, persecution was predicted—just the order of church history to the days of Constantine. After that we have in Pergamos (or Pergamum) a settling down in the world, followed by Thyatira, which finds its counterpart in Popery. Next is Sardis, where nothing wrong in doctrine is mentioned, but a state of deadness with orthodoxy—just that which has been developed in Protestant communities since the Reformation. The whole closes with Philadelphia and with Laodicea. In the former, Christ is much to the saints; in the latter, He is nothing to those there who bear His name. All this we can see has been developed, and in this order, in the history of the church on earth.

Then, too, the four last churches are viewed as going on to the coming of Christ (ii. 25; iii. 3, 11, 16), so their characteristics were to be seen on earth together at the close. But these, again, can be divided into two classes. For in Thyatira and in Sardis, we see portrayed, in the one those who have a corrupt creed and in the other those who have an orthodox creed; whilst in Philadelphia and in Laodicea it is a question of reality, and of valuing Christ or not. Is not this last the question of our day? Time was when the test of faithfulness to the light was connected with Protestantism, as opposed to a corrupt creed. The question of our day is, Are you really a Christian, or one only in name?

No one then, can study these several addresses without perceiving that they present to us an outline

of the history of the church to the coming of the Lord, when those who are merely professors will be spewed out of His mouth—rejected as nauseous. And since the promises to the overcomers are connected with the hope of being in heaven, they are addressed to those who partake of the heavenly calling—a special feature of this dispensation.

So the next scene in this book (iv., v.) shows us all true Christians in heaven, having been raised, or caught up, at the rapture predicted in 1 Thes. iv.; and they are symbolized under the twenty-four elders who, we learn from Rev. xx. 4, must include all Old Testament saints as well; for there are but three distinct classes of saints in heaven described in that chapter, and the Old Testament saints cannot, it is evident, be included in those slain under the fifth seal, nor in those martyred under the beast. But the mere professors in Christian times, where are they? Silence is maintained about them, till a further development of events takes place. Meanwhile, what blessedness must it be to partake of everlasting life, and to prove the truth of the Lord's gracious words, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be" (John xii. 26). We can look, as it were, with John, through the open door, and see all the true Christians in heaven and all Old Testament saints as well, around the throne of God, and with the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

But there will be saints who are to dwell throughout the millenium on earth. Of these we are now to read as being called out. And since the restraining power of the Holy Ghost's presence, as dwelling on earth, will then be no longer known, for He will go with the Church whenever the rapture takes place, persecution will again break out, and continue to the end. So saints then on earth must face martyrdom as their only way of exit from this world. Some will be slain; but a large number will be preserved alive

to enjoy millennial blessing. In the course of events connected with this, we are next instructed through the seals, the trumpets, and the vials.

Of martyrs we first read (vi. 10, 11), already slain before that fifth seal is opened. Of unconverted men alive on earth under the sixth seal (vi. 12-17) we have an account. The martyrs were not afraid of death. The men under the sixth seal dread the wrath of the Lamb. What a contrast! Those who had life in their souls, everlasting life, cheerfully surrendered the life of the body, not fearing men who can do no more than kill the body (Luke xii. 4, 5). The great men, the mighty men, etc. are afraid of the wrath of the Lamb, having no security that they will not come into judgment. Why fear this wrath, if there be no judgment to come? To the Lord's gracious assurance respecting that (John v. 24) they are perfect strangers, and strangers also to any interest in His words to Martha (John xi. 25, 26). Not thus with the martyrs, who can rest on that comforting declaration, "He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" whilst countless numbers of Gentiles, in common with 144,000 of the twelve tribes, will prove, as we learn in Rev. vii., the words made good on their behalf, "He that liveth, and believeth on Me, shall never die." Spiritual life enjoyed now ensures the life of the body in the future, whether death intervene or not.

But yet fiercer persecutions will there be, though in a more restricted area. Of that we learn in chapters x.-xv. 4. Faithful ones will be slain, not loving their lives unto death. The beast, wielding Satanic power, will slay the two witnesses (xi. 7), as well as that company seen subsequently on the sea of glass (xv. 1-4). And now it would seem as if all the testimony on earth must be extinguished. Not so, however. For just as in the days of Elijah, so in the coming day, there will be a remnant at the close of that awful time, of 144,000 Jews with the Lamb on Mount Zion,

who will have been faithful, and will have been kept alive during the relentless persecution under the beast (xiii. 7, 8, 15, 16), experiencing in their way the faithfulness of the Lord to His word about His sheep: "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 one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29).

So far, we have read of the saints called out after the rapture: some to be martyred, others to be kept alive on earth, but each and all having shared in everlasting life in their souls, and to enjoy that life fully in their very bodies, when the Lord shall come back in power. Then all the martyred ones will have had part in the first resurrection, the number of the heavenly saints being completed (xx. 4), and those preserved alive on earth will experience the Lamb's special care, resting for ever from all persecution (vii. 14-17; xiv. 1), their enemies having disappeared from this scene. To this we must now turn.

We have read of those who will be spewed out of Christ's mouth at the rapture. In heaven such will never be, nor on earth will they remain; and if for a time continuing here, it is to swell the number of the great apostasy (2 Thess. i. 8-10; ii. 11, 12). In dread of the wrath of the Lamb under the *sixth* seal, and repenting not of their idolatries, their sorceries and fornications under the *sixth* trumpet, those of them not slain by judgments will blaspheme the name of God under the *fourth* vial, will gnaw their tongues with pain and will blaspheme under the *fifth* vial and so be ready to enlist under the banner of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet under the *sixth* vial. For, not content with persecuting God's saints, they will be found banded together to keep, if possible, the Lord Jesus Christ out of His earthly kingdom (xvii., xix). A scheme more wild and reckless never was conceived. It will end in dire discomfiture. This the apocalyptic seer foretells.

With the great whore burnt by the beast and the ten kings (xvii. 16), that ecclesiastical system which corrupted the earth, and was seen drunken with the blood of saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, all trace of professing Christianity disappears from earth. The great apostasy which will supplant it will next fall under judgment. Its two earthly leaders will, at the coming of the Lord Jesus out of heaven, be cast alive into the lake of fire (xix. 20), and their followers, their willing dupes, will be slain by the sword which proceedeth out of the Lord's mouth. All these disappear from earth and sight, whilst the earthly saints remain, and the heavenly ones are seen on high—disappear, we say, from this scene, to come up for judgment at the great white throne, and then to find their final place in the lake of fire.

Meanwhile, between their death and final judgment, millennial blessing will run its uninterrupted course for a thousand years. The ungodly, once—some of them, at least—so powerful on earth, will never re-visit it, nor be found in company anywhere with those they have persecuted. Driven off the scene at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, if they have not left it before, silence is maintained about them; though very clear and very blessed revelations have been made about the saints. Continuing in death when all the heavenly saints have been raised; the devil, too, bound in the bottomless pit; peace and joy will flourish under the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the marriage of the Lamb having taken place in heaven before the thousand years begin, the true Church will be displayed in the heavens in all her bridal beauty, after the whore has passed away, never again to defile earth by her presence and ensnaring ways. Then, as the city, the New Jerusalem, her inhabitants will enjoy the fruits of the tree of life, and drink refreshing draughts of the river of the water of life.

Yet one last struggle between Satan and God, and all opposition will be subdued ; and, finally discomfited, Satan will be consigned to the lake of fire. The judgment of the great white throne then takes place, at which the ungodly dead will stand to be finally condemned to that lake which is the second death, their names not being found in the book of life (xx. 7-15) ; and the awful delusion that temporal death is the end of human existence will then, if not before, be finally dispelled for any who have cherished it. But the Church, the Lamb's wife, will remain in all her bridal freshness and beauty, ten centuries making no change in that ; and men on earth in the eternal state will enjoy immunity from pain, sorrow, and death, the sad fruits of sin (xxi. 1-8). None, however, not sharing in everlasting life will be found sharing in anything less awful than the second death. For blessedly, yet awfully, true will be the words, "He that hath the Son hath life ; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 12).

And now, may we not quote the words in the gospel of John (iii. 36) as a suited motto for this book : "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." What the gospel thus states doctrinally, the Revelation depicts prophetically ; and it is the mission of prophecy to reveal beforehand the events and the acts by which that will be openly carried out to its fulfilment.

With Him in whom is life John's ministry begins (John i. 4). With a mention of the tree of life (Rev. xxii. 14, 19), and the blessedness of eating of it ; and with the sad lot of forfeiting that favour, he ends his ministry in the sacred volume. It is a ministry essentially about life—life existing in the eternity of the past ; and to be enjoyed by saints now, and in the eternity of the future.

C. E. S.

A FAST.

How significantly we have presented in Isa. lviii. externals without an accompaniment of truth in the inward parts. Formalism, with that opposite of what should be, feeling more hurt that what they went on with was not pleasing to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, than ashamed, humbled, abased, because having transgressed, whose sins were not hid—a people who had known His way, yet turned from it.

Chapter i. tells the same most solemn history of a people in relation to God who had been nourished and had rebelled. Faithfully corrected, but going on with evil; morally corrupt and corrupters—upon whom discipline, counsel, care, nourishment were alike bestowed without yielding delight and joy to the Giver of every good. Apparently no lack in bringing multitudes of sacrifices, in comforting themselves with the thought of their acceptance, and making their addresses to Him, which but wearied Him. Be they joyous feasts or solemn fasts—of what avail when that condition existed, told out in so few words: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.” And what follows. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Here, then, were doings in plenty, but that lacking which gave savour to their sacrifices. Where was the

circumcised ear and heart? Oh! that privileged ones would choose the better part—to hear His Word and learn of Him. “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

Humbling, indeed, to find such comparison as ox and owner—the lower creature a solemn witness against a people so sunk and separated by their sins from the Holy One of Israel. Ox knew master; Israel knew not her God! The lost sheep He was sent in search of—the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

What a word in Matt. xv. to those who had made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition, a people who had not honoured father or mother—hypocrites they were designated. The prophet Esaias said of them: “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” This Pharisee company who fast, who thank God they are not as other men, who were offended at His Word—these were not of His Father’s planting, those of whom the prophet had spoken: “See ye, indeed, but perceive not.” But He has His own whom He calls by name, and His little following should know that these were to be “*Let alone*: they be blind leaders of the blind.”

How the Spirit of Christ shines out from one who had confessed Him Lord, judgment passed upon all that had been in activity to dishonour Him, as Rom. iii. as well as Isa. i. speaks of no soundness from crown of head to sole of foot; so throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, eyes were all engaged in evil, when that which is good (1 Tim. i. 8-12) is brought to bear to close every mouth, and all the world be under judg-

ment to God—*every mouth stopped: His Word in grace addressed to His guilty creatures* (Rom. iii.). “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

Where is the profit of the works, labour, patience, intolerance of evil, discernment of false apostles, labour without fainting (which He testifies of Ephesus), when, alas! devotedness to the Person is the missing link? 1 Cor. xiii.: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

Of what worth the works described in Rev. ii. 19, or the gorgeous splendour and luxury in which indifferent Laodicea thought herself surrounded—rich, but not toward Him; how poor. Self-satisfied—lukewarm—never knew His fast—not knowing her own deep need, or the knowledge of what suited Him. Need of nothing; yet the wretched, the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!

“Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?”

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose

the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

Blessed Lord Jesus, Thou didst say, "Sacrifice and offerings Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 8, 9).

Oh! yes, Thou didst deliver a message, and proclaim to poor captives deliverance, and receiving of sight to blind. We have heard of Thee, of Thy love to Him who sent Thee for the sheep for whom Thou wast smitten; unselfish, obedient unto death; the will of Him, Thy will. We know the living and true God through Thee. Blessed Lord Jesus, may Thy love constrain our hearts to cleave to Thee—to treasure Thy precious Word—to manifest to Thy praise we bear Thy Name. Thou wast brought up at Nazareth—didst go on and on to Calvary, giving us the knowledge of God as light and love. Our God, Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour, seated Him at Thy right hand. Thou who wast wounded for the transgressions of Thy people, bruised for their iniquities, kept this fast chosen of God. Quicken our poor hearts to treasure Thy gracious salutations, to expect with joy to behold Thee, to hail with delight the thought of praising Thee, who art worthy.

Nothing but pure, unmixed grace have we known. And in what a wondrously blessed relation are we placed to Him for whom we watch and wait. Poorly, indeed, do we seek grace to win to Christ, spreading the knowledge of Him where we go.

LIGHT BEFORE THE SUN WAS SET IN THE HEAVENS.

I READ these verses (John i. 1—18) as a kind of preface, serving to introduce this Gospel in its due character, as the *Gospel of the Son of God—the Son of the Father*—and the Baptist's testimony is summarily appended to this preface, as serving to the same end.

And here I remark, that the place which our blessed Lord *immediately* takes, on His appearing upon earth, is that which I have already observed belongs to Him as the Son of God, and to the Church with Him—that is, the place of *a stranger*. He is here shown to us at once in this character. He is as light in the midst of darkness; the Maker of the world, and yet not known of the world; coming to His own, and yet not received of His own; made flesh, and yet only tabernacling for a while among us. All this shows Him to be the Stranger here; it is thus that this Gospel introduces Him. And, accordingly, at the beginning, it assumes that His questions with the world and with His earthly people Israel, were both determined (see ver. 10, 11). The Spirit of God in our Evangelist at once shuts up the world under the condemnation of being “without God,” and concludes Israel in unbelief; and upon this, brings out an elect family, not registered in the earth, or born of flesh, but born of God, for whom “grace and truth,” the fulness of the Father in the Son, were now provided.

The book of Genesis opens with creation; but the Gospel of John opens with Him who was before creation and above creation. It is to Him that we are immediately taken. Creation is passed by, and we get to “the Word,” who was with God, was God.

This is the opening of our Gospel, defining it to be the Gospel of the Son of God, the Creator of all things, the Declarer of the Father, the Fountain and the Channel of grace and truth to sinners. And, according

to this, the glory which John tells us we have beheld is that "of the only begotten of the Father"—that is, a *personal* glory; while the glory which the other Evangelists record as having been beheld was the glory on the holy mount—that is, an *official* glory merely. And this again characteristically marks the end and bearing of this Gospel by John.

Very blessed, as well as very elevating and divine, are the thoughts suggested by these introductory verses. They tell us, beside what I have observed above, that the light, the living light, shined in darkness ere the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; yea, ere His harbinger, the Baptist, was sent forth by God. Just as in the old creation. Light was the first element under the forming power of God. It went before the sun. The sun was the creature of the *fourth* day, but light was the prime creature of the *first*. The first three days, therefore, walked in the light of light merely, without the presence of that which afterwards ruled the day. And so has it been, as these verses tell us, in the history of the living Light. Christ was the earliest thought from God that rose upon the moral darkness and chaos of apostate man. In the promise, "It shall bruise thy head," the living light sprang forth. Days or dispensations succeeded. The first three days again, as it were, took their course. The ages of the Patriarchs and of Moses spent themselves. But the light of life had gone abroad, though as yet the Word had not been made flesh. The light shined before the sun was set in the heavens. And this is a happy thought. The Christ of God was the earliest revelation that arose upon the ruins and darkness of Adam; and though for a season that divine depositary of all light, that great source of all vivifying beams, remained unmanifested; yet effulgences worthy of Him, and which belonged to Him, came forth to cheer and guide preceding ages, the first, the second, and the third day.

But *heat* as well as light is ours, I might say. For

the same wondrous scripture tells us, that "the bosom of the Father" has been disclosed to us. "The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." There is nothing like that. The deep, unspeakable, unfathomable love that dwells in that bosom is the love that has visited us, in the warmth of which we have been addressed. And how surpassing all knowledge is such a thought as that! Well may we ask to be strengthened with might by the Spirit to comprehend it (Eph. iii. 16-19). It is the heaven of the heart to be still and silent, and in simple faith to let such a revelation tell its tale upon us.

J. G. B.

DEFILEMENT FOR THE DEAD.

NUMBERS xix.

WITHOUT pretending to enter into the details of this chapter, I would point out some points in the type of such importance and so little appreciated by the children of God generally, that we cannot have them too often brought before us. For I think that this portion, as indeed the word of God in general, is the revelation not of the mercy that brings us nigh to God, so much as of His continuing, sustaining, restoring grace. This will never sanction our distance from Him again in a practical way. Happily the considerations I refer to are quite plain.

First, there was the sacrifice; and here the blood that was sprinkled before God, as the foundation of all the rest, was a complete thing never renewed. It was sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle. Whatever might be the circumstances, the sprinkling was never renewed. To have supposed such a thing would be to endanger the foundation. God never raises a question about the perfect efficacy of the blood of Christ. Scripture never yields such a thought as the renewal of the blood of Christ; for this is the

very point in which the sacrifice of Christ stands contrasted with the sacrifices of the law over and over again in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Wherever there is the thought of fresh sprinkling of the blood, a man is on Jewish and not on Christian ground. It is not merely that His sacrifice has been made once, but we are perfected for ever through that one offering. It is a thing done once for all. This is the first thing to notice. "Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times."

But then there was another need. How are we to have our communion restored if broken by defilement? In fact, we know that the children of God are in the circumstances of great temptation and trial, and that they have not only a tempter without, but a nature within which would constantly drag them into sin. I do not mean that there is any necessity for a child of God to fall: there is no need for it, nor does God in any way tempt to evil. On the contrary, he who has found Christ, and yet fails in the way of sin, is always inexcusable. To allow the thought that God's providence has to do with this, is scarce short of blasphemy. Even, if unhappily wrong, let us beware of adding to it the aggravation of throwing it upon God, and of excusing ourselves at His cost.

But what does God provide for the sorrowful circumstances of the one who forgets Him? This is what we find in the second part of the chapter, and what was really His peculiar object in the red heifer. For the body of the heifer, her skin, her flesh, her dung, everything that belonged to her, was all to be burnt, and the ashes to be religiously kept. Nor was it merely that the heifer had to be burned, but into the burning had to be thrown cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet; the cedar wood and hyssop referring to nature in all its extent—embracing the whole range of that which was originally very good; but which

man only uses as an instrument for departure from God. Scarlet, in Scripture, is the continual figure of the pride of the world. Here, then, we have all these thrown into the burning of the heifer, as a witness of the circumstances of the trial, or the means of defilement. Of all this the ashes were to be kept.

It will be observed, again, that God marks in a peculiar way the defiling effects of death, because it set forth in a special manner the slips and failures of the children of God, while passing through the wilderness. And hence it is only given in Numbers, because it is a provision for the wilderness. If one had anything to do with the heifer, the person became unclean. The priest and he that burnt it were unclean. And if a person that was clean had to gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, he too was rendered unclean. All this was to mark the nicety of God, this deep feeling about anything that had to do with our defilement. In Christ, where this is found, there is, of course, the absence and opposite of uncleanness. Christ was the only One that could touch the leper without being defiled. The intention was to shew the delicate feeling that God would have in His people about any defilement. "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days."

There was no haste in a soul's restoration from impurity. "He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean." If a man tampered with sin, God at least would not make light of his sin. He would give the soul the profit of being exercised about it. It was in vain for such an one to say, I am sprinkled with the blood—I am clean: why should I trouble more about the sin? Such thoughts do not come from the Holy Ghost. Instead of our being sprinkled with Christ's blood being a reason for taking comfort in the presence of sin, it is the strongest motive for shame and humiliation. What a stain on His name, and what a pain to

our hearts that, after God had attracted us by His mercy to hear His word, and had given Christ's blood to purge our sins, we were indulging in that which had required the sufferings of the Son of God ! The blood is not the appointed way for meetings in afterwards. The flesh uses that to make light of sin. It is not the blood that was here used to purify, but the ashes of the heifer. What did they represent ? The full proof of judgment. There might have been the blood without the intense suffering that the reducing of the heifer to ashes expressed. It is what Christ suffered that is brought to my remembrance by the Holy Ghost. The ashes were mingled with living water. The power of the Holy Ghost—His present action in using the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ. It is not the truth of sacrifice that is used, but of His sufferings on the cross—His going through the judgment of the sin before God. My soul is brought back to this, not merely as a redeemed person, but as one who thinks of what it cost the Lord Jesus Himself.

There were two applications, that is slowness and deliberation. Every thing must be complete. The man must be under the effect of the water seven days, going through in his spirit the sorrow of not standing in his full privileges among the people of God. Christianity, no doubt, has nothing to do with times and seasons ; but they are here significant of great principles. It is not that a man must now be a week before being entitled to renew his enjoyment of communion with God again. Yet this is true—that if a soul has got defiled with sin and is not led by the Holy Ghost to judge it in God's presence, he cannot regain practical communion with God. He is a liar according to the strong language of the Holy Ghost. The full force of that word applies to a man that never knew God. But so far as a Christian, through the deceit of Satan, makes light of sin, he is an offender against the true character of God. Is not

this a very serious thought? I am sure there are few of us who feel its weight as we ought. We take a comparatively light view of our slips and failures in word and deed against the Lord. The effect of the failure should be to lead our souls to regard Him in all His sufferings, and to go in spirit through what that particular evil cost the Lord—what it was for God to judge it—what the Lord Jesus felt in taking it upon Him before God; for indeed He did take it all. If so, what is the effect? The man acquires a stronger and a deeper knowledge of God's grace than he ever had before, and a practical acquaintance with the deceitfulness of sin and of his own heart; so that instead of Satan gaining an advantage, the man gets fresh blessing for his soul. But how often, instead of this, alas! we see a person tampering with evil. Then it becomes so grave that even the eyes of others see it. Then perhaps it goes farther still; the very world sees it—too truly sees a careless, unholy walk. What is the consequence? The man slips completely away. He gets farther and farther, until, alas! there is the discovery to himself and to others of what was true from the first—there never was a living link between that soul and God. Still it remains true, that what is destruction to an unconverted man is dangerous and hurtful to a Christian. Wherever we tamper with sin, in ourselves or in others, there is defilement. If the unclean person touched anything, it became unclean. Sin leads on from one bad step to another, unless we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ about it.

The difference of the days I understand to be this. The third day represents that there must be the feeling of his condition as an unclean man. If it was a question of anything evil, the principle of the law was that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. Two was the absolute number that was necessary in order to prove anything: but three was more than sufficient. On the third day the unclean was to purify himself with these

ashes of the heifer. On the seventh day the thing was repeated—the uncleanness is again brought before the soul by the Spirit of God, and then the person resumes his place among the people of God.

But to take a New Testament instance, let us look at Peter. See how he broke down in spite of the Lord's warning. It is not that Peter had less affection for Christ than the other disciples; the reason was because Peter had great confidence in his love for Christ, and therefore rushed into circumstances where none but the Lord could stand, and from which the other disciples held back. And therefore coming more into the light, into the place where Christ was, he only proved the flesh more clearly than the others did. The others had not come into the same circumstances of temptation. But how does the Lord restore Peter? First of all, when He turned and looked upon him, Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. That will illustrate what is meant by the third day's purifying. The whole work might be done in a short time; but it must be really done. It is the grave, deliberate self-judgment, the power of weighing the thing in all its hatefulness before God. Peter, when the Lord looks upon him, remembers the word that He had spoken unto him. That is the way the Holy Ghost works. It is not merely a feeling, but the word of the Lord brought back to Peter's mind. Now it seems to me that the word thus brought home to him exactly answers to the ashes of the heifer applied to the man that was unclean on the third day. There was the sprinkling for the first time.

But the process was not yet complete, though it was going on. For when a man is in an actively evil state, he would not, as Peter did, desire to see the Lord again; he would have kept away from the sepulchre. If the Holy Ghost had not been working in Peter's soul, he would have avoided, instead of desiring to be near the Lord. But he shewed living faith because he wanted to see and hear the Lord.

The Lord, however, waits. The work was not done at once, and it was not till some time after that Peter is with the Lord in John xxi. The beautiful interview between them recorded in that chapter illustrates the second purifying—when the Lord so seriously and withal so affectionately asked him, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?” There was not one word said about his denying the Lord. But if Peter did not understand at first, the Lord would not let him go, and repeats once and again the question, till the whole root is laid bare, and Peter felt what the Lord really meant. Yet said He, “Feed My sheep.” It was not merely that He looked for Peter himself to be by grace His faithful follower in the thing in which he had failed; but He confided that which was the precious object of His love to the man who had denied his Master. There we have the seventh day. It was digging down to the root of the wrong. What was the occasion of this fall? Peter had trusted not in the Lord’s love to Peter, but in Simon’s love to the Lord. It was in no small degree a natural affection, though there was more and better mixed with it. And so, I suppose, it is that the Lord calls him by his name, “Simon, son of Jonas.” He was resting on his affection for Christ, not on Christ Himself. And I believe we are very little alive to the extent in which we give credit to nature for being grace. There is a vast deal of nature about the truest Christian, and it was just Simon’s mistake not to suspect it. But the Lord shews him that no flesh shall glory in His presence, but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

After this, the work being done, Simon returns to his place of ease and happiness in the Lord’s presence. And now, too, he can undertake the Lord’s work, broken in spirit and in communion with Himself, about to go at a later day both to prison and to death for His sake. How completely grace restores the soul!—*Bible Treasury*.

GOD'S COMMUNICATIONS IN GRACE AND THE SAINT'S INTERCESSION.

GENESIS xviii.

THE Lord communicated the knowledge of what He was about to do concerning Sodom. The place the Church stands in is similar to that of Abraham with God ; and this word is a very descriptive display of the ground of intimacy the Lord sets His people on with Himself. Ours is in a higher sense, because Abraham stood on the earth, the place of judgment ; but in us it is a far more blessed thing, as we are altogether out of the place of judgment, enjoying the blessing itself ; God "having made known to us the mystery of His will," &c.

The men rose up and looked towards Sodom. The Lord directed them as the executors of His judgment, and Abraham went with them to shew them the way. The Lord makes His saints His companions, not invariably, but still it is their privilege. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord ? but we have the mind of Christ." Thus in the communications God has made to us, He has made us His companions in the best way ; for there cannot be a better way one can shew love to another, than by communicating to him his thoughts and feelings. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." So we are to walk with Christ until He comes to take us up to Himself. The exercise and path of faith is down here ; and, mark, the Church is above judgment (not above discipline for their good). Lot looked towards Sodom ; but Abraham was out of it. Abraham being the Lord's companion is not only delivered out of the judgment, but when the Lord is going to judge, He tells Abraham about it. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do ?" "For I know him." So it is with us, the ground of this communication is the thought the Lord has about us—He has centred His

love upon us, and therefore He lets us into His confidence. He has put Abraham into the place of covenant blessing. So He has united the Church to Christ—associated it with Christ. And He says, If I have brought Abraham into this place I will introduce him into the knowledge of what it is—"spoken of his house for a great while to come." So God has made known to us the mystery of His will because of the place in which He has put the Church.

"I know him"—there is great blessing in this word. It is a different thing from the judgment. The Lord does not talk in this way about those He is going to judge. When He talks about judgment, He talks about enquiring, "I will go down and see;" and until He has fully investigated it, He will not touch them. It is not so with the saints; He has no need to go down to see about them, for He fully knows them, as He said of Abraham, "I know him." The cry of Sodom had come up before God; but, before going to execute judgment, He will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto Him. "The men went towards Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." That is blessed. Thus if the Lord knows Abraham, so that he is able to get the blessing, he stays with the Lord Himself. He is going to bring judgment on the world, but He will not smite until He cannot help it; but no judgment coming on the world can separate Abraham from God. God's eye so rests upon Abraham, that Abraham rests quiet in God. And so it is with us, whatever trial may be coming on the world, our place is to abide with the Lord Himself, and then, like Abraham, the effect of having drunk into this grace will be to be calm, quiet, and happy. Our place is not to go down to search out the depths of iniquity, but to let the cry come up to us. There will be Lots many; but let us be with God on the mountain, abiding in perfect peace with the Lord Himself. Abraham, being in perfect peace, had

nothing to ask for himself, and was therefore free to intercede for others. So it was in the case of Abimelech : if Abraham be a prophet, if he has this intimacy with the mind of the Lord, let him pray for thee. So it is with us, "If ye abide in Me, and My words," &c. The possession of the Lord's mind gives the power of intercession for others (not like Jacob, with whom the Lord had to wrestle, because of the crookedness in himself, and therefore He could not communicate to him His name which was secret, although He blessed him). Jacob had to get the blessing for himself, and therefore he had not power to get it for others, but Abraham had the knowledge of that communion which must produce great peace and joy (there is reverence of course—"I am but dust and ashes"—but perfect intimacy as well). "And the Lord went His way as soon as He had done communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place." Abraham's position is with the Lord, in perfect peace, in unquestioning confidence, having no question to settle with God, but on that ground where he can enjoy perfect communion.—*Anon.*

SERVICE IN CLOSING DAYS.

As I lay reading in my berth on the steamer, I was struck afresh with the order of the teaching set forth in 2 Tim. ii. 1-7 (New Translation), especially from verse 3. (1) "Take thy share therefore in suffering, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Who is to measure to each his share? The One who gives them the power to bear it. If He will not allow us to be *tempted* above what we are able to bear (1 Cor. x. 13), neither will He allow us to *suffer* more than is necessary.

But *soldiers* are never murmurers at the hardship they endure when on active service : never ! If such a

thing arise, it is in all probability because of the overbearing and tyrannical conduct of some superior, or on account of non-payment of wages, or the quantity or quality of their food, or some such cause. At any rate, such causes could never arise in the army of the Lord. Each, then, must take his share in suffering as a good soldier.

(2) "No one serving as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life;" then the reason is given, "that he may please him who has enlisted him as a soldier." It is a question of *entanglements*, not of relationships. How easy to drop into things which soon become entanglements! Instead of being free as soldiers, ready for anything, to please the One who has called us, we become "lovers of *self*"—the first thing which characterises the departure of the last days (2 Tim. iii. 2); then "lovers of money"—then "boastful."

(3) Then the figure changes. If a man is an athlete, he can only gain the crown if he strive lawfully. This is important for us. There must be adherence to Scriptural ways and means. Never was there such a time as the present for resorting to all manner of ways of expediency in doing the work of the Lord. Well, he who uses them may appear to be first in the race, and receive the plaudits of his fellows, and thus be strengthened in his love of *self*; "yet is he not *crowned*, except he strive *lawfully*." The gospel has not lost any of its power; it is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). It needs no external helps, or supports, or auxiliaries. Nor is it necessary for the "man of God" to count heads, or plead with audiences to "hold up hands those who have been blest," in order that he may be able to say, "so many were converted." It is God's work. "It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). "Preach the Word" is the servant's work. "We need not to speak anything," says Paul,

“for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). These are the blessed results where the Gospel has been preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and without any external help of any kind whatever. It speaks for itself. The servant is hidden. Neither hands nor heads are counted; but the holy, unselfish, and separate lives of the converts speak to all, and point to a work of God done by lawful means.

(4) Again the figure changes to teach another important lesson. “The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits.” Fruit does not spring up in one night. Patience is needed. “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain” (James v. 7). He has to *wait*. He labours first and then waits. Methinks much of the gospel fruit of to-day would have been a great deal better if it had not been “forced.” There is not the natural strength and vigour and hardiness seen in it which resist the various climatic changes to which it is exposed, hence it withers under the scorching sun of prosperity, or is nipped with the severe frosts of adversity. Remember the husbandman, ye workers in the Master’s field. Don’t be so anxious to “force” the fruit. Put the plough in deep; harrow the ground well; pray for the rain to fall on it. Don’t finger it yourself; let the Holy Spirit do it all; and you will find your prayers and your patience rewarded by fruit *you* will not need to talk about, for all will see it to be such as only God could produce, though deigning to use a human instrument as His tool.

(5) Lastly, “Think of these things which I say, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things.”

If the mind is dwelling on these things, the Lord will open them up ; their vastness and importance will be apprehended, while their lessons will be learnt and carried out by the one who seeks to please the Lord.

Briefly, then, we have—(1) Endure hardness as a good soldier ; (2) No soldier entangles himself ; (3) The athlete must strive lawfully ; (4) The husbandman must labour first, and then wait patiently for the fruit ; (5) Think of these things, and the Lord will open them up to you in a fuller way.

New Zealand.

W. E.

THE FATHER'S LOVE.

FATHER ! 'tis sweet to nestle here,
 In Thine own bosom ; doubt and fear
 All far away through that rich grace
 That gave me in Thy Christ a place ;
 Brought nigh to Thee, through His own blood,
 And born anew a child of God.

'Tis sweet to know Thy holy love
 Beaming upon me from above ;
 To know myself lov'd as Thine own,
 Thy dearest, best beloved One !

'Tis sweet to know Thy tender care
 Watching around me everywhere ;
 Precious to know Thy sympathy,
 In every circumstance with me ;
 Precious to know Thy staff, Thy rod—
 Supporting, chastening, Father—God !

And sweet to know that, by and by,
My heart shall love *Thee* perfectly,
 Shall yield at length a full response
 To all Thy love, that never once
 Has failed, in grace, to bear with me,
 Whose ways so oft are grieving Thee.

R. H.

2 CHRON. XXXIII. 11.—Esarhaddon, at the death of Sennacherib, hearing that there was a ferment among the populace at Babylon, went to live there, where he built a palace in addition to the one he had at Nineveh, which accounts for Manasseh being taken to Babylon. This explanation, which silences cavillers, has come to light by recent discoveries.

TRUTH IS LIKE THE FINEST GOLD. Burn it as long as ye will, ye cannot reduce its weight.

YOU MAY GO TO HEAVEN without health, or wealth, or honour, or learning, or friends, but never *without Christ*.

THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS.—When a certain English monarch asked his assembled nobles by what title they held their lands, at his rash question a hundred swords leapt from their scabbards. Advancing on the alarmed monarch the nobles exclaimed, "What title? By these we won our lands and by these we will keep them!" No imaginable contrast to this could be greater than the heavenly glory. All eyes are fixed on the Lamb as it had been slain; every look is love; unbounded gratitude glows in every bosom and swells in every song; every golden harp celebrates the Saviour's eternal praise; while descending from their thrones to do Him homage, the heavenly saints from every clime cast their golden crowns in one glittering heap at those feet which were nailed to the cross of Calvary.—*Dr. Guthrie*.

IMMENSITY OF SPACE.—A railroad train, travelling night and day at the rate of 50 miles an hour, would reach the moon in six months, the sun in 200 years, and Alpha Centauri, the nearest of the fixed stars, in 42 millions of years (*Professor Grant*). The distance of some of the fixed stars is so great that light travelling at 187,000 miles in a second would take half a million of years to pass to the earth; so that we see them not as they are, but as they were half a million of years ago. Through the Lick Observatory telescope may be seen Alpha Lyra, a hundred billions of miles distant from the earth, having a magnitude and a splendour twenty times as great as that of our sun! Professor Barnard says that with photographic plates now in preparation, the camera will record the presence of at least 500 millions of stars, with the certainty that there must be a still larger number which are not visible.—*Professor W. Matthews, in the Anglo-American Times*.

YOU MIGHT AS WELL ARGUE that the sun in the heavens is a delusion and a phantasy as that the Bible, to which I owe a saved soul and a new nature, is a fabrication palmed upon my credulity.

MANY A MAN is a sceptic because he wishes to get rid of his responsibility. He flatters himself that, by making it his boast to believe nothing, to spurn conscience as a demon of the imagination, and to discard the soul's immortality as a similar unauthenticated dream, he can thus dismiss and bury in oblivion the haunting accusations within him.

"ONE THING THOU LACKEST."—"I was once very near Christ," some will probably be saying in eternity, "but I left Him. The world's chain was too strong for me. I thought of Him. I went to God's house. I desired to be saved, I thought. But I could not take up the cross and count all things but loss for His sake. So I turned my back on Him, and with Him I lost my soul, my heaven, my all."

A FEW SQUALID HUTS now rise upon the ruins of the once luxurious Corinth and the once warlike Sparta. Tyre, that grand commercial city, whose merchants were princes, has now literally become "a place to spread nets upon;" while Ephesus, with its world-famed temple, is altogether forsaken, except by the antiquarian. Such is the fate, sooner or later, and in a greater or less degree, of the cities of the world.

NAZARETH rejected Christ (Luke iv. 16-30), and He never went there again! Capernaum received Him (verses 31-41), and He went there frequently. It is a dangerous thing to reject Him.

"OH, LORD, advertise Thy love through us," was the prayer of an earnest worker among sailors at the East end of London.

"A BIBLE," said an Australian colporteur, "brought light to my father and mother; it was a treasure to our home, and we hid it so securely that the authorities could never find it, though, when my parents no longer went to mass, they suspected we possessed a Bible. They even turned up the garden in their search, but never succeeded in taking our treasure away. The Bible has done so much for us that I long to spread it far and wide."

"WHAT A DIM LIGHT mine must be if others are not sure that I love Jesus," was the sorrowful reflection of a dear young Christian when tenderly asked if she loved Him. We are children of light, walking in eternal sunshine, reflecting the brightness of His face; but we can only mirror His brightness and send it gleaming out to others by communion with Him in the unction and power of an ungrieved Spirit.

TO THE YOUNG.—Let the Lord have the flower of your age: the best is due to Him. Give Christ your first love. You cannot put your heart into a better hand. Oh! if ye knew Him and saw His beauty, you would close with Him and cleave to Him. His Name is as a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and so perfectly constructed that a child in grace may ascend it without danger. Take as many up with you as ye are able to draw, that ye may be the more welcome, shall we say?

CHRIST IS THE ONLY LIGHT by which a man down here can see to read his Bible.

A MAN IN GLORY IN HEAVEN is a truth dear to the heart and mind of God.

"WE SEE JESUS," wrote Paul, as though his eye beheld Him, "crowned with glory and honour." Himself seen there, whatever is of man finds its secondary place.

DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN, He was the perfection of human nature. All therein was in perfect subjection to God, and had *its* place, and did exactly *its* service. That which was pure, separate, and lovely in human nature was in Jesus under all its sorrows, but in all its excellence, and excellent in its sorrows. Make others to see Christ in you—moving, doing, speaking, and thinking.

THE LORD JESUS is "the Way," without which there is no going; "the Truth," without which there is no knowing; and "the Life," without which there is no living.

PHILIPPI was a city of Macedonia, on the borders of Thrace, founded by Philip of Macedon. The site bears the same name, but only ruins remain.

J E D I D I A H.

2 *Sam.* xii. 25.

THE more carefully and closely we scan the blessed page of Inspiration, the more gloriously shines out the infinite grace of God in His dealings with helpless, undone sinners. In the subject before us, we would, with grateful and adoring hearts, learn something of the tenderness of His heart, and of the love which, like some peaceful, pure, unending stream, flows therefrom.

David's terrible crime had its origin, we learn, in an apparently trivial piece of misconduct. He had remained at home resting upon his couch, when he should have been engaged in warfare. This reversal of God's order of things is a common offence with man generally. We have a marked demonstration of it in the solemn scene in the garden of Gethsemane. When the blessed Lord was in the throes of that mighty conflict, His companions were sleeping. When He went forth, Victor, in calm and peaceful dignity to meet the rabble with their swords and staves, His disciples were demanding, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" How jangled, out of tune, and harsh is every thought and action of man with the thoughts and purposes of God! But David's ill-timed rest led him, as we know, into deep sin; and though "the thing which David had done displeased the Lord," He yet, in long-suffering grace, withheld the hand of judgment. Months passed—weary months must they have been to David, with so huge and dark a load upon his heart and conscience. At length Nathan is sent to him, and, in the parable of the poor man and his one ewe lamb, the prophet with great power brings the sin home to David's conscience (2 *Sam.* xii. 7); and then, but not till then, is the confession made: "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 *Sam.* xii. 13). "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done

evil in Thy sight" (Ps. li. 4). The wrongs inflicted upon Uriah and Bathsheba were sins against God, and in His presence they, personally, were lost sight of. David had probed his sin to its proper depth. Self-convicted he stood before the Lord, a murderer, an adulterer, and a dissembler, with the sentence of death already passed upon himself by his own lips (2 Sam. xii. 5). Truly, an awful moment. What can he do? The law's provision for sin in such a case failed. Of this David was well aware: "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it" (Psalm li. 16). "When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance" (Lev. iv. 22), could not apply to him. His sin had not been committed even upon the impulse of the moment; but had been carefully planned and wilfully carried out. But for the gracious intervention of God, there had been no escape from death. How dark the gloom that must quickly have gathered around his soul, so keenly awake, as he must have been, to his solemn position! But, quickly as it may have gathered, it was as quickly dispelled. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye" (Eze. xviii. 32), which, may we remember with gratitude, holds true to-day as then.

David had most surely turned, and sorely repented of his sin. But "because He delighteth in mercy" will the Lord depart from His own law? Must death *not* be met by death (Ex. xxi. 12) because of the inability of the law? God is righteous (for "righteousness is the habitation of His throne") as well as gracious, and He will not swerve from righteousness any more than He will cease to act in grace. Grace reigns through righteousness, and not, as with us so often, at the expense of it. The death of a substitute God demands; a substitute of His own special selection. The blood of bulls and of goats will not avail.

David's own son, one whom he fondly loved (2 Sam. xii. 15-18), must yield up his life. A son who had not known (committed) sin must die for the sinner, but for a sinner who had confessed himself "guilty before God." Who can fail to trace here, though in dim outline, another Substitute, sinless and spotless, who yielded up His life for us guilty, lost, and ruined sinners? "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." To David another son is given; and previous to his birth the announcement was made: "Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about, for his name shall be Solomon (margin, peaceable), and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days" (1 Ch. xxii. 9). The man of rest was to follow the man of war. Warfare must precede, not follow rest, as David had sorrowfully to learn (and saints to-day are enjoined to labour to enter into rest—Heb. iv.). To have learnt from God the high destiny which awaited his son was grace indeed; but the occasion of its birth must have stirred the memories of a departed day; and knowing the fickleness of the human heart, was it possible for the question to arise again, "Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live?" The possibility of such a thing God would not in grace permit, as we shall learn. That enough, yea, more than enough, had already been done to satisfy David's heart, no one would question. But enough had *not* been done to satisfy the loving heart of Him of whom we read: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,

how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Is this not true of Him to-day? Is He not now scattering the pledges of His eternal love around us on all sides? Nathan, who had carried to David a message of righteousness, as it may not inaptly be termed, is now commissioned to bear a message of pure, unmingled grace: "And He sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and He called his name Jedidiah" (*i.e.*, Beloved of the Lord, margin), "because of the Lord" (2 Sam. xii. 25), a name which disclosed the secret springs of love of God's own heart. What a picture of the love of God! How bright it shines on the dark background of David's sin! What delight, what outflowings of gratitude must this secret name have caused to well up in that father's heart; a shadow, may it not be said, of that new name, engraved upon a white stone, which shall be given to the overcomer, and which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it; and of what perpetual delight it will be the source no one may say.

What a beautiful impress we have here of God's character. The death of the child tells of His righteousness. In Solomon we read of peace having been made, righteousness and peace having kissed each other; and in Jedidiah we learn of His grace and love, which, like a glorious halo, encircles everything of God. This name is vocal of Him who is the "Beloved more than another beloved, . . . the Chiefest among ten thousand," and it brings home, with thrilling power, to the heart and memory the blessed declaration that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The cross of Christ alone reveals, in all its plenitude and power, the wondrous character of our blessed God; and thither may the picture here presented direct the reader.

A. C. H.

THE MINISTRY OF JUDE.

JUDE, the brother of James, is the least voluminous of all the New Testament writers. In this he may be compared with Obadiah in the Old Testament. Obadiah had a prophetic vision, and tells us about it. It had respect both to the final overthrow of Edom, the persistent enemy of Israel, and to the return to their land in the future of God's ancient people. His place in the sacred canon, arranged as the minor prophets are in a moral order, comes fitly after Amos, who had foretold the possession by Israel of the remnant of Edom (ix. 12). Obadiah then appears in the light of an appendix to the prediction of the herdman of Tekoa, in common in that respect with Jonah, the prophet of Gath-hepher: For, whilst the former treats of Edom, the book of Jonah illustrates divine mercy shown to Gentiles, two subjects touched on in that verse in Amos already referred to.

Jude is an appendix to no one, though like Obadiah he writes of judgment, but of judgment on the corrupters of God's House by apostasy, and not on the destroyers of God's heritage in Israel. Jude's place is generally the last of the *General Epistles*, so called, in whatever part of the New Testament volume these writings are found.*

Of his ministry this short letter is all with which we are acquainted. Where he chiefly laboured, as well as the place in which he wrote this letter, seem unknown. His wish, however, for the welfare of Christians is no secret. This letter sufficiently demonstrates that. How earnestly did he desire all of them to be kept in the true path, for apostasy was beginning even then to show itself. Hence he was stirred up to write as he has done.

* In the Uncial MSS., the Codex Sinaiticus excepted, the General Epistles follow immediately after the Acts, preceding those written by Paul.

In common with Peter, he writes of coming judgment. But, whilst the son of Jonas impresses on his readers the certainty of divine judgment overtaking *sinner*s, Jude treats of the end of *apostates*. Again, both in their ministry refer to past judicial dealings on the part of God, sins and apostasy having already called down unsparing judgment on the guilty. Hence instances quoted by each of them are warnings, that neither impenitent sinners, nor apostates can hope to escape the wrath of the Almighty. The instances recalled to the reader's remembrance are taken from Old Testament history. Yet the special objects of these two New Testament writers are ever kept by them in view. Jude did not copy from Peter, nor did Peter from Jude.

A few remarks will make this plain. Peter tells us of the angels who *sinned* (2 Pet. ii. 4). Jude writes of these same as not having kept their *first estate* (or, principality), and as having left their own (or, proper) habitation. The son of Jonas also reminds all of the ungodliness of the men of Sodom and of Gomorrah (2 Pet. ii. 6). Jude tells his readers that they went after strange flesh. Apostasy characterised these two classes. Peter for his third example adduces the sinners dealt with at the flood. Now these were not apostates. So Jude, in keeping with his special line of ministry, brings to the front for his third example the conduct of the children of Israel in the wilderness, who, brought out of Egypt to go to Canaan, turned back in heart to Egypt. This was apostasy in spirit. The reader then, we trust, will readily perceive the difference between Peter and Jude, and their real independence of each other.

Turning now particularly to Jude, it is plain that he cherished no such vain delusion as is sometimes propounded, viz., that men and manners are so improving, that a millenium of peace and happiness will be ushered in by the present preaching of the gospel of the grace God converting the whole

world. What Paul had foretold, Jude certainly endorsed, viz., that evil men and seducers (or imposters) will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Tim. iii. 13). So the outlook, whether Paul, or Peter, or John, or Jude wrote of it, is anything but encouraging to such dreams. What, then, should become true Christians in such circumstances as Jude depicts is a very important matter. To this he addresses himself.

To Christians in every place, to Christians in every age he writes, first telling them in what light he could view, and we may say in what light the Spirit of God regards, them. As regards the Father, they were "beloved" by Him (as we should here read, not "sanctified"). Next they were kept, or preserved, for Jesus Christ. And they were also called ones. Of present blessing and of future joy he would remind them: present blessing, as sharing in the Father's love; future joy, as kept for the Lord Jesus Christ. Then exhortations follow, for they were to be *contenders* (3), *builders* (20), and *saviours* (23).

And first of *contenders* he writes, pressing on Christians the common duty of contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints (3). For the faith already revealed they were to contend, and not for mere dogma, or some ideas, or a system of doctrines elaborated by some human brain; but for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Many an one might like always to sail on the calm unruffled waters of some Pacific Ocean;—no conflict around, no contention called for, no appearance of opposing forces, or adverse currents. Such a fair voyage, just floating on the water, might be the dream of some. No earnest Christian, however, could look for that. He is called to be a soldier (1 Tim. vi. 12). He is meant to be a labourer (1 Cor. xv. 58). He professes to be a trader (Luke xix. 12-19). To find himself at times confronted with opposition, or in circumstances of difficulty, he must expect, nor must he

be dismayed at it. For to contend for the faith each and all are called—but the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Nothing more catholic than this can there be. It is not zeal for a sect, or earnestness in a cause, which has its limits short of the extent of the Church of God. Nor is it fighting for some mysticism, some esoteric teaching known to an initiated and select few, of which Jude writes. For *the* faith, the common property of each and all, every saint should care about. Now to carry out this, one must study the Word of God ; for there, and there only, shall we find in its fulness, and each part in due proportion to all the rest, the revelation of *the* faith which should be precious to every child of God. Creeds, articles, confessions drawn up by men, all come short of the fulness of the faith. Else why supplement the creed by articles ? Why adopt a confession instead of articles ? Why seek, as some in these days, to amend a confession ?

Peace without contention many may desire. But that cannot be till the great enemy is bound ; so any who are looking for that now are clearly not in the current of the divine mind. There *was* conflict ; there *will be* conflict as long as the church remains on earth. Hence the Christian is, and should be, *practically*, a soldier. To contend for the faith is his duty, and forms, as we see, part of his instructions.

But again we would point out, and trust the reader will bear with us in doing so, that it is for *the faith once for all delivered to the saints*. Were this, and had this always been, kept in view, many a controversy might never have arisen, and many a division of the one flock would never have been heard of. Nevertheless, what Jude insisted upon would from his day downwards have been needed. To war a good warfare was appointed Timothy (1 Tim. i. 18), who, whilst doing that, was to avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions

of science falsely so called (1 Tim. vi. 20). There may be, as there evidently were in the apostle's day, wranglings and janglings. On such Paul frowned, and Christians entering upon them he sternly forbid (1 Tim. i. 4 ; vi. 3-5 ; 2 Tim. ii. 14-16, 23 ; Titus iii. 9). Yet no one more earnestly contended for the faith than he did at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11-14), and subsequently when writing to the Galatians.

Now the contending, to which Jude exhorted, was called for by the condition of things within, and not by opposition from without. Certain men had crept in unawares amongst the Christians of that day, who were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Lord (or, Master) and Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 4). Ungodly men they were. Privily had they crept in. Evidently their real character had not been previously discerned. The faithful had been taken unawares. Was God likewise? The condemnation of these men was already the subject of a divine revelation. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, thus distinguishing him from the son of Cain, had prophesied of this. Long, long ago, had God foreseen what would take place in Christian times and in the Christian assembly. But the prediction, uttered before the flood, only finds a place in the sacred volume after the beginning of the Christian dispensation. Interesting to us is this, as evidence that things are written in that book when in season, and not before.

Enoch prophesied of judgment on *men*. But when Moses wrote, and put on record facts about Enoch, God had taken up Israel as a nation for Himself, and was not dealing directly with men as such. Hence that prophecy would have been out of character with the dispensation which had just commenced. But when Christian times had begun, and the gospel was going out to men as men, the elect nation no longer occupying the foreground as before, Enoch's prophecy could come in as neither out of date nor out of character with the new dispensation. So what had been

passed over by Moses, though not forgotten by God, comes in most appropriately when quoted by Jude.

Now Jude, though warning of apostasy and announcing the judgment that will overtake apostates, adds nothing to the revelation already vouchsafed. The common faith already delivered was enough, and they clearly were acquainted with it. For how contend for that of which one has never heard? But what they had was sufficient. And Jude, we would repeat, addresses all saints. No one then, in that day, could divest himself of responsibility in this matter, if really a member of that wonderfully blessed company, viz., those beloved of God the Father.

But now another exhortation was called for, reminding Christians of that which was requisite for each one, in order to contend successfully for the faith. The faith was a holy faith, and each one was to build up himself or herself upon it. A *builder*, then, each one was to be (20). With the faith they were to be personally and practically acquainted. Establishment in it was called for, if they would uphold it. A creed, a form of confession, was not enough. Each one was to test its sufficiency, building up himself on it. Now, to countenance the practices of those who had crept in was clearly to act quite at variance with it. And not less, to use the language so common in our day, would the keeping quiet for peace sake be wholly inconsistent with true Christian profession.

Again, the building up in the faith was to be a process going on; not something done once for all. And learning, as they thus would, more about the faith, they would become more and more satisfied as to its sufficiency, and would also become more and more impressed with its real importance. So the practical denial of it on the part of others in outward Christian fellowship would not be a matter of indifference; nor would the introduction of ungodly ways among those who partook of the lovefeasts (12) be viewed without concern.

Further, *prayer* in the Holy Ghost was to characterise them likewise. The true spirit of *dependence*, and the need of divine guidance—these they were to cultivate. The former would be expressed by prayer. How often was the Lord found in prayer! The latter would be found by seeking for the Spirit's leading in that exercise. Then, too, they were to keep themselves in the love of God. What can so keep the spirit fresh, and the person ready for service? And, lastly, they were to be looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life. This hope was to be kept in view, and the heart to be reminded that it was all of mercy. No room for self confidence, no ground for boasting, or exalting themselves above others. All was of grace and mercy. Is it not so still? Moreover, all that the saints needed in Jude's day, of which he had just reminded them, we require still; remembering that God has provided us with a full revelation for our pathway here. The faith once for all delivered unto the saints can fully furnish us unto every good work.

Not only, however, were they to consider themselves. Care was to be manifested for others, and in exercising that they would act the part of *saviours* (23). To this attention is now directed, and the way to discharge that service is pointed out. But here there is an uncertainty about the text of Jude's instructions, though none about the general tenour of them.

Discrimination in dealing with individuals was pressed on the saints. Wise, how wise was that! Then, hatred of the garment spotted by the flesh was insisted upon by the brother of James. And into three classes, most probably, he divided those with whom the faithful saints of Christ would have to do. Following the Revised Version, the passage runs thus:—"On some have mercy who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating," etc. Others

would present the passage as follows :—“ Some convict (or correct) when they are disputing ; and some save, snatching them out of the fire ; and some compassionate in fear,” etc. (22, 23).

The importance of discriminating in different cases cannot be too strongly pressed. In all movements there are the leaders and the led. Any compromise with the evil here denounced was to be resisted, and its advocates to be firmly opposed. Compassion, however, on behalf of those entangled with the ungodliness was to be manifested, and their liberation, if possible, attempted ; ever remembering the need of watchfulness over one's self, as we each have in us a nature which cannot be improved, and which, if it acts, can draw us into the same evil. Now, if Jude's directions were followed out, the divine nature would be displayed, for holiness would be maintained, and true Christian love be exemplified. But how could any successfully engage in this, unless whilst contending for the faith they are also building up themselves on it? Unless that is the case we shall be neither good soldiers nor efficient saviours.

Jude's ministry, then, was one essentially hortatory in character, and was called forth by the state of things among the saints. The maintenance of the faith by earnestly contending for it he puts in the foreground. Then what each must be doing on his own behalf is adduced, else how extricate those entangled by the teaching and by the seduction of the ungodly men who had crept in unawares? Shutting the door against all thought of development of the faith, he insisted on the sufficiency of the revelation vouchsafed to meet the germs of apostasy which were working in the assembly. Then he closes with a doxology different from any that we meet with elsewhere in Scripture, in which we are fittingly reminded of the need of upholding grace, whilst opposing the error that then was, and would continue to be, abroad ; for the evil men denounced are viewed

as only dealt with by the coming of the Lord out of heaven: "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy. To the only God (*wise* should be omitted) our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."

The soldier must be kept; the one who would be a saviour must be upheld. What Jude could have written about the common salvation we shall never know on this side of the grave. We see, however, that he had discernment as to the character of ministry needed, and he exercised it accordingly. The state of Christians (1 Cor. iii. 1; Heb. v. 11-12), or the character of things in the assembly may call for special ministry suited for souls. It betokens wisdom from above to discern that, and grace received to minister it.

C. E. S.

ELIJAH.

SCRIPTURE history, prophecy, the gospels and epistles furnish us with that which is full of interest and profit to the child of God concerning Elijah the prophet. Instruction as to our own hearts, as well as gracious encouragement, are afforded to us as his history and ways, personal and otherwise, come before us.

My object in penning these few lines is to call attention to the *servant*—"a man of like passions" with ourselves.

Elijah appears abruptly to us in connection with a message Jehovah gave to him for Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kings xvii.). Later on we find his eye gets occupied with himself. He forgets that he is the *servant* of Jehovah, and consequently he breaks down under the strain that is bearing upon him. But at present

he is seen by us as one who, with child-like simplicity, hears and obeys, because Jehovah speaks. He is the servant of Jehovah, and no circumstances he may be placed in have any power to alter that fact. His Master, then, has all the ordering of his service, and will in no wise forget His servant.*

If the heavens yield no rain, and consequently there is famine for man and beast all around, the servant learns, as he goes on in his mission, how mighty Jehovah the God of Israel is.

Let our eye follow the prophet as he goes, according to the word of the Lord, and hides himself by the brook Cherith. To that lonely spot, and little known, probably, he is directed. To go elsewhere, or to propose other work to himself, would be to manifest that he had forgotten he was the servant. That would not do. *Faith* must prevail with him in *all* things. He might be tempted to think that nothing but disaster could result to him in such a mission, but strong in faith—and that is strong in God—he is satisfied to have the ravens as the bearers of his daily food from his Master's table at one time, or the poor widow of Zarephath at another.

We read not of Elijah making any of the sons of the prophets aware of his errand, or mentioning to them the impoverished region he was going to, so that they might bear him in mind and send him help. No, that would not have been *faith in God*. And yet how much of that so-called faith there is, and little, how little, of what we see in Elijah.

Faith in God disappears when we allow the voice or the actings of our fellow saints to affect us, no less in

*John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord, and who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, entertains the thought, as he lies in the prison, that he is forgotten of his Master. But, wonderful servant that he is, he has to learn that his condition must be subservient to the interests of his Lord. He thought, doubtless, he had reached this point when he rejoiced in hearing the voice of the Bridegroom (John iii. 29). *Inside the prison* it is not so easy to decrease *joyfully*. John will discover and be satisfied one day that his Master never forgot him.

such a case than when, like Elijah in another day not far off from the one before us, he *hears* the voice of an enemy of God and flees, thinking he will be cut down by her hand.

But, meantime, Jehovah God is supreme in the prophet's soul. He to whom all things belong, and who says, "I know all the fowls of the mountains," and who numbereth the hairs of the head, has given charge to the ravens to feed His servant. When they have served His purpose, He has a widow of Zidon who will accomplish His will. Elijah proceeds quietly and confidently. An important point for us is, Am I going at the call of the Lord, or is my eye on some of His creatures for their smile and their aid?

I Kings xviii. presents to us Elijah outwardly in the full sense and vigour of his calling. He is "strong and of a good courage"—Jehovah is all to him—and the priests of Baal are as chaff before the wind, only fuel for the fire of God's holy judgment.

I have said "outwardly," for at such a moment there is much in the service to prevent the soul realising its actual state with God, unless it is carried on in much dependence on the Lord. When the service is completed, then comes the time which manifests whether the inner man has been really with God; and this, we find in the next chapter, the prophet was lacking in. He had to pass through much casting down in his own eyes in order that he might possess his soul in peace—the peace of God.

Jezebel, enraged by hearing that all the prophets of Baal had been slain by Elijah, vows vengeance on Elijah. But she only thought of Elijah. She was ignorant of Elijah's God. Before she can touch a hair of the servant's head she must grapple with and overcome the One who is "mightier than the mightiest." Her threat, however, reaches the ear of Elijah; and God, in love to His servant, allows it to rest in his mind, in order that a work in him He sees to be needful may be accomplished.

“Elijah went for his life, and came to Beersheba ;” and after leaving his servant there, he then went a day’s journey into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree, and there poured out his complaint : “It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers.” Evidently Elijah had thought he was better than those who had preceded him, as well as the only one that was left who cared aught for the honour of Jehovah. No word that he has received from the Lord has brought him where he is. He, like others before him and many of us since, lost sight of his Master and took his own way.

But grace is a wonderful thing. Nothing is a surprise to God. He knows what He will find in His servant. He can teach him, He can use him such as he is. He can cause him to keep out of his own sight the natural importance so ready to appear. He does it in His servant, though in working it in him it ends in his withdrawal from a path which bristled with enemies, in whose presence the prophet quails.

We come now to a moment that witnesses the tender care of the Lord over Elijah. *He* takes thought for the body—if He directs *us* not to do it—and a heavenly messenger carries to the prophet what the eye of love sees is required. The angel touches him, and bids him “arise and eat.” He does so, and lies down again. Again the angel waits on him, and bids him “arise and eat,” as the journey was too great for him. The prophet is obedient, and then “goes in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.”

He enters a cave and lodges there ; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him and asked him, “What doest thou here, Elijah ?” No word by an angel on this occasion—it is the Master Himself ; with Him the prophet has to do. Elijah’s reply to the question put to him by the Lord probably satisfied him for the moment. He begins, “I have been very

jealous for the Lord God of hosts." He is occupied with *himself*, with what he has been doing for the Lord. That was the secret of his flight from Jezebel ; and as he allows "I" to bulk in his mind will he proceed to speak *against* his people. He becomes an accuser of his brethren. This is not approved by Jehovah ; and while *He* lingers in long-suffering over His people, He will set His servant the lesson that his self-occupation requires. Jehovah sees what the prophet does not see—what the prophet *might* have seen had his own service not overgrown in its proportions to himself. The Lord had a company reserved to Himself who had kept faithful. The Lord's estimate is very different from ours.

While we cannot and ought not to shut our eyes to the failure of the servant, how beautiful it is to notice his sense of what is suitable when he is in the presence of Jehovah Himself. The wind, the earthquake, and the fire are around him. He is unmoved by all these tokens of the mighty power of his God ; but when "the still small voice" is heard, he wraps his face in his mantle and goes and stands in the entering in of the cave. The voice may, as in after days with a Peter, renew the challenge that searches to the depths and quick of the soul ; but it is the voice of love which binds to it those it sees needful to rebuke.

The prophet has reached his present state through supposing that the burden of the day lay on his shoulders. He soon learns his mistake. But in the wisdom of God it is a serious one, and he must proceed to make ready for another to fill his place.

No doubt there had been much searching of heart in the prophet, when he learned that he was to anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat in his room. But he is the servant again—he does what he is commanded. Work and service are not equivalents, and it is *service* the Lord desires of us.

Here we must take leave of this remarkable man of

God. Elijah is about to be taken up to heaven, and a "whirlwind" is the messenger to accomplish the translation of the prophet. Elijah had beheld its actings on the mount before the Lord; now it is to accomplish Jehovah's pleasure in carrying him into heaven. His fitness for that presence is not on the ground of works. Works of a saint could never be the basis of a welcome in the presence of God and the Lamb. Let them be all in perfect harmony with the mind of God, yet they will not, they cannot in their very nature, be a passport for one who is of the fallen race of Adam.

At the same time it is cheering to find, when Elijah is to be taken up into heaven, that Gilgal is the place he *goes* to;—Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt is rolled away—Gilgal, the place of self-judgment, is the spot of all others for the saved sinner to frequent, as he expects to be called at any moment from earth, the scene of his sins and his sorrows, to the presence of the holy Saviour. This blessed man of God has now

" Flung behind him, as an unworthy thing, his former self
and ways,
And reaching forward far, he seeks the things that are,
Beyond time's lagging days."

Service and reward go together; but entrance into the presence of God rests solely on the blood that has been shed.

The victory won, when Christ the Son of God was alone on the cross, forsaken of God for our guilty souls, will be the song of the redeemed for ever and ever. Then His servants shall *serve* Him—they shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads. The wilderness journey, with all its needed lessons and sad failures on our part, will then be for ever over.

D. S.

A PILGRIM SONG.

Deut. xxxiii. 25; 2 Cor. xii. 9.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 This the word the Lord hath given ;
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 Is a voice to us from heaven.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 Shows the watchful care of God ;
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 Helps the saint to kiss the rod.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 Bids each murmuring thought depart ;
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 Falls like dew upon the heart.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 What a balm for earthly cares !
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 Bids the mourner dry his tears.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 Thus the Lord His saints doth greet ;
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 Onward, upward leads our feet.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 Soon shall sound for us no more ;
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 Bids the pilgrim-heart adore.

As thy days thy strength shall be !
 Sound aloud the joyful strain !
 Sufficient is My grace for thee !
 To Him be glory, praise. Amen.

THE whole life of a Christian must be a feast of unleavened bread ; his common conversation as well as his devotions must be holy.—*Henry.*

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

How often has it been said that much of the work in souls now-a-days is manifestly superficial, though real when tested ; but is there not a danger in such a case of our turning away with a self-righteous sigh after presenting some portion of the Word of God, because we find no response, instead of going on seeking to "give meat in due season," counting upon the Spirit of God to lead and guide aright? If we find this true in one, shall we not in the many? Only solid work can stand the test of such a day as this ; and this can only be as the living Word of God becomes the sustaining power.

"*Continue* thou in the things which thou hast *learned* and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." We *need* this word, for in manifesting, or with purpose of heart cleaving to, this is our wisdom and strength (2 Tim. iii. 15). If evil is developing, then how blessed for every child of God to realise that God is supreme, and that it is a fact that we shall all come to the *unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Ephes. iv. 13). *This is development*, and calms and steadies the heart as we look out on a disquietude and unrest, not only in the world, but among His own. "The Christ! Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, *the fulness of Him* that filleth all in all"! Here we have completeness which nothing can hinder, and as we practice righteousness and manifest the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we realise the *development* of the divine nature and life of which we are all partakers. We need to have more and more the thought in our minds, that we have fellowship with the Father in consequence of the possession of this eternal life, and thus we can, in a measure, learn our oneness in this respect with Him in whom dwelleth *all* the ful-

ness of the Godhead bodily. If this be so, how blessed to know that we dwell in a circle of light from which we cannot depart. This is a necessity, for were we not once darkness, but are now light in the Lord? And in John's first epistle it is not *where* we walk only, but also *how* we walk in the sphere where we have been set. And again, the divine nature showing our origin, we find declared, "If we walk in the light *as* He is in the light;" and again, "Which thing is true in Him *and in you*;" and further, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, *even as* He is righteous," and "Herein is love with us made perfect, because *as* He is, so are we in this world." All this tells of a relationship (though He is seen in all the fulness, we in measure, yet surely developing), though giving Him a separate place, "for He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of One*, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

And if, even now, the reality of this brings joy to our hearts (1 Tim. i. 4), what desire there is to know this reality, when divested of everything that clogs the growth and comprehension of it now. Then shall we find ourselves, each one, a part of the new creation of God in its fulness and magnificence, displayed to the joy and satisfaction of the heart of its Creator. Then shall we have full knowledge of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. "Do we comprehend this? Oh, He will work in spite of everything; having predestinated us, according to the *good pleasure of His will*, to the *praise of the glory of His grace* (Ephes. i. 5, 6); and if this is His eternal purpose, oh, what grace do we see working to accomplish these mighty purposes, for so soon as the first man forfeits his position we hear that blessed announcement, The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head, though it needs must be His heel should be bruised; this announcement of grace to man conveying the sentence of judgment to the opposer of God's counsels. With what astonishment must Satan have surveyed the

birth of Eve's firstborn—utter weakness—in the light of this word—The woman's seed! Crucified through weakness; yet had God laid help upon One who was mighty. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted! It is this that makes His victory so precious to our souls, and leads us with one accord to declare Him the chiefest among ten thousand. Oh! what a victory! And now God's heart perfectly free to bless the poor miserable captive, even according to His own heart. And now what a calling, beloved! God displayed in Christ, for "in Him all fulness was pleased to dwell" (Col. i. 19), and Christ displayed in the Church, His body, His bride, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephes. i. 22). He, the ordered centre of a reconciled universe, and she the helpmeet, the Eve of the last Adam, in the day of His power and glory!

How, then, is all this to be realised in the soul? How are saints to walk in the power of this calling of God? We must be strengthened with all might according to the riches of the glory of the Father, by *His Spirit* in the inner man. But for what? What need of such blessed living action of God in us? Shall we answer these questions in view and in the light of the superficiality so common. Ah! it is in order that this Christ, *this centre of all things* to whom heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings must bow the knee, "may dwell in our hearts by faith"! That the soul's affections may centre in Him, surround Him, entwine themselves about Him, "that being rooted and grounded in love"! No Satan's power can disturb the *planting and growth* of our souls in the soil of love. Down deeply will the roots strike there, though this will be tried and tested; far and wide may the branches spread. Sorrow may unfold it. Temptations to disturb it are met by the power of it ministered to the soul. The coldness of our brethren deepens the joy of its being ours. The world's sneer and scorn turn the heart more distinctly to Him who

loves. The entranced soul rises to the deeper contemplation of that central Sun, and looks out from Him to the length, and breadth, and depth, and height which centre in Him, and is lost in the fields of illimitable glory. How deep the wellspring of that love must be to One who was the object of His eternal choice, whose delights were in the sons of men! The more one enters upon, and realises what the Church of God is as connected with His counsels for Christ's glory, and what a place she holds in God's plans for the ordered manifestation of His glory, the more one feels how hopeless is the ruin which lies far and wide around her path. How few there are who care for more than that which speaks of their own blessing! This, surely, is a hindrance to real growth. How few even that have *realised* their personal blessing at all! How His people may say, even at their best, "my leanness, my leanness."

And must this continue to be the state of His saints? If there are some who are forced to bow to these wondrous truths because they cannot gainsay them, and have not felt their power, and yet have no desire to learn that the interests of Christ Himself are necessarily their interests, and faith is not exercised, how can we be astonished that the heart is not equal to the carrying out of that which is necessarily due to Him? Pitiable condition indeed! The centre of God's counsels, the person of Christ, is not valued above all else, *for faith knows the One it trusts*. Yet God would gather a people in these days to the confession of the Name of Jesus and the truth of His body. And He supplies the necessary gifts for its development. How blessed to be with Him in this work which will stand for eternity! He would awaken bridal affections which Jesus looks for in His Church, for which He gave Himself. He would awaken His people, and recall them to the state of those who at first looked for and awaited God's Son from heaven. He would form a heavenly company

of *true, whole-hearted* souls, whose aims, and life, and work are for the glory of His Son. Are there not those who would respond to those Spirit-wrought desires, who long to answer in all things to the heart of Christ? Surely there are. Surely, when God has really brought these plans and counsels for the glory of His Son and our eternal blessing to light, He will find a people who will value them, and answer to His heart's desire. Will you, beloved reader?

J. H. I.

TO OPENED EARS.

BELoved brethren and sisters in Christ,—The day of the apostasy is hastening on with rapid strides, and also the day in which the Lord shall come to snatch His own away. The present moment is of so solemn a character, that I feel constrained to address you the word of exhortation. Godly men everywhere, who watch the signs of the times, see the moment approaching which shall terminate the present actings of grace. The time has, evidently arrived when one must speak plainly and decisively, and ask you where you are and what you are about. You have, by grace, which has shone brighter and brighter as it has approached its termination, been gathered out of the seething mass of idolatry and wickedness which now threatens Christendom and the world with an overthrow, more awful than that of Sodom and Gomorrah of old; and the question is whether you are adequately impressed with the responsibility, as well as the blessedness, of the ground you are on, and walking like men and women whose eyes have been opened. Believe me, there has never been in the world's history such a time as the present, and Satan is occupied with none as he is with you, and his occupation with you is the more to be feared because of the subtlety of his operations. His object is to withdraw your attention from

Christ, while you suppose you are on safe ground and have nothing to fear. He would destroy you with the very truth itself. For mark the subtlety : you *are* on safe ground, but *only* while Christ is your all in all. Here is where Satan is drawing some away. Interpose anything between your soul and Christ, and your Philadelphia becomes Laodicea, your safe ground is as unsafe as the rest of Christendom, your strength is gone from you, and you are become weak, like any ordinary mortal. Some of you are young, recently converted, or brought to the right ways of the Lord, and you do not know the depths of Satan. But you are hereby solemnly warned of your peril ; and if mischief overtake you, you cannot plead ignorance. Again, I say, Satan has his eye specially upon you, for the purpose of interposing the world, in some form, between your soul and Christ. He cares how little, or in what form. If you knew how little will answer his purpose, you would be alarmed. It is not by that which is gross or shameful ; such is the development, not the beginning of evil. It is not by anything glaring that he seeks to ruin you, but in small and seemingly harmless things—things that would not shock or offend any one as things go, and yet these constitute the deadly and insidious poison, destined to ruin your testimony and withdraw you from Christ. Do you ask what are these alarming symptoms, and where are they seen ? The question does but show what is the character of the opiate at work. Brethren and sisters, you are being infected with the spirit of the world. Your dress, your manner, your talk, your lack of spirituality betrays it in every gathering. There is a dead weight, a restraint, a want of power, that reveals itself in the meetings, as plain as if your heart were visibly displayed and its thoughts publicly read. A form of godliness denying its power is beginning to be seen among *you*, as plainly as in Christendom generally. As surely as you tamper with the world, so surely will you drift away to its level. This

is in the nature of things. It must be so. If you tamper with the world, instead of shielding you, the privileged place you occupy will only expose you to greater condemnation. It must be Christ *or* the world. It cannot be—ought not to be—Christ *and* the world. God's grace in drawing you out of the world in your *ignorance* is one thing, but God will never permit you to prostitute His grace, and play fast and loose, when you have been separated from the world. Remember you take the place, and claim the privilege, of one whose eyes have been opened; and if on the one hand this is unspeakably blessed—and it is—on the other hand, it is the most solemn position in which a human being can be found.

Beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak, and I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will bless Him for these few faithful words. Nothing can be more glorious than the position you are called to occupy in these closing days. Saints have stood in the breach, have watched through weary days and nights these eighteen hundred years, and you only wait for the trumpet of victory, to go in and take possession of the glorious inheritance. Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours; and yet, forsooth, you are lowering your dignity to the level of the poor potsherd of the earth, who only wait for the rod of the Victor (and yours too) to be dashed into pieces. Oh, awake then from your lethargy; slumber no longer—put away your idols and false gods, wash your garments, and get you to Bethel, where you will find God to be better than ever you knew Him, even in your best days. Lay aside your last bit of worldly dress; guard your speech, that it be of Christ and His affairs, and not, as you know it now often is, of anything but Him. Let your prayers mingle with those of other saints at the prayer meetings—they never were more needed. Neglect no opportunity of gathering up instruction from that Word which alone can keep you from the

paths of the destroyer, and let your life be the evidence of the treasures you gather up at the lecture or the reading-meeting. If you want occupation, with a glorious reward from a beloved Master, ask that Master to set you to work for Him; you will never regret it, either in this world or in that which is to come.

Beloved, bear with me; I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. You belong to Christ and Christ to you. Break not this holy union. Let not the betrothed one be unfaithful to her Bridegroom! Why should you be robbed and spoiled? And for what? Empty husks and bitter fruits, while you waste this little span of blessing! All the distinctions acquired here in the energy of the Spirit will but serve to enhance your beauty, and render you more lovely in the eyes of Him who has espoused you to Himself. Can you refuse Him His delights in you? Can you refuse Him the fruit of the travail of His soul, who once hung, a dying man, between two thieves on Calvary, a spectacle for men and angels, and for *you*; you who have *forgotten* (for you cannot have *despised*) this devotedness for you. He could have taken the world without the cross, and left you out, but He would not; and now, will you, having been enriched by those agonies and that blood, take the world into your tolerance and leave Him out? Impossible! Your pure mind did but need to be stirred up by way of remembrance.

Let us therefore take courage from this very moment. We have lately been offering up prayers, confessing the lack of piety and devotedness. May we not take this word as the answer of our ever-gracious, faithful Lord, to arouse us—to re-awaken our drooping energies? And then the more quickly He comes the better. We shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.—*Anon.*

London, May, 1869.

WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED, IN A MOMENT.

1 *Cor.* xv. 51, 52.

O MOMENT! of all moments the supreme,
When all of earth shall perish like a dream!
These bodies of humiliation gone;
Changed into glorious bodies, like His own.

Oh! what a moment! when His face we see,
Shining with grace and brightest majesty;
Radiant with joy! That face for us once marred,
By sinners smitten, by a thorn-crown scarred.

When to Him, in a mighty wave, they roll,
His image stamped on every blood-bought soul;
Not one is missing that His Father gave,
Not one forgotten that He came to save.

His glorious Church! no spot or wrinkle seen,
No trace of what its members may have been;
Washed, cleansed, and sanctified by patient love,
All fitted for the place prepared above.

Lord Jesus! while we wait Thy summons here,
Let Thy loved fellowship our spirits cheer;
Bright Morning Star! for us Thou'lt quickly come,
To share with us Thine everlasting home.

15th February, 1893.

E. C. W.

REST IN THE LORD.

SAY NOT, my soul, from whence can God relieve my care?
Remember that Omnipotence hath servants everywhere!
Commit thy ways to God, the cares that make thee faint;
Words are to Him no load; to Him breathe thy complaint.
On Him alone rely, so shalt thou safe go on;
Fix on Himself thy steadfast eye, so shall thy work be done!

THE CROSS OF CHRIST may well make us count the world as a crucified and put-to-open-shame thing, by its having crucified Him, and act towards it accordingly. How heavenly a thing it is to be deaf and dead to this world's sweetest music!

I MUST never make my experiences the ground of my confidence, or the exercises through which my soul is passing, or the circumstances through which I am called to walk. It is God Himself, and His word. On His own word I rest that He is for me; nothing can alter that.

HOW CONSCIENCE gets irritated when the light shows a man to himself; and how it seeks to find occasion for fault with the saints—in reality with God. It is the “murmuring” over again of Luke xv.

WE SEE in Joseph's history how it matters not what circumstances a man be in if he have God with him in them.

A GREAT MISTAKE is, it appears to me, the teaching what was absolutely true, as if it had been *dispensationally* true. Eternal life and life in the Son for saints, are true really for all time; but dispensationally you could not affirm them of saints before the cross.

GOD “DID LET none of his words fall to the ground” (1 Sam. iii. 19). There is a great principle here. It shows the eye of God following the words of His servant to give them effect. Men might pass them by and disesteem him who uttered them; but God “did let none of his words fall to the ground.” So the great thing is to be walking before Him in dependence and in obedience, and, whatever the seeming present results of our words or our doings, God will let none of them fall to the ground. What quiet confidence this gives to the soul in the midst of everything to discourage as far as men are concerned.

THE OLD TESTAMENT Scriptures have wonderful importance assigned to them when they are called “the oracles of God” (Rom. iii. 2). How infidels bend their efforts to invalidate the authority of these Old Testament writings. They well know that that of the New is bound up with it.

CHRIST DID NOT speak of His sufferings to man. We don't find them in the gospels. He spoke of them to God. We have them in the Psalms. The Psalms reveal to us the intercourse of the Lord Jesus with His Father—when He, was whole nights in prayer.

LOT GOES TO SODOM; God, therefore, gathers people from the ends of the earth against him, and afterwards turns him out!

A DYING SOLDIER in the Crimea was carried off the field and laid down to die. An officer, seeing him, asked what he could do for him, and was answered, “Nothing.” “Write to your friends?” “I have none. But go to my knapsack, and take out a Testament, and, at the end of John xiv., read a verse beginning with ‘Peace.’” He did so: “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you.” “I have that peace; I am going to that Saviour; I can say no more.” No friend to lament over the dying man on earth; but the Saviour, Son of God, to welcome him to His own presence in heaven!

“THE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION is abused when employed to lessen what is due to God.”—W. K.

“DISTRUST THOSE who talk much about Greek to those who do not understand it.”—J. N. D.

"SURELY, I AM as a beast before Thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with Thee." What deep acquaintance with grace to be able to connect both !

"SINCE YOU WOULD KNOW by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, a *Christian* ; and I choose, if God should count me worthy, *to be called a Christian*, a believer, or any other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those factious titles of Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or the like, I conclude that they came neither from Jerusalem nor Antioch, but rather from hell and Babylon, for they naturally tend to divisions. You may know them by their fruits."—*Bunyan*.

REVELATION i. 9.—"The persecuting emperor little thought what he was giving to us when he banished the apostle ; no more than Augustus, in his political plans as to the census of the empire, knew he was sending a poor carpenter to Bethlehem, with his espoused wife, that Christ might be born there ; or the Jews and Pilate's soldiers, that they were sending the thief to heaven when they broke his legs, in heartless respect for their own superstitious or ordinances. God's ways are behind the scenes ; but He moves all the scenes that He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements. They will accomplish God's will. The rest of them all perish and disappear."—J. N. D.

REVELATION iii. 10.—"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience."—"Christ is waiting till His enemies be made His footstool. We must wait for that, to see the world set right. We have to go on where the god of this world has his way, though under divine limitation. The thought that good is to have its rights in this world is to forget the cross and Christ. We cannot have our rights till He has, for we have none but His. Judgment, since Pilate had it—and Christ was the righteous One before him—has not yet returned to righteousness. Till then Christ waits, though at the right hand of God ; and we wait."—J. N. D.

THE CHURCH never enjoyed the same open manifestation of divine power after the day of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira ; just as Israel never had the same open manifestation of power with them that made the walls of Jericho fall down flat after the sin of Achan and the defeat of Ai.

WITH GOD AS DESPOT we have the only desirable form of government, for He is All-wise, All-good, and All-powerful. This will be the rule of the world to come (1 Cor. xv. 24, &c.).

THE ASCENSION (Luke xxiv. 50).—He had been rejected and crucified by the wicked hands of His own people at Jerusalem ; and now in resurrection He led them outside the camp that He might bless them ; and He parted from them at Bethany, where He had been so deeply loved, to have them remember in the place of love and devotedness that His hands were still lifted up to bless them. "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven ?" asked the angels. We are worshipping Him, might have been the reply ; for the steadfast gaze of a fervent and loving heart after an ascended and glorified Jesus is the truest worship.—*W. Reid*.

THE LORD'S LAST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

Luke xix. 29-48.

AND it came to pass, when He was come nigh to the mount of Olives, "He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which, at your entering, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither." For Jesus had to present Himself in His kingly character and title to the royal city, before His rejection, in all the rights and dignities which pertained to Him by prophecy, and promise, and birth, as Son of David, would be actually and formally accomplished by the Jews. "And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him." For it is in the largeness of His relation as Son of man, and in His title of Lord of all "the works of God's hands," as in Psalm viii., that Jesus is here acting. Nor is this the height of these directions, touching the colt and its owner; for whilst they plainly assert His right to loose the colt, as the Lord of the whole earth, they equally show Him in the light of Creator, in principle claiming the cattle upon a thousand hills as well as this colt.

Beyond all this, though hidden behind these outward directions, one may see Him in the omniscience of His own Deity telling the disciples what they should find, and where—if not in the omnipotence, too, by which the owner was made the willing servant of this Lord, in proof that the hearts of all men were as much at His disposal as the colt of which the Lord had need. The owner of the colt had tied him, but the Lord of creation had sent His disciples to loose him; and, in the exercise of His omniscience, and omnipresence, and omnipotence, as the God-man, was presenting Himself as the Jehovah to Israel, God of the whole earth, when He used the same power and authority to roll back Jordan or dry up the Red Sea.

Can they see Him in these preparations for His entrance into Jerusalem as plainly as their forefathers did, when He made the cloud His chariot, and rode upon a cherub and did fly ?

“ And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt ? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus : and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.” What a day for Israel and the people, if they can only understand this time of their visitation. Promise and prophecy equally foretold of this day ; and Zechariah had aroused them to keep it in expectation, and prepared the song, if they would but sing it : “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : He is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” What could be plainer for the Messiah, or for a willing and expectant nation ?

“ And as He went, they spread their clothes in the way ”—seemed for a moment to promise fair ! “ And when He was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God for all the mighty works that they had seen.” And so their reluctancy, or hesitation to celebrate His presence and glory, was rebuked by the multitude of the disciples.

And they said, “ Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord : peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.” For now the time is come that the order of the angels' introductory statement must be transposed in all its parts ; for it needs be re-cast, and put in harmony with the place and ways of Him it celebrates. Why, for instance, is the last part entirely omitted, “ Good will, or good pleasure with men ” ? but because of the unreadiness and refusal of Israel to hail the glad tidings at Bethlehem, or in the cities and villages into which He had come, or *now* at

the mount of Olives! How could this good pleasure of God with men sanction and take a place with them at this mount? Nay, for before this it had parted company with the scribes, and Pharisees, and rulers of the nation, and refused on its behalf to be at home and to accredit any one on earth but the Messiah, in *His* pathway, as the fulfiller of all righteousness. It witnessed to Jesus, in its foreknowledge (so to speak) of the break up, when over Jordan and its waters a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Again, at the mount of His transfiguration this good pleasure identified itself, and found its satisfaction in and with Jesus, when He shone forth in His kingdom glory above the brightness of the sun! After His descent from that mount, to take another path through death, by which to reach a higher point, this good pleasure follows Him, and identifies itself with whatever Jesus associates Himself with in His rejection by the nation. It travels away from Israel, like the grieved glory in Ezekiel's prophetic day, and hovers over the "little flock" whom, as the Shepherd, He has gathered out, and leads unto other pastures and stiller waters than flowed around them then; saying, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

And this is very precious for us, who have followed Him by this new and living way of His "decease" out into the Father's good pleasure and the coming kingdom! We must needs go further than this if, as we have said, the angels' statement is re-cast, and transposed from the earth to suit the heavens and the counsels of God, which only open themselves with a risen Christ seated in their midst as Head over all things to the Church. It is in this character and style that He lifted up His hands and blessed this little flock, when at Bethany He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And *there* the good pleasure having seated the beloved Son, and

the little flock too upon the earth, introduces us in another character with Christ, as from before the foundation of the world itself, according to the counsels of the Father's love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to "the good pleasure of His will," to the praise of the glory of His grace! Good pleasure with men has in this way set us in its own steps, with the beloved Son of man, whom we follow through the world, and then out of the world into the heavens, to learn up there by the Holy Ghost what the Father's good pleasure had counselled from before the world.

But other parts of the angels' statement are transposed at the descent of this mount of Olives, from which the Lord finally made His departure out of the world, and upon which His feet will again stand on the day of His return to this earth. Peace must follow the good pleasure where it settles itself; and "glory in the highest" must wait upon the Son of man, be He where He may; and decline to make itself a home in the midst of men as they are, who at the birth of the great mystery could find no room for the young Child, even though He entered the world by its inn. The world has lost its opportunity of connecting man with the glory of God, through Christ, on the earth; and all has been refused by men and driven back, yea, turned out at that shameful cross where they nailed the Prince of life and glory. The little flock have got all this, re-cast and transposed to suit "the pre-determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" in the heavens. Moreover, Jesus in manhood made all the parts His own "by flesh and blood," and in His own death and resurrection carried them away to the mount of Olives and to the right hand of God, where glory to God in the *very* highest, and the Father's good pleasure, and peace on earth are being inaugurated afresh, to descend from God out of heaven. Thus bound up everlastingly with the Son of man in glory, and the multitude of His risen saints, in His

own likeness and image above, and with the ten thousands of Israel and His redeemed ones below, the good pleasure, and the peace from the God of peace, and the glory of the Father can be established on earth, because all and each of these have first made for themselves a home, and a new beginning with the last Adam, the ascended Son of man, at the right hand of God in the heavenly places.

How sad to turn from such a morning without clouds, and look again into our chapter, to listen and be grieved at the discordant notes and voices below. "And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And He said unto them, I tell you, that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." All is now finished between the throne of Jerusalem and its King. The city has stopped the cry of those who said, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; and if the remnant who sang these notes held their peace, the very stones of Jerusalem over which He rode would cry out in witness of Him who travelled upon them, and in token of their condemnation and refusal.

If she has not a tear to shed for herself at this alienation of heart from Himself as her King, He must take the place for her, and prove to her the constancy of His own heart's faithful love in the face of this desertion. "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." Here we may observe that the correspondence of the great Prophet, in this His day of weeping, with Jeremiah is striking, only bearing in mind this grief of the Man of sorrows exceeded all others, as did David's over Jonathan. Still, as Jeremiah prophesied unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive, and sealed his ministry by the

added book of his "Lamentations," so Jesus closes His wondrous work and ways from the ninth chapter to the nineteenth, on His journey to Jerusalem, with His tears over the city. We may recall too, for profit, that when Jesus began His ministry, under the anointing, and the opened book of the prophet Isaiah, He read out His commission of "recovering sight to the blind" in the presence of all those who were in the synagogue of Nazareth. How faithful He was in opening the eyes and unstopping the ears, that Himself personally might be received by them, and the preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom might be heard and sink down into their ears, we have witnessed in all the cities and villages that lay in the way to Jerusalem through Jericho; but now, in His lamentations and tears, He acts judicially on them to close their eyes, and to say, as to the things which He and the disciples had ministered to her, and that belonged to her peace, they are *hid* from thine eyes.

Is it not always thus with a ministration of grace? which, if refused in its offer of salvation and peace, must clothe itself in a judicial power, and deliver over unto captivity as Jeremiah did, and as Jesus is forced to declare to Jerusalem and its coming days, saying, "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

These visits of the Lord into the midst of men are of the greatest possible moment; whether *then*, as confirming "the promises to the fathers" of blessing in the land, and amongst men upon the earth, by the reception of the Messiah and the King in the day of their visitation; or as *now*, by the rejection and departure of the Lord into heaven, and the times of our visitation, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, to gather together the members of Christ as

His body and Bride, in hope of the coming visitation by Himself a second time, when *we* shall be caught up to meet Him, and be presented to the Father faultless, and with exceeding joy.

By the way, it may be added, that these visits and the times of visitation are somewhat familiar to Luke, and come out here and there with much brightness and meaning. Take the man full of the Holy Ghost, after his mouth had been opened and his tongue loosed! and what are the first outbursts of his liberated spirit, but these visits of the messengers of Christ, and the Messiah Himself? "And Zacharias prophesied and said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath *visited* and redeemed His people," and this visitation is immediately connected with "the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath *visited* us." So, again, "when he that was dead sat up, and began to speak," in answer to the visit Jesus paid to the city of Nain, "There came a great fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, "That a great Prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people." So when Jesus is bringing His visit to a close, and assures Jerusalem of the time of her visitation, and the things which He had presented to her as the King ready to introduce her to the things that make for her peace, and saying to her on His leave-taking, "O that thou hadst known, in this thy day!"

Our chapter xix. tells us that Jerusalem having refused her visitor come down to woo and wed her, and declined His visits, and closed against herself the time of His visitation to gather her and her children, like the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, He must bewail her, and pronounce His lamentations, as He changes His appearance, and judicially (as we have said) consigns her, and her lovers, and friends unto captivity and the enemy's hand, where they still lie bound. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she

that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary."

Jesus leaves the city in His tears, as Jeremiah did by his lamentation. And now there remains but one spot unvisited in the land of Israel and in the city of Jerusalem, and this one spot was the brightest in the whole world, in which the typical glory had once entered and found a home, and over which the cloud rested as the dwelling-place of Jehovah in the time of Solomon's reign. What will the temple say to the Greater than the temple, should He visit it and walk through it to test it by the holiness of the cloud and the light of the glory of the Lord, which He was and is? Alas! how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they only esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! In the day of Jeremiah's visitation, he had witnessed this as to the city, and her sanctuary, and the sons of Zion; and had further owned what she was in the day of her espousals, and separation unto God, in holiness and truth, with many a regret at the contrast; saying, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire: their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick."

And what will the visitation of the light of the temple discover there, now that He is at its porch? Jesus "went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves." Alas for the temple and the nation! for there was no longer in it the authorised worship of God, nor His accepted worshippers. They had lost their place and title to draw near to Jehovah, for they knew not their

Messiah who drew near to them, and had reduced themselves to buyers and sellers, and turned the house of prayer for all nations into a house of merchandise. The temple proves itself as unready for its Lord, by the tables and seats of them that sold doves, and its money-changers, as was the city of Jerusalem for its King, riding through her midst on the colt. The temple knew not the time of its visitation by the Sun of righteousness, come to her with healing in His wings, if she would but own Him ; and the city forbade even the cry of those who hailed Him as the King of peace. They had each, in their respective ways, profaned the Name of the Lord—profaned His sanctuary and His table—and made the fruit thereof, even His meat, contemptible ! The prophet Malachi sought to prepare the way of the Lord into His temple, as Zechariah had prepared for them His way into the city of Salem, riding upon the colt ; saying, “ Who may abide the day of His coming ? and who shall stand when He appeareth ? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

Will the temple and its chief priests refuse their visitor, though He needs must pass through her courts with the fire and with the soap ? In faithful love He makes this final and closing visit, declaring Himself, too, in the characters of the refiner and the fuller ; for Jesus “ taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy Him ; and could not find what they might do : for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.” His patient and unwearied services throughout the land of Israel and its cities and villages, and, finally, through the city of Jerusalem as its King, and through the temple of God as the refiner’s fire and the fuller’s soap, have only uncovered the hostility of the chief

priests and chief rulers, who challenge Him as to the authority by which He overturns their tables, and the title to use the scourge of small cords and drive them out. Nor is this all ; for their enmity (as the heads and accepted rulers of all this corruption and profanity which Jesus overthrows) is so violent, that they take counsel how to destroy and get rid of Him, who judicially exposes and would get rid of them, in His zeal for the house of God. They had made void the law of Moses by their traditions, and turned the worship of God round for their own self-importance and profit ; and did not like that the Light of the world should be set upon the golden candlestick in the temple, and manifest the rottenness which lay at the very core.

Nor (we may say in passing) are *these* times and customs, with the enmity of the priests and chief rulers, in the least degree changed, where the truth of Christ, and Christianity, and the Church of the living God are maintained in the power of the Holy Ghost against Christendom, and its corruptions, and corruptors, and the accredited chiefs of to-day ! Peter prepared the way of the Lord since those days, by warning the saints of false teachers (even as there were false prophets amongst Israel), " who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." And the same apostle maintains the comparison, beyond the prophets and teachers, saying, " And many shall follow their pernicious ways ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Nor is the sad resemblance to the temple, and its tables, and money-changers completed ; for Peter adds these last features to the apostasy in each dispensation, " And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you : whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

J. E. B.

PSALM XXIII.

THE Lord our faithful Shepherd is,
 And we shall never want ;
 'Tis He Himself who tells us this,
 And to His praise we chant.

How tenderly He holds our hand,
 And guides our tottering feet,
 Where pastures green at His command
 Spring up His flock to meet !

Nor this alone ; He leadeth us
 Beside the waters still,
 That He His secret may disclose
 To those who love His will.

Restoring strength will He bestow,
 In righteous paths will lead ;
 In death's dark vale no fear we know,
 For love has all decreed.

His rod, His staff will comfort give
 Along that rugged way,
 That we may to His glory live,
 While waiting break of day !

A table is before us spread,
 Prepared that we may dine,
 That we no enemies may dread,
 But feast on love divine.

Our head anointed is with oil,
 And our full cup runs o'er ;
 'Tis not of sorrow or of toil,
 But grace's boundless store.

His goodness shall for aye endure,
 His mercy never fail ;
 The Father's house for us is sure,
 Where glory shall prevail.

And when we enter that bright home,
 "There only to adore,"
 From its blest scenes we ne'er shall roam,
 But dwell for evermore !

GOD AND HIS SAINTS.

IN the blessing of Moses, the man of God, wherewith he blessed the children of Israel before his death (Deut. xxxiii.), we see in the short compass of one verse (3) what a marvellous place the Holy Ghost gives to the saints of God. Surely it discloses to us how the heart of God is occupied with His saints, and reveals, too, the delight He has in them. The first clause is, "*Yea, He loved the people.*" This is the initial thing. It is at that point divine grace starts, and it is in that that all its activities find their source and their spring. Every saint of God in the past, in the present, and in the future has been, is, and will be such because, and only because, of the love of God. What a solid, immovable ground of assurance and confidence this is. In the far distant and past eternity we were foreseen of God; foreknown of Him and fore-ordained to become, by a sovereign act of His own grace—simply and solely because of His unmerited, immutable, and imperishable love—"vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory," the glory of His precious, peerless Son! How blessed to roll this word as a sweet morsel on the tongue, "Yea, He loved the people;" sweeter it is than honey and the honeycomb! When, by divine grace, we by and by sit down in the Father's house, and survey Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, with the whole Church of God resplendent in the heavenly glory, shall we not emphatically exclaim, "Yea, He loved the people"? and when from that exalted scene we look down upon Israel on earth, when glory fills the land because of Jehovah Shammah (Ezekiel xlvi. 35), shall we not again exclaim, "Yea, He loved the people"? "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them" (Num. xxiii. 21).

Surely God would have us trace up every blessing,

of whatever kind, to this one originating cause—His own unsolicited and unmerited love. As God spoke of the nation by His prophet Jeremiah (xii. 7), so may every saint of God appropriate to himself that word, “The dearly beloved of my soul.” Beloved brethren, what response of heart have we made to this wonderful love of God? Does He not look for it and covet it? In its very nature love is exacting as to its object, desiring a responsive affection. And thus Paul writes to his beloved Thessalonian converts, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God”; and John plainly states, “He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love”; while Jude bids us (in view of the dark and difficult days we are in) to keep ourselves in the love of God. Practical, needful, and comforting, beloved, are these Scriptures.

Well, that word “Yea, He loved the people” shows the place we have *on His heart*. Next, we have another word equally important, “All His saints are in *Thy hand*.” The hand indicates skill, and power, and authority; hence security and guidance for us. How blessedly secure are all who are hid in the hollow of His hand, and how blessedly manipulated for His service and for His glory are all they who are to Him as clay in the hand of the Potter! When we take our true place as clay in His hand, then can He both fashion us for His own glory and fit us as instruments for His service. Thus, in Rev. i. 16, 17, 20, we see how the Lord’s right hand not only upholds the seven golden candlesticks which are the seven churches in their honoured and privileged place of testimony for and association with Him, but also imparts spiritual cheer and divine strength to the beloved apostle while an exile in Patmos. From this, then, we learn that both corporately and individually the saints of God are in His hand, and truly blessed is this for us.

But the third clause now claims our attention. “They sat down *at Thy feet*.” What does God say

about this place? He says, "I will make the place of My feet glorious!" (Is. lx. 13). And again, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Is. lii. 7). And, in the New Testament, not Mary of Bethany only, though pre-eminently, but the woman of the seventh of Luke and the cleansed leper who returned to give thanks, and the centurion, and the beloved John, and others, all proved what a favoured and a fruitful spot was the place of His feet who was God manifest in the flesh! Let us for our own profit observe that what we have here is a very practical thing, "They *sat down* at Thy feet." Beloved, we well know the adage, "Actions speak louder than words." Let us prove our appreciation of a place at His feet by sitting down there in lowly, loving discipleship, when, surely, He will fulfil to us His own word, "I will make the place of My feet glorious!"

And lastly, "Everyone shall receive of *Thy words*." And what has God said about His word? Well, so much has He said that we are embarrassed with the wealth of Scriptures that speak of it. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89). What sublime testimony is here found of God's thoughts about His word! Who but God Himself would have conceived such a thought as that His word is for ever settled *in heaven*? And then, again (Ps. cxxxviii. 2), "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy Name." Here also we may exclaim, Who but God Himself would have conceived such a thought as that the word of the Lord has been magnified above *all His Name*? No finite mind would have had the temerity thus to speak. But God exalts and magnifies His own word which men carp at, and criticise, and depreciate to their own destruction. But of believers, we may say, every one receives of His words, for they are manna to the hungry soul, the

bread of God is found in them, the Christ of God whose flesh is meat indeed, whose blood is drink indeed. How blessed to have Mary's place, sitting at His feet and hearing His word!

Beloved, let us consolidate these truths about God and His saints. First and for ever first is this, that we have a place *on* His heart; second, that we are *in* His hand; third, that we are *at* His feet; and when all this is not only true of us, as it must needs be, for it is all of His grace, but is realised in practical power by our souls, what is the assured result but this, that we every one *receive* His words? "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Ps. xix. 10, 11). "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my Strength and my Redeemer" (ver. 14).

A FEW THOUGHTS ON JOHN XIII.

IN John x. the security of His *own* sheep is before us—the good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep (verse 11); the Father knows Him and He the Father, and He lays down His life for the sheep. There are other sheep which are not of this (Jewish) fold; they shall be brought by Him—shall hear His voice, and there shall be one flock (those gathered out of the fold and those not of it), and one Shepherd. Then, as laying down His life, and because He does so, His Father loves Him. No one has power to take it from Him; He has authority to lay it down—yea, and to take it again, and this at His Father's commandment. And so it need be no matter of wonder to hear Him say: "My sheep hear *My* voice; *I* know them; they follow Me; *I* give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out

of My hand." And it is not only Himself, but "My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

How assuring all this is—Himself and His Father thus to impart confidence as to this safety. In His hand; who can snatch away? He gives eternal life; who can deprive of that which He gives? This is connected with power which is His. Beside this, there is the thought so full of comfort for the heart, *He loves His own*—they were *His own* sheep. The hireling might flee and leave the sheep because they were not *his own*, and because he was an hireling and cared not for the sheep. Not so the good Shepherd. *Power* to keep *His own* sheep—none can pluck from His hand. *Authority* to lay down His life—none can take it from Him.

May we not, then, notice the *way* of this love in the chapter which heads this little paper. How full and assuring such a word: "Having loved *His own* which were in the world, He loved them to the end;" or, may we not well say? using a note given with this word in the New Translation, "'to the end' does not give the full force of the expression, for it makes it refer merely to time, whereas *going through with everything* is, as it seems to me, implied."

Going through with everything. What does such words convey? This precious portion of the word seems to supply its own answer—in one way, will allow nothing to come in the way of carrying out the purposes which He in His love devises (see verses 6-10); and, in another, will not interpose anything to hinder any soul learning its suited, needed lesson (see verses 36-38). Peter at the beginning would say: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Peter loved the Lord, and the Lord loved Peter too; but the Lord must and would have His own way with Peter. How good and suitable this for all and each of His own as well as Peter. Peter, perhaps, might think it was too humbling of the Lord thus to stoop; but does love,

such love as His, think anything too humbling for its object? That word has to come from the Lord, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me."

At the close of the chapter Peter again lets his voice be heard: "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." How often, it may be, we speak when silence would be more becoming. And Peter has to hear that other word: "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice." No; the blessed Master knew all about Peter, and in very love to him would not hinder the needful, humbling lesson being learned till poor broken-down Peter, learning the love in that look, wept bitterly. Peter was weak, and he learnt that lesson, and could tell out to his loved Master's ear: "Lord, *Thou knowest all things*; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Going through with everything. What a love is that of the Lord's! And so He would give His poor, weak, failing, yet beloved servant the privilege of following Him, telling him of it before He told him he would deny Him (verse 36), "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards"; and assuring him of it, as in ch. xxi. 18, 19: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Meanwhile, two things are to mark him, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep," and "Follow Me." He who, as the Shepherd of Israel, fed the flock till He is abhorred of the shepherds, and the staff Beauty is cut asunder and broken, so that "the poor of the flock that waited upon Me knew that it was the word of the Lord" (see Zech. xi.)—this, too, in connection with His rejection and the goodly price that He was prized at of them—now, as the risen One, going back to His Father, commits His sheep and lambs to the care and feeding of this beloved servant. Wondrous, blessed ways—"If I

wash thee not thou hast no part with Me"; and then that other needed lesson; and then, "Feed My sheep."

"Part with Me." Does not this, coupled with verses 16, 17, convey to us the thought of His loving, gracious service toward His own which were in the world—He going back to His Father, they left awhile here, and so intimating the need for the continuance in His absence of this gracious service, and this service thus rendered one to another, and He thus speaking of it as "Part with Me"? For Him. We most surely know there never could be the slightest need of *His* feet being washed; there surely is for us. He *could not* be defiled in passing through such a scene. In our pathway, how much, alas! in numberless ways, defilement is contracted. He would gird Himself with the towel; and if, as someone has said, the towel indicates the comfortings of the word as the water may set forth the cleansing power of the word, does not this bring before us how, in passing through this world and among His own, He would know the "comfort of the Scriptures;" yet, as here, know them in connection with the application of them to His own? What patience and gentleness in these ways with them. "Know ye," He says, "what I have done to you?" "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." Precious grace! thus to identify with Himself in such service these, His own. But is it not also thus, that, in order to such identification with Him, part with Him, *He* must Himself wash the feet, and wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded (linen towel is given in New Translation—how pure, holy, refined the word is)!

Oh for simplicity of soul to discern His gracious purpose, not only to fit us to be with Him where He is—as says verse 10, "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet"—but also to fit us to serve one another while He is absent. Hence the character of the love which He has to His own, loving, *going*

through with everything. How needful *this* to be ever in remembrance: "This is My commandment, That ye love one another *as I have loved you*" (ch. xv. 12); nothing staying its blessed, precious ways. *He* may, nay *He does*, use a bason (verse 5). *He* pours water therein, *He* uses that water, *He* applies the towel. The bason may be an earthen vessel (see 2 Cor. iv. 7), in itself easily broken, but sufficient for His gracious purpose—for *Him* to pour into it the water for cleansing; but all *His* working. So, if there be any true service of love in true devotedness to Him, one to another, how all manifests His gracious care for His own in this world. What honour to be a vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use! What grace in Him to take up and use us in any service for Him to His own in this world, to care for His because *they are* His, and thus in love serve one another! G. C.

"FORSAKEN THE RIGHT WAY."

2 Peter ii. 15.

THE second epistle by Peter is a precious portion of the word of God, which comes suitably before any seeking to gather light to tread the path of righteousness for His Name. Referring to the first epistle, we should adoringly praise our blessed God for showing us His concern for the inward parts of His beloved ones, while the world is engaged looking upon the outward appearance. Here are lessons, in chapter three of the first epistle by Peter, rich in detail—with oft recurring words which tell of His delight in order, subjection, obedience, government, noticeable to other than critical students of Scripture—to amply repay all who care to know the will of God and the testimony of Peter as to the true grace of God in which we stand.

How commanding are the expressions God uses. When a qualifying word is required to express some-

thing in the eyes of Him we revere—that which is in His sight of *great* price—with what absorbing interest do we listen as we learn what it is. Our whole deportment has character and expression when out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, or those outward adornings are noticeable which tell, more plainly than speech can, of display of self. In various ways communings are shown to be with a poor, wretched, deceitful heart, instead of with God, who has given Christ to fill and satisfy us. In verse 3 we have given us the negative, and verse 4 that which is not corruptible. Ah! yes; He cares about our hearts and our spirits—how they are set. "A meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of *great* price" (1 Pet. iii. 4).

Though nothing further was shown us, how blessed to have His word as to what suits the eye of Him who is holy, that which is within, beyond the penetration of those eyes which cannot cease from sin.

Returning from a meeting where these things had been before our souls, what did I hear? Curiously enough, from the lips of one who had no visible companion; but the voice was raised loud enough: "They say you ought to return good for evil." "Can't always, though." Such was the solemn admission from one who had evidently fragments left of what he had heard. It may have been in years gone by, at a pious mother's knee; or, as commonly, of a teacher who had taken pains to tell him of the straight way, pressing upon young hearts dangers and difficulties, evils abounding, to be overcome only by good. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, *to him it is sin*" (Jas. iv. 17).

This one instance is but a sample of the legion surrounding us who still adhere to the profession of, or bearing Christ's name, yet walk not as He walked. False teachers, who love the reward of unrighteousness, having hearts practised in covetousness, get the ears of such as turn from the straight way. Who

would forbear to raise a cry when the merest suggestion of swerving from, turning aside, or forsaking the right way is intimated? There is a close to the path of the unrighteous—the rewards of the unrighteous to be given. The way is crooked—a perverse, insubject will is shown. What issues! How this one (Peter) who was specially tender of the flock, although scattered so widely, was given words which, obeyed (1 Peter ii. 15), keep the lambs and sheep from being led away along with the error of the wicked. Well might he exhort, admonish, and warn—take pains, too—that such counsel should be given after his decease to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance, that the truth might hold us, in such times of abounding wickedness, just before open and pronounced apostasy is avowed. “Brethren,” says the apostle, “use diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet. ii. 10).

Do you know of a case where one may be found with *hands hanging down, and having failing knees*, who has the marks of lameness? May we not interpret the long-suffering of our Lord’s salvation, and seek the healing of the lame, that it may never come to such a going on with the dissolute in a way that has its close in separation from God for eternity? The promise is sure. New heavens and new earth, wherein dwell righteousness, will have its blessed accomplishment. Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear then?

It is but a moment more, and He will come; your ear no longer vexed with the abandoned conversation of the wicked, your heart no longer disturbed by utter corruption and confusion around.

We are chosen to obey. How safe, how humble and steady (as another has said) is obedience! Insubordination, revolt, and rebellion, with all their horrors as set forth in the word, we are clean escaped from, to extol and praise the only wise God, who gives us to know this and to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May readers keep in the straight way through knowing Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the way to the FATHER. Many say: "Get on in the world." But He shows us the way out of the world by the way of the cross—away from its doom. In subjection to trial during a few moments sojourn here, may the revelation of Jesus Christ be truly before our hearts, in whom believing we may well exult, and may we find grace and peace multiplied to us as we count it joy to suffer for His Name, patiently waiting, and using diligence to be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless.

W. B.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

11th JULY, 1831.

DEAR MISS B——.— . . . Many a voice has been lifted up, since you parted from us, to proclaim the Lord's past and present love and fast coming judgments! But, alas! most of us may cry out with the prophet, "Ah! Lord, they say, he speaketh parables." Dear B— and T— came down soon after, and boldly and powerfully proclaimed the truth in Mr. H—'s, and Mr. H—d's and Mr. C—'s chapels; and then on the Hoe with W—; at the village of H—; on Plympton Castle Green, at G—, 2,000 people in the fields; on North Combe Sands, in Modbury Streets, and Kingsbridge Quay to 4,000 people; since which, W— and I have done so in streets of Ivy Bridge and Underwood; at several revels; and on Thursday forenoon last, on the Hoe at the regatta, where, to our astonishment, in a crowd of ladies and gentlemen we were permitted to speak of mercy and judgment for nearly three hours, not only without interruption, but with great attention and, we trust, with some blessing. We all went together to Totnes races. Time will not allow me to tell you all the particulars; but we

sung a hymn on a bank on the course, and read the word of God, and, in spite of insult, scorn, derision, and buffeting, the truth was proclaimed for one hour, when we were fairly beaten off. In the evening we spoke of the blessed Lord in the square opposite to the inn, and were treated to similar indignity; and on the following forenoon again went to the course, but all attempts were useless. We stood in the Lord's strength for perhaps an hour, when the mud and stones fell so thickly that we were obliged to go, being fairly hooted off. Alas! for the poor, unhappy, sin-deceived people. Eternity! what is it to them? The blood of Jesus! what is it to them? Ah! an idle tale! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—my dear sister in Him—who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, according as He hath chosen us in Him, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Blessed be God that He hath chosen us and called us. May He enable us to be faithful. We really are living in most fearful times, not only because the world is rocking to and fro, but because all deceivableness of unrighteousness is abroad—a power of seduction in everything and everyone to lead us away from faithfulness—a want of uncompromising principle and tenderness of conscience—an easiness of falling into little sins, little errors, and lower ground, and so on to lower and lower. All to encourage you in this, and speak peace to you in it; but rectitude of conduct is not appreciated—nay, scorned, and that by Christians. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness *for the upright in heart.*" But really the natural man, in many instances, is not only more conscientious, but better able to appreciate conscientiousness than those who profess to be children of light. Where is the light? If we are children of the light, though once we were darkness, let us, dear sister, dwell in the light—walk in the light—for we are now "light in the Lord," and "the fruit of the

Spirit (see Rev. v., light) is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth."

We need not ask you to plead earnestly for us before the Lord of all. Really, we want His strength. We have scorn of every kind to meet from without and within, as well as a desperate struggle with principalities and powers, who are striving mightily to shut our mouths and destroy our testimony. We call on you, then, because of your fellow membership in love, pray for us—plead your interest with Jesus to manifest Himself in might to us, that we may go forth in the sense of victory. And as for yourself, I do charge you witness a good confession before all men—show out of a good conversation your words with meekness of wisdom. . . . I would say to my brethren and sisters, as looseness of life is the character of the church now, be over strict—be punctilious to an excess—as a witness against them and in affection to them. P. H.

"I WAS just thinking of the characteristics of God as set forth in the epistles of Paul. 'The God who quickeneth the dead,' and 'who raiseth the dead;' 'the God of patience and consolation,' or encouragement; 'the God of peace' and 'of hope;' 'the God who comforteth those that are cast down,' and the like. What He is, and as suited to His people, He is there set forth; different prismatic colours, as it were, of one ray of light. But thus learning what He is, we learn how He can minister to us in our need. You will find, I think, that such characteristics of God are met with in the New Testament in Paul's writings, and rarely elsewhere. He, who was the vessel appointed to bring out the highest truths, shews us, in the fullest way, how the Christian needs the comfort and sustainment drawn from a knowledge of the unchanging characteristics of his God."—C. E. S. (*Extract of Letter, 1874*).

THE NOTION CURRENT that a distinction should be made between the words of Christ and those of the Apostles is an exceedingly erroneous and mischievous one. Apostolic testimony is as authoritative as that borne by the Lord Himself. He spake from the Father: "My doctrine," He said, "is not Mine, but His that sent Me," a statement equally true of all Apostolic teaching. The Scriptures are an organic whole, each separate part needful and essential to the unity of the rest, and all inbreathed and divinely enjoined by one and the same Spirit. The sacred canon is called "The word of Christ" (Col. iii. 16), and the inspiring Spirit is called "The Spirit of Christ" (1 Peter i. 11). Paul writing to Timothy says, referring to his own teaching, "If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing" (1 Tim. vi. 3, 4). He thus declares that his words as the writer of what has gone before are the words of Christ. The human element in the Scriptures as connected with the writers in no way lessens or modifies the infallibility or authority of that which they have written. Hence the Apostle could say again, "I command, yet not I, but the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 10).

WICLIF'S BIBLE.—So great was the eagerness to possess a copy that a few loads of hay would be given for the possession of a few favourite chapters. They would hide the forbidden treasure beneath the floors of their houses, and expose their lives to danger rather than surrender it. They would sit up all night, doors shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing the word of God. They would bury themselves in the woods, conversing with it in silence and solitude, or while tending their flocks steal an hour for meditation on the good tidings of grace and salvation.

"SEEK FIRST the kingdom of God, for you will find it much harder to seek it *second*!"

"TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO," said Prebendary Webb-Peploe, "I was chaplain to the workhouse in Hereford. In a common shed that held the parish hearse, there lay a poor man wasting away with cancer in the mouth. No one would sit with him except the epileptic idiots of the place, who were regarded with fear. For three months I had to visit him there as he lay dying, an offence to all, but a treasure to God. His last words, feebly spluttered out, were, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." What an object-lesson for many of us! Strange paradox. It is not for our own satisfaction that we are to be satisfied; it is for Him who is to see of the travail of His soul in us, and therein to be satisfied."

HAVING HAD an ever-deepening conviction, arising from a close observation and experience of thirty to forty years in our Nonconformist, and principally Congregational, bodies, I am more and more convinced that (1) the development and progress of rationalism are the chief factors in (2) the development and progress of ritualism or semi Romanism, and that (3) the root of that rationalism lies in the departure (disguised or avowed) from the foundation principle of the sufficiency and supreme authority of Holy Scripture as the infallible standard and guide in truth and practice.—*Ex-chairman of Congregational Union.*

THE HOSTILITY OF THE WORLD is so little able to overthrow God's plan, that it is compelled to become the means of accomplishing it.

PHARAOH intended to drown the Jews, but succeeded only in getting drowned himself, with his army; Daniel was intended as food for lions, but his enemies were eaten instead; three other Jews were to be burnt, but their enemies were burnt instead; another Jew was intended for the gallows, but his Gentile hater was hanged himself on his own gallows. The enemies of the Jews can neither absorb nor annihilate them. They not only fail, but succeed in bringing down on themselves the mischief intended for the Jews. Hence, a true patriot—one who loves his country, and seeks his country's welfare—should have no sympathy with unkindness to Israel, but should seek in every way possible the welfare of that people still beloved for their fathers' sakes.

KNOW GOD.—Study His perfections; feed upon His word; keep yourself in His love; adore His sovereignty. "Acquaint thyself with Him and be at peace." Whether your stewardship be wisdom, influence and wealth, or the lowly lot, the uncultured mind, the restricted means, ay, the rifled, desolated home and the crash of earthly fortune, you will be able to glory in the noble avowal:—

"O Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Who art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown,
Give what Thou canst; without Thee we are poor,
But with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away."

PUBLICLY LABOURING to disprove Christianity and bring Scripture into contempt as a forgery, a certain Deist was found instructing his child from the New Testament. When taxed with his inconsistency, his only reply was that it was necessary to teach him morality, and nowhere else was such true morality to be found. We thank the Deist for this confession.

THE ATTITUDE of Christians toward spiritualism ought not to be doubtful. Unfortunately we are not in this life outside the range of the great deceiver. To place ourselves still more directly within his power is gross folly no less than great sin. Any dallying with the powers of darkness can only expose us to appalling spiritual danger. Let who will undertake experiments of this kind, we must firmly decline to be of their company. Satanic influences are too near and frequent already, and it is the highest unwisdom voluntarily to seek their increase. The only spirit with whom communion may be safely indulged is the Holy Spirit of God.

HAVING KILLED HIS WIFE in a fit of anger, a servant at one of the African missions buried himself in a desert solitude; his only companion was a copy of the gospel of Luke. Oppressed with his sins, he at length received assurance that they were blotted out by the blood of Christ; he got peace with God. One day he encountered an old friend, and both he and two others came to know the Lord. In the end he became a zealous witness for Christ; the leading man of a neighbouring village and thirty-five others were converted through his instrumentality. "Wherein abounded, grace did much more abound" (*Rom.* v. 20).

LUKE VIII. 14.—*Cares*, Martha (x. 41); *riches*, "thou fool" (xii. 20); *pleasures*, Demas (2 Tim. iv. 10). These *choke* the word.

"TEMPTING GOD was making essays to try whether the Lord was among them, saying, 'Is the Lord indeed amongst us?' not a humble confidence that He was, and therefore doing His will being based on that confidence."—J. N. D.