

WORDS IN SEASON.

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

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EFFECTS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

PAST JUDGMENT.—*Neh.* viii. 1-11

FULL seventeen decades of years had rolled by since Hilkiah had found in the Temple the book of the law of the Lord by the hand of Moses (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14). Of that identical roll we never hear again. Was it buried ere the Chaldæans captured the Temple, or did it perish in the conflagration of the sacred building (Jer. lli. 13)? It may be that we shall never on earth be in a position to answer these questions. The Word of the Lord, however, did not perish. Among the captives in Babylon the written Word was preserved, and by some studied and valued. The law of sacrifice was remembered, and put in practice by the returned remnant under Jeshua and Zerubbabel (Ezra iii. 2-4). And many years later, a priest was found still in Babylon, who was known as "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given" (vii. 6). Neither time nor circumstances had made it obsolete. And Ezra took up with him a copy of that law (vii. 14); and the returned remnant bowed to its authority in the matter of the strange wives, putting them away "according to the law" (x. 3).

Thirteen years more ran by, then Nehemiah appeared on the scene. The wall of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, was repaired, and the gates re-erected, and furnished with their attendant bars. Nehemiah's special mission thus completed, amid all kinds of discouragements, the people could assemble within the city gates in comparative peace, and freed from fear of any sudden hostile attack, to hear read the written law of their God. Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, was present; but as a listener, not as the reader. The duty of instructing the people in the law belonged not to the Governor, but to the priests (Malachi ii. 7). So Ezra, who for years now had

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been in the background in the history, is again prominent, and the principal figure in the new picture.

A picture, we call it ; and well may we do so ; for earnest men and women were gathered together on the first day of the seventh month, the duly-appointed feast of trumpets, in the street before the water-gate, to hear what the Lord God had said to their fathers in the wilderness. But a few weeks previously, the builders had been busily engaged in repairing the wall and the water-gate. The sound, however, of the workman's trowel had now ceased ; the clink of the hammer, as the masons chipped the rough edges of the stone, was heard no more ; and the sonorous voice of the priest alone broke the silence. The people had asked Ezra to bring out to them the book of the law of Moses. The ready scribe responded—and surely, we may well believe, responded to their wish with alacrity. Standing on a pulpit of wood, made for him for the occasion, he opened the book which they had desired to have read, in the sight of all the people. Breathless silence must have prevailed, for all the people, we read, were very attentive. They listened with earnestness, intent on hearing, each one for himself, what Moses had left on record for the guidance and admonition of Israel. And no more suitable day could have been fixed upon than that of the feast of trumpets, the foreshadow of what is in store for the people when they shall be gathered back into their land to await the coming of their Messiah.

A picture, indeed, it must have been. Young men and maidens, old men and matrons, all that could hear with understanding, gathered under the open canopy of heaven to listen to the revealed and written will of their God. That law, to which Josiah had listened, they now heard read. What a change had come over the nation since that king's day ! Captivity had been endured, the Temple had been burnt, Jerusalem had been laid low ; and, instead of a populous city, as it had been, it was but sparsely tenanted

by people. "The city was large and great," we read, "but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded" (Neh. vii. 4).

From early morn to mid-day they all stood and listened. Some would understand the Hebrew; others needed the Word explained to them in Aramaic. For that priests and Levites were pressed into the service. Ezra read distinctly, and his associates gave the sense, so that all could understand the reading. All were in earnest. Their presence in the street of the water-gate for so many hours continuously evidenced that. Beginning, as that day did, with Ezra blessing the Lord, when he appeared on the pulpit of wood, to which all the people responded with a loud Amen, and bowed themselves, and worshipped, deep attention was paid to all that the company heard. Nor did that attention flag ere mid-day was reached. "All the people," to quote Nehemiah's words a second time, "were very attentive unto the book of the law" (viii. 3).

They heard, and they wept (9). Who could wonder? How the national failure must have been pressed home on them. What were they but a feeble remnant, insufficient properly to populate the city? Servants, too, they owned they were to the kings of Persia. David's throne overturned; the house once exceedingly magnificent now shrunk in its dimensions; and many—may we not say most?—of their brethren still dispersed abroad. What had caused all this, but the awful sins of their progenitors? Josiah had wept—and no wonder—as he learnt from the book what the people deserved, and heard, too, that there was no means of their escaping their heavy doom. Can we wonder at the little remnant, painfully conscious of their enfeebled condition, weeping likewise?

Did weeping, however, become them? Josiah had wept, and rightly. Should they also weep? Different, how different, was their position. He looked on to an approaching judgment; they looked back

on that as passed for them. Captivity awaited the nation in the king's days ; captivity—the Babylonish captivity—was over for them, and never to return. But more ; their very condition—a returned company—spoke of the faithfulness of God to His word. Had He not said that, after the seventy years at Babylon, He would visit the people, and cause them to return to their land (Jer. xxix. 10)? Had He not done that? Had He not also declared that, at the end of the seventy years, He would punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity (Jer. xxv. 12)? Had not that also been brought to pass? Not one word of God relating to that matter had failed. The people then, though weak and few in number in Jerusalem, were witnesses of the faithfulness of their God. To face captivity as impending was one thing ; to look back on it as past was quite another. This last was their position. Joyfulness, then, and not sadness, became them.

But why were they back? What had they done to deserve it? They well knew they had done nothing to earn such a favour. Why, then, was their lot changed? The law in the book of Deuteronomy furnished an answer. The Lord their God was again rejoicing over them for good, as He had rejoiced over their fathers (Deut. xxx. 9). Proofs of that were at hand not only in the respective decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes in their favour, but the remnant had returned, and rebuilt the House. That House had been finished in spite of determined opposition. It had also been beautified. And now the wall, which had been broken down, had been re-built, and Jerusalem had become once more a walled, a fortified, town.

Gladness, then, became them ; and their leaders pointed this out. Nehemiah and Ezra insisted on it, and the Levites in their turn stilled all the people (Neh. viii. 9-11). The day was holy, for it was the feast of trumpets, and the people by divine favour

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could celebrate it without molestation. Whether any present understood of what that feast is the fore-shadow we cannot say ; but the fact of their celebrating it in peace betokened the favour and mercy of their God. But another reason was adduced why gladness should characterise them : "The joy of the Lord was their strength" (10). Had they not heard read in their ears how the Lord would rejoice over them when restored, and that finally ? Was not their present restoration an earnest of future and abiding blessing ? The Lord could, He did, and He will in the future, rejoice over His people, grievously though they have sinned (Deut. xxx. 9). In that light they were to view the then present, and therefore to rejoice. God was rejoicing over them. Of His joy they were to be mindful, and find how true could be the words of Nehemiah : "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. viii. 10).

This was enough. The current of their thoughts was changed. Eating the fat and drinking the sweet themselves, they thought of others, and sent portions to those for whom nothing was prepared. Mirth, great mirth, now reigned among them, where sounds of sorrow and weeping had been heard. It is a great thing to understand the character of the times, and to learn what befits people as in harmony with them. Grace, the grace of God, in which they shared, they had come to apprehend. It acted like magic on their spirits. It made them, too, thoughtful, gracious, and generous to others. They stood on the other side of the Babylonish captivity to that on which Josiah had found himself ; and whilst judgment, and that only as righteously deserved, was awaiting the nation in his day, God was rejoicing over the remnant, feeble and few though they were, who had now assembled in the street before the water-gate. God's thoughts about His people, and His purposes when made known, are to regulate the feelings of exercised souls who hearken to His word.

And now, some may ask, what has that to do with us? Has that history any application for our day? We believe it certainly has. Where, we would ask, is each reader of this paper? Confronting judgment, righteously deserved, or consciously past it, and that for ever? This is the question. But can one really know whilst on earth what it is to be past divine judgment, and so never to bear it? Yes, one can, and one should. The words of the coming Judge cast the necessary light on this important matter. Addressing the Jews when He was on earth, He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My words, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Is there a judgment to come? Undoubtedly there is; else why the hope held out of not coming into it? Is it a judgment out of which any of Adam's race who enter into it will ever emerge unscathed? Rev. xx. 11-15 answers that question in the negative, and Matt. xxv. 46 confirms it. The former passage describes the judgment of the ungodly dead; the latter depicts the judgment of the living nations. How, then, can any one of us escape coming into that judgment, and being judged according to our works? "For all have sinned" is the verdict of God on every man. The way of escape is made perfectly plain, and it is a simple way. The words of the Lord already quoted afford *absolute certainty* regarding it. He who hears the words of Christ, and believeth Him that sent Him, hath everlasting life. Then the question of spiritual life for all such is settled, and each may know for himself if he possesses it or not. And the life here spoken of is confined to no nation, and to no sect or party amongst Christians. The one who fulfils the conditions laid down by the Saviour, call himself what he may, or be called by others what he may, has that priceless possession—everlasting life. For him there can be no judgment to determine if he

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shall live. Judgment for his sins, therefore, he will never come into. One has borne that judgment which he deserved, and has come out of it. He is now beyond it; and the believer can therefore say he also is beyond it. That judgment, so terrible to contemplate, is past for him, and that for ever. His substitute, the crucified One, bore it in his stead.

The words of Nehemiah stilled the people, and they came to look at the matter in its right light. Shall the words of the Lord Jesus have less weight? Shall His assurance be treated as of no value? Is there, then, no judgment in the future? May the believer live as he likes? There is a judgment connected with service. We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, according to what we each have done, whether good or bad (2 Cor. v. 10). Hence responsibility as servants remains, whilst joy can fill the heart, and grace, too, work in the individual, because the question of his guilt has been definitely settled before God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1).

A good word this is for a new year. The effect of Nehemiah's word on the people is on record. What is the effect of the words of Christ in John v. 24 on each reader of this paper, and on each hearer of it?

C. E. S.

MAN OF SORROWS AND MAN OF JOY.

IN Gethsemane, Lord Jesus,
Kneeling while in prayer,
Thy dependence and submission,
Perfect everywhere!

Man of sorrows, and acquainted
With the deepest grief,

Full for Thee the cup of suffering,
Wrath without relief !

Man of sorrows ! of Thy loved ones
None to watch with Thee ;
Anguish causing bloody sweat,
Bitter agony !

Man of sorrows ! God had counselled
Thou to death should'st go,
Be made sin, and bear the judgment,
Satan's power o'erthrow.

Man of sorrows ! overcoming
Evil with Thy good ;
'Twas for fallen, guilty creatures
Our blest Surety stood.

Man of sorrows ! Joseph laid Thee
In his own new grave ;
Hallelujah, Thou art risen,
Mighty One, to save !

Spotless Man, Thy ways were pleasing
In the Father's sight ;
Doing all things for His glory
Ever Thy delight.

Man of joy ! above all others
God anointed Thee ;
Answer to Thy prayer, Lord Jesus,
Thine shall be with Thee.

Man of joy ! above all others
We Thy voice shall hear,
Singing praises to the Father,
Sweetest in His ear.

Man of joy ! we soon shall see Thee,
Meet Thee in the air,
Live forever in Thy presence,
There Thy joy to share.

J. O.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

A SMALL pamphlet has been recently sent us in which there are some statements that, as desiring to "hold fast the form of sound words," we cannot endorse. Touching the truth as to the person of our Lord, as they do, we feel responsible to make a solemn protest. A word said against a dear friend would pain one's heart, though one might keep silence about it, but when Christ is assailed to be silent would be sinful.

In the pamphlet referred to we find the following:—
 "The Lord could, if God decreed He should, lay down His life under poison, as He did under crucifixion; He had power to do it, or He could have permitted age to creep over Him, and then laid down His life. There was nothing in His humanity that would have made such a thing out of order." We decidedly object to the statement that the Lord could have died either under poison or old age. To say "if God decreed He should" does not guard the Lord's person. It is true He died *under* crucifixion, but He did not die *by* crucifixion. The Lord said (John x. 17, 18), "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because *I lay down My life*. No man *taketh* it from Me, but *I lay it down of Myself*. I have power [authority] to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." This shows clearly that the Lord did not die *by* crucifixion. No man took His life from Him. He laid it down Himself. His death was not the result of His physical sufferings upon the cross. Physical suffering there was, but death in His case was voluntary. He laid it down as truly as He took it up again. Had poison been administered to Him He could not have died by it. Of course, if poisoning had been a legal method of punishment instead of crucifixion He might have died under it, but not by it. For Him to die He

must lay down His life. As regards "permitting age to creep over Him" and laying down His life, the two things are inconsistent. Dying by or of old age would not be His laying down His life. Old age creeping over Him could not be a penal punishment. Man could not administer it to Him. Such a thing could not be by the sanction or authority of the "powers that be." They might legalise poisoning as a method of penal punishment, or, as was actually the case, crucifixion, but not the becoming old.

Whatever method might have been sanctioned as a legal way of punishment, He could not have died thereby except He had laid down His life Himself.

To speak of His laying down His life in connection with His permitting age to creep over Him is to reveal a misconception of His person—a misconception, too, which is fatal, because it robs us of a true Christ—and a misconception of His work in death and for atonement, and this latter equally fatal, for if His death was not really His own will it could not have been an atoning death. Life taken by man could not make atonement. It is life laid down that avails for that. But the Lord only could lay down His life. Others have died by poison, by old age, and by crucifixion, but they did not lay down their lives. His death is thus seen to be unique, to have a character peculiar to itself. It is important to preserve this character. Not to do so is to lose everything. Atonement, a true Christ, salvation, everything is gone unless it be true that He laid down His life, unless death was by His own will.

Therefore we must reject the statement that "He could have permitted age to creep over Him, and then laid down His life." It is an inconsistency, a denial of the true character of His atoning work.

But this is not the only objectionable statement in the pamphlet. We find another which is just as fatal, equally subversive of the truth as to the person of our Lord, and equally a denial of the true character of

atonement. We read, "The Lord distinctly stated that of Himself He could do nothing, yet nothing impossible to Him, as having faith in God." It is true the Lord said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing," but what did He mean? Did He mean that He could do nothing beyond what any saint might do as having faith in God? Did He mean that He could do no divine act? Did He mean that He could not go beyond humanity, that none of His acts were of a higher order than those of men of faith? Surely not. He meant that He did not act independently of His Father, but in communion with Him. He was a divine person, and as that He did divine acts, yet in doing them He did not act independently of the Father from whom He had come and whose work He was engaged in. Everything He did and said was in full communion with the Father. Now this is a very different thing from not being able to go beyond what a saint might do as believing in God.

But it may be said that we have misunderstood the expression. Let us see. The sentence immediately following the one we have quoted reads, "He never would go outside His humanity, and never assumed any personality, nor performed any act not in harmony with humanity, having faith in God." Here the meaning is plain, and justifies the interpretation we have put upon the previous quotation. But what must be one's conception of the Lord when such language is used of Him? Did He never go outside of His humanity? Was it simply as man that He turned water into wine? Did He not go outside His humanity when He arose and commanded the winds and the sea, instantly producing a calm in place of the tempest? Was the resurrection of Lazarus a mere human act? Surely He was a man, but even so He was God, and everywhere the divine manifested itself in the man. The glory of the Only Begotten shone forth in Him. The witnesses of His life bear testimony to His going beyond His humanity. They

declare they saw what was outside it. If He never performed any act outside His humanity they are false witnesses, for they constantly represent Him as acting as God.

But this is not all. If He never did go outside His humanity how do we know that He was God manifest in the flesh? What proof have we that He came from God? What evidence have we that He was the Son of God? To say He never went outside of His humanity is to deny His true person. If that is true, God has not revealed Himself. We do not know the Father. How completely everything is taken from us. We are robbed of God altogether.

The doctrine taught in the pamphlet is illustrated in this way: "The face of Moses shone, returning from the mount, and on the mount the Lord was transfigured, illustrating 2 Corinthians iii. 9; but it was *equally* as a man, as with Moses." With Moses it was reflected glory that shone from his face. Was it reflected glory that shone from the face of the Lord or was it personal glory? How all through the Lord is degraded!

The doctrine degrades the work of the cross also. Did not the Lord go outside His humanity there? Was the work of atonement nothing more than mere human work? Does not "Lamb of God" mean that the work of the cross was something outside of humanity? We have seen already that He laid down His life. This surely was going outside His humanity, for in doing it He acted as a divine person. We find other expressions in the pamphlet which we must object to, but space will not admit of any notice of them. Enough, however, has been said to point out the attack on our Lord and His blessed work.

We only add, let us hold fast the form of sound words. Let us maintain the truth of the person of Christ, and be exceeding jealous of every slight put upon Him and of every effort to fasten upon Him a false character.—*The Shepherd's Voice*.

LUKE XX.

TEMPTING as it is to follow the Forerunner, we must pass away from Jesus as "the truth," back to the lie of the devil and the hypocrisies of the religious scribes and chief priests, who have filled Immanuel's land with falsehood and corruption, and only lie in wait to shed "the blood of that innocent man," touching which Pilate washed his hands in testimony against His betrayers.

Then came to Him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked Him as to the seven brethren, who died one after the other, having been the husbands of one woman, who, last of all, died likewise; whose wife should she be of them, seeing the seven had her to wife (ver. 27)? The "Witness to the truth" brings the light from whence He came, and back to which He is on His way, to make plain this question of the resurrection, which they denied; and said: "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (ver. 36). The Lord thus bids them know that the world in which they lived, and its circumstances and events, however true in their place as to life and death, could not possibly supply "the truth" by which to know what lay outside its range and beyond its reach and ken. "The resurrection *from* the dead," of which He now speaks, would be a path out into life which was not yet open to any, but which He would presently make for Himself, and over which He would travel up within the vail, as the Forerunner, in His newly-acquired title of the "First Begotten from out of the dead." Redemption by the cross was a path which He who could

alone make it would presently make for His people, that they might get out of Egypt. Resurrection was a path that He must make for Himself, by means of the sepulchre, and into which He would lead all those who follow Him, as "the children of God," being the children of the resurrection.

How blessed to be able to remind ourselves, at this point, of "the resurrection from out of the dead;" that He who is the Truth, and who came to bear witness to the truth, necessarily gives a new character to everything with which He connects Himself, either in His life or in His death, or in His rising from among the dead, and by His ascension to the heavens.

It is not merely the fact, which has largely occupied us in this "former treatise," that the promises and types, with the covenants and prophecies to the fathers, having been identified with the Messiah-Jesus, by His life and death, have gone away with the departed One into heaven, that they may be made sure to all the heirs and joint heirs in His resurrection, and be hung upon that sure nail, the Son of Man in the glory, whom Stephen saw, and to whom he bore witness. Nor is it the further most important fact, that His own personal relations to Jehovah and Israel, which were offered by Him from the manger to the mount, as a present link for national and outward blessing, have all in like manner travelled away from the earth with Him, to begin from the heavens, and with God, where He dwells. For all this is true, and made sure by His resurrection, to be brought back again and set up in manifested glory and blessing on earth at His second coming. But there remains this great truth for us who know Him in a light which is His own, and beyond all the promises and prophecies which have this earth for their sphere mainly, however important they may be—and precious, too, in this creation; for no one can say of these, that they are "*the truth*," though they are each true, and are now made Yea and Amen to

us, and will be to the glory of God by us! Still, they are not the truth "as the truth is in Jesus." Nor is it learning Christ, and hearing His words *to us* (the words of Him who is the Truth, and who makes truth), if we go to Jesus with the book and the law of Moses, "which served for the time then present."

These Sadducees quoted, correctly enough, the law of marriage and succession, as many do in this day, and got themselves into doubts, and the denial of one of the greatest facts in Christianity, by mistaking Moses. And who took them out of their difficulties, we may ask, and how? The "Witness unto the truth" was He who delivered them, and by means of Himself in relation to death and resurrection, by which He showed them what the truth was in Jesus. So, as Christians, we never learn either grace, or truth, or the coming glory, rightly, unless we have accepted them as they are made truth and fact in Jesus. For instance, He is not merely the One through whom grace and truth came, as everybody must admit; but He is the channel of each, and of the coming glory too. Yea, and He is the manner and measure of the grace, and the truth, and the glory; for who else could be? We may be, and are, thank God, the objects and the recipients and the vessels into which the grace and the truth and the glory flow; and small enough they are; and, we may add, not nearly so preparatorily empty as they might be and should be for the praise of God or our individual blessing and joy. But all this is what the vessel is, and not what Christ is. He remains the unfailing channel, perfect as to measure, and compassionate and tender in His manner towards us, down to His very touch.

The Lord thus bids them learn the truth of the resurrection outside where they were, and beyond their reasonings—though Moses "shewed that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of

Jacob, at the bush. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live unto Him" (ver. 38).

The resurrection at the last day was an expectation of the Jews ; but neither this, nor what is called a general resurrection at the end of the world (which, by the way, is not true), depended on Christ ; for the Jews would not connect any expectation, present or future, with Jesus ; nor could the disciples understand His resurrection from out of the dead on "the third day," and were afraid to ask Him of that saying ! The truth of the resurrection, when learned in Christ, is, that He was the first man out from among the dead, and leaving all else there as regards their bodies, He made this a truth for Himself and in Himself, and then left it as a truth in Jesus for us, to whom this blessed truth became a victorious fact over death and the grave, by His own resurrection out of the sepulchre by the glory of the Father. Thus the departure of Jesus from the midst of the living, and leaving redemption as our way out—and His resurrection from the midst of the dead, and leaving the hope of His second coming to receive us to Himself—prove to us how entirely God has done with man in the flesh, and the world as it is, and begun the work of the new creation in the last Adam on the other side of the flesh and the world, and of Satan, its prince. Our present calling and privilege is to follow Him by the selfsame steps—not merely by-and-by, at His second coming, when we cannot help it, but *now*, in this little while of His absence, to own and maintain the truth as it is in Jesus, that we are crucified, dead, and buried as to our old Adam nature ; quickened and raised with, and seated in, Christ, as one with Him in life and righteousness.

May we all more distinctly be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." It is not enough to own the resurrection of Christ for our justification, though blessedly true, and

which, perhaps, may be the mark which mere Evangelicalism makes and maintains since the time of Luther ; but Christianity, which insists upon this fact as a foundation truth in Jesus before God for peace and joy, goes much further, and teaches us that our old man has been crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, and that we are alive unto God in Christ Jesus in order to bring forth fruit unto God.

For myself, I cannot but think that the Lord treats of the matters of fruit, in the parable of the vineyard and of the kingdom and its city, which He had judicially given over to the enemies, in a new light, as suited to His position of the accepted and exalted One above. In this light He had given over the world and its kingdoms to Cæsar, according to the image and superscription upon the penny-piece ; and in this light He saw before Him the refused Stone, made the Headstone of the corner. In this light He may have come into His garden to gather His pleasant fruits, in the truth of His resurrection from the dead, and in the order of another world, when the early mystery of the bush that was never consumed will come out in its manifested glory, that God was not the "God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto Him." Thus Jesus not only accepted His decease, but is in spirit passing before our eyes out of Cæsar's world, and the world where they marry and are given in marriage, into another world, where they that are "accounted worthy to obtain that world" do no such things, but are as the angels. The Sadducees may come, and talk to Him about the husbands who died, and the wife who outlived them all ; and if they blundered by not having the light of His own resurrection, or the living God and His power over the dead patriarchs at the bush, we may take up the truth of this as it was in Jesus at that moment, and accept it without reserve as interpreted to the whole nation afterwards by Paul.

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Neither can they die any more, but are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Thus has Jesus in spirit gone across Jordan, into resurrection and the new order of marriage, and glanced at the dead at Machpelah and elsewhere (of whom Cæsar’s world was not worthy) as risen by the power of God and in the kingdom of God; though still in anticipation of the day (of which He presently speaks) when He will drink wine *new* with them, and serve them.

The thoughts of Jesus lead Him to ask them a certain thing; and this is in keeping with the King, and the kingdom upon the other side of Jordan, in spirit. How say they that Christ is David’s Son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. David therefore calleth Him Lord, how is He then his Son? He has thus passed away with the sweet Psalmist, out of their sight and understanding, into a region of His own, and views Himself in the place that He has since taken by His resurrection, and where He now sits, waiting at God’s right hand, till His enemies shall be made His footstool.

We should never separate our redemption from His own resurrection, or the second coming of the Lord. As the Body, the Church, we wait His coming with a shout; and if we think of creation and its groanings, it waits for deliverance at His coming, and the manifestation of the sons of God. Israel also waits for the Messiah’s return, when they shall look upon Him whom they pierced and mourn. The Gentiles, also, shall rejoice with His people Israel. The vineyard is trodden down of the wild boar, till He returns and visits and plants it afresh. Jerusalem

is also trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; and the pleasant land is become a wilderness, because Israel did not believe the things that made for their peace, and Jerusalem, with her temple, knew not their Jehovah-Jesus, nor the time of His visitation; and now they are hid from their eyes! On the day of His return, God will pour out on them the Spirit of grace and supplication, and make the people willing in the day of His power. How gladly will they then say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (and ascribe to Him what they refused in the day of His humiliation), "Hosanna in the highest!"

In the meanwhile, Jesus puts into contrast with Himself and His own path of rejection out of Israel and the world, those who make use of both for making much of man in the flesh, where he is. And perhaps nothing gives man more importance in his own eyes, or the eyes of others, than a traditional religion, maintained by sacramentalism, which necessitates an ordained class of men for their administration. "Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation" (vers. 45-47). He has thus made these up into "a footstool for His feet," and righteously counts them as enemies, only worthy to receive greater damnation.

His resurrection and present place on the right hand of God, to which He has transferred, as a necessary consequence, all that either by promise or counsel are connected with His person, is now to faith the answer to His own question: David therefore calleth Him Lord, how is He then his Son? His coming forth from the Father's throne in the day when He begins the kingdom of God from the heavens, instead

of the earth, and by His resurrection glory and power, instead of by His birth as the Son of David into Bethlehem, will make this question plain to sight; for, as a matter of fact, Jesus, as "the born King of the Jews," has left the kingdom, the throne of David, in order to establish "glory to God in the highest" by taking His place first on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Who must He be, that could do *this* in personal title, and has done this, and trodden this path up to the throne of God, where He now sits, as an accomplished fact? What will His father David call Him, as led by the Spirit of prophecy, but Lord and Son? The Psalmist of Israel must rise up in the judgment, and condemn the nation to whom he sang, as the anointed one of Jacob, because they cannot, or will not, call Him "Son and Lord!"

J. E. B.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

THERE is perhaps nothing which the saint of God rejoices in so much as that the Lord Jesus has gained the victory over sin and Satan, and fully glorified God thereby. He recognises that this is the beginning and foundation of his confidence, and his heart consequently goes out to the Person of the Son of God, for it is his Saviour, who has by Himself done it all, and readily does his heart respond to the desires of his Lord. He rejoices, too, in the fact that the Lord Jesus is accorded the highest place, and crowned with glory and honour. What is there like this to cheer, to refresh, or to rouse the spiritual energy of a redeemed one? Ah, yes, He has triumphed gloriously, and, if we turn to Matt. xxvii. 62-63, there do we behold the machinations of the arch-enemy using his willing captives in the endeavour to frustrate the triumph of the Son of God only doomed to signal failure. And, as we turn our attention to the leaders

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of the people, what words are these they use of Him who had shown and drawn out beyond question that the heart of man was deceitful above all things. With effrontery they say, "Sir, we remember that that *deceiver* said," ignorant of the fact that their own Scriptures declared that "neither was any *deceit* in His mouth" (Isaiah liii. 9).

Let us compare this with another scene—Gen. iii. 13-15. Here again we hear words which attribute blame to a deceiver, but with what a contrast. No mistake here. Judgment given here is righteous, and cannot be frustrated. "The serpent beguiled" (*deceived*) "me, and I did eat"; then judgment is pronounced upon the deceiver and the ultimate issue of that conflict, the close of which we have just looked at. But what a sight is here—man, poor man, distrusts God, confidence is gone, and sorrow in all its various forms comes in; man is helpless, and so, as the history of the world is recorded, only to tell the same sad tale as generation follows generation, and man to-day is not able to bear his burden any more than Cain of old; minds driven to despair; Satan whispering ever his counsels of deceit, deluding his victims. Oh, my beloved reader, what a dread, dark scene is this misery rampant on every hand; men, urged on by Satan, destroy themselves, only to find how real the deceit was which led them on when too late to retrace their steps. Shall we not at the thought of this and the mercy of our God, whose arm has indeed saved us who were among the victims of the arch-enemy, shall we not, I say, with full hearts, pour forth to Him a song of praise and adoration? Shall not the name of our beloved Lord and Saviour touch afresh the chords of our heart? What joy to us to know that He is the One by whom we *believe* in God that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory that *our faith and hope might be in God* (1 Peter i. 22).

Man had distrusted God; confidence had gone.

But here is a grand announcement. Our Saviour has been raised from the dead, and has been given glory, that our confidence might be in God, and we sing—

Lamb of God ! Thou now art seated
High upon Thy Father's throne,
All Thy gracious work completed,
All Thy mighty victory won !

But we are still here amid scenes of sorrow and distress, and the saint of God has still the trials and difficulties of the way to meet ; but oh ! what a change confidence in God brings ! Safe in Christ, with all its attendant blessings, we glory in the grace now which places us there (2 Cor. xii. 5). And now, if Satan comes to work his evil will and to cause sorrow, or if trials come, we hear the glorious truth, "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Note it well, beloved, His strength in all its perfection. Ah ! do we not remember that He was stronger than the "strong man" whom He bound and spoiled his goods ? He has gained our confidence, and his strength is ours to meet all before us. How natural for us to invite poor deluded souls to such a Saviour, who meets every need to the full. Satan is ever defeated while we abide in our Lord. Job was tested, and Satan gains nothing but the dross out of the furnace ; and if Satan sifts Peter, he gets nothing but the chaff—the wheat remains. And further, in Paul's case, he gains no footing, for when Paul learns the grace at his disposal he can glory in infirmities, so that the power of Christ may be manifested. Can we not then in triumph say, as in His strength we go on, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loveth us" ?

"His be the Victor's name," we cry aloud, and who would dare whisper a word to tarnish it ? Who would spend the hours of grace in lowering that blest Name which is above every name ? He shall have the

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pre-eminence. Oh, then, for those whose spiritual energy has waned to rouse themselves, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with hearts beating, only for Him to repel the attacks, whether open or covert, but which bear the stamp of the deceiver. Soon shall we be beyond the scene of conflict, and all hearts redeemed by His precious blood o'erflow with joy and praise which His abounding grace has awakened here.

Beloved, He comes, the One we long to see. Shall any, then, be found unfaithful to Him who has been raised from the dead, and been given glory that our faith and hope might be in God? To Him be all the praise and glory. Amen. J. H. I.

 OUR WORSHIP IN THE HOLIEST.

RENT is the veil, and by the way thus opened
 Boldness we have, through grace, to enter there,
 Where erst the glory of th' eternal Godhead
 Our guilty eyes were all unfit to bear.
 Ent'ring by Christ, all guilty fear now vanished,
 The glory, shining, dazzles us no more;
 Children of light, the darkness for us banished,
 Set in the light, our home for evermore.

Our great High Priest, the Christ of God, here meets us,
 He who by blood has brought us nigh to God,
 In whom accepted, God the Father greets us
 "Children," on ground no carnal foot ere trod.
 For in His Son, His own, His best beloved,
 We stand through grace from all pollution free,
 Without a dread, calm, tranquil, all unmoved,
 Viewed in His Christ, and even loved as He.

Thee, Thee, our God, with grateful hearts adoring,
 We worship, fill'd with wonder and amaze;
 The soundless depths of Godhead's love exploring,
 As here in praise we on Thy glory gaze.

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The harmony of infinite perfections
 Swells all around us, and the glory bright
 Gladdens and fills us with divine reflections—
 Partakers made of Thine own soul's delight.

For Thou, a Father's heart to us revealing,
 Its depth of love unfolding by Thy Son,
 And fountain springs of heavenly grace unsealing,
 Hast shewn to us Thyself—the Holy One :
 Hast made us know, thro' wonders of redemption,
 The rich resources of Thy love divine,
 Whose wisdom infinite, in blest convention,
 Could righteousness with pard'ning grace combine.

Our God, we praise, we worship, we adore Thee ;
 Thy wisdom, might, and majesty extol ;
 Creator, Lord of all, we bow before Thee,
 Restored by grace to Thy supreme control.
 The Holy One, the Righteous One, th'All-glorious,
 The God of truth, of love, of grace, of peace,
 O'er sin through Thy redeeming love victorious,
 Whose worship and whose praise shall never cease.

R. H.

“PUT AWAY FROM AMONG YOURSELVES” (1 Cor. v. 13).—It is strange that any difficulty should be found or made as to the signification of “yourselves.” The meaning must be the same as “their own company” in Acts iv. 23. Had Peter and John gone to the saints in Antioch or at Rome instead of to the saints in Jerusalem, would it not have been equally “to their own company”? “Yourselves” has the same force. It was not the body of Christ, *as such*, for no member could be amputated from the Body. But what was done “in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ” and in the power of His Spirit, was to put away the wicked person from *the fellowship of the saints*. A brother when received is not received into the body of Christ, nor into the House of God, nor to the Lord's table, as to all this he may have had his place for years, but into the fellowship of saints divinely gathered

unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, which is the expression of the One Body, primarily seen in the breaking of bread. And if he be put away he can be put away only from that into which he had been received, not therefore from the body of Christ, the House of God, or the Lord's table, but from the fellowship of the saints. Such reception and such putting away take effect just as far and no further than where that fellowship is recognised and expressed according to Scriptural order, that is, by inter-communion, letters of commendation, and the endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. When Paul was received into the fellowship of the saints, it was not at Jerusalem only, but equally into the fellowship of all the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (Acts ix. 31); and when the wicked man of 1 Cor. v. was put away, he was no more outside the door at Corinth than in Rome, Ephesus, and Philippi. Surely this is as simple as it is scriptural.

DIVISION of power was undoubtedly one cause of the Jewish misfortunes. During part of the time that Jephthah was reigning on the eastern side of the Jordan, and a little before Samson began to rule over the territory of Dan, the high priest Eli was exercising some species of command in the south-west of Palestine. It was in his day that the Philistines broke into the land; and it was at the very close of his life that those warlike strangers seized the Ark of the Covenant as one of the spoils of a great victory which they obtained over the Hebrews, who had brought the sacred receptacle on to the battle-field of Ebenezer in the belief that it would be a guarantee of security and triumph. The Ark was restored by the Philistines seven months later; but the sudden intelligence of its capture, together with the death of his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, caused the death of the aged Eli, about 1141 B.C.—the year before that in

which Samson began his judgeship. The state of moral corruption into which the Israelites had fallen at this period is shown by the outrageous conduct of the sons of Eli, who, in the fulfilment of their hereditary ecclesiastical offices at Shiloh, committed acts of gross profligacy in the very entrance to the Tabernacle—acts which Eli reproved, indeed, but did nothing to check. Such was the condition of degeneracy and political disruption to which some three centuries of anarchy had reduced the countrymen of Moses. The Jewish race was divided into jealous and often antagonistic communities; idolatry was more or less prevalent amongst them; antagonistic nations vexed the land, and laid tribute on the people; the traditions of Israel were gradually fading out before the influence of foreign customs; and the ministers of religion itself were guilty of open wickedness within the sacred precincts. But at that very time a boy was growing up, under the guidance of Eli, who was destined to renew the national life, and to bring about a change in the constitution of the country, productive of very striking and important results. This was Samuel, who is usually described as the first of the unbroken succession of prophets, and who was the means—though the unwilling means—by which the Theocratical was converted into the Monarchical Government.—*Extract.*

THE SEVEN so called sacred books of the world are the Koran of the Mohammedan, the Tri Pitikes of the Buddhists, the Five Kings of the Chinese, the Three Vedas of the Hindus, the Zendavesta of the Persians, the Eddas of the Scandinavians, and the Scriptures of the Christian. The Koran is the most recent of all, dating from about the seventh century after Christ. It is a compound of quotations from both the Old and New Testaments, and from the Talmud. The Tri Pitikes contain sublime morals and

pure aspirations. Their author lived and died in the sixth century before Christ. The sacred writings of the Chinese are called the Five Kings, the word "kings" meaning web of cloth. From this it is presumed they were originally written on five rolls of cloth. They contain wise sayings from the sages on the duties of life, but they cannot be traced further back than the eleventh century before our era. The Vedas are the most ancient books in the language of the Hindus, but they do not, according to late commentators, antedate the twelfth century before the Christian era. The Zendavesta of the Persians, next to our Bible, is reckoned among scholars as being the greatest and most learned of the sacred writings. Zoroaster, whose sayings it contains, lived and worked in the twelfth century before Christ. Moses lived and wrote the Pentateuch fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ; therefore that portion of our Bible is at least three hundred years older than the most ancient of other "sacred" writings. The Eddas, a semi-sacred work of the Scandinavians, was given to the world in the fourteenth century.—*Missionary Review of the World.*

'TIS SOVEREIGN GRACE calls its children to prayer, and, as the days grow darker and the times more perilous, the throne of grace should be the true Christian centre of rest and pavilion of shelter. 'Tis in the darkest days of the past God has made the throne of grace the *rock of refuge*—for the Lord Jesus sits on this throne, and He *sees* and hears all the boasting and menacing threats of the enemy. Nor should we forget a sharp contest is before us, and *all the strength* for it will come through the waiting on God. Jacob found this at Peniel, and we shall experience the same, for our God to-day is the *mighty God of Jacob*. "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and "He abideth faithful!"—*Rev. W. F. Harringay.*

ONCE an utter stranger was brought to Christ by a gentleman tapping him on the shoulder, and saying, "Well, my brother, how does your soul prosper to-day?" He turned round astonished, for he had never heard such a question. When the other saw his face, he said, "Oh! I beg your pardon; I thought you were an old friend of mine." It was a mistake, but it was a blessed mistake, which God used to the awakening of a conscience which only needed to be aroused by such a word as that. Dear friends, do try and speak to some. I know it is not easy work for many to do; but practise it, and you will find it easier the more often you try. Let the people know you are concerned about them.

I HAD AN OLD FRIEND who was forty years a shepherd, and he lived to be eighty years old. During the last forty years he was a minister; and he said, "I have had two flocks. The first forty years I fed sheep, the second forty years I fed men: and the second flock was a deal more sheepish than the first."—*Spurgeon*.

AN ARMY CHAPLAIN once asked the Duke of Wellington, "Do you think it is of any use our taking the Gospel to the hill tribes in India? Will they ever receive it?" The Duke's significant reply was, "What are your marching orders?" So very little have some Christians done for the spread of the Gospel, that the world is none the better for their being in it.

DR. WRIGHT, on visiting Damascus, brought from there a Roll of the Law, which had required a flock of sixty sheep to afford sufficient skin for the five books of Moses to be written thereon. Contrast this with the fact that a New Testament may now be bought for one penny, and the complete Bible for sixpence!

THE TOILET ARTICLES OF A PRIEST.—Romanists admit that these are of Pagan or Jewish origin. (1) *The amice*, a white napkin or kerchief, folded in a particular way, was the ancient head-dress of the heathen priest. (2) *The alb* was the under garment of the ancient Romans, made of white linen and next the body, being, in fact, what we call a shirt, though much longer. (3) *The stole* was a portion of the dress of Roman ladies, worn just as a scarf, boa, or sash is now worn. (4) *The maniple* was originally an embroidered handkerchief, which, instead of being kept in the pocket, was suspended from the wrist. (5) *The chasuble*, or *casula*, was the *toga virilis* of the Roman gentleman, put on just as ecclesiastics do now, so as to fall in graceful folds around the person. (6) *The cope* was nothing else than the overcoat of the Roman, being, as they still call it, the pluviate, to ward off the inclemency of the weather.

IF I MIGHT CHOOSE my path, and if I even had to stop out of heaven for the purpose, it would be heaven to me to be permitted always to be preaching Christ and the glories of His salvation. If I might be privileged to be, without ceasing, lauding and praising and extolling that dear Word of God, the Christ who was born at Bethlehem; if I might tell out to sinners everywhere that God was in Him making reconciliation—nay, that He has made reconciliation for all who believe on Him, this might be heaven enough, at least, for one poor heart, world without end.—*Spurgeon*.

AN OLD DIVINE says: Never bring to God one duty stained with the blood of another.

TEMPORARY INJUSTICES are permitted by God for purposes most wise ; but the bitter shall not be always called sweet, nor light be for ever traduced as darkness. The right shall be made apparent in due season ; the fictitious and pretentious shall be unmasked, and the real and the true shall be revealed. God's character involves this. If we have done faithfully, we may appeal from the petty sessions of society to the solemn assize of the great day ! Remember, too, that tenures differ, and none can match the holding which believers have of heaven ! Paradise is theirs, and an inheritance with Christ, which they shall live for ever and for ever to enjoy. Who would not be a saint on such terms ? Who would fret about, or begrudge, the fleeting treasures of the godless ? Tarry the Lord's leisure. "Wait on the Lord." Wait in obedience, as a servant ; in hope, as an heir ; in expectation, as a believer ; wait for Him. Never flag, never weary, never chafe, nor dream of turning aside. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Patient faith and persevering holiness shall be followed with promised blessing (Ps. xxxvii. 34).—*Spurgeon*.

THE WORD "SERMON" signifies a thrust, and it must be made with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," handled with energy and effect. Keep to facts and to doctrines which stir the conscience and affect the heart. God's truth is adapted to man, and God's grace adapts man to it. Keep, then, to that Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation." Preach Christ always and evermore. He is the whole Gospel. His person, His work, His offices, must be the one great, all-comprehending theme. The fire of Wesley and the fuel of Whitfield is what is wanted. Salvation is a theme for which I would fain enlist every tongue. I am greedy after witnesses for the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. O that Christ crucified were the universal burden of men of God.—*Spurgeon*.

THE BLESSEDNESS of him that considereth the poor. Pagan philosophy, says Robert Hall, soared in sublime speculation, wasted its strength in endless subtleties and debates ; but it never aimed at *this*. You might have traversed the Roman Empire in the zenith of its power, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, without meeting with a single charitable asylum for the sick. Monuments of pride, of ambition, of vindictive wrath, were to be found in abundance, but not one legible record of consideration for the poor. The primitive Christians taught this lesson of philanthropy. Hospitals are first referred to A.D. 325, and the first celebrated one was that of Cæsarea, A.D. 370-380, endowed by the Emperor Valens ; after which history records a growing consideration for the poor.

PSALM XXXVIII. 14.—"I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." David was bravely silent, and thus was eminently typical of the Lord Jesus, whose marvellous silence before Pilate was more eloquent than words. We have an Advocate, and have no need, therefore, to plead our own cause. Vengeance belongs to Him ; let us wait patiently, and find it our strength to sit still.

THE DISTANCES which astronomy reveals absolutely overwhelm the mind ! What can one say of the infinities of space ? Depth is swallowed up in height insurmountable ; height is swallowed up in depth unfathomable ! The limits appear absolutely illimitable !

THE JEWS OF ROME are taken up altogether with worldly interests; they feel no need of a Saviour, they say, "We harm no one; God will not be hard on us," while many openly assert, "Money is our God, bank-notes are our Holy Scriptures." One Jew said, "Our ancestors worshipped the golden calf, and we worship golden money." Verily, "the vail is upon their heart," yet Rom. xi. 5 abides true, thank God.

A MISSIONARY in China was once visited by a man of some standing who was a physician, and after talking a good deal of the worship of departed ancestors and other heathen customs, he said, "Suppose all were cleared up about our customs, worship of ancestors, &c., how can I make my heart clean? *Have you the secret?*" Blessed be God, we have.

THE *London Missionary Society Chronicle* has recently given a very interesting case—it is one of which there are many examples—of *conversion through study of the Scriptures alone*:—"Surrendra Nath Gupta, a student of the Entrance Class of our Institution, confessed Christ publicly by baptism at Calcutta a few weeks ago. His was a notable case. He was brought to Christ by reading the Gospel of John, before he knew a single Christian. As soon as he came to know Christ he sought us out, that he might learn more about his Master, and read with several of us privately. We were delighted with his faith, his understanding of the Gospel, and his beautiful Christian life. So when he offered himself for baptism we readily assented, even though he is, in the eye of the law, still a minor. After baptism he went boldly home to his friends. At first they were moderately kind to him; but soon he was taken to his home in the Dacca district, where his father took his Bible and every other book from him, and subjected him to cruel persecution. Letters are intercepted so that he cannot hear from us, nor we from him. But they cannot intercept prayers, thank God! We are praying daily for him, and we know that Christ is with him. Will friends in England remember this brave young soldier of Christ, in whom the words of Christ are being so literally fulfilled? (Matt. x, 21, 22.)

SHE IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH:—

O majesty of death! O wondrous peace!
How can we bring our weak and selfish fears,
And the wild anguish of protesting tears,
Into Thy presence, Lord? Our faith increase!
For Thou hast signed this "order of release;"
And her emancipated spirit hears,
Above the glad home-welcome of her peers,
Thy "Well done!" greeting ere our farewells cease.
Shall, then, the clamour of our loud despair
Ruffle this peace sublime, invade this rest,
Which Thou with Thine own likeness hast impressed,
Setting Thy seal upon these lips so fair?
"A little while!" and then Thou wilt restore,
Not for a little while—for evermore! —J. B. Greenwood.

MANY PEOPLE regard religion as they regard the small-pox. They desire to have it as slight as possible, and they are very careful that it does not *mark* them.

“ ABSENT FROM THE BODY—PRESENT WITH THE LORD.”

2 Corinthians v. 4-8.

TWO things go together for us as saints ; the certainty of the Lord's coming and the uncertainty whether or not we shall fall asleep before He comes. Known to God only is it whether we shall have put off the tabernacle of the body or be found in occupation of it when Christ returns in the air ; but, in presence of the certainty of His coming, the uncertainty whether we shall then be in the body or out of the body, however much it may interest, does not disturb us. In either case, a blessedness is assured to us richly surpassing our present blessing, and we can happily entrust to His sovereignty the disposal of our earthly house of tabernacle ! It is good to be for Him here ; it is “ far better ” to fall asleep and go to Him there ; but best of all to awake in His likeness if we have slept, or, if living when He comes, to see Him as He is ! This, the superlative thing and not the comparative, though that also be blessed, is what the Lord always puts before us as the object of our hope ; nothing short of this is the “ mark for the prize ”—the desired consummation when He and we are glorified together ! The fact that in Scripture the Holy Ghost uniformly connects our heart's aspirations with the return of Christ should suffice to satisfy every saint of God that the superlative thing, that which is the subject of “ that blessed hope,” is His coming, and that if we substitute anything else, it only indicates that we are out of the mind and current of the Spirit of God. But while that be incontestable, and cannot be too emphatically maintained, the fact that so many saints have fallen asleep since the assembly of God first acquired “ that blessed hope,” and that one after another around us is ever and anon retiring to rest, necessitates to our

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hearts a very deep and ever renewed interest in the character of their blessing.

The thief, in whom grace wrought on the cross, blessed as was the new-born desire of his heart, needed light on three points, each of exceeding interest. He asked (1) to be remembered by the Lord (2) at His coming, (3) in His kingdom. The Lord both corrected and surpassed each feature of his request, for He promised (1) that he should be with Him (2) that day (3) in paradise! This affords the fullest Scripture teaching as to the blessedness of those who put off this tabernacle, and connecting it with Paul's testimony, that "absent from the body" the saint is "present with the Lord;" that "to depart and be with Christ is far better;" and that "to die is gain," clearly establishes that the emancipated spirit enjoys (1) the blessedness of being with Christ, which is far better than any blessing enjoyed below, (2) that such blessedness is immediate, and (3) it is in the elysium of His own presence, a locality otherwise undefined.

But if this summarises the direct instruction which the Holy Ghost has given us in the word, yet may we safely and soberly predicate a variety of aspects of the blessedness involved in that momentous change of condition into which the *spirit is introduced when the earthly house of its tabernacle is vacated. Discumbered of the body, it is at once relieved from the drag or resistance which a sinful body (however well adapted for the exercises of faith, and as an instrument for service to the Lord in a sinful world) must inevitably impose upon its freedom.

With what new gladness shall we reflect that we can never grieve His blessed heart any more, nor ever

* The lower animals are soul and body; man only is "spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thes. v. 23). Spirit and soul, though clearly distinguished, are never severed, never dis-associated, either in this world, in the unclothed state, or in eternal glory. So far as these teachings go, what is said of the spirit may be understood to apply, for the above reason, to the soul also. Man's soul and spirit are both immortal.

"ABSENT FROM THE BODY."

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again bring dishonour upon His peerless Name ; that sin and sorrow, toil and trouble, care and conflict, and all that tends to weaken our love and attachment to the Lord, or hinder its outflow, with every other thing that tells of the fall and the curse, are left behind for ever ! Whether it be the needs and weakness of humanity as created, or its sick and suffering condition as fallen, or as the vehicle in which my will would work, that abode in which the flesh dwells—all this I am freed from on leaving the body : no more can I know want or weariness ; no more pain and anguish ; no more workings of a perverse will, of a carnal mind, of a heart at enmity with God !

By vacating the body I have broken every link with the flesh and its activities, with the world and its elements ; I have parted company, never to be resumed, with the old man, man's world, and the world's god.

What a release from Satan's hostility and subtlety ! What an escape from every snare of the fowler ; from the world, too, Satan's usurped empire ; no further exposure to its hydra-headed opposition to Christ and to those who are His ; the wilderness past, with all its painful experience of battlings and buffetings, and the haven reached where all evil is excluded and all toil has ceased in the eternal calm and sublimity of His presence !

It is a happy and a refreshing thought that my body, being a member of Christ, is assured of resurrection, because of His Spirit who dwelleth in me, and this secures the body for that day ; while being "one spirit" with the Lord, one with Him in living, eternal union, whether in or out of the body, my spirit in returning to God finds that grateful retreat in the presence of Christ which secures it also, while waiting for reunion with the body at His coming !

Save the Lord Himself, no one was ever more superior to circumstances than Paul ; he who could say, "I am initiated both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer privation. I have

strength for all things in Him that gives me power." Yet he says, "I have a desire to depart." No one had a more important service to detain him below, and no one was more singularly qualified, and more thoroughly devoted as a servant. It is summed up—this remarkable identification of himself with Christ's interests on earth—in the words, "For me to live is Christ," and yet he adds, "to die is gain!"

There are four aspects in which the departed saint may be regarded; as to what he *escapes*, what he *resigns*, what he *retains*, and what he *acquires*.

What he *escapes* has been already sufficiently touched upon. What he *resigns* is equally apparent, though not, perhaps, sufficiently recognised, otherwise we should value and turn to account more than we do the present unique period of the soul's history! Each of us has doubtless looked back to the days of his youth, never to be recalled, and found occasion to mourn over days of evil that cannot now be corrected, and opportunities for good that can never return; as that spring-time of life has left its stamp on all after-years, so surely will the soul's spring-time bear its mark for eternity, for I learn now and I gather here, that which, missing the present opportunity, I shall never learn or gather at all; in fact, this is the time of the soul's pupilage in the place where it takes its degree! All this we resign when we leave the body; surely, were saints sufficiently alive to this fact we should not find so many droning away the precious spring-time, unmindful of the word, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. v. 14). But, further, I forego, if I leave the body, that highest of all privileges, the witnessing for Christ in the day and in the scene of His refusal, also the outward and visible fellowship of saints, the table of the Lord with its rich and endearing associations, the endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, the exercises of brotherly love, of

prayer, of sympathy, of generosity and hospitality, of practical separation from evil, what James calls "Pure religion, and undefiled"—all these exercises, in fine all that is demonstrative in its character, I pass out of for the time being ; while such principles as faith, patience, dependence, and obedience, if in exercise, will be in exercise under such new conditions as constitute, or at least imply, a generic change !

In respect to the third point—that which on falling asleep we *retain*—I content myself with suggesting that I retain all that which divine grace has conferred upon me for eternity ; I carry with me, and shall continue to enjoy, the eternal life, the new creation blessing, union with Christ, the peace which surpasseth understanding, the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and the relationships into which grace has introduced me, which can never be weakened or annulled ! Never can I cease to be a child of God and a member of the body of Christ.

Lastly, as to what I *acquire*, the "gain," it is clear that I finally enter into rest—a rest never to be disturbed, a full and deep repose, never to be broken ! What a wonderful expansion will my spirit experience as it emerges from the density of an atmosphere so oppressive as is this into that of His presence ; and, oh ! how sweet is the conviction that steals over me, that I have passed into that blissful presence *for ever* ; that I am at length in that new region of unruffled peace characterised by the presence of my Saviour and my Lord :

"There shall all clouds depart,
The wilderness shall cease,
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace."

But though with Himself in the profound quietude of an eternal calm, and enjoying an unalloyed happiness in His own immediate presence, I wait for His coming on that cloudless morning when He

shall bring forth from the grave, to the joy of His own heart, the bodies which, in all ages and in every clime, He had hushed to sleep! In the scene of His rejection I had once waited for Him, but sleep overtook my body, my heart was still wakeful, my spirit passed into His presence, and I waited on—my waiting became more like His, *I kept vigil with Him!* It was not enough to be in His presence, I wanted to see Him as He is; it was not enough to be with Him, I wanted to be like Him, for this would give peculiar joy to His heart; for this I needed a glorified body, and I waited still! It was not enough that He should be crowned with glory and with honour upon the Father's throne, I longed for His manifested glories in heaven and on earth, when He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; I longed to see His brow bedecked with many crowns, and I longed to swell the harmony of the new song which should extol His worth; I longed to see Him in the Father's house, to be there at home with Himself; I longed to see Him express, as there only He fully can, the fervour of His faithful love to His bride, and to set forth in blessed array the untold joy and delight that will thrill His heart when He shall have things all His own way, and when God shall make every element of glory, animate or inanimate, subserve in the heaven of His own presence the counsels of His heart from eternity!

All those blessed longings of spirit which had Christ for their object here, I there unhinderedly and undistractedly indulge, and thus the superlative thing, the glory itself, will be blissfully and powerfully anticipated. All that, if absent from the body, my heart will but the more ardently long for and watch for in the patience of Christ, and as to which cannot be fully satisfied short of its consummation; all to which my heart aspires now, and would aspire then, whether in these circumstances or in those, only His coming in the air can possibly supply an answer to!

TWO GOOD THINGS.

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Then shall we resume the functions of worship in the conditions alone compatible with it ; then shall we sing as only redeemed saints, and in the body, are said to do ! Then only will He present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy ; then only will He make us to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us ; then only will He satisfy for us every desire which our knowledge of Himself has inspired in our hearts ! Upon this, then, the superlative thing, His own heart is set, as well as that of the Spirit and the bride, saying, "Come ;" and He who loves to be thus greeted, loves too to reply—"Surely I come quickly," adding His own "Amen ;" and if we, like the beloved disciple, have pillowed our heads, though in another way, upon His bosom, we shall have to respond, whether in the body or out of the body, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus !"

" Oh, how I thirst the chains to burst,
That weigh my spirit downward ;
And there to flow, in love's full glow,
With hearts like Thine surrounded !"

TWO GOOD THINGS.

I. "For it is *a good thing* that the heart be established with grace ; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Heb. xiii. 9). If it is not, we shall be occupied with self in some of its miserable, joy-depriving forms ; or perhaps with whatsoever things are *unlovely* in others. Whichever it may be, whether looking *in* or *around*, the result will be the same—wretchedness, discontent, grumbling. Surely this is not a good thing ! The moment we think of *grace*, we have reached God. We have left *self*—left occupation with others—left that which induces grumbling and complaining, and we have reached the source of all good. His blessed heart is the spring of grace, and He acts

towards us apart from all motive *in us*, according to what He is in Himself, "the God of all grace," founded upon the perfect sacrifice of His beloved Son, so that "grace reigns through righteousness." How blessed when the heart is *established* in it—settled—firmly fixed in the grace of God.

It is by grace we are saved (Eph. ii. 5). We are justified freely by it (Rom. iii. 24). Yea, numerous are the blessings we have through it, and which hem us in and wall us round on every side. Surely, it is a good thing to have the heart established with it. Then let us not give it up, whether for "divers and strange doctrines," or for "meats" which have not profited them that have already tried them. Rather let us "be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. ii. 1).

II. "It is *a good thing* to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High. To shew forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night" (Psalm xcii. 1-2). Surely it is! But there is no doing this good thing if we are not established and in the enjoyment of the other good thing. The one springs from the other. "For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work" (verse 4). There must be the apprehension of what He has done; and occupation of heart with what He is in Himself to produce praise and thanksgiving. How beautifully it is seen in the prison at Philippi. "They prayed, and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them." Their hearts were *established* with grace, and their lips could praise for the grace; then they declared the grace, while the jailer and his household were saved by that grace.

Beloved brethren, let us think more of the wonderful grace of God. May we find ourselves "rooted and built up" in it—firmly fixed in it—and thus able to do the other good thing, "give thanks unto the Lord and sing praises unto His name."

New Zealand.

W. EASTON.

THE DAWN OF ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE.

Isaiah xl.-lxvi.

AT a critical time in Jerusalem's history Isaiah, the son of Amoz, began his ministry. The evil influence of the matrimonial alliance of the house of David with that of Ahab had been sorely felt in Judah, and Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, who made it by marrying Athaliah, departed without being desired. Ahaziah, his son, was slain by command of Jehu, and Joash, his son, was killed by his servants. Amaziah, his son, fell a victim to a conspiracy likewise. For three generations the kings of Judah met with violent deaths. (Was this in accordance with Exodus xx. 5?) Uzziah then appeared. His reign was long and victorious. The nations around, as the Philistines, the Arabians, the Mehunim, and the Ammonites, learnt to respect him. He died, however, a leper, smitten by the direct hand of God for invading the priestly office. Jotham, his son, succeeded him, and prospered in his wars against the Ammonites, because he prepared his way before the Lord his God (2 Chron. xxvii. 6). Days of triumph had succeeded years of rebuke and dishonour.

Was the ancient glory of the kingdom to revive, and the occupant of the throne at Jerusalem again to give law to neighbouring nations? That will be seen, and the ancient glory of the kingdom will be more than revived, but only under a King who has not yet wielded in power that sceptre. The little reviving under Uzziah and Jotham was but transient. Greater trials than Judah had yet known were near at hand. Under Ahaz the kingdom was brought low indeed, and an invasion was predicted which, like an irresistible torrent, would sweep over the country, leaving Jerusalem as a rock rearing its head in the midst of a wide waste of waters. This Isaiah predicted (vii., viii.). This, too, he witnessed (x. 28-32).

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Ahaz had sought help from Tiglath-pileser, the King of Assyria. He got it, but smarted for it. Syria, his enemy, was indeed rendered powerless by that monarch, who, however, distressed Ahaz, and strengthened him not (2 Chron. xxviii. 20). Ahaz thus opened the door to that power destined to make havoc in the land; for shortly afterwards Shalmanezzer appeared and laid siege to Samaria, which subsequently was taken, it seems, by Sargon, a usurper, who was his successor. This latter afterwards over-ran Judah as described in Isaiah x. 28-32. Next came his son, Sennacherib. Invincible he thought himself—and Jerusalem, he considered, was within his grasp. But like those words in Job (xxxviii. 11) spoken of the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," his arrogance was checked by the slaughter, through angelic agency, of one hundred and eighty-five thousand of his warriors in one night. Softly then had the boastful monarch to return to his land, where he met his death at the hands of two of his sons. For a time Assyria was checked. There was a God who could deliver Hezekiah out of the great king's hand.

The alarm occasioned, first by the invasion under Sargon, and then by that under Sennacherib, the prophet witnessed, and with the different views put forward as to Judah's true policy he was well acquainted. The relief, too, brought about by the sudden destruction of Sennacherib's host, and God's gracious provision to meet the need of the people in the land, he shared with them. But though Sennacherib never repeated his invasion of Judah, the people's troubles were by no means at an end. Another power there was to rise into prominence which, though at that time favourable to Judah, would become hostile. Of that power Isaiah also prophesied, predicting that the seed-royal of David's house would furnish eunuchs for the palace of the King of Babylon (Isaiah xxxix. 6, 7). This was

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brought about when Daniel and his companions had been carried captive in the early years of the reign of Jehoiakim. From their deportation dated the seventy years captivity (Daniel i).

At this point in the nation's history the first part of the book of Isaiah, as it is called, ends. In it we have seen the introduction on the scene of these two powers—the Assyrian and the Babylonian; and in it also we read of their final doom. Chapp. xiii.-xiv. describe that of the latter; chap. xxx. 30-32 foretells that of the former. Here a remark must be made. Historically, as we know, the Assyrian empire was overthrown before the Babylonian rose to its greatest height, and grandeur, and power. In chapter xiv., however, which describes the complete desolation of this latter, the final overthrow of the Assyrian is mentioned *after* that of Babylon has been stated at length (xiv. 24-27).

Was the prophet mistaken in that which he wrote? Was his forecast of the future hopelessly astray? We believe not. For the prophet here looked on to that which is still future, as indeed he does in xxx. 27-32. For no one can seriously contend that these latter verses received their fulfilment in the destruction of Sennacherib's army.* The fact is, that the arrangement of subjects in chapter xiv., which might seem at first sight to be out of chronological order, is really chronologically correct. For whilst Babylon has fallen never to rise again to oppress the nation, there will be an enemy in the land in the last days answering to the Assyrian of the past, and called by Daniel the King of the North. Hence the hostile power from the north in the prophet's day was, by its invasion of the land, really foreshadowing events still in the womb of the future. And to Isaiah, as to Daniel, was it given to speak of such in language

* Pestilence destroyed Sennacherib's host. Devouring fire, scattering tempest, and hailstones will mark the destruction of the Assyrian of xxx. 30.

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which, perhaps at the time not fully understood, is more clear to us who are now living upon earth. We have spoken of xxx. 27-32 as looking forward to the future. We would claim the same for x. 12. For who could say the *whole* work of the Lord God was performed on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem by either the invasion of Sargon or that under Sennacherib? Prophecy has often in it a fulness which is not exhausted by the events of the day in which it may be delivered. Such is the case with the prophecies just referred to. The Assyrian of the future will be dealt with within the limits of the land of Israel, as was the Assyrian of the past.

Turning to the second part of the book of our prophet (chapp. lx.-lxvi.), we find it occupied with the deliverance of God's earthly people and with their introduction into final blessing. Here the fortunes of the surrounding nations, which occupied the prophet for the most part in chapp. xiii.-xxiv., are wholly passed over. They had a place in the prophetic vision when the track of desolating conquest was traced out. They have no place in that same vision when the prophet dwells on the final deliverance of Israel. The first part (chapp. i.-xxxix.) closes, as we have said, with that which really predicted the Babylonish captivity. The second part opens with Israel's blessing—the first step of which in the train of events was the return of a remnant from Babylon. Accordingly, as we have read in the first part of the *two* great hostile powers, we are to read in the second of the *two* persons by whom Israel's restoration should be effected.

With such a change of subject there may well be a change of key. The joyous theme of Israel's blessing may explain the sudden change in the prophetic strain. For are we to think it inconceivable that Isaiah, who died before the Babylonish captivity, should write of the people's deliverance from it? If he was permitted to strike the first note of prophetic

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announcement of that captivity, why could he not have been a fitted instrument to be the first to write distinctly of return from it? And seeing that he predicted beyond all contradiction events of a far later date in connection with the Lord Jesus, why should it be impossible that he should have foretold the name of the first instrument in the deliverance of his people? A man of God out of Judah foretold the name of the king who would defile the idolatrous altar at Bethel—even Josiah—and that *three* centuries before his birth. Why could not Isaiah have mentioned Cyrus by name less than *two* centuries before he appeared? Was it beyond the range of his subjects to write of Jerusalem's final deliverance? In the first chapter of his prophecy he intimates, not obscurely, that it will take place (i. 27). Why, we ask, should he not, ere his prophetic ministry closed, have been called to expatiate upon it? It is not then incongruous, as we think of the first part of the book of his visions, that he should end his ministry with glowing pictures and descriptions of the nation's final blessing.

This, however, could only be brought about as the Babylonish captivity should first have a reversal. So we read in the second part, as already noted, of the two persons by whom the nation's deliverance was destined to be brought about. In xli. 1-4, we are introduced to the first. In xlii. 1-7, we read about the second. By Cyrus the deliverance was commenced. By the Lord Jesus will Israel's final blessing be consummated. Hence we see what an important epoch in history dates from the decree of Cyrus, quoted in part in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23, and more fully in Ezra i. 1-4, and of which we have a further extract in Ezra vi. 3-5. It was the dawn of Israel's deliverance, the final acts of which yet await their accomplishment.

Of Cyrus we read only in the first great section of the second part of Isaiah, viz., chapp. xl.-xlviii.

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After that he disappears from the prophetic horizon. Like a bright meteor passing through the sky in the hours of night, and which disappears before the break of day, so Cyrus suddenly, as it were, passes before us, and disappears before the true Sun, which, when risen, will wax brighter and brighter, till it reaches its meridian splendour, and, differing from the sun above us, will never set.

Of the Lord we first read in this part of the book in xlii. But more, much more have we to learn about Him in xlix.-lxvi.; of great interest to us all. First, hearing of His birth in vii. 14, we are taught (ix. 6, 7) of His right to David's throne, and with no successor, He being its final occupant. Then the character of His rule and His dealing in power with evil the prophet also sets forth (xi. 1-10). All this appears in the first part of Isaiah, presenting Him as the King. The suitability of this we must admit, seeing that invasions and conquests are treated of therein.

But is the Lord only a conqueror and king like Cyrus? In other characters He appears, and our prophet, who had foretold His birth and future reign, will fill in the sketch of His life and history in connection with earth. All this is fitting, surely, and nothing to cause surprise, nor to raise suspicion that another hand now takes up the thread and unfolds the future. Hence it is that in the second part of the book a different line of teaching in connection with Him is traced out. Kingly power and the enforcement of His will in government are not now the prominent points, so much as His ministry among men, His lowliness, and His death. Here again, we have to say, how perfect is this in its place. For though the power of His arm His enemies will feel, when He puts down the oppressors of His people; yet the necessary prelude for Israel to all that, is the repentance of the remnant, consequent on a real waking up to the moral condition of the nation. Now for this a ministry to the conscience is needed,

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and encouragement for the heart likewise, rather than the laying bare of a powerful arm ready to strike its foes. So the prophet now dwells on the Lord as the servant (xlii., xlix., l., liii., lxi.), depicting, too, what He experienced when here in humiliation. Cyrus was introduced as a conqueror, for through his conquest of Babylon the return from captivity was to be brought about. The Lord is introduced as a Teacher and Minister, for hearts must be won ere Israel's final restoration to blessing can be definitely consummated.

We have said that there are just these two spoken of as instruments for the carrying out of the divine purpose, viz., the one who began the deliverance and the One who will ultimately and finally complete it. But here we must mark a difference in the effects produced by these two events. Joy and gladness, surely, the remnant experienced when the conqueror's decree was understood. In the future, however, the world and created things will take an interest in Israel's final restoration, and will express it (xlii. 10-12; xliv. 23). So all are called on to rejoice. No such note of praise was sounded when Cyrus issued his emancipating decree. Praise, however, from nations, and from heaven and earth, will resound when Israel's long night of darkness is succeeded by the dawn of its endless day. The Lord's coming to reign ensures creation's deliverance from the bondage of corruption. His coming for Israel's deliverance is the day for which creation has so long waited. The book of Isaiah, then, when viewed as a whole, is divided into two parts. In the first we have predicted those desolating judgments which the nation was to endure; in the second we have foretold that people's final deliverance, and the two by whom it was to be effected. The one began it; the other will perfect it.

Seeing, then, that Isaiah predicted in chapter i. the redemption of Jerusalem, for which Zion still waits, how natural that he should tell us of the great steps

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by which that will be brought about. The return from Babylon was the first light that shone on the nation's fortunes. The return, after the great trumpet shall be blown (Isa. xxvii. 13), will usher in their final emancipation; and the ministry of the Lord on earth, His death, and His return in power are all links in the chain by which that redemption will be successfully consummated. How natural, we have said, how fitting, we add, that the writer of chapter i. should be the writer of chapp. xl.-lxvi.

But here we may be met with the assertion that these chapters just referred to cannot have come from the pen of the son of Amoz, and that the grounds for this conclusion are overwhelmingly convincing. Contenting ourselves with expressing dissent from this view, since to enter at length on that subject would be unsuited for this periodical, we would remind our readers that in old days, *i.e.*, apostolic days, there was no such doubt thrown on their authorship. And we may add, that no book is so frequently quoted by name in the New Testament as that of this prophet. And out of the twenty-two times that reference is made to Isaiah by name, ten times certainly are quotations said to be culled from the last twenty-seven chapters of our prophet.* Matthew, Luke, John, Paul quote from the second part of the book, and affirm that they are quoting from the prophet Isaiah. Were they all in the dark on this point? Were they all deceived? Or, knowing better, did they agree to pander to the popular opinion, and thus deceived their readers? Then if their writings are inspired, we may ask, Was the Spirit of God deceived as to the penmen of His own Scriptures? And was the Lord in ignorance when the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him, that He was about to read, as people supposed, from that prophet words which, however

* Matt. iii. 3; viii. 17; xii. 17; Luke iii. 4; iv. 17; John i. 23; xii. 38; Acts viii. 28-33; Rom. x. 16, 20, 21.

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inspired, never were penned by that writer? Of course, we could conceive a copyist inserting in some one place the name of a writer through mistake. The references, however, in this case to Isaiah are too numerous, and the writers who quote them too many, to admit of any such explanation. And one New Testament writer is certainly too deeply committed to the Isaianic authorship to leave us in doubt of that which he believed. We refer to the apostle and evangelist John.

"These things," he writes, "spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them. But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, because he saw His glory, and spake of Him" (John xii. 36-41). John evidently believed that Isaiah wrote chapter liii. 1 of the book which bears his name, as well as that of chapter vi. 9, 10 in the same book, which is admittedly his. "Esaias the prophet," he says, spake what he quoted from (liii. 1). Not only are the words found in the book which bears the prophet's name; but John tells us that the prophet spake them. He affirmed this when quoting them. He re-affirmed it, as he tells his readers that the writer of liii. 1 is the same as that of vi. 9, 10. John, we must believe, was satisfied as to the identity of their authorship. Both came from the prophet Isaiah. We, then, may well be satisfied of this also, and be content to keep in his company and to follow his lead, till overwhelming proof is forthcoming that Matthew, Luke, John and Paul were all mistaken as to the true authorship of

those last twenty-seven chapters of the book of Isaiah—only found there, and nowhere else.

C. E. S.

CHRIST, THE MEAT OFFERING.—*Lev. ii.*

At length, Thou, Lord our God, hast found,
What long, in vain, Thou sought'st around—

A human soul on earth
That fully met Thy whole desire,
With true devotedness on fire—
A truly subject heart.

When Thou, from heaven's high throne did'st view
The world, and all its race review,

No single man appeared
Whom just and righteous, Thou might'st call ;
But guilt and lawlessness in all :
Not one Jehovah feared.

But now Thine eye hath rested on
That Object that it sought so long—

A fully subject Man :
Jesus hath suffered, Christ hath done
All that Thou would'st, as never one
Before, since time began.

Man with his malice, curs't and vile,
And Satan, with his every wile,

To overthrow Him tried ;
In every form His heart was proved,
But, 'mid temptations all unmoved,
His God He glorified.

Therefore, from out the opened heaven
Thy loving testimony given,

In tones of pleasure ran ;
Giving to Heaven and earth to know
That God had found, at length below,
His heart's desire in Man.

R. H.

WHAT CHRISTIANS HAVE TO LOOK FOR UNLESS THE LORD COMES.

I HAVE no desire that your readers should meddle in politics ; I do not do so myself, nor do I think that a Christian ought. He believes that God governs, and governs with a view to the glory of Christ, and that He will infallibly bring about His purposes. But it is well that Christians should apprehend what they have to look for, and be prepared for it, if the Lord tarry. Did it not concern them religiously, you would have no word from me on such subjects. What I purpose doing is to review briefly the course of events, and state what seem to me their results. Parties are all alike to me ; they are all alike guilty, and have all alike their part in what is going on.

Lord Derby it was who banished the scriptures from Irish schools, and set up the Irish National (really, Popish) School System. He stated that there was no proselytism, but that "the use of scripture" was a fatal objection, because it was displeasing to the priest. We must remember that politicians have no idea of principles, but only of existing influences to which they must be subject. The next step was that of that most short-sighted man, however great a general he might have been, the Duke of Wellington. I take no side with any party—I distrust them all, but he was a Tory, as they call it, aristocratic in principle. He, with Sir Robert Peel, passed the Catholic Emancipation Bill, so called, which admitted some sixty or seventy violent democrats into the House, and by that party (as it is well known) the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed ; the majority of English members were against it.

Now, for a state with a political machinery like that of England to work smoothly, a large portion of influential masses must not be outside its institutions.

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The Duke of Wellington declared the system perfect which did shut them out, after introducing elements which made it impossible to hold that ground.

He thought to stem it by the House of Lords, and nearly brought on an open revolution ; and Lord Harrowby and the waverers, as they were then called, gave a majority to the Reform Bill in the House of Lords ; the bill was a revolution. That is, it was not an admission of excluded influences into existing institutions, but a total change in the institutions themselves.

Democracy became ascendant and possessed the power. The House of Lords became insignificant, and populous boroughs acquired the power once wielded by the land.

Old habits modified the effect, but every one knows that this is what took place. The ancient institutions of the country were in principle overturned. With this railroads and the commercial movement, and the refusal of landlords to increase the population on their lands, concurred to throw the population into the towns. Vaunted education ministered immensely to general infidelity, Satan being let loose in that respect, and by the growth of this and of Dissent, which predominates in the great towns, the clergy were on the one hand thrown into ritualism and popish principles, or on the other adopted infidel or semi-infidel principles ; and infidel notions acquired a powerful influence over the mental activity of the country, and exercised a great power in the governing body, the House of Commons.

Morally speaking, the Protestant Church was gone, and rationalism and Popery, in principle, divided the country. Evangelicalism became practically null in the Establishment. In this state of things the democratic influence has acquired an immense accession of power by the new Reform Bill. Power is put into hands which will use it. The forms are immaterial ; they will probably be changed immediately or ere long.

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But my object is to notice the effects on the state of society.

God cares for the poor. But the poor have ceased to be—in the scriptural sense of the word. They are masters. The effect on the masses and on the active minds of the country will be infidelity, exalting man.

Even popular religious preaching will take this character. It will keep up the name of Christian, but will exalt man in its statements, not Christ:—Despise government, says the apostle, presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Human reason, not God, will be the arbiter of good and evil.

What already prevails so largely, will be open to a vast party in the country. The will of the people, confidence in man, his rights, his general perfectability, will be the banner of all this class. The aristocracy, on the contrary, having lost power, will seek to compensate themselves (vexed and dissatisfied in heart) with luxury and pleasure. To maintain quiet (principle having gone in both classes), and some influence—some barrier against the strong will of the people, they will rapidly seek to increase the influence of the clergy—the only remaining one over those that constitute the bulk of those around.

In the country it will be the body of the poor subject to priestcraft, and in the towns a very large increase of Popery, so as to have an integral place in the population; the bulk of those who are not so, or who do not side with them, being infidel.

It may be thought that I have not sufficiently allowed for the influence of religious dissenters. It is really next to nothing, and will be always becoming less.

Already exalting man is the system that most widely prevails, going on with the age. But there is another thing, they will join with the Roman Catholic in putting down the Establishment, which has little or no political hold on the country. Episcopalianism

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must then, as against Dissent, base itself on its distinctive character, in alliance with (if not in the form of) Popery, successional grace and sacraments, and the clergy the only channels of it. I do not expect Protestantism nominally to cease, but it will be really infidel.

You may find individual ministers, Dissenting or Episcopalian, preaching Christ, but the disruption that is taking place is a disruption into infidel radicalism or popular will, and Popery in the aristocracy and in all that they can bring under its influence, as a check upon that will.

I have no doubt that God will keep every faithful soul, and maintain every needed testimony, but it is well that Christians should know what is before them, as time goes on more rapidly, perhaps, than we are aware.

I do not look for violence, because I believe there is no courage anywhere to resist the course of events.

I do not pretend to say how long it may take to bring these things about. God knows, and God holds the reins or loosens them; but I have no doubt as to what is coming on. The Christian may walk in peace through it all, waiting for God's Son from heaven, and keeping the word of His patience: yea, having a specially blessed place of testimony in the midst of it all, but a lowly one, content to be nothing in a world that has rejected Christ, and is ripening for His judgment. Their part is to *keep His word* and not deny His Name.

The result as to the western world will be, as known to students of prophecy, that the Babylonish or idolatrous power, with which the kings of the earth had committed fornication, will be utterly destroyed, and the popular will in the same sphere will give itself to the Beast, who will be destroyed with the false prophet by the Lord Himself coming from heaven.

The present result of what is now enacting will be: the aristocratic part of the community giving itself up

to luxury and pleasure, and, with the dependent part of the population, to Popery; the independent and mentally active part to infidelity. The opposition to Popery will be infidel, not Protestant.

The general public effect will be a great and rapid increase of centralisation or despotic power, and loss of personal liberty. Individual personal independence of character will disappear almost entirely. Men must go with others to be anything. Protestantism having lost its integrity and energy, God allows infidelity as a check on Popish power. If things go smoothly, I apprehend the first move towards centralisation will be the substitution of a paid for an unpaid magistracy; to set aside, nominally, local territorial influence and gain efficiency, but throwing a vast power into the centre of government, and being the first move towards despotism or central power as a counter-balance to multitudinous self-will or anarchy; personal liberty and independence being proportionately set aside.

Other social questions, as primogeniture, will soon come in; the importance of money and luxury, the necessary consequence of its abolition, will rapidly increase, and the moral degradation and dissipation which go with it. All this will be modified by existing habits, no doubt, and the love of something aristocratic is inherent in the human mind,* but this will not materially affect the result. J. N. D.

(*Written about 1867.*)

OBEDIENCE.—*Eph.* v. 21—vi. 9.

THIS is the genius of Christianity in our evil world, in which man's will is the source of all the evil, expressing his departure from God, to whom all sub-

* Liveries and armorial bearings are coming in in New York, and carefully studied genealogies where there are any.

mission is due. The principle of submission and of obedience is the healing principle of humanity ; only God must be brought into it, in order that the will of man be not the guide after all. But the principle that governs the heart of man in good is always and everywhere obedience. I may have to say that God must be obeyed rather than man ; but to depart from obedience is to enter into sin. A man may have, as a father, to command and direct, but he does it ill if he do it not in obedience to God and to His Word. This was the essence of the life of Christ : " I come to do Thy will, O My God." Accordingly, the apostle begins his exhortations with regard to relationships by giving the general precept : " Submit yourselves one to another." This renders order easy, even when the order of institutions and of authority may fail. Submission, moral obedience, can never in principle be wanting to the true Christian. It is the starting point of his whole life. He is sanctified unto the obedience of Christ (1 Peter i. 2). It is striking to see how this principle elevates the slave in his condition : he obeys by an inward divine principle, as though it were Christ Himself whom he obeyed. However wicked his master may be, he obeys as if he obeyed Christ Himself. Three times the apostle repeats this principle of obedience to Christ or the service of Christ, adding, " Doing the will of God from the heart." What a difference this made in the poor slave's condition ! Moreover, whether bond or free, each should receive his reward from the Lord. The master himself had the same Master in heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons. Still it is to the masters that he says this, not to the slave ; for Christianity is delicate in its propriety, and never falsifies its principles. The master was also to treat the slave with perfect equity—even as he expected it from the slave—and was not to threaten. Thus divine doctrine enters into the details of life, and throws the fragrance of its perfection into every duty

LETTER OF INTEREST.

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and every relationship. It acknowledges existing things, as far as they can be owned and directed by its principles, but exalts and enhances the value of everything according to the perfection of those principles, by touching not the relationships, but the man's heart who walks in them. J. N. D.

 LETTER OF INTEREST.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am interested in your enquiry as to how far we can own the Lord's table where the Lordship of Christ and His authority are denied, Christians and the world mixed together, order and discipline ignored, &c. Are we responsible to accredit such a table as the table of the Lord? To all this it seems to me that a little further on you yourself supply the answer. *It is a bad expression of the Lord's table, corrupted in the hands of men through insubjection to Him who is Lord of it.* Therefore I could not partake of it myself, or sanction it by any act of recognition.

But in discussing Church action, one has to look upon the house of God in its length and breadth. Discipline theoretically is on behalf of the Church at large, but practically it was only so exercised during the early days of the Church. The total disruption of Church unity has totally dislocated Church action. That which was, so to speak, the discipline of the house of God is now discipline only *in* the house of God. I could not deny that *there* is the Holy Ghost dwelling, and *there* is the Lord's table and the Lord's supper, and *there* is the word ministered. *We have no special claim to any of these things; but* here and there in various secluded corners, in what has become as a great house (2 Tim. ii. 20), there is a broken and peeled company who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Instead of denying His Name (Rev. iii. 8), they are divinely and thankfully gathered unto it. Cleaving to divine principles, they sedulously

keep His word, and they loyally seek to express what is due to Him as Head of His body, the Church. In fellowship with Him and with one another, with only little strength but in the unction of an ungrieved Spirit, they respond to the dying request of their beloved Lord, to be observed during His absence and until His return, by remembering Him in the breaking of bread, thus keeping vigil until He come.

Gladly do they receive saints to, and sorrowfully do they put them away from, this their fellowship. No such gathered company, or any number of such, however closely incorporated, constitutes the house of God, or the assembly of God, or the body of Christ, and yet they *may be* the whole and sole expression of these things, scripturally and characteristically. And further, we may safely affirm that upon nothing else on earth does the eye of the Lord look down with greater complacency, and towards nothing else here does His mighty heart go out with deeper affection and delight.

This it is, then, which is the distinctive and much-to-be-coveted thing—the being truly gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus. Then and there, as nohow else and nowhere else, His presence is vouchsafed; this character or specific mode of His presence being, I thoroughly believe, dependent upon the one special thing, the being gathered unto His Name, as His own word of promise had declared.

Surely our hearts ought to be more affected and impressed, not only with the gravity of, but with the peculiar blessedness attaching to, these things in the estimation of Christ. Were that so, the order of the house of God and the principles of the body of Christ would be more attentively studied and carefully observed. Thus also would the exercised heart scrupulously avoid all complicity with the tenets and with the practices of those who, intentionally or unintentionally, are undermining the ground of the Church of God.—Affectionately yours, W. R.

ONE DAY, I saw a man sitting at table, with his napkin under his chin, enjoying his dinner, and, overhearing an observation that I made about a sinner, he said, "I never had a spiritual sensation in my life, and I do not believe there is anything spiritual in this world." If I had been standing near a sty, and a pig had made that observation, I should not have contradicted; nor did I contradict this man, for I thought he spoke the truth, and quite believed that every spiritual sensation was a stranger to him. So when some men say, "I perceive no sweetness in Christ, and therefore there is none," I wish they would draw the more correct inference, Therefore I have not that taste which would enable me to appreciate His sweetness. The soul dead in trespasses and sin has no appetite for Christ.

"THE REMNANT."—That faithful band of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, who in the last days—the days of the nation's complete apostasy—will adhere to the Lord and to the truth and promises of His covenant, and who, therefore, in the time of the divine judgments upon their nation because of the full transgression, will be preserved and finally become the nucleus of the accepted, blest, and worshipping nation in the days of the kingdom.—See Is. i. 9; x. 21, 22; xi. 11; Ez. xiv. 22; Joel ii. 32; Amos v. 15; Mic. ii. 12; iv. 7; Zeph. iii. 12, 13; Zech. viii. 12; xiv. 8, 9; Rom. ix. 7; xi. 5.

OLD MASTER DYER speaks of locking up his heart by prayer first thing in the morning and giving Christ the key. I am afraid some do the opposite. They give the devil the key, and hope he will be honest enough not to rob them.

IN A CERTAIN SENSE Brooks was right when he said, "Praying will make you leave off sinning, or sinning will make you leave off praying." "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

IN THE IRISH CHANNEL a passenger asked a sailor if he would not like to visit a certain place of amusement. "I go, sir," said he, "as often as ever I like. I have a religion that lets me go as often as I think proper." "How is that?" was the next enquiry. "Because I *never like to go at all*," was the conclusive reply.

A SINGLE WORD, spoken in the strength of God, will effect far more than ten thousand words uttered in the power of mere reasoning or eloquence, or even earnestness.—*Spurgeon*.

IT IS A SUGGESTIVE FACT that the rainbow is never seen except in a cloud from which the rain is at the same time falling. So if the shower reminds us of the *flood*, the bow in the cloud reminds us of the *covenant*.

"PURE RELIGION and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James i. 27). This is not the secret part of religion. Of that we read elsewhere. But this is the very dress that true religion puts on; charitably caring for the most destitute of our fellow creatures, and holy walking, that we be not as the men of the world are.

NEW CREATION.—Only He that made all things can make all things new. There is as much, and a great deal more, to be wrought upon and in you to make you a Christian, as has been wrought upon you to make you a man. However godly your father, and however gracious your mother, all that is born of the flesh is flesh.

THE MORE you know of *Christ* the more you wish to know, and the more you taste of Him the sweeter He becomes, till in heaven the sweetness will be in the highest degree intensified. How precious, then, and how delightful will He be to us throughout eternity! And so, also, will be *His word*. How often, then, will the glorified saints lift up their hands and exclaim, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Then will heaven be to us as a wood, like that of Jonathan, which dripped with honey, and every word which God spake to us here shall be remembered with matchless sweetness.

FOR EVERY SINGLE LETTER in the Bible it is estimated that there are 1,250 heathens who are totally without any knowledge of God as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And even in that professedly Christian country, France, out of 35 millions nominally Roman Catholic, it is believed that 30 millions are living in utter indifference to even any semblance or form of religion.

"THE TRUTH" (1 Tim. ii. 15).—It stands like a pillar; it supports like a column; it ascends like a tower; it adorns like a monument; it illuminates like a Pharos (lighthouse).

"PAST TEMPTATION."—A friend of mine one morning met a deacon whom up to that time he had held in the highest respect. "I want you," said he, "to do me a good turn." He replied, "I'm sure I will if it is at all reasonable." "I want you to lend me a hundred pounds," said the deacon. "You can trust me, you know; I am perfectly safe. I am not like a young man, who may be led into doing wrong. I have been in the ways of the Lord for so many years, and have had so much experience, that I am past temptation." "Past temptation!" The words staggered my friend, who exclaimed, "Past temptation! I would not lend you a sixpence." "Why not?" "Because," said the other, "you say you are past temptation! I could have no confidence in a man who has such confidence in himself." The boaster had seriously compromised himself in pecuniary matters, and was in prison within a month of that time.—*Spurgeon*.

DO NOT ANSWER them that slander you. If an ass kicked you, would you kick the ass? If a fool brings a charge against you, do not reply to him. Let him rail on; God will vindicate you. He that wrestles with a sweep will soon be as black as he. A man may perform an action which will never be understood while he lives: the true man of God lives not for time but for eternity. He says, "I do not care if it takes 500 years for the righteousness of my action to be understood. It will not make it more righteous when that is seen, nor is it any less righteous while unseen. What have I to do with men? I serve the living God, and by-and-by 'the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of the Father.'"

THEY RUN fastest home who most fear the storm; hence "Blessed is the man that feareth always." They carry most of Christ who have least of self; hence the richness of spiritual poverty.

"THE WAY OF THE WICKED He turneth upside down." Joseph's case is a specimen. His brethren sell him into Egypt. He becomes a prince there, and there they bow down before him! Mordecai's case is another. Haman will have him hanged. He has the gallows ready, but Haman gets hanged on his own gallows!

PSALM XXXVII. 31.—The best thing in the best place with the best results. The divine blessing is the secret of happiness; the divine displeasure the essence of misery.

THERE IS NONE so greedy after Christ as the man who has had most of Him. Paul had been a believer at least fifteen years, and yet he said this was his ambition, "That I may know Him" (Phil. iii. 10).

"MY SUNDAY school teacher used to say, 'I have prayed too much for my class for one of them to be lost.' A thoughtless girl was I at the time, and remember wondering she should be so self-confident, as I thought; but she was speaking the language of faith. She did not live to see it, but I did—the whole of the sixteen girls were brought to Christ!"

LOATHSOME AS SIN IS, I am almost ready to agree with Augustine when, speaking of the fall, he said, "*O, beata culpa!*"—Oh, happy fault—because it opened such room for redeeming love and divine compassion. We can only magnify the depth of the wisdom, and the height of the grace, and the breadth of the love of God, in the way in which eternal mercy overcame that evil which was, doubtless, permitted for that very end.—*Spurgeon*.

A HOME MISSIONARY describes a visit he paid to a servant girl suffering in a hospital from typhus fever. On the day after her admission, there came out spots upon her body till it became covered with putrescence. She was blind, and heard with difficulty. "Though I can't see you," she said, "I know your voice. You conducted family prayer one night where I was last a servant. How kind of you to come and see me, shut out as I am from every one else"—for she was placed in a little outer ward so as not to infect other patients. "I spoke to her," the missionary said, "of the greater, yea, the infinite kindness of Him who came down from heaven not merely to *risk* His life, but to *give* it a ransom for sinners. This seemed to melt her heart, and the warm tears welled from her poor, sad eyes. In short, through that terrible affliction God met her in His grace, and brought her to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as her Saviour." He records, too, that he came across a man who said he had been all his life *praying for mercy*. I told him God justifies the ungodly by faith, and he then said he had all along been *living in unbelief*.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD should be the delight of His people. God anywhere and everywhere is blessed for ever, but God upon His throne should make His saints shout their hallelujahs with all their heart.

"MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST" (2 Pet. i. 21).—The word means "carried." Our English word "rapt," which means taken out of oneself, is more nearly the term employed. In some cases the seizure appears to have been very sudden, as that of Isaiah in 2 Kings xx. 4. He was stopped on his way to the "middle court," and turned round with a message from God to Hezekiah. Mary's, Zechariah's and Simeon's songs, together with Elizabeth's salutation, are also examples; no mention being made of any preparation for their utterance, thus they could say, "Thus saith the Lord."

"WHO CROWNETH THEE with loving kindness and tender mercies" (Psalm ciii. 4). As His saints, we ought to wear the halo of the sunshine of God's tender mercies like a crown upon our brows all the day long!

SATAN'S CRAFT is seen in tempting men to sin, and then in tempting them to despair because of their sins.

"DELIGHT THYSELF also in the Lord." Make Him the joy and rejoicing of thy spirit. Bad men delight in carnal objects. Do not envy them if they be allowed to take their fill in such vanities. Look thou to thy better delight, and fill thyself with thy sublimer portion. In a certain sense imitate the wicked. They delight in their portion; take care to delight in yours, and so far from envying you will then pity them. There is no room for fretting if we remember that God, that Christ, is ours, but there is every incentive to sacred enjoyment of the most elevated and ecstatic kind. Every name, attribute, word, or deed of His should be delightful to us, and in meditating thereon our souls should be as glad as is the epicure who feeds delicately, with a profound relish for his dainties. Sooner would we hunger with John than feast with Herod; better feed on scant fare with the prophets in Obadiah's cave than riot with the priests of Baal. Content finds *multum in parvo*, while for a wicked heart the whole world is too little. Even in our fall, God is pitiful. Where grace does not keep from going down, it shall save from keeping down. Job had double wealth at last. Joseph reigned over Egypt. Jonah came, as also did Paul, safe to land. Not because the saints are strong, or wise, or meritorious do they rise after every fall, but because "God is for us." And not only is it that the righteous are cared for and kept, but we read, "And his seed is blessed." Where a godly man's children are not godly there must have been parental neglect, or some other guilty cause. The friend of the parents is the friend of the family! The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac and of Jacob.—*Spurgeon*.

"SCRIPTURE."—The word simply means *writing*, and is used only once (Dan. x. 21) in the Old Testament, but often in the New. The Hebrew for writing signifies to engrave, paint, draw, describe. In 2 Tim. iii. 15, Paul speaks of the Scriptures, but uses a different word, meaning "sacred letters." *Scripture* is thus almost an equivalent for "literature." "How knoweth this man letters?" *i.e.*, sacred literature. A foundation truth is that things were confessedly committed to writing by *divine command*. In Exodus xvii. 14 we get the first order to write. A book of memorial was then begun, or was probably begun before this time, the more correct translation being "in the book." God caused the Scriptures to be written because of the exceeding importance of what was revealed. Everything must be recorded in black and white. The history of 2,000 years is comprised in Genesis, while the four following books relate only to the events of one man's lifetime. Not a single passage of the Old Testament has any doubt thrown upon it in the New. The Old Testament is taken by the apostles as a court of final appeal, and from it they perpetually argued that Jesus was the Christ. Three things may be noted. (1) *A wonderful unity in diversity*. The authors were all working on a plan, though not fully known to themselves. (2) *A wonderful spiritual energy*. They were living oracles. (3) *A wonderful adaptation*. They fit everybody, be he child or old man, philosopher, Englishman or Kaffir!

ALL THROUGH THE BIBLE the promise is not of freedom from trouble, but of blessing and peace in the midst of it.

BRIGHT LIGHTS FOR DARK DAYS.

MALACHI AND JUDE.

GOD never leaves His saints to grope their own way in dark and evil times, but ever provides suitable light and encouragement. Everything committed to man becomes a failure; and such is his evil nature that the higher the divine privileges and truth committed to him, the greater and more profound the corruption and departure. In such cases the resource for saints is in humility to confess their part in the general ruin, and to be cast on the Giver of all spiritual blessing.

There are many interesting points of similarity between these two communications, God's closing message to Israel by Malachi and one of the latest letters to the professing Church by Jude. Both draw a darksome picture of apostasy and corruption; both allude to the coming of the Lord in its judicial aspect; both speak of the love of God in its purposes and unchanging character. Both, too, can tell of a little faithful company in the midst of general defection, and present to the gaze of such a bright and glorious prospect!

Malachi speaks to God's earthly people, but like most prophetic writings his message has a threefold application. It had a voice for Israel in the prophet's own day, and especially to the priests of Jehovah. There are, however, passages which can only meet their fulfilment in a day yet future in the history of that people, hence it has a future application. There is also its present application, conveying moral lessons and divine principles for the guidance of God's saints in these days. A few points let us then look at, which may be helpful to us and others who realise that these days are dark and evil.

It is encouraging, when confronted with terrible and abounding evil, in those who profess to be God's servants and people, to find that it has not taken

Him by surprise, but that He has foreseen it. Malachi's message is principally addressed to the priests, the house of Levi, who aptly prefigure God's people in this dispensation, who, as Peter tells us, are a "royal priesthood." So it is the priests who are displaying such terrible departure from and indifference to Jehovah.

First, notice, they are questioners. "Wherein hast Thou loved us? Wherein have we despised Thy name? Wherein have we polluted Thee? Wherein have we wearied Him? Wherein shall we return? Wherein have we robbed Thee? Wherein have we spoken against Thee?" Alas! what an exhibition of deadness of conscience as to their moral condition before God! what self-justification! what an absence of all thought of Jehovah's claims! But let anyone in these days of loud profession and religious zeal bear witness to the Church's departure from God and indifference to His claims, and there will be a perfect chorus of challenges raised, such as the above.

Again, they are despisers. "The table of the Lord is contemptible," they said; so that offering the blind and the lame and sick was accounted no evil. "The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible." "Ye say also, Behold what a weariness is it! and ye have scoffed at it, saith the Lord of Hosts." "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts."

What terrible self-occupation is here betrayed, and what utter indifference to the claims of Jehovah is manifested by those who occupied the position of priests of Jehovah, and, as such, should have been the upholders of the divine glory! Need we look far to find the parallels to this in our days? Nay, it behoves us to look very close home, for we may discover to our shame that we, too, are manifesting something of this spirit. But the picture grows yet

darker! Those sons of Levi who should have observed Jehovah's word and kept His covenant, who should have taught Jacob God's covenant and Israel His law (Deut. xxxiii. 9, 10), had turned aside out of the way, had "caused many to stumble at the law," and had "corrupted the covenant of Levi." So perverse, indeed, had their hearts become that they were ready to say what they knew to be false: "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighted in them." And again, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. ii. 17; iii. 15).

But this does not go on unchecked. Being an earthly people, a present retribution in the cursing of earthly blessings they would experience, and the coming of Him who is a God of judgment is foretold; who should be as a refiner's fire and a swift witness against all the wrong-doers, for He had taken knowledge of it all.

Jehovah's heart yearned over true ones in Israel in those days, as He will over the faithful remnant in a day yet to come, and even as He does over those who think upon His name in these days of man's exaltation. So He has a message for such, and sends it to them by the hand of Malachi, addressed to the whole house of Israel. What is its burden? "*I have loved you*, saith the Lord." Oh! how gracious, how wonderful! What a comfort to the trembling saint who feared the Name of Jehovah in the midst of general apathy or antagonism! But yet more, it is *sovereign* love, and as such unchangeable and not dependent on what its objects may be. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob," and there is no alteration in His purpose, for Edom's heritage is laid waste for ever. What a resting place is Jehovah's sovereign love, which is superior to all that man is or can be. So amid the wreck of all that professed to be for God on earth,

the contrite ones are assured by Him "I am the Lord, *I change not* ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed " (iii. 6).

It was but a small portion of Judah—Benjamin and Levi—that was in the land when this prophetic message was sent, but there was a re-assuring, comforting thought for those who realised their feebleness, that Jehovah embraced *all Israel* in His thoughts and purposes. In like manner, a servant of His at a later date could speak of "our twelve tribes" embracing in *his* thoughts nothing less than the whole object of God's counsels and love. Such, too, is the privilege of those who, in these days, "fear the Lord" in the midst of wide-spread departure ; to embrace in their thoughts, affections, and prayers the whole Church of God. And this preserves from narrowness, bigotry, self-righteousness, and despondency. In the dark days of Malachi there were those "that feared the Lord." Probably, their names were not so well known in Israel as many others ; their deeds were not so notable, and they were a despised company in the day when the proud were "esteemed happy" and those that worked wickedness were set up. But it is written of them that they "spake often one to another." Mutual help, encouragement, and fellowship they sought, and to be fellow-helpers of one another's faith in a dark and evil day.

If this were seen in Malachi's time, how much more so will it be in that future day, to which his prophesy looks on, when the proud "man of sin" shall be exalted and that "wicked one" set up, and the godly remnant shall meet together where they can to strengthen one another in the hour of persecution and oppression. And of what do they speak ? Surely it is of their faithful, loving Lord, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and it is written of these that they "thought upon His Name." So it is not the ruin around, nor their own feebleness or sorrows, but the unchangeable Lord that occupies

their hearts and tongues, and in this surely they teach us a lesson we do well to lay to heart.

What divine encouragement is next afforded for these unknown or down-trodden, feeble ones! Man may be ignorant of their existence, or, if aware of it, only find in them an object on which to wreak his enmity and hatred of God. But to the eternal confusion of the proud ones of earth and to the lasting joy and comfort of those who "fear the Lord," this astounding and assuring fact is recorded: "the Lord hearkened and heard." Think of it, you tried saints; think of it, you scattered twos and threes, breaking bread from house to house in order to keep a good conscience, meeting for mutual edification, speaking together of Him: the Lord who dwelleth in the midst of the celestial myriads, harping upon their harps and chanting the eternal anthem; the Lord who has the government of the whole universe upon His shoulder—He "hearkened and heard."

Jehovah listened as two or three on earth who "feared Him" were holding intercourse about Him, in whispers and hushed notes of praise, it may be, for fear earth's tyrants should spy out their liberty and seek to crush them. Not only does Jehovah stoop to listen, but He treasures up that which He hears—"a book of remembrance was written before Him." How gracious! how encouraging!

When those who have held their heads high amongst their fellows are no more, and forgotten amongst men, those who "thought upon the Name of the Lord" shall still have their memorial before Jehovah; His never forgotten ones! In the "day that cometh, that shall burn as an oven, when all the proud and all that work wickedness shall be stubble," then these despised ones shall be Jehovah's "special treasure."

What a sweet thought! what a real joy to the heart that sets store by what the Lord thinks! Special wisdom and discernment, too, is given to these simple

ones to "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." How needful this when Satan's counterfeits and lies abound on every hand.

Through fiery trials and many difficulties the pathway of these saints had lain, but the Lord at last brings them out into a large place. Purging from His kingdom all that offend, leaving the wicked "neither root nor branch," then to those that "fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings," and "ye shall go forth and gambol as calves of the stall, and ye shall tread down the wicked : for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts" (iv. 2, 3).

Are not these promises of Jehovah "bright lights" indeed for the godly in Israel in a day of declension and apostasy? Indeed they are; words of unspeakable comfort, encouragement, and guidance! Although we, through God's grace, belong to the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, whose hopes are heavenly; yet, while still in the place of profession here on earth, how much of this prophetic message is of comfort and divine encouragement for us!

Beloved fellow saints, let us never allow our hearts to get so occupied with the evil and ruin as to lose sight in any measure of that which remains, that which is the burden of Jehovah's message to Israel by Malachi:—

"I HAVE LOVED YOU, SAITH THE LORD" (i. 2).

"Love that no tongue can teach,
Love that no thought can reach;
No love like His!
God is its blessed source,
Death ne'er can stop its course,
Nothing can stay its force;
Matchless it is!"

H. S. A.

“WE DO NOT WISH TO BE UNCLOTHED,
BUT CLOTHED, THAT WHAT IS MOR-
TAL MAY BE SWALLOWED UP BY
LIFE.”—2 *Cor.* v. 4.

THE blessed and animating hope of the Lord's return for His saints is so definitely marked in scripture, in varied and striking ways, that its super-eminent importance cannot for a moment be contested by any one who is truly subject to the word. With it is bound up the fulfilment of God's eternal purposes for the glory of Christ and of those who are His at His coming. And by it, as an object before the saints and as a motive, the Holy Ghost seeks to make good to our souls all the present ways of God—detaching our hearts from every un-Christ-like thing, and connecting our affections with Himself in ever-increasing conformity to His own image, till He come. No object could be more blessed, as an object, than this consummation in glory then, and no motive, as a motive, more powerful in swaying the affections and the life now. It eclipses, by its unique blessedness to the heart, every other desire that the revelation of the glory has formed in the soul of the saint, and it equally transcends in its present spiritual power every other means of practical sanctification to God.

This being established in our souls, there is little difficulty in apprehending why the Spirit of God has given such limited instruction upon the state of the disembodied spirit of the believer.

But let us look into the subject. Man in innocence was in his full perfection and maturity as a creature, body, soul, and spirit, in an earthly paradise. Man in glory will be equally in the perfection and maturity of his new order of being, body, soul, and spirit, in the paradise of God. Of the former of these, Adam had experience as the first man, but only for a brief moment; of the latter, the second Man is now the ever-living witness, the glorified One for eternity!

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These two things are normal states or conditions according to God, and everything else abnormal. Man's state as a sinner in the world, alive in the body, is an anomaly ; and equally so, if he have died, that he is not yet in the lake of fire. On the other hand, the saint alive in the body, in a world like this, is an anomaly ; and equally so, if he have fallen asleep, that he is not yet in the Father's house.

Body, soul, and spirit in the lake of fire is no anomaly to the sinner who has perished in his sins, or to God, who, in holy horror and judgment of them, has cast him therein. Solemn thought !—the anomaly ends there ! The rationalist and the sceptic may reason as they will that an eternal hell is an anomaly and a blot in the ways of God ; the truth is that the anomaly ends where they say it begins. And so for us, beloved reader, the anomaly of divine life as now exhibited where the curse prevails, and that other anomaly of unclothed spirits not yet clothed upon, these alike end in the glory which comes to us with the coming of Christ, and in the crowning blessedness of the Father's house.

Presuming that Adam and Eve became believers, *they only* of the human family will when in eternity have passed through all these four states or conditions of blessing : (1), innocent beings, in Eden ; (2), believers, in the world ; (3), unclothed spirits, with Christ ; (4), glorified saints, with the Father. None but our first parents have passed through the first ; many since then have passed from the second into the third, and are waiting for the fourth ; while we who are now in the second are looking for the fourth, but may or may not reach it through the third. We know, however, that some will *not*—even those who will be remaining alive when the Lord comes, and who will undergo that instantaneous change from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly, which will translate them from the second to the fourth, in the same moment, and by the same resurrection power

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and sovereign grace as will lift the sleeping saints from their graves (re-uniting the soul and spirit with the body), the latter thus passing from the third to the fourth, or final, perfect and eternally-glorified condition of the believer. For this, our true and proper hope, we wait and we watch, having the eye now filled with the beauty of those cheering rays which reach us from “the bright and the morning Star,” passing through the night’s long vigil as “they that watch for the morning.”

When this is fully understood, no surprise will be felt at the Holy Ghost’s measure of silence upon the subject of the condition of the saint’s soul and spirit after leaving the body ; for clearly that condition is what may be termed abnormal. Moreover, the uniform design of the Holy Ghost since Pentecost being to foster and encourage in the soul, as a cardinal element in Christianity, a salutary sense of the proximity of the Lord’s coming to take to Himself all those who are His, it would have fatally marred the desired effect had more than passing reference been made to the disembodied state. Be it noted, therefore, that it forms no subject of special teaching by the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh, nor by the Holy Ghost since He was glorified ; but what we gather is of an incidental character, yet of precious and inestimable value. In whatever is said, there is everything to sustain and encourage the hearts of those saints who appear to be about to leave the body, and everything to cheer and comfort those who are, or are shortly to become, bereaved mourners, refusing every consolation that is not drawn from purely divine springs.

The apostles had looked for the Lord to return in their lifetime, and when they left the body, transmitted the same sublime hope to those who came after. Thus this precious heirloom has continued to cheer, more or less, the hearts of fifty or sixty successive generations of saints, carrying its benignant and sanctifying effect all along its course to these last days,

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culminating in the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom," which went forth some half-century ago, re-awakening in the hearts of the saints what is due to the Person of Christ, and then, necessarily, the transcending blessedness of His return to receive His heavenly ones to Himself.

But as each succeeding generation has augmented from its ranks the imposing company of those who have died in the Lord, there cannot but be a deepening interest in their present state, and it becomes us, while refusing all the sentimentalities and vapid conceptions of men's minds, to accept with thankfulness whatever may be found in, or soberly inferred from, the word of God. Two reasons have already been adduced, and others may possibly occur to the reader, why so little direct teaching has been given us on this subject—first, the anomalous character of the condition in question; and, second, the nearness of the Lord's coming, as the commanding thought of the Spirit of God, forbidding any such diversion to this subordinate and temporary state as would be calculated to weaken the hold of the soul upon its true and proper hope—the greater and more magnificent thing, glory together with Christ!

There are two errors, opposite in their character, which may here be fittingly noted: one is, that on the death of the believer the spirit sleeps until the resurrection morning; the other, that the spirit passes into glory at once, as Toplady sang,

"More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven;"

or, as our Wesleyan brethren say, "Sudden death, sudden glory." But Scripture never speaks of spirits sleeping, nor of spirits glorified. The sleep of the saint is the sleep of the body in the grave, and the glorified saint consists of a glorified body re-united to the soul and spirit when the Lord comes to raise the dust, or change the living bodies, of His redeemed ones.

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Meanwhile Scripture affords more than sufficient evidence that the disembodied spirit is by no means in a state of torpor, apathy, or oblivion. It is simply monstrous to maintain, in the teeth of the Lord's word to the thief, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise:” that when relieved of this “cumbrous clay,” and our ransomed spirits with Christ, they will be oblivious of the untold blessedness of being in that new and singular way present with Him. Were it so, it were altogether preferable to abide in this scene; but how, then, could Paul have said, to depart and to be with Christ is ever-so-much better than even a life on earth which “is Christ”? No, on the contrary, the spirit will be in a state of blessedness, far, very far, transcending our present blessing, and, if not in that rapturous bliss which belongs to glory, will be in the happy serenity and profound quietude of an eternally-unruffled peace, having, above all, the sweetness and the gladness of the Lord's own presence without a distraction from within or without. Here we are absent from the Lord, there we shall be present with Him. Here at home in the body, there at home with the Lord. Here our spirits enjoy communion with Him, despite the character of this sinful scene and the poor sinful bodies in which we tabernacle—how much more in that secure retreat where such communion will flow on without let, in unimpeded and unbroken current. Every bit of knowledge of Himself gained here, every bit of likeness to Him acquired in the scene of His refusal (the hindering body having been put off), will be qualification for enjoying with enhanced susceptibility to every spiritual emotion, and therefore more blessedly than before—Himself and the joys and secrets of His loving heart. Oh, what blessed confidences are shared, and what bosom-joys are found, in the unclouded presence of our adorable Lord and Christ, when every hurtful, hindering thing, as to ourselves and our surroundings, has been swept away for ever!

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How graphically does the apostle speak of his own estimate of the dead-weight the body imposes, when he says that in our earthly tabernacle we groan, being burdened (2 Cor. v.); this is the language in which the tell-tale spirit speaks of the encumbrance which we carry about in earth's dense atmosphere; how it longs, too, to be invested with its house from heaven when mortality shall be swallowed up of life! For this there was ardour of desire—ardently desiring to have put on, or clothed ourselves with, our house which is from heaven. (The English reader may possibly demur to the apparent clashing of the two different figurative thoughts concerning the body, it being here regarded at the same time as a suit of apparel we wear, and as a house we occupy; but when it is observed that the expression used in the first verse denotes that our present bodies are only temporary dwellings, tabernacles, or tents, and when it is known that the camel's-hair cloth of Cilicia of which tents were made was often used also for clothing, the incongruity disappears). But between these two states, the groaning, burdened one, and that of being invested with the glorified body, is the disembodied or unclothed state, concerning which the apostle says, "We do not wish" for it. Reflecting that with this state is connected blessing to the saint, rather than glory to Christ, and that every demonstration of His victory, and its triumphant results to Him and to us waits for the still future day of glory, we see how fittingly he centres his desire upon the investing of the spirit with its glorified body, when, and not till when, "mortality shall be swallowed up of life!"

Yet, though he speaks so clearly as to this, he could not lose sight of the fact that so long as we are present in the body we are absent from the Lord; nor does he suppress the deep feeling of his heart, that rather would he be absent from the body and present with the Lord. That this was his deliberate judgment is conclusive from what he writes to the Philip-

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pains, that, though living was to him expressed by one word—“Christ”—yet, nevertheless, to die was *gain*; and blessed as it was to live to Him and for Him, engaged in that wonderful service with which he was entrusted, and which was beyond compare, yet to depart and to be with Christ was, as to himself, far, “very far, better.” But, being put to the test (as to continuing or departing), he gives the opposite solution to his case, for his devotedness and his self-denial were such that his choice was governed by what was due to the interests of Christ and the beloved saints, rather than by any interest of his own.

And, if to represent and serve Christ in this world in a way suited to His own heart be indeed the common, but surpassingly wonderful, dignity and privilege of every saint of God, it is clear that where this service is really fulfilled, it is gain to Christ that it should be continued, and every true-hearted, self-denying one may well say, “Be it mine to represent and serve Him here a little while longer, and more efficiently, even until He come.” But if the interests of the saint alone be considered, the conclusion is inevitable, it is very far better to be with Him!

And so, one by one, day after day, from Abel downward, has He augmented the vast company of His sleeping saints, taking their emancipated spirits into the retirement of that serene enclosure where (1) they participate in the unwonted blessedness of His uninterrupted, unclouded presence; where (2) the highest joy which our spirits have ever yet experienced—their enjoying Himself, is their unbroken, blest employ; and where (3) the brightest anticipation that ever gladdened our hearts here—that of the rapture of our glorified bodies into the presence of the Lord on high—continues to be their blessed hope, but heightened and enhanced a thousandfold. Let the soul select the brightest moment in its history, yet “absent from the body, present with the Lord” will outstrip its blessedness; let the saint recall his

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richest, sweetest experience of communion with the Lord, or with His saints, yet his new experience of the presence-joys of Christ will transcend it supremely !

Surely all this is full of sweetest solace, consolation, and cheer of heart for departing saints, as well as for any around who are in trembling anticipation of the poignant sorrows of bereavement. The coming of the Lord is the one bright pole-star in faith's horizon, towards which, as the only luminous point, every feeling of the heart should invariably converge. The departing one is not entitled to say, "You will meet me *where I am going*," for that may never be, but rather, we shall meet in the clouds, and together be welcomed by the Lord Himself in the air. The bereaved one is not entitled to draw his comfort, as David in his day fittingly did, from the reflection, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," but in the blessed apprehension of what "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel," should find his comfort rather in this, that "if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also who have been put to sleep by Jesus will God bring with Him." Sweet, sweet thought ! When God brings the Lord Jesus into the air, He will also bring us together to meet Him there, our bodies of humiliation transformed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, "into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has, even to subdue all things to Himself." "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." It is that *unique* comfort which the Holy Ghost ministers from the heart of our Father and our God !

"Lord, haste that day of cloudless ray,
That prospect bright, unfailing,
When God shall shine in light divine,
In glory never-fading !"

THE SECRET OF TRUE SERVICE.

Luke viii. 1-3.

THE Lord, who had sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, and there received the homage of a certain woman, much to the surprise of Simon, His host, shortly afterwards resumed His service of preaching. He had preached in the synagogues of Galilee (iv. 44), after that memorable Sabbath day described by both Mark (i. 21-34) and his brother evangelist, Luke (iv. 31-41). He now itinerated, not confining Himself, it would seem, to synagogues ; for He went from city to city, and from village to village. Untiring was He in service, seeking in small as well as in large places the welfare of God's ancient people. He preached, we are told. What grace on His part ! And, what none had done before Him, He announced the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

As yet, He alone was the preacher, since John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod. Soon, however, twelve would go forth commissioned by Him (ix. 1), and so attract by their ministry attention to their Master, that even the guilty king's conscience would become aroused, and a desire to see the Lord be engendered in his heart. Subsequently seventy others were to appear on the scene, the messengers likewise of the Lord Jesus, to be sent before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come (x. 1). The number of preachers thus swelled, yet would they be in no manner substitutes for Him. His labours, His service, they could not supersede (Matt. xi. 1).

In Luke vi. 12-16, we learn that He had called the twelve to be with Him ; and Mark, in the parallel passage in his gospel (iii. 13-19), tells us He had all along intended to send them out to preach. But, as we learn from Luke, they were still with Him, for their education, as we might call it, for the service of

preaching, was not yet completed. From city, then, to city, and from village to village, the Lord went, and the apostles with Him. All could see that He was not alone. A company, chiefly Galileans, was always with Him—the twelve whom He had chosen. But others were in His train, and passed along with Him wherever He went. These had received no specific call, like that of the twelve—nor any commission such as that which subsequently the seventy disciples could boast of. These last went before His face. Those of whom we speak followed in His steps—a band of faithful, devoted women, the number of which, and the names of most, we shall never know on earth. They followed to minister to Him of their substance, and to the apostles as well.

Were these out of their place? Were they embarking on a service not suited to their sex? Far from it, for in personal service women are most at home. Would any challenge them for their commission thus to go about? They could produce none. No word of command had they heard, saying, "Follow Me." Yet they followed, and that persistently. Nor were they rebuffed. They ministered. They were not repelled. The Lord accepted their service, and the twelve apostles profited daily by it.

Women of various stations in life they appear to have been. Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, must have had, we suppose, some social position; and some at least, if not all, were women of means; so that they could minister to the temporal necessities of the Lord. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others, writes Luke, formed that company, delighting thus to serve. To those mentioned by name we may probably add Mary the mother of James the less, and Salome, the Virgin's sister (Mark xv. 40, 41).

Itinerant preaching was very likely a new thing. Certainly the theme of it was new, though welcome. Good news it was that the Lord proclaimed—good

news of the coming kingdom. New, too, must it have been in the eyes of most, if not of all, to see the Lord followed by such a company. And why was it? Was it love of notoriety that prompted them? Was it a forwardness of character, which impels its possessors to make themselves prominent at the expense of womanly feeling and modesty, that displayed itself in the members of this band? No. Other motives swayed them; other feelings actuated them; and the evangelist explains it all to us in a single clause of a verse, "They had been healed of evil spirits and of infirmities" (Luke viii. 2). They had received from Christ, so they would give to Christ.

Healed each one, grateful indeed for their different cures, all were united in this, that personal service to their Deliverer became them, and they would render it. The secret of their willing service was that they were, and they would acknowledge it, illustrations of divine power and of divine compassion. They served not to get healing, but because they were healed. They served because they knew that they were healed. They served because they had been touched by the favour individually bestowed on them, and the Lord accepted their ministrations, for they proceeded from grateful hearts. Toilsome at times might be the journey, steep too might be the ascent often on the road, yet surely on the wings of love they went, delighting in opportunities to manifest their thankfulness for the favours they had each received. The secret of their service was just this, that they were subjects of divine mercy and favour. This is the secret of true service still.

Would any ask, How can I serve? What shall I do? No one, we may surely believe, told these women what they should do. They saw the need. They recognised the opportunity. They went forward at once in that which lay within their power. A willing mind, a grateful heart will surely not be long without discovering something that it can

do. The Maries of the New Testament evidently found no difficulty as to that. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses, found scope for their energies in ministering to the Lord. Mary, the mother of John Mark, made use of her house for Christians to meet in for prayer (Acts xii. 12). Mary of Bethany anointed the Lord, and He interpreted it as for His burial (John xii.). Another of the same name bestowed much labour on Paul (Rom. xvi. 6). Then the Gaius—the one at Corinth and the other in Asia Minor—found service in showing hospitality to labourers in the Word, &c. (Rom. xvi. 23; 3 John 5, 6); and Phœbe, the deaconess of the church at Cenchreæ, succoured many, and Paul also (Rom. xvi. 2). Dorcas made garments for the poor (Acts ix. 36); and that humble man, Onesiphorus (2 Tim. i. 16-18), sought out Paul *diligently* in Rome, was not ashamed of his chain, and by his visits often refreshed the heart of the great apostle. All in Asia had turned from Paul, not caring to be identified with the prisoner in Rome. Onesiphorus then *diligently* sought him out. Grateful was Paul for his visits. He never forgot them. And we are sure that One on high was not unmindful of them. Service done to Paul was service done to Himself, and Onesiphorus will be remembered for it in a coming day, as his family doubtless reaped blessed consequences on account of it in the past.

Would any one say, Can such an one as I serve? Can I be a fitted instrument for work? Others may be who have lived better lives, and not wasted for long their energies, or bitterly opposed God's truth. From a block of marble, cast aside as useless, Michael Angelo carved his famous statue of David. From the most unlikely subjects God can fashion willing instruments. Think of that woman in the Pharisee's house, who was allowed to wash the Lord's feet with her tears and to wipe them with the hairs of her head. Simon the Pharisee's neglect of courtesy should be repaired, and that woman should be allowed the honour of

repairing it. She got the opportunity—she took it, and the Lord graciously allowed it, and let all hear from His lips that announcement to her, Thy sins are forgiven. Mary of Bethany anointed Him for His burial. This woman washed His feet, for which Simon should have provided.

God's ways are not as our ways. Think, too, of the Gadarene demoniac, proclaiming in Decapolis the service to him of his Deliverer. The Lord driven away, His praises were proclaimed, and His healing power declared by the one who had experienced it. Throughout Decapolis it should be told what had taken place at Gadara, and the one formerly the terror of his neighbours went about to tell of the deliverance he had received.

Think, too, of Saul the persecutor being turned into Paul the preacher. Satanic power had possessed the former, a legion of demons having tyrannised over him. Exceedingly mad against Christians had Paul been, yet he was a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name before Gentiles, kings, and the people of Israel. These were some whose services were accepted, and, as with others, they served *because they had received*. The woman had shared in divine grace, being forgiven much; the demoniac had shared in divine delivering power; and the persecutor had obtained mercy at the hands of Him against whom he had sinned. It is the subjects of divine mercy, and who are thankful for it, that become fitting servants of the Lord Jesus Christ now, and His servants for ever (Rev. xxii. 3).

C. E. S.

OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM are all things:—

All truth is God's, as He is true,
Whate'er ye know He shows it you!
So let our knowledge, as it grows,
Draw us to Him more near and close.

WHAT ROMISH PRIESTS TEACH THEIR PEOPLE ABOUT PROTESTANTS.

THE great majority of Christians speak very leniently about the terrible apostacy of Romish idolatry.

It will be a salutary exercise for those who are so exceedingly "charitable" (as they mistakenly call it) towards Romanism, to read what Romish priests teach their people about *them*.

I translate from a book by a Jesuit priest and circulated in Italian and Spanish speaking countries to guard their people against Bible agents, missionaries, and evangelists. It is called a "Catechism of Protestantism, for the Use of the People." I make no attempt at arrangement, but translate just as I come across the passages, neither do I attempt any comment: such bare-faced lying needs none.

"The words *Protestant* and *Protestantism* are used to signify . . . the rebellion of certain proud men against Jesus Christ the founder of the Church." "What is the doctrine of Protestantism? To determine the doctrine or teaching of Protestantism is very difficult and almost impossible, for Protestants, it may be said, change their doctrine with every change of the moon. Their doctrine varies just as the brain of each Protestant varies; each one has his own doctrine, and very different from that of the rest. The worst of it is, their doctrine is absurd in theory and immoral in practice: a doctrine that highly offends the divine honour, degrades man, is highly dangerous to society and contrary to right feeling and shame. As these [doctrines] flatter the passions of men, especially pride, the lust of the flesh, and the love of money, they immediately had for disciples all those who wished to gratify their lusts. The majority of them were lovers of women, of rapine, and anxious for employments in the new sect. Nearly all had a bad end as did their masters: some of remorse, others

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of desperation, and others committed suicide, after a life more or less miserable. Luther, after having passed the last day of his life in the midst of a splendid banquet, between buffoonery and laughter, was attacked at night by apoplexy and died impenitent. Calvin died in despair, of a shameful disease, eaten up by worms, blaspheming God and calling on the devil. They have employed against Catholics executions and torments of such a nature that have, for their refined cruelty, left far behind even the Pagan emperors. The iron, the fire, torment, wheels of razors, lakes of ice, all, everything have served them against the Catholics. Such persecutions have never lacked in Protestant countries." "Is it communism and socialism, as you have just explained, that the authors and disseminators of Protestantism attempt to propagate?" "Precisely. This is the only object of their earnestness and anxiety. Protestantism is an empty word without sense, it is a denial of the true religion; and for this its propagators take so much pains to cover their criminal intentions, which are nothing else but the destruction of property, robbery, and to get hold of everything, to end finally with destroying each other. The English [propagators] are like the birds of prey that thrust themselves everywhere. Like the Pharisees who . . . but inwardly were proud as Lucifer, covetous as Judas, rapacious, impure, obscene, and envious, and for this the Saviour called them a race of vipers and whited sepulchres. Thus are all the heretics, and thus are these English propagators. As regards morality, the Protestants are, speaking generally, given up to dissoluteness, to thieving, to murder, and to suicide, as may be seen by their statistics. If it were possible to count all the disorders that are committed in Catholic countries, which contain more than 150,000,000 souls, their number, whatever it might be, would be very distant from what are committed in England alone." "There are other sectarians that title themselves propagators of the *Good*

News. Can you tell me who are these, and if it is difficult to recognise them?" "Not at all difficult, for although they seem to be the most astute, they are, nevertheless, those that are most easily recognised. Although they try to hide their perverse maxims, from their lips escape sufficient to know them; they are always blaspheming God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin, and the Saints. It is the most convenient religion in the world: because the Protestants have no fixed belief, no commandments, nor sacraments, nor abstinences, nor fasts. Protestantism has been invented to the taste of the passions and the corruption of the heart."

I might quote much more of the same wicked rubbish. But this is enough to show how the Jesuits can lie for the good of "the Church."—*From "Peru: an occasional record of Gospel labours,"* 1895.

GALATIANS V. 11-12.

"AND I, if I preach circumcision, why am I persecuted?" It will, in fact, be seen that the Jews were habitually the instigators of the persecution which the apostle suffered from the Gentiles. The spirit of Judaism, as has been the case in all ages, the religious spirit of the natural man, has been Satan's great instrument in his opposition to the gospel. If Christ could put His sanction on the flesh, the world would come to terms and be as religious as you please, and would value itself upon its devotion. But in that case it would not be the true Christ. Christ came, the witness that the natural man is lost, wicked, and without hope, dead in his trespasses and sins; that redemption is necessary, and a new man. He came in grace, but it was because man was incapable of being restored; and consequently, all must be pure grace, and emanate from God. If Christ would have

to do with the old man, all would be well ; but, I repeat, He would no longer be Christ. The world then, the old man, does not endure Him. But there is a conscience, there is a felt need of religion, there is the prestige of an ancient religion held from one's fathers ; true, perhaps, in its original foundations, although perverted. Thus the prince of the world will use carnal religion to excite the flesh, the ready enemy, when once awakened, of the spiritual religion which pronounces sentence upon it.

It is only to add something to Christ. But what? If it is not Christ and the new man, it is the old man—it is sinful man ; and, instead of a needed and *accomplished* redemption, and an entirely new life from above, you have a testimony that agreement between the two is possible ; that grace is not necessary, except at most as a little help ; that man is not already lost and dead in his trespasses and sins ; that the flesh is not essentially and absolutely evil. Thus the Name of Christ is made subservient to the flesh, which willingly adorns itself with the credit of His Name, in order to destroy the gospel from its very foundations. Only preach circumcision, accept the religion of the flesh, and all difficulty will cease ; the world will accept your gospel, but it will not be the gospel of Christ. The cross in itself (that is, the total ruin of man—man proved to be the enemy of God), and perfect finished redemption by grace, will always be a stumbling-block to one who desires to maintain some credit for the flesh. “Would to God,” says the apostle—for he sees the whole gospel falling into ruin before this device, and souls destroyed—“Would to God that they who trouble you were cut off!” What have we seen since then? Where is the holy indignation of the apostle?

J. N. D.

THE reason why God is so little trusted is because He is so little known. “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace.” (*Job* xxii. 21).

SOCIALISM, NOT CHRISTIANITY.

THERE is a spirit abroad, which, under the plea of that grace which is the very heart and soul of Christianity, would destroy all the foundations of government in the world, in the family, and in the Church itself. Actuated by covetousness, it quotes the fruit of the Spirit, in Acts ii. 44, 45, to establish a claim over what belongs to others. *There* it is the rich bringing their goods to the poor,—a voluntary act prompted by the Spirit of God, who dwells in them. But *here* it is the poor burning with the desire to get the goods which belong to the rich. This is not Christianity, but socialism,—the very root of anarchy itself. That same spirit would forbid the king to bear the sword and use it against evil-doers, pleading the grace which God would exercise toward sinners. They utterly forget or ignore that grace itself is shown only to them who *condemn themselves* for their sins.

So in the family: instead of a faithful, paternal government, which does not fail to discipline the child for his wrong-doing, and thus press upon him a wholesome fear of evil and of its retribution, grace is again misused, corrupted, and degraded to a mere excuse of sin. The effects are plain enough on every hand, and the end cannot fail:—the rising generation will not be Christian, but socialistic.

But in the Church itself is this corruption of grace seen in its worst forms:—the circle where sin should not be found, or if found not be excused nor covered up, but mourned over and *repented of*; and if not repented of *cast out*, though it be in sorrow—has become a hiding-place for all manner of spiritual and moral evil. Men devoid of spiritual intelligence plead grace for all this, as if the holiness which becomes the house of God were incompatible with His love.

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All this only shows that the cross has lost its power over such, if ever it had any ; the sin, which caused that awful cross, is lightly judged, if at all ; that *repentance*, therefore, has ceased to be coupled with faith,—the salt lacking in the sacrifices, and corruption fast doing its work.

It is clear why "judgment must begin at the house of God," for if we judge not ourselves we compel God to do it ; and though judgment be His "strange work," and delayed as far as possible, it becomes His necessary work. "I will spew thee out of My mouth" is His holy sentence upon an indifferent Laodicea.

P. J. L.

 SOON AND THEN.

SOON shall we see Thee as Thou art :

Soon shall we like Thee be !

Soon shall we cease to grieve Thine heart ;

Soon evermore with Thee !

Then all the storms of life shall cease ;

Then no more shadows fall !

Then the eternal, changeless peace ;

Then Thou our All in all !

Soon shall these straining, tear-dimmed eyes

Brightly behold Thy face !

Soon shall we mount above the skies,

In glory prove Thy grace !

Then only to adore Thee, Lord,

And on Thy beauty gaze !

Then only, "Everlasting Word,"

To hymn Thine endless praise !

MURMURING.—It is the sign of a corrupt soul when every little trouble and affliction maketh a man break out into fretting and grumbles. The wound would be nothing but for the murmuring spirit.

LETTER OF INTEREST.

As to the distribution of gospel tracts and Protestant portions of Scripture in Spain, I believe I am correct in saying that the 11th article of the Constitution, which prohibits the *public* manifestation of any other than the State religion, is at present in most parts receiving a liberal construction, and that more than formerly can be done with safety. But the article is still the law, and it can be worked by those who desire to work it to the obstruction of any obtrusively public Protestant propaganda. There are Alcaldes who can be moved to enforce it according to the clerical view of its purport, as well as others who leave it to slumber. The British and Foreign Bible Society is still not allowed to import Spanish *Bibles* into Spain, and it can only import Spanish *Testaments* in by the one port of Alicante. But it can print in Madrid, and has depôts in several places and colporteurs distributed over the country. But out of 17½ millions of people, some 12 millions can neither read nor write, and so cannot make use of books! *Ignorance* makes them easily led by priests and revolutionary demagogues.

It is difficult in Spain to keep anti-Romish work free from the imputation of being also Republican or Revolutionary. Religious and political liberators are on the same side, and the clerical party are opposed to both, and do all they can to suppress both in a common onslaught.

Spain, cut off by the Pyrenees and the sea from the rest of Europe, is much behind Italy, I believe, in many ways. I know, however, Spain personally, but not Italy. Two or three gens d'armes, fully armed, still travel in every train in Spain to secure the safety of passengers.—*Extract.*

ACCORDING to some learned commentators, a man's name may be in the book of life for a time, but it may be removed. If their teaching is true, that book will be very much scratched and blotted. I thank God that I do not believe in such a book. If the Lord Jesus Christ has written my name in the book of life, the great family register of the redeemed, I defy all the devils of hell ever to get it erased.—*Spurgeon.*

THE LEVITE who presided over the idolatrous worship of the house of Micah, and later of the tribe of Dan, was of the family of Gershom, the son of Moses (Judges xviii. 30, R.V.). Nabal, the churlish worldling, was of the house of Caleb (1 Sam. xxv. 3). What contrasts to their progenitors! And do we not learn in this to "cease from man," to "let no man glory in men"? It is not ancestry, but Christ, who saves; not lineage, but individual devotedness, that insures faithfulness to God.

PATMOS is an island of about thirty miles in circumference, situate in the Ægean Sea, and now called *Palmosa* (Rev. i. 9).

THE FAITH of a little child sometimes puts ours to the blush. "How did you find your way upstairs and get your book in the dark? There was no one with you, and the lamp was not lit." "Yes, there was, sister," said the little one; "God was with me, and He lit me up with His moon."

MARY was a favourite and common name among the Jews—doubtless from Moses' sister Miriam—so much so that in the same family the name was given twice (John xix. 25). Possibly, however, Mary of Cleophas was a half-sister, or even a cousin, called from intimacy a sister—a usage not uncommon among the Jews. Be this as it may, there is no Scripture to identify Mary, sister of Lazarus, with Mary Magdalene. Indeed, it is impossible, for the one came from Magdala, a town in Galilee, and the other from Bethany, a town near Jerusalem (John xi. 1, 18). There are three passages which speak of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus—Luke x. 38-42; John xi.; John xii. 1-9. Matt. xxvi. 6-14 gives the parallel passage to this last, without her name, but only that of the town, Bethany. Mary Magdalene had been delivered from seven devils, and had devoted herself to ministering to the Lord (Luke viii. 1-3). She followed him from Galilee, and was present at the cross (Matt. xxvii. 55, 56). She was early at the tomb, and was the first to see the arisen Lord (Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 1-18). Her history is therefore entirely distinct from that of the sister of Lazarus. Neither must the "woman that was a sinner" (Luke vii. 36-50) be confounded with either of the women mentioned. Her name is not given, and the summary at the head of the chapter in our Authorised Version which calls her Mary Magdalene has not the slightest foundation. On the other hand, the anointing by this woman must not be confounded with that by Mary the sister of Lazarus. The first was during the earlier part of our Lord's ministry in Galilee; the last was just at the close, and at Bethany. Their objects, too, were different: the first was the worship of a penitent sinner; the last the anointing for His burial by one who had long known and loved Him and entered into His thoughts.—*Help and Food*.

"GOD WORKS His sovereign will" outside His own people sometimes, even by His unintelligent creatures. He uses a raven to *feed* a prophet; an ass to *rebuke* the folly of a prophet; a whale to *carry* a disobedient prophet. He closes the mouths of lions, so as not to hurt His faithful servant, and opens those same mouths to devour His adversaries. He directs His east wind to bring the locusts, and by His west wind casts them into the Red Sea. How true it is that "all things serve His might!"

IT IS RELATED that on one occasion a slave-dealer in New Orleans actually recommended the woman he was selling as "a good Christian"! Small wonder that such an incident evoked from Whittier a storm of fiery lines, of which we can only quote four verses:—

"A Christian! going, gone!
 Who bids for God's own image? for His grace
 Which that poor victim of the market-place
 Hath in her suffering won?
 "My God, can such things be?
 Hast Thou not said that whatsoe'er is done
 Unto Thy weakest and Thy humblest one
 Is even done to Thee?
 "In that sad victim, then,
 Child of Thy pitying love, I see Thee stand—
 Once more the jest-word of a mocking band,
 Bound, sold, and scourged again!
 "A Christian up for sale!
 Wet with her blood your whips, o'ertask her frame,
 Make her life loathsome with your wrong and shame;
 Her patience shall not fail!"

IN NADAB AND ABIHU the sin is not said to have been in doing what God had forbidden, but simply in doing what He had *not commanded*. In not eating of the sin-offering Aaron acknowledges a lack of power which we may excuse in him, but should never excuse in ourselves. To throw the blame of what we do upon our circumstances is only a covert way of laying it upon God. Inability to eat the sin-offering is how common a case! *It was for others* that it was to be eaten. And to enter *into the sin of others* "in the holy place," that is before God, while realising the grace that has provided for it—a grace needed by ourselves as fully as by any—tests our spirituality. Only the males of Aaron's house could eat the sin-offering, and that as a most holy thing in the holy place. May we know better how to do it!

IT WILL BE a very poor thing when in eternity to have to say, "I lived in the great nineteenth century, and, according to the then fashion, did not believe in the value of the blood of God's Son, and am now for ever and for ever barred out from heaven and its songs."

THE JUBILEE is the fiftieth year, *following* the seventh Sabbatical one, as Pentecost, the fiftieth *day*, followed the seventh Sabbatical day from the sheaf of resurrection. It is the Jewish Pentecost, as ours is the Christian. The effort to show it to be the forty-ninth year (the seventh Sabbatical year itself) would, if successful, rob the type of much of its significance. Pentecost is the day after the Sabbath—an eighth day, first of a new week, a type of *new creation* blessing. This Pentecost of years is similarly an eighth year, and the type of *new covenant* mercies. It is in the grace of the new covenant, the sweet expression of the "I wills" of God, that the nation can and will be restored; and thus it is, as the *eighth day* of the feast of tabernacles has assured us, that the blessing runs on from time into eternity. This fiftieth year, how beautiful an overflow of the Sabbatic is it in its meaning—man with Almighty God, and *capacity* in grace to walk before Him.

IF YOU ARE NOT quite sure what your work for the Lord should be, let your hand find something to do for Him, and He will soon show you what He would have you to do. Remember that no angel's lips can tell of grace as yours; no pure spirit can tell of glory as yours; for what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived, God has revealed to us by His Spirit.

THE ASSEMBLY, which is Christ's body (Eph. i. 22, 23), cannot as yet assemble. It is scattered over the world. The local Assembly represents the Body at large, and being that which can alone actually assemble, has duties and responsibilities for the whole. Here is the sphere of our fellowship, and here is the divine organisation for all spiritual purposes, in which every one has his place given of God. How precious an expression of the divine love, which has bound and fitted in together, each ministering to all and all to each. Pentecost (where no one calls that which he has his own) realised in spiritual things; yet finds it multiplied by the whole number of those who share it with him. Where is this Church of God in every place? Yet our duty to it and in it remains the same, while the difficulties and needs in a day of ruin only call out the more the grace which ministers to us and the power of that arm which carries us through!

GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.—People say, He took our nature upon Him, which is not in the Bible. He took human nature, that is perfectly true, but He was not of the earth earthy, but *that holy thing!* The *truth* is, that He gives to those who believe *His* nature. It is true now of the spirit, and will be true by and by as to the body, which He will then fashion into the likeness of the body of His glory.

J. RUSSELL LOWELL says:—

“Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and *Me!*”

JOHN'S BAPTISM to repentance had no claim upon the Lord personally, and to have come to it on His own account would have been a denial of His spotlessness. Rightly said the Baptist, “I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me?” All thought of the Lord's doing this by way of *example* for us is therefore a grave and gross mistake. His word was, “Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” For sinners, baptism in Jordan, “unto death” (Rom. vi. 4), was the first step in righteousness; and how deeply significant. Death was the righteous penalty of sin, which by grace they were thus permitted to anticipate, owning their guilt in view of remission of sins (Luke iii. 3) through Him whom John heralded. Now He was come, and owning *for them* the righteousness of this confession of their guilt, and of the penalty under which they were, His own fulfilment of righteousness is in going into death for them as their Saviour and their Sacrifice. He is taking position as One fulfilling righteousness for others. This implies for Him death, which He speaks of afterwards as the baptism He was to be baptised with, “*straitened*” by His love, and in the manifestation of it, till it was accomplished (Luke xii. 50). All glories unite in Him, and the pathway of suffering is indeed His glory.

THE LAST WORDS of an old saint dying in the Bromley Infirmary were: “Good-bye, dear brother. *Right up! Right up!*” What a contrast is this to the last end of some, who will go down, right down!

DANIEL III.-VII.—The use which these established powers make of the authority which God has given them does not alter the source of this power. Jesus acknowledged that the power of Pontius Pilate, by which that Governor condemned Him, came from God. When His hour was come, He submitted Himself to that which the authority, ordained of God, commanded. It is evident, from the use which the Gentiles make of their power in turning it against God, that they are under the direction of Satan. While holding their power from the One, they make use of it for the other. What course does the child of God pursue? He does not maintain himself by leaning upon the civil power; he acts according to his conscience, and seeks only the will of God. At the same time he submits, and in so doing yields up his body; for his conscience is submissive to no one but the Lord: he cannot serve two masters.—*J. N. D.*

THE LEPROUS HOUSE (Lev. xiv. 33-47)—says Gardner, in Lange's Commentary—the so-called "fathers" consider "symbolical of Israel, who was examined and purified, and the evil stones of its building removed by the many judgments upon the nation, and especially by the carrying away without the camp to Babylon. But at last, when its incurable sin broke out afresh in the crucifixion of the Lord of Life, the whole house was pulled down, and its stones cast out into an unclean place." And there may be easily seen a more unwelcome application to the Christian Church as God's house in the world. It too has had, as Luther wrote—but in a way beyond his judgment of it—its Babylonish captivity, and, after its partial deliverance in these present times, the incurable evil will break out again in an open apostasy, which seems even now coming in, and which will be completed when the true saints are caught up to heaven. Then the solemn words to Laodicea, "I will spew thee out of My mouth," will be fulfilled, and the present gospel light go out in that "gross darkness" which the sure word of prophecy foretells is to "cover the people" when the glory of the Lord arises once more for Israel (Isaiah xl.). Men do not like to think this, and a harder saying can scarcely be for man to-day. This will not in the least hinder its fulfilment; the word of God is as plain as it is certain to be fulfilled.

THE LABOUR of a saint is of God, not that of a sinner; the sinner's labours are of man—he is seeking to work so as to satisfy God. He may be honest and sincere in that; but it is all based on this thought: Man must work up to God. The end of it all is, he finds a law in his members that he can never satisfy God. That which man does under the law is labouring up to God. "Oh wretched man that I am," is its end, even when the desire and understanding are right concerning it. There is the saint's labour in Christ in 1 Thess. i.—the labour of love. Christ's labour (while faithful under the law indeed) was not up to God, but from God. It all came from God—flowed from Him as the source and spring of it all; and such is the labour of the saint.—*J. N. D.*

THE WORD HERESY, says Mr. Gladstone, does not in itself imply poisonous or mischievous opinion. It means self-chosen and self-formed opinion. The responsibility of the arch-heretic, or heretic proper, lies in this—that God offers him something, he puts it aside, and substitutes for it another thing.

“THE PARADISE OF GOD.”—*Rev. ii. 7.*

“WHAT meaneth this, O King of all desire? Thou art wounded with the nails, and dost Thou yet promise paradise? Thou hangest on the tree, and yet sayest to the thief, ‘To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.’ And, O Thou Desire of souls, where is this paradise, in that Thou sayest to the thief, ‘With Me in paradise?’ Or is paradise with Thee, and where Thou willest is *that* paradise? Or art Thou Thyself of a truth this paradise, in that Thou dost so certainly promise paradise, saying, ‘Thou shalt be with Me in paradise’? I believe, O Lord, I do verily believe, that where Thou willest and where Thou art, there is paradise, and to be with Thee, this is to be in paradise.” These are the impassioned words of the ancient saint, Anselm of Canterbury, and beautiful are they, as well as devout and true.

Much more interesting and much more important is it to us to learn the character than the locality of paradise; yet the latter point is frequently an object of interest and enquiry to those saints who wish to learn all that may be known as to others who have fallen asleep. The apostles John and Paul, as well as the Lord Himself, speak of paradise. John, giving Christ’s words, says, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life (communion with Him), which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (*Rev. ii. 7*). But in Paul’s words we get further light on this subject. The “man in Christ” of whom he writes, who was doubtless *himself*, was “*caught up to the third heaven*” (2 Cor. xii. 2); and he adds, “*caught up into paradise*” (verse 4). Ignoring altogether the body, of which he had no cognisance, his soul and spirit were caught up to the third heaven, and this was *the ascent* into paradise. That utterly repugnant thought that the soul of the believer *descends* into some subterranean and cavernous abode is, therefore, precluded. It would be altogether out of

harmony with the revelation we have of the soul of the believer instantaneously passing at death into the immediate presence of the Lord. Who would dream of locating "the paradise of God," which is "the third heaven," in the heart of the earth? That the body descends into the grave is evident to all; but the spirit ascends to the bosom of God, and to the intimate and blissful presence of Christ Himself. In Luke xvi. we read that Lazarus "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," and of the rich man we read, "in hades he *lift up his eyes*;" he looked to an elevation higher up than where he was, where Lazarus was reposing, which confirms what the apostle Paul wrote later on, as referred to above.

Thus we may scripturally conclude that the soul of the penitent thief followed that of his Lord in its ascent to paradise—the One who would there invite all the confidences as here He had dispelled all the fears of his trembling heart. "The atmosphere of that dear garden, cloistered only from the rude unrest of the world, thrills and palpitates with warmth, and throbs with light, and is filled with the sounds and melodies of holy, blessed voices."* There the Lord and the thief were, and there, doubtless, were the whole company of Old Testament saints; and into that same scene was the "man in Christ" caught up, and there he "heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 4).

And although for that reason we have no revelation of what he saw, or heard, or felt, in the paradise of God, yet we see the effect upon himself of those ravishing sights and sounds when we read of his longing desire to depart and be with Christ, and his emphatic declaration added thereto, "*which is very much better.*" We know enough of the apostle to be well assured that he would have delightedly communicated what had been specially manifested unto him

* James E. Walker, M.A.

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had he been permitted to do so. For we read, "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children : so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thess. ii. 7, 8).

"There with the good and blest,
Those we love most and best,
We shall for ever rest,
In heaven our home!"

The "soul, connected as it is with that which is higher than itself—the spirit—is immortal, and its powers and attributes must be in activity beyond death. It is the seat of the affections here, and, surely, there too. Why, then, shall not these affections there have full unhindered play? Let us seek to gather something from analogy. Knowledge has its seat in the spirit of man, and here he exercises that faculty; nor does the spirit any more than the soul cease to exist; nor are its attributes therefore to be arrested. Yet we read of knowledge in that scene, 'it shall vanish away.' And why? Is it not because of the perfect light that there shines? Human knowledge is but a candle, and what worth is candle-light when the noonday sun shines? It is overwhelmed, swallowed up, by perfect light. It 'vanishes away,' is not extinguished, any more than is human knowledge by the shock of death or change; but perfection of Light has done away with the very appearance of imperfection. Now is this not equally and exactly true of that other part of the divine nature—Love? *Here* we both know in part and love in part. *There* the perfection of Love causes that which is imperfect—the human affection of the soul—to 'vanish away.' The greater swallows up the less. The infinite attraction of the Lord Jesus—that 'glory' which He prayed that we might see (John xvii.)—overwhelms all lower affections with no rough,

rude shock as of death, but by the very superabundance of the bliss. His glory! What is it but the radiant outshining of His infinitely blessed, infinitely attractive, divine nature—Love and Light, Light and Love? Both swallowing up, in their respective spheres, every inferior, imperfect reflection of them that we have enjoyed here in this scene of imperfection, leaving nothing to be desired, nothing missed; allowing perfect play to every human faculty and affection—crushing, extinguishing none. Death has not been permitted to annul these faculties. The perfect love of the Lord Jesus has outstripped them, swallowed them up in warmer affections, sweeter communion."

"To the one who longs for likeness to God, to be absolutely conformed to the image of His Son, what joy does death bring! The world may look upon it with horror, but the believer can say, as one did, 'How have I dreaded as an enemy this smiling friend!' Those who are absent from the body have left all its infirmities and pains behind. It is sad to see the limitations which hamper so many—a frail body, oft-recurring pain and sickness, and the infirmities of old age. While we should, and do, get good out of such trials, what a relief to be beyond the need and so beyond the fact of having them. 'Present with the Lord.' That means everything. 'In Thy presence is fulness of joy.' Death is a gloomy thing to those here, but to the one who departs it is *fulness of joy*. Stephen met death by stoning—that was the earth-side view. He looked up into heaven and 'saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.' That was the heaven-side view. 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'—he is absent from the body and at home with the Lord! What an exchange! the blessedness of the Lord's presence for the cursings and stones of the Jews. No wonder that he could say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' Do we know Christ? Then we know something of the blessedness of being with Him. Redemption, as

"THE PARADISE OF GOD."

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made known by the Spirit, fills the heart with peace and joy. With Christ its fulness will be more deeply known. The person of the Lord, as known now, is most precious. With Him, He becomes better known, and, therefore, more deeply loved. If one hour of communion here is so sweet that the savour of it lingers, what shall we say of uninterrupted fellowship with Him? And now, as we realise the blessed portion of those whose bodies sleep, can we not give God thanks that they are with the Lord in heaven, for He is there and they are with Him? As bereaved we mourn, but we are not to sorrow as 'others who have no hope.' We can look at death and say, 'O death, where is thy sting?' Christ has taken away the sting, which is sin. We can look at the grave and say, 'O grave, where is thy victory?' Christ has won the victory, and by His resurrection has left us an *open* grave with the way out. May not all God's sorrowing people learn to rejoice at the blessing which the departed saints enjoy? And would not the spirit of joy and praise be as a tonic to enable them to pick up afresh the duties of this life, and to go on, with firmness and progress, in the path appointed? And it is only a very little while. The Lord Himself will soon come. There will be no more mourning then; but now is the time of trial and of opportunity to suffer and to do, for Him, who suffered and did so much for us."*

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above;
When their words of love and cheer
Fall no longer on our ear;
Hush! be every murmur dumb,
It is only 'till He come.'"

It has been pertinently asked, "If it be God who gave us these affections, and pronounced His own work good, will He one day suddenly change

* "*Help and Food.*"

and pronounce it evil? He who dowered earth with such strong and sweet attachments, will He denude heaven of these? There are families on high, united in indissoluble ties, loving each other with a firmer, stronger love than earth ever knew. No egotism diminishes, no infidelity sullies, no ambition chokes, no love of gold petrifies; it is constantly re-baptised in the adoration of God, and this adoration, far from extinguishing it, only imparts its own eternal glory."*

So sure as having lived we shall live again; so sure as having loved we shall love again. The separation from those who have gone before is but a single beat of the great pendulum of eternity!

Surely those who enter, soul and spirit, into the life and blessedness of God's paradise above, find that death has conducted them into the presence of loved ones gone before, whose faces and whose hearts are vividly brought back to the intensified memory, and again live before them. In that ineffably blessed scene, where only, as Keble says, "hearts are of each other sure," the heart can expend the wealth of its affections without fear of their being unrequited; confidences never can be broken, misrepresentations never can be made, roots of bitterness never spring up, rivalries and jealousies never arise! "There the elect shall not enjoy the intermittent sweetness (given, as it were, only drop by drop) of divine contemplation, but shall be filled with an infinite, unmeasured, unimagined joy which none shall take from them, and with an immutable peace, which is peace indeed."

To this rich gift of eternally-unruffled peace, to be enjoyed under the perpetual sunshine of the face of the Lord Jesus, are we introduced, if as "by the kiss of God," to use a Jewish expression as to Moses, we enter upon the light and the felicity of our intermediate life in paradise, and our middle-home with Him who has become the peace and the refreshing

* Countess de Gasparin.

of all who have fallen asleep. And O the infinite activities which follow their blissful emancipation from earthly snares and toils when they enter, and that for ever, upon the beautiful and beatific life of heaven! "No thorny brakes of bitter, wounding unkindness shall tear the tender soul, nor the vulgar ways of earth jar, as now, the refinement and sensitiveness of the heart that is spiritual. The interchanges of love shall then be drawn forth and hallowed by the warm, sweet breath of the summer that is made perpetual and everlasting by the presence of God. There hearts shall open to hearts as spontaneously as the flowers to the sun, and the soul shall communicate itself to the soul it loves as naturally as the dews nourish the white lilies of the wood."*

"Absent from the body," "present with the Lord," express in their sharp and vivid antithesis, which seems purposely without interval, without pause—not, indeed, more truly, for that were impossible, but more directly—the manner of the soul's translation as instantaneous and immediate.

But when the soul leaves the body, its distinct objective existence will surely need some adjustment to its new conditions, and its spiritual powers will have to be brought into focus with the higher life and associations which prevail in paradise; faculties and energies and corresponding phenomena may thus be brought into activity to which we are at present strangers, and which we can only speak of as possibilities, for God has not withdrawn the veil from them. In our corporeal life it is not the eye of the body, properly speaking, which sees, but the soul sees by means of the eye as an instrument. It is not my tongue which speaks any more than it is my pen which writes, but it is I who speak by the use of my tongue. Thus there exists in each of us an incorporeal capacity for seeing, hearing, speaking, &c., and God may have

* James E. Walker, M. A.

some means of bringing these faculties into exercise other than the bodily organs which we term senses.

However this may be, we do know that the life there, as has been truly said, is *all life*, an unending beatitude of light and of love (in the presence of Him whose very nature is revealed to us in these words) while waiting the perfect consummation and full fruition of glory and of bliss, to which the resurrection at the Lord's coming will alone introduce. But of the intermediate and paradisiacal state the eager words of Augustine are, "Who shall not desire thee, where *no enemy can ever enter in, and no friend ever goeth out?*" "Souls that breathe free of all things, though separated from the body, are borne immortal to the bosom of God, even as in the winds the vapours are attracted and rise toward the sun."* Of this are we sure, that all who are there are living and moving in an atmosphere of sacred peace, of sanctified serenity, and of tranquil, holy gladness, and they share with us, though in a heightened degree, the bright and blessed hope of the dawn of the resurrection morning, when they shall be re-invested in bodies, but in bodies of glory then, like unto Christ's.

This brings us to consider the teaching of 2 Cor. v., which by many is not at all clearly understood. The first verse contrasts our present bodies, which are earthly tabernacles about to be dissolved, with the heavenly house of God's building. This has an eternal character, and by it is described the body of glory like unto Christ's (Phil. iii. 21), which we shall shortly occupy. But it is asked, how can we be said to *have* it when the earthly house is dissolved, if we are not to be invested with it until the Lord shall come? The answer is that every believer has a divinely granted title to that glorified body. It is his, though he have not yet occupied it, or even seen it; that building of God waits for its tenant, but it is inalienably secured by

* Clement of Alexandria.

the divine word, and on the resurrection morning, when the eclectic resurrection, the resurrection *from amongst* the dead, takes place, these buildings of God will be tenanted by those redeemed saints whose earthly houses have crumbled into dust. And we who are alive and remain in that day shall be similarly invested with "our house which is from heaven." By what means a link of association is formed between the bodies of humiliation and these bodies of glory (like unto Christ's), so that personal identification is maintained, has not been revealed to us. We fall back, therefore, on the apostle's words (1 Cor. xv. 43), "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory," &c. Where reason staggers, faith plumes her wings!

In 2 Cor ii. 2-4 we have four different expressions, each of which has its distinct significance: "naked" expresses what is totally unsuited to God, a sinner in his sins; "clothed," on the contrary, signifies what is suited to Him, a believer who is clothed with, or in other words is *in, Christ*; "unclothed" describes the intermediate or disembodied state of the believer, when he is divested by death of his human body, which in the first verse is spoken of as "this tabernacle"; and "clothed upon" sets forth the believer's final or perfected condition, when he is invested with the glorified body, the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The investiture with this is of so august and sublime a character that then, and not until then, mortality is said to be swallowed up of life! Not one of these terms can be changed for another; but each being understood in its distinct significance, the passage becomes luminous and full of instruction.

For Paul was not a mere professor, *naked* (Rev. iii. 17-18), and thus exposed to judgment, but having on the best robe (Christ) was already *clothed*; yet he was still in the body, and should he die would be unvested of the flesh, and this he terms *unclothed*, which

he did not desire ; but that which he did desire was to be *clothed upon* with the house which is from heaven, for then mortality would be swallowed up of life, God having wrought us for the selfsame thing !

The apostle expresses just two desires therefore. First, to depart and to be with Christ ; but this could only be at the expense of being unclothed (which in itself he did not desire). The other, the being "clothed upon" with the glorified body at the first resurrection, when the saint and his Redeemer should be glorified together. This is the consummation which every saint, whether in the body or out of the body, must desire—it is that for which the saints in paradise are waiting—that for which the travel-stained saints on earth are waiting—and that for which emphatically the Lord Himself is waiting—that morning without clouds, the first fair beams of which will surely soon break upon the tear-dimmed eyes of *those who watch and who wait for Him !*

THE LAND I LOVE.

"My heart is bounding onward,
Home to the land I love ;
Its distant vales and mountains
My wistful passions move :
Fain would my thirsting spirit
Its living freshness breathe,
And wearied steps find resting
Its hallowed shades beneath.

No soil of nature's evil,
No touch of man's rude hand,
Shall e'er disturb around us
That bright and peaceful land.
The charms that woo our senses
Shall be as pure as fair ;
For all, while stealing o'er us,
Shall tell of Jesus there.

BRIGHT LIGHTS FOR DARK DAYS.

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What light, when all its beaming
 Shall own Him as its Sun !
 What music, when its breathing
 Shall bear His Name along !
 No pause, no change, those pleasures
 Shall ever seek to know :
 The draught that lulls our thirsting
 But wakes that thirst anew !”

J. G. Bellett.

 BRIGHT LIGHTS FOR DARK DAYS.

WE now turn to the epistle of Jude, which gives us in vigorous and concise language a true sketch of the professing church as it would develop in its future history right on to the day of the Lord.

The apostle Paul, in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, warned them that from amongst themselves should perverse ones arise, and grievous wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock. So, too, Jude forewarns the saints of ungodly men who should creep *in* unawares. It is not enemies from without, but foes from *within*, that he writes of, and these have been ever the most dangerous to the well-being of God's assembly on earth.

Abuse of the grace of God and denial of the authority of the Lord Jesus are amongst the early features of the departure from the truth. Graphic is the summary of the whole character of this declension, ending in open apostasy : “ They have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.”

The “ way of Cain ” is the denial of man's ruin and his need of an atoning sacrifice ; the worship of God according to human reason and presentation of cultivated, fallen human nature to God. The fruit is seen in hatred and murder of the man of faith.

The “ error of Balaam ” is simply explained in the

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Lord's brief message to the church at Pergamos (Rev. ii. 14): "Thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (R. V.). How terrible is this corruption—unhallowed intercourse of the saints with the world, and the blending the worship of God with that of demons.

Very solemn, too, is the character of this man, Balaam. Used of God to pronounce His blessing on, and thoughts about, Israel; yet telling out his own heart's true condition by giving Balak counsel as to how best to ruin and bring down upon the people the judgment of God, by entangling them in idolatry and unholy intercourse with those who were the enemies of Jehovah.

The "gainsaying of Korah" is that exaltation of man which ends in the proud blasphemies of the "man of sin," who openly defies God's High-priest and King, and meets his righteous doom by being cast alive into the lake of fire; even as Korah and his company were swallowed up alive by the earth opening her mouth (Num. xvi.). The "mystery of iniquity doth already work," we are told, and the principles of all these terrible evils are in the professing church to-day, and concern us each one. None can separate themselves *from the professing church*, the "Great House," who own the Name of Christ, though some, through grace, may occupy a place of separation *in it*, "sanctified and meet for the Master's use."

No ecclesiastical position or association whatever can guarantee us immunity from these terrible evils. Nay, "they creep in *unawares*," they are "hidden rocks in your love feasts" (R. V.), and the moment we make much of our "separated position," or rest satisfied with being on "the right ground," or talk of being "Philadelphians," that moment we lay ourselves open to insidious attacks of the enemy, and are

already manifesting the symptoms of corruption. Need we go far to see some of these "murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; *speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage?*"

Does all this go on unheeded? By no means. God is taking knowledge of it all. He "whose eyes are as a flame of fire" walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Man's sin may go unchecked and unpunished for a time, especially in this dispensation when "grace reigns," but "God is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." Sentence has been pronounced against "all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

So Jude recalls to the memories of the saints how God had dealt in times past with sinners amongst men and angels. The man who by faith walked with God before the flood, and who witnessed something of the long-suffering of Jehovah with the godless people by whom he was surrounded, had made known the solemn fact, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Then our course is clear, to leave these wrong-doers to be dealt with by the Lord, and commit ourselves to Him that judgeth righteously.

Is this, then, all that the Lord has to cheer and encourage the hearts of His faithful ones with in the dark days of apostasy? Oh, no. He will let them know somewhat of His thoughts about them. So the Spirit guides Jude to these saints who were God's "called" ones, that they are "beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (R. V.). That company gathered in Jerusalem shortly after the day of Pentecost, when "great grace was upon them all," when the lovely features of divine unity were dis-

played by them, could surely rejoice in the truth of these words, "Beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." And down the centuries, even when the warmth of first love had declined, and the corruptions of Pergamos and Thyatira had overspread that which was once so fair and lovely, there were many who could rejoice still in the truth of that precious word, "Beloved in God the Father"; and being surrounded by these corrupting influences, how much more would they rejoice in knowing that they were "*kept* for Jesus Christ."

Now also, in these days when Thyatira corruption and Sardis dead orthodoxy mark the two ecclesiastical positions, and Philadelphian faithfulness and Laodicean indifference mark the different conditions of the professing church, how sweet to the faithful ones to recall this precious word from the Lord to those who had heard His voice, "*Beloved* in God the Father." Unappreciated by the mass of professors (who can boast their vast organisations, and display their subscription lists and their great efforts, and who are satisfied that they are "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"), feeble in strength and few in numbers, yet they can remember that One on high sees them and knows them, and they have a place in His heart, "*Beloved* in God the Father." Conscious, too, of their weakness and of the power of evil around, how encouraging to know they are "kept for Jesus Christ"; kept for Him whose is the Bride; kept for that day when He will present the Church to Himself "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Not only does the Lord cheer the individual saint, but He gives guidance for such in their difficulties. What is their resource in a day when "wolves have come in," and perverse men have arisen amongst the shepherds of the flock? Simple, indeed, and available, however few there may be in any given place who realise the ruin and their need. "Ye, beloved, build-

ing up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Again reminded that they are "beloved," the first great need and resource are alike made known thus: "*Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.*" This is mutual *edification*: speaking often one to another—"building up"; not resting content with simply knowing salvation, or even busy in evangelistic work, but *building up in the faith*, that they should be strong, and not driven about by every wind and wave of doctrine, but that they should know what that holy faith is which has been "once for all delivered to the saints." How needful this is evident, when we see how busy the enemy is using those who profess to be shepherds, calling in question that which has been most surely received among us and the very foundation of our faith, even the word of God.

Nor need any wait for "ordained" or humanly-authorised teachers. "Building up yourselves" enables any two or three saints to meet together for this blessed purpose. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." "Ye need not that any man teach you."

Prayer, too, and that in the power and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is another resource and source of strength. The difficulties of the time may be great, and the saint's perplexities, in the general confusion, very bewildering, so that they "know not what to pray for," but "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Bewildered and perplexed saints, be much together in prayer, "praying in the Holy Ghost," and "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, for He maketh intercession for the saints according to God."

Next, that which is the source of all blessing and good in this poor, weary world of sin, was to be the abiding refuge of their hearts, the answer to every question which might perplex in view of the mysteries

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of evil, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." It was the knowledge of that love in its marvellous manifestation that kindled love in their hearts at the first, as it is written : " We love, because He first loved us ;" and it is only this that can keep the heart fresh and warm amid the general declension. It is also the foundation for the heart of one who desires to be built up in the faith ; "rooted and grounded in love, ye may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth " (R. V.).

Another thing : " Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." How suited is this ! When there is inwrought in the soul a sense of how grievously the Church has failed as a corporate witness, the individual must realise his need of the "mercy of the Lord" as to all his pathway and service. This is needful, too, to keep the heart humble, and not lifted up in pride as being better than others. At no period of the path shall we get beyond the need of the mercy of the Lord ; but how gracious that, as individuals, we can indeed look for that mercy to be shown us right on to the eternal life. Possessors of eternal life now, as believers on the Son of God, we have it in a scene that is but temporary and uncongenial to its development and manifestation. But when we are with Christ, who is our life, we shall then be in a scene that is eternal in its character, and suited for the display of this eternal life. Surrounded here by evil ; the corruption of the professing Church only increasing ; the individual saint realising more and more his own share in it all, and inability to stem the tide, or adequately witness for Christ ; the heart looks onward to the day of His coming, and can truly sing—

" How shall I meet those eyes ?
 Mine on Himself I cast ;
 And own myself the Saviour's prize,
Mercy from first to last."

Before noticing the instruction for saints in their relations towards others, we will first consider the blessing invoked when Jude salutes those to whom he writes. It is unique ; no other company of saints is greeted in the same terms, nor individual either. What is it ? " Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied." In the epistles to assemblies, mercy is not mentioned in the salutation, but in those to individuals it is. So this marks the character of this epistle as being addressed to saints individually in a time of general declension, rather than to the whole company. Similarly, as in the letters to the seven churches in Asia in the Revelation, " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Mercy, then, is spoken of first by the Lord's bond-servant as being the paramount need of the saints in these circumstances. Peace also is desired, as being suited alike for them as individual saints or as gathered companies.

Love. This is the only epistle in which this is introduced in the introductory salutation. But how suited, how needed, in view of all that was coming in amongst them, causing separations, contentions, and heart-breakings. And these things Jude desires should be multiplied to them. Yes, even in such untoward circumstances, these things he desired for the saints, and it was for them to seek after the realisation ; " Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied."

Now what guidance is given for those who are seeking to build themselves up in their most holy faith, as to their relations towards other saints entangled in the general ruin of the professing church ? There is no hard and fast rule laid down ; no standard of spiritual attainment or intelligence demanded ; but rather a spirit of mercy to be displayed by those who are seeking to be true to the Lord. We follow the revised version of verses 22-23.

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There are many saints in perplexity, "doubt," as to what is the right path ; on such "have mercy," even as you look for mercy yourself. "Some save, snatching them out of the fire." Are not these Christians, who are settling down in worldly religious systems, and whom love would seek to rescue at all cost from the power of this present world ? We read elsewhere that the works of some shall "be burned up," but themselves "saved so as by fire." "And on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Mercy to be in exercise again, though tempered with fear, and accompanied by a thorough manifestation that divine holiness can hold no parley with immoral ways and habits.

Have we a hint in all this that any *ecclesiastical position* is *the* right one, and therefore safe ? Nay ! there is a remarkable absence of all assumption or high-sounding pretension. Mercy the saints are expected to look for, and mercy are they called upon to show. In the history of the Church, whenever there has been in any measure ecclesiastical assumption of being *the* right Church, there has been in the same degree a corresponding absence of the display of mercy, and the godly have been forced outside. And in recent times, must we not with shame confess, that those whom the Spirit gathered outside of men's systems to witness to the failure of the Church, and to seek to act on the truth that "there is One Body," have also grievously failed. Assumption has taken the place of humility ; ecclesiastical pretension and claim have taken the place of confession and looking for the mercy of the Lord. Instead of showing mercy there have been arbitrary and unrighteous dealings, and many have been forced to go outside that which was at first the product of the Spirit's work in the professing Church. May this speak to our consciences, and keep us watchful and humble. It is written that when "iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold ;" but, beloved, let us remember

the divine antidote, "*Keep yourselves in the love of God.*"

And now for a moment, the veil that hides the future from our eyes is just drawn aside by the hand of the Lord's bond-servant, and we catch a glimpse of a soul-gladdening sight. The mighty Saviour in the glory, and the joyous host of the redeemed ones, who stumbled along life's pathway sad exhibitions of human frailty and sin, set at last in the presence of His glory, without blemish, in "exceeding joy." We feel in our inmost souls that this is *His doing*, and gladly our hearts burst out into praise "Unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen" (R. V.).

H. S. A.

2 PETER III.

PETER, like Paul, is a witness of the character of the last days, and joins him in giving a fearful account of them. Peter, Paul, and John bear witness that things cannot be expected to improve as time advances. You find gradual declension in the history of Israel. God bore with them, until at length the Babylonish captivity came upon them, and God's sword of judgment. Do you expect Christendom to prove faithful in a position where all others have failed? Israel was tried and failed. The Church has been tried and failed. Each story ends in the ripening of iniquity, and judgment from the Lord as the consequence.

The chapter before us deals with two materials, corruption and judgment. It is much in the style of the old Jewish prophets. Corruption, judgment, and glory were the three objects of the Jewish seers; and here, in the second chapter, we have an elaborate description

of corruption ; and in the third, a detailed account of judgment ; and, in conclusion, a glance at glory.

The blocking out is very distinct in Isaiah, and the other prophets also. The character of corruption in this chapter is scoffing, infidelity (the third gives us moral relaxation), infidel scorn, supported by man's reasoning—where is the promise of His coming, &c. The world is full of this very element now. It is the scoffer attempting to sanctify his thoughts by the force of human reason. But let us look in the face of God's Word. We insist that things do not continue to-day because they were yesterday. We find our reason for such an assertion in the fifth verse : " By the Word of God the heavens were of old." In progress of the world's history, we find the world overflowed with water, and it perished ; the present heaven and earth being, by the same Word, kept in store for the coming judgment by fire. Man comes and opposes his reason, but the Spirit of God hangs upon our arm one simple shield to repel *all* the fiery darts of the devil, and it is the shield of faith. Faith uses the Word of God. Things do not just occur to-day because they occurred yesterday. The Word of God accounts for all changes. The Word of God called the creation into existence. When man's iniquity was ripe, He ruined him by judgment of water. He now, by the very same Word, reserves him to the judgment and perdition of ungodly men. This we declare, and it is no well-ordered course of sequence, it is obedience to the Word of God. Now to which school will you go, the scoffers or God's Word ?

Peter then takes up two things—suffering and judgment. The latter is divided into morning and evening judgment, more distinctly displayed in Revelation. The morning judgment begins the millennial reign—the evening is the judgment of the dead. The morning comes as a thief in the night—the evening comes to dissolve seen things, and melt the elements with fervent heat. Now the eye of Peter is

directed by the Spirit to the evening judgment. The 19th of Revelation gives you the morning judgment of the quick, of the beast and confederates; this is followed by the millennial kingdom, at the close of which there is another judgment—of the dead. In order to the execution of this judgment the great White Throne is set, and He, from whose face the heaven and earth shall flee away, sits on it. This judgment is Peter's subject. He glances at the other also when he names "the day of the Lord." This expression is frequent in the prophets; the Spirit of God expresses the judgment immediately consequent on man's corruption. This judgment is to cleanse the world of all that offends, and of those who do iniquity. Now, what is the business of the morning judgment? It is to say: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead!" The first duty of morning is to rebuke the slumberers. This done, it says: "Christ shall give thee light;" and physically, this is the business of the morning sun—first to displace darkness, and then to rule the day. So the day of the Lord first displays judicial power—then asserts the light of God. Is this mere poetry? May I ask you what did the light of God do when first it visited your soul? Did it sanction, or rebuke? "Awake, thou that sleepest," rebukes my darkness; but "Christ shall give thee light," leaves light in my soul. But it will have its large sense when millennial days are come. Peter gives us here Revelation xix., xx., xxi.; and yet Peter and John had not put their heads together. They never consulted how to best put these things, and yet the Holy Ghost gave Peter to write in this condensed form that which John details in Revelation.

From the 9th to the 15th verse, the prominent thought is long-suffering, a very important word. In the ordinary sense, it means a quiet bearing of reproach and insult. We are called to such as saints—we should all practise it. Meekness becomes them,

and a spirit of contentment under injury, without impatience ; but the long-suffering of God has a specific sense. It means the delay which God makes between the ripening of iniquity and the execution of judgment. You must have observed this in Scripture. In Noah's day, God looked down and saw the imagination of man's heart only evil continually, fully ripe for judgment, yet He suspended it for 120 years. The Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man. Yet the days of his life shall be 120 years. This respite was the long-suffering of God, so-called in 1 Peter iii. 20. The same thing in Egypt's history. Egypt was ripe for judgment when Pharaoh forgot Joseph. He and his land owed all to Joseph and Joseph's God, and when he forgot Him he was a vessel fitted for destruction. He turned his back on both ; and Paul says, "What if God," &c. God did bear with Egypt as He had done with the antediluvian times, and His forbearance is called in Romans ix. "long-suffering." You see what Peter says of the antediluvian host, Paul says of Egypt, and the Spirit adds the same of the present time.

We are living at a period kindred or analagous to the 120 years of Noah, or the time of Egypt's plagues. They were sent to induce repentance, and this is the time of God's long-suffering. This entire age is the long-suffering of God. The world is, indeed, a vessel fitted to destruction ; but God has not yet taken it and dashed it to pieces. Noah was a preacher—God is now the preacher by His Son.

Oh, beloved ! be ye on the watch-tower, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Observe. The day of the Lord is that which establishes the kingdom of Christ. The "day of God" is at the close of the other, and introduces us to the delivering up of the kingdom, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24 to 28). J. E. B.

THE HIGH PRIEST AND ADVOCATE.

LORD JESUS, how untiring
Is Thine all-constant love ;
Perennial spring and fountain
Of blessing from above.
That love which heaven is flooding
With full, unhindered flow,
Our feeble hearts is gladdening
In sparkling rills, below.

Despite th' unnumbered follies
That in Thy saints are found ;
Failures, and faults, and blunders
That everywhere abound ;
Thou ceasest not to tend them,
Nor failest to maintain
Supplies of grace unending,
Our weakness to sustain.

And when, with erring footstep,
Some path of sin is trod,
Our cause 'Thou advocatest
Before our Father-God ;
Urgest to true self-judgment,
Washest the sin-soiled feet,
Leadest to prompt repentance
And to confession meet ;

Support or comfort givest ;
And when the need appears,
Reprovest too, but e'er with love
That hushes doubts and fears.
Thy sympathies, Lord Jesus,
Lead every heart along,
E'en sorrow's plaint and sighings
Converting into song.

How can we choose but love Thee,
Aye, love and serve Thee too,
Our life's whole current bringing
Into subjection due ?

114 THE TENDER LOVE OF "MOTHER CHURCH."

Our hearts can do no other
Than worship and adore,
And praise the love that keepeth
And blesseth evermore.

R. H.

THE TENDER LOVE OF "MOTHER CHURCH."

ONE day a preacher went to one of the *pueblos* to preach. When he arrived the priests called the Catholics together and told them when the people came out of the meeting they should attack them and kill them. When the preacher came out, he was leading his child, and could not run as the others did, so the crowd overtook them. The priest at the head, with a revolver threatened to shoot the child; the preacher begged him not to do it, for the child was not guilty of any thing. Some one struck the preacher a blow on the head, which knocked him to the ground; the priest then fired the revolver, and the shot entered the poor man's forehead, coming out at the back of his head. The child cried, "Oh, don't hurt my papa; he's here preaching the Gospel." This happened about noon, and when the news was given, and some went to see about it, they, at five o'clock in the evening, found the man lying dead and the child by his side.—*A note made in Guadalajara, Mexico, 1895.*

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. x. 15). And Job says, "Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet" (Job xiii. 27). Let us take heed that wheresoever we travel we leave God's print—the testimony of the gospel of peace—behind us, though persecution and death follow.

TIDINGS FROM FOREIGN FIELDS.

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND.

JAN. 20TH, 1895.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—Just a line to give you a little cheer. I am about 350 miles away from home (south), visiting and preaching here and there. On my way down I spent a night at Timaru. We have two dear sisters there who constantly visit the hospital, and I learned from one of them of the conversion of a patient (who has since gone home to the Lord) through reading "*Except Joe Whitbread.*" I did not get much detail, but learnt the fact. This is cheering, both to writers and distributors, as such work calls for more faith and patience than preaching. The result of written ministry awaits the judgment-seat for its display. It is not so often seen and known as in preaching. Still, every seed *is* seen, and His eye has watched it drop, and He knows what has become of it, and will make it all manifest in that day! Let us, then, take courage and go on. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand," &c.

I found a nice case of conversion, or, I am inclined to think, of restoration, the other day through my little book, "*Grace, what it does.*" The young fellow is now in communion. Blessed be God, we thus get bits of cheer now and again. Our Father sees we need it, and so in His grace He gives it.

Yesterday, I had a blessed time here at Maitāwhiri—four breaking bread. Lectured in the afternoon on the Lord's coming. Reading at 6.30. Gospel preaching at 8, and two young men confessed Christ. It was quite a cheer. The Lord be praised. But I must stop. I am going on to-day to Invercargill to see the brother of a sister in fellowship in Scotland. Love in Christ to all.—Yours in the Lord Jesus,

WM. EASTON.

MANATEE, FLA., U.S.A.—Here in the vicinity of the Gulf of Mexico a work of grace has commenced. About one year ago these shores were in part evangelised, with promise of good yield. He having prepared many hearts and directing His word to His creatures, who sat in bonds and in darkness (there being a Berean spirit of searching the word), some score or two have been richly ministered to from His word, praise being His, and peace and blessing (sweet portions) for those who have believed on His Name. Meetings continue, and interest is shown by attendance, many at distances asking for meetings and ministry. Books, papers, &c. much enjoyed.

BRADEN CREEK.—Some little enquiry here. A school-house in these isolated parts, conveniently filled with attentive listeners, was joyous to behold, and exceeding gracious of our God to linger in His patience with poor sinners of the Gentiles and address in grace His word to us. May He bless and give increase.

HUNTER'S POINT, FLORIDA.—This is a fishing settlement of some few families who were previously residents in North Carolina. Here they turn out well, and attentively listen to the same rich gospel of glory which our apostle of old was entrusted with. We find so many plead "works," either for salvation or to try to help get it in that way. The desire to *do* seems inherent in poor, undone man. What a volume is here, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." He spake it to similar unbelieving crowds and individuals such as we find to-day. May the word of God be glorified by many eyes being opened, souls turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

W. B.

CHRISTIANITY ought first to make a man more of a man, and then, more than a man.—*Secker*.

Now.—I expect to pass through this life but once; if, then, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do for the Lord's sake to those around, and especially to those who are His, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

WHAT TIME IS IT? asked a young man one day. When told, he said, "I wish it was five o'clock—I am going to a ball to-night." A few seconds later he was killed on the spot by an explosion. Reader, had it been you, where would your soul have been? In heaven or in hell—which?

PHILADELPHIA and Laodicea alone are now left. Who can question that we have reached the last stage, every mark of Laodicea being about us? This being so, mark the word of our Lord Jesus to the present state of the professing Church (Rev. iii. 17). Yes, in the light of God, in the eyes of the Lord, in the judgment of the Sanctuary, we live in a day of *poverty*—a lack of all true riches, whilst the air is filled with boastings of wealth and attainment. If you and I have shared in any way in the blessings of Philadelphia, we share in the dangers of Laodicea. Yea, he who thinks he represents or has the characteristics of Philadelphia is the very one who is most open to adopt the boast of Laodicea.

"A LITTLE LEAVEN leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6). The apostle does not mean that all the Corinthians would commit the same sin, but that indifference to the Lord's honour, carelessness as to those who confessed His Name, would, if persisted in, corrupt the whole Assembly. Shall I say I am not responsible for other men's sins? Our Scripture answers, and nothing else would be the path of duty, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, *as ye are unleavened*." This last states what is the fact before God, sanctified by the one offering of Christ. Since this is the case *absolutely*, we are to maintain it *practically* by purging out the evil, that we may be always a new lump, an unleavened company, both doctrinally and manifestly.

IT IS A GREAT THING in days of declension and fickleness to be steadfast towards God. How much good one does who is always present at the prayer and reading meetings. His steadfastness is both an example and a cheer. The Church needs gifts, and Christ has given them; but simple, daily steadfastness He looks for *from all* (1 Cor. xv. 58).

"THE LORD GOD Almighty and the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 22). Jehovah, of the Old Testament revelation, with the Lamb, in Whom we have the revelation of the New. God in full display, so far as His creatures can apprehend Him, for none can fully know God but God. The creature will always remain the creature. The glory of God lightens the city, and "the Lamb is the Lamp thereof." The lamp exhibits the light, sustains it, but adds nothing to it. To the divine glory nothing can be added; it is infinite and divine. So will Christ always be the One in whom the Father is made known. The nations bring their glory *unto* the heavenly city. They own the heavens and the heavenly kingdom to be the source of all, and bring these the homage of their power. Heaven is seen, then, as the source of all the glory and honour of this world. All this portion is millennial.

NATURE is but the name for an effect whose cause is God.

118 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

AS TO THE PRESENCE or absence of Paul in "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 14), almost the same difficulty is found in the twelve tribes of Israel. Ephraim and Manasseh are tribal heads equal to Jacob's own sons, making thirteen in all; yet they are always counted as twelve. May not the apostles, in spite of the addition of Paul, be counted here as twelve? We are surely not to individualise, as though any one foundation must be appropriated to a particular apostle. It is characteristic only.

GOD has 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 us 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*.

ACTS VI. 2-4.—Repeated stress is laid in the early chapters of the Acts on the fulness of life and wisdom and power requisite in those who are seen to act in the Assembly of God. Even those who take charge of its funds should be whole-hearted men of God—not necessarily possessing spiritual gifts, but full of the Holy Ghost, and grace, and power, and devoted to Christ's interests.

THE SPIRITUAL and carnal Christian can no more walk together than could Abraham and Lot. Heart divergence is sure to crop out. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Here is the root of much schism. Some are spiritual, and some walk as men. Flesh and spirit can never be welded together (John iii. 6). But the land, thank God, will bear all who have the heart to live on it (Gen. xiii. 6; xxxvi. 7). Its hills and valleys yield the finest of the wheat; its very rocks give honey. If there are partings and separations, the cause is in ourselves; not in the Christian position we are called to occupy. The Lord give us one heart to prove the fertility of the land He has given us to sustain all His people.

"LET A MAN so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1). He was in nowise their servant—save in a sense for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. iv. 5)—and he repudiated their right to enquire into, or criticise him in, his path of service for Christ. Ministry is in His hands; not in any sense in the hands of official men, nor of the Church. The ascended Christ (Eph. iv.) is the source of all ministry. He has given gifts—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers; the Church has no place save as receiving what He gives. Noble and self-sacrificing servant! He had drunk deeply into his Master's spirit, and felt it to be far "more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).

2 TIM. IV. 14 may be read as a prophecy, not as a curse; the Lord will render to, or will judge him, &c. See note to New Translation.

THE FATHER'S NAME was frequently given in the Gospels; but, after Pentecost, even this was dropped. Paul incidentally says he was of the tribe of Benjamin; but we are nowhere told the name of his father. He warned his beloved sons in the faith (1 Tim. i. 4; Titus iii. 9) against giving heed to "endless genealogies." Though one were descended from David or from Aaron, one would have no higher place in the Church on that account than one descended from Ammon, Moab, or Canaan.

"**THY GENTLENESS** hath made me great." Many of the most beautiful things in nature are so delicate in their structure that you touch them only to destroy them. Man could not imitate them, and, for the most part, they escape his notice. Yet God builds this beauty, and delights to put it everywhere, to show us His beauty and His tenderness as well. The delicate, tiny flower; the wing of the butterfly crushed with the finger of a child, were made by Him who condescendeth to take thought of them. So also in spiritual things, there are characters whom the touch of man seems to mar. The new-born soul, with its desires after God, its love for Christ, its almost inarticulate prayers and praises, is surely more beautiful in His sight than the fairest flower of earth. Let us learn to be tender with one another, being imitators of Him, and seeking to develop all that which is of Him. How has He built us up? By His gentleness. Our love to Him and joy in Him, the early fruit of the Spirit encouraged and nourished; our coldness borne with. And so He has gently led us on. May we with God's lambs go and do likewise (2 Sam. xxii. 36).

IF GOD HAS IN MERCY restored to us any truths of His Word, we owe it to the whole Church to impart it to as many as will receive it. "Feed the flock of God;" not *part of it* (that is sectarianism), but all—any who will share with us what we have won back from the spoiler, though they follow not with us.

BELOVED READER, meditate a little on the following striking and precious contrast. Solomon in all his glory, with a brighter halo of wisdom round his head than ever had any other of the children of men, on the one hand, and on the other the child of God to-day. "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrehite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (1 Kings iv.). Is it not a magnificent ascription of abounding wisdom? What field has it not capacity to explore? Philosophy in its depths; poetry in its beauties; botany and zoology in their wonders. Do we envy him? Listen to what his poor heart was groaning out all the time: "In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Now turn to *our* portion above the sun—"the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;" infinitely higher, deeper, lovelier, and more wondrous than the fields explored by Solomon, in constant unfoldings of riches of wisdom, and each new unfolding bringing its own sweet measure of grace and peace. Have not the lines fallen to us in pleasant places? Have we not a goodly heritage? Take the feeblest of the saints of God to-day, and had Solomon in all his glory a lot like one of these? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

IT WAS AFTER the Egyptians had gone out that Joseph made himself known to his brethren. It was through closed doors the Lord, after He had risen, came to His disciples. If we are to enjoy communion with Him, the world must be shut out. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (Cant. iv. 12). Separation to God conduces to communion and preserves from defilement.

THE BURNT OFFERING was flayed (inmost thoughts revealed); separated into its parts, and every part washed in water—not to cleanse, but to *show its purity*. In all this we have the perfect Man.

DIVISIONS among the saints should fill us with shame and sorrow, and lead us to weep over them, each realising and confessing his responsibility for the general state. Unless we humble ourselves personally, we can never be fit instruments to help our brethren. What is needed is a large and tender heart and an exercised conscience, that confidence may be inspired. In David's darkest days the people believed in his sincerity and devotedness, because there was conscience towards God, and love and care for God's people. The true spirit of leadership is service: "I am among you as he that serveth;" "By love serve one another;" "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." One of the greatest needs of the Church of God to-day is pastors—men who love and yearn over God's people because they are His, ministering comfort where needed, healing breeches; helping, guarding, cherishing the Lord's dear people for His sake.

SERVANT OF THE LORD, be not drawn aside by the subtle influences of this evil day. Be an imitator of the apostle. How dare we build upon the blessed foundation laid for us anything but the glories of Christ? Must not all else be wood, hay, and stubble? Let us with all our heart seek to have only Himself before us, His divine person, His precious work, His eternal glories. These indeed are gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor. iii. 12).

AS TO THE CHURCH, fewer persons understand the teaching of Scripture than upon any other doctrine of the Word of God. The effect is but too apparent. The revival of other precious truths, such as assurance, the Lord's coming, &c. has not been accompanied by an awakening as to this. Sad it is to hear men devoted in the Gospel, and clear expounders of the Word, telling us they do not trouble about Church doctrine; that salvation is the all-important theme, and that Christians should be established in fundamentals is all that is necessary. The studied neglect of Church truth only gives cause for the most serious apprehension. Let us entreat those who love the Word of God to take up this neglected truth, and learn His mind regarding that which is as dear to Him as His own body. Nothing but blessing would result. "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all" shows that through grace the Church is the complement of Christ. God likens the Church in its relation to Christ as a wife in relation to her husband, the complement, amazing thought of the last Adam (Eph. v. 22, 23).

ONE OF OUR POETS says:—

"A truth that is only half the truth
Is ever the worst of lies."

JEREMIAH, AN EXAMPLE.

How instructive it is to remark the instruments God uses wherewith to accomplish His designs. As His resource when a'l had failed, by which He could show Himself just and yet the Justifier of them that believe in Jesus, surpasses all that man has conceived, or could have dreamt of, so often, when He works, the instruments selected are just those which man would have rejected as utterly unfit for the purpose. But these very instruments, when taken up and adapted for the object God has in view, display His power and redound to His glory. Of this Jeremiah is a striking instance, who, naturally timid and retiring, is yet made by the Lord as bold as a lion, and able to do and to brave that from which the stoutest heart might well have shrunk.

To testify against evil, to expose the wickedness of a generation, and to declare the sin of a people is ever an unwelcome task to a sensitive creature. It shrinks back at the bare thought of it. And well it may, for what power has the earthen vessel in itself? But if the Lord is with it, if He deigns to use it, weak and fragile in itself, it can become in His hands "a defenced city, an iron pillar, and brazen walls" (Jer. i. 18). One thus situated is brought into opposition to the current thoughts and feelings of the world, making him clash with the opinions, maxims, and habits of those who, whatever they profess, are really opposed to God. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James iv. 4). It must, then, be a work of faith; and the work of faith attests the impotency of the creature and the power of God.

For if confident in its own strength, and assured it can overcome by its own power, it seeks not elsewhere for assistance; but, if the task assigned is felt to be too great, it can only go forward in the strength of another. And if it then turns away, and looks only to God, it walks by faith. And the walking by faith

is the going contrary to that which nature would dictate, the incurring that which worldly prudence would avoid, and the doing that which regard to personal comfort and ease would counsel the individual most strongly to leave alone.

Weak and timid as a child is Jeremiah as presented to us in chapter i., when the prophetic commission is announced to him : " Ah, Lord God ! behold, I cannot speak : for I am a child " (ver. 6). Such are the first accents of the future prophet which burst on our ears. He stands aghast at the task assigned him—" A prophet unto the nations " ! " I am a child," he says. Did not the Lord know that ? Assuredly He did, for he had already said, " Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee ; and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee ; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." His commission now delivered to him was clearly no afterthought. The One who sends him forth to the nations had formed him from the belly, and sanctified him from the womb for this very work. This announcement, so comforting and cheering to one who has learnt to trust the living God, failed to support Jeremiah. He was occupied with his weakness. He saw that ; he felt that. He could give no heed to the words, " I formed thee ; I sanctified thee." He urged objections : " I cannot speak : for I am a child." His youth he thought a reasonable hindrance to compliance with the divine mind. His inability to speak is in his eyes a fitting reason why the Lord should not send him. Yet God had ordained him from the womb for that special work.

How often is similar conduct displayed by God's children. God calls ; His servant objects. There is a difficulty discovered which God has overlooked ; an obstacle it is which must prove an effectual hindrance to compliance with His will. Such an one cannot speak, for he is a child. As with Jeremiah, so with Moses at an earlier date ; personal inefficiency was

urged. Had God made a mistake? How could He? He had formed each of them for his work. It is well to be thoroughly sensible of our own weakness, and to feel that we cannot do anything of ourselves.

But it is never right to make our sense of weakness an excuse for disobeying God. "When I am weak," says Paul, "then am I strong." Now God had called the prophet to his office, however unfit he felt himself for it. Doubtless, humanly speaking, he was unfit. If men had been selecting a suitable instrument, it would probably not have been Jeremiah. Jesse never thought of presenting David before Samuel. Samuel thought Eliab was the man of God's choice; but till David came they could not sit down to meat. And when he came the Lord's anointed stood before them. His training and experience as a shepherd fitted him to be the leader and ruler of Israel.

In objecting, then, Jeremiah was wrong. Conscious of God's express command, objections could have no place. Besides, what good was gained? Could he turn aside the Lord from His purpose? Sooner or later he must obey. Jonah, dismayed at the work given to him to do, attempted to fly to Tarshish to escape its execution. He could delay the commencement of his service by his disobedience; but he could not change God's counsels concerning him. Go he must, and go he did, and then found God had gone before him. Israel in the wilderness shrunk from conflict with the nations in Canaan. The war was delayed for well-nigh forty years, but had to be encountered at last; and the enemies their fathers feared to meet, the children successfully overcame.

Jeremiah endeavoured, but in vain, to change the mind of the Lord: "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" (Isa. xiv. 27). The prophet's failure, however, gives occasion for the manifestation of the Lord's graciousness, who allows His servant to reason with Him—not to change God's mind, but to be overruled by assurances of His help

and protection. "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah i. 7, 8). If his being a child is no valid objection to his employment as a prophet, neither is his inability of speech to be any hindrance for the work. "And the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant" (9, 10). What a commission is here! To nature most appalling; to faith God's will, and that is enough.

But his work does not end here. He might have discharged the office of prophet to the nations without once coming into contact with the subjects of his prophecies, by sending them to the different nations by the hands of messengers, as he did in some cases (chaps. xxvii. 3; li. 59-64). What follows, however, cut off all hope of seclusion. He must face men, prophesy against Judah, and announce judgment against Jerusalem: "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee" (i. 17-19).

From this there could be no escape. If he drew back, the Lord would confound him before them. If he went forward, it would be to incur their hatred and to encounter their opposition. "They shall fight

against thee." To stand still, then, was impossible. To retreat was out of the question. To go forward was all that was left him. And "I am with thee to deliver thee" was the only thing to which he could trust. But that was the word of his God.

His message was to be one of reproof and of judgment, though many precious promises were mingled with the announcements of coming wrath. There are some who take pleasure in predicting evil and in looking for judgments to overtake their adversaries. Had Jeremiah been one of that class, he might have found his difficulties in some measure counterbalanced by the pleasure of foreseeing the confusion and the misery of his oppressors. But he was a man of a different stamp. In accordance with the spirit of the dispensation under which he lived, he could pray for the punishment of his enemies (xv. 15). Yet we find him grieved to the heart at the evil he was the medium of predicting (iv. 19-26; viii. 18; ix. 1; xiii. 17). In no way, then, was the office of prophet congenial to his nature. He shrank from conflict with the wicked; and when uttering the word of the Lord, foretelling the punishment and misery coming on his people, his gentle soul was pained, and the spirit of intercession, which arose from the depths of his heart, was only checked by repeated injunctions from the Lord to refrain (vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11; xv. 1).

From the beginning to the end of his ministry he is obliged to face the ungodly part of the nation, and even to enter the king's house and therein deliver messages of woe. He is continually put forward, and made by the Lord to take a most prominent place in his country's history. How does he comport himself in this, to him, unwished-for position?

His first public acts are to press home on the conscience of the nation, if possible, a conception of the enormity of its guilt. From chapters ii.-xii. he is occupied with this, which may be summed up under three heads—general corruption, idolatry, and

covenant-breaking. From ii.-vi. he unfolds their general corruption, crying in the ears of Jerusalem. The Lord had only done them good from the earliest years of their national existence. They had requited Him with the blackest ingratitude, having forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which could hold no water. From the Lord they had turned to Assyria, and, when that failed, they had looked to Egypt for help. Their glory they had changed for that which did not profit. Idolatry was established, with its concomitant vices, for which the prophet reproves them (ii. 27; iii. 9; v. 7-9). The Lord's word was disbelieved (v. 12). They were rebellious. All classes were corrupt. Providential dealings had no effect (iii. 3). "As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she (*i.e.*, Jerusalem) casteth out her wickedness" (vi. 7). No shame could be seen on their face, no blush crimsoned their cheeks (15). Reprobate silver would they be called, because the Lord had rejected them (30). Among such was Jeremiah placed as a tower and fortress to know and try their way (27).

From vii.-x. the prophet is sent to speak to the men of Judah, in the house of the Lord, to shew up their abominable sins carried on whilst calling out: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these" (vii. 4). They were hypocrites. They could steal, murder, commit adultery, burn incense to Baal, and come to the Lord's house, saying they were delivered to do all these things.*

Their idolatry is then denounced. But in this they were not alone; the heathen were guilty of it likewise, therefore a message is sent to the latter by the "prophet to the nations," announcing (in Chaldee)

*Not delivered over to do them, but saved by the observance of ordinances in order that they might be free to do them. So Revised Version gives it, "We are delivered: that ye may do all these abominations" (verse 10).

that the gods, who have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens (x. 11). After this we have the contrast between idols and the Lord God brought out (12-16); and judgment is prayed for on the heathen; "for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate" (25).

But if Judah was guilty, in common with the Gentiles, of idolatry and of the vices in its train, there was a sin peculiarly their own. They had broken the covenant. This is next charged against them (xi., xii.). God had therefore forsaken His house; He had left His heritage (xii. 7). Prayer for them is now of no avail (xi. 14). Yet afterwards the Lord will be gracious. The nation shall be restored (xii. 15), though in the meantime those who have provoked His anger will suffer for it.

These three heavy charges having been pressed on them, the prophet is next shown, under different figures, the certainty of the Lord's then rejection of His people. The girdle marred at the river Euphrates (xiii.) is explained to mean the bringing down of their pride. God "will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together" (14). He will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy. By the occasion of a dearth the prophet learns again, when desirous to intercede, that the Lord will not accept it now, and even if Moses and Samuel stood before Him, He would not hear them. The sword, the famine, death, or captivity must be the people's portion, and nothing now remains for the faithful but separation from the ungodly (xiv., xv.). The two next chapters (xvi., xvii.) bring out in full relief how far the separation is to be carried; not merely separation in heart, but in act (xvi. 1-8). Difficult, indeed, must such a path ever be, but the faithful are strengthened by the assurance of blessings to those who trust in the Lord, and by the mention of the curse which should follow those who trusted in man (xvii. 5-8).

The potter's vessel is next used as an illustration. Marred in the potter's hand, it illustrated God's right to deal with people as He pleases; and the potter's earthen bottle, broken by the prophet in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in the presence of ancients of the people, and ancients of the priests, foreshadowed the certainty of the people and of the city being broken before God (xviii.-xix). Then in xxi.-xxiv. the fortunes of the royal house are the theme. First its punishment is announced; after that the future glory attaching to it is foretold. Shallum, Josiah's son, will return no more, nor see his native country again. Jehoiakim would be buried with the burial of an ass. Coniah, a despised and broken vessel, should die in Babylon. Zedekiah, too, would be childless (lii. 10). Yet the family of David shall not be cut off. For "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness" (xxiii. 5, 6). But this was future, and is future yet. At the time Jeremiah lived, how different was the scene! In the midst of unrighteousness of kings, prophets, priests, and people, this prophecy comes as a bright spot in the surrounding, deepening darkness. Before, however, it could be realised, and the reign of righteousness commence, a general judgment of the nations must take place. The cup, drunk first by Judah, was afterwards to be drunk by all to whom it was sent, and lastly by the King of Babylon, the scourge used of God in the prophet's day to carry out His purposes. (See chapter xxv.)

Another part of the book now commences. The sovereignty departing from Judah was to be transferred to Gentile hands, and all must submit to the conqueror, for so had God willed. The prophet is now placed in a very difficult position. He must

exhort his countrymen still in Judæa, and those already in captivity, as well as the nations around the land, to accept the sovereignty of Nebuchadnezzar. Afterwards Israel would be restored ; be again governed by their own rulers ; and David, their king, be in their midst. This is the leading subject of xxvi.-xxxiii. From xxxiv.-xlv. we have illustrated the different ends of those who only profess and of those who practice obedience. Those who manifest profession only, without reality, are to be destroyed ; those really obedient will have life. Jonadab should never want a man to stand before the Lord for ever, and Baruch's life should be given him for a prey. The concluding portion (xlvi.-li.) is occupied with predictions against certain nations—some of them descendants of Ham, the others descendants of Shem.

Throughout his ministry we see Jeremiah brought prominently forward ; the consequences to himself it is not difficult to guess. Four times was his life in danger (xi. 19-21 ; xxvi. 11 ; xxxvi. 26 ; xxxviii. 4-9). The hostility of the people was not confined to threats. Once was he put in the stocks (xx.), twice into dungeons, then kept in prison, when delivered from the pit in the house of Malchiah, till Jerusalem was taken (xxxvii. 16 ; xxxviii. 6, 13 ; xxxix. 14). The history ends with the prophet in Egypt, carried captive thither by Johanan and the remnant of Judah which had returned to dwell in the land (xliii. 5). Truly he was a man of woes. "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth ! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury ; yet every one of them doth curse me" (xv. 10).

What a place for him to occupy ! From the thirteenth year of King Josiah to the flight of Johanan into Egypt, for a period of more than forty years, was Jeremiah before his people, reproving them, and warning them of coming judgments. On several occasions, as we have mentioned, their rage against

him was openly manifested ; yet he persevered in spite of all. A good illustration of his boldness and faithfulness is afforded us in xxvi. 14, when his life was threatened by the priests, the prophets, and their partisans among the people. There is no drawing back, no cringing, no temporising. " As for me, behold I am in your hand ; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you." Death he is ready to meet ; anything rather than to withdraw his words, or to refuse to utter what God had commanded. How different his words were to those that we have in chapter i. There he feared the faces of men (i. 8, 17) ; now he only fears God. He speaks as directed, and leaves the issue with the Lord. He suffered much.

He suffered from foreseeing the calamities which were coming on his country. He suffered in sharing her calamities when they came. He suffered from his countrymen, who rewarded him evil for good, and hatred for his good will. From the heathen monarch, the destruction of whose kingdom and the capture of whose metropolis he foretold, he received nothing but kindness (xxxix. 11 ; xl. 4). From his own countrymen, some bright examples excepted, as Ahikam and Ebedmelech, he experienced nothing but bitterness, hostility, and persecution.

We see in him the feebleness of the creature, and the strength which God can give. He failed sometimes. Who is there but One who could tread such a path without failure ? But, if we refer to this, it is not to make a spectacle of human infirmity, still less to sit in judgment on the prophet. If any take pleasure in such a task, let them perform it, taking care that he that is without sin should cast the first stone at him. For us his failure, weakness, and natural timidity of character are occasions for portraying what the power of God can do ; how He can fit the most unlikely instrument to human eyes to perform the greatest work, and how the agent, the least suited apparently for such a service, may be enabled effectually to perform it.

This leads us to the consideration of the secret of his success. He obeyed God implicitly, and brought all his difficulties to Him with the simplicity of a child. When first called to his office, he questions, as we have seen, before he obeys; ever after he obeys before he questions. He learnt his lesson of obedience at the commencement of his ministry. Have we learnt ours? Grievous to him, indeed, were the messages he had often to deliver; but he gives them as received. Hence his boldness. Assured it was the word of the Lord, he goes forth to encounter the opposition of priests, prophets, kings, and people. No matter who opposes, or who may threaten, he must speak—and he does.

See him in chapter xx., just after he had come out of the stocks, put in them by Pashur, the governor of the house of the Lord, for predicting the desolation of the city. He had felt the power of man against him for his faithfulness to God. When let out the next day, he repeats the unwelcome truth, directly charges Pashur with prophesying lies, and calls him *Magor-missabib*. Then see him before God: "O Lord, Thou hast deceived (or, persuaded) me, and I was deceived (or, persuaded): Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (xx. 7-9). Before men he is as bold as a lion, and the brazen wall and iron pillar. Before the Lord we see him pouring out his complaint, confessing his hesitation, and setting forth his troubles.

He unbosoms himself to God. This gives confidence. For the Lord, before whom, and to whom he speaks,

was with him "as a mighty and terrible One: therefore," he says, "my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten" (11). With this confidence he can sing unto the Lord, and exhort others to do the same, on the ground of deliverance accomplished, "He hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers" (13).

With Jeremiah the path of obedience was the only safe path, and he walked therein. Obedience carried him forward—faith kept him up. Obedience did not lead him into an easy path—it did not put away difficulties—it seemed to create them; but it always afforded a way of surmounting them. To go forward was the command to Israel at the Red Sea. Here their obedience was tested. To trust in the Lord to open the way, in this their faith was tried. So with Jeremiah, and with all God's people, the only safe principle is obedience on the ground of faith. Jeremiah went through difficulties, suffered imprisonments, had his feet made fast in the stocks, passed some time in dungeons, and sank deep in the mire.

He suffered this and much more, because he was obedient. He could trust the Lord, and therefore he could look every difficulty in the face, and go forward. Yet not (as we have said) that his faith never failed. In this very chapter (xx. 14-18) we have an instance of failure. Sorely tried he was; and the natural feelings of his heart find expression. The principle, however, on which he acted was obedience; and he found it, when acted upon, one which would stand the tests to which it was subjected.

Again, see him in chapter xxxii., when told to buy the field of Hanameel, the son of Shallum, his uncle's son. He does not understand it, yet he buys it according to the word of the Lord. After he has bought it, he asks the Lord about it; and He, who always responds to the faith of His people, answers

him with words of comfort, telling of the blessing yet in store for the nation, and for the places the prophet loved so well (36-44).

In all this there is much instruction for us. The prophet, when obedient, always found God faithful. God had promised that his enemies should not prevail against him. This always came true. They could oppress, they could threaten, they could imprison, they could attempt, too, his life, yet never could they take it. His opposers fell—he did not. Pashur should die in Babylon. Hananiah must die the same year that he prophesied, and he died just two months after his assumed prediction (xxviii. 1, 17), because he taught rebellion against the Lord. Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, should not see the good the Lord would do unto Israel, nor have a man to dwell among his people (xxix. 32). But the Lord's promise to Jeremiah never failed: "I am with thee to deliver thee" (i. 19). Few though these words are, how much was conveyed by them! The presence of the Lord would be with him to deliver him. Into a strange land he would be carried. With the remnant of the people he would share the affliction of his nation. But who could break the iron, even the northern iron and brass? (xv. 12). The Lord made him a brazen wall, which could not be broken.

A man of sorrows he was. Yet he had a joy in spite of his circumstances, and even in the midst of his greatest trials. His joy was the word of his God. That which seemed to outward eyes the cause of his troubles afforded him solace in those troubles: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of Hosts" (xv. 16). But if the word received into his heart gave him joy, it was the instrument which separated him from the surrounding evil: "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone, because of Thy hand: for Thou hast filled me

with indignation." Personifying the faithful remnant, he expresses what they suffered. Grievous, however, as their position was, it was the place of testimony and the sphere of influence. What follows shows this: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible" (xv. 19-21).

We see, then, what the word of the Lord was to him; according to it he walked; from it he drew comfort and joy; by means of it he was separated from the evil around him. What the Word was to him, should it not be to God's people at all times? He went not by his thoughts, his feelings, his surmises. He walked according to the Word, as soon as he was assured it was the Word. Nothing more is required of us. It is to the Word, the doctrine that we are to give heed, the doctrine according to godliness—the Word of God's grace. The Word of God separated him from evil. It will always act like that. Hence the trial which faithfulness causes. Comfort, however, there will be in the assured presence of the Lord with us, and the joy which the truths He has made known give to the heart which feeds on them.

How often is the bait held out of greater influence at the price of unfaithfulness. Too rigid conformity to the Word, it is said, offends some. A little relaxing, a little yielding to the opinions of others, will enable personal influence to have its full weight. Such are man's thoughts. How contrary to these are God's thoughts. This Jeremiah xv. 19 and 2 Timothy ii. 21, show: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto

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honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." We cannot want more. This is influence indeed. Be as God's mouth; a vessel meet for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work!

What opportunities for usefulness these words intimate; of what influence to be exerted do they assure us. We shall be strong, we shall be influential, in proportion as we are walking by faith in childlike obedience to the Word. C. E. S.

 THOUGHTS ON 2 KINGS XVII.

IN this chapter, Elijah the prophet appears for the first time. As his departure from this world, recorded in 2 Kings ii., is remarkable and unique, so is his appearance here; neither genealogy nor record of his previous life given, only that he was a Tishbite, and of the inhabitants of Gilead. Of the common people, no title nor rank, he appears before King Ahab, the king of a great people—but the wicked Ahab, who had done more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him (1 Kings xvi. 33). How could Elijah stand in the presence of this king? What was the secret of his power and boldness? He said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand" (xvii. 1). He stood before God; thus he did not fear the king. May we not draw a lesson from this? Are we conscious of the presence of the Lord in what we say or do for Him?

With what power and force the words came to Ahab, "The Lord God of Israel liveth"—whom Ahab had despised and insulted; and the judgment of God was about to be felt by him and the people who had joined with him in his iniquity. But it is the path for Elijah marked out by the Lord to which the writer would now draw attention. It is not such a path as *we* might have expected for the servant of the Lord. *He had done great things for the Lord.*

James, at the close of his epistle, tells us how he had prayed, and we have had before us how he had stood before and spoken to the mightiest in the land. But what is the path now for Elijah? "Get thee hence, and turn eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan" (ver. 3). Not a great thing for him to do now, but a path of simple obedience; and Elijah's obedience is another lesson. "Hide thyself" by an insignificant brook; and he goes. He went, and did according to the word of the Lord. Blessed obedience! How unlike many in this day, who seek to make themselves a name.

"And it shall be that I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there" (ver. 4). What unlikely sources, looked at naturally—the little brook, which might soon dry, and the ravens, whose nature it is to take from and devour, even neglecting their young.

The prophet was content to sit by the brook—even if Jordan (death) were before him. What a lesson to us in our vain wanderings and our restlessness down here in this world. Truly a famine is here. But there is an unfailing supply for us in the Word; ever a stream to drink from; and this is a sure antidote to restlessness and discontent in our wilderness journey.

And as to our temporal necessities, God can command whom or what He pleases to supply all our need, even as the ravens fed Elijah. No human aid there for Elijah. The other prophets fed on bread and water in the cave; *his* supplies were from God alone, his meat in morning and evening portions, constantly reminded him of the goodness of his God. What a blessed picture! What encouragement and comfort to His own now! Blessed Lord Jesus, may *we* be feeding on Thee and obtaining all we need from Thee until Thou dost come.

"And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." Earthly resources may fail, but God remains the same. There was no rain in the land—the land of promise,

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a land that had flowed with milk and honey; not even a stream of water now for the Lord's servant.

Do we find it so here? or are we, like Lot, choosing the well-watered plains? Are we not too much occupied with earth's things, things that are passing away?

But the writer has been reminded, in thinking of Elijah's position by the brook, of Him, the Son of Man, who had not where to lay His head. His path was indeed a solitary one, which led only to the cross. When Elijah's stream dried, the Lord opened another way; but Christ entered into death, bearing the judgment of God, alone, none to help, no way opening up for Him but through death.

Verses 8, 9: "And the word of the Lord came unto 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." How great a contrast, surely, God's ways to man's ideas. Not sent to some great one, but to a widow, and to a city of the country from which Ahab had chosen his idolatrous wife. As with the ravens, so with the widow—the most unlikely one naturally to look to for support; but the Lord had commanded, had prepared the widow, and blessing results to Elijah, to the widow, and her son. The same lessons may be learned by us in this part of the chapter as in the other part we have had before us. Elijah is sustained in the widow's house during the remainder of the famine, and in this humble home the power of God is displayed.

The writer's object in these few lines has been in some feeble measure to put before believers the simplicity and obedience seen in the path of Elijah, in contrast with what is seen around us now—how Satan is succeeding in occupying the Lord's children with the comforts and luxuries of the present times. May He bless His own word.

J. B.

"NEITHER MURMUR YE."

1 *Cor.* x. 10-12 ; contrast *Lam.* v. with 1 *Peter* i. 3-9. ; *Ex.* xvi.

IN the wilderness is the place of testing. Our God permits hunger, thirst, weariness, and need there, and these are not sin ; but oh ! what ways are taken to satisfy those needs, and how all come short there ! But One can be turned to who waited continually for His Word and who accepted in those circumstances necessities which showed Him true Man, dependent and humble, and superior to all the whisperings of Satan who tempted Him there. But He who succours us suffered this ; and we may know that in such things as infirmity, and all those attendant trials of wilderness sojourn, temptation goes on to get us to raise complaint against His provision, with our food or for lack of it, that dishonouring reproach may reach our blessed God. But with what interest He watches over those who have the trial of faith to undergo. Peter tells us—"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." And we get, too, the One who takes hold of the seed of Abraham, a merciful and faithful High Priest. We have a High Priest—the throne of grace, mercy ; and we find grace for seasonable help. And how we need all that is thus provided by Him who tempteth no man.

What desire we find expressed in Hebrews to instruct babes that that One is on high, and all encouragement is given to labour to enter into rest and reach the city whose founder is God—babes so slow to receive unfoldings of their High Priest assaluted and installed and serving perfectly. Sad that the eye is turned away, solemn to know ears are dull of hearing, senses unexercised to discern both good and evil.

Then again, Peter, in that gentle way, endowed with wisdom from on high, to babes puts the bottle—its contents pure mental milk—and what is the result ? what the intent ? Why, this : patient and persistent

reminder of the Word by which they had been born, of its abiding character, and *all flesh* shown as grass stripped of its flower—shorn of its glory. And then, a beautiful continuation: "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever." What praise and blessing shall we ascribe as we further read: "And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Ah! sad to have lightly esteemed it, to have failed in redeeming the time, that anything else should have been preferred before it; but the bottle is put to such as He has given desire to, and unfoldings go on until one is lost in wonder, and found filling that character of holy priest—shewing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Oh! bliss of the purified to have engagement of heart, in a wilderness scene, with Him in the holiest, having found an eternal redemption, giving us by faith to enter into it as to our whole being—so soon to His praise an accomplished fact; then homage to Him, adoring, unceasing glory and power for what He is and has done.

In things natural, we may view a God-fearing man with his family, one who early and late toils to provide for his own, for he hateth not his own flesh. The fruit of his loins are about him; they frolic and enter into a father's glee; constantly they live in the heart and thought of father and mother—their requirements are all anticipated, their frailties and peculiarities understood; food for their bodies and minds, clothes to their backs, and plenty of affection for their hearts, with stripes betimes to subdue and give them suited instruction as to being placed of God under parental authority. We find at times ungrateful children who, in exchange for the love (that which has emboldened a man or woman fearing God to endanger their lives and health to procure food, raiment, and shelter for their family), return hate, or little short of it, as pout and *contemptuous putting from them of temporal mercies* is seen. With what sorrow and heaviness of heart such a spectacle is viewed.

Isaiah must receive a vision, and the heavens and earth are called to witness, concerning His ways with Judah. He had nourished children, brought them up, He who never erred or failed, petted or spoiled, or gave undue chastening or encouraging—everything in proportion—yet it must be said, and the Holy One hath spoken it: "They have rebelled against Me . . . they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."

Moses witnesses the same character of things in Ex. xvi. A people who had groaned, for their burdens were so great in Egypt; for whom a leader and deliverer had been raised up from the most unlikely quarter, a sea opened in a place of death, a sure passage made through, aliens cast back in ignominious defeat; yet God's purpose missed, so far as their hearts and minds were concerned, for murmuring was heard there against Moses and Aaron, aye, a greater than Moses and Aaron, for it was against the Lord, which no re-assurance of a good land ahead was sufficient to silence. Supply of flesh and manna was no mark of His approval on this occasion, but of having heard murmurs from such as should have adoringly worshipped Him.

An antidote to all dishonour is found in "This do for a remembrance of Me." Not a land, but a Person who fills all things and satisfies the heart. How much of self-judgment there would be did we but know how erring and wandering we are. Do all our thoughts centre upon Christ? Are our hearts expressing constant thanks and praise for those set of Him to edify and build us up in our most holy faith? Are we exercised and obedient to His Word, "esteeming others better than ourselves"? As we think of this, and contemplate results which have followed upon undue occupation with the vessel of testimony in its appearance of infirmity, often is reckoning carried out in a carnal way which looks more upon outward

appearance, more upon what is of earth than the treasure the vessel contains or the rich food the servant brings to edify His own. This picking and choosing who should feed, and what the food should comprise—setting aside of such as He in love and wisdom fits to serve Him—showed those sad features of murmur and revolt which drew forth for admonition such pictures as given us in the Word. Children revolting are shown us in Isaiah i.; such as go from their principles are found in Jude, who must hear (when God's grace has been abused and applied to fleshly advantage): "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish." Such as despise lordship, speak railingly against dignities, who corrupt themselves.

Judgment against evil is fully revealed in the gospel: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* who hold the truth in unrighteousness." With this accords fully Enoch's prophecy (Jude 14, 15, 16); and, finally, absence of feasting and gloom of darkness for eternity will be in place of that false peace which poor mockers get themselves into who walk after their own lusts of ungodliness. As surely as He who cried, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! . . . Bethsaida! . . . Capernaum"—yea, less tolerable in the day of judgment than for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, for the latter had corrupted themselves, but had not had such marvellous privileges as the former.

Still greater have been the advantages and opportunities of Christendom, who, alas! have boasted in outward ordinances; they have had religion to the full—sad to say, it is after the order of Cain, unacceptable to God; sitting in seats of judgment, speaking great swelling words for the sake of profit, until judgment is passed

in pride upon His servants, upon His Son, upon His Word, and but a refuge of lies is left. But for such as obey not the gospel, but turn to murmuring and complaining, what an undeceiving there will be.

Despising is done in such subtle ways. It may be seen in the man gathering sticks, or men seeking manna on the Sabbath; a preference for this preacher or that character of meeting; using the assembly for eating and drinking purposes, selfish advantage, &c. (1 Cor. xi. 22, 23); and not embracing with worshipful heart opportunity afforded through such means to hear and do what He has directed. Oh! the loss, in how many cases eternal loss, in all cases where souls rest in empty profession, who feast without fear, who yield no obedience to our blessed God when He says, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." It is the Lord who rebukes those of the contrary part. It is He who pronounces woe unto them who have gone in the way of Cain and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. It is the part of Satan to accuse brethren. It was an attempt of his to turn aside men of faith, full of the Holy Ghost, when murmuring arose, as shown in Acts vi.; but instead of that murmuring rising to such a height until utter corruption covered the scene, more happy, hearty toilers in the Word were vouchsafed, and the cry was hushed—the conclusion of the apostle was, "We will give ourselves up to prayer and the ministry of the Word." This higher, or lower criticism, evil speaking, fault-finding spirit lays bare a most horrible state of departure—moral corruption—and yet such marked impotency to minister the Word in the power of the Spirit, such slowness to discern. His continued supplies is no more a token of our going on humbly and in brokenness in His fear than the supply of flesh marked His

pleasure in that people who sojourned forty years in the wilderness.

As saints, priests, and worshippers who have worshipped the Father, and have called upon the Father, have we not forgotten His character is holy, our walk in the light and by faith, our worship by the Spirit, our warfare by the Word? Have we pondered sufficiently the One in whose mouth no guile was found, who when reviled reviled not again? Of one mind, having compassion one of another, loving to the brethren, pitiful, courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit blessing. Let us ponder His ways of perfect grace with us, who has not held us by the throat, or used threatenings, but has forgiven us, justified us from all things, overcome evil by good, giving us water—living water; bread—true bread; who looketh for fruit and encourageth us to be imitators of God. Alas! how short we have come. May shamefacedness and sobriety characterise us, true humility and girding up of loins, as those who wait for Him. W. B.

A SONG OF JESUS' LOVE.

LORD Jesus, my Saviour,
How great is Thy love!
I am blest with Thy favour,
All favour above.
No worthiness, merit,
Or goodness I claim;
'Tis all of Thy mercy,
And all for Thy Name.

And I know that this favour
Shall ne'er pass away;
For, Lord, whom Thou lovest
Thou lovest for aye.
Though oft I'm forgetful,
Thy promise is true,
And because I am feeble
Thou wilt bear me through.

And oh, bounteous Saviour!
Thy love has bestowed
A glorious prospect
To brighten my road;
The prospect of sharing—
With Thee who art Heir
And Owner by purchase—
Inheritance fair.

But more! For Thy glory
Alone it shall be;
The display of Thy mercy
All praise brings to Thee.
And—worlds then beholding
The fruits of Thy grace—
Thou chiefest in glory
Shalt have Thy true place.

H. S.

THE KINGDOM AND THE RAPTURE.

Luke xvii. 21 ; xix. 11 ; xxi. 8 ; *Acts* i. ; *John* xiv. 2 ; *1 Cor.* xv. 23 ;
1 Thess. iv. 16-17 ; *Rev.* iv.

NOW in *John* xiv. 2 there is not a single thought in the Lord's mind, as it is conveyed to us in words, that any necessary delay attaches to that moment, or that before we can be taken to meet Him in the air a single thing need take place. Why cannot the Lord enter upon His kingdom? Because He must first change the scene. Christ and Belial cannot reign together. The earth must be prepared for the glory. But what does He tell us in *John* xiv.? He is doing now, by His presence in heaven for the resurrection saints, the very thing that judgment will do by-and-by for the earth. Heaven must be prepared for us ; but the Lord does not tell us that that scene wants judgment! The presence of the Lord Jesus in heaven is all that is needed to get it ready for us. Judgment is not needed there.

Then in *1 Cor.* xv. 23 we get the story of the resurrection again. And is there a single word there that tells me of delay before I get my glorified body? Ah, no! there is the thing shining and glittering before me, for which everything is ready. It may take place to-morrow ; yea, this day.

So, when we travel on to *1 Thess.* iv. 16-17, there we find the rapture of our glorified bodies. I take up my glorified body in *1 Cor.* xv., I carry it up to heaven in *1 Thess.* iv. And is there a single suggestion here that that cannot take place till something takes place before it? No. Here we are in company, not with the manifestation of the kingdom, but with the children of the resurrection. The saints of glory in heaven is a different mystery, and connected with a different line of thought. I am a liar if I say the kingdom is immediately to appear. I am astray if I say I may not be glorified to-morrow.

If we keep in mind these two mysteries, they will

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introduce us to 2 Thess. ii., because the Spirit there (as we found before) comforts them against fearing the day of the Lord by the coming of the Lord, thus distinguishing these two things. Therefore, the saints of the light, or day, are to comfort themselves by the thought of the coming against the thought of the day with its terrors. Let us keep these two mysteries apart always in our minds.

Then in Rev. iv. we read of "a door opened in heaven;" and when John looked in, he saw the glorified saints there. How they got there we know by 1 Cor. xv. 23 and 1 Thess. iv. 16-17; but when they got there no Scripture tells me. They are there when God pleases; the fulness of that time is known to Him. So I say in this cluster of Scriptures, we are in company with two distinct mysteries, the manifestation of the kingdom here and the appearing of the sons of glory there. J. E. B.

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AN act of discipline, according to God, of any assembly is for the whole Church, and binding upon it. Is it not bound in heaven? To be explicit, a person righteously put away in Corinth is out of communion with the whole Church of God. He is out at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Rome. He could not go to Ephesus and have his case re-opened there: that would be to appeal from the judgment of heaven. This grows out of the truth of the One body: to deny it in word or in deed would be *to say that there is not* One body, but many. Oh, how God's people have neglected this! We cannot refrain from pointing out here the necessity of letters of commendation between the assemblies of God (2 Cor. iii. 2) for those not known. The neglect of this brings in carelessness, a disregard for the Lord's honour, and may be the cause of much sorrow. Let the wordly-minded scoff; God

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has intrusted His people with a priceless treasure, has made them guardians of the honour of His holy Name: let them take care. But it may be asked, Is it not begging the question to say a decision is bound in heaven *if* it be righteous? Is not this the very thing to be proved? And must not every act of discipline be examined before it can be accepted?

Our first answer must be—we cannot get on without God. We have the Holy Spirit present in the Church for the very reason that we could never get on by ourselves. We should be like a houseful of children—orphans—without the Comforter. He being present, to guide according to the Word, will and does give confidence to the Church in those so guided. Suspicion will have no place, but fullest confidence. We believe unless we are compelled not to believe. Difficult cases will not be of frequent occurrence: when they do occur, what is the remedy?

Let us suppose an assembly has unrighteously put away a person not really wicked. It comes to the ears of Christians elsewhere, and they are bound to take knowledge of it. But how? Not assuredly taking up the subject at a distance, and going over it. The presumption is always in favour of the righteousness of the act, and the suspected person most assuredly could not be received when under discipline. Let them go to their brethren in the assembly where the judgment has been given. They will, if in the right, be most ready to spread the case before the enquirers, and give all the reasons for their action. If mistaken, they will gladly retract on its being made plain to them.—*Help and Food*, Jan., 1895.

LOST, LOST!—I find that “the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” I put my finger on that word, and say, I’m the lost one, and I cry out, “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

ONE OF GOD'S suffering saints wrote: "I protest in the presence of that all-discerning Eye, who knoweth what I write and what I think, that I would not want the sweet experience of the consolations of God, for all the bitterness of affliction; nay, whether God come to His children with a rod or a crown, if He come Himself with it, it is well! Welcome, welcome, Jesus, what way soever Thou comest, if we can get a sight of Thee!"

"HE SHALL BE CALLED A NAZARENE"—not as a specific prophecy, but the tenor of the prophets generally.

WE HAVE BEEN TOLD it is "the *duty* of the man of science to *push-back* the Great First Cause in time as far as possible." The beauty and blessedness of Scripture consists in its persistent effort to bring God nigh.

LET FAITH but climb the tree of prayer, and watch and wait; the Lord will surely pass that way.

JABEZ (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10).—Chap. ii. 55 favours the impression that he was of the family of the Kenites, descendants of Hobab, a Cushite, who came with Israel at Moses' express invitation (Num. x. 29), and his children dwelt among the people of Judah (Judges i. 16). A Kenite could not claim a portion *in* Israel; yet he might call on the God of Israel, and ask to be blessed with Israel.

DATHAN AND ABIRAM, with their children, went down alive into the pit. "Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not" (Num. xvi. 11). These appear to have left their father alone in his wickedness; and of the sons of the very man who disputed the authority of Moses and Aaron came that prophet who spake unto Israel, and said, "It is Jehovah that advanced Moses and Aaron" (1 Sam. xii. 6-8).

"THE SONS OF THE STRANGER" were not overlooked when the Lord bountifully blessed Israel. "When He writeth up the people," the Holy Ghost graciously includes in the list of David's mighty men; Zelek the Ammonite (1 Chron. xi. 39), Uriah the Hittite (ver. 41), and Ithmar the Moabite (ver. 46). In this connection we would also mention Ittai the Gittite, whose faithfulness to David when a fugitive rebuked an ungrateful nation (2 Sam. xv. 19-23), and was rewarded by his being made one of the chief commanders of David's army (xviii. 2). Honourable mention is also made of Ornan the Jebusite, who readily offered to give his threshing-floor, oxen, and implements to his acknowledged sovereign lord, the King of Israel (1 Chron. xxi. 18-28).

STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD should be like taking a survey from the top of Nebo, the whole of the land from Dan to Beersheba beneath our eyes, and everywhere flowing with milk and honey. Mental work, to a certain point, is most refreshing, and, where the Bible is the theme, toil is delight. Classics and mathematics may exhaust us, but not the volume of our Father's grace, the charter of our joys, the treasury of our wealth.

PEACE is love reposing—love in the green pastures, beside the still waters. It is that great calm which comes over the conscience when it sees the atonement sufficient and the Saviour willing. It is unclouded azure in a lake of glass. It is the soul which Christ has pacified spread out in serenity and simple faith, and the Lord God merciful and gracious smiling over it.—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

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THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.—The Lord has His own personal way of making His love and grace to be known and experienced by those of His children who are in suffering and persecution; and with this a stranger may not intermeddle. There are love-passages between Himself and His saints, which wonderfully sustain them even in the fiercest fires. “Oh, massa,” said a poor female *slave* who had been lying *ill* on a mat in her wretched hut *for a year*, “me glad to see you; me thought me should die, and not be able to tell you how good our Lord is. Oh, massa, Him too good, too good for me, poor nigger!”

AN OLD PURITAN relates how God answered prayer at a time of calamity. Some pious passengers were in a ship which had sprung a leak. *They* prayed, whilst the *seamen* laboured at the pumps without result. At length they espy the water at a stand, and so get into port; when, on examining the ship, they found a hole in her side exactly filled up by *a fish*. “Thus” (as in the case of the tribute money), “whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He, in heaven and in earth, *in the seas*, and in all deep places” (Ps. cxxxv. 6).

“THOU WILT MAKE all his bed in his sickness” (Ps. xli. 3). What! doth the Lord turn bed-maker to His sick ones? Herein is love indeed! Grace gives patience, and God’s smile gives peace, and the bed is made soft because the heart is content; the pillows are downy when the head is peaceful. And it is *all* his bed the Lord maketh—that is, from head to foot. What considerate and indefatigable kindness!

“Oh, the terrible cares, the temptations and snares,

That our God has conducted us through!

Oh, the blessings bestowed by His bountiful hand,

And the mercies eternally new!”

THE NAME of Bethel, or of a Canaanite village near, was Luz, which signifies an almond tree; and it is of interest that the almond tree is the earliest tree in blossom, and so, as a symbol of the resurrection, has its place in the golden candlestick; while the rod of Aaron, type of Christ in His priesthood, blossomed with almonds.

LUKE XXII. 43.—We know not in what trembling way the angel-comforter stooped to minister to the lonely heart—whether with timid, worshipful touch he dared to raise the bowed and drooping head, laying a cool hand upon His burning forehead, where the purple dewdrops were thickly gathered; or whether he cleansed away the blood that dripped from the open veins, as the moisture oozes from the moss-clad rocks; or whether he only looked upon the face of the great Sufferer with bright, angelic eyes, dim now with something like human tears, while silence was preserved inviolate, and gave its unspoken homage to so divine and incomprehensible a sorrow. Blessed is it for us to know that these heavenly spirits, in all their colossal might and the splendour of their power, are by Him who is Lord of angels engaged to be now in a continual ministry to the Church, which is His body.

THOU HEAREST daily, O man among the faithful, “Lift up your heart”; and, as if thou heardest just otherwise, thou buriest thy heart in the earth! Oh, leave the world. Harken to me, ye poor! What have ye not, if ye have Christ? Hear, ye rich! What have ye, if ye have not Christ?

ABRAM had to leave Mesopotamia and to cross the "great river," the Euphrates. This separated him entirely from his old home and country, and hence the Canaanites gave to him the name of the "Hebrew"—the man who had *crossed* the river—the emigrant from Mesopotamia. Then he passed the great Syrian desert, and, though his route is not mentioned in Scripture, we may suppose that he tarried at Damascus, since Eliezer, "the steward of his house," was a native of that place. Quitting Damascus, Abram crossed the Jordan, and, entering the Holy Land, passed into the valley of Shechem, or Sichem, "unto the *plain* of Moreh" (more properly the oaks of Moreh), between mounts Ebal and Gerizim. Here God appeared to him again, and gave him the *second promise* of the possession of the land by his seed; and here Abram built the first of those altars to Jehovah which the patriarchs erected wherever they pitched their tents. Thus Sichem was his first halting-place in the Holy Land.—*Smith's O. T. History*.

"I AM WITH THEE" (Isa. xli. 10). He was with Joseph in the house of his master, and with him in the prison; with Moses in the wilderness, and with Joshua in Canaan. He was with Daniel in the lions' den; with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace; with Stephen under the stones of his enemies, and with Paul at the bar of Cæsar. His very Name is Immanuel, God with us.

"NO DROP of the ocean, even at its greatest depth (four or five miles), is for one moment at rest, said Captain Wharton at the British Association Meeting. "The troubled sea—it cannot rest" (Isa. lvii. 20).

FROM THE most minute to the most magnificent, all creatures of God feel the sway of order, and they well observe the laws imposed by their Creator.

The very law that moulds a tear
And bids it trickle from its source,
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course.

A MINISTER records that on his conversion, at the age of seventeen, he was baptised, and on his return home his mother shut the door in his face. Handing him out his small bundle of clothes, she said, "You have no longer any home here. Your father is so angry that I think he would murder you if you came in now." That night he slept with the calves, and for a fortnight he knew no better bed! His ejection was chiefly due to the lady of whom the small farm was rented, who had said that, unless they turned him out, she would turn out them. Years passed, and she was as bitter as ever against him. When much advanced in life, being on a visit to London, she was asked to go to a neighbouring chapel, and, out of curiosity, went. The sovereign grace of God met her there, and she wrote to the preacher—whom she then found to be the son of her tenants, the young man she had persecuted—and became the comfort and help of his life in the Lord's work, rejoicing in that Gospel she would once have destroyed.

"UNITE MY HEART to fear Thy Name" (Ps. lxxxvi. 11). As a double-minded man is of constant instability, so a divided heart is a standing treachery. In true loyalty may we be able to say, "*With my whole heart have I sought Thee*" (Ps. cix. 10).

"HE SHOWED ME a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1). Clear as crystal is that river of joy, with no soil of sin and no shadow of death; and it proceeds from the *throne*! Not from God's mercy alone, but from His absolute sovereignty, His unchangeable glory, His satisfied justice. For it is *the throne of God and of the Lamb*!

THE LORD'S DAY.—Said a young man, "I maintain that Sunday ought to be a general holiday, and the people ought not to be kept out of such places as the Zoological Gardens, Crystal Palace, &c., where they would find both health and amusement. I would have the Sunday used for recreation." An elderly gentleman quietly replied: "Recreation! Yes, that is the very word, and quite meets my views. If some people I know were once *re-created*, they would want very little of the so-called recreation which they now make so much of!

NEVER are we nearer to God than when we are nearest to trouble.
—*Bishop Hall*.

"A GARDEN ENCLOSED is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." A garden is a plot of ground separated from plots of land outside. So is the Church. The Church is a separate thing from the world. I suppose there is no such thing as a "Christian world." I never saw it; I do not think I ever shall. I know there is such a thing as a worldly Christian. I have seen that kind of being. But the Church of God is not of the world. "Ye are not of the world," saith Christ, "even as I am not of the world." Attempts have been made many times to make the Church take in the world, and wherever it has succeeded it has come to this result—the world has sucked in the Church. It must be so. The greater is sure to swamp the less.—*Spurgeon*.

"WOULD'ST thou go forth to bless, be sure of thine own ground;
Fix well *thy centre* first, then draw thy circles round."

—*Archbishop Trench*.

EPITAPH on a young girl's tombstone in Ipswich cemetery:—

"Who plucked this flower?"

'The Master.'

The gardener held his peace!"

From an old tombstone in Suffolk:—

"Christ is a path, if any be misled;

He is a robe, if any naked be;

If any chance to hunger, He is bread;

If any should be weak, how strong is He!"

From one in the Isle of Man:—

"All, all on earth is *shadow*; all beyond is *substance*."

Epitaph on Bishop Heber, obit 1826:—

"Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,

Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb;

Thy Saviour has passed the portals before thee,

And the lamp of His love is thy guide through the gloom.

Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,

Whose God was thy Ransom, thy Guardian and Guide;

He gave thee, He took thee, and He will restore thee;

And death has no sting, for the Saviour has died."

THE TWO APPOINTMENTS AND THE THREE APPEARINGS.

Heb. ix. 24-28.

IN the midst of this Scripture we have the two appointments which God has made with the sinner, "It is appointed unto men once *to die*, but after this *the judgment*." These are not for the believer; for the Lord said to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live also," and He said to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John xi. 26). The believer has already passed from *death* unto *life*, and shall not come into *judgment*. But this is written of men as men, for all such are sinners, and the soul that sinneth it shall die. This is the divine award, God's sentence of death on account of transgression. This is His appointment as to *death*; and, moreover, we read in Acts xvii. 31, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will *judge* the world in righteousness." These are His two appointments with the sinner, and every sinner has to keep these two appointments with God. There is no possibility of his breaking either of these appointments, or any means of shirking them; the sinner must meet God in death and in judgment! As the apostle Peter says, "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner *appear*?" The only answer is, he must *appear before God*. Now this leads us to the next branch of our subject: the Lord Jesus Christ has in grace *appeared for us*. We have the word "appear" three times connected with the place occupied by the Lord Jesus. Each is full of interest and worthy of consideration, for these places are taken by Him in grace. His own essential place is on the eternal throne of God-head glory. But He is here seen as taking new positions, and, as we have said, *in grace*.

First, He has appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and it is

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added, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." It needs no words of ours to point out what an entirely new place the Lord Jesus is there seen to occupy. Because of that root of sin which Satan had introduced, the fruit of which was seen in the sins which we had committed, Christ appeared in this world. When the world had become hoary in its guilt, for that is what we may understand by "the end of the world"; when man had proved himself under all circumstances utterly astray from God, and his heart in rebellious enmity against Him—dead in trespasses and sins—Christ appeared, in the world and as God's gift to the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Observe that He came in order to address Himself once for all, that is, finally and effectually, to the great problem of sin and sins. Without admitting any question of why God should have permitted evil to enter His fair and innocent creation, we are met with two grave facts which yield to none other in importance to us—(1) that this great upas tree of sin is found flourishing in the world, and its fatal fruits are profusely scattered over the whole face of the earth; and (2) that God in His rich grace has given His Son to grapple with this terrible condition of man here, and thus he appeared once in the end of the age to put away sin and to bear the sins of many.

But next observe at what a mighty cost this had to be accomplished. God had to expend what was to Him the whole wealth of heaven, the very Koh-i-noor on the diadem of His eternal glory; He had to give His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the free gift of His love to a guilty world! And this *He did*—blessed be His name—that we might not perish, but have everlasting life. He "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us." At what a cost was it to Christ also! Who can estimate the sorrow and the suffering, the malice and the hatred, the indignation and the wrath, implied in those words, by the *sacrifice*

of Himself? when He who was the Burnt-offering and the Sin-offering and the Trespass-offering all in one, became the Victim of the consuming fire of God's holiness—by the Eternal Spirit offering Himself without spot unto God! Yes, it was only by the sacrifice of Himself—a sacrifice which is utterly and necessarily without a parallel—that a single sinner could have been won for God and for His glory. But who among men can adequately appraise the untold anguish covered by those solemn words—the *sacrifice of Himself!*

But, we proceed; He not only died, but was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and has ascended up on high leading captivity captive! This brings us to the *second* place which He has taken on the ground of divine grace. As we read in our chapter, "Now to appear in the presence of God for us" (ver. 24). If we have in the first a blessed provision of divine grace for the sinner, we have in this second a no less gracious provision for the believer, and, may I not say, a no less necessary one? Even when our terrible condition as guilty and ruined sinners has been met by the blood of Christ, how could we ever proceed even a step in the divine life had we not a great High-priest over the house of God and an Advocate with the Father? By His session at the right hand of God, in the exercise of His priesthood, and by that alone, are we enabled here to stand for Him, even in any little measure, as His witnesses; and when failure overtakes us, alas, how often! it is by His advocacy with the Father, and by that alone, we get restoration of soul and renewal of communion, tasting again with chastened hearts the joys of His salvation. These two positions which Christ has filled and fills, are in view in Romans v. 10: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life;" these being the two-fold result of the work

done on earth and that now being done in heaven by Him who gave Himself unto death to be our Saviour, and lives for us before God as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls and Captain of our salvation. His Name be eternally praised !

Lastly, He shall appear without, or apart from, sin unto salvation (ver. 28). *In the past*, He appeared on earth once for all to settle the whole question of sins ; how truly was it *for us* ! Now, in the present, He appears in the presence of God ; this, too, is "*for us*." And in the future also He gives us the blessed assurance that *for us* who "look for Him" shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Beautifully and blessedly did He comfort the sorrowing hearts of His attached disciples when He said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3). Yes, He who died for us lives for us, and He who lives for us is coming for us. Once He appeared in the world ; now He appears before the face of God ; soon He will appear in the glory, and we shall then appear with Him, and also in glory, for we shall be glorified together ! (Col. iii. 4 ; Rom. viii. 17).

Oh, my reader, are these infinite and eternal realities to your soul ? What a solemn contrast to the blessedness of what we have been considering is found in the 27th verse of this chapter (Heb. ix.) : "It is appointed unto men once to die." That of itself is solemn enough to the soul that sinneth ; but there is yet another thing—it is appointed of God equally as much as the other, that "after this the judgment."

Thus God's righteousness, holiness, and truth involve these two judicial appointments for the sinner in his sins ; and, let me add, they are appointments that, as I have said, the sinner will find *he has to keep* ! But the mercy and love of God has provided for the believer these three gracious appearings of the Lord Jesus Christ, past, present, and to come, that our past,

our present, and our future may be fully and for ever met according to the overflowing aboundings of His grace.

Oh, dear reader, cast yourself in simple faith thereon, open your heart to the great love of God, and then you will be relieved, as otherwise you can never be, of keeping those dread appointments of death and judgment against which Scripture so solemnly warns those who neglect this great salvation.

THE DIVINITY OF THE LAMB.—*Rev. v.*

INTERESTING indeed is the portion of the divine Word contained in the fifth chapter of the Revelation. How often is it read. As part of the vision which embraces the previous chapter, it projects the reader, as it were, into the future, presenting a scene so vividly described as to make one feel like a spectator and listener to all that goes on. This is what a prophetic vision can do. The word of revelation can foretell what is to be, recounting the attending circumstances, as well as the causes which lead up to it. We read it, then, as history ; but of the future, not of the past. A prophetic vision, however, can so place the reader in the future as to present things as if passing before his eyes. The prediction reveals what is to be ; the vision presents it as if actually and livingly in existence.

Reading, then, this fifth chapter of the Revelation, we are permitted, as side by side with the writer in spirit, to look through the door opened into the heavens, and to witness what is described as taking place therein. How varied is the teaching that may be drawn from this chapter ! Are Christians and Old Testament sain'ts to be in their very bodies in heaven ? This portion leaves no doubt of that. For it is not disembodied spirits that are enthroned, but persons in their glorified bodies who sit there. Their resurrection has consequently taken place—a resurrection *from* the dead, for many will still be sleeping in the tombs

when these will have sat down on their thrones on high. The scene, too, depicts them in their priestly character of interceders, with golden vials full of the prayers of saints still on trial on earth, and so symbolises them all under twenty-four elders, analagous to the twenty-four courses of the Aaronic priesthood. For they all are priests unto God.

Is the destiny of this world confided to the crucified One? Yes, indeed; for He is here seen taking the book out of the hand of Him who sits on the throne, and, therefore, with His full permission to open in due order the seals of it one by one, and thus to disclose what must take place upon earth. To Him, and to Him alone, does it appertain to do this (5).

Can the precious blood of Christ give to sinners holy boldness before the throne? Assuredly it can, and it does; for here are seen those who had sinned on earth in happy, holy boldness in the very presence of their God, and making mention of the blood of the Lamb shed on their behalf. Previously engaged in praising Him who sits on the throne (iv. 11), every voice is silenced when the angel's challenge is heard: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (v. 2). None of them forget—how could they?—what they had been on earth, or the ruin caused by the fall. Perfect silence pervades the whole company; yet, when the Lamb takes the book to open it, everyone's mouth is opened, and all are free. The remembrance of that precious blood gives them boldness and freedom of spirit in the very presence of their God. Never, never shall we forget that blood. Never, never will it be a theme worn out, or too low for saints in heaven to celebrate with gladness of heart.

To another light, however, in which this chapter may be viewed, we desire to attract attention. Who is the Lamb who is the object of such attention and adoration?* He is the One who has died, and who,

* *Arnion*, not *amnos*, is the word here employed. *Amnos* is used of a sacrificial lamb in lxx., and so of the Lord in the New Testament

though in heaven, bears the marks of His passion. "A lamb as it had been slain"—such is the description; who is Lion, too, of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David (Rev. v. 5, 6). A Man clearly of the race of Israel, and the source of David's kingly power! Moreover, He has died. But more: He is a divine Person—God and Man in one Person. There is but One of whom this ever was true, and ever will be true. And of His divinity this chapter bears witness—abundant witness.

But such a truth, though an important article of the Christian faith, is denied by some, and its acceptance determinedly resisted. Interesting, then, and instructive it is to see in the record of this chapter what those in heaven can say about it, and in what light they regard it.

We know that when the Lord was on earth the Jews stumbled over this truth: how He, a Man, made Himself equal with God (John v. 18), and made Himself God (x. 33). It was a startling truth, we can well understand; yet Old Testament Scriptures should have prepared minds to receive it. Of Messiah's birth Isaiah had sung, and Micah the Morasthite had written. The former declared that He would be called, among other names, "The mighty God" (Isaiah ix. 6); the latter taught that His "goings forth were of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2). Rightly, then, and in the fullest sense could He be called Immanuel, *i.e.*, God with us (Isaiah vii. 14). Sojourning here on earth, with death in prospect, we learn from the quotation from Psalm cii. 24-27, that He, who would die as a man, and thus terminate His existence on earth in humiliation, was really the Creator of all things, and whose years have no end. Heb. i. 10-12 is the authority for this statement.

(John i. 29, 36; 1 Peter i. 19). *Arnion*, a diminutive appellation, is used once in the lxx. of Jeremiah (xi. 19). This term met with in the New Testament, and in the singular only in the Revelation, and there always applied to the Lord, presents Him as the One who has died, put to death by men.

Further, rejected by men, crucified by them in contempt, and in hatred of God and of His Son, He sits now, where none but One who is God can sit, viz., at the righthand of Jehovah, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool (Psalm cx. 1). Has the world seen the last of Him whom they crucified? No; He is coming back, and Psalm xlv. gives a personal description of Him as returning—the King coming back in power, a Man, yet also God (6, 7).^{*} Thus on this mystery, which we cannot fathom, that union in one Person of Deity with Humanity, the Old Testament is by no means reticent.

In due time He came, fore-announced by Gabriel, and heralded by John the Baptist. As was fitting, He Himself declared and maintained this cardinal truth as to His Person. On that eventful evening with Nicodemus in Jerusalem, He uttered a clear statement about it as He spoke of Himself both as the *Son of Man* come down from heaven, and yet in heaven at the same time, and also as the *only begotten Son of God* (John iii. 13, 16, 18). There is but one only begotten Son of God, and that speaks of His eternal generation. He re-affirmed this truth as to His Person at the preliminary examination on the night before His cross (Mark xiv. 61-64), when questioned by the high priest. He again asserted it before the Sanhedrin on the morning of His crucifixion (Luke xxii. 67-70). All understood the meaning of His reference to Dan. vii. 13, though all His judges refused its application to the One standing at their bar. Is it true, then, that He is God as well as Man? Have we interpreted Old Testament Scripture aright in drawing that conclusion? Are His claims as to His Person to be admitted? If men on earth reject them, and His judges refused them, what will those in

^{*} We are aware, of course, of the views of some as to these verses. With Heb. i. 8, 9 before us, we believe the commonly received interpretation is the best.

heaven say about them? There surely nought but what is true will be admitted.

Now on this, our chapter of the Revelation speaks with no uncertain sound. True, we have no dogmatic announcement of the doctrine in any part of it. But we have what the reader will allow us to call undesigned evidence in confirmation of it. Undesigned we call it on the part of the actors and speakers. Testimony of that kind is often most valuable; and whilst in this case we would not rest the doctrine on it, we are free to call attention to it as fully supporting what we have culled from both the Old and the New Testaments.

The Lamb takes the book from Him who sits on the throne. Immediately the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are prostrate before Him (8). In the previous chapter (iv. 10), the elders are seen prostrate before Him who sits on the throne. In xix. 4, the elders and the four living creatures are together in worship before God on the throne. What conclusion is to be drawn from their attitude in chap. v. 8? Did not the Lamb, when on earth, tell the devil that worship was to be rendered only to God? "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Luke iv. 8). Yet here He receives such adoration. Are not the living creatures the supporters of God's throne (Rev. iv. 6)? And do we not there see them absorbed in proclaiming the holiness of Him who sits as God thereon? Would the Lamb accept homage due only to God, if He is not in Himself God? Would those living creatures prostrate themselves before Him in the presence of God on His throne, if they knew that the Lamb was only a creature? Would the true God, who will not give His glory to another, allow of such homage in His presence to be rendered to one who owed his existence to His creative power? Impossible! Three impossibilities there are. *First*: That the Lamb should willingly receive such homage. *Second*: That

the living creatures should render it. *Third*: That God on His throne could permit it ; unless it be true, that the Lamb who died is God as well as man.

As yet, but the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders have rendered divine homage to the Lamb. Now we read how the whole angelic host present before the throne take their part in this scene. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands open their mouths, and with one accord proclaim that the Lamb is worthy "to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). Observe, they do not address Him as God, but speak of Him as man. What, then, are we to say of their utterance? What is its import? Rev. vii. 11-12 will show to any its significance. In the latter passage the whole angelic host are seen worshipping God, and ascribing to Him "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might." Compare their utterances. Are they speaking in the latter case to God, and in the former (v. 12) to one who is only a creature? What is there in their language to mark that? True, the terms used are not all the same in the two instances. To the Lamb they ascribe riches—to God they ascribe thanksgiving. All else is the same. Does this difference mark the pure humanity of the Lamb, as only a man, and the true deity of Him who is on the throne? Certainly not. The ascriptions of praise are so similar, that we cannot escape from the conclusion, that in the eyes of the angels the Lamb is also divine. Angels must know who is God and who is not. If men here profess their inability to settle the question of the Lamb's claim to be God as well as man, that to the angelic host is plain beyond a shadow of a doubt. Their ascription to Him in the very presence of God shows, in a measure not to be mistaken, what they think of His person. They know that He is God.

Made lower than angels, He is yet far above them.

How valuable is their testimony, for they saw Him in various circumstances when here in humiliation. They looked down on Him when a babe in the manger ; they saw Him a hungry man in the wilderness, and ministered to Him ; they beheld Him a weary man at the well ; they knew Him as a tempted man in the garden, prostrate on the ground before His Father, and strengthened in His agony by angelic ministration. With the scene of the cross they were all, of course, perfectly familiar, and watched, doubtless, as Joseph rolled the stone to close the door of the sepulchre. If any creatures, then, might have questioned His divinity, who more naturally could have done it than the angels? All, however, are agreed that the Lamb is worthy to receive praise such as is suited, they own, only for their God.

Another testimony is next presented. John heard every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, lifting up their voice. It was the united utterance of what we must call, in contrast to men and angels, non-intelligent creation. The action of the Lamb in taking the book evokes from them all a response, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." God and the Lamb are thus associated, and to be so for ever and ever. Could God and a mere creature be thus associated? Could He allow it? All will see the incongruity of that. But here non-intelligent creation is united in what is said, using language only justified of the Lamb as divine.

Is creation right in what it says and does? Proof of that is immediately forthcoming. The four living creatures say, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped. There the divine record stops ; and how significantly? The scene thus closes with the elders worshipping together God and the Lamb. The utterance of non-intelligent creation the living creatures, as we here see, fully endorse, and the

elders admit its correctness, as they then fall before God and before the Lamb.

Four distinct attestations have we here of the Lamb's true deity: the living creatures, the elders, the angels, and non-intelligent creatures. The mind in heaven is one, and throughout creation the witness is the same. *All* the living creatures, *all* the elders, *all* the angels, and *all* created things in heaven and on earth, under the earth, and in the sea, are agreed. Who doubts it? Only men priding themselves, it may be, on their sagacity and powers of mind refuse to admit the truth confessed in heaven, and owned throughout creation, that the Lamb, who is man, is also very and eternal God. C. E. S.

THE LORD'S HUMANITY.

THAT Christ was truly man in thought, feeling, and sympathy is a truth of cardinal blessing and fundamental importance to our souls. But I have learnt, thereby, not that humanity is not real humanity if there is a divine spring of thought and feeling in it; but that God can be the spring of thought and feeling in it, without its ceasing to be truly and really man. This is the very truth of infinite and unspeakable blessedness that I have learnt. This, in its little feeble measure, and in another and derivative way, is true of us now, by grace. He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. This is true in Jesus in a yet far more important and blessed way. There was once an innocent man left to himself; the spring of thought and feeling being simply man, however called on by every blessing and natural testimony of God without; we know what came of it. Then there was a man whose heart, alas! was the spring "from within," of evil thoughts and the dark train of acts that followed. What I see in

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Christ is man where God has become the spring of thought and feeling. Did He hereby cease to be man? Not at all. It is, though "according to God," in man and as man these thoughts and feelings are to be found. And this extends itself to all the sorrows and the pressure of death itself upon His soul in thought. He had human feelings as to what lay upon Him and before Him; but God was the spring of His estimate of it all. Besides, the manifestation of God was in all His ways. We had known man innocent in suitable circumstances; and guilty, subject to misery; but in Christ we have perfectness in relation to God in every way, in infallibly maintained communion in the midst of all the circumstances of sorrow, temptation, and death by which He was beset—the spring of divine life in the midst of evil, so that His every thought as man was perfection before God, and perfect in that position. This was what marked His state as being down here that new thing.

J. N. D.

 THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE LORD'S HUMANITY.

HUNGER, thirst, uneasiness are not a kind of humanity, but a state of circumstances in which it is placed. That Christ came into these circumstances is undoubted. I have not a different humanity when I am hungry and when I am full. But I am placed in a condition in which hunger and starvation may fall upon me if God permit. Who will say *if* Adam had not had food he would not have been hungry. But God had not set him in that condition. Further, even as to death there is much misapprehension. No creature is, in itself, in a state which cannot perish. That is the condition of existence of God alone, "who only hath immortality." If Adam was not mortal before he sinned, it was by God's continually

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sustaining power—we may say, by Christ's. By God's appointment, when man sinned he passed out of that state of continually sustained existence, and was not to continue beyond a limited period in his actual condition of existence. This was not humanity, but man's state, as such, when Christ came. Now, Christ came expressly to die, and took all this sorrow in its full weight upon His soul. He was made a little lower than the angels, *for the suffering of death*. But His doing this in obedience—"Lo, I come to do Thy will"—to glorify God and manifest and accomplish His love, exalt His righteousness, and be the suffering vessel of witness to the claims of this necessity, was infinitely acceptable to God, so that His relationship to God as being in flesh, and by being in it, was one of infinite acceptability to God. But, though He came on purpose to die, because of the ruined condition in which man was, to raise His people, and so was in a capacity of dying, as made lower than the angels, yet it was in such sort that it should be a matter of pure grace in Him to give up His life. He laid it down of Himself. He had authority to lay it down and authority to take it again, still in obedience. "This commandment have I received of My Father." That was the real condition of Christ's death. He came to die, but He came to *give* His life. He had life in Himself. The condition of His existence here was to lay down by grace, obediently, but of Himself, His life. He was not, as of God, in a condition of losing it. He was not in Adam's condition. For Adam could not lay down as Christ, nor take again his life, nor had he life in himself. To speak of Him as liable to death, if something had happened, is mere irreverence—(He was in a position of commanding His own death and life, but *could* do this, because of His perfection, only in obedience to His Father's will)—it is nonsense; because in the supposition is denied the condition of His existence, which was to lay it down.

J. N. D.

COMFORTING THOUGHTS FOR TROUBLED HEARTS.

IN the 11th chapter of John we have portrayed a very touching scene, and the central figure in it is none other than our blessed Lord Himself; and wherever He is seen in such a character, it is a precious sight indeed. We find that Lazarus of Bethany was sick, and his sisters sent to Jesus to inform Him, thinking, no doubt, that this was all that was necessary to bring Him at once to their side. But we find the key-note of the chapter, and, indeed, the key-note of the life of our blessed Master, in the verse which follows: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." His glory was the object He had in view, and—as will be seen from what follows—when this is the primary object, everything else falls into its proper place.

The next thing we are told is that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," and yet "He abode two days still in the same place where He was." One would naturally think that He would have hurried away to the bedside of Lazarus, and restored him to health again. But no; His thoughts are not as our thoughts, and His ways are not as our ways. He knew how God's glory and their good could be best brought about, hence His apparent indifference. He wanted to test the hearts of those He loved, in order that they might prove His sympathy in the midst of their trial.

We can easily imagine that Martha and Mary would be constantly expecting Jesus to come and raise their sick brother; and, no doubt, they would seek to cheer and encourage him with the same thought. But still the fatal disease makes rapid progress, and to all human appearance they are going to be disappointed. They see him approaching the gates of death, and their hearts begin to fail; but still

He does not come. At last, the hand of death is laid upon him, and their hopes are crushed. As far as we know, the thought of his being again restored to them never entered their minds. They knew that Jesus could heal the sick, and make the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the blind to see, but they seemed to think that His power stopped short of death itself; and this was the lesson they had to learn—that His power was infinite.

How touching and yet how simple are Martha's words to Jesus, repeated again by Mary, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" and as He witnessed their sorrow His heart melted within Him, and tears of truest sympathy were shed by Him. Here we see His humanity shining out in a way it does nowhere else. And He is the same Jesus still. He is not on earth now, but He is at the Father's right hand, and He is as able and willing to sympathise with us as He did with them on that mournful occasion; and if it is not His will to restore to health and strength those whom we love, but that they should fall asleep, we may learn a lesson from this narrative that will raise us above our trials, and recognise that although He is human He is also divine; and as He proved His divine power by calling forth Lazarus from his grave, as sure will He put forth the same power and raise those who have fallen asleep, and then we shall be re-united to them. And what can equal the joy of this? surely nothing but His own presence for evermore.

If we had asked Martha and Mary whether they thought their way or His was best, what do you think the answer would have been? Doubtless they would have said His way was the best; and while they experienced the sorrow, they were conscious of His sympathy with them in it, and then they experienced the joy of having their brother restored to them again.

May the Lord impress this on each of our hearts; and though the path may seem trying and difficult,

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may we each realise that He is with us in the trials ; and one day very soon He will come, and that divine power will be exercised to re-unite us with those who have gone before, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

J. C. H.

 THE LORD'S RETURN.

THOU, O Lord, wilt come again ;
 Thou wilt have us like Thee when
 We meet at harvest home !
 O that will be joyful ; joyful, joyful, joyful !
 O that will be joyful, when our Saviour claims His own !

Myriads saints will greet Thee there,
 Who have learnt to love Thee where
 They proved Thy grace and love !
 O that will be joyful, &c.

Many a grief and trouble now
 Pains the heart and clouds the brow,
 But none can enter there !
 O that will be joyful, &c.

Ev'ry sorrow then shall cease,
 Tears be wiped from ev'ry face,
 In that bright scene above !
 O that will be joyful, &c.

Foes and snares shall have no place ;
 There Thy glory and Thy grace
 Shall find their full display !
 O that will be joyful, &c.

All the conflict, all the fear,
 Shall be left behind us here,
 When that bright morning breaks !
 O that will be joyful, &c.

Joy unspeakable is ours—
 Faith doth put forth all her pow'rs—
 When glory is in view !
 O that will be joyful, &c.

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Come, then, Saviour ; Saviour, come,
Take Thy suffering people home,
Thus crown Thy glorious work !
O that will be joyful, &c.

Thou Thy joy hast made our own,
Thou wilt soon bestow the crown,
And share with us Thy throne !
O that will be joyful ; joyful, joyful, joyful !
O that will be joyful, when our Saviour claims His own !

THE TRUTH IN DUE PROPORTION.

IT is a wise thing to study carefully the Scripture proportion of God's teaching, and not to deviate from it, even with the best intentions. The Spirit will not be with us if we distort or misapply the word, even with the purpose of exalting Christ.

While the grand leading theme of the Spirit in the Holy Scriptures is God's thoughts about His Son, in His person, work, relationships, and glories ; yet no Scriptures would have been written if there had been no redeemed saints on earth ; and God would not have *them* to be overlooked.

The Old Testament was given to Israel ; and both Old and New were given to the Church. What happened in the past has been written for the present. Luke tells us that the Lord, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, *expounded* unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (to give that *exposition of Scripture* was the first work of the risen Saviour) ; yet 1 Cor. x. 11 tells us that besides "the things concerning Himself," there are things "*written for our admonition.*" The Church was thus *an* object to the Holy Ghost.

We are told by some that we should not look to ourselves, but always look to Christ : if this mean that all grace and truth are to be found in Him, or that we are to live by the faith of the Son of God, we

quite agree ; but there is a side, not of grace, but of responsibility, though we need grace to discharge it. If it be a matter of salvation, then the word says, "*Look unto Me and be ye saved ;*" but if a matter of responsibility there is, "*Look to yourselves*, that we lose not those things which we have wrought."

Then, again, some have said we must have Christ alone as an example. Most true ; but Scripture teaches more fully about this, *eg.*, see in Phil. ii. three *lesser examples* of devotedness in Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus—examples to us, but only as they followed Christ. "*Brethren, be followers together of me, as ye have us for an ensample.*" Again, "*Be thou an example of the believers ;*" and the Hebrews were exhorted, "*whose faith follow.*" These are the very persons who are told to be "*looking unto Jesus,*" as supreme over all the galaxy of worthies mentioned in the ancient chronicle of faith.

The Spirit of God has given the Lord His place and pre-eminence in the word, but there are Scriptures about our walk, work, and worship, as well as about the person, life, work, and glory of our Lord Jesus. Everything is natural, proportioned, sober, and unexaggerated in the word, and balanced withal, and the highest things, things that are heavenly, are given in the same chapter as earthly things. God would not have dwelt in a tent for forty years in the wilderness if Israel had not been there : nor would He be on earth now if His saints were not here as His New Testament "*habitation in the Spirit.*" His people are of value and interest to Him ; and He testifies to this by His writing so much to them concerning what they have in Christ, and also what they should be and do. His testimony gives the person of Christ a unique place, but the word speaks also "*concerning Christ and the Church.*" And so linked are we with Him in God's purpose and grace, that we cannot see Him in His official glory without at the same time seeing ourselves, and what concerns ourselves, and learning what suits Him in our walk.

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I set down these two or three things as samples of due proportion in the Holy Scriptures, that I may beseech my brethren to observe the balance of truth; and be careful to act upon it, and avoid distorting, dislocating, alienating, or exaggerating Scripture; for this can be only displeasing to God, and damaging to His saints. Such an extra Scriptural canon of interpretation, for example, as would find Christ everywhere in the book of Psalms, and the remnant of the coming day nowhere, cannot be pleasing to the Spirit, nor honouring to Him, because it is not true; nor that we should ignore all that the Spirit says regarding ourselves and our practical everyday life by way of exalting Him. Let us not dare to improve upon the Holy Ghost's *method, variety, and fulness*, from a false notion that our way is more glorifying to Christ: for not only is Christ before the mind of the Spirit in His testimony, but Christians in their privilege and responsibility are so, too, in their subordinate, yet important place. The teaching that sees nothing but Christ and His glory in God's Holy Scriptures is sure to lead to Antinomianism. It has become a grave question, why there is so much of loose living in connection with the enjoyment of high truth in our day; and whether teachers can have been rightly dividing the word of truth, giving the practical side of truth in the same proportion and with the same frequency as we find it in the Scriptures. It is, no doubt, difficult for weak, erring creatures like us to take in God's word as He has written it, and to hold the balance even between what speaks of God's grace and what speaks of the saints' responsibility, not exaggerating the one nor abating the other (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13).

The teaching has not been too doctrinal, but it is too little practical. Among the sects, responsibility has been so exclusively dwelt upon that it has been exaggerated into legalism; among those who have left them, grace and Christ have been so exclusively

preached, that in not a few instances the grace of God has been turned to lasciviousness. There is a revulsion from legalism that has a strong tendency towards Antinomianism. Neither the one set of teachers nor the other has given a facsimile of the truth of God in the proportion and balance of the word. The Scripture proportion of grace and responsibility is the thing that is wanted. We all need the teaching of the Holy Ghost to enable us to divide the word correctly, take it in spiritually, and live it out practically.

The Puritans exaggerated the Spirit's work in the soul, and its progress in knowledge and experience; and while there was much seeking after God, there was little deliverance known; but some of our modern teaching ignores the exigencies of the inner life, its health, growth, and progress, dwelling all but exclusively on objective truth. But the word of God has it otherwise. There must be growth, progress, and attainment of Christ, if Scripture injunctions are heeded by us.

The word gives exhortations to grow, fight, put off and put on, run, and make progress. "*Grow up* to Him in all things:" "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye *may grow* thereby unto salvation:" "*Grow in grace* and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:" "Your faith *groweth exceedingly*:" "He that hath begun a *good work in you will perfect it* up to the day of Jesus Christ:" "*Work out your own salvation*, for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure:" "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected, but I *press on* if so be I may lay hold of that for which also I am laid hold of by Christ" (see also verses 13-14): "Whereunto we have attained (in like mindedness), let *us* walk by the same:" "We beseech you, brethren, that ye *increase* more and more"—in love: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a

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living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service :” “ If *ye*, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, *ye* shall live.” See also Titus ii. 11-15.

Christ is God’s object—*the* Object before God, and all His other objects are in connection with Him and subordinated to Him.

The world in its misery is, no doubt, *an* object to 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 :” but Christ is *the* Object to God, and the Church is *an* object because Christ gave Himself for it : and it is now His in a real way by the Holy Ghost. God has many objects, but His testimony is about His Son in glory, and the Church connected with Him. The glory of Christ is *the* object dear to God’s heart, and whatever man may do to thwart His purpose, and to blot out His Church in its holiness, as His house on earth, He will bring it out in all its virgin freshness and bridal beauty when the marriage of the Lamb shall come, and His wife shall have made herself ready ; the children given Him shall all be presented faultless to the Father : the Church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Christ will present to Himself—holy and without blemish ; and Christ and the Church will be seen together in the holy Jerusalem set for the blessing and governing of the millennial world in the heights of heavenly glory in the kingdom of the Father ; and Christ shall reign when His enemies are made His footstool, and, then, He shall deliver up the kingdom to God and the Father. God’s purpose is to glorify His Son, who has glorified Him at all cost here below, and His object now is Christ glorified—the Christ, the Son of the living God—but as such the Christ of the mystery of God ; for God has formed a body for His Son, and a bride will one day be ready for the Lamb—and so the testimony of God is of His Son the Second Man—not of the first ; the

last Adam in the glory of God—not the first man Adam, a living soul, in this terrestrial world.

The Gospel proper is “the gospel of the glory of Christ.” No doubt we read of “the gospel of the grace of God,” but it cannot be rightly preached as dissociated from the glory of Christ, for what tells out so fully God’s sovereign action in association with Him as “grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life”? No gospel like God’s purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from a glorified Christ, who, in the fulness of time, came down in love and went up in righteousness, and who has now a body united to Him in the power of the Holy Ghost: “*The church, which is His body.*”

Well, then, may we refuse to turn from the Second Man in heaven, to the first man in his misery, knowing well that the first man in misery can only be reached and blessed through the Second Man in Glory, who is THE object before God’s mind and the delight of God’s heart.” “*Set up from everlasting.*” “*Daily His delight!*” “*And My delights were with the sons of men.*” ANON.

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH.

I SEE no more real difficulty, as regards authority, than as regards the ministry of the Word; because authority in the Church is not a place with certain powers, limited by a written law; nor something confided by men, jealous lest the authority they have given should be overstepped through the lust of power, or the ambition of the persons to whom it has been entrusted. Authority in the Church is always, like the ministry of the Word, the power of the Holy Spirit on the conscience; which, moreover, will not be found wanting. Where it exists, God will enforce, even by chastisements, the authority of His Spirit which He has lodged in a man, if that authority be

despised. The discipline of the Church also confirms it in certain cases: examples of this may be seen in the epistle to the Corinthians. If we do but believe in the presence of God in the Church, we cannot doubt that He is able to compel respect to Himself, and that in the authority which He has entrusted ; to whomsoever it may have been given. J. N. D.

LETTERS OF INTEREST.

SAN FRANCISCO, FEB. 20, 1895.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Have received as follows from R. T. G. :—"There are no gatherings with us in Spain, but some with O. B., and also with P. Street, I think. I am sincerely thankful that our dear brother is going to work in the Gospel in those needy fields. I believe it would do good to many to take a look at things there. Bob Little and myself have been out here all winter, and found an open door and blessing from God upon the Word ; some saved, and about thirty added at Los Angeles, and in other parts too a manifestly open door. Brother L. hopes to move out here, and I may come also for an indefinite stay, if God enables me. This land is cosmopolitan, and many are now accessible through reverses, &c. under God's hand ; but heresies abound. It has been a testing time for us all in many ways, meeting so many dear souls in various parts ignorant of what originated O. B. We felt the claims of Jude 22, 23. Then assured by leaders among them that things had at least changed as to 'fellowshipping evil doctrines' (which out here as to annihilationism, &c., we know was so), we were under strong pressure ; but God has shewn us mercy. Several labourers are gone from us, and are doing all they can to unsettle others. We owe you and others of our brethren across the sea a debt of gratitude for facts given, and your measure of forbearance with your 'erring brethren,' and many of us wish our links

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were more strengthened by intercourse and ministry. The day of our trust and labour will soon end, and the night of watching with it. May we be found in all things faithful, blending in due proportions the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ."—With love in Him, believe me, ever affectionately in Christ,

B. C. GREENMAN.

ON BOARD, BOUND FOR KEY WEST, FLORIDA,
FEB. 18, 1895.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—When one reflects upon the rich volume of counsels and purposes revealed—mystery hid in ages bygone, yet declared so fully to Gentiles by their apostle—how apparently lost upon our poor hearts do these unsearchable riches seem! Oh, that in power of the Spirit there might be such regard given to these divine communications as would produce like effect upon us as upon Saul of Tarsus, and that thus we might be truly started on our way, serving and suffering, with God's glorified One full in view—showing tossed ones and Himself in full association; He sustaining the vessel of testimony in her weakness, showing our sufficiency to be of Him whose Name we bear upon us, and whose way to the Father is at present connected with suffering and shame. May we seek to put His own in mind of what has been delivered, that such worshipful praise may ascend as is befitting, though but from a feeble remnant of little strength. Acts ix.; Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. i. 9, 10, iii. 1-8; Col. i. 18-29 are so unmistakable, that the marvel is such truth should ever be let slip—so little sweet savour of Christ going up to delight our blessed God from those to whom so much has been given and so much forgiven! We must of necessity ever look out of and away from ourselves if we would know patient grace, long-suffering, and unchanging love. Looking unto Jesus our search is ever rewarded, for He answers truly to that for which He gave Himself!

February 20.—Arrived, and find myself once more among those known and loved for His sake, and served because His and dear to Him. In seven years changes come, and as we know His feeble saints have been attacked with unabated venom and subtlety—this spot has been no exception—yet how much abides which is to His praise, and leads to our hearts going out in worship and thanks. Some internal sorrows have occasioned scattering, which, I trust, will result in more general humbleness; but, however many devices have been tried, His dear ones have been in the main preserved, strengthened, and added to. They need patient toil and further light to establish them more and more. It is a cause of joy that, for the most part, He who has much people in this modern Corinth has taken such tender care, though labourers are few and days evil. Rejoice with me, then, dear brother, that His word and work have prospered, and will yet be prospered of Him whose it is. Also from Bahamas I hear indirectly of much interest. It is so good after seven years' absence to look once more into the faces of those who still desire His word in grace to be addressed to them, owning with sorrow and in brokenness much failure, shortcoming, and erring, principally through ignorance; and not being much readers of written ministry, kept backward accordingly. Yet, oh how much to admire, to note, and to mark in work of faith and labour of love. These once rough stones, but now living stones, will compose His house, and no spot will mar the beauty of that which He will present to Himself blameless and faultless! Young fields are more full of promise; yet, as another has said, blossom is not fruit: but may that which is tender and His be trained and be reminded of His ways, and thus be preserved from taking their own way. With Christian love and greeting I close.—Affectionately in Him,

W. BLATCHLEY.

OH ! HE is a great forgiver ! *He is a great forgiver !* said a criminal on his way to execution, adding, "Perfect love casteth out fear," and "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

REDEMPTION.—A wealthy and generous man visiting a slave market observed a young woman, one of the "lots," overwhelmed with grief. She had been kindly nurtured, and, having reason to fear she would now be cruelly treated, was terrified at her approaching fate. He purchased her of the owner, and placed a certificate of freedom in her hands. While she was endeavouring to understand his action he went his way. When the truth burst on her mind she ran after her deliverer, and besought that she might become his humble and obedient servant for ever. To the bystanders she explained it all by the exclamation, "He has redeemed me ! He has redeemed me !" Such is the effect of a right apprehension of the grace of God. Dr. John Duncan said, I have never heard the Gospel better stated than by a poor negress, "*Me die or He die ; He die, me no die.*"

AN AFRICAN WOMAN, having called together her husband and their friends, said, "Behold, I am going to die !" Some started ; others wept. "Weep not for me," said she, "but for your own sins and your own souls. All is well with me. Do not suppose I die like a beast. Jesus has died for me, and I am going to be with Him." Not less confident was Hornel, a French Protestant, who suffered martyrdom in 1683. For 44 hours had he been tortured for his unflinching confession of Christ. Every limb, every bone of his body had been broken, but he would not deny his Master. When asked if he would recant, he boldly answered, "How, my lords ! Had it been my design to change my religion, should I not have done it before my bones had been broken in pieces ? Only for the hour of my dissolution do I wait. Courage, courage, O my soul ! Thou shalt presently enjoy the delights of heaven." Shortly before the executioner relieved him from his agony by a death-stroke with his sword, the martyr turned his eyes to his wife, and exclaimed, "Farewell once more, my well-beloved spouse ; but know that though you see my bones broken to shivers, my soul is replenished with inexpressible joys."

AT "ALL-HALLOWES," London, Wesley preached his first sermon extempore. Mounting the pulpit steps he found he had come without his sermon, and returned to the vestry in consternation. A woman there enquired, "Pray, sir, what is the matter ?" On his explaining his agitation, she put her hand on his shoulder, saying, "Is that all ? What ? cannot you trust God for a sermon ?" He returned to the pulpit and preached with much liberty and power, never again using a written sermon.

THE NEGUS, or Emperor of Abyssinia, recently (says a letter to Rome from Massowah) detecting one of his pages plotting against his life, ordered the man's tongue and his right hand to be cut off, and one of his feet to be sawn away ; the mutilated sufferer to be then exposed in the desert under the glare of the sun to be eaten by the hyenas, who might take hours in bringing him death. Reading this we become Hebraic ; "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" is a magnificent sentence, and is as full of truth now, as far as Asia is concerned, as it was 3,000 years ago.—*Spectator*.

IT IS BETTER to die for Jesus Christ, if only I may attain unto Him, than to reign over the ends of the earth.—*Ignatius*.

AS A BABE without milk—a pining, pining, wasting thing—so is the soul without the Word; a life that is really a prolonged dying, without growth, without strength, without beauty! The “Churches” swarm with these sickly babes of 20, 40, 60 years of age, always crying for cordials and needing to be looked after! *They do not feed on the Word.* Prayer and the Word are the Christian’s two oars. If we use only one we shall go round and round without making any progress. If one is more important than the other it is reading the Word, for it is better that I should hear Him than that I should speak to Him. The reason the Christian has so little faith in God is because he is so little acquainted with Him. If “the sword of the Spirit” is not kept sharp and bright we are in the sorry case of the soldier who was overcome, not for want of a sword, but because it was *rusty in its sheath*.

IN ANCIENT and in Oriental tongues the meaning of *the dawn* is “the going out,” and of *the eve* is “the entering in.” Upwards, onwards, homewards springs the soul in response to these words. The Day-spring having arisen in our hearts, our service (having in view the needs of a perishing world and the down grade of the professing church) should be a constant *going out* and giving forth of the rivers of living water, as overflowing vessels! And by and by what an *entering in*! When the voice of our beloved Lord and heavenly Bridegroom is heard, and we rise to meet Him in the air, in that moment of supremest bliss, what a season of enraptured surprise and unparalleled joy will be the meeting of the millions of redeemed from every clime, the glorious thronging up the steep of light, the warmth of heavenly welcomes, and the thrill of mutual recognitions, accompanied with an outburst of alleluias and hosannas that even the vaults of heaven have never yet resounded with.

“SIX MONTHS AGO,” said a workman, “I heard an address from John iii. 16; I could not take it to myself then, but that night I dreamt that ‘whosoever’ meant *me*. I got out of bed, and got a light to see in the Bible the very words, and there it was ‘whosoever.’ I wanted to see it with my own eyes, and I’ve been resting on it ever since.” That word “whosoever” is a long and a big one, and I will tell you how big—big enough for the greatest sinner to get inside of, and to lie down in and there rest for ever! And never does it prove more blessed than when a poor, heavy-laden, sin-burdened soul says, in the language of faith, that big word “whosoever” means the little word “me.”

SIR HENRY WOTTON, when residing at Vienna as British Ambassador, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, went one morning to the parish church. The Catholic priest, meeting him outside, put a card into his hand, on which was written: “Where was your religion before Henry the Eighth?” Sir Henry promptly returned the card to the priest, with his reply pencilled on the back: “In the Bible, where your’s never was.”

“THY ROD AND THY STAFF” (Ps. xxiii. 4).—The rod was a token of power and authority; the staff was the symbol of guidance and direction. Of both ought we to be able to say, *they comfort me!* “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. xxiv. 8).

THE YOUNG COLPORTEUR.—He was going along with his pack on his back, in Switzerland, and a big man accosted him in this wise : “Well, my little fellow, do you belong to the Militia?” “No, sir, I do not ; but I belong to the King’s Own.” “You little fool,” said the man, “why, there is not any king in this country, so you cannot belong to the King’s Own.” The colporteur replied, “I don’t know that I am a fool any more for that, for, do you know, I belong to *another* country.” “What do you mean by saying that you belong to another country? You are not a foreigner.” “Well, I won’t say that I am a foreigner ; but I can say that I am a stranger in this land ; and I do belong, as I have already told you, to another country ; and that I am not a fool is quite certain, for in the country to which I belong there is a King, and I am in His army ; and, if you would like to know how to enlist in it, I have a book in my pack which you can buy, and in which you can read all about my King and His army.” It was well put, and it also expressed nothing more than the real truth. Here, in the midst of this world, you and I, if we are truly born again from above, are strangers and pilgrims. We have come into this land as gipsies might have come, pitching our tent here and there, but having no abiding city anywhere. We are in this world as Abraham was in Canaan. We are not related to any of the Canaanites amongst whom we dwell. We are of another country, to wit, a heavenly ; and we are looking for “a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” There are some professing Christians, alas ! who are worldly ; but a worldly Christian is an anomaly and a contradiction.

MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.—The cost of collecting and management is as follows :—Church Missionary Society, 2s. 1d. in the £ ; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 2s. 9d. in the £ ; Zenana Mission, 2s. 9d. ; South American Mission, 3s. 7d. ; Colonial and Church Society, 3s. 7d. ; Oxford Mission to Calcutta, 4s.

MOHAMMEDANISM.—It is certain death for any Christian to be found at Mecca, and the Koran forbids the faithful to make drawings or sketches of the place.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.—It has won victories over fire, air, earth, and water. Prayer opened the Red Sea. Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from heaven. Prayer made the sun stand still. Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah’s sacrifice. Prayer turned the counsel of Abithophel into foolishness. Prayer overthrew the army of Sennacherib. Well might Mary, Queen of Scots, say, “I fear John Knox’s prayers more than I fear an army of 10,000 men.” “The child of many prayers,” said an old Christian to Augustine’s mother, “shall never perish.” “Let Me alone” is the remarkable saying of God to Moses when he was about to intercede for the Israelites (Ex. xxxii. 10). The Chaldee version has it, “Leave off praying.” So long as Abraham asked mercy for Sodom, the Lord went on giving. He never ceased to give till Abraham ceased to pray. If this is not encouragement for believers, words have no meaning.

NATURE has perfections in order to show that she is the image of God, and defects in order to show that she is *only* His image.—*Pascal*.

MOUNT ARARAT is about 17,750 feet high, and for at least 4,000 feet from the summit is covered with perpetual snow. The ark rested upon some spur of the mountain.

"DESSERT FIRST."—An old couple in an almshouse found great delight in the visits of a gentleman who came to read the Word and pray with them. One day, finding them about to begin dinner, he would have gone away, to call again later; but they would not hear of this, and he had to read and pray as usual. Then the old man said, "Now, sir, mother and I will enjoy our dinner; we have had *dessert first*, and 'twill sweeten the meal."

"THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT THERE" (Rev. xxii. 5):—

"'Tis night—all night!" the weary pilgrim cries;

"'Tis night, and I would travel to the skies."

"Fear not! go forward!" is the answer given—

"'Tis night below, but nightless day in heaven!"

MISSIONS.—Counting clergy, ministers, Bible women, catechists, &c., there are as many missionaries working among the 4 millions of London as there are among the 800 millions of heathen and 200 millions of Mohammedans! Out of the 1,500 millions in the world, about 1,000 millions are still in darkness, nearly 200 millions are Roman Catholics, and only 135 millions are Protestants. In Asia alone, 790 millions in all, only 10 millions bear the name of Christians, 70 millions are Mohammedans, and 700 millions still heathen! In Bombay (India) the census of 1881 showed that 73 per cent. were Hindoos, and less than one per cent. were Christians—and of these nine-tenths were Roman Catholics!

ALEXANDER THE GREAT had two friends. To one he gave a golden cup of immense value; to the other a kiss; on which the one who had received the cup wept, for he knew that the cup was nothing to be compared to the love-token. The kiss was, so to say, part of the king himself, and beyond all price. The kiss was an emblem of true personal love; and thus the Bride in the Canticles says, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy love is better than wine" (ch. i. 2). He who values the kiss more than the cup, Christ Himself more than what He has to give, has holy longings which He only can satisfy. Nor will He fail to do so. There is no love like Christ's. It is no this-side-of-the-grave love, but one that runs through time and through eternity. How precious and how soul-satisfying is that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii. 19).

AT EVEN-TIDE IT SHALL BE LIGHT.—How touching and beautiful are the last words and testimony of the great and venerable physicist, the late Sir David Brewster: "Life has been very bright to me, and now there is the brightness beyond. I shall see Jesus who created all things; Jesus who made the worlds. I shall see Him as He is. Yes, I have had the light for many years, and oh, how bright it is! I feel so safe, so satisfied!" The beloved Christian philosopher, Michael Faraday, when old, was found by his physician, Dr. Lathom, in tears, with an open Bible beside him. "I fear you are worse," said Dr. Lathom. "It is not that," said Faraday, with a sob, "but why will people go astray when they have this blessed book to guide them?" In vivid contrast with the bright testimony and peaceful experiences of these faithful Christian men stands the awful expression of another powerful intellect, used, alas! in opposition to God. Voltaire, after a brilliant career of intellectual scepticism, could, amid the hopeless gloom of infidelity, only exclaim, "I wish I had never been born."—*Thoughts on Faith and Scepticism.*

LUKE XXI.

THE Lord Jesus comes back from anticipations of the Head-stone of the corner, and of that world where they neither marry nor die any more, and of His own place on the right hand of God, to resume His ministry as a Prophet, but as a Prophet of woe, as introducing "the day of vengeance" under the jealousy of the throne of Jehovah, on behalf of the rejected Messiah who sits there. Our chapter contains this prophetic ministry at large: "And He looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites."

If we look at this scene with the Lord Jesus, and bring the light of the golden candlestick of the Sanctuary to bear upon the treasury of God, we shall find an intended contrast between the devourers of widows' houses—whose iniquity was sought to be covered with long prayers, and hidden, as here, by the gifts which they cast in—and that which the poor widow brought to the treasury, viz., "all the living that she had," in the real devotion of her heart. This poor widow seems introduced as a true daughter of David, to rise up in the judgment of that very hour to condemn the hypocritical nation who, having rejected the Messiah of untold value, would gild over *that* wickedness, and their enmity against God, by casting their gold into this treasury.

David, in his day, distinguished between what he had prepared with all his might for the house of his God (see 1 Chron. xxix.) and what he afterwards added, because he had set his affection, to the house of his God; and there is a dispensational and moral character which this daughter of David brings with her to the temple in her day. Israel, like her, was bereft and a widow, having lost her "first husband," as Hosea witnessed to us. And now Israel had refused her King and Messiah, in whom all the nation's hopes and the prosperity of the world rested, so that they were

impoverished doubly, and were fitly represented and rebuked by this widow indeed, upon whom the Lord looked, and whom He drew to Himself. Of her own proper and personal affection she had cast in all that she had. And what could this action be to the heart of Him whose eye beheld her, but that which He declares: "Of a truth, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (ver. 3, 4). This widow and her poverty made up together, morally, the only fit and proper expression of what the nation of Israel had reduced herself to, by the refusal of Jchovah as her "Ishi," and her rejection of Jesus-Messiah, the Son of David, as the King of Jerusalem; but, like the rich men who cast in out of their abundance and cast in much, they bribed the soldiers, so to speak, and gave the lie to their penury and widowhood. Nevertheless, to the eyes of the heavenly Man, who stood there as "the treasury" of God (as He had before passed through their temple as greater than the temple), these two mites were the only fine gold to be found in the city or throughout Immanuel's land; and, spiritually, this desolate widow carries upon her wherever she goes the secret that "the desolate hath many more children than she that hath a husband," where there is a heart to understand what corresponded in the widow to the heart of the Lord Jesus, as the cast-off One and the cast-out One!

"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down;" but this showed forgetfulness of the pillar of salt and of the lesson taught by Lot's wife, for they looked back upon the goodly stones and gifts of the temple as she did upon Sodom, instead of upon the judgment which stood

at the very doors. Hesitating, perhaps, between the outward adornments which they beheld and the overthrow of the enemy, which, though He had declared as coming, they could not as yet see, "they asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" (ver. 7). If they could not in faith go forward with Him to the right hand of God, and identify themselves and their hopes with Him, in the future day of His kingdom and glory, as the accepted One of the heavens, this great Prophet will draw aside the veil that covers up the events which must come to pass upon the earth, and over Jerusalem and the temple, till the day shall reveal Him like the lightning. "And He said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them;" for these sayings and doings would, ever and anon, mark the interval between His departure and second coming.

Also He says: "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by" (ver. 8). We have just seen that "Glory to God in the highest," which came into the world at the birth of Christ, has been transferred in the person of Jesus to the throne of God, where He is now sitting till His enemies are made His footstool. And now we may say, that "peace on earth" being "taken from the earth" in like manner, the Nebuchadnezzar image of power, and its deterioration from the head of gold to the iron and clay toes—together with the lion, and bear, and leopard, beasts of the prophet Daniel, to which is added the unnamed and all but indescribable fourth of the Roman Empire, which had great iron teeth and devoured much flesh—must needs come into play, and do their work of destruction, till the Little Stone cut out without hands does its, and the Son of Man at the right hand does His.

"Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven" (ver. 10, 11). And are *these* the tokens of the "good pleasure, or good will towards men" from God? Nay; but the proof that the "good pleasure" has gone away with the Lord Jesus to the right hand of the throne, with the peace and the glory, to bud and blossom and bring forth almonds; but at present laid up before God, as when Moses took in the rods of the princes of all Israel, after he and Aaron had made an atonement for the people's sin. On the morrow (and what a to-morrow it will be!), Christ will come forth out of the true tabernacle of witness, not merely as Moses did, but as the Melchizedek Priest and King, with all the rods in full fruit that have been carried in through the long night of Israel's trespass, and laid up before the Lord in the heavenly tabernacle of testimony. "And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord, unto all the children of Israel; and they looked and took every man his rod." Yea so, and much more, shall this true Melchizedek, which is by interpretation "King of Righteousness; and after that King of Salem, which is, King of Peace," bring out the rods, in that blest morning, yea every one of them, and deliver them out afresh to the princes and to all the people, with these three rods foremost, even "Glory to God in the highest—upon earth, peace—and good pleasure to men!"

The great Prophet having thus told them what would be the state and condition of the earth, tells them in the next place what would be the world's action towards them as the disciples of the absent One, and what their testimony was to be in its midst. "But before all these" (wars and commotions, &c.), "they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up," as they were about to do with

their Lord and Master ; but it should turn to them for a witness, for Jesus would give to them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist. Their own relations would also be against them ; for they should "be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends ; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls." How truly and fully this persecution for "His Name's sake" would be reciprocated in present sympathy and succour He metes out to them, in that unfathomable measure from His own fulness, as the patient One : "in patience, *possess* ye your souls" !

Such supplies as these, which would make these disciples to bud and blossom and bring forth fruit in the midst of the world's hatred, and of Cæsar's bars and prisons, could only flow down from the right hand of God's power, and from the unfailing grace of Christ who lives there. For He digged *this* well, and bids His nobles to drink of it ; in this way adding, "Beer, the well whereof the Lord spake" at the end of the wilderness journey, to the waters of Bethlehem, of which they had also tasted at the beginning. How else could even the Lord Jesus deposit this secret with them, or go before them in such a path for Himself, and even make the world's persecutions a tributary aid, that in patience they would *possess* their souls ! Not lose them, as flesh and blood might say—nor, in fact, lose anything, even as to the hair of their heads, in passing through Nebuchadnezzar's furnaces, or under the great iron teeth of Cæsar, which devoured, and stamped the residue with his feet—but be able to precede Paul, who in this patience possessed his soul, and said to Timothy, Thou, therefore, my son, "be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner : but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God."

Surely in these new lessons of Christ, Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, excels the Nazarite of the book of Judges, in the former days of physical power and outward deliverance ; for those were not the days of persecution and patience for the Name's sake, or for righteousness' sake. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, when the young lion roared against him ; and he rent him as he would have rent a kid ; and he had nothing in his hand ;" whereas Paul, under the Spirit of Christ, became a suffering witness for the testimony, even unto prison and bonds, that patience might have its perfect work, and he possess his soul by means of patience in suffering. Paul's obedience and his testimony (as the Lord said to the disciples) made him acquainted with the fourth beast and the iron teeth, so that he tells us, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion;" and he adds a note of encouragement to all, by his confidence in the delivering power of another, and of the preserving grace of Christ towards him, by saying, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In result, however, it is instructive and precious to tell each other that "the riddle of Samson," as he propounded it to his thirty companions for seven days—and "the secret of the Lord," as He delivered it to His disciples to keep during the times of the Gentiles—and the testimony of Paul to his son Timothy—agree both in the letter and in the spirit ; that "out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness ;" or, in the words of Christ, "in your patience possess ye your souls." Be it so with us, gracious Lord, that all things may work together for profit and Thy glory, according to Thine own path and place on the right hand of the throne of God ; sure that there is always a fourth, like unto the Son of God, with the three, walking in the midst of the fire, so that they get no hurt, nor even does the smell of the

fire pass upon them. As regards ourselves, as brethren of the Lord, and the exercises of kindness, and all else, in relation one to another, as called out not only to believe on Him, but to suffer for His sake, may we not fail; but be near enough to Him, and His oneness with His own, to do every service of love to Himself; and "the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

The next instructions from the great Prophet are touching "Jerusalem compassed with armies; then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." And here let it be remarked that the destruction of Jerusalem by Luke is already past, and become an historical fact, as everybody knows, under the power of the fourth beast, by the hand of Titus. The desolation spoken of by Matthew is yet future, and therefore assumes that it will be rebuilt shortly, by the Jews returning there in unbelief, and yet with the hope of a coming Messiah, and so making ready the city for His appearing. Any careful reader of these two accounts will see that Matthew also speaks of "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" at the time of the end; and that Luke does not, and could not, make it his subject in any such connections. Besides this, Luke views the city in relation to the Gentiles, and as such says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," of which times Matthew is altogether silent. As a whole it will be found that Luke xxi. describes the first destruction of Jerusalem, compassed about with armies, and in connection with the Gentiles; whereas Matthew xxiv. predicts the yet future destruction as described by Daniel, at the time of the end, when the Gentiles will have come to their closing up days likewise. One more distinction may be looked at between these two accounts, viz., that Luke (in verse 24) speaks of the

"Jews being led away captive into all nations" during the times of Gentile prosperity and greatness—or, as Jehovah said by the prophet of old, "they shall be made a hissing, and a bye-word, and a reproach among all nations;" whereas Matthew, like Daniel, passes over "the times of the Gentiles" as regards any outward connection between them, and takes up the Jews "at the time of the great tribulation," when the Gentile nations will be punished and go down into obscurity. Then Israel will rise up out of her captivity and the severe judgment of God, shake herself from the dust as the once captive daughter of Zion, put on her beautiful garments, and be led forth by her Messiah, to become a joy and a praise in the whole earth; for, as any student of prophecy knows, the Gentile nations and their cities, whether ancient or modern, can never be in the ascendant at the same time as "the commonwealth of Israel" and "Jerusalem, the city of the great King."

It must be remembered, in making this characteristic difference in these two accounts, that, nevertheless, Luke (after the 24th verse already alluded to) writes "of the signs in the sun, and the moon, and the stars," with which this present age closes. The disciples asked the Lord, "When shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" and this is what the Master is answering. Having stated the proximate destruction of the city, and the captivity of the people amongst all the nations during the times of the Gentile ascendancy in the earth, till their times were fulfilled, He connects the end of the age with the beginning, and tells them not only of signs in the heavens and the earth, but the effect of these signs upon men generally. There would be "distress of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." And this is a solemn word for to-day, because contradictory to all the

expectations of Gentile progress and advancement towards the prosperity and greatness they proclaim!

Also He says, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (vers. 27, 28). For God's order in government, as well as in grace, and in the coming glory of the kingdom, is "redemption," and no longer Israel after the flesh; much less the Gentile nations and their great cities, which are the next to come into the judgment of God upon the earth. The two great subjects in these instructions to the disciples by the great Prophet are the terrible judgments of God upon the world first, followed by this redemption, and the lifting up of their heads, at the coming of the Son of man in a cloud with power and great glory, as the necessary events for the foundation and setting up of the kingdom "under the whole heaven."

In connection with the throne of God and the city of the great King, as the appointed centre, under the personal reign of Christ, for blessing and prosperity and peace upon the earth, there crowd in all the magnificent promises and prophecies of Moses and the law, and of David in the Psalms, as well as of the prophets. All these find their opportunity of coming out from the heavenly "tabernacle of witness," where they too have been laid up before the Lord in hope of the "morrow," when they shall be handed out to the princes and to the twelve tribes "to bloom, and bud, and blossom, and bring forth almonds" throughout the millennial age, and constitute those thousand years of gladness and rejoicing of which God has delighted ever to bear witness by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

How nearly identified, or how far off from God's appointed order of redemption and the Son of man coming in a cloud in power and great glory," as His ordained ways and means of peace and prosperity on

the earth, the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God may be at this present time is a momentous question! In a day when the world has made flesh its arm, and steam its power, and mechanics and machinery its triumphal car, it may be a *word in season*, as well as a word of warning, to sound in the ears of all the reproofs of the prophet Isaiah to Israel: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots: now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out His hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they shall all fall together."

The Lord warned His disciples against such errors and delusions as these, and said, "Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." And let us remember *well* that the two things are the heavy judgments of God on the world in connection with the second coming of the Son of man from heaven, and the consequent redemption of His people with the promised peace and blessing; for "heaven and earth shall pass away," He adds, "but My words shall not pass away." Then follow the gracious words from the lips of the Lord Jesus: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." For here, again, the power of Satan and the disciples' danger is in being connected through "this life" with the things that are around or behind (like Lot's wife, and in forgetfulness of "the pillar of salt"), which weight the heart with cares and surfeiting, and the things of the wrong world, instead of the world to come! Thus the occupied and burdened heart becomes detached from the hope of His own coming, and the day falls upon such unawares. "For as a snare shall it come

on all them " that dwell upon the earth ; for, morally, Lot's wife, and looking back at the doomed temple, adorned with its goodly stones, stand connected, and are but preparatory steps to the surfeited heart and the dwellers upon the earth.

The alternative with this condition is our taking up the cross, and following Christ into heaven *now* in spirit, and affection, and hope, so that the heart may be satisfied with Himself, and all that satisfies the Father to give Him. And what a blessed portion is this ! As the fit companions of such a position, and for those in the place, the Lord says, " Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man " (ver. 36), bringing them by these steps safely through all the persecutions and enmity from which they would suffer for His Name's sake, guiding them by the fig-tree and all the trees as to the good time of summer, and directing them to the taking heed to themselves and their own hearts ; and bidding them to watch, as those whose hopes were outside this world ; and to pray in the confidence of His own unfailing grace and power, as well as in the consciousness of the weakness that looks for, and leans upon, strength supplied.

But all these proofs of the activity of Christ's love to His disciples could not *measure* His sympathies, nor satisfy Him ; so He widens the circle to the condition and state of all around Him, whether they were conscious of this need and what He carried for them or not ; and so we read, as the only fit conclusion of such a chapter, which declares the Teacher and the Prophet come from God, that " in the day-time He was teaching in the temple ; and at night He went out, and abode in the Mount of Olives ; and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, for to hear Him." What a life, and what a lifetime was His, which day and night could only bring out, in a way and manner suited to those " whose

breath is in their nostrils." And *here* His public ministry closed. He had said all He had to say in His testimony among men, and it only remained for those who had heard Him to do what they were about to do, sad and shameful as that was. J. E. B.

THE HIGHROAD TO BLESSING.

IT was a piece of sound advice the Philistine priests and diviners gave the people when asked what they should do "to the ark of the Lord" (1 Sam. vi. 2-5). It had been in their land *seven* months (ver. 1), like "a burdensome stone for all who burden themselves with it," as Jerusalem will be to the nations by and by (Zech. xii. 3). They felt the hand of the Lord was upon them, and turned to their religious leaders for instruction as to *how* to get rid of it. They had had quite enough of it. Their capture was a costly one, for destruction and death followed in every place to which it was taken, till at last they could stand it no longer, and determined to get rid of it. They were advised to "give glory unto the God of Israel," though their advisers could only add a "*peradventure* He will lighten His hand from off you" (ver. 5).

Their priests and diviners could not assure them of the absolute certainty of exemption from judgment if they did it; still, they knew this much, that God must have His place, that they must acknowledge it by sending Him a present to appease His wrath, and then there would be a *possibility* of deliverance for them (vers. 4, 5).

There was evident hesitation, however, on their part to act on this advice, for their wise men immediately add: "Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?" (ver. 6). What a true picture we have

here of the human heart. How slow man is, whether saint or sinner, to act on the truth! How slow to give glory to God and let Him have His right place, whatever it may cost us, and to do it at once!

Yet no man is right till he has done this, no matter how loud his profession, how great his abilities, or how zealous in his labours as a saint or servant. And certainly no sinner has even taken the first step toward God till he has done this. Man must get *down* first, then "there is lifting up, and He shall save the humble person" (Job xxii. 29). This is the highroad to blessing. It is the King's highway. It puts man in his right place with God by means of his conscience. The conscience and the throne of God are brought together, and when this is the case, though painful at first, through grace it ends in blessing.

The history of the ark at this time is most solemn and instructive. The people of Israel had got so far away from God and lost all sense of what became Him, that in their backsliding and folly they had taken the ark into the battle with the Philistines that *it* might save them (iv. 3). It was a complete ignoring of Him who dwelt between the cherubim; only to find, however, that if they gave God up, He would give them up—hence we read: "He delivered His glory into the enemy's hand" (Psalm lxxviii. 61). Israel, too, had to learn again that "the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways" (Prov. xiv. 14), and that they had procured all the sorrow to themselves through forsaking the Lord (Jer. ii. 17-19).

How often do we see the same thing in principle among God's people to-day! It is a more common snare than many imagine. Some great blessing given by God to us may become at last a snare to us; like Israel with the brazen serpent, which in the end became to them an object of idolatrous worship (2 Kings xviii. 4). Or like Jericho and Ai. Flushed with their victory at Jericho, they forgot to give glory to

the Lord their God, and went in their own strength against Ai, but only to suffer defeat after defeat, till they at last gave God *His* place, and took theirs in humility and confession; then God undertook for them and gave them victory. And so with many to-day: the heart settles down satisfied with the blessing, whatever that blessing may be—be it a *correct church position or any other thing*—and God is practically left out, and the outward thing trusted to instead of Himself, and He allows it to come to a collapse, or He allows *us* to have a smash in some way to teach us our lesson, while in it all He cares for His own glory and maintains His place in spite of us.

Sometimes we see men who have been owned of God, and who have been privileged to stand in the front ranks for Him, and carried along on the spring-tide of popularity, we have seen such sink into comparative obscurity and sometimes worse. Why? Is it not that God has not had His place in their hearts? They have not given glory to Him. Their successes have blinded them; and when God had departed from them, they have traded on their previous popularity, and tried by *questionable means* to keep it up, till conscience got deadened, and they went out to shake themselves as at other times, like Samson, not realising that "God had departed from them" till the Philistines were upon them (Judges xvi. 20), and some open public scandal at last wakes them up to their true state. How we see it working in similar ways in other spheres of Christian usefulness, causing bitterness and sorrow, our readers will doubtless be able to recall for themselves. Again we ask, Why is it?

Surely it is because God has not been glorified (Dan. v. 23). He has not had His place in our hearts; and God is a jealous God. He will not give His glory to another, no matter whom. Pride, envy, jealousy allowed to govern the heart are effectual barriers to keep God out, and the certain precursors of a fall. How sound the advice of those heathen priests and

diviners: "Give glory unto the God of Israel"! It is, I repeat, the highroad to blessing.

Observe how God cared for His own glory when Israel would not do it. In the picture before us we see the ark was taken; the priests were slain; Eli broke his neck; and his daughter-in-law died after she had named her infant son "Ichabod"—"the glory is departed" (see *1 Sam. iv. 10-22*). All this was chastisement on His people for their backsliding. But the moment the ark was taken into the idol's temple, God there vindicated His own glory, and Dagon fell before Him (*chap. v.*). Then the people were smitten and died. Wherever they carried the ark, they carried destruction and death to their midst. That unholy and impious dealing with it was disastrous both to Philistines and Israelites alike, for the men of Bethshemesh were slain by the thousand for daring to handle and look into it (*vi. 19*). If they failed to maintain what was due to God, He would not fail to maintain it Himself, though at fearful cost both to friend and foe.

Another striking and solemn example of this is shown us in *Lev. x.* in the death of Aaron's two sons, who offered strange fire before the Lord and were slain inside the sanctuary. "Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (*Lev. x. 3*). Brethren, shall we not "fear before Him," and "give glory to the Lord your God"? (*Jer. xiii. 15-17*). May His grace enable us to do so.

How striking the way these Philistines took to send the ark back! How we learn afresh the same lesson—God caring for His own glory, looking after His own interests, yet thinking of His sinful and erring people, and finding His way back amongst them! What more unnatural thing could be conceived, or unlikely way invented, than to expect two milch cows to go straight from home yoked to a cart

with a burden in it, leaving their calves at home in the stall lowing for them! And what more wonderful picture of the grace of God could be witnessed than this act of His in constraining these animals, contrary to nature, to draw that precious burden along the road to Beth-shemesh—God, so to speak, finding His way back into the midst of His sinful people who had treated Him so shamefully. Truly it is a wondrous, a marvellous sight! And this is the God we have to do with. He loves His people; He cares for His people, while chastening them for their backslidings and caring for His own glory.

It is interesting, too, to notice that the oxen which drew the ark on the new cart were offered as a burnt offering to the Lord. They had performed their service *for* God under His good and guiding hand; they had *worked for Him*; then they were *offered to Him*. It is said that the Missionary Union adopted as their motto a device found on an ancient medal, which represents a bullock standing between a plough and an altar, with this inscription: "Ready for either"—that is, service or sacrifice. In our chapter we see one scriptural illustration of this, from which we do well to learn lessons. Only we *must start* with this, "Give glory unto the Lord;" then His constraining power is required to make *us* "Ready for either."

The Philistine priests could only say to their people, "*Peradventure* He will lighten His hand from off you." Ah! they knew not what *we* are privileged to know to-day. Jacob, too, in view of meeting Esau, his brother, saw nothing beyond a "*peradventure* he will accept of me" (Gen. xxxii. 20). Moses also, when the people sinned and made the golden calf, could only say, "And now I will go up unto the Lord; *peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exod. xxxii. 30). None of these could give certainty and assurance as to the result of their actions. But now, blessed be God, atonement *has* been made, and made by the only One who could make it; God has

been glorified by the death of His beloved Son, and there is no *peradventure*. Souls may be blessed, but grace reigns "through righteousness unto eternal life," and it is for "whosoever will."

The highroad to blessing we see is to "give glory unto God." There is no other way, whether it be for saint or sinner. If the latter, he *must* own as true all that God says about him in His Word, and "let God be true, but every man a liar" (see Rom. iii. 4). He *must* bow to God's statements as to his *guilt* and *state*: how he has "sinned and come short of the glory of God;" how Jesus has died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18); how He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25), so that all who believe in Him shall "not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Yea, they are made to "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 11). This is what gives God His place. It exalts God, and puts the sinner low in the dust, where God can reach him in grace and bless him. On the other hand, the sinner who refuses to "give glory unto God" must perish for ever.

If it is a backsliding saint, suffering from the chastening hand of God, the principle is just the same. Let him give glory to God by accepting the chastening, make a clean breast of everything, hiding nothing from Him, and patiently wait for His deliverance. I have known cases of this kind. One comes before me now. A saint, through covetousness, had brought himself into a position from which he could not free himself for twelve months, and as it did not pay, it entailed suffering on his wife and family, as well as himself. He made a clean breast of his sin and state to God, accepted his present sufferings as chastening from Him, besought Him for deliverance, and waited patiently for it. In less than one week deliverance was given, and in the most unexpected way, and his joy was once more full. Beloved, God *will* be glori-

fied by all who come nigh to Him. High sounding profession with low moral state is simple Laodiceanism, and hateful to God. Our hearts must be right. "Keep thy heart with all diligence." "My son, give Me thy heart." Our hearts can only be right as we give glory to God. Jehu said to Jehonadab: "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" (2 Kings x. 15). Let that question come from God to us. There can be no question as to *His* heart, but what about ours? If we can say "It is," then He holds out *His hand* and takes ours, and leads us along. How blessed! What company to be in. May we all know it and enjoy it.

New Zealand.

W. EASTON.

ANGELS AND MEN.

I KNOW not that angels were ever made the centre of any system; but man was. It was his glory to be the lord and centre of this lower world; an associate, but dependent Eve, his companion and help in his presence. He was the image and glory of God. His dependence made him look up; and this is true glory and blessedness to all but God. Dependence looks up, and is exalted above itself. Independence must look down (for it cannot be filled with itself in a creature), and is degraded. Dependence is true exaltation in a creature, when the object of it is right. This primeval state of man was not holiness in the proper sense of it, because evil was not known. It was not a divine, but a blessed creation state: it was innocence. But this was lost in the assertion of independence. If man became as God, knowing good and evil, it was with a guilty conscience, the slave of the evil he knew, and in an independence he could not sustain himself in, while he had morally lost God to depend upon.

J. N. D.

"THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH."

THE thoughts of many at the present moment about the testimony of God savour of the personal considerations, *where they have been and what they have been doing*, rather than present a fair expression of what is true as to *God and His truth*.

The grace of God in these last days found all, whom it has found, dwelling in a moral Babylon; and there the cry was heard, "Come out of her, My people!" And who that has replied to the call, "I come, Lord," has not found both the inextricable character of the labyrinth out of which, through grace, he desired to escape, and his own complicity, alas! with the evil of the place?

To move from one building to another in that mystic city is readily allowed; and it is comparatively easy. But none, save He who is the Lord of that city, can bring clean out of it any of those who have been born there, and have thus become "dwellers upon the earth:"—in *avowed* obedience to the name of Christ, yet holders of citizenship, "where Satan's seat is."

Speaking as a man, I might say the Roman circus—the Grecian quadrangle—the seven-dials of Protestantism—the colleges, schools, and triangle of Nonconformity—the model buildings of Separation—the All-saints' Hall of the Evangelical Alliance, which goes not beyond a "pandect;" do none of them present a "Pella" or a "Zoar" in regard to Babylon. What outward place does? True: and yet if a man has heard a cry, "Come out of her, My people"—and that by a voice whose call is *never in vain*—he must get out, lest he be lost in the confusions of the place. And caution will be needed with minds like ours, so prone to self-deception in the things of God. Alas! when one has been roused to action, how frequently the heart confounds the thought, "I have done *something*," with "I have done *Thy will*, O God." But

who needs be told that these are often far from being equivalent?

As to the so-called present testimony, I will state in simplicity, for myself individually, what I mean by the present testimony, in which, and of which, I desire grace to be found: and at the same time, I must say, I deeply deplore that many beloved children of God either do not see its existence, or make light of it altogether.

No better introduction of my subject occurs to me than the well-known, but much-abused creed-term—"the *Holy Catholic Church*," but which we know as the Church of God.

While God was teaching earthly truths and government, *the Jew* was His subject; but when heavenly truth became the theme, Christ and His grace in the Church became the subject. God established upon earth the counterpart and witness of what was in His counsel for the heavens—*the Church*; and the word of God's grace was about Christ and the Church: see Paul's conversion. In connection with the Church, the individual believer found his *position*, his privileges, and his responsibilities; it was to be on earth as a chaste virgin, Christ-expectant, and serving the living and true God until the Saviour and Lord came back.

The Church! chief specimen of God's workmanship, it came out to light when the Son of man, rejected by man from earth, had found His seat at the right hand of God. His God and Father has not changed His truth, nor recalled it yet to give it another form: nor has He changed the place of the Son of man upon the Father's throne. The "chaste virgin" on earth, espoused to a heavenly Lord as a bride waiting—*where is she?* Nay, all this is changed here, in her appearance, from what once it was; and because of man's utter unfaithfulness we were found, if found by grace at all, in a sort of ecclesiastical and moral Babylon. But found *by whom*, except by the Father of

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our Lord Jesus Christ, who retains Him still as Son of man upon His throne? The position and relation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not changed; nor will change (blessed be God!) to please us and our narrow thoughts. Divine and heavenly truth about the Son of God and the Church of God is still the standing form of God's present display of Himself.

Now what I want is, to be broken down in myself, and in all that I have and am, by this divine and Fatherly love, and to be made to realise and to exhibit in the midst of the ruin and wreck of the Church here below, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is still acting down here upon earth as the God and Father of the Son of man, who is at His right hand in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, and *who has a body down here*. The claims of God and the blessing of my own soul require this.

It is clear *I cannot*, if I would, break up the truth given, because I cannot change God's revelation of Himself, nor the position which His Christ holds, until the Church is all gathered into the Father's house.

The discovery of this truth tells me *where* I am not and *what* I am not. It tells of man's utter failure, and of circumstances so changed down here, partly the effect of our wickedness, and partly the effect of the moral judgment of God thereon,—that one finds it is God alone can soften down to the platform of His grace,—a platform where all the heavenly, divine light of the Son of man, upon the Father's throne, meets the conscience of a member of His body in a place where all is confusion and sin. "The obedience *of faith*," how precious in such a position! the knowledge of which involves that God and His truth are not changed; and if the circumstances down here proper to it are changed, God will accept the integrity which seeks to find and to do His will, and He will give guidance to such; though He may leave to their own wisdom those who, because they have failed themselves, want to make out, either that He also is changed, or

that, if not changed in Himself or in His truth, He is not as the living God *acting upon that truth now*. No measure short of Christ and the Church is our *gospel*; and God is acting upon that truth, and I do most simply, therefore, ask that I may find grace in His sight, not only to know Himself and His truth, but to know myself livingly associated with Him as the living God in His present action. Blessed also is the truth to such an one of the lordship of Christ, *i.e.*, that He is not only Saviour, but Lord of all.

I believe it to be a very great sin, and a grief and dishonour to the Holy Ghost, to deny the Church of the living God. To make little of what God is doing as the living God is a sin, too; and this is what they are guilty of, who make little of present association with Him as the God so acting. Who would turn back from "the Father," and "the Son of man upon the Father's throne;" the Father acting for the members of the body of Christ—to grace and mercy as fitted for a soul in *its* dangers and needs—and thus act as if man in his misery were God's object, and *not* the Son of man in the glory of God? Blessed is the Gospel which calls a sinner, and the grace that suits a saint; but I am speaking of the responsibility of unexampled, infinite grace. I believe it to be awful dishonour to be thinking *merely* of one's own soul, or even of the souls of poor sinners and saints around, if it be to the forgetting of God's central truth of His delight in Christ and His Church.

I need hardly say, I do not despise any babe's attainment in thus speaking. I speak not of such, but I speak of those who "professing to be somewhat," and to be making progress into a fuller light and liberty, would set the gospel to sinners as their more excellent employment, putting into a corner God's great work among His saints in regard to Christ and the Church.

My decided conviction is, the man who has to do individually with the living God in *His* Gospel, knows

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that Gospel to be, not only of the grace of God to sinners, but also about Christ and the Church; and that much as man has failed, God, as the living God, holds to that gospel, and holds men of God to see their failure; and, if walking with Him as the living God, to own the scope of the truth first given, and to seek from God power to live it out, amid all the wreck and ruin, as integral parts of that body, the Head of which is in heaven, and so to be consistently associated with God's present testimony for Himself. And all I would add is, that if God is ready to vindicate Himself against man and Satan in upholding a few individuals after that sort—may I be one! (2 Tim. i. 6-14.)

ANON.

IS ANYTHING SO GOOD AS PRAISE?

Psalm lxxix. 30, 34.

EVERLASTING glory be,
God and Saviour, unto Thee!
Songs of joy we gladly raise;
Is anything so good as praise?

Offered praise doth glorify
Him who dwells above the sky;
Pleased is He with joyful lays,
And values naught so much as praise.

Doth He lend a listening ear
To the feeblest voice of prayer?
Come, my soul, fresh tribute raise
To Him who loves His people's praise.

When from earth's sad scenes we soar
Where our eyes can weep no more,
Where His glory He displays,
There naught shall hinder heartfelt praise.

When we see Him face to face,
Where His glory crowns His grace,
Alleluias we shall raise,
For nothing is so good as praise!

SOME LANDMARKS OF JERUSALEM.

THOSE who go to Jerusalem with faith are apt to have their faith strengthened; those who go to Jerusalem without faith are likely to bring something very like faith away. The Christian Messiah, to the ordinary mind the world over, is an idea, a myth, a sentiment, or a religion. In Jerusalem He becomes a reality. He was the only perfect human being who ever lived, and He lived for a time in Jerusalem. The Mohammedans, as well as the Jews and the Christians, consider Jerusalem a Holy City. To the followers of the Prophet it comes next to Medina, after Mecca; to the Christians it is not exceeded in holiness even by Rome; and to the Hebrews it is the one Holy City in the world.

The altitude of Jerusalem is always a surprise to the visitor who comes here for the first time. He knows, of course, that it is a mountain city, and that it was built upon Mount Zion and Mount Moriah; but he does not realise, until he makes the gradual ascent, that it is about twenty-six hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and nearly four thousand feet above the surface of the Dead Sea. As high on the one side as the Catskill Mountain House; as high on the other as the crater of Mount Vesuvius.

Jerusalem is a city of surprises. It is, apart from its sacred associations, an intensely interesting spot even to travellers who are already saturated with the hitherto unfamiliar and surprising charms of Cairo, Athens, and Constantinople. Its size can best be expressed by the statement that the journey round about the outside of its walls may be made by an ordinary rapid walker in the space of an hour. Its houses are small, irregular in shape, squalid, and mean. Its streets, if streets they can be called, are not named or numbered; they are steep, crooked, narrow, roughly paved, never cleaned, and in many instances they are vaulted over by the buildings on each side of them. Never a pair of wheels traverse them, and rarely is a horse or a

donkey seen within the walls. The halt, the maimed, and the blind ; the leprous, and the wretchedly poor, form the great bulk of the population of Jerusalem, and with the single exception of the Hebrews, they are persistent and clamorous beggars. Trade and commerce seem to be confined to the bare necessities of life, and to dealers in beads and crucifixes. There is but one hotel, and that not a good hotel, within its walls ; and one Turkish merchant, who displays in his little window-less, door-less shop a small assortment of silver charms, trinkets, and *bric-à-brac* to the gaze of the passer-by, is almost the only vendor of anything like luxuries in the place. His customers, of course, are the pilgrims who come to see, and not to worship.

Jerusalem is unique as a city in which everything is serious and solemn and severe. It has no clubs, no bar-rooms, no beer-gardens, no concert-halls, no theatres, no lecture-rooms, no places of amusement of any kind, no street bands, no wandering minstrels, no wealthy or upper classes, no mayor, no aldermen, no newspapers, no printing-presses, no book-stores—except one outside the walls, for the sale of Bibles—no cheerfulness, no life. No one sings or dances ; no one laughs in Jerusalem ; even the children do not play.

The Jews, it is said, form almost two-thirds of the population of the city. They occupy a section which covers the greater part of the eastward slope of Zion, and the Jewish quarter is the most wretched in the whole wretched town. Its inhabitants are quiet and subdued in bearing ; they make no claims to their hereditary rights in the Royal City of their kings ; they simply and silently and patiently wait. The Wailing Wall of the Jews, so wonderfully painted by Vereschagin, is, perhaps, the most realistic sight in Jerusalem to-day. In a small, paved, oblong, unroofed enclosure, some seventy-five by twenty feet in extent, and in a most inaccessible portion of the town, is the mass of ancient masonry which is generally accepted

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as having been a portion of the outside of the actual wall of the Temple itself. Against these rough stones, every day of the week, but especially on Friday, and at all times of the day, are seen Hebrews of all countries, and of all ages, of both sexes, rich and poor alike, weeping and bewailing the desolation which has come upon them *and upon the city of their former glory.*

Whatever may be their faith, it is beautiful and sincere; and their grief is actual and without dissimulation. They kiss the walls, and beat their breasts, and tear their hair, and rend their garments; and the real tears they shed come from their hearts and their souls as well as from their eyes. They ask for no backsheesh; they pay no attention to the curious and inquisitive heretics and Gentiles who pity while they wonder at them. They read the Lamentations of Jeremiah and the mournful words of Isaiah; they wail for the days that are gone; and they pray to the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob that they may get their own again.

About one-sixth of the inhabitants of Jerusalem are followers of Mohammed. They believe in the prophets of the Old Testament, in the Christ of the New Testament, and in their own Prophet, whom they consider, of course, the greatest of them all. Their chief sanctuary here is the Dome of the Rock, commonly known to travellers as the Mosque of Omar, standing on the site of Solomon's Temple. The enclosed space on Mount Moriah is called by the Moslems the Haram, or Sacred Place, and in their minds it is peculiarly associated with Mohammed himself, for the dome, the most prominent of its many buildings, covers that mass of Jerusalem limestone which to Jew and Gentile and Moslem alike is the most interesting rock in the world. Upon this rock, according to very ancient tradition, Abraham worshipped and was ready to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. Upon it David erected an altar. Upon it Elijah and the Messiah prayed; and from it Mohammed *is said* to have ascended up into heaven.—*Laurence Hutton.*

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, M.P., who has spent many years in the Holy Land, states that the descent from Jerusalem to Jericho is as great as from the top of Snowdon to the sea coast, and that the English town which would most accurately compare with Jericho in situation is Brighton.

THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA.—*Brahmanism* is bitterly jealous, fanatical, and persecuting. *Buddhism* is the essence of atheism and latitudinarianism, lukewarm, and materialistic; and, alas, it sways the minds of *one third of the human race*. There is no deity, Buddha not being worshipped as such, but as a sort of petrified example, and they deify human intellect. *Confucianism*, the religion of China, is merely a system of ethics rather than what is commonly understood as a religion. Prayer is made to spirits and to deceased ancestors, but God is unknown, and the common people are recommended to fulfil their duties, and not trouble themselves about what is beyond their apprehension.

PRESUMPTION.—A venerable Christian woman said: "I have looked to the Lord Jesus, and have a humble hope that through His blood I shall be saved at last; but it's not for the likes of me to have the presumption to say that I know I am saved." But in her closing hours light and peace dawned upon her, and her language was: "I never felt the terrible character of sin more than I do now; but I have believed in the Lord Jesus, and it's not for the likes of me to have the presumption to doubt His power to save; has He not said, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life'?" (John iii. 36)

"THE PEACE OF GOD," the unruffled serenity of the infinitely-happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God! This shall possess your heart and mind (Phil. iv. 7). When one of the martyrs was about to burn for Christ, he said to the judge who was giving orders to fire the pile, "Will you lay your hand on my heart?" The judge did so. "Does it beat fast? Do I show any sign of fear?" "No," said the judge. "Now lay your hand on your own heart, and see whether you are not more excited than I am." Think of that man of God who, on the morning he was to be burned, was so soundly asleep that they had to shake him to awaken him. He had to get up to be burned, but had such confidence in God that he could sleep sweetly. This is the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.—*Spurgeon*.

THE CURTAINS of the tabernacle. Blue suggests the heavenly aspect of Christ, as in John's gospel; scarlet, His Jewish royalty, as in Matthew; purple, His characteristic as Son of man, as in Luke; fine twined linen, the service to God and man, which we find specially in Mark. The cherubim typify the power of truth and faculty of judgment with which Christ is invested; for the whole curtain is unquestionably typical of Him as the glorious vesture of His people.

SIN is that Satanic thing in the world that is contrary to God. God is light, and that is darkness. God is beauty, and that is ugliness and deformity. All sin is direct rebellion against God and utterly opposed to His nature. With what notions soever we sugar or sweeten it, yet God can never smile upon it. He will never make a truce with it. God and sin will never agree together. "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John iii. 8).—*Cudworth*.

"LET THY GARMENTS be always white ; and let thy head lack no ointment " (Ecc. ix. 8). "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him " (Col. ii. 6). O the nameless sweetness, O the matchless grace of such a life !—the fragrance of the ointment bewrayeth itself, and cannot be hid ; the oil of joy and consecration passing to the very skirts of the garment, the lowest and meanest things of every-day life ; like the Burmese native teacher—what he would not do for himself he would not do for Christ !

ISRAEL AT PI-HAHIROTH.—

The great and terrible land
Of wilderness and drought
Lay in the shadows behind us,
For the Lord had brought us out !

The great and terrible river,
Though shrouded still from view,
Lay in the shadows before us,
But the Lord would bear us through !

PRECIOUS STONES in Rev. xxi. They give us not the simple brightness of colourless light—God is this—for "God is light" essentially ; but if He show Himself in His varied characters through the tears and sorrows of this life, then we see the rainbow, and in these precious stones we get the unfoldings of the various ways and dealings of God with us—the light broken into these rays of colour as shining through a prism. We see it in grace now, in glory then.

NEW GUINEA.—The pioneer missionaries placed Mataika and a helper upon an island just off the coast of New Guinea, and after varying experiences, holding their lives in their hands, they at length gained the confidence of the natives, and settled down to steady work. But Mataika thought that "two of them on one station was just one too many when there were such numbers of heathen all around." So he decided to take the Gospel to the people of a neighbouring island. But no one would lend him a canoe, fearing he would be killed, in which case they would lose both him and the canoe. Not being a man to forego his purpose, he made a canoe for himself, and, after commending himself to God's care and saying farewell to his companion, he started on his mission of divine grace, knowing well the risk involved, for the islanders were bloodthirsty savages in the most literal sense. As the sequel showed, it was only because they could not decide *who* should kill the stranger when he landed that his life was spared. But God spared him from being sacrificed, and enabled him to work among the people. He made a rough translation of the Gospel of Mark for their use ; and though they have not much of the Bible, they are very proud of what they have got. In many places in New Guinea they have but one Gospel ; but being the only book in their language, many of the natives know it by heart, and want more. Thank God for the work being done in New Guinea.

VERY TENDERLY doth Christ cherish and preserve the buddings of grace that are in thee. It was the priest's office to keep the fire in the sanctuary from going out ; and it is Christ's work in the exercise of His gracious priesthood to do the same in thy soul, and He will look to it that it go not out, and this by the operation of His Spirit.

THE OLD MAN in Scripture signifies, as to the believer, the old self, all that he was as an unregenerate son of Adam, and which at conversion ceases to exist, having been for ever *put off*. THE FLESH is our actual sinful nature; that principle of evil which ever remains, even in the believer, and which is in direct antagonism to the Holy Ghost who dwells in us (see Gal. v. 16, 17). But, thank God, we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 9).

FAITH.—In Abraham we have a man of faith who fully trusted God, enjoying communion with Him, and obeying Him implicitly even to the sacrificing of Isaac, the child of promise! In Jacob we see one whose faith was weak, who lived in a worldly atmosphere, often got out of communion, and tolerated evil in his household; but, when awakened to a sense of this, showed the reality of his faith by taking earnest heed to the Word of God. In Saul we have an utter lack of faith, a man who knew nothing of communion with God, who with the most heartless indifference could disobey His express command, and then invent an excuse for his sin. It is a man in the flesh attempting to do God's work and utterly breaking down in the effort.

FAITH.—The poor widow, unable to procure enough work to support herself and her little ones, had her faith severely tried, having one night to put her children supperless to bed. Next morning she took her children a walk, and they dispersed to play while she read her Bible. As they were returning home, a lady, in passing, asked her how she was, slipped half a sovereign into her hand, and walked rapidly away. The widow had told no one but the Lord that she needed help, and she trusted Him to send it at the right time. Oh, that the Lord's people had more faith in Himself, and really showed that they were conscious that their Father was doing the best thing for them and with them.—*Mat. vii. 8.*

CONVERSIONS.—A husband having signified what the Lord had done for him was received with an outburst of opposition and passionate reproach from his wife. He retained his peace of mind and calmness of spirit. She determined he should have no rest that night, and continued her persecution until two o'clock in the morning, the only result being to elicit expressions of affection and utterances of a devout and Christian nature. At length, over-awed by this, she burst into tears, asked her husband's prayers that she too might become of the same spirit, and together they knelt down, when the Lord gave her also to believe unto salvation!—A drunken man who was seriously disturbing a meeting was about to be removed, when one pleaded that he might remain, saying, "Perhaps he may never hear the Gospel again." These words were all he remembered, and the rest of the day was spent in drunken debauch. But when sober he reflected on his conduct, and resolved to be a hearer on the following Lord's day, feeling shocked that he had so insulted God. He went, and God met him in His grace, and made him a new creature in Christ Jesus.—A young lady from a convent in Belgium was visiting friends in England, and was induced to enter a prayer meeting, although she was on the eve of taking the veil and entering a nunnery for life. The result was the salvation of her soul, when she at once relinquished her former purpose, and is now living as a child of God, relying on Him who has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).

FAULTS IN PRAYER.—Dealing in generalities is like asking for everything and praying for nothing. Saying prayers is not praying. Praying without persevering is the cause of much barren intercession, like roguish boys ringing door-bells and then running away. Prayer is want felt, help sought, and promise claimed, remembering that God is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (*Eph. iii. 20*).

WHAT IS THE shining of the true church? Doth not a church shine when the service is raised from a decent and primitive simplicity, and decorated with pompous ceremonies, with rich furniture and gaudy vestments? Is not the church then beautiful? Yes, indeed; but all the question is, whether this be the proper *genuine beauty* or no? Whether this be not strange fire, as the fire that Aaron’s sons used, which became vain, and was taken as strange fire? The truth is, those things seem to deck religion, but *they undo it*. Observe where they are most used, and we shall find little or no substance of devotion under them, as we see in the apostate church of Rome. This painting is dishonourable for Christ’s spouse, and spoils her natural complexion.—*Archbishop Leighton*.

TWO DRUNKEN SAILORS who had to cross a Scotch frith at night, stumbled into the boat and pulled away at the oars with all their might. They pulled and pulled, but made no progress. At first they thought the tide must be dead against them, and at last concluded the boat was bewitched. The night wore on, and only the morning light and soberer moments revealed the mystery: “Why, Sandy, mon, we never pulled up the anchor!” Many and many a sinner has been in like case. He has tried to believe, but it has all come to nothing. He toils and toils, and has no rest, no peace; nor will he ever reach the heavenly shore until he looses his hold of his self-righteousness and dead works, and trusts only to Christ his Saviour. *Up, then, with the anchor.*

A MAN WHO had all his life been a river pirate (one who made it his business to rob ships on the rivers), whose father and whose grandfather had also been river pirates, called upon a minister in his study. He had never heard a sermon in his life, although in the midst of churches and chapels; and had never read a line in the Bible, for he couldn’t read. “Be you the minister?” he said. “I want to tell you something that has happened to me,” and he went on to tell how Christ had appeared to him; how God had Himself, without apparent human agency, reached down into the very slum of heathenism and vice in which he lay, and picked up his soul and imparted to him eternal life. This miracle is the work of the Holy Ghost. *See next extract.*

EVERY believer is God’s miracle.—*Bailey*.

THE WAGES that Satan bargains to pay the sinner are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages of sin which he pays are death, torment, and destruction. He that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin must compare together its promises and its payments.—*South*.

A MISSIONARY’S WIFE once said to me, “Whenever you drink a cup of tea, pray for China!” Did you ever do this? When you eat your rice, give a thought to India. When you drink coffee, think of Ceylon and Jamaica. When you take your arrowroot, give a thought to the South Sea Islands. When you moisten the gum of your envelopes, do you remember the benighted souls of the Soudan and Arabia?

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

WHEN one turns to this portion of God's Word, one feels the light much stronger than in the other gospels. The same blessed, wondrous Person is the subject of all the four ; but light, life, and love are specially presented to us by John. But if this is so, the darkness in man is more apparent—his enmity more unveiled.

I refer to special features in these wondrous portions ; for, no doubt, when we search minutely, what is prominent in one will be seen to be in the others. Luke may take as his special theme the perfect manhood of Him who was the Eternal Son of the Eternal God, and so equally divine ; yet there are testimonies in Luke to His divine glory also. When God writes, He does not need to use many words to make known His meaning to us.

John begins grandly—majestically. These four favoured men—the writers of the gospels—have got for their theme the One who always was. Matthew and Luke may start with a time period, and so also Mark. Yet again, I say it is one and the same Person. He who became a man was God ; He who comes as the *King* and the *Servant* was the same "true God."

John begins to write of Him before the beginning. When the beginning began, He *was*. Chap. i. presents Him to us as Light and Life. All was darkness, and still is, unless illuminated by Him, unless He is received. All was death, and still it is so unless He is known in the soul as the Quickener of the dead.

The Baptist is the herald of this glorious Person. To outward eye, the forerunner was a stern, austere man in his garb and in his speech. Like the apostle John, *one* thing alone filled his soul, inspired his tongue : "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." He sought not the homes of men ; no intercourse with

H

them in a social way. He demands their submission to his Lord ; nothing else will do for him. John is a fine sample of a servant : he does what he is told ; he proclaims what he is entrusted with.

What an announcement to break in upon the slumber of men ! "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," is here. Men, behold Him ! The question of sin will for ever get its settlement from Him.

How different a theme from what occupies men to-day ! Man, as man, has been engaged trying to fight the *time consequences* of sin as they rise up in the countries and cities of this world. They make laws and repeal laws in their efforts to control the passions of men. The time has not yet come for the repeal of the Criminal Acts. The powers that be are ordained of God for the repression of evil. Penalties on purse and body for the violation of law are imposed ; but to deal with SIN they think not of—they cannot touch that question. God alone can do that.

The One destined in the counsels of God to put away sin has appeared. Not that it is put away yet. And note : it is sin, not sins, that the Baptist speaks of. He goes to the root. The greater includes the less, however. Note well, it is as "the Lamb of God" the Lord will accomplish the work John speaks of. He must die ; He must be the sacrifice on the altar ; He must be lifted up ; and from Him, as the One who has been lifted up, "a healing virtue flows" to all who receive Him (v. 12). Their *sins* are effaced by the precious blood shed at Calvary.

John's proclamation, however, goes further, and he thinks of the eternity of Revelation xxi., when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. How poor are man's efforts to cope with the consequences in this world of sin. He tries to be a reformer. He tries his hand in many a direction to secure what he sees would be desirable and pleasant. He forgets, however, God is not just

now putting right the world, but forming anew every man who learns he is away from God. This is the lesson of chap. iii.

The Baptist is not only a faithful servant, but he is an admiring saint. A child of God, one Lord's day morning, broke the silence by exclaiming, "God admires His Son, and we admire Him too." Verse 36 of our chapter finds John in nearness to the Lord. It is not as the servant he speaks now, but the child, the devoted friend (iii. 29), the saint who worships and adores. He exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God!" John is "lost in wonder, love, and praise" as he looks on the Son of God.

Sin must be dealt with; it is a necessity of God's nature. Now the One who can cope with the whole question has come at last! What an unspeakable blessedness to a holy nature such as John had received. His glory as the Lamb of God has taken possession of him. A result is seen at once in the two men who had followed him as their master: they leave John, "and followed Jesus."

My brother, what think you of the results of that day's work? Do you and I go in for such results? to see ourselves, as it were, returning to our homes *alone—we nothing*, and each one occupied with the Christ of God. That is work which will have its reward in the coming day.

John is delighted. His joy is fulfilled! The Master is everything. Yet John may waver in his faith when, in a little, he finds himself in the prison. He may be saying, "Have I made a mistake? Can it be that, after all, the One I saw was only *like* the anointed of God, and that the true One is yet to come?" John may have thought all this, and much more, as he lay in that prison from which he sent messengers. But John *was all right* in his exclamation of delight. John had to learn the power and beauty of his own words, "He must increase, but I must decrease," and rejoice in Him, although stone walls and iron chains

hinder him from companionship with this wondrous Friend in an eternal way.

John discerned the Lord also as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and with fire, as Matthew iii. 11 tells us. To baptize with the Holy Ghost, the Lord had to die, rise again, and ascend to the Father. To baptize with the fire of judgment is still future.

The Holy One of God came after John, yet was before him, and John knows how to speak of Him. He tells us, "He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." What happiness for John! He is nothing; the Christ is all. John has educated his two disciples well. They leave John and follow Jesus, their new Master, the following of whom will land them in the country He came from. The Lord sees them following, and turns and asks them, "*What seek ye?*" This was what they had made up their minds for—they wished to see where this wondrous stranger dwelt. His reply is short, but how full: "Come and see." Thus the Master speaks. He gave no description. *He is that.* They must *come* and see. He leads to the Father.

What a visit! What they heard we are not told. We, too, as really must respond to His abiding word of invitation, "Come and see." Surely, this is a step in advance to the "Come . . . and I will give you rest" of Matt. xi.

May we not say we have the sacrifice first (i. 29)—that which gives the conscience peace—and then the entrance into the holiest (39), where "the merits of the Lord appear and fill the holy place," and where the Father is made known.

The chapter closes with a busy scene. Andrew, who has been in "the inner chamber," thinks of his brother Simon. To him he turns to make known some of the virtues of Him who called him—and "he brought him to Jesus." Then Jesus, the day following, would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and

saith unto him, "Follow Me." There is "the way" now out of this world to God. In innocence there was no way needed; man was not lost. Now all is changed. Sin has entered; and Jesus comes and says, "Follow Me." He dies, and goes out of the world. He has become the Captain of our salvation.

Philip then thinks of Nathanael, and "Come and see" is proved sufficient to solve all doubt, and pave the way to Nathanael receiving the revelation of a greater glory than he confessed the knowledge of—even *the Son of man*, the object of the attention of angels.

D. S.

MISSIONARY WORK—ARE WE HELPING IT?

BELOVED Brethren,—The subject of giving, in connection with missionary work among the heathen, has been pressing much on my heart of late, and I desire to set before you some of my thoughts for your prayerful consideration, and trust that through grace it may awaken in your hearts more zeal for this blessed work—more self-denial, in order to help it on—and more prayer for its success. I feel satisfied that as we widen out in our sympathies and prayers, and take in the terrible need of the millions of Christless souls on their march to eternity, and the needs of the devoted little band of workers who are seeking to make known to them the salvation of God, we shall find our own souls greatly cheered, and helped, and blessed. We shall feel like *partners* in a good going concern, and not mere outside onlookers.

Moreover, we shall find ourselves in the current of the Master's thoughts and sympathies, without in any way displacing other blessed truths, which some do not see, but which God has taught us and given us to enjoy. Yea, we shall have our appreciation and enjoyment of *all* truth deepened in our souls as we forget or deny self, and for Christ's sake seek the blessing of those for whom He died.

Missionary work! Alas, the word almost sounds strange amongst us; does it not? We have scarcely one in our communion labouring in a heathen land. And as companies of saints, gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing, in some measure at least, God's purposes in connection with His Son, we seldom if ever make any special effort to send help to any with whom we could and might have fellowship, who are devoting their lives to make known among the heathen the Saviour's love, and "gather out a people for His Name" ere the summoning shout is heard, and all are "caught up" to be "for ever with the Lord."

Beloved brethren, might it not be seasonable to ask ourselves at the present moment, in the presence of God, "*What are we doing*" as assemblies of saints for the spreading abroad of the glorious gospel of the blessed God?" Just cast your eye over the meetings you are acquainted with and test them. At the same time ask *yourself* the question, "*What am I doing myself?*" You may reply, "We have gospel preaching in the room every Lord's day evening." Well, thank God for that. At the same time, might we not ask again, "How much do you yourself help on *that* work, either by your prayers or in seeking to get people in to hear?" Thank God for the labourers who plod on week after week in our meeting rooms, sowing the seed, often with little encouragement either from the saints or in the way of manifested fruit, but whose labours will be rewarded in that day. We would seek to have the fullest sympathy and fellowship with them, and with all who are making any effort to serve the Lord in the gospel. But still how much there is undone that might be done by each one! Where are the tract distributors to-day? Where the earnest praying and seeking to get people under the sound and power of the gospel? Is it not often a Gospel preaching to converted people, whose faces and seats are as mechanically seen and filled as the

cogs of a wheel fitting into their place in the revolving machinery?

But let us, however, assume that we do think of the needs of those around us and preach the gospel to them. How much of the commission given by a risen Christ have we fulfilled, or had fellowship in fulfilling in that? His words were, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel *to the whole creation*" (Mark xvi. 15, R. V.). Now no one dreams for a moment that all can *go* and do this. But *dare* we say that with our once-a-week service we are doing *all* that lies in our power for the carrying out, or the helping on of the carrying out, of that commission of the Master? One gospel preaching a week for the salvation of souls, and often no unsaved souls there to preach to! Then lectures and readings for ourselves till, in some instances, alas! saints have got puffed up with spiritual pride and self-satisfaction, cold and critical, able to discuss questions, but heartless and careless as to the multitudes of souls dying daily without the knowledge of a Saviour's love and atoning death.

Beloved brethren, I want this plain speech to strike home to our consciences and hearts, that we may be saved from living in nutshells—living to ourselves instead of "to Him who died for us and rose again." Do not misunderstand me, however. I believe in readings, I believe in lectures, I believe in saints being taught. I speak not against these things. The ascended Christ gave gifts to men, and "He gave some *teachers*" (Eph. iv). Each and all have their place. The body must be edified. The truth of the Church, so dear to the heart of Christ, must be taught, and accepted, and acted on. The stones for the building of that spiritual house must be shaped and placed according to the divine plan; and that plan can only be seen and known as the truth of the Church is divinely and intelligently understood. All this is blessedly true, and has its place. But what

about the commission which sends out the labourers *to get the stones*? Has *it* had its due place?—its place in our *hearts*, our *prayers*, our *purses*—or has the truth of the Church been pitted against the gospel till the latter has lost its hold on our hearts and lives?

We know, of course, that the world is not going to be converted by the preaching of the gospel. We know also that Psalm ii. 8, so often quoted by missionaries, is viewed in a mistaken way by many. "Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" does not apply to the present day of grace, but to the future day of power, when the Lord Jesus will take to Himself His great power and reign, and put His enemies down by power, "breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (see verse 9).

Still, those who are to be saved—and surely, we may say, God has multitudes marked off among the heathen, since the Lord commissioned His disciples to "preach the gospel to every creature"—are to be saved through preaching. It is God's ordinary way: "It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). And the apostle says, "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x.). And how can they preach unless they are supported? we might here add. And how can they circulate the precious Word and truth of God unless means are forthcoming for that purpose from the loving hearts of God's people? Brethren, we are merely stewards of God, and entrusted with means to use for Him—entrusted with little or much, as the case may be. How do we use them? Selfishly, or for Him as He directs? Does He not want any of the heathen saved just now? Does the commission not stand good to-day? And can this be done without *men* or *means*? We might say it can. But is it God's way to do it? No! He graciously uses both,

and allows all to have fellowship with Him in that blessed work ; blessed be His Name.

We know, alas ! that some have done incalculable mischief among saints by exalting the Church at the expense of the gospel, and almost giving the Church a higher place than the Head of it, so that "not holding the Church" was, with them, almost worse than "not holding the Head ;" while devoted and unselfish men, with hearts burning with love to Christ and seeking souls for His glory and joy—men who were carrying their lives in their hands, and ready to lay them down if necessary—were looked upon as low down in the scale of religious intelligence, and scarcely worthy of notice, much less of support. And this sort of teaching has left its mark in many places and on many minds. I ask, however, is it to continue ?

Are we to live on in apathy and indifference to all gospel and missionary effort except our own tiny little circle ? If *we* cannot ourselves "go into all the world and preach the gospel," are we to try and help by our means, our prayers, and our sympathy those who *are* doing it ; or are we simply to do nothing but criticise, and boast ourselves of our knowledge and ability ? May God wake us all up, brethren, and give heart and courage to some one in the meetings here and there to take the thing in hand, for His glory.

It seems to me the thing could be done in a consistent and godly way, and without inflicting injury or hardship on any ; though, at the same time, we must never forget that it is the money given that has really been the result of *self-denial* that is most valued and most likely to be blessed. "Out of their *deep poverty*" the Churches of Macedonia gave with "*liberality*." The widow's mite was valued because it was "her all," and cost her something. Excuses, therefore, of "not being able to afford it," &c., &c. have no place here. God does not expect it if you have not got it. Remember, however, if you could easily afford it there would be no self-denial in it ;

but when it is hard to afford it, but yet you deny yourself to do it for Christ's sake, it is acceptable to the Lord—a sacrifice with which He is well pleased (Heb. xiii. 16).

Supposing, then, each saint were to make up his mind to give one penny per week for missionary purposes—by that I mean for work among *the heathen* alone, or people who have no Bible—giving, of course, as much more as they chose, and as often as they chose; and this entirely apart from the ordinary collection in the box for the Lord's work in general, or special collections for any thing in particular. Then let one brother in the meeting take upon himself, as unto the Lord, the service of taking care of the missionary money, and as needs might arise of reminding the saints of their privilege, which possibly they might be forgetting. Such a plan would entail no unnecessary hardship on any, but give a most blessed privilege to all of helping, in fellowship with the heart of Christ, those who are seeking to carry out the Saviour's commission.

Nor need we hesitate to resort to the simple practice, so well known to many, of having a box on the mantle-shelf, or some convenient place, in which to drop any gift which might otherwise have been spent in selfish gratification, and occasionally have it opened and given to the brother whose charge it is, and thus lay up for ourselves "treasure in heaven." Take care of the pennies, and they will soon turn into pounds. Once we have the pounds they can soon be turned into Bibles and tracts, through which souls may be saved—what a blessed result!—or made to minister to the needs of tried labourers in heathen lands, in strengthening their faith and confidence in God, and fitting them for renewed service.

I do not mean that the brother should keep a list of how much each one gives, like a subscription list but merely receive from each and account for the whole. If there is simplicity and godly sincerity

in each one there will be no difficulty made about it. It is not individual *almsgiving*, where your left hand need not know what the right hand does. It is simply loving hearts doing what they can, and doing it "decently and in order," and without any thought of others knowing—just the brother who takes it—and all working from motives of love to Christ and the perishing millions for whom He died, that they may hear the gospel and find their place as members of that Church which is to be the Bride of Christ, and occupy that unique place throughout eternity.

Then, again—say each quarter, or any given time as might be most convenient—a special meeting might be held, at which God could be asked to guide as to where the money should be sent—whether China, with its hundreds of millions ; or Africa, with its mighty multitudes of poor benighted souls ; or Central and South America, with their millions of Romanists, without the Bible and dark as heathens ; or wherever He might direct. Special prayer might then be offered for His blessing on every penny piece, that it might all be found again in blessing in that day when sowers and reapers shall rejoice together.

What a widening and deepening of affection and sympathy with Christ and *all* His interests would such blessed work give us. How we should lose sight of self, and learn to estimate the loving service of others who have left all for Christ (and a little more, as the Master estimates it), and find constant and fresh themes for prayer, and also for praise, as we heard of their labours and held them up before God. Nor would we undervalue or displace truth connected with other interests of Christ besides the salvation of souls. Nay ; we would value it more. Our hearts would be softer, in a better state—less occupied with ourselves or with one another—and better able to enjoy it ; for as the heart is occupied with Christ about others, it becomes soft through contact with Him and more easily impressed, and truth has more power over it.

Beloved brethren, shall we not covet and go in for this privilege and blessing—this *systematic giving* to the Lord, which is far and away beyond the feeble and *spasmodic* efforts which are sometimes made for His service—or shall we reason about it, and argue about it, and raise difficulties about it, and shake our heads with knowing looks, till every one is frightened and it falls through? For God's sake, let us try and do something for the heathen. We have surely lived in a nutshell long enough. There are numbers of devoted men and women in China alone, in connection with "The China Inland Mission," who have gone forth and are there without a guarantee of a single penny piece from any soul or society, simply trusting in the Lord and looking to Him alone for supplies for both body and soul: men and women whose lives and godliness might put many of us to the blush, whose hearts burn with love to Christ, and who are waiting for His coming again, while they seek to snatch brands from the burning to wait with them for that blessed event. Not only so; we have the millions of Spanish and Portugese in Central and South America, hundreds of thousands of whom have never seen a Bible, and for whom some of our brethren are printing and circulating the Word and truth of God, to which He is putting His seal in a marked way in conversions and blessing. And we are doing *what* to help it? Yet we *could* do *very much*, even with a penny a week; or much more, in many instances, *if we would*. Shall we do it? Will some brother take it up and start it? "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury." Shall He see the box in the house with its missionary money and give you treasure in heaven; or are the heathen to perish—a million a month in China alone—and we do nothing? Which? Let Abner's advice to the elders of Israel have its place: "Now then do it" (2 Sam. iii. 18).

New Zealand.

W. EASTON.

MATTHEW VIII. 1, 2, 3.

IN the above verses we have a very beautiful picture of real worship. Worship is the whole soul occupied with its Object—a soul divinely guided into a right appreciation of the Person of Him whom we approach. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, it was the privilege of few, a very few, to understand who He was, but this poor leper was one of that number.

Whilst on earth, many followed and lauded Him because of what they received. It was not the intrinsic beauty or the divine glory of Himself that attracted them. They looked not on His brow as one worthy of a crown, nor heard His voice as the voice of the Lord. Alas! is it not to be feared that oftentimes our worship comes from our appreciating what we receive, and even from an appreciation of ourselves as saved ones, rather than from our appreciation of the heart that bestows and the One who redeemed? Doubtless it is, in a certain measure, unconsciously so; but it only becomes, therefore, the more needful to be pointed out, that we may be the more watchful.

Take the case of Job. When the news of his great losses came to him, he fell down and worshipped. How quietly and patiently he bore it. But why? Because he appreciated the person of—Job. It was, as after events show, because Job was Job—this upright man who eschewed evil—and God had to show him that there was something in his heart besides grace—there was pride, though it was there, to a great extent, unconsciously. It creeps on us insidiously; and what a lesson we ought to learn from it! Of course, realising what God has made us, and with what a portion He has blessed us, must ever draw out our hearts in thanksgiving; but this is what we want to ask and answer: Is He not worthy of our worship and adoration apart from any blessing He

may have given us? Who would say, No? Is it not because He is what He is that He has blessed us, and brought us to share a portion with Himself? Yet how far short of this beautiful aspect of worship we come!

It was not so with the poor leper. By divine tuition he comprehended the value of the Person who was, to almost everyone else but Jesus, the carpenter's Son. He who was but a leper worshipped! He, as yet, had received no blessing; his leprosy was yet uncleansed. True, he sought blessing, but the way he did so only showed how real was his appreciation of the One from whom he sought it. He knew that adoration was due to this One, whether he received his request or not. So from his heart there came, "*Lord, if Thou wilt.*" How precious was this! He knew that all power was His; but what about the love? He rests his request upon what he thought this One was. How beautiful this becomes! The answer he gets proves that this One was more than worthy of appreciation and worship, and he renders it in the fullest manner. If He has the power, He has the love. How the poor leper's heart must have rejoiced as the answer of love, "I will, be thou clean," came forth, and he learned that his confidence had not been misplaced, but that this "Lord" was all that he thought Him to be. God grant that we may the better appreciate the Person of His Christ by learning more of His moral worth and glory. What we, in reality, render to God goes up as a sweet savour of Christ; it tells Him, as it were, of Christ's worth.

This is what our blessings should do for us. If we learn that we have an unfailing One accessible to us; no want too mean for Him to pass over; no trouble so small but He must sooth it; no joy so slight but He must rejoice in unison, it should draw out our hearts in truest worship, for it tells us what He must be thus to act. May His moral glories shine very brightly before us in these dark, evil days, teaching us

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED."

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now the real meaning of "Thou art worthy," and so enlarging our hearts with His beauties that we, in truth, rightly appreciate His Person, and worship Him *for what He is*.

"Worthy of homage and of praise ;
Worthy by all to be adored !
Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays !
Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord."

H. F.

"I SHALL BE SATISFIED . . . WITH
THY LIKENESS."—*Psalm* xvii. 15.

Ah ! can it be that we shall see
Our Saviour face to face ?
Be glorified with Him who died,
Our Substitute in grace ?

While here below, how sweet to know
Our Priest and Advocate !
But there above, His feast of love
Shall never terminate !

The joy begun shall endless run,
Nor shade, nor break shall see ;
The One who died to win His bride,
How satisfied shall be !

Behold her shine in light divine,
In beauty all His own ;
His glory there, for ever fair,
Adorns her for His throne !

No cloud shall dim her view of Him
Throughout eternal day ;
The glory blaze shall feast her gaze,
Then satisfied for aye !

ON INSPIRATION.

GOD has spoken to His intelligent creature—man. He spake in patriarchal days *directly* to His creatures for the personal benefit of those addressed.* He spoke thus to Adam, to Cain, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Abimelech, to Laban, and to Job. In all these cases the individual quite understood what He meant to convey, though faith in the divine word might not always be in full exercise in the heart. God spoke for the instruction of those addressed. He spoke directly, so there was no possibility of doubting the correctness of the communication, nor of any uncertainty as to its meaning. It was the voice of God to the person, and he discerned it. It was God's word to him, clear and distinct, and he understood it.

In time, however, to these direct divine communications there were added other methods of addressing His creatures. Human agency was employed, and men, selected men, became messengers from the Holy One to their fellow creatures. Such were called of God as He chose. A herdsman, a shepherd, a ploughman, a priest, a captive, each received his call, which in some cases—witness Moses and Jeremiah—was at first unwillingly accepted. Oral ministry and written ministry thus came into exercise. In Moses both these methods of communicating with others were displayed. Moses was a prophet, and addressed contemporaries. Moses was also a writer.

But when human, and therefore fallible, instruments were to become channels of divine revelations, what means would be taken to authenticate the messengers, as well as to ensure the correctness of the message? Satan would undoubtedly be busy to deceive men, if possible, by pretended revelations through those whom he would enlist in his service.

* To this Enoch's prophecy is no real exception. For, as far as we know, though an oracular announcement, it was sent to no person or persons in his day. It was a prediction, but no message to others.

As for the messengers, God provided a test in Old Testament times by which His people could be kept from seduction by false prophets (see Deut. xviii. 21, 22). And in the New Testament He gave a clear mark by which one energised by an evil, a seducing spirit could infallibly be discovered (see 1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7). Then as to the correctness of a message delivered by a true servant of the Most High, what means can we say were taken to ensure that? If those in patriarchal days could have no doubt of the divine communication being exactly what was intended, were men in after ages to be left in uncertainty as to the correctness of that which reached them? Were they to be at a disadvantage as compared with Noah, Abraham, Jacob, &c.? Would the prophets be left to their own unaided memory? Memory we know, and some of us but too well, is a poor thing at times to trust to.

Further, the full importance of a divine communication the human instrument might not at all times apprehend. Yet God's communications to His creatures are of supreme importance. Hence what is called *inspiration* was provided, that those to be addressed by the prophet in Old Testament days, or by the teacher in New Testament times, should not be dependent on the prophet's memory, or on the teacher's apprehension of the value of setting forth the revelation as each had received it. The communications were inspired of God.

Now what are we to understand by inspiration? To Scripture must we turn for an answer which can really enlighten and fully satisfy us. And that we shall surely find, for it is not the will of our God to leave us in doubt on this matter.

True prophetic utterances were from God. For "no prophecy," writes Peter, "ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). Divine activity was then from time to time in exercise. But as Satan

imitates in order to deceive men and to corrupt the truth, side by side with true prophets there appeared false ones, and they abounded. Which should be credited? Which of them really communicated thoughts of God? Which were charged with messages from the Most High? Those, we have to answer, who spoke in *words* taught by the Holy Ghost. Here we would remark that, whilst men commonly talk of inspired persons, Scripture treats of inspired writings (2 Tim. iii. 16): a distinction of no small importance. For a man might be speaking at one time in words taught him by the Spirit, and at another in words which certainly had no such authority. Paul will illustrate this. As a vessel of divine revelation, he ministered truth in words taught him of the Holy Ghost; but when before the council at Jerusalem (Acts xxiii. 3) he spoke, as he himself owned, under no such guidance. True prophets, then, and apostles were under special divine direction while they delivered their message; but they were not always speaking by inspiration.

We have said they spoke in words taught of the Holy Ghost. And we say that on the authority of the apostle Paul, who must have well known what it was that he was writing to the Church of God at Corinth. We quote the passage: "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by the Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; com-

paring spiritual things with spiritual.* But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 9-14).

The mind of God is of necessity primarily only known to the Spirit of God. No creature can fathom it, nor read, untaught by the Spirit, the thoughts of the Almighty. For as the things of a man are only known to the spirit of the man, so the things of God are only known to the Spirit of God. Hence divine revelation is called for if men are to learn about the things of God. Such a revelation the apostle declares has taken place. God has revealed them to us by the Spirit, who is competent for this; for He searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. But to whom was the revelation vouchsafed? To certain individuals, of whom the apostle Paul was one. "God has revealed them unto *us*," he writes; *us*, not *all men*.

Further, those to whom in New Testament times divine revelations were vouchsafed had intelligence about the things revealed, but only through the Spirit. Mere human wisdom, then, and man's unaided intellect are here shut out. Intelligence of the things revealed by the Spirit comes only from the Spirit. We have spoken of New Testament times, for the prophets of old had not always, Peter tells us, understanding of their predictions (1 Pet. i. 10, 11), though always quite sure that what they set forth was really a revelation from God.

As far, then, as we have gone, we have read of the provision for the individual used of God. Truth to him was revealed, and understanding about it was vouchsafed. And both came from the Spirit. A

* Different translations of this last clause have been proposed, as: "Communicating spiritual things by spiritual means," "Interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men," "Connecting spiritual things with spiritual." The point seems to be, that spiritual things are set forth in words taught of the Spirit.

further step, however, was requisite, viz., the communicating to others without mistake that which had been revealed to him. How needful this was we can all understand, as we know that often in the matters of this life a messenger fails to convey the exact words of a message with which he has been entrusted. So mistakes unintentionally arise, and in some cases the original statement gets perverted. Now God provided against this by teaching His messengers through the Spirit in what words they were to hand on to others the revelations vouchsafed to them. "We speak," wrote Paul, "not in *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but *which* the Spirit teacheth." He was aware of the difference between being left to convey some divine revelation to others as best he could, and conveying it in words taught him of the Spirit. By this last he was kept from error in transmitting what he had received; for he spake in *words* taught him of the Spirit. His utterance under such circumstances was an inspired utterance. He communicated spiritual things by spiritual means, viz., words taught him by the Spirit.*

Three steps he has enumerated. First, a *revelation* came. Next, it was *understood* by the receiver of it. Then he communicated it to others; not as best he could, but in *words* taught him by the Spirit. Each step was under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God. And who tells us all this? One who was consciously thus taught of the Spirit, and guided directly by the Spirit. Who is competent to controvert the apostle's statements? Only one, who was also a vessel of revelation, and commissioned by God to impart that revelation to others. None such have arisen to dispute Paul's statement.

Men may cavil at inspiration; they may ridicule

* We are writing here only of the original communications, whether oral or written. For God did not promise to guard transcribers of the sacred text from error, nor translators either. Care and patient study in these days have, however, done much to verify the text of the originals, and scholarship has helped to correct mistakes of translators.

the thought of verbal inspiration if they like ; but all that they have to advance against it are just their own suppositions or conclusions, never having been, like the apostle, under the distinct guidance of the Holy Ghost. Against the *positive* affirmation of Paul what can they produce but negative assertions?—the denial of the possibility of that which he states with such perfect confidence. Now who, in the things of this life, would accept the dogma of a mere theorist, in the face of statements made by those familiar with, and competent to speak on, that which they were affirming? Men, where their temporal interests are concerned, would never do that. Why, when everlasting interests are at stake, shall we prefer mere conjectural conclusions to the definite statement of one who knew well what it was that he was writing?

But is the apostle Paul alone in this matter? True, he is the most explicit about it. Do others confirm him? They do. Balaam, David, Micaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are witnesses of this—that God taught them the words in which they were to declare their messages from the Almighty.

Balaam, who would fain have pleased Balak by cursing Israel, tells the monarch on his arrival that he can only speak the word which God shall put in his mouth (Numbers xxii. 38). Wealth, honours, worldly advancement were offered him to curse Israel. Gladly would he have gained what Balak had promised him. He would for that have cursed Israel, but he could not. Only the word that God should put in his mouth he well knew that he must speak. Evidently, he was personally acquainted with that of which the apostle subsequently wrote ; nor does he speak of it as anything strange or new to him.

On the morrow, the two, the king and the prophet, stood together on the high places of Baal. Seven altars were erected, on which seven bullocks and seven rams were offered. Could the Almighty be induced by these sacrifices to change His mind, and permit

Balaam to minister to the desire of Balak? God met Balaam, and Balaam spoke of the altars and of the sacrifices. God then spoke, but not a word did He say about the sacrifices. He put, however, a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak." Little had Balak expected what now came forth from the prophet, and expressing that when he heard it, Balaam could only say, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord putteth into my mouth?" Again taking up his parable, and uttering words which stirred the anger of the Moabitish king, and made him dismiss the prophet unrewarded, the son of Beor could only say, on his own behalf, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak." (Numb. xxiv. 13).

He was the mouthpiece of the Almighty. He knew it and declared it. He well knew of what he was speaking—that the Lord had put a word in his mouth. God spake; Balaam hearkened, and passed on what he had heard to the king, and as he had received it. He told Balak, that what he expected was the word to be put by the Lord in his mouth (xxii. 38). He found that indeed true. He strove to fight against it, but in vain. Each time what he uttered was the word of the Lord put into his mouth. Beautiful testimony this of God's watchful care over His own people, but an equally clear testimony of what inspiration really means.

Was Balaam alone in Old Testament times in the consciousness of being the mouthpiece of God? David was just as clear and decided about it, saying in his last words, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was on my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). Very like verbal inspiration this—"His *word* was on my tongue." And so conscious were the Old Testament prophets of this that, if a message was discredited, that prophet could calmly wait till its accuracy was made apparent. See Micaiah before Ahab (1 Kings

xxii. 28). Consigned to prison till the king should return in peace, the faithful prophet quietly replied, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me." And, conscious that he had spoken the word of the Lord to the king, he called all the company to witness, saying, "Hearken, O people, every one of you." The king did not return in peace, for the Lord had spoken by Micaiah; not merely *to* him, but *by* him.

There was a definiteness of claim to inspiration on the part of these three which makes it impossible to believe that there was the least uncertainty in their minds about it. Balaam lost honours and rewards such as he greatly coveted, and Micaiah was consigned to prison, because they were vessels by which God spake, and they knew it.

We turn to Jeremiah and to Ezekiel. In these cases, God declared that both should be His mouthpiece. Addressing Jeremiah, He said, "Behold, I have put *My words* in thy mouth" (Jer. i. 9); and calling Ezekiel to his prophetic ministry, He tells him, "Thou shalt speak *My words* unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ezek. ii. 7). Again, "Son of man, all *My words* that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (iii. 10, 11). When Ezekiel, in fulfilment of this, said, "Thus *saith* the Lord," what did he mean, but that he was handing on to them the *words* of God—*words*, we say, not merely *word*—which he had received in his heart, and had heard with his ears?

If these witnesses are true—and who can confute them?—and if God is to be believed, there is such a thing as verbal inspiration; the sacred writers setting forth what they did in words taught them of the Holy Ghost. Would it be like our God, or in character

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with His ways in patriarchal times, to send, subsequently, messengers to His creatures who could not be sure that they were expressing the mind of God in the form He would have it expressed? And if demons could so take possession of human creatures as to make them their mouthpiece to express the thoughts and fears of the demons (Matt. viii. 29) within them, why could not the Holy Ghost, who is God, divinely guide certain individuals to express in words of His choice what He desired them to say? C. E. S.

GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

BAHAMAS, WEST INDIES.

ABACO.—Several settlements visited briefly on this island, which is situated on a parallel with Southern Florida, with Cuba (now in insurrection) a little to the south and west. How thankful we should be for such advantages as are afforded us of having access to the Word of God, and the liberty of preaching that precious, blessed, abiding Word to creatures of God! What a difference between poor priest-ridden Cuba and these insignificant islands, in comparative peace and quiet. But, alas! our fellow-men are found wasting opportunities, and these outward advantages are no proof of inward piety. We have as much, yea more, need of showing unmistakable marks of unfeigned repentance; for we, with an open Bible vouchsafed us, have not generally responded to His Word (only in form, not in spirit); while they, not having an open Bible—just fragments of it in a dead tongue—do things worthy of stripes. The day may yet dawn when this people, or some from among them, will hear and believe, and thus emerge from bondages more serious than those which they suppose unendurable. Subjection to Spain and to priests is one thing, but subjection to sin and Satan is another! But if ever such

preaching as Christ crucified is heard in her streets, it will be pure sovereign grace; for how could a lawless people, who refuse to render tribute to whom tribute is due, ever deserve any other portion than that which belongs to traitors and the rebellious? "Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's," was His perfect answer to such as desired to prove Him lawless. But upon hearing Him they marvelled, left Him, and went their way. And what a way; no peace, but destruction and misery in their ways. This is the way still of the religious pharisees who reject the counsel of God against themselves.

These poor Cubans are our neighbours, and where love works no ill will be wrought; but, alas! so much ease and self-justification prevail that we are ready at times with our enquiry, "Who is my neighbour?" forgetful that this interrogation came from a lawyer whose chief exercise was to tempt our blessed Lord, and to justify himself. Yet he is made out of his own mouth to condemn himself.

Your readers will rejoice to learn that in seven different settlements are to be found a few humble, simple, failing saints gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, owning (amidst trial, persecution, and temptation) that there is One Body. It is so cheering to find in the main a people who welcome the Word, and don't fail to show gratitude for having the privilege of sitting under it, and glorify God by responding to it. Not being a reading people, their growth is slow; but in testimony (that He preserves, and makes the weak to stand), with few exceptions, after eight years the same faces are seen, with some additions or changes through emigration or passing away to be present with the Lord. What grace! and that our God should make known to us with whom His pleasure rests, and we not stumbled to find a few unlettered men and women here and there whose chief mark is love one to another, following

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righteousness, and pained when anything dishonouring to Christ presents itself in their midst.

NASSAU, N.P.—In this, the capital, there has been steady increase in numbers, and larger premises occupied. From three or four in a brother's parlour, now upwards of forty in a larger room are found keeping His appointments, according to the Word, and sounding out the gospel in the highways, as well as exhorting one another. And, on the part of some, diligent application to the study of Scripture enables one to rejoice that, though rationalism, ritualism, and Romanism are also flourishing, our blessed God gives in His faithfulness a way of escape (1 Cor. x. 1-17). Two weeks spent in this city has been a season of profit to my soul, in watering others being myself watered.

COVE, ELEUTHERA.—This is an old field, although laboured in but a very little upwards of eight years ago; yet yield of fruit rewards and encourages one to toil on and sow the seed beside all waters. Beyond a simple gospel testimony we did not go then; now a little, feeble company are found in a path of separation to God, who show fellowship with the glad tidings, and suffer reproach for His Name. Pineapples constitute one of the principal articles of commerce from this island; but, with weakened land and depreciation of the fruit in market value, there seems to be the prospect of future failure. God grant His poor may be kept a humble, watchful, dependent people, content with such things as they have. Two or three other settlements have a few gathered to His Name, who in simplicity render testimony as the truth is in Jesus. May this widen, and many be won to Christ in these increasingly dark, though favoured parts. Our little meeting room suffices for the five or six who gather, and some good audiences assemble in the open air to hear the glad tidings. We can but count upon Him still to work; for no doubt many are saved, but not separated, and show shyness of such as are identified with Christ in His rejection.

W. BLATCHLEY.

IF PREACHING would save a man, Judas would not have been damned; if prophesying would save a man, Balaam would not have been a castaway!

A SCIENTIFIC gentleman, eminent in learning and wealth, came to Tunbridge Wells to select his resting-place in the churchyard. Canon Hoare asked him if he was prepared for the change: where would his soul be? He replied he had large means and used them well; he trusted the right things would outweigh the wrong. Canon Hoare faithfully exploded his hopeless hope! The scientist saw his mistake, owned his guilty and lost state, was saved, and died in the Lord. Snowballs will never heat an oven, and good works will take no man to heaven. No man can earn it, no man can buy it, though all may receive and accept it.

CONVERSION OF TWO JEWS.—Rabbinowitz, the celebrated Jewish lawyer, was converted to Christ about ten years ago. He went to Palestine to see about some land for his fellow-countrymen, who were being driven from other countries. He was advised to take a New Testament as a guide to the country. Standing on Olivet with this in his hand, and reading from the words of Christ the prophecy of judgment consequent on His rejection; seeing how that had been, and was still being fulfilled, a divine flash of conviction broke in upon him that the rejected Nazarene was the Messiah, and there and then he became a Christian through the operation of the Holy Ghost. The conversion of Leopold Cohn, who is now assisting Mr. Warszawiak:—Born and bred in the very heart of orthodox Judaism, he “did not know anything about the Lord Jesus Christ or His claims—I did not even know of the existence of a New Testament.” Consequently, when by the study of the Old Testament he became convinced that *the Messiah had already come*, he was completely in the dark as to who He was. Led to New York, he found himself one afternoon outside Mr. Warszawiak’s mission church. A brother Jew drew him away, saying, “You had better come away from there. There are some apostates in that church who mislead our Jewish nation.” “How, how, I pray?” asked Mr. Cohn. “They say,” he replied, “that *the Messiah is come already*.” After this, Mr. Cohn could find no rest till he had interviewed Mr. Warszawiak, and, after staying at the Mission Home with him, by constant prayer and searching in the Scriptures, “I became convinced in my own soul that Jesus of Nazareth is my blessed Saviour and mighty Redeemer.”

TIME.—Time Was is past, thou canst not it recall;

Time Future is not, and may never be;

Time Present is the *only* time for thee!

AN EASTERN KING had graven upon his tomb two fingers, represented as sounding upon each other with a snap, and under them the motto, “All is not worth that!” Apicius Coelius hanged himself because his steward informed him that he had only £80,000 sterling left. No amount of riches is an inheritance for *the soul*. Robespierre attempted to win the applause of the world; but when he was dying, a woman, rushing through the crowd, cried, “Murderer of my kindred, descend to hell, covered with the curses of every mother in France!” Many who have aimed at the plaudits of the world have only earned its execrations.

A YOUNG LADY, dressing for a ball, placed a sort of coronet on her brow ornamented with silver stars. A fair-haired little sister climbed into a chair and touched it with her fingers. Being cautioned not to do so, she said, "I was looking at that and thinking of *something else*." "Of what?" said the elder. "I was remembering that my Sunday School teacher said, if by our influence sinners were saved, we should win stars to our crowns in glory, and I wished I could save some soul." The elder sister went to the ball, but in solemn meditation, for those few words had taken root in her soul. Early she returned home, and going to the room of her little sister, she imprinted a kiss on the soft cheek of the sleeper, and said, "Precious sister, you have won one star for your crown!"—*Matt. xxi. 16.*

"THE CAPTAIN was constantly drunk and swearing. He used to take too much of that stuff you have there;" and the stranger pointed to a flask from which one of the men was helping himself. "When the storm came on, he hardly knew what he was about. The only thing he was up to was to stagger about the deck and swear. I had heard plenty of bad language before, but this beat all that ever I had heard; it was so horrible that it frightened me. Well, he got a little sobered, and took a turn at the helm, while the men were engaged throwing some of the deck-load overboard; and I was at the wheel with him. Ah, mates, if a fellow-man's curses did anyone hurt, I don't know where I should have been that day. He swore at me nearly every minute we were at the wheel together. Presently, we saw a tremendous sea coming right aft. It came on like a wall of water without a break, as far as I could see. I thought it was all up with us, and I sent up a prayer to God to have mercy on my soul; but the captain only swore at it, just as if he expected God's great sea was going to be frightened by him! Well, on it came, and in a moment it swept the decks. I held on to the wheel with all my might; and when the wave was passed, I looked up, and the captain was gone. He was carried right away, mates. Yes, the captain's last word was an oath." "And how about the crew?" asked one of the sailors, who all seemed interested in the story. "They were every one safe, lads. They had all held on to something, and not one of them was lost. Only the captain, poor fellow, he was gone. It wasn't long before the weather abated; and although the 'Alice' was pretty much knocked about, she weathered it, and we took her into port all right. Well, mates, I had had enough of swearing, and drinking too, for that matter; and I made up my mind that day never to swear again." "Then I suppose you expect to go to heaven when you die, because you don't swear nor drink?" "No, I don't expect anything of the sort, for it is only by repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, that anyone can be saved." "Do you mean to say," asked one of them, "if a man didn't swear, and never got drunk, and was honest, and did his duty by his ship, and all the rest of it, he wouldn't be safer than a drunken, lazy thief?" "I mean to say, mate—leastways, it isn't me that says it, but the Bible—that no one is safe unless he believes in the Lord Jesus. If you could leave off every evil way, and never commit another sin from this very minute, that couldn't save your soul; there would be all your past sins hanging to you still, and unless they were forgiven they would sink you into hell."

A CHILD once exclaimed, "Mother, one of your hands is beautiful, but the other hand is ugly." And this was the fact. "Tell me, mother, what makes that hand so ugly." And the mother said, "You are scarcely old enough to understand just now, but I will tell you by-and-by." And as the years passed by the mother saw her opportunity, and said, "When you were quite a little thing, you tumbled into the fire; I came inside the room just in time to see it and to save you. Your clothes caught fire directly, but I caught you, covered you with my mantle and my skirts, and with this hand I knocked out the flames." "Oh," said the little one, "I think that that wounded hand is the more lovely of the two." Oh, Saviour, Thou art altogether lovely. for Thou wast wounded for my sake, scarred and bruised for me. Oh, what a proof—what a powerful and indisputable proof—of Thy great love for me!

TWO HAPPY PERSONS.—A lady was asked lately, Who was the happiest person she had ever known? She replied, "A missionary in China, who wears the same sort of clothes as the poorest of the natives, and eats the same sort of food. Often he is in a place far from any European, but, from his letters to me, he would seem never to be lonely, and never sad." "Then," continued the lady, "I know a mother who, without any warning, heard by telegram, at different times last year, of the death, in different parts of the world, of two sons and a daughter; but the more she is crushed, the sweeter she is. Indeed, she seems to me to be far happier than those who have never had losses of the kind, for she always thinks of her loved ones as being kept safely in a Heavenly Father's arms, until the time for her to meet them."

ONE THOUSAND and thirty millions of people are there in the world who do not even profess the Name of Christ—heathen and Mohammedans; 800 millions of whom have never heard His Name! And in all the world there are not more than 7,000 Protestant missionaries, male and female. The B. and F. Bible Society issues four to five millions of Bibles, or portions, every year. Were all these in Chinese, and all issued in China, it would take 80 years before every inhabitant could be provided with even one part of the Word of God! Japan has 40 millions population, and only 693 Protestant missionaries, male and female. In India, there are more idols, it is said, than there are men and women, and the Hindu temples are dens of iniquity. Buddhism as practised among the Asiatic nations is a gross and elaborate system of idolatry—it has no Creator and no Saviour, and its doctrine as to the future is that of the transmigration of souls, a combination of atheism and fatalism! In the Soudan, there are said to be 60 millions of souls and not a single missionary!

GOD'S PURPOSE is the highest good; His plan the deepest wisdom; yet He puts me into the world, and tells me that all I do and say will either help or hinder the accomplishment of that purpose and the carrying out that plan; and all the possible helps and hindrances arising from the exercise of man's free will were reckoned for in the plan, and adjusted to the fulfilment of the purpose. Well may we exclaim, "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!" (Rom. xi. 33).

240 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

TALKING TO A JEW in Dublin, I was led to read with him 1 Cor. xiii. It was new to him that such sublime ideas, which excited his highest admiration, were to be found amongst Christians and in the New Testament, and he confessed that neither the law, the Talmud, nor Jewish life knew of a love that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7).

THE BISHOP AND THE RED MAN.—Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, says, "One who had been a heathen red man came 600 miles to visit me in my home. As he came into the door, he knelt at my feet. He said to me, 'I kneel to tell you of my gratitude that you pitied the red man.' He then told me this simple, artless story:—'I was a wild man, living beyond the turtle mountain. I knew that my people were perishing. I never looked in the face of my child that my heart was not sick. My fathers told me there was a Great Spirit, and I have often gone to the woods and tried to ask Him for help, and I only got the sound of my voice.' And then he looked in my face in that artless way, and said, 'You do not know what I mean. *You never stood in the dark and reached out your hand, and took hold of nothing.* One day, an Indian came to my wigwam. He said to me he had heard you tell a wonderful story at Red Lake; that you said the Great Spirit's Son had come down to earth to save those who needed help; that the reason why the white man was so much more blessed than the red man was because he had the true religion of the Son of the Great Spirit, and I said I must see that man. They told me you would be at the Red Lake crossing. I came 200 miles. I asked for you, and they said you were sick, and then I said, Where can I see a missionary? I came 150 miles more, and I found that the missionary was a red man like myself. My father, I have been with him three moons. I have the story in my heart. It is no longer dark. It laughs all the while.' And he turned to me, and said, 'Will you not give us a missionary?' Shame on the Church that I had to say to him, 'We have not the man, and we have not the means.'"—*Missionary Facts.*

POPULATION AND EVANGELISATION.—It is estimated that within this century the population of the heathen world has increased by 200 millions, and, during the same period, only four millions of converts have been baptized! Thirty-five millions pass annually into Christless graves. In India, 1,300 die every hour; in China, 1,400, or, in a day of 24 hours, 33,000 actually pass into eternity. Were a missionary to leave this day for China, before he could land upon its shores one and a half millions of the heathen of that vast empire would have perished. . . . Our style of living is always rising. Our expenditure on ourselves and our surroundings is enormous. We have old silver, we have jewellery, objects of art, rare editions of books, things that have been given us by those we have loved. All these would bring their money value if they were sold. May we not hear the Lord's voice, saying, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" We should go carefully over our stewardship in the light of those eyes which closed in death for our redemption. Let us entreat Him to have mercy not only on the Christless heathen, but on the Christlessness of our own hearts, our shallow sympathies, and hollow self-denials, and on our heartless callousness to the woes of a perishing world, for love of which God gave His only and well-beloved Son.—*Miss Isabella Bishop, F.R.G.S.*

ERRATA.—Page 214, second line from top, *eternal* should be *external*.

AN ASSEMBLY'S CONDITION.

Leviticus xiv. 33-57.

WE come now to a third revelation, given, as the first was, to both Moses and Aaron, and which treats of leprosy in a house in the land. Leprosy in a man, or in a garment, could be known in the wilderness; that in the house could only be experienced in the land and it was a direct infliction by the hand of God "And I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession."

The priest, made acquainted with the occupant's suspicion about the house—for it was the duty of one in it to acquaint him with his fears respecting it—he was to order them to empty it ere he entered therein, that all in the house should not be made unclean.

Examining the walls, he judged if the marks were in sight lower than the wall—*i.e.*, not mere superficial marks. If they were, he shut up the house for seven days, for it was the plague which had attacked it.

Examining it again at the expiration of that time, if the marks had spread, the plague-stricken stones were to be taken out, the whole house scraped, new stones put in the place of diseased ones, and the whole replastered; whilst the stones removed and the scrapings of the walls were all to be cast into an unclean place without the city. If the plague re-appeared after that, there was nothing for it but the demolition of the whole building, and its stones, timber and mortar to be carried forth to an unclean place outside the city. Such a house was not to be suffered to remain in the land.

What care was to be exercised, and what patience! The plague really there, as evidenced on the first inspection, the priest waited to see whether or not it would spread. If it did, he tried to save the house by the removal of the diseased stones. If, however, the leprosy still worked, unsparing was the treatment

to be pursued. But should the removal of some stones be sufficient to eradicate the plague, the priest offered for the cleansing of the house the same offerings as were enjoined for the leper on the first day of his cleansing. Atonement thus made for it, the house was clean, because the plague was healed. These offerings, however, were to be offered only in the case of the plague having ceased to spread after the stones had been taken out (ver. 48) and the house replastered. So it would appear that when the second examination of the house (*i.e.*, that on the seventh day) showed that the plague had not spread since the priest had first seen it, no sacrifices were required.

The house then was in a condition analogous to that of the man in whom the leprosy had all turned white (xiii. 13). It was clean. Such was the law.

To us, this affords instruction in type about an assembly in which evil has got a footing that requires to be dealt with ; for the whole subject of leprosy in these two chapters (xiii., xiv.) provides us with principles applicable to the circumstances in which a Christian can be found. Is he himself leprous, the disease still at work in him? Then putting away from the fellowship of the saints is the proper Scriptural way of dealing with him ; and the assembly, certified of his state, is responsible to act as the word directs. Are his surroundings such as God's word forbids? He must get out of them at all cost to himself. Is any local assembly known to harbour evil, and which ought to be put out? The state of that assembly should be the common concern of all saints. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6). If it purges itself, so that the evil ceases to work, well and good. But should the disease still work, the authors of it and those infected by it must be put away. If that does not arrest the spread of the plague, the assembly must be broken up—*i.e.*, disowned as an assembly of God.

Do any ask for an example in Scripture of the

assembly in general disowning any local assembly? We must answer at once that there is none, though we can point to Corinth as affording instruction about the whole case.

Evil leaven was among them. The apostle wrote to them about it; they dealt with it, and thus got clear of it (2 Cor. vii. 11). The visit of Titus, and his report about them, evidenced that to the apostle; so he proceeded no further. But was Paul unconcerned about it? No. Did he take the ground that none could urge a local assembly to act? No. And we may be quite sure that the one who could write as he did in 1 Cor. v. 2, 7, 13 would not have tolerated the retention among them of the evil about which he wrote. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," he writes—a very plain intimation of the character they would have borne if the evil had not been purged out. And if he insisted on their dealing with the offender, would he—could he—have held intercourse with them as an assembly of God, supposing they had refused to act? His language evidences in what light he would have viewed them.

The Corinthians dealt with the offender, as the priest did with the leper. But they did not do it till Paul, who was not locally connected with them—his language proves that (1 Cor. v. 7, 13)—pressed on them the need of action, and pointed out what should be done; and waited (and how anxiously) to learn what they would do. In this he acted somewhat like the priest, who inspected the house, and then waited a week to see if the disease was still working. As an apostle he personally could do all this, and take such ground with them about the evil in question; for he was an apostle of Christ, and apostolic power was no light thing (2 Cor. x. 1-11, xiii. 2-10; 1 Cor. iv. 21; 1 Tim. i. 20; 3 John 10).

But what, some may ask, is to be done now, seeing there are no apostles? John xx. 21-23 supplies us with the answer. The disciples breathed on by the

Lord Jesus, receiving from Him the Holy Ghost, were thereby authorised to act on earth for Him. That authority remains, and that is enough. The assembly, viewed in its general character, has power to act for Christ—to care for His glory as much as the assembly viewed in its local character. In both aspects it is the body of Christ (Eph. iv. ; 1 Cor. xii.), and in both it is regarded as having all its members, and therefore it is competent to act. God's word gives no sanction to the thought that, whilst the local assembly must keep itself clear, the assembly in its general character has no power to deal with evil. It is surely responsible to cleanse itself as the house of God, and has authority to act for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should also bear in mind the revelation of Levit. xiv. 46, 47, which tells us in what light those were regarded who went into a house after it had been shut up by the priest. They were by entrance into it made unclean, and had to wash their clothes in order to be cleansed. Would it, then, be fitting for anyone, not locally connected with it, to have personal fellowship with an assembly in a state analogous to that of the house? We can all answer such a question. But we must remember that till the priest examined the house and found it unclean it was not shut up. So, surely, there should be an investigation into an assembly's condition corresponding to that of the examination by the priest, ere so serious a charge as that of leprosy within it could be held to be proved.—*From Vol. IV. "Bible Herald."* C. E. S.

EPH. VI. 4.—The exhortation to fathers is remarkable—that they should not provoke their children; that their *hearts* should be turned toward them; that they should not repel them, nor destroy that influence which is the strongest guard against the evil of the world. God forms the hearts of children around this happy centre. The father should watch over this.

J. N. D.

LUKE XXII. 1-38.

THE previous chapters have occupied us with Jesus as the child born and growing up into manhood, also as Son of Man, and the obedient Servant, and the dependent One. We have also seen Him as the righteous Man in Jordan, and the acknowledged and beloved Son of the Father in heaven; but the challenged One by the devil below. We have followed Him into the wilderness, as the hungry and the tempted One of the earth; but as the last Adam, who defcated Satan in all that he had to offer and do. As the sent One, we have seen Him sealed with the Holy Ghost for His ministry; and as the Shepherd of Israel, seeking to gather the lost sheep together.

We have been with Him as the great Teacher, and heard His words, from the synagogue of Nazareth to the temple of Jerusalem; and are His witnesses as the Son of God, all the way from Bethlehem to the holy mount. We have accompanied Him in all His ways and works, as the Son of Abraham and the Son of David; and have owned Him as the rightful heir to the throne and sceptre, as King in Zion. In all the opening glories of the Messiah, and in His unwearied services and ministry as the Saviour of Israel, we have followed Him, "going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." As the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, we have mourned with Him; and as the Friend of the friendless and of him that had no helper, we have journeyed with Him through the villages, and cities, and towns in which the poor, and the diseased, and the lame, and the halt, and the blind lay. In the morning, rising a great while before day, as the Bridegroom coming out of His chamber, and bringing His wine with Him, if they would but come to the wedding; or else, as the great Prophet who wept over the city, we have wept with Him, as He returned at night to Him that sent

Him forth, saying, Israel refused to be gathered, and My people would have none of Me!

In all these characters and relations, Jesus presented Himself day by day, and every day, in His unwearied love to them, and in the midst of contempt and opposition from their rulers, and of controversy and false accusation from their chief priests and scribes. Such ministries and such services failed to recover the nation either to Jehovah or the Messiah come in the flesh. So He folded up the glory of the kingdom, and His own kingly majesty and honours, and left them on the holy mount; and came back to enter and lie down in the sepulchre, that He might win all by death that could not be won by His life; and in like manner fold up the napkin, and leave the grave clothes behind Him, as the witness of redemption through His blood, and the tokens, yea, and the very pledge, that He had purchased the inheritance in the new title of the Kinsman-Redeemer, and would come back from the heavens to take possession and hold it, and themselves too, in the sovereign power of His resurrection. He will thus win Israel and the groaning creation back from the enemy's hand, and out of the lion's mouth, for the God that made them, and for Himself to come back into.

This is now the mighty work before Jesus in the following chapter xxii. of this Gospel, which presents Him as the willing Sacrifice and appointed Victim; for He had risen up, and shut to the door upon all that had rejected and refused Him, in the former chapter of judgment, only putting His elect ones in the place of watching and praying, that thus they *might escape all those things which are coming to pass upon the earth, and be prepared to welcome and "stand before the Son of Man."*

Those who know the Lord Jesus must gladly say, yea, each of us, how like Thee! thus to give us the very ground of Thine own coming to stand on with Thee, that Thou mightest find us morally, hand in

hand, foot by foot, and step by step, so well kept and in such exact time, that we may be on the same meridian, and at the precise degree, so as to be found "standing before Thee" at Thy return—like the sun, and its dial plate below!

The Lord now connects Himself with the sacrificial and Levitical types, in the prospect of the decease which is before Him. "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people." But they little think how easy all their enmity can find a ready outlet by the help of "the murderer" from the beginning; for having cast off and denied the good Shepherd of the sheep, and His care over the flock, it is impossible but that the lion and the wolf, and the thief and the robber, must be close at hand.

"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money." And here again, we may remark the way in which God catcheth the wicked in their own nets; and withal, how the righteous One escapeth out of their hands, and like David, who walked with God upon the other side of the mountain, while Saul was hunting down the Lord's anointed on this side!

And Judas "promised, and sought opportunity to betray Him unto them in the absence of the multitude." But whatever the enmity may be which sought to kill, and the ready will of Satan to lend *his own energy and craft to Judas, by entering into him*, and the treachery of the betrayer besides; yet they can do nothing before the time appointed by the law of the Levitical priests, or in their accomplishment in the offering up of Jesus as the fore-ordained Lamb of God from before the foundation of the world. Let us mark it!

"*Then* came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover *must* be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat." And here we see Jesus in this last and most precious pathway of laying down His life that He might take it again, be this instrumentally brought about by whatever ways and means God may please. Moreover, the readiness of His own voluntary will is as perfect as His submission to the Father's will; and He found His meat and drink therein. Yea, though the traitor waits, and Satan is ready and active outside, yet the action itself must begin by the direction of Him who is the suffering Victim; and who, being perfect in every grace, and knowing too what became Him as the Fulfiller of all righteousness, sent forth Peter and John to prepare.

The disciples prepare to keep it, and eat it, with the elect One in their midst; whilst the chief priests and scribes and Judas prepare to kill it, with the devil as their chief. In these two diverse companies, we see how goodness is rising up to its own proper height, and how wickedness is sinking down into its own depths of infamy. The perfection of grace and holy devotedness has found out a nest for itself, in whatever may be for the glory of God; and the consummation of iniquity has found a new outlet for itself, and made itself at home, alas, in the Cross of Calvary.

It is in a growing acquaintance with these diverse companies, in their widening circles of love and of cruel hatred, that we must pursue our journey to Gethsemane, and after the garden to the Cross, and to the new Sepulchre, that we may see and learn the immeasurable heights of glory that crown the Son of Man, who is gone up there, and the unfathomable abyss into which the son of perdition has yet to be cast down by the righteous judgment of God. The great secret we shall be taught as we sit at this feast, with the paschal Lamb in person, is that the promises of God, and the covenants made to the fathers, and

the prophecies of permanent blessing and peace are to be first founded and laid on the death of the Surety, before they can be established and opened out in His life. This is the new lesson which we are called to learn, in the change of God's order and ways from the first Adam to the last ; and we have been made alive to the reasons and necessity for this change by all that has taken place, when Israel and men were tested by God, whether they were ready and prepared to sit at His feast, or to accept His invitation to the great supper, or to come to the marriage which the King made for His Son. We remember their answers and excuses ; so that nothing remained but to set man aside as in the flesh (which profited nothing, and in which no good dwelt), and by redemption to bring the elect out of the state and condition of the fallen creature into the position of new creatures in Christ, by His resurrection from the dead, and plant such in the likeness and image of the heavenly Man.

This is now become the standing order of God in the new creation, of which the last Adam is the glorified Head and beginning. The Sabbath of rest and satisfaction (which typically led off the Levitical order for the earth, at their first establishment) has long since connected itself with the heavens, and with the glorified Son of Man at the right hand of God, according to the order of the new creation. For where can Jehovah rest, but in the types and figures of Christ, as He taught His people before the Messiah came into the world ; and where can He *now* rest, after Christ has been here, and the world has cast Him out, but where that same Christ is gone ? The Sabbath *day* is gone ; but not the secret of Him who is the kernel of the rest itself ! God rests in Christ, and so do His elect ; but why not in external blessing, like there originally was in creation ? and why not in Canaan ? The first query may be best answered by another, Where is Adam ? and the second by, Where is Israel ? If any one may yet

enquire in a Sabbath observance age, And why not in the world as it now is? this query may be in like manner best replied to by another, Where is the Christ? Could God, or any one that knows the Son of Man, keep a Sabbath of rest and satisfaction in the very world that killed Him, and with the generation of men who did it? If any attempt to do so, will God keep it with them on the murderer's side of the cross, where the blood of Christ cries from the very ground?

These observations on the Sabbath day have reference also to the fact that Jesus begins with the pass-over and the feast of unleavened bread; for how could He keep a Sabbath in a world where He was about to lay new foundation stones between God and men, and the good pleasure with the children of men, on the same footing of redemption by His blood and His own ascension into heaven, that He might hold the glory as Man, but in association with the Father?

"And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in." The "colt tied" and made ready for Jesus, when He had need of him, for His journey into the city of Jerusalem as its King, was not more perfect in its place on that day than is this man, who meets them bearing a pitcher of water at this season! What can this be, but the Lord in Spirit tasting and refreshing Himself by the knowledge of what man would become as viewed on the other side of His own death, and when "out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water"? What form could man take before the eyes of the Lord Jesus, who knew quite well what the fruit and effect of redemption would be, but the fashion and figure of this man (prospectively seen in the distance) bearing on his shoulder a pitcher of water—the ready carrier of life and healing, and contributing refreshment to

all around, where aforetime, and by nature, man had been but the channel of death and corruption, so that it repented God that He had made him on the earth!

"Follow him into the house where he entereth in" are the thoughts and directions of the Lord to His disciples; for this, as we have suggested, was the representative man, as viewed under the effect of this feast of the passover and of the unleavened bread. Afterwards, when He went up to another feast of the seventh month, He stood and cried on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, that great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink; for he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (but this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

These are the respective distinctions between those of the first month's feast of the passover and those of the seventh month's feast of tabernacles. The first class had not received the Spirit, and were like the disciples sitting with Jesus, drawing the feast of the first month out of type and pattern into fact and accomplishment, in the knowledge of the paschal Lamb. The second class are viewed prospectively too; only not like the man bearing a pitcher of water, but as these same disciples were afterwards at Pentecost when the Holy Ghost was given, and drew the type and pattern of the seventh month out into fact and accomplishment by the knowledge of the Son of Man glorified; so that out of their belly flowed rivers of living water. Beyond this, we find men, like Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost," and knowing Jesus as having passed through and out of Levitical order and types into His present position—going by martyrdom to be with Him, where Stephen, looking up stedfastly into heaven, beheld Jesus. Nor are these representations concluded of what "a man in Christ" *now is*, unless we add to the pitcher of water and its bearer,

and the rivers of water flowing out from Him, and the eye of the martyr looking at Jesus in glory, the further fact of his bearing about in his body on earth the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in his mortal body. May the Lord perfect us in each and in all these developments, that for us to live may be Christ !

“ And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, 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.” This earth, and His place and rights in it, are fast closing in upon Him ; and all around are the betrayers and murderers, who have superseded the watchers and the spies of yesterday. Perfect in His own path, the Lord opens the “ guest-chamber ” as the paschal Lamb ; and when “ the hour was come ” He takes His place as the Master of the feast, and yet as the Victim to be offered up. Moreover, the moment was come when the great desire of His own heart could let itself out to the disciples, as He bound them up in the efficacy of the death that would make them His own for ever ; not by their attachment to Him only, but by His yearning affection for them, on account of which He would purchase them with His blood.

It is the desire with which He desired to eat this passover with them that gives the character to the feast, and sheds its own bright light and colour in upon the guest-chamber ; like the first rays of the rising sun bring a new day in upon an old world : and so it was, but much more than this. The pass-over, too, gets a significance before and after His sufferings which it is necessary for us to observe in *taking our thoughts from His own ; for it was His passing through death that would take the types and shadows which pointed to Him out of the pattern-book of Leviticus, and carry them forward into fulfil-*

ment in the kingdom of God ; and this is very precious for us to realise in our communion with Himself and the Father. Therefore it is that He marks to the disciples His desire to eat with them "before I suffer," inasmuch as He was about to embody all these types in Himself ; first, by eating it with them as come in the flesh, and as one of Israel, and also as eating it no more with them in shadows of Himself, and of the kingdom in the feast of tabernacles on the seventh month ; because He would by means of His sufferings establish them in glorious fulfilments, on the other side of death, by means of His resurrection.

Like "the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up," while in holy jealousy for God He purged the temple when He walked through it, so now this one absorbing desire of His soul eats Him up, as He enters the guest-chamber at the appointed hour with His disciples to keep the feasts, and to fulfil them for the glory of God. In view of His baptism by blood, He had said already, "how am I straitened till it be accomplished," in order that His life might be set free from all the limitations which, being born according to the flesh, imposed upon Him as the Son of Abraham and Son of David ; so now, in like manner, He desires to eat the passover and keep the feast of unleavened bread, that by these early steps He might press forward and become free to take the place of the wave-sheaf before Jehovah by resurrection.

"With desire I have desired to eat—before I suffer" carried Him yet further away from all that straitened Him before His death, as He saw close at hand the "two wave-loaves of fine flour, brought out of their habitations" too, as "the first fruits unto the Lord," on the fiftieth day after He should in the first place have presented Himself above, as "the wave-sheaf" out of death and the grave. We may get a glimpse of what He meant by "the baptism" which liberated Him from His straits, and the desire to eat, and not to eat any more till the glory and the blessing, and

the peace and the joy, of which these seven feasts of Jehovah were the typical formations and the pledge, should be carried out into their times of accomplishment in the manifested kingdom of God.

"And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves ; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." The law of the Nazarite, and the time of his separation from the earth by its rejection of Him, and of His absence in heaven, as well as the new place He has taken there as the last Adam, apart from the joys which properly belonged to Him as the appointed heir of the world, were present to the eye of the Lord, as He passed the cup to them to divide among themselves. All the days of His Nazariteship, the law forbade that He should eat or drink any "thing that was made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk," until the days of His separation were fulfilled, and He came again to "the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" in the full acceptance and perfectness of the burnt offering and its attendant sacrifices. Then, in the office and character of the high priest too, He shall wave the shoulder of the ram, and its accompaniments, "for a wave-offering before the Lord ;"—the portion for the priest himself being "the wave-breast and the heave shoulder : " and after that may the Nazarite go, and drink wine !

And Jesus "took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying; This is My body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." Here, and in these two parts of this one scene, Jesus (if we may so speak) is in the place of the greatest of all scribes ; and, as the well-instructed Expositor of the mind of God, is bringing out of His treasures things new and old to us. Consistently with this guest-chamber, and corresponding with its mean-

ing in reference to the kingdom of God, the twelve apostles may have carried it out themselves, in their subsequent ministry in the Acts, as they preached and taught the people. On the other hand, Paul, who had never been connected with Jesus according to the flesh, nor identified with the Messiah and the twelve disciples, as gathering around Him on the earth, and to Jerusalem as its centre, was differently taught by the Lord, when He had broken up His relations with Israel below, and had departed into the heavens to open out the new relationships with Himself as the Head of His body, the Church. Accordingly the apostle of the Gentiles writes to the Corinthians, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread," &c., quoting the last part of this supper-time to them, as in Church relations with Christ, and adding, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

What I mean to present is this, viz., that in the time and order of the fulfilments of the passover, and the accompanying feasts of Jehovah with His people, Jesus will come out as the true Nazarite, when the days of His separation are ended, and present Himself at the door of the earthly tabernacle, and drink of the fruit of the vine in the coming kingdom of God during the thousand years of gladness below: whereas in the order and manner of the fulfilments of the death of Christ to the Church it is very different; though as members of His Body, and being the Bride, we have likewise our place with the King in the kingdom. The differences, however, between the Church fulfilments in heaven and the kingdom fulfilments upon the earth must be plain enough by the respective spheres; besides this, we show His death till He comes with a shout, and we are caught up into the air to meet Him, and go to the Father's house in the life and righteousness of the heavenly

Man and changed into His image. We are thus changed, and go upward, having put off the likeness of the earthy man ; whereas the Lord comes back to Israel and Jerusalem, to establish the promises and prophecies of outward and national blessing to them in Immanuel's land, and to settle the twelve tribes in their inheritances, that the Gentiles may rejoice with His people.

In this disordered and distracted world, we see Him in the midst of men and things as they were ; and thus He says to them, " Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined : but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed ! " We may remark here that Jesus cannot allow Himself to be any longer straitened by the Levitical law of the feasts, which restricted them to the circumcised only ; but having passed into His days of separation from the world, and Israel too, as the faithful Nazarene, and out of them again in spirit, to drink wine new with them in the fulfilments of the kingdom, He now appears in the title and largeness of " the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined ! " He is outside and beyond all restrictions and straits, and ready to take up His cross according to the foreknowledge and counsel of God with Him as man, and the Son of Man ; albeit as the Shepherd of Israel, and the King of Jerusalem, and the child of Joseph and Mary His mother.

Here, again, when goodness is at its height by all this willing devotedness towards God and His people, wickedness lurks, and scarce conceals itself, in one of those who sit at the table with Him, unsuspected by any except Him before whose eyes all things were naked and open. " And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing ; " none writing the sentence of death upon himself, but each looking and enquiring of one another, *Who* should do this thing ? Every one more likely than the other.

“And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” And so it has been, and is, even amongst those who are in the company of Jesus; and when sitting at the table, in remembrance of Christ, who by His death for us has refused the flesh; and in forgetfulness of our own death with Christ, by which our old man has been crucified with its affections and lusts. Whenever the flesh in us escapes from under the judgment of God, by its condemnation at the cross and with Christ, it can only manifest itself in an astonishment that the betrayal of Jesus should be thought possible, and followed by an enquiry, Which of them should do this? At the very same time this flesh, when unjudged in us, can and will strive in its native pride and self-love for the pre-eminence; and thus trample upon Jesus, and tread down every one worthier than one's self, in its struggle to be the greatest; and by means of the false standard by which actions are weighed, and the falser weights and measures, and the corrupt hands of men who hold the balance, what a different estimate is pronounced upon the betrayal and upon the trampling down: the strife to be greatest is gilded over, whilst the kiss (as it deserves to be) is a matter of hissing and reproach.

It is blessed to notice that any and all such outbursts of the flesh are no longer to be corrected or punished by statute law, and by stoning to death, but to be set aside by the virtue and strength which Christ carries, and which He supplies to His own. Moreover, He seeks to win the disciples away from what they were, by the fact and example of what He had been amongst them.

Further than this, He says, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” For the practice, and walk,

and ways, and motives for discipleship with Christ must be changed, according to His change of place, from the throne and the kingdom to the cross and His cutting-off as the Messiah of Israel, and getting nothing, except by means of death and on the other side of it.

"For whether," He asks, "is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." And it is a fact not only to be observed, but learnt, that neither the personal intimacy nor the teaching, any more than the example or ways of Jesus in the midst of His disciples, either corrected, much less changed, the nature or character of their flesh towards Himself or in relation to one another.

Indeed, it was only by connecting Himself with them in the character of His own ministry that He could still say, "I am among you as he that serveth," and as He identified them with Himself in the perfectness of His own grace could at such a moment rise above all their delinquencies, and without reserve tell them, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me."

Such ways as these towards them in His life-time, and since then towards ourselves who are waiting for Him, shine forth in such moral glory and precious grace as to comfort and encourage our poor hearts, by the discovery that He is as great in the descending steps of His humiliation and service as in the ascending path which led Him to the mount of His transfiguration. His love to His disciples, which identified them with Himself in every delight of His own heart, opened to them a place yet future: "That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The Lord has thus led them with Himself, by the way of His cross, to the thrones of Israel, and through the guest-chamber to His coming kingdom; He has

carried them by means of the feasts to their fulfillments in resurrection, and by the way of His sufferings to the heavenly glory. He refused to drink wine, or to share the joy of this earth, that they might eat and drink with Him at His table. He had stood as the paschal Lamb between them and God upon the question of their sins, and borne the heavy judgment in their stead; and now He closes these services and sufferings in life and death by standing between them and the malice of Satan with his sieve. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

He has put them right with God as a Judge at the passover, and keeps them right against the temptations or accusations of Satan by His own prayers and living intercession as the Advocate, "Jesus Christ the righteous One," in the presence of the Father. He has separated them from the kings of the Gentiles and their modes of exercising lordship in the world, as well as from the ways of its benefactors, by which they rise and exalt themselves; and has substituted a power which He brought with Him, that can only be at home in the lowest place, and spend itself in being the servant of others. Princes and benefactors do not go down upon the level of those whom they profess to serve, but get authority and a pedestal for themselves by doing it. The forgetfulness or non-observance of the Master's words, "but ye shall not be so," have in these days led on to Church preferment and the Episcopal bench, by which the Church, so-called, is avowedly united with the State and these kings of the Gentiles.

The workings of the flesh, at its worst, or in its more refined forms and strivings, as well as the possession and exercise of the world's power for elevation in the Church, and Satan's enmity to the disciples and to Jesus, have all passed before His

heart and under His eye, but only to draw them the closer to Himself in unfailing love, and to assure them of the prevalence and succour of His constant watchfulness and intercession when He had gone away from them, as the wave-sheaf, into heaven.

For Himself, He knew what man was, and what was in man, and would not escape from its kiss of betrayal by Judas, or confide in the assurances of the flesh by Peter in his honesty of purpose, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." This was the best sample of wheat which Jesus could find in the world, and which He had gathered round Himself in the closest personal intimacy too. But to what purpose, and with what effect, either to Him or for them? we may well ask. The cock-crowing of the next morning would be the reply, and should have been from that time to this the early but the warning note to every one as he shakes himself out of his sleep, that "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass"; yea, "cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." This is what the disciples were as they appeared to Him and to one another when gathered in the guest-chamber to eat the passover with Him, and sitting with Him in their midst. But nothing in them, and which He knew perfectly, could prevent His looking at them apart from the workings of their own flesh and in the light of His own heart's desire and love towards them; yea, and on account of all that was present to His eye and to be manifested before the cock crew, His love must find for itself a ground for its own activity and outflow; and this was now before Him. His own death and resurrection, as the sample sheaf before God of another sowing and of another harvest-field, where "flesh and blood" could not enter, but where every grain of wheat would be like the corn of

wheat that had fallen into the ground and willingly died, that presently the two wave loaves of fine flour might be presented as "the first-fruits unto the Lord," were now within the sight and reach of Jesus.

Who could begin such a new work in the earth as this but the Sower who went forth to sow? Moreover, He would bring His seed with Him; for man in his own nature was worthless. Nor will Jesus be satisfied with refusing the flesh of man whilst growing in the field, that the ground may be good, and yield thirty, and sixty, and a hundred-fold to the glory of God; but when He comes a second time to gather the wheat into His garner, and to reap what He sowed, all the sheaves must be in the image and likeness and quality of the original "wave sheaf," as they rise up out of their graves at the shout of harvest time.

He refuses man in the flesh, on account of the sin that dwells in his nature while he lives upon the earth; and He will refuse it a second time in its corruption, when he is dead and buried out of sight. Death and corruption will have only done towards the body, which is raised up out of that field, what the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap would have likewise done for them morally, when they were first sown by the sower and growing up in this world. How else could the Lord Jesus say to His disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me;" and by what other path and meetness could He verify to them His own desire, "that ye may eat and drink with Me at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"? While He was with them He had kept them; and before giving Himself up to those who were outside this enclosure of "the guest-chamber."

He asks, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip:

and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one ;" thus casting them upon the ordinary means of support, and of what they had, or lay within their reach : for they would no longer have the care or protection of His presence, but were to go forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves." He likewise must tread His own solitary path, that this which is written may be accomplished, "And He was reckoned among the transgressors : for the things concerning Me have an end."

And what an end, Lord Jesus ! and yet not an end (save to Thyself and a world that would not have Thee), but an end which only opened the door to Thee for that wondrous beginning of the new creation into which Thou wert to be raised up on the third day by the glory of Thy Father. J. E. B.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL :

A TREATISE ON THE RELATION EXISTING BETWEEN THE TWO
DISPENSATIONS, BY JAMES WHITE.

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ONE of our contributors has sent us the above, and desires to call attention to its utterly unscriptural character. It appears to be a bold defiance of the Word of God by Paul in his epistle to the Galatians : "We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 16-21). Then in the third chapter : "That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident : for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith." Also in the

fourth chapter, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" And in the fifth chapter, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." For Mr. White all this appears to have been written in vain. Let the reader judge by what follows.

EXTRACTS.

Said the Father to the Son, Let us make man in our image.

But if it be true that the law of the Father and the gospel of the Son are opposed to each other, then it follows that those saved in the former dispensation are saved by the Father and the law, &c.

Those who have lived since the crucifixion of Christ will join the patriarchs and prophets in the song of praise to the Father, the Creator and Lawgiver.

When man fell, angels wept. Heaven was bathed in tears. The Father and Son took counsel, and Jesus offered to undertake the cause of fallen man.

Are we Christians by virtue of living faith in Christ? So was Abel.

The dispensation of the law of God is longer than that of the gospel. It commenced before the fall, or there could not have been in the justice of God any such thing as the fall. It existed

ANSWERS.

GOD said this, not the Father. The revelation of the Father was not made until the Lord Jesus gave it forth when on earth.

"The law of the Father" is equally unscriptural. It was the law of GOD. The gospel of God is not opposed to, but is the complement of, the law of God. Paul says the latter was our schoolmaster unto Christ (Gal. iii. 24).

Scripture attributes creation not to the Father but to the SON, and the law to GOD.

Angels do not weep; heaven has no tears! The Lord Jesus came to do the will of God; our salvation was secondary to the primary thing, which was God's glory.

No Old Testament saint is termed a Christian, nor does any Scripture connect Christianity with any testimony earlier than that which began at Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was given.

"THE LAW was given by Moses" (John i. 17). The dispensation of the law could not therefore have commenced before his day. Man disobeyed and became a fallen being, not because

as early as there were created intelligences subject to the government of the Creator. Angels fell, therefore were on probation. They, being on probation, were consequently amenable to law. In the absence of law they could not be on probation, therefore could not fall. The same may be said of Adam and Eve in Eden. Through all dispensations there has been the knowledge of the principles of the ten commandments, consequently a knowledge of sin.

The foregoing positions relative to the law of God would meet with but little opposition were it not for the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The proper observance of the Bible Sabbath is not only crossing, but with many inconvenient, and not favourable to the successful prosecution of their worldly plans. The fearful and unbelieving shun its claims, brand it as a Jewish institution, &c.

With Christians the cry was to arise, Christ, the cross, the gospel; but away with the law of the Father.

In no case did He (Jesus) intimate that He would give a new law to take the place of that of His Father.

Men of this day who teach that the gospel of the Son makes void the law of the Father.

The gospel is a necessity in consequence of law transgressed. Where there is no law, there is no transgression, no sin, no need of the blood of Christ, no need of the gospel.—Sin is the transgression of the law.—The gospel presents Him to the

he had broken the law of God, but because he had violated a distinct prohibition. Angels "left their first estate" and became rebels. Nothing in Scripture connects man in Eden or angels in heaven with disobedience to the law of God. Scripture distinctly says the Gentiles "have not the law" (Rom. ii. 14).

The Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Matt. xxviii. 1-6; Mark xvi. 1, 2; Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1). He met His disciples once and again on that day (John xx. 19-26). The early disciples came together to break bread on that day (Acts xx. 7). The Corinthians were directed to lay by their contributions for the poor on that day (1 Cor. xvi. 2). And the exiled apostle John was in the Spirit on that day (Rev. i. 10). These, then, are our reasons for observing the LORD'S DAY, and not the Jewish Sabbath.

One who understood the revelation of the Father as one of the prime elements of Christianity, as made known in the Word, would shrink from such an incongruous term as "the law of the Father." Compare in Matt. v., "Ye have heard that it was said," with "*But I say unto you.*"

Scripture does say, "Where there is no law there is no transgression," but it could *not* say and does *not* say, Where there is no law there is no *sin*; for "sin reigned from Adam to Moses." Sin is *not* the transgression of the law, but *lawless-*

sinner as the bleeding sacrifice for the sins of those who transgress the law. — Remove the law, and we have no further need of Christ and His gospel.

Sin is the transgression of the law of the Father; hence the sinner offends the Father, is in trouble with the Father, and needs Jesus to plead his cause with the Father. But if the Father's law has been abolished, and Christ sustains to the sinner the relation of lawgiver, who is his advocate?

Faith in Jesus Christ, while refusing obedience to the law of the Father, is presumption.

The curse must fall on man and upon the earth for man's sake. — Because God's law that had been transgressed could not be changed, could not be abolished. Every fading flower and falling leaf since man left Eden has proclaimed the law of God changeless. — And this has all come about because of the transgression of that law which is as changeless as the throne of Heaven. If that law could ever be changed in any particular, it would have been changed when there were but two fallen beings, &c.

The Lord Himself descended in awful grandeur (at Sinai) and proclaimed, &c. Do you say that that was the origin of the law of God?

ness. If Christ was a sacrifice for those only who transgress the law, He is no Saviour for Gentiles, for Scripture distinctly says they "have not the law" (Rom. ii. 14). Not for law-breakers only, but for *sinners* Christ died.

Scripture neither says nor suggests that Christ pleads the cause of the sinner to the Father. He is a High Priest with God and an Advocate with the Father for *believers*, and for them only.

Faith saves, not faith and law-keeping combined. Scripture never couples these contrary principles of approach to God. Scripture says "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28). Thus what Mr. White calls "presumption" the Spirit of God terms "*justification*." God justifies the heathen *through faith*; "*the law is not of faith*" (Gal. iii. 8-12).

The serpent was cursed and the ground was cursed, but man was not cursed. God's law had not been transgressed, not having yet been given. Scripture says, "Until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. v. 13). This would be nonsense if the law of God had existed in Eden, "when there were but two fallen beings."

Yes.

Do you say that He has since abolished that code or changed it? When did He do this? Where did He do it? Never.

The crucifixion establishes the law of God. If that law was of such a nature that it could be abolished or any of its precepts be changed, why not have done this and set man free, instead of the Son of God laying aside His glory? &c. Why, oh, why should the divine Son of God do all this to save man, if that law which held him as a sinner could be changed, so that he could be set free?

Behold Him groaning in Gethsemane. His divine soul was in agony as the sins of man were rolled upon Him.—The weight of man's sin in transgressing God's immutable law was such as to press from His pores, as it were, great drops of blood.

There was in His case the additional weight of the sins of the whole world.

Christ, the noblest Being in the universe save One, is dying in agony.

Christ hath "obtained a more excellent ministry. He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts, &c. I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 6-13).

"As many as are of the works of the law" (that is, Jews) "are under the curse" (of the broken law), "but that no man is justified by the law . . . is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith" (Gal. iii. 10-12). Christ died to redeem those who were under the law from its curse. But, why, oh! why should He die if law-keeping remains incumbent on believers? "Whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4).

The awful prospect of the Cross looming before the Lord's soul caused the Lord to sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," but Scripture never connects Gethsemane with the actual bearing of sins, which was only "on the tree" (see 2 Peter ii. 24).

Scripture does not say He bore "the sins of the whole world." He was a propitiation for the whole world (1 John ii. 2), but that is another thing.

This is indignity to Christ, who was never less than "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5).

The whole creation tremble as the Son of God dies in agony.

Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, &c.

It was Christ who spoke the law from Sinai. It was Christ who gave the law to Moses engraven on tables of stone. It was His Father's law.

Faith in Christ must be accompanied by obedience to the law of God.

The sinner . . . must be made to realise that "sin is the transgression of the law."

God's law is a copy of His mind and will.

It was love that prompted God to express His will in the ten precepts of the Decalogue. Afterward He showed His love for man by sending prophets and teachers to explain and illustrate His holy law.

God has given man a complete rule of life in His law. Obeyed, man shall live by it, through the merits of Christ. Transgressed, it has power to condemn. The law sends men to Christ, and Christ points them back to the law.

This description of the Lord's death contrasts with "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46).

This is *not* Scripture. Rev. xxii. 14 correctly translated is, "Blessed are they that wash their robes." (See Revised Version.)

Scripture does not connect Christ with the giving of the law, nor the law with the Father. "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator"—Moses (Gal. iii. 10).

Scripture says, "faith *without* the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28).

Sin is *not* the transgression of the law, but lawlessness. (See Revised Version of I John iii. 4.)

God's mind and will are revealed in the Word of God and were displayed in Christ. The law fell far short of this, being God's lowest and least demands on His people.

The law manifested that God is *light*. Christ manifested that He is also *love*.

On the contrary, by the law is the knowledge of sin and condemnation. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 26; see also Gal. ii. 16). If by obedience to the law we are to live, what need for "*the merits of Christ*"? And if we are by the law sent to Christ and by Christ back to the law, only one awful conclusion is possible—God is mocking poor sinners, for there is *no salvation*!

God in mercy preserve souls from these modern Judaizers. Concerning such, Paul wrote (Gal. v. 12), "I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

VERY TENDERLY doth Christ cherish and preserve the buddings of grace that are in thee. It was the priest's office to keep the fire in the sanctuary from going out; and it is Christ's work in the exercise of His gracious priesthood to do the same in thy soul, and He will look to it that it go not out, and this by the operation of His Spirit.

BAXTER on his death-bed was reminded by his friends that he was going to a world where the wicked cease from troubling. "Aye!" responded he with a flash of quaint humour, "and where *the good* cease from troubling also."

DEVIL WORSHIP IN TINNEVELLY.—I know a hamlet consisting of only nine houses where thirteen devils are worshipped. This fear of the anger of demons deters many from listening to Christian testimony, and drives many away who are not established. It saps their confidence in God and tempts them to make shipwreck of faith. From this cause cases of apostasy sometimes occur. Lately a man labouring under disease apostatised, and subsequently professed to repent, and returned. But soon after he was induced, by the importunity of his friends, to sacrifice to demons; and while the flesh of the sacrifice was still in his mouth the wrath of God fell upon him, and he died almost instantaneously.—*Historical Sketches*.

AN EVIL THOUGHT and a thought of evil are as far asunder as the east and west. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," but into the head from without are injected thoughts of evil. Jesus never had an evil thought, but Satan, in the temptation, was allowed to present insinuating suggestions and thoughts before the mind of Christ, when he said, "Make these stones bread," "Fall down and worship me," and so get possession of the world. These evil thoughts were like fiery darts forged in hell, cast from outside at the holy Christ—who quenched them in the shield of faith. His infinitely pure mind seized the thoughts and recognised their origin, and hurled them back to hell, whence they came. Alas, many a child of God has claimed heart purity, and when Satan has come to cast these darts (for Jesus "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin") at the soul which is cleansed as much as the shed life-blood of the Son of God can cleanse, through failure to recognise the origin of these hellish assaults, begins to wonder if the cleansing was complete; and instead of "taking up the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one," he has in ignorance begun to doubt if really the heart was cleansed. This is just why Satan brought the temptation.—*Dudley Kidd*.

DROPS OF WATER.—"I saw an amusing experiment in Kansas City lately," said Henry Weller, of Omaha. "Some one stated that no man could stand a quart of water dropped on his hand, drop by drop, from a height of two or three feet. A bystander declared that he could, and the experiment was tried. In less than a minute there was a blister on the man's hand, and in less than three minutes his face gave evidence of intense suffering. Before a pint had been dropped he gave up exhausted, and described the sensation as the most terrible one he had ever experienced." Such being the painful physical effect of mere drops of water falling thus on one's body, who can estimate the awful and eternal consequences to the Christ-rejecting soul on whom "the vials of God's wrath must ere long be poured out"?—*Rev. xvi. 1*.

A FRENCH MISER, whose ruling passion was strong in death, exclaimed, "Marie, put out that candle!" "But, uncle, suppose you want something." "Put out that candle, I tell you. One does not need light to die!" Indeed we do: we need Him who is the only Light of the world! the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

THE JEWS refuse all active exertion both as a means of livelihood and as a source of amusement. They are, perhaps, the sole instance of a successful people living in temperate climates who, explicitly or implicitly, reject the duty of exercise. This is, no doubt, a survival of the Oriental feeling that labour should fall upon slaves.

QUEEN ELIZABETH, when closely questioned by the persecuting bishops Gardiner and Bonner as to the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine used in the sacrament, replied:

"Christ's was the word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what His word did make it,
That I believe and take it."

GARDINER'S death was a remarkable one. Intensely hating Latimer and Ridley, who were about to be burnt at Oxford, he arranged for a messenger to bring him, by relays of swift horses, the tidings that the fires had been lighted, and he made a vow that he would not dine until the news had reached him. The Duke of Norfolk was his guest for the day, and the usual hour was eleven o'clock. The tidings did not arrive till three, and then the feast was served. *But Gardiner could not eat of it!* In an unconscious state he was carried to his bed, and died in a few hours. He would not eat of it till God's servants had been burnt, and God took care he should not eat it afterwards. Verily "God is not mocked."—*Gal. vi. 7.*

THE COUNTERBALANCE OF TRUTH.—The Scripture proportion of grace and responsibility is the thing that is needed. We all require the teaching of God the Holy Ghost to enable us to divide the Word rightly, to assimilate it spiritually, and to live it out practically. It is then that the Word of Christ dwells in us *richly*, and we are filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

ARE WE SUFFERING TOGETHER WITH CHRIST? Are we finding ourselves increasingly *from home* in this pleasure-loving, earth-grabbing generation? Does the godless, worldly state of the professing Church wound us to the quick?

SINCERITY (2 Cor. ii. 17).—A beautiful word which means "the splendour of the sun," and, used in the connection in which it stands, shows how closely the apostle applied himself to setting forth the truth of God, and thus that truth appealed to the hearts and consciences of all who heard him (even Felix trembled).

MISSION WORK.—The most influential lives that have ever adorned the mission field have been the young men and the young women who have given up their very life as a sacrifice for Christ. The Lord Himself, in the days of His service on earth, was Himself a young man, and He will accept the bright and beautiful offering of consecrated youth, and give to it the glory that the world can never bestow. Let us give Him our brightest and our best.

ANOKAR, a missionary to the Scandinavians in the ninth century, when asked by his heathen auditors whether he could perform miracles, replied with spiritual wisdom: "*If God were indeed to offer me that power, I would only ask that I might exhibit the miracle of a holy life.*"

CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD.—He died to make us clean; He lives to keep us clean. Continual sinners need a continual priest; not only for the sins we see, but, beyond these, for those He sees; not only for what we do, but for what we are, and what we fail to do.—*W. G. Carr.*

A CHRISTIAN waiting for his breakfast took up the daily newspaper to read. His little boy nestled up to him and quietly whispered, "Bible first, papa; Bible first!" That little sermon was never forgotten. "Bible first, papa," rang in his ears, and became the motto of his life.

SAVED IN AN INSTANT.—He was an ungodly, blaspheming sailor, but was familiar with the letter of the Gospel, without faith in his heart. One day, at sea, his duty called him aloft, and he went up, swearing as usual. Suddenly, having lost hold, he was falling to the deck. On picking him up it was found that he was now a saved man, having been born again while falling. He had by faith turned to and trusted in that Saviour whose Name he had so often blasphemed. Who can measure the grace shown in such a conversion? The sailor lived to show that his conversion was a reality. Simply close with God's offer of salvation, having faith in Christ, and He will save you instantly.

GOD CHARGES nothing for salvation. It is "without money and without price." Rowland Hill said that most auctioneers had hard work to get people up to the price, but that he had hard work to get people down to his. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life."

A MOTHER, who had an only child, said, "I am resolved to make a lady of her." So Susan learnt to play the piano and to crochet; she loved fine clothes and gaiety. At length she went an "excursion" and was brought home insensible! In her last moments she revived, but only to exclaim, "*O mother, why didn't you teach me to die?*" and then passed away. *Parents, observe!* Let not your children's blood be on *your* heads.

SUBSTITUTION.—The Lord Jesus was no hypothetical or potential substitute for us upon the cross, but did actually stand in our place and stead. The Lord "laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." He "died for them"—the many—was their actual, positive substitute and surety before God. At that time, and in that way, once for all, He exhausted for them, and for them only, the judgment of God. It was a real, veritable substitution of the Just One, under the penal stroke of a Holy God, in place of the unjust, so that God might Himself be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Let us hold fast the solid truth of divine substitution, giving glory to God.

LUKE XXII. 39-71.

AND now He has left the world and Israel, till another day, to Cæsar, and the strong man armed that keepeth his palace. He also withdraws Himself from "the large upper room furnished," where He had eaten the passover with His disciples, and "came out, and went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." The spirit of prophecy left Israel without excuse, by the records of David at the cave of Adullam, and by the subsequent ones in connection with this mountain; for the Psalmist had all along written for the eyes, and sounded in the ears of Israel, the things concerning his greater Son and Lord. "And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." But the nation was unpractised in David's minstrelsy, and saw no lesson beyond the scenes and circumstances of that hour. The disciples themselves were slow of heart in the day when Jesus fulfilled what this spirit of prophecy had written by David respecting a greater than David; now that his Son and Lord was making Himself acquainted with all that the Mount of Olives was to the mind and determinate counsel of the Father—with whom alone He must needs take it up in a present communion; for no one upon the earth could. He might, and did, eat the passover with His disciples; but He must take up its fulfilments with His Father, and be alone with Him in such an hour as this—and it was come.

"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done. And there

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appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Perfection had marked Him in every relation as Man—perfect in His obedience as the righteous One ; perfect in His devotedness and dependence, as the Servant and the sent One ; perfection in His sympathy and succour, as the Man of Sorrows towards others. He makes Himself perfect through weakness, to get into the place of His last perfectness as the Captain of Salvation, "perfect through sufferings." The reality and perfection of His nature in manhood shows itself in its own intrinsic grace and virtue, as He speaks with the Father about "this cup" ; and what could His nature be, and because it was His, in the face of such an hour, with God—but weak ? And this weakness was His perfection, for it was His perfectness that brought Him there. Yea, and it would carry Him further, into a path which none had ever trod, or ever could but Himself, as "crucified through weakness," that on the third day "He might live by the power of God."

Strength, and independency, and self-sufficiency in man had brought in the evil by the first Adam ; but now, by dependence and obedience in the perfection of human weakness, which no one could reach and make his own for the glory of God but this Jesus, the Son of God, He will put out the evil and bring in the good, and establish righteousness and true holiness in the Son of Man, and with men, in the presence of God and the principalities and powers, in the heavenly places. By a supposed strength, man had forfeited and lost all that the Creator had put into his hands ; and now, in the garden of Gethsemane, this "son of Adam," who has made Himself perfect by emptying Himself, "to be found in fashion as a man," had thus by the perfection of His nature reached the weakness on account of which the angel from heaven was sent to strengthen Him. The title and dominion of the first Adam was lost through self-confidence and strength ; but the titles, and honours, and glories

of the last Adam will be won in the absoluteness of felt weakness that will not help itself—this was the perfection of Christ—and taken up by Paul in writing to the Corinthians : “ For we also are weak with Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.” For, we may ask, what could Almighty power look down upon in sympathy, to help and strengthen, but the very weakness that looked up to it in the consciousness of obedience and absolute dependence? or what can the grace of Christ (now that He is passed through the heavens as the Great High Priest) be touched with, but our infirmities? and what can He compassionate and sustain but the weakness that counts upon Himself and His intercession till He comes again?

But the perfectness of His nature as Man is not only marked by His weakness, for His sufferings (not yet as a sin-bearer or being made sin) in intercourse with the Father about sin, and drinking the cup, are equally marked, and even the more so, because united with this weakness, in which He was glorifying God, before the Cross came, but in the prospect of it. “ And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly : and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” He shrank from the fact of sufferings as Man ; but shall we suppose, as introduced into the garden with Him, that these bodily sufferings were the cause of this agony and of this sweat? Who that knows at all what sin is in the sight of God, and who that has ever taken it up in our feeble estimate and feelings with God, but must disclaim such a limitation as this? We are conscious that to Him who knew no sin, but having in the perfectness of His own human nature to take the cup which the holiness of God had mixed, and prospectively drink it in the full knowledge of what sin was in the light of His own presence, could only take it in acquiescence, with an inward agony which could but find its expression by His sweating as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground!

The Lord, in His love for His own, might desire to associate His disciples with Himself in all times and places before His actual betrayal; but whilst this was a proof of His own grace, it likewise brought out the fact of their incompetency to keep Him company. "And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow." Jesus had taken them up with Him to see His majesty and to witness how the kingdom of God would come in; but they had succumbed, under the sense of how "good it was to be there," and their nature found its relief from the felt incompetency to be with Him in such a height by rest in sleep. Now He had them as witnesses of the depths through which His appointed path lay; but how could flesh and blood be acquainted with the perfection of His weakness and His agony of blood when there was the absence of any outward hand to produce it? One learns at least this (and this does fall within our comprehension), that our nature is not to be trusted either in sorrow or in joy. It betrayed itself in the guest-chamber by the strife; upon the mount by its inability to drink the wine of the kingdom, in passing; and now in this garden of Gethsemane, by its sleeping for sorrow. Their nature was neither company for themselves, nor for one another, nor for Him!

"And He said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." For their hour was come, as well as His, for His betrayal; and how would they pass through it? Would it be an hour of victory to them, in felt weakness and dependence, through self-judgment and faith in God with Himself; or would they by means of it only enter into temptation, and separate themselves off from Him; yea, even forsake Him, and flee in the hour of danger, and so make manifest the worthlessness of the flesh by their cowardice and denial of Him?

"And while He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went

before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss ?” Extremes meet—the best and the worst are together, and all things are ready for the crisis hour which is close at hand ; the winding up of the world’s history, in its last and final refusal to be loved by Him that came out from heaven and pursued men in grace, beseeching them to be reconciled unto God. The soldier’s spear was the insolent but harmless reply on man’s part, which, nevertheless, measured the great gulf that lay unmeasured (save by the grace that has since bridged it) between man and Christ.

“When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword ? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him.” Out of time and out of place as the disciples are in their thoughts and ways from God and from Christ, it is like the star in a dark night to witness the grace of Jesus in repairing the damage which the drawn sword had wrought in the unskilled hand of him that used it. He cannot falsify Himself, and must be Jesus to heal, though the disciples draw the sword to destroy ; even as God shone out, in the brightness of His own grace, above and beyond the enmity of man at the cross, overwhelming the hatred by His infinite love, for He must and will be God in the supremacy of His own love ; yes, and turn the opportunity round about, so as to make it the occasion of His own purpose and Christ’s glory.

“Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to Him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves ? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against Me : but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. Then

took they Him, and led Him, and brought Him into the high priest's house ;" for the traitor has done his work, and rough hands have laid hold upon the Son of God's love. Extremes meet again, in the high priest of Israel and in Jesus the Son of God, presently to pass through the heavens into His Melchizedec priesthood. What can consummate wickedness do, under whatever guise, whether by the kiss of Judas or the robes and mitre of Caiaphas, but push itself forward (out of sight it may be, except to Jesus and to God) to the Cross and to death? for, as Jesus knew, they would neither believe Him nor let Him go, say or do whatever they might ask of Him.

There are two paths that lie before us from this chapter, which we shall have to follow—one in which the loved disciples of Jesus, in all the amiability and honesty of their natures, break down fatally and finally by their denial and cowardice; the other in which the outbreak of wicked flesh accuses and condemns Jesus, and then hands Him over to rougher hands for the outburst of their violence, till the enmity on all hands had satiated itself by feasting on His sufferings and finally His death.

"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Such was Jesus, and such were His shearers, till they lost that character by becoming His murderers. The first path is, as we have said, the breakdown of all that stood round Jesus, who had left all to follow Him, and grown up under His eye and hand. They had accompanied Him day by day, hearing His words both by parables and prophecies, and in the confidence of their love to Him, declared one and all that, though they should be called to die with Him, yet they would never deny Him. What a lesson is this for to-day; and what a reproof, when one sees those who were nearest Jesus, and personally loved by Him, whose hearts never misgave them at the moment when (as knowing all things) He

cautioned them as to His own death and certain rejection by the world, yet to discover that these were the ones who escaped out of the place of witness because it was one of danger, let it be by falsehood, or, if needs be to save one's self, by oaths and curses, that they knew not the Man.

The elect nation of Israel had broken down long before, though taken out from the surrounding nations as a witness of Jehovah's love to them ; but they were at their best only a circumcised people and separated unto God in the flesh, though blessed in their basket and in their store, yea, having all that the heart of Jehovah could bestow as worthy of Himself towards His favoured nation, that they might rejoice always before Him. Since that breakdown Jesus has come into their midst, and called out a repentant remnant, that as the promised Messiah and King He might set up again the kingdom of heaven as prophesied by Daniel ; but with what results to them and to Him we need not recapitulate here. Out of the midst of this Jesus drew twelve men round Himself, and one of them was a devil. But this little handful of wheat, these twelve in whom human nature is seen at its very best, and under the greatest possible advantages, with Jesus in their midst, now breaks down, at the hour when He has let out all His heart towards them, and bound them up with Himself in all that love could give or appoint them to.

It is not the outbreak of wicked flesh that we are considering—*that* may come next—but the breakdown of amiable, loving, kind, and generous nature, when supplied with motives of personal attachment, which, as they themselves declare who were under their constraining power, nothing, no, not even death nor the prison could affect, except to consolidate and concentrate. These are the men who have broken down, not only as to their attachment, but as to their confession of Jesus ; in a court, too, where such an

opportunity of owning Jesus as the Son of God, and in all His rights as Son of Man and the King of Israel, could only occur once in the world's history. And these are the men who break down and deny Him behind His back and before His face.

The centre of the circle, or what was next to the centre, has given way, and Jesus remains by Himself and alone, before He rises on the third day to take His place in heaven at the right hand of God, and carry the glory, and the peace, and the good pleasure away with Him to begin from above. Man takes credit for being a social creature. Be it so ; only remember, it was not with Jehovah that Israel was social in the days of the Judges or the Prophets ; and let it be deeply engraved, that if men still take credit for being sociable and social, it was not with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor with the Son of Man Himself ; for surely the Cross is the standing and shameful witness that whoever mankind may be sociable and make merry with, it is not with the Father and the Son !

It is painful and humbling, though profitable, to follow into detail the breakdown of the best and the brightest of men as they then stood around Jesus, as the centre of all moral influence in the world ; because it will make us practically know why He accepted His decease on the mount of His transfiguration, rather than open out the kingdom of God with disciples as they still were in the flesh and with men at large as they waited for Him when He came down. Man's redemption out of a nature which was at enmity with God, as proved by the rejection and crucifixion of Christ, was the crying want, which no one knew so well as the Lord. Every day was but the deeper cry, as the deepening want declared itself, till at last the twelve broke down, and the Lord went to the Mount of Olives instead, and from thence to Gethsemane, not to speak of His decease (for *this* He had accepted), but to take the cup from His Father's

hand and drink it ; for redemption should be accomplished, and He who alone could work after this pattern has undertaken to lift the world up out of its moral enmity, and to take away its sin as the Lamb of God.

How the details of this breakdown carries its own shame, if we enquire where about the boldest and the bravest may be seen, when they had seized Jesus. The reply is, "And Peter followed afar off," for the once attractive centre is become the power of repression, and may be of repulsion ! "And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them ;" but the coldest and chilliest thing that beat in that company was poor Peter's heart. And what could the fire do for a heart that had broken down ? Nothing ; for a guilty conscience is next door neighbour to a heart that has already given way to outward danger before God and about Christ.

And "a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not." And thus he has passed into Satan's sieve, as Jesus had told him. Nevertheless, if he has denied Jesus and left Him alone, the Lord will not leave Peter in the dread hour (worse than death itself) of a guilty conscience and of a terrified heart. The roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, was not far away from such a scene as this, now that Jesus and His disciples seemed to be all in his hands ; for, indeed, it was Satan's "hour, and the power of darkness," as the Lord had said. So he passed Peter through the sieve *a second time, and again a third, till the three denials* were completed in all respects : first, that he knew not Jesus ; next, that he was not one of His disciples ; and lastly, "Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly."

What havoc, alas ! the devil makes with the saints, and in the Church of God, which he knows he cannot destroy ; and how often the Lord turns all round to profit, and His own glory ; howbeit Satan thinks not so. One gladly thinks, at such a moment as this, of the Lord's unfailing love to His failing and faulty disciple, so that if Satan is allowed to sift Peter in his sieve, as he was suffered to strip Job of all that he wrapped around himself, or if Paul gets a messenger of Satan to buffet him, it is well to read all these trials in the light of the latter end, that, as in Peter, the object of the Lord may be seen as over-riding all the malice of Satan.

We all know how undeniably the epistles of Peter prove what a gainer he was by all the sifting, and how fitted he became to expose the tempter in his three-fold character of adversary, and devil, and roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour ; for it was in these ways that Satan had got him into his sieve, and sifted him as wheat. God watched the process of stripping with his servant Job, and in the end only made Satan subservient to His own purpose and for Job's advancement.

The Lord had His eye upon the sifter, and the sieve, and the wheat ; and when Satan had done his part, the cock-crowing must tell out its note to Peter's ear, that the word of the Lord may enter in again, and be remembered by him in conscience and conviction. Satan, and the cock-crowing, and the word of the Lord were needed to write the sentence of death upon the flesh in Peter ; but at that moment it was the Lord turned, and looked upon His wheat, that He might do with it what His own eye alone could do ; so that Peter went out from the hall fire and the company of men and women, weeping bitterly ! He retires from the devil's ground of temptation and his busy emissaries, into which he had entered in forgetfulness, it may be, or neglect, of the words of Jesus, " Pray that ye enter not into temptation ; " but the

bitterness of the weeper, in answer to the Lord's look, told that a depth had been reached between them which had never been sounded before. That eye had broken his heart, and recovered it too—had searched to the bottom of his conscience in the bitterness of death, but to heal it and bind it up.

The man who has gone out weeping shall doubtless come again rejoicing, and bringing his sheaves with him. The forlorn and the outcast backslider is cast upon the heart of Him who could at that very instant (when every hope was gone) turn Himself round to look upon the penitent, and take His sifted wheat into His own hand to carry it and water it from another fountain, whither He Himself was going, on the other side of the world, through His own death and resurrection. Indeed, the first words of this converted Peter, when he is at his work of strengthening the brethren, are addressed and dated from the other side of the flesh, in resurrection life and power with Christ. Under the anointing of the Pentecostal Spirit, as united to the ascended Lord, he writes as one that is begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, &c. His first epistle not only carries this conversion and this ability to strengthen the brethren on its forefront, but gives out the abundant grace, and the sweet savour, and the preciousness of Christ and of faith, as well as its diligence in practice, by the encouragements that only such an one could know, as had been once a "sheep going astray," but had returned and been folded by "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls."

If anything further be said on the two epistles to "the scattered strangers" and the brethren, it may be only to remark that the characteristic subject of the first is "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow," which Peter in the flesh could not put together, and divided so as to offend his Master, by saying, "This shall not be unto Thee ; be it far from

Thee"; to which Jesus replied, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Nor was it only in reference to the doctrine that Peter stumbled, but yet further, when they were to be embodied in Christ at the Mount of Olives; so that the look by Jesus upon Peter in the hall was but a repeat of what His lips had before uttered, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." The sieve, and the cock-crow, and the eye of the Lord were necessary to clear away what was of man, and which made Peter "an offence" to the Lord; so that in the end Satan lost Peter through putting him into his sieve, and the Lord made him by these means a polished shaft in His hand against the wiles of the devil, as this first epistle proves through-out.

The second shows us Peter like a man waked out of sleep, and going up again (under the anointing and the blood of sprinkling) the mount of transfiguration; able to make amends for his offence there, too, and at every cost of himself to do so; for he can put the majesty of the King and the glory of the kingdom together, and, as converted to the reality of the mount at the second coming of the Lord, strengthen his brethren, that an abundant entrance may be administered to them. Peter is at no loss now, but, like the sifted wheat, planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, and as one with Him in the heavens, can only get there by the way of the Mount of Olives, and the necessary links of the sufferings with the glories. He is equally confident and bold as an eye witness, too, of the future majesty and the glory of the kingdom, as well as of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when, as he says (without any compunction for the falling asleep), we were with Him on the holy mount. He is converted to the kingdom and the coming of the Lord, as truly as he was to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that shall follow, and strengthens his brethren after such sort, as to put the light before their feet for the

dark place (that they might not fall as he had done), and bids them look up at the Day star for their hearts, that they may be linked in their affections and hopes with all which it precedes, and of which it is the forerunner.

What remains for Jesus *here* draws to its close. The many bulls have now to compass Him, and the strong bulls of Bashan to beset Him round, and gape upon Him with their mouths, as led on by the ravening and roaring lion. "And the men that held Jesus mocked Him and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him." For dogs have compassed Him, and the assembly of the wicked are about to enclose Him. He looked for comforters, but there was none; and He asked for some to take pity, but there was none.

"And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led Him into their council, saying, Art Thou the Christ? tell us. And He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go." All was over between Him and them as to the present and the past; but there was a future before Him to which all that they were doing or could do to Him would but open the way. They were but preparing the third day, when He would be perfected, and pass by these means beyond their reach to open out the testimony (which they and the nation refused) in the heavens, and begin from the Son of Man in the glory.

With this beginning before Him, He said, "Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God," for this new position was what they were working out for Him by the over-ruling wisdom of God. Satan and the Cross were now to prepare the last steps for the momentous work of Christ, and

these were by means of death and the grave. They were but dimly concealed by the opposition and enmity of the confederated Jews and Gentiles which he arranged in the foreground. The instigator of this hatred to Christ and of this dire rebellion against God was the devil, though he sheltered himself behind the rulers and the crowd which he swayed. Before the full display of his diabolical craft he weaves a covering for himself out of the consent and sanction of the leaders and the verdict of the judgment hall. Wisdom had long ago written of this guile of the serpent: "Moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there." But Satan and the Cross can only, in the counsels of God, lead to the higher glory of Christ in the heavens.

Such were the paths which were now opening out to the soul of Jesus, and in which none could accompany Him. It was Satan's hour, and the power of darkness; yet God was in it, and over it all. He had to tread it alone, and finish it, by laying down a life that must needs close itself up in death under the righteous judgment of God, that He might take it again in resurrection power and open it out in eternal glory with the Father, beyond the range of Satan's might and the reach of human enmity.

"Then said they all, Art Thou then the Son of God? And He said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth." The great subjects of the Old Testament, which had been given to Israel, and in which they made their boast, contained in type, and prophecy, and promise the goings forth of the Child that should be born—the Christ! Besides this, Isaiah had witnessed to Him as "the mighty God," "the everlasting Father," and "the Prince of Peace." He who was all these stood in their midst, and challenged as the Christ, upon whom now their hopes of recovery and blessing hung.

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From His own lips they had drawn forth the confession of His eternal Sonship, by demanding, "Art Thou the Son of God?" but in each of these relations to themselves as "come in the flesh," and towards God as "the Seed of the woman," they refuse Him. Their Levitical types pointed to Him as the Lamb of God in all the various sacrifices and offerings of the tabernacle service and temple ministry. "Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," they disown Him; nor will they accept the testimony of Jesus to Himself, as the exalted Son of Man hereafter to be seen by them on the right hand of God, made "higher than the heavens." Discrediting their own Scriptures in disowning Him as the Christ, the Son of God, and as Son of Man, whether now on the earth or hereafter in heaven, what is left for them but to fall a prey to their own reasonings in dealing with this "mystery of God," and so drop into the snare of the devil?

J. E. B.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR PLAIN FOLK.

I.

THERE are four witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ, to which He directed the attention of the unbelieving Jews in John v. 33-47. The first He mentioned was that of John the Baptist (33-35); the second that of His own works (36); the third that of His Father (37, 38); and the fourth that of the Scriptures, and notably the writings of Moses (39-47). Predictions concerning the Lord had not been infrequent in the sacred writings. David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and others had foretold something about Him; but on this occasion He only particularised Moses. "He wrote of Me," He said (John v. 46). But where?

Now plain folk would naturally turn to Deut. xviii. 15-19 as one clear prediction on the part of the great

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lawgiver of Him who stood that day before the Jews in the temple of their God, and affirmed that He was in the fullest and highest sense the Son of God ; further, He was in truth that Prophet that should "come like unto Moses (Acts iii. 22 ; vii. 37). Is it asked in what the likeness would consist? Deut. xxxiv. 10 supplies the answer. It must be one whom the Lord would know face to face, and with whom He would speak mouth to mouth (Numb. xii. 8). This, true of Moses, as the Lord Jehovah declared to Aaron, and to Miriam their sister, was of course true of Him who, though man, is also the only-begotten Son of God. Moses, then, *wrote* something about the Lord Jesus, and that something was extant at the time the Lord spake. Was the Lord affirming that of which the Jews were ignorant? He spoke then, and on other occasions, of writings which extant were rightly accepted by the Jews as proceeding from the pen of Moses: "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 47). A written record, then, there was undoubtedly from the pen of Moses, which was not some much later composition, worked up by an unknown compiler from tradition, the source of which he has carefully concealed, and so the credibility of the supposed tradition it is impossible to substantiate.

On another occasion, and again in the Temple courts, the Lord Jesus asked His opponents, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" (John vii. 19). Let us mark the language—*the* law, not *a* law, not a *nucleus* of the law, nor some outline sketched by Moses, filled up centuries after by others whose names, localities, and even dates of flourishing are unknown. Further, though the Jews had *the* law given by Moses, they had not kept it. Disobedience therefore on their part, and neglect of its precepts, is no valid ground for any to suppose that they were ignorant of its existence. Its existence is quite compatible with

grievous neglect of it. This remark will apply to the nation's history from the days of the judges downwards.

If, then, Moses gave them the law, it must date from his day. Clearly, too, it was extant when the Lord was on earth, for He mentioned (Luke xxiv. 44) the three great divisions of the Jewish Scriptures—the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, called respectively in the Hebrew Bible *Torah*, *Nebiim*, and *Chethubim*. By the law in this connection was meant the five books, commonly called the Pentateuch. The Prophets in this enumeration comprised the books of the former prophets, viz., Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, as well as the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor ones. With the Psalms, which heads the third great division, the *Chethubim*, and from which therefore that division took its name, was included all the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. A sharp line, then, was at that time drawn between the law and the book of Joshua. It is drawn by the Jews still. Their lectionary of the passages of Holy Writ to be read in the synagogue service confirms this. Men *then* would have talked of the Law, or of the Pentateuch. Now some write of a Hexateuch, classing Joshua with the five books of Moses. That was not the manner of the Lord Jesus, nor of the Jews then or now. Moses was a lawgiver, Joshua was not.

"The law was given by Moses," so wrote the Apostle and Evangelist John (i. 17). Godly Jews at that time, as Philip and Nathanael, distinguished between the law and the prophets; the former saying to the latter, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write" (John i. 45). Of course, then, if these men were correct, and if the Teacher come from God, the Prophet like unto Moses, spake what He did, as recorded by John, and also by Luke, the Law or Pentateuch was rightly ascribed to Moses, and therefore must have been in existence before the lawgiver's death.

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Was He the Prophet who should come? John the Baptist was not that Prophet (John i. 21). The Lord was, as Peter (Acts iii. 22) and Stephen (vii. 37) agree in declaring. To Him Israel—and surely not they only—were to hearken. He spoke of “the book of Moses” (Mark xii. 26). Then that book must have been in existence at that date, for men, if minded, He averred, could read in it in His day. Has anything been lost of canonical Scripture since the Lord’s day? We know that the book of the law has not. The Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Greek translation of the Scriptures called the Septuagint, attest that. So, the book of Moses, in existence then, we know is in existence still, and is commonly called the Pentateuch.

With the Lord’s words before us, “the book of Moses,” plain folk would naturally understand that in it was contained what Moses had *written*. “Writings” he certainly left, if the Lord Jesus is to be trusted (John v. 47). But here critics step in, and confidently assert that the Mosaic authorship of Genesis to Numbers cannot be sustained, and that Deuteronomy was composed about the reign of Manassch. Yet ever and anon the words of the Lord come back to us like a refrain, “He” (*i.e.*, Moses) “wrote of Me.” Not simply he spoke, but he *wrote* of Me.

Was the Prophet, to whom all were and are to hearken, mistaken about the Pentateuch? Was He behind the critics of the nineteenth century in discernment, and in ability to dissect the Hebrew text extant in His day? It were blasphemy to think that. Where, then, shall we find what Moses wrote? If the statements of critics are correct—statements sought to be based on examination of the sacred books, and advanced, too, by scholars of no mean repute—plain folk may ask in bewilderment, where shall we find with any degree of certainty what Moses wrote? He wrote, the Lord said, and the

Jews believed it, that law of divorce in Deut. xxiv., if Mark has correctly reported the words of the Master. Now if we turn to the dissectors of the book of Deuteronomy, we are told that chap. xxiv. 1-3 in its present form is the work of the Deuteronomist, who lived about the time of Manasseh. How, then, can we be sure that the law is really before us as Moses gave it, and wrote it?

The literary patchwork of the law, composed, we are taught, of contributions from sources respectively designated P., J., E., J.E., H., D.* by some critics (but cited under different symbols by others) and arranged, we are given to understand, by them or others whose names are wholly unknown, is all that is offered us by which to gain any idea of that which Moses might have said to the people ere he died. We say *might*, for the elements on which some or all of these supposed sources are based may have been provided, it is suggested, not unlikely by tradition! Of course, if this is correct, we must modify our thoughts of the Pentateuch, and regard it as an unique specimen of literary mosaic, such as never before was attempted and never since has been imitated. And the law, as we have it, as a code must be viewed as, at best, the law edited and expanded by people of whose names all are professedly ignorant, and upon the dates when they flourished critics are not agreed! Who, in the common affairs of this life, would submit to be governed by such a code, whether civil or criminal? The authority for such legislation would be the first question asked, and a satisfactory answer demanded.

*The reader may like to know what these letters express. P. stands for the Priestly code, which we are told was probably not completed till subsequent to the age of the prophet Ezekiel. J. stands for the *Jehovist*, or *Jahvist*, that name of God being so frequently used by him. E. means the Elohists, who thus, it is said, writes of the Divine Being. J.E. was a compiler who combined together portions of the two last. H. means the laws of Holiness, as they are termed. D. represents the Deuteronomist. We need not trouble the readers with further distinctions. These are enough.

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Now it may strike plain people that, if Moses did write, some of his writings may remain. But in all dissection of the Pentateuch, whilst P., J., E., J.E., H., and D. are professedly distinguished, where do we find the letter M. to indicate that there have been some passages in the Pentateuch identified as distinctively and purely Mosaic? The verifying critical faculty has professed to detect changes from P. to J.E. in the middle even of a verse. We must suppose, therefore, that, if anything existed in the legislation of the Pentateuch purely Mosaic, it would have been discovered. Yet "He wrote of Me," the Lord said. But where?

Again, when the Lord said, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" (John vii. 19), why did not some of the doctors, learned men indeed—for instance, Gamaliel, who was then living—challenge the statement as uncritical, to say the least? With what an air of triumph might they have answered, if the critics are correct: "Show us, if you can, any regulations in the law which are purely Mosaic. We are perfectly acquainted with and distinguish between the contributions of P., J., E., J.E., and H., and are well acquainted with the work of the Deuteronomist, but we deny the purely Mosaic authorship of the law!" Yet they never thought of that in their contentions with Him. Why did they not expose the ignorance of One, who thought that Moses had written about divorces what really was penned and edited by the Deuteronomist? The Lord declared that Moses *wrote* Deut. xxiv. 1. Critics tell us that is to be ascribed to the Deuteronomist. Why did not the Jews at once confute His assertion? Simple people will think the answer to that question is not far to seek.

Before, then, accepting as incontrovertible these theories of the formation of the Pentateuch, we may well pause, and enquire what the book itself can say to it all; and see also if other Scriptures confirm the

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view that we are now told is correct. For it would seem strange, if no hint is given in the Old Testament of such a composite formation of "the book of Moses," that God should have left His people for upwards of thirty-three centuries under a misapprehension, believing, but erroneously, that the Pentateuch exhibits the law given of old by Moses. Strange, too, that the Lord should by His language have encouraged such an impression, and have left men to learn of their mistake from critics, who are not all of one mind in their conclusions.

Here we must pause for the moment. C. E. S.

 "THROUGH GRACE TO GLORY."

*O Lord ! how doth Thy mercy keep,
Throughout life's fitful story,
Thy feeble lambs and wayward sheep,
Till we get home to glory.*

"As weaker than a bruised reed,
We cannot do without Thee ;
We want Thee here each hour of need,
Shall want Thee, too, in glory.

"And though our efforts now to praise
Are often cold and lowly,
A nobler, sweeter song we'll raise
With all Thy saints in glory.

"We'll lay our trophies at Thy feet,
We'll worship and adore Thee,
Whose precious blood has made us meet
To dwell with Thee in glory."

*Blest Lord ! how great Thy mercy's been
Since first we came to know Thee,
Conducting through this chequered scene
Thy loved ones home to glory.*

*And when we see Thee face to face
Reviewing then life's story,
What joy with Thee the path to trace
Which led through grace to glory !*

A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

“And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.”—*Luke xxii. 14.*

I DESIRE to bring the above lines before my brothers and sisters who have learned the desire of our Lord and Master, that we should remember Him in the breaking of bread on the first day of the week. I couple with this sentence in Luke a verse with which we are all familiar: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. xviii. 20).

I need not say that every word and thought and action of the Lord is invaluable; but we do need to exhort one another to keep His words and ways in remembrance, and obey them.

Order is a lesson I find taught me from the ways of the Lord. “He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties” (Mark vi. 39, 40). I learn also from John vii. 6, He would not act before His time, however persistent His brethren might be; and from the verse at the beginning of these few lines, that when the hour was come *He was there*. He had sent His disciples to make ready the passover, and when the hour would come they could count with certainty that He would be there—and so He was.

My point is this, that if it is a reality to me that the Lord is in the midst of His people when so gathered, it will be a matter of immense importance *to me that I am there at the hour*. I remember an aged servant of the Lord, many years ago, remarking that he had been wondering *when* the Lord was coming into the meeting, as he saw one and another arriving after the hour. Orthodoxy in the theory of the Lord's presence will not be power to us. We need that He, the living Lord, be our object.

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Kindred to what I have been dwelling on is the great want that brothers and sisters should wake up to the need of prayer; coming together to pray. If in practice this is undervalued—this assembling together to pray—what about prayer in private? What about reading of the Word? I shall be told *that we can read the Word alone. Yes, you can. And* be assured of this, that if you do you will find what I seek to set before you in the word of God. I wonder often (and try to seek the remedy at the Lord's hands) how saints get on in their souls who are only found with their brethren *once during seven days!*

I remember at this point that absence is not always to be put down to indifference. The claims of home, of the sick, and of the aged are many and varied. But it still is true that "cares" as well as pleasures choke the Word, and no fruit is brought to perfection.

Suffer this word of exhortation, and the Lord graciously so place Himself before the eye of the heart, that in His fear and in dependence on Him He may be followed in these matters. D. S.

 PEACE BY JESUS CHRIST.

PETER'S voice has long since been silent, though others have taken up what he was permitted both to write and speak for his and our blessed Lord, whom unseen we love, exulting in the hope of soon seeing, being with and like Him who first loved us. A simple testimony, rendered in power to both Jews and Gentiles, which so substantially shows our God "no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. (He is Lord of all): . . . how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost

and with power : who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with Him " (Acts x. 34-38).

God's witnesses have had their commands from Him, hence He has been preached and a testimony rendered along with the preaching that He it is who was determinately appointed of God, Judge of living and of dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness that every one that believes on Him will receive through His Name remission of sins. The busy throng no longer hasten to hear news from above uttered in a scene of unrest. Strains from stammering lips in honour of Him who, at such cost, made peace, have no answering response from hearts of Jews or Gentiles. It is a day of languishing and weariness, yet pride and lawlessness prevailing, so that no enquiry is heard for Him who giveth rest. The feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things are not yet accounted beautiful, but both the messenger is regarded as a troubler and the message as that which disturbs. The prophet would enquire, " Who hath believed our report ? " and the solemn words made known to holy brethren supplies the why and wherefore in New Testament terms of so many falling short both of the glory and the rest of God. Awful fall ! demonstrating so forcibly the wickedness of indifference to what He had to address, by whom He would, to His creatures. " But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard " (Heb. iv. 2).

No wonder our blessed Lord said, during His evangelising, " He that hath ears to hear, let him hear ; " for in view of such solemn turning away by the Jews, according to fulfilment of prophecy, too, " some believed not." Is that all ? the indifferent may say. But oh ! what is the issue of their unbelief ? " Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see and

not perceive : for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Are Gentiles wise in their day and generation, or is it a repetition in history showing, as face in water answers to face, so heart to heart? And as less and less distinct sound is given to the gospel, no alarm, but actions showing how heartlessly indifferent we have been to hold in memory and cherish the day of God's visitation, when He in grace brought us dispensationally nigh and proclaimed to us peace in believing from His own mouth in the terms of the precious gospel of His grace. Oh ! God grant that many may do the work of an evangelist, as we need those sounds in our ears for our hearts and spirits as long as we are here ; and if ruled out by the powers as trespassers, may hearts constrained by the love of Christ be taught ways, and be shown means, of communicating testimony to that grace when public testimony is no more allowed. Much there is to sober us, much more to ravish our hearts, for we have the most elaborate defence of the gospel in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. Our will and ways are shown in 1 Pet. iv. 3-6, Eph. iv. 17-19, and our God's dealings in grace in Eph. ii. ; teachings of grace, Titus ii., for such as acknowledge the truth, which is after godliness, who have that blessed hope of eternal life from our God, who cannot lie ; on the contrary, " the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ;" and Jude shows us the portion of those who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Preaching peace by Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all. How sufficient ! He made peace through the

blood of His cross. He is our peace. Having abolished in His flesh the enmity—for this existed from Jew and Gentile—both toward God and one another, our enmity spent itself upon Him, and nothing but new creatures will do for our God, and He in Himself reconciles to God by the Cross, having slain the enmity, and the glad tidings of peace He has preached to us afar off and to those nigh. Oh, shall we not revenge such forgetfulness of Him? for to have had such preachings, and to choose war instead, we still have His infallible Word to tell us whence they come (Jas. iv.), and Titus iii. 3 shows we were once servants to sin! How we need His warnings and beacons—the leaven of the Pharisees to shun (Luke xii.), as well as malice and wickedness judged so as to keep such a feast to His honour as it was in His heart to call us to. Being so slow to get grounded in grace, we need the showings of the Father's heart, and His "somewhat to say" to Simon; to hear also, that our spirits may not grow hard and unforgiving. He is Lord! all praise to our God. Salutations of peace reach the children of God. May we seek wisdom that is from above, as Jas. iii. 17-18, and still desire to win to Christ—through whom we have peace with God. W. B.

EPH. v. 1-2.—We are to walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us a sacrifice to God. "*For us*" was divine love; "*to God*" is perfection of object and motive. Law takes up the love of self as the measure of love to others. Christ gives up self wholly and for us, but to God. Our worthlessness enhances the love; but, on the other hand, an affection and a motive have their worth from the object (and with Christ it was God Himself), self wholly given up.—J. N. D.

CHINESE is spoken by over 400 millions; Hindustani and English each by about 100 millions; Russian 70 millions; and German 57 millions.

"O THOU LOVING ONE, O Thou blessed One, Thou deservest to have me *all*. Thou hast paid for me ten thousand times more than I am worth."—*John Bunyan*.

THE LORD'S COMING.—345 verses in the Old Testament are found to teach the second coming of the Lord, besides allusions. In the New Testament there are 385 verses which distinctly set it forth, or more than one verse in twenty-three. But plainly and abundantly as it is proclaimed, it is hid from the eyes of most of His preachers and their hearers.—*J. H. Brookes*.

BEHOLD, my brethren, a great marvel. God is the Most High : if thou liftest up thyself, He fleeth from thee ; but if thou wilt abase thyself, He cometh down to thee. The humble soul draws God, as it were, out of heaven, that He may become its neighbour ! God loves an humble sinner rather than a proud saint.—*Augustine*.

HOPE.—*Dum spiro, spero*, said the heathen, while I live I hope ; but *Dum expiro, spero*, says the Christian, when I die I hope.

AN APOSTLE lost as an apostate, and perishing for ever, gone to his own place ; and on the other hand, a malefactor's soul on the day of his execution gathered into the sheaf of everlasting life, and with his Lord in paradise ! Such are the supernatural mysteries of the sovereignty of divine grace !

IN THE ANCIENT art of metallurgy, that the ore might not be consumed in the heated crucible, there was always a breathing of cool air through a chink in the side of the furnace when the furnace doors were shut—a sweet emblem of the comfort of God, hiddenly-given to the heart, when most fevered and scorched by the intensity of its chastening. The Great Refiner will never cease breathing His inward consolations and His inspirations of hope into the poor heart which sobs like the molten gold in the fires, saying in its anguish, Thy will be done.

THE NOTHINGNESS of worldly pomp in its loftiest elevation has rarely been exemplified more powerfully than in that ambitious and successful despot, Septimus Severus, the Roman emperor, who died at York A.D. 211. At the close of his life, he exclaimed, "I have been everything, but what am I now ?" Commanding his funeral urn to be brought to him, he took it into his arms, and, in terms of mingled anguish and pride, addressed it in words of this import : "Thou soon wilt be the resting place of one whom, aforetime, the world was too narrow to satisfy !"

IF CHRISTIANITY is not the sole true and perfect religion, and if all others are not consequently false and pernicious, it is based on delusion. If it is not merely the best, but also the only religion whereby men can be saved, it is an imposture. If it contains only part of the truth, sharing that priceless possession with other religions, its source is not as it proclaims itself to be. Christianity is either the sole and complete revelation of divine truth from God Himself, and hence the only and absolute truth, or it is a fabrication of men—the more worthless because it seeks to bolster itself up by false pretences. If God did not come down from heaven and take on the form of a man in order that He might die, and show to man the only way of salvation, thereby making all other religions false and profane, Christian theology is a sham ; it is built on fiction.—*New York Sun*.

THERE ARE some men who, like Herod and the scribes, are sign-posts upon a road over which they do not move an inch ; unwittingly, however, as in that case, they may be instruments in guiding worshippers to the feet of Jesus.

DR. JOHNSON said, "I have made no approaches to a state which can look on death as not terrible." *The natural powers of his mind* found no remedy for the confusion and terror of his spirit. When he came to die he yielded, it is said, subjection to God's testimony to Christ, and the sufficiency of the propitiation which He made, dwelling much on His one sacrifice for sins, and his fears were calmed.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC complained that in her sphere of life it was impossible to be a real Christian. Speaking of persecution from one's own relatives and friends, I quoted John i. 2, how that Jesus came unto His own people the Jews, and they "received Him not." She turned to me, and said : "Well, then, Jesus was a Jew ; but I always thought He was a Catholic."

GAMBLING is one of the chief vices in Buenos Ayres. Why do not the authorities put a stop to it ? Because Government officials frequent these dens. History relates that some years ago one of the Presidents of the Republic having staked his last dollar, cried : "If I lose now, I will shut up this place." Of course the proprietors took care that his opponent was bribed to lose, and thus the house, one of the most important of its class, was allowed to continue with its devilish excitement and maddening fascination.

BIBLES.—It is estimated that all the Bibles in existence do not number more than two hundred millions, and that the total population of the world is fourteen thousand millions, which leaves us to the sad conclusion that six persons out of seven have no Bible !

SOME preachers, before they will denounce any special sin, want to know who is hiding under it.

BRAZIL.—Romanism here is another name for heathenism, for its followers are idolators. "Christ" is often held up to the people, but alas ! it is a brass Christ on a bronze cross ! There are many saints here, but they are made of wood and metal ! Oh ! when will the Church of Christ arise to see the hollow mockery, the carnal sham, the pitiable mockery of religious truths that garnish the outside of Rome when within it is full of rottenness and dead men's bones !

WHEN the Rev. G. W. Chamberlain first went to South America he found fifteen millions in a nominally Roman Catholic country who scarcely knew what a Bible was. To one old man of eighty he gave a Portuguese Testament, and when he had explained to him the way of salvation, he replied : "Young man, this is what I have been long waiting for. But where was your father when my father was alive, that he never came to tell my father how to be saved ?" Will not some such question come up at the judgment seat of Christ ?

"GOD IS LOVE."—A Christian desirous of reminding himself and others of this very blessed fact, had it painted on a weather-vane upon his premises, so that whether pointing East, West, North, or South, it might tell the same tale. There is, however, another side to this question : "God is light" also ; and it would have been well, instead of both sides of the vane testifying of the former, if on one of the sides this latter had been displayed. The cross of Christ testifies of both.

"IT WILL DO TO LIGHT MY PIPE," was the exclamation of a soldier who had received a New Testament from a colporteur. But he kept the book, and was saved by its means, and, after dying from wounds received in the Crimean war, there was found in the book this inscription: "Received at Toulon, 1855. Despised at first and badly used, but afterwards read, believed, and made the instrument of my salvation. J. L., Fusileer, 4th Company — regiment of the line."

A SUFFOLK PLOUGHBOY spent whatever money he could spare in giving away Christian books amongst the villagers, and on one occasion gave a shilling, which was all he possessed, to the mission cause, and added a fervent prayer, "Lord, bless that shilling to the salvation of some soul."

THE GOSPEL has turned the Fijian from his cannibalism, his widow-strangling, his temples for human sacrifices, his priesthood (cunning, cruel, and treacherous), and his chronic tribal wars, and has made him a devout, Bible-reading, consistent Christian. Some missionaries are overlooked and underestimated, particularly David and Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, &c. When these get acclimatised in the languages of people, they go on without cessation extending the kingdom of God by making known His grace to the nations. On the isle of Rotuma in the Pacific, in 1860, were two Fijian teachers, one of whom having made a translation of Matthew's gospel, took it to Sydney and got it printed by the auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Before these gospels arrived at Rotuma, difficulties had arisen on the island. The missionary in charge of them was not permitted to land. But as these 3,000 gospels were in a language not spoken anywhere else, and were thus valueless elsewhere, he sent them on shore as bread cast upon the waters. A young chief, who had learned to read the New Testament and was a Christian, at length got permission from the King, when the books were opened, to gather the natives around him and teach them *to read only*. They soon began to see they were sinners, and needed a Saviour. They found the Gospel taught them forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The young chief at length preached to them, and now there are on that island seven or eight companies of believers and preaching stations entirely entrusted to native teachers. The whole of the Scriptures are now in their possession in the Fijian language.

IT IS UNDER the attribute of Retributive justice that conscience primarily testifies of God.

EPITAPH ON A PROFLIGATE.—

Satan's captive, long enchained,
All the vilest passions reigned;
From this tyranny released,
Say not, "Miracles have ceased!"

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, speak very, very simply to your scholars. It would often surprise you could you clearly see how little they really know. Teach them what God is—great, wise, holy, and full of love! Teach them what we are by nature and by practice—lost, sinful! Teach them what the Lord Jesus is, and what He came to do, and at what cost He has done it. And do not forget to teach them that He is returning also, and will soon, very soon, receive His own to Himself for ever! *Fail not to urge them to be of the happy company.*

300 INCIDENTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, ETC.

"WE HAVE seen His star in the east" (Matt. ii. 2).—This naturally connects itself with Balaam's prophecy of the "Star to arise out of Jacob," and which was, as we know, the prophecy of a Gentile among Gentiles. Prophecy had evidently spoken to them, or they would hardly have so definitely understood the object of their search to be a King of *the Jews*. The Magi were the great natural observers of these days, and here we have the witness of nature to her Lord. The disappearance and re-appearance of the star, and its guiding them to just where the young child was, indicate, spite of all attempted explanations, something very different from an object in the far-off heavens. At any rate, the love in it was not far off, and it spoke in no uncertain way to these glad pilgrims journeying at its word. Did they come expecting to find Jerusalem all eager to meet the enquirer with a gospel message? They find an Edomite on the throne, with all the old Edomite hatred in his heart, craftily as he seeks to hide it. The chief priests and elders can tell all about Christ's birth textually, and how the words must have stricken the old blood-stained tyrant! "Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall be Shepherd to My people Israel." Face to face with Him, they worship. In that humble house there are but a young mother and her babe. But they worship, not the mother, but the babe. Divinely taught, they pour out their gifts at His feet: "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Gold for royalty; frankincense for Deity; and myrrh for death, used as it was at His burial. God over-ruled all in a peculiar way.—*F. W. G.*

LOVED by the Father, John xvi. 27; xvii. 23. SAVED by the Son, 1 Tim. i. 15; 2 Peter iii. 18. SEALED with the Holy Ghost, Eph. i. 13; iv. 30.

A GENTLEMAN of wealth and position, residing in the north of Ireland, was unwell. Being in great fear that he should die in his sleep, he paid a special nurse to awaken him three times during each night. This she did, but he passed away in his sleep after all. After spending the evening at billiards he retired to bed, and between the hours of special waking another hand woke him up to the solemn realities of eternity. Don't ask whither his soul had gone? It is too terrible.

IN ONE of the huts in Galicia, a colporteur found a young forester whose leg had been crushed by the fall of a tree, and had been amputated with the rude surgery of the village. Being in mental and bodily agony he spoke to him of the only source of comfort, and read to him the Word of life. But the young man was hopeless and defiant. A year later the colporteur found him wasted beyond recognition, but he was actually reading the volume he had sold him a year before. In a moment there shone in his face a light as from heaven, and he said, "*I cannot express my gratitude that by this Bible you led me to God. It is my only comfort, and I am happy, though I suffer fearfully. I have found my Saviour, who tenderly loveth the weary laden. Miserable was I through unbelief, but in His Word have I found comfort and salvation.*" A week later he had been taken home. He repeatedly said, "*I long to be with the Lord,*" and his last words were, "*Lord Jesus!*"

THE SOWER.—*Matt. xiii.*

THE Lord came as a sower, not reaper, to this dispensation, or new creation. To the old creation He came seeking fruit upon three occasions, and was disappointed. Now He becomes a sower, and is the Husbandman beginning the work of the new creation. He will never gather any fruit that He has not Himself sown.

We find in this parable, the seed was the same in every case, but it has this property, it tested the soul, the *soil*. Even so the gospel is preached to all, but it tests the hearts it enters or touches. Now, why does the Lord link Satan with the wayside hearer? Because if Satan can bear away the seed from the heart, all his work is done. If it find admittance into the heart, then he corrupts it. Then there is the stony-ground hearer, who hears the Word, and something awakens a tasteful emotion of mind. There is nothing in the stony-ground hearer that intimates a work in the conscience; and nothing is done if the conscience is not reached, because the conscience is revolted from God, and until that breach is repaired nothing is achieved. The stony-ground hearers never dealt with the word as sinners needing pardon.

Then the thorny-ground hearers are those who treat the word with great gravity. They acknowledge the importance of eternity, but they own time to be a serious thing also. They own the weighty importance of their place in the world, and they have no manner of mind to sacrifice the one for the other; and thus the two kingdoms go on in their hearts, and no fruit is borne. Oh! with what divine skilfulness Jesus unfolds and exposes the heart!

The fourth is what He calls good ground. What made it good? Was it by any refinement of flesh? No, indeed, it was the Spirit of God. Now, we find that *Satan* corrupts the wayside hearer; *nature* makes the stony ground unfruitful; *the world*

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destroys the thorny-ground hearer ; while the *Holy Ghost* is the Tiller in every piece of tillage that brings forth fruit to the Lord Jesus, whether it be thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold.

Oh, how fruitful in moral warning is all this. Don't let us refuse to be exposed ; it is good for us. Now, mark, in that parable, the Lord is not giving the likeness of the King of Heaven, but the tares and wheat begin the parables of the King.

Now we are getting into the story of Christendom, the kingdom of heaven. Here is the Christendom that surrounds us every day ; and has not the Lord anticipated it truly ? How did this field become a mingled field ? He tells us ; by the hand of an enemy ! How are we to deal with it ? *Let it be.*

We are not to attempt to cure it ; and the moment the Church begins to purify the world, she has forgotten her appointed business. They were servants of a truth who proposed doing so, but they mistook their office. The same thing stares me in the face every hour ; the saints occupied about that which Christ never set them to do. The Church's business is not to purify the world ; it is to busy herself in calling out sinners from that world. The Lord here sweetly owns they may be servants, but shall not prosper in their work. Let us cultivate the wheat in ourselves or others ; let us call sinners to the gospel offer of salvation ; but in any other sense our duty is to let the tares alone, and any attempt of ours to regulate the world is taken up in ignorance of Christ's mind.

The Lord now gives two parables (verses 31, 32, 33) wherein He is pursuing the story of the " tares ;" and in the next two parables (44, 45, 46), He is pursuing the story of the wheat. He is giving the story of the tares' character in the parable of the mustard seed and leaven, showing in the former that the sowing of the wicked one was to grow to be a most important tree in the world, while in the latter, by

leaven (always the symbol of evil), He shows the working of corruption, and its natural result extensive.

The leaven hid in measures of meal shews us the varied doctrinal corruption. There is, first, external *political corruption*; second, *internal doctrinal corruption*; and has not all that taken place? What is Romanism? A great thing—more important than heathenism, or any other thing we could name. The mustard seed is there, and the leaven is there (political and doctrinal corruption). Then Jesus comes to two sweet little parables, in which He is pursuing the story of the wheat. Look at the figure He presents. First, a treasure hid in a field. Are the tares hidden? No, they stare us in the face on every side. Do the children of the kingdom stare me in the face? Do I see the reflection of Jesus everywhere? Ah, no, the tares occupy the widespread field called the world; they occupy the moral scene before me. I have *to look* for the wheat. Could anything be more accurate than these anticipations of Christ? And the pearl in the same way: He *seeks* it.

But that is not all. If the mustard seed be occupied by unclean birds, the treasure and the pearl are unspeakably dear to the heart of Jesus. Look at two men or women—one unrenewed, the other renewed. How little do you realise the immense moral difference between these two! One is the representative of the thing the unclean birds delight in, the other is nearer to the heart of Jesus Christ than anything in His whole creation. How little do we apprehend these things! The treasure was a treasure to Christ, the pearl was a pearl to Christ's eye. Oh! how beautiful these things are; and I say Christ speaks here not as the Saviour of sinners, nor as the Teacher of saints, or Master of servants, but as a Prophet in the light, asking you and me to walk with Him in the light of Him who knew the end from the beginning. He is my Saviour—my Master—my Lord—and He is *my* Friend (as said the Bride); and He invites me to sit

by His side, and listen to what He, and He only, knows, even the bosom-counsels of God.

In the close, we get the parable of the drag-net ; that anticipates a moment which we don't yet see. We have seen the public apostasy abroad ; we have seen the heart of God hanging over His hidden thing in this world ; but we have not yet seen the drag-net, because that represents the close of Christendom, the fulness of the dispensation. We have not yet seen it brought to its appointed end, the good gathered into vessels, the bad cast away.

Let us ask ourselves, are we living as those nearest to the heart of Jesus, or as the thing in which the unclean birds find delight ? Are we savouring of the spirit of the world, or are we one spirit with the Lord as to the Church of God ?

* * *

WANDERING.

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."—*Prov.* xxvii. 8.

WE were all once wanderers, far from God, for whose glory we were made, and in whose presence alone we could be truly happy. Of the misery of that wandering we need but to be reminded—its bitterness and hopelessness. The Shepherd came to seek His lost sheep—traversed the distance between us and God, at infinite cost ; and finding us, has brought us home again to God. So that we can now truly say, "Yea, the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts" (*Ps.* lxxxiv. 3). The sparrow seems to be marked in Scripture as the bird of loneliness, and of insignificance. "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (*Ps.* cii. 7). "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God ?" (*Luke* xii. 6).

The swallow is the bird of complaint and restlessness—the bird of passage” (Isa. xxxviii. 14; Jer. viii. 7). How fittingly do these birds represent, in a twofold way, the lonely, worthless, restless sinner who has found a home and a nest on God’s altars,—atonement and worship; and of the saint, too, as he looks forward to *his* nest, with the Lord for ever.

But the wanderer has been brought back, the lonely sparrow has found society, the restless swallow has found a nest, through Him who is our Altar, the One who has made peace, and by whom we worship. Now we can sing,—

“The wanderer no more will roam.”

Through infinite grace, at an infinite cost, we have been brought unto God. Of the rest, the security, the joy of that “nest,” what can we say? Is it not perfect, absolute, eternal? Is not every longing satisfied? and does not the heart of the wanderer find itself indeed at home in God’s presence?

The soul has found its “place”—a place of access to God the Father, of nearness—the very holiest itself, into which we have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus. It is also in a place of relationship, for the believer is born of God, a child of God. The Spirit of adoption has been also given him, whereby he cries, “Abba, Father.” He is also in a new position, as quickened and raised with Christ; and in Him, in the heavenly places, he is a heavenly man, with heavenly associations, heavenly destinies. This is the place of every child of God. If he wander from it, he is like a bird that wanders from her nest.

But the Word of God is living and operative, and when rightly received ever produces the fruits of holiness and separation from the world. Where these are lacking, communion is impossible.

Need we say, then, that it is only too easy for the Christian to wander from his place here? The world and the Word do not agree. Let the things of this

time secure our hearts' attention, and how quickly the taste for the Word of God is lost! We cannot feed on Egypt's food and on manna at the same time. With a taste for the Word of God gone, the soul makes no further progress. The love and grace of God, the fellowship of saints, the glad service of self-denial are forgotten; and nothing remains but the dull routine of what has become almost a meaningless form. "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD" (Mal. i. 13).

When the link of communion is once broken, the wandering has begun; and who can tell where it will end? David's sin, and Peter's, and that of many others, alas, only show us how far declension may go when it once begins. Nothing but the sovereign mercy of God can prevent the wanderer from plunging into that which will be an open shame. Even where such extremes are not reached, there is a barrenness, a dearth in the soul, which destroys all true happiness. Is the reader of these lines one who has wandered from his place—his place at Jesus' feet? He is indeed like a bird that has wandered from his nest—no rest, no comfort, no holy associations.

"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him" (Hos. vi. 1; xiv. 4). There is but one way back to the place of communion, and that is to turn to the Lord, with true confession, and a simple apprehension of grace. How the Lord yearns to have His own back again! There is but one place for us, and that is the place of communion.

Had every Christian in the world forsaken this place; had they gathered with one another round various rallying points—of man, or doctrine, or

practice,—nay, had every believer in the world linked himself with such an association,—they would all of them have been as birds wandering from their nest. How easily the eye gets blinded by great names, and great numbers! Unless watchful, who is out of danger?

There is only too great danger of wandering from the place of separation from the world, of subjection to His Word and authority. Many may be the causes which lead to this. The personal state of soul, natural ties of affection, neglect of Scripture,—nay, even the godly desire for a wider unity amongst God's people, if unchecked by the limitations put upon it by the Word of God,—any or all of these may lead to a *wandering from our place*. It may seem to be an easy path and a simple way of getting over many difficulties; but easy paths are not promised, and there will be difficulties so long as we are here. Let us face them in dependence upon our faithful Lord, and not seek to avoid them by wandering.

Soon, beloved brethren, it will be a blessed impossibility to wander from our place. When we have been gathered home into the Father's house, we shall *go no more out for ever*. We shall grieve the Lord no more, and give pain to one another no more. How soon that time may be here! How rapidly the days are slipping by, and we shall hear the voice of our Beloved, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." How He will satisfy every heart then! Will one desire to wander? Ah no! Then even now let us be satisfied with Him. Let Him fill our heart, till every restless longing is stilled; till desire for change, for more room, for anything but Himself, is gone, and we sit at His feet. The Lord bind His people to Himself, till He come!—*Abridged from "Help and Food."*

SOME THOUGHTS FOR PLAIN FOLK.

II.

THAT Moses *taught* something is, we presume, beyond all controversy. That he *wrote* something must be accepted on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. That he gave Israel *the law*, and as we have it, textual errors excepted, has been commonly believed throughout the Christian dispensation.

Was this a delusion? Critics now tell us that we are mistaken. Of none of the books of the Pentateuch, they assure us, can a Mosaic authorship be rightly predicated. That question, as regards Genesis to Numbers, is settled decisively, it is said, against the current belief of both Jews and Christians for ages. And as for Deuteronomy, which professes to give addresses by the lawgiver, and the very words of the covenant made by God with Israel in the plains of Moab (Deut. xxix. 1), why, the writer, whoever he was, may have done like profane authors, and recast in his own words information he had received, and then set down in those words what he presumed were the thoughts and feelings of the lawgiver near the close of his life! And if he framed those discourses appropriate to the condition of Moses from elements supplied by tradition, there is nothing for us to wonder at, nor are we to think hardly of the Deuteronomist in consequence! How far all this is compatible with a belief in a divine and written revelation, and whether we are to hold that Deut. xii.-xxviii. contain the words of the covenant the Lord made with Israel in the land of Moab, is, apparently, then, a matter of little moment, about which none need to be troubled!!

Unwilling to surrender what we and our fathers have believed, unless the case for it is well made out, we purpose, in the present paper, to seek to gather up something of that which the law has to say for itself,

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and to find out, if possible, what people thought of it who lived at a date later than Moses, but much nearer his day than any of us. And since, in these days, prisoners on their trial are permitted, under certain conditions, to be witnesses in their own behalf, the Scriptures may well be interrogated as to what they can say on theirs.

There were different revelations vouchsafed to Moses, some of which, at all events, he committed to writing. Exodus xx.-xxiii. tells us of the first covenant. This he recorded in a book (Exodus xxiv. 4-7). Then Exodus xxxiv. 10-27 contains the unconditional covenant made with Israel after the golden calf, on the ground of which they *entered* the land. This also was put in writing (Exodus xxxiv. 27). With writing, then, Moses was acquainted. It would be nothing surprising, therefore, if he had written more, and had put on record the covenant made with Israel in the wilderness by the Red Sea,* on the observance of which they would *continue to enjoy* the land. This covenant is professedly only found in Deut. xii.-xxviii.

Now we read that Moses "wrote this law" (Deut. xxxi. 9). What law? "The book of this law," he called it (Deut. xxviii. 61); and "this book of the law," as xxix. 21 and xxx. 10 declare that he termed it, clearly referring to something to which he pointed the people as he was addressing them. Moreover, it is affirmed that he wrote this law in a book and delivered it to the priests and all the elders of Israel (xxxi. 9); directed, too, where it was to be kept (xxxi. 26); and enjoined the public reading of it in the ears of the people every seven years, at the feast of Tabernacles (10, 11). Was that book, which once evidently existed—if the words we have quoted mean anything—was that book, we ask, lost from that day? Had it perished at the lawgiver's death? Who can

* Rather, "by Suph." See Revised Version.

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believe this? That book survived some years, at all events. None can dispute this.

And what was in it? We read that it was the book of the law, in which all the curses threatened in chapter xxviii. were recorded (xxix. 21)—the curses of the covenant. Moreover, it contained the whole covenant made with Israel in the wilderness by Suph, as Deut. xxix. 21, when rightly translated, shows us. That covenant, as we have already noticed, is professedly only found in Deut. xii.-xxviii. And the words of xxix. 21, according to all the curses of the covenant that is (not are) written in this book of the law, plainly states that all that covenant was therein recorded. Where is it now?

Further, this book of the law, the words of which Moses finished writing (xxxi. 24), was evidently regarded by him as a completed code, for on the observance of its contents Israel would continue to enjoy the land generation after generation. And if driven out of it because of their sins—as, indeed, they have been—restoration to it was to be dependant on their obeying the voice of the Lord according to all that Moses commanded them *that day* (xxx. 2). Could we, then, confine the contents of that book to Deut. xii.-xxvii. only? Clearly not, we must say; for we have in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers legislation which was only to come into force after the people had entered the land. And in these books were found commandments and judgments to which it was incumbent on Israel to take heed, for on failure of observing them they would be driven out of their land (Levit. xxvi. 3-46). These laws referred to in Leviticus, we learn, were made in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses. Hence, how can we escape from the conclusion that the whole Mosaic legislation, as we have commonly understood it, must have been in that book of the law, written by Moses, and finished by him, and entrusted to the custody of the priests, the sons of Levi, which bore the ark of the covenant of

the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel (Deut. xxxi. 9)? The laws made in Mount Sinai were written, we believe, by Moses in that book which he finished in the plains of Moab.

When the Lord Jesus was leaving earth, His disciples were taught to wait for the Comforter, who would teach them all things. Similarly, ere Moses died, he told Israel of a Prophet like unto himself who should come, to whom they were to hearken. Till the arrival, however, of that One, the Mosaic legislation was to be in force; to no intermediate agents did the lawgiver point the people. For One only were they directed to look. Fifteen centuries, however, were to pass ere He would appear. And we find that till then, and even up to the death of the Lord, the law of Moses *was* expounded by the scribes. They sat in Moses' seat (Matt. xxiii. 2), and their teaching was to be listened to. Strange this was, if nothing distinctly of Moses was in existence.

Did Moses then, we ask, really say and write all that is averred of him in the book of Deuteronomy? If he did, we must hold that the book of the law was then completed, and was intended to be so. If he did not, as some strongly maintain—who hold that the Deuteronomist, as they call him, lived about the era of King Manasseh—how could that writer think of putting in the lawgiver's mouth words which he knew not that he ever uttered? Plain folk must think that was strange conduct on his part, a taking of great liberties with the lawgiver's fame, and, what is worse, taking unauthorised liberties with the Living and True God. How write of commandments of God if he was not sure that they ever came from Him, having no better ground to rest on than tradition? But if they were really divine commands, what were the sources from which the Deuteronomist received them? Who knows? Who ever heard? Into what uncertainty, then, would that fifth book of the law be thrown, and the whole Mosaic legislation likewise?

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Assuming, however, that the critics are right about the comparatively recent formation of Deuteronomy, what conclusions shall we draw from the writer's statements to which we have referred, otherwise than to believe that the reader was to understand that the law was given by Moses as a completed code ; and that he handed the book of it to the elders and to the priests, as legislation sufficient to guide them till the Prophet should appear ? Are there any statements in the book to show that the writer intended his readers to believe that he had revised, re-edited, or expanded the Mosaic legislation centuries after the death of the son of Amram ? If, then, this book of Deuteronomy contains no announcement of such a fact, will other parts of Scripture give countenance to such a supposition ?

Moses died. God then addressed Joshua, exhorting him to observe and do according to all the law which Moses had commanded him, if he would prosper whithersoever he went, adding, " This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night " (Josh. i. 8). To a well-known book God here turns His servant—one already in existence. Did Joshua compile the book of the law ? He may well have written the last chapter of the Pentateuch, which tells of the lawgiver's death, for that is history, not law. But is the language of the Almighty, to which we have just referred, consistent with the book having been compiled by Joshua after Moses' death ? Is it not more consistent with the belief that Moses left a complete code, and that Joshua was well acquainted with it ? And we must remember it was just after the death of Moses that the Lord addressed him as above. Had Joshua, who had so recently succeeded to the command of the host of Israel, sufficient time or leisure to compile the book of the law ? It is scarcely credible that he had.

Certain is it, too, that he had no hint, that we read of, of some future expansion of it. No word is there

that what Moses had written was a nucleus, round which would cluster future legislation. What had come from the pen of Moses was all that Joshua had, and that was to be enough for him, and for Israel after him. So to that book of the law he directed the earnest attention of the people when near the close of his life. And then, for the first time, do we meet with its designation as "the book of the law of Moses" (Josh. xxiii. 6). No one was better fitted; no one, we may safely say, was so competent as Joshua to speak with authority about it. Intimate as he had been with Moses, he must have known of its origin and compilation. Would he have designated it as "the book of the law of Moses" if its compilation had been his own work? We think not. For him and for Israel the book of the law of Moses was the book of the law of their God (xxiv. 26). For himself and for Israel, may we not say, he knew of nothing but that book as Moses had left it.

Did Joshua add to it? He did write therein, it is true. Was it an addition to, or an expansion of the Mosaic code? No. He only wrote in it that covenant by which the people had under the oak at Shechem sworn to obey God (xxiv. 26). About that which he wrote there was no concealment. That very act, however, of his, as recorded in chapter xxiv., marks off the law as something quite distinct, and regarded by him as complete. For Israel at that time bound themselves to obey, not some future expansion of the code, which might not appear till many years later, but only that which was already in existence, and known as "the book of the law of Moses."

Coming down the stream of time to the days in which there were recognised prophets in Israel subsequent to Samuel, is there a hint, is there a particle of evidence, that the law given by Moses was to be supplemented by authorised additions? David was a prophet, and a writer of inspired communications (2 Samuel xxiii. 2). He knew well the law, but only

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as given by Moses. He knew, too, its component parts, but as Moses had previously described them (Deut. vi. 17, 20), viz., God's statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies (1 Kings ii. 3); and to these parts of the law of Moses he directed Solomon for his guidance. The book of the law was then evidently in existence, and neither David nor Solomon, we feel sure, thought of adding to that volume which had come from the great lawgiver long, long before.

Throughout the history of the kingdom of Judah down to the days of Josiah we have notices of the law, but never a word of its revision or expansion. Rehoboam was aware of it, for he forsook it (2 Chron. xii. 1). Asa was acquainted with it, and enjoined on the people the observance of it (xiv. 4). Jehoshaphat knew of the book, and sent about princes, priests, and Levites with it to teach the people (xvii. 7-9). Jehoiada carried out the sacrificial ritual, as it *was written in the law of Moses* (xxiii. 18). Amaziah killed his father's murderers, but spared their children, "as it is written," so runs the record, "in the law in the book of Moses" (xxv. 4). The portion here referred to is Deut xxiv. 16. Was not, then, that book known in those days—*i.e.*, about two hundred years before Hilkiash found in the Temple the book of the law of the Lord by the hand of Moses?

Surely, we may say, that down to this king's reign no thought could there have been of legislation, as part of the law of God, which was not found in the original book written by Moses. "The book of Moses" the sacred historian calls it, and again in xxxv. 12. But here we may be reminded that the books of Chronicles were compiled after the captivity. Granted. That, however, only strengthens the case against the critics. For would any writer, guided of the Spirit, if aware of the very recent compilation of great part of the laws, have called it the *book of Moses*, if it was certain that the Mosaic authorship of Deu-

teronomy could not be sustained, and that the other books of the Pentateuch were in the same condition?

Of course, the chronicler knew, supposing what we are asked to believe is correct, that Deuteronomy had no existence till nearly two centuries after Amaziah ascended the throne. How then could he, if really guided of the Spirit, have ascribed to Amaziah a knowledge of that which was not on record till many years after his death? Either it was on record in his day or it was not. If it was, where was it but where the chronicler tells us—in the “book of Moses”? That book had not perished ere the son of Joash ascended the throne.

To continue the historical notices, Hezekiah celebrated the passover “according to the law of Moses” (2 Chron. xxx. 16); and the ritual which had been in abeyance in the days of Ahaz was again observed, according as it was “written in the law of the Lord” (xxxi. 3). Then, in the days of Josiah, the high priest, Hilkiah, found “the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses” (xxxiv. 14)—very probably the original, deposited by the lawgiver in the sanctuary at the near approach of his death, and which during the awful times of Manasseh and Amon may very well have been hidden, and its place of security forgotten.

Thus, from Joshua downwards, the law of Moses was known as a code in existence, and at times, too, acted upon by kings of the house of David. It was viewed as a book distinct from all other books. No hint have we of any one adding to it, or re-editing it. And this remark receives confirmation as we note the way that David’s regulation of the courses of the priests, and his introduction of the service of song, are mentioned by the sacred writers. If any additions to the law could have been allowed, or recognised, surely the regulations as to music in the worship of the sanctuary would have been incorporated with it. Closely connected was the service of song with the

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service at the altar, and though mentioned with the sacrifices, the regulations referred to are distinguished from the Mosaic ritual. We quote Scripture in support of this.

In the days of Joash, Jehoida (the high priest) "appointed the offices of the house of the LORD, by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is *written in the law of Moses*, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David" (2 Chron. xxiii. 18). How clear, how marked is the distinction here drawn between the ordinances of the law of Moses and those of David. Both were binding, both were from God; but no one thought of expanding the law of sacrifice by the addition of David's regulations for a musical accompaniment. The Mosaic law and the Davidic regulations were viewed as quite distinct, and the authority of the former was not pleaded to enforce the latter. Similarly, in the days of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxix. 25), and in those of Jeshua and Zerubabel (Ezra iii. 10), the service of song rested, and was confessed to rest, only on the ordinance of David, king of Israel. What an opportunity was missed of expanding the law and re-editing it with the regulations of David, introduced as of Mosaic origin!! No one, however, did that. We can say why. Because the law was viewed as distinct from all later divine injunctions, and as complete in itself.

Plain folk, then, may reasonably conclude, and not be ashamed of the belief, that the book of the law was recognised from the first, and to the closing days of the kingdom, as a code of legislation given by Moses to Israel, to which no addition was made by anonymous writers. It was enough, and Joshua knew of no more, and needed no more. Who, and where were the people who added to it, revised it, or expanded it? What were their names, and what were their sons' names? Who can tell? C. E. S.

“v

MY BELOVED.

What is thy Beloved more than another beloved ? " (*Cant. v. 9*).

OH, what is thy Belovèd ?
 They oft enquire of me ;
 And what in my Belovèd
 So passing fair I see ?
 Is it the heavenly splendour
 In which He shines above ?
 His riches and dominions
 That won my heart's deep love ?

* * *

Though higher than the highest,
 Most mighty King Thou art ;
 Thy grace and not Thy greatness,
 First touched my rebel-heart ;
 Thy sword it might have slain me,
 Thine arrows drunk my blood ;
 But 'twas *Thy cross* subdued me,
 And won my heart to God.

Thy sceptre rules creation,
 Thy *wounded hand* rules me ;
 All bow before Thy footstool,
 I but the *nail-prints* see !
 Aloud they sound Thy titles,
 Thou Lord of lords, most high ;
 One thrilling thought absorbs me—
This Lord for me did die !

Oh ! this is my Belovèd,
 There's none so fair as He ;
 The Chief among ten thousand,
 The all in all to me !
 My heart it breaks with longing
 To dwell with Him above,
 Who wooed me first, and won me,
By His sweet, dying love !
— *The Remembrancer.*

THE BIBLES OF THE WORLD.

PERMIT me to begin the little I have to say to you by a parable. Let me ask you to imagine an impossible scene, which may give you some idea of a sad reality, may help you to realise the immense preponderance of the unevangelised portion of our fellow-subjects, as well as some of the difficulties which the Bible Society has to contend with in seeking to substitute our Holy Bible for the sacred books of the non-Christian world.

Imagine, then, a vast pavilion—sufficiently vast in its proportions to hold all the Queen's subjects, about three hundred and fifty million persons. Then imagine a throne, and on the throne our much-loved Queen herself; and before her let there be a table, and on the table five books.

First and foremost, the Holy Bible of us her Christian subjects.

Secondly, the bible of her Hindū subjects—the Veda.

Thirdly, the bible of her Mohammedan subjects—the Kurān.

Fourthly, the bible of her Buddhist subjects—the Tripitaka.

Fifthly, the bible of those ancient Persians (or Pārsīs) who, although few in number, are among the most loyal subjects of the Queen—the Zend Avesta.

These five books may rightly be called "Sacred books of the East."

And now imagine the Queen to rise from her throne, and, taking in her hand the first of these five books, to say to her assembled subjects:

"Here is the Book that teaches the faith which I have promised to defend, the Book which I believe to be the word of God, the Book which reveals One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and is able to make me and you wise unto salvation. I fear that

some among my subjects here present reject this Holy Bible, and believe this second book to be the only true Word of God. Let all, then, who believe in the divine inspiration of the Veda take their own sacred book and pass out before me. And behold, two hundred millions of our fellow-subjects pass out of the Queen's presence, leaving one hundred and fifty millions behind. Once more give reins to your imagination. Imagine the sadness with which Her Majesty might next proceed to hold up the third book, the Kurān of her Mohammedan subjects, and repeat the same words, and imagine her grief as she beholds about sixty millions more of her subjects take their own sacred book and pass out, leaving only ninety millions behind. Again suppose another act of the imaginary drama. Our Queen repeats the same words, and behold, forty millions more depart, taking with them the two remaining sacred books of the Buddhists and Pārsīs, and leaving behind only fifty millions of her subjects—only one out of every seven—who are even nominal believers in the Holy Bible of her Christian subjects. And then imagine one final closing scene. Imagine the withdrawal from her presence of *every secret unbeliever* among those fifty millions of nominal Christians. *How many true believers, think you, would remain?* Perhaps only a little flock numbered by thousands instead of millions. And yet no less than four million copies of the Bible are distributed every year by the Society in whose behalf I am pleading, and *nearly one hundred and forty million* copies have been distributed since its foundation in 1804. Yes, about one hundred and forty million copies, and of these an immense majority rejected, lost, or set aside and never used. To what purpose, then, I hear some one say, is this apparent waste?

I reply, this seemingly too-prodigious expenditure is justified by God's universal method—His universal law in the maintenance of His universe. Does not the sun dart day by day millions upon millions of rays of

light into apparently empty space? Did not the living Word of God Himself pour forth with infinite prodigality His life-giving words before crowds and crowds of His followers? Yet did all desert Him except a little flock of twelve, to whom He once turned round and said, "Will ye also go away?" My friends, I have been young and now am old, and I have made these five sacred books of the East the study of a long life. I have read and studied them all, but chiefly, I hope and trust, this sacred volume which contains the charter of our own most holy faith. And now in the latter days of this expiring century, when a constant succession of modern writers, of sciolists and criticasters, of Neo-Buddhists and Theosophists, are pressing on us their new gospels and their new ideas of all kinds, trying hard to seduce us from the "old paths," this Sacred Book seems to speak to us and say, "Will ye also go away?" Well, my friends, to what other book shall we go? This Book alone reveals the Christ, the Saviour of the world. This Book alone has the words of eternal life. To what other book then should dying sinners go but to this Book of life?

Let those who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise sinners, betake themselves to those other so-called sacred books. Well suited are the scriptures of Brāhmans, Moslims, Buddhists, and Pārsīs to all who thank God that they are morally correct, to all who look for salvation to the fulfilment of their religious tasks, their fastings, penances, and self-mortifications; to all who seek to stand before God in the rags of their own self-righteousness. But to dying sinners such books are worse than useless. To lepers seamed and scarred with the leprosy of guilt they are worse than a mockery; for they tell not of the one Physician, they offer no balm, they provide no healing remedy.—*Sir M. Monier-Williams, in Bible Society's Report.*

JOHN THE BAPTIST TESTED.

John iii. 25-36.

How true it is that God's ways are not as our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts (Isa. lv. 8). In His testings of His people, whether of Israel or Christians to-day, how He uses the very simplest circumstances, and sometimes the most unlikely people, to accomplish His purposes. So much so, in fact, that oftentimes one would not even suppose that it was God working, but just ordinary every-day events taking place. Take as an illustration the anointing of Saul to be king (1 Sam., chaps. 9-10). It was just a simple occurrence. Kish lost his asses, and sent Saul out to seek them. Quite simple, quite natural. Who would have thought that had anything to do with the kingdom and the king that the people were asking for? Yet it was just that simple circumstance that led Saul to Samuel to be anointed king. It needs one to be ever on the watch-tower to see and learn these ways of God.

In this portion before us (John iii.), we have another remarkable picture which we do well to study. Again we see God behind the scenes which He allows others to shift, and witness the testing of one of His servants, though in all probability few, if any, saw at the time anything of what it meant for that servant. To them, it would be only a simple occurrence of a religious question between two parties. To us, it was an effort of Satan to upset a servant; resulting, through grace, in the victory of the servant and the discomfiture of the enemy. Let us look at it.

(1). Satan's test (ver. xxvi). It began by a discussion between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying (John iii. 25). Surely that was simple enough! Ah, but the devil had set that discussion going! Indeed, it is very questionable if he does not set all such things going! He intended that ball to

roll against John, and, if possible, upset him. God, too, was looking on and allowing it, though unknown and unnoticed by any; but He was sustaining the heart of His servant through it all. How truly He is the God of all grace!

Their discussion at last brought them to John, to whom they said: "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and *all men come to Him*" (ver. 26). What an effort of Satan to stir up any envy or jealousy which might be lying in John's heart. And who, with Titus iii. 3 before them, would say there was none there? "All men come to Him!" What servant, apart from the grace of God, can bear to see another more successful than himself, or superseding him in the esteem and affection of others, without feelings of envy or jealousy being stirred up? And Satan used that discussion to bring John's own disciples and those Jews to test the state of his heart, and God allowed it. But John had an Object before him that satisfied his heart, and Satan's test fell powerless. Satan was baffled and defeated. Nay, it became an occasion to set forth in a fuller way the glory of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

How many of us, dear brethren, would have been proof against such an effort? Some of us have seen such a test allowed, and servants fall before it. Why not ourselves? May we not say, as often we have sung :—

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be."

It was grace that kept us. Sometimes men are very humble in their own estimation (proof to those who have discernment that there is no humility there at all), till some one else comes on the scene better, or more successful than themselves, then that which was really there previously, unjudged, becomes painfully

manifest to all others to that one's confusion and shame. Their disparaging remarks, insinuations, and inuendoes mark their inward state of soul, and that the fretting leprosy of jealousy is rapidly working which eventually leads to open opposition, and sometimes worse effects.

Beloved brethren, do these remarks fit any readers? Then let us take them to heart and be warned by them. At the same time, may we not only have for an example this devoted servant of God, but may our faith be strengthened and our hearts encouraged by a quiet, careful study of the Master Himself, as well as others set forth in that beautiful chapter, Philippians ii.

(II). The servant's victory (ver. 27-30). What a magnificent picture! A man who had been on the flood-tide of popularity, and had bowed the masses of the people like bulrushes before the wind, and now that his star is waning before the rising of One brighter, mightier, and more brilliant than he, still sustained by the grace and power of God, not only meets the temptation, and overcomes the enemy by accepting the place of inferiority, but he finds his joy in the appearance of the One who was putting him in the shade through the outshining majesty of His Person as the Bridegroom. O precious grace, thus seen in John! True still to his confession at the start, when he said he was only a voice—a forerunner,—a preparer of the way of One better than himself. He was content to sink into insignificance, or be extinguished, now that “the light” had come—the Son of God—the Bridegroom. Yet the fact of Jesus being the Bridegroom made the joy of the faithful servant to be complete, for it put him in the place of being His friend. What a victory over Satan!

We see the Lord here not as an autocrat, whose star was in the ascendant, and before whom John *must* bow or break. Hewas the Bridegroom, and John His friend,

of whom He lovingly said: "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. xi. 2). And John was delighted to take the place of inferiority. The Lord pity the servant who thinks himself so important that he cannot fill an inferior position till his gift has made room for him (Proverbs xviii. 16). Such an one has fallen into the snare of the devil, however unconscious of it.

Brethren, let us covet and seek this place and state, which exalts Christ, and puts us in His path when here on earth. The way *up* is *down*! May we ever be but finger-posts, living and loving to say, "Behold the Lamb of God." He *must* increase; blessed be His Name, He *must*. We *must* decrease. May we *get* down, so as not to be *set* down.

(III). The testimony of the evangelist (ver. 31-36). Here we have a most blessed and glorious unfolding of the Person of Christ. Not by the Baptist, however;—he had his place and testimony, and kept and gave it;—but by the Evangelist John, under the power and guidance of the Holy Ghost. Christ came from above—from heaven—and is above all (John iii. 13, 31; Col. i). He spake God's words (ver. 11, 12, 34). Yet He was rejected—is so still. Faith receives Him (ver. 33)—receives the One who has everything in His hands, given Him by the Father, and is the Object of the Father's love (ver. 35). Receiving Him, we possess eternal life; those who reject Him lie under the wrath of God (ver. 36).

What wondrous truths are here set forth! Christ came from above—from heaven—is above all. He has seen, heard, and testifies of heavenly things—speaks—reveals the very heart of God—is the Object of the Father's love—the One in whose hands everything has been placed. Who so worthy of being believed in and trusted as He? Who so calculated to satisfy our hearts as He? May each reader know Him, love Him, serve Him, cleave to Him, follow Him, and be so satisfied with Himself, that tests of whatever kind,

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and in whatsoever way brought to bear upon us to turn us aside, may all fail in their object, and only be the means of manifesting more and more of the perfections of that blessed and worthy One—the Lamb of God—the Son of God—the Object of our adoration and praise.

W. EASTON.

New Zealand.

WEAKNESS.

“My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

“When I am weak, then am I strong.”

2 Cor. xii. 9-10.

WE do not keep our own souls, nor do we build up others, by lamenting over our weakness. But I remark shortly that:—

There is weakness which occupies the mind; the soul is depressed and hindered in the journey; there is not occupation unto the Lord (through His Word and Spirit) and His power, which is above all.

There is weakness seen, however, elsewhere—in other conditions. No self-judgment manifests itself, but hasty passing over the road. No lessons appear to be learned; self in some form occupies, and the soul seems very satisfied!

But there is weakness known in the soul—the fruit of faith. God has spoken; His Word is received, and the child “leans hard” because it *is* weak. The soul proves the might of His power, and goes on, *carried by faith*.

Where are we in these days of giving up the Word of God? Human definitions preferred to “thus saith the Lord.” There is no anchorage ground! But a single line of Scripture preferred to all the thoughts of men, and held in faith, will be enough to keep the soul above the malice and power of Satan. D. S.

A CONFESSION.

IT is with unfeigned sorrow I note the effect of unduly preaching man's need, even while also declaring God's remedy ; yet still, with all that, how solemn the discovery to find selfishness, high-mindedness, and much ignorance of the adorable Person whom, when our God preaches, He declares so fully, leaving our hearts aglow with admiration. As we view the perfection of all He takes in hand, as we contemplate the grace, the love, and power of Him who came into the world to save sinners, marvel is intensified until worship is rendered to One worthy to be adored. It is very gracious of Him to give one to go over a field which has been wrought so imperfectly for Him, humbling to find blemishes that bespeak little fruit for Christ—yet much foliage ; all praise to Him sufficient is found both to deeply humble as well as to heartily encourage us to patiently serve ; for no labour is in vain in the Lord. Just this line to own how short I have come in declaring Him, in preaching the gospel of God that concerns His Son Jesus Christ our Lord ; such preaching results in indifference to Him and His Word. May others who go forth in His Name preach Him and that precious Word which gives the truth as to man's utter ruin while extolling Him, making known His love, and attracting to Him out of a world given up to self-will, covetousness, and which is, as to every good work, void of judgment.

The effect of the apostles' teaching and preaching was that a Person was looked for, longed for, and patiently waited for, and this effect was produced upon a people who were previously dead in trespasses and sins. Is it not now more a creed that is held—His coming again—than a purifying, invigorating hope which has a moral, formative power over us who bear His Name and proclaim His Word ? May our blessed Lord overrule His poor servants' many failures, and prosper His Word and work.

W. B.

THE THEATRE.—"I can go to the theatre whenever I like," said a Christian. "Then why do you not go?" said an enquirer. "Because *I don't like*, for the Lord has changed my taste for all these things, and it would now be no pleasure to me to frequent such places, nor could I do it to the glory of God.

AN OUTLAW having murdered a trooper who was sent to capture him, was taken, tried, and hanged. Before his execution he made a will, leaving all he had to the trooper's widow. But the noble woman refused it absolutely. How could she be a debtor to the bounty of him whose hands were wet with her husband's blood? The world has murdered Christ. It stands, as it were, in the dock, and the Holy Ghost is a witness against it. Are we in collusion with the world, or in the current of the Holy Ghost against it—which? Do witnesses for the prosecution fraternise with or receive favours from the prisoner in the dock? How can Christians seek honours and favours from the world?

FREE WILL.—An acute remark is made by Mr. Illingworth in his Bampton Lectures on the freedom of the human will, which, he contends, is proved by this universal experience, that when men have done wrong they have a sense of remorse; and why should they have remorse if they have not been free agents? Remorse overshadows the heart with sadness, driving its countless victims into madness, suicide, despair, and awful forebodings of judgment to come. Remorse is only a darker name for man's recognition of his own free will.

WHEN WILL Christians awake to the discovery that the fulness of the Spirit of God is the birthright of every believer? When will they understand that God wants us to be living as *this* side Pentecost (Acts ii.), and not as on the *other* side?

THE UNACKNOWLEDGED Spirit of God! Much reflection on the spiritual condition of our "churches" has led us to the conclusion that what we most urgently need is to recover the great doctrine of the personality and mission of the Holy Spirit.—*Methodist Times*.

IT IS EVER God's way to produce a sense of need in the soul, and then to meet it. The one is the *seeking*, and the other the *saving* act of His grace. Joseph's storehouses were full of corn, but the supply was not afforded until the "cry for bread" was heard!

THE LORD'S COMING.—"Not only is it true that the Lord must come some time, but He may come at any time."—*Present Archbishop of Canterbury*.

SOUTH AMERICA has thirty-seven million souls, and less than 400 missionaries. Many look at Rome as "a sister church in error." As a matter of fact, it is absolute heathenism, for which Romanism is almost another name. Every mud hut has its altar, with images and saints. From the Isthmus of Panama to the end of Chili are 4,450 miles open to missionaries, but *where are they?* Out of sixty seaports only five have missionaries. South America is 4,700 miles long by 3,000 wide, with a coast line 18,000 miles long. It forms one-eighth of the land surface of the globe. For nearly 400 years it has been part of the parish of the Pope, but only the fringe of it has been touched by the Gospel! It is divided into fourteen great countries, swarming with priests, but there is low morality, with an utter absence of spirituality, and the people are tired of the domination of the Pope.

BRAZIL.—When Rev. George Chamberlain went there, he found fifteen million people in a nominally papal land who scarcely knew what a Bible was. An old man of eighty, to whom he gave a Testament and explained salvation, said, "Young man, this is what I have long waited to hear. But where, when my father was alive, was your father, that he never came to tell him how to be saved?"—*A. T. P.*

WHAT IS SIN? Lawlessness, or the activity of self-will (1 John iii. 4). "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17). Doing evil wilfully, and having pleasure in them that do it (Rom. i. 32).

ECUADOR, South America. "The Spanish priests," writes Mr. Milne, "make no objection to the Indians practising their heathen rites, so long as they pay for masses and other ecclesiastical lies."

ROME does hold up Christ, it is said. Yes, but *what Christ* does Rome hold up? A figure of a helpless infant in a mother's arms, a figure of a helpless Man hanging dead upon a cross, a wafer in a priest's hand! An unattainable Christ, except as brought by His mother or by a priest within reach; NOT a living, risen, accessible Saviour of men. One man told Mr. Clough that he trusted in the mother of our Lord for salvation. He knew nothing of Christ, except that He was the Son of "Maria Santissima," the ever-blessed Mary!

FAITH.—A young lady teaching geography asked her little pupil, "How do you know the world is round?" "Oh, because I have been told so." "But how do you know you have been told right?" "My aunt Maggie told me, and she always tells the truth." Just so as to what we know of heaven and the way there. *God has told us, and He always tells the truth.*

ARE YOU GOING TO THE MEETING? Where? "*To meet the Lord in the air*" (1 Thess. iv. 17). You *are* invited; of that there is no doubt, for the Gospel reads, "Whosoever will." It will be "a glorious meeting," for not only will *all* the saints be there, and all in good time, but all in glorified bodies like unto their Lord's. There will be beautiful singing, too, and not one discordant note! And the song will be something like this: "Unto Him that loveth us, and has 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." Won't you go to the meeting? Should you *not* be there, should you fail to accept the sweet and loving invitation given you to meet Christ and His saints in the air, you will be *compelled* to go to another meeting; and oh! terrible thought, it is this: you will meet the devil and his angels in the lake of fire. To one of these meetings you *are bound* to go. **WHICH SHALL IT BE?**

"**WHAT CHURCH ARE YOU OF?**" was asked of a dying soldier. "Of the Church of God," he replied. "I mean, of what persuasion are you?" said the visitor. "Persuasion," said the dying man, as his eyes, beaming with love to his Saviour, were directed heavenward, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). Reader, see to it that you are of the same persuasion as the dying soldier.

IN THE GREAT eternity beyond, among the many marvels that will burst upon the soul, this surely will be among the greatest, that the Son of God came to redeem mankind, that certain individuals were chosen out from mankind as first-fruits, that to them was committed the inconceivable honour of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to *all* their fellow creatures still in darkness, and that they *did not do it!*—*Eugene Stock.*

GOD'S OMNISCIENCE.—Some natives of South America, after listening to missionaries, replied, "You say that the God of the Christians knows everything, that nothing is hidden from Him, that He is everywhere, and sees all that is done below. Now we do not desire a God so sharp-sighted. We choose to live with freedom in our woods, without having over our heads a perpetual observer of our actions." In all this they only made manifest that their consciences accused them (Rom. ii. 15).

THE SIN and its excuse (Gen. iii. 6, 12, 13). The first sin is the specimen sin, for all other sins are reproductions of it. Besides this, the first sin is the infectious sin. There is no darker blot than dissembling; as Montaigne saith, it is to be brave towards God and a coward towards man, for a lie faceth God and shrinketh from man!

MELCHIZEDEC.—The human circumstances in which he appears as a type are exalted into symbols of superhuman things. Everything combines to show that he was a Canaanitish king who worshipped the true God, and combined in his own person the offices of priest and king. There is not used regarding him, nor does he use, the title of Jehovah, but that of the High God, a title found also in the question addressed (Mic. vi. 5, 6) by the Moabitish king, Balak, to his prophet Balaam; but Abram, in answering the King of Sodom (probably in his presence), affirms the identity of his covenant-God Jehovah with the High God, possessor of heaven and earth, of whom Melchizedec had spoken.—*Alford.*

ABRAHAM'S CHRONOLOGY.—Ainsworth reckons thus: He enters Canaan and receives the promise B.C. 1921; Isaac mocked by Ishmael, B.C. 1891; Israel departs from Egypt, B.C. 1491. Difference between first and last of these dates, 430 years. Of these, 215 were passed in Canaan and 215 in Egypt.

"A CORN OF WHEAT—if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). In recent years, 12,780 grains have been produced by a single grain of the famous corn of Smyrna. In eight years as much corn might spring from *one* "corn of wheat" as would supply all mankind with bread for *a year and a half!*—*Gaussen.*

THE SEA.—Should the fountains of the great deep be dried up, the blooming surface of the earth would become a barren waste. To the sea we owe the magnificence of our forests, the verdure and beauty of our fields. It is its waters we enjoy in the luscious fruits of our orchards. They circulate in the veins of numberless animals: the bee which offers us its honey, the bird that charms us with its song, the animal on whose flesh we feed and whose services are indispensable to our welfare. Nay, our own blood is originally drawn from the wells of the ocean, and replenished from its sources.—*Hartwig.* From this we may judge what a radical change is implied when God says, "There was no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1).

PEACE is love reposing—love on the green pastures and beside the still waters! It is that great calm which comes over the conscience when the atonement is seen to be sufficient and the Saviour gracious and the Lord God smiling over us!

GOD'S SPEAKING is His willing, and His willing is His doing!—*Bishop Hall.*

THE STARS.—Their multitude may be imagined from this, that Herschel calculated 16,000 stars crossed the field of his telescope in fifteen minutes when it was directed towards one part of the Milky Way.

MAN.—So far as geological evidence goes, we have no trace of man or his works till we arrive at the superficial accumulations. The fair assumption is that man was not called into being until the commencement of the current geological era, and about the time when in the northern hemisphere the sea and land received their present configuration, and were peopled by existing genera and species.—*D. Page.*

ENVY.—The same cause that moved Satan to destroy the first man moved the second to murder the third. There never was an envy that was not bloody; if not in act, yet in essence.—*Bishop Hall.*

GRACE does not run in the blood, but sin does. A sinner begets a sinner, but a saint does not beget a saint.—*M. Henry.*

EVERY MAN is a missionary for good or evil. He may be a blot, radiating his dark influence around, or he may be a luminary, whose blessed influence casts a benediction everywhere; a blank he cannot be.

THE ARK, taking the cubit at 21 inches, was 525 feet long, 87½ broad, and 52½ high. It had a tonnage of about 40,000, and would have carried 20,000 persons, besides stores, &c. for six months. The ark appears to have been as high as Solomon's Temple, five times as long, and twice as wide. What a wonder of mercy! only one poor family saved—eight grains of corn winnowed from a whole barn-full of chaff! The wicked world could not flout Noah out of his faith. Every stroke on the ark was a real sermon, forewarning the shipwrights to flee from the wrath to come; but they did not, and were all buried together in one universal grave of waters.—*Trapp.*

THE WAGES that sin bargains to give the sinner are life, pleasure, and profit; but the wages it pays him are death, torment, and destruction. He that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin must compare its promises and payments together.—*South.* There is more bitterness following sin's ending than sweetness in sin's acting. You who see nothing but *weal* in its commission will find nothing but *woe* in its conclusion. You that sin for profit will never profit by your sins.—*Dyer.*

ABRAM'S JOURNEY.—He left Mesopotamia, and crossed the great river (Euphrates). Hence the Canaanites gave him the name of the Hebrew (the man who had *crossed* the river). Then he passed through the great Syrian desert, and probably tarried at Damascus, since Eliezer, his steward, was a native of that city. Thence he crossed the Jordan, entered the Holy Land, and tarried at the oak, or oaks, rather than *the plain*, of Moreh, in the valley of Shechem, or Sichem, between the two mountains Ebal and Gerizim. Here God appeared to him again, and gave him the *second* promise of the possession of the land by his seed.

“HADDASSAH, THAT IS ESTHER.”

Suffering first, and then glory, mark the due path or history of the saint. This has been illustrated from old time. Joseph, Moses, and David may be remembered in connection with this truth. But it is the *common* history—in a great moral sense, the *necessary* history of those who adhere to God, in a system or world that has departed from Him. For such must ever be stemming a contrary current.

But there is more than this. *The moment of deepest depression has commonly been the eve of deliverance.*

In Egypt, the burthens of the Israelites had grown to their *highest*, just when the Lord was preparing Moses' deliverance for them. In the ministry of the Lord, just as He was bringing redemption, the devil would commonly throw his poor captive in the midst, or cause him to cry out under a still *sorer* affliction. Our own souls are led to the Lord Jesus and salvation by a light which has also discovered to us our *full* moral ruin and degradation—and in the latter day, when Israel's "strength is gone," and "there is none shut up or left," and the enemy is coming in *like a flood*, then the Spirit of the Lord will lift up His standard. "For the hour of preparation for a better order of things is not a time of *favourable* appearances, but the reverse."

All this, however, is happy and encouraging. The bud is bitter the very moment before it opens to the scented flower. So that it is not only sufferings first, and then glory; but sufferings, commonly, in their sorest form, before the glory and salvation break forth.

But there is a truth standing in company with this, yet, as I may say, over against it. I mean *the pride first, and then the overthrow or judgment of the man of the world, and that, too, in the hour of his highest, loftiest arrogance.*

The builders of Babel were in one great confederacy, and the proud design which filled their heart, and which their hand was stretched out to accomplish, was

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nothing less than to raise a tower that was to reach to heaven. But in that hour of *proudest* daring, the Lord comes down in judgment (Gen. xi.). Pharaoh had been raised to be the first man in the world, and in the thought of his greatness, and in the pride of his independency, had forgotten Joseph, and declared that he knew not the God of Israel. But it was *then* that the vials of wrath from the Lord's hand began to be poured out upon him (Exodus v.). Nebuchadnezzar walked in his palace, and admired his magnificence, and said, "is not this great Babylon that *I have builded?*" But the Lord was watching that evil, and while the word of pride and importance was in his mouth, *he that exalted himself was abased* (Dan. iv.). And Herod, after all this, was lauded as a god, and, in a moment, the judgment of God made a spectacle of him (Acts xii.).

These were awful visitations in the hour of such prosperity and mighty pride of heart. Such things are foretold in prophecies, as well as illustrated in histories. The "Lucifer" of Isaiah, the "Prince of Tyrus" of Ezekiel, the "Man of sin" of Paul, and the "Beast" of Revelation, are all prophetic of the doom of a proud one *in the moment of loftiest presumption*.

These serious and interesting truths—the exaltation of the *righteous* in the moment of *deepest depression*, and the abasement of the proud in the hour of their stoutest self-sufficiency—may easily connect themselves with our recollections of the Book of Esther. It closes the volume of the historical books of the Old Testament, and it is of all parts of Scripture the most full and vivid expression of these two great principles; and thus, at the close of the histories, we get, in fit and beautiful season, the most complete illustration of the secret springs of the whole movement.

In the catalogue of those proud ones who meet their doom in their height of pride, I might have mentioned Haman, the Agagite. He was of the genuine seed of Amalek, with whom the Lord had a

controversy for ever, and who of old defied the glory as it began to unfold its brightness in the gloomy desert, in the freshest moments of Israel's history (Ex. xvii.). Prosperity had attended him in a remarkable manner. He had the ear, the hand, and the ring of his master, the Persian (the chiefest monarch upon earth), at his command. And his pride, because of all this, could brook no refusal—and if the servant of God will not worship, all God's people must pay the penalty.

In the day of this Amalekite Esther appears in the scene. She had been a poor captive from the land of Israel, and was now in the land of the Persian—not only, however, in the common sorrow and degradation of her people, but with a grief and affliction that were peculiarly her own. She was an orphan, and in every sense a destitute one, save in the kindness and care of her godly kinsman, Mordecai.

In process of time, without any effort or desire on her part, she becomes the favourite wife of the Persian king. Nay, not only without effort or desire, but after she had, like another Daniel, purposed, though in the court of the Gentile, to preserve her Nazaritism, or separation to God from the customs of the peoples (ii. 15). She will be no debtor to man. She will not, as it were, take from the king of Sodom (Gen. xiv.) beyond the necessary things. It is the Lord (and not ornaments) which gives her favour in the eyes of all who behold her—the king himself is won, and the crown royal is put upon her head. But she is the Jewish handmaiden still, and obedient to Mordecai, as in the day when she was brought up by him in his own house. This was a happy beginning. She began with *herself*—with a full purpose to keep herself pure. And such will be found fit for the Master's use (2 Tim. ii.). Jerusalem might have boasted of such a daughter, though in the palace of Shushan. She might have stood a witness of the prophet's truth, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their

polishing was of sapphire." And when, in further process of time, she heard of the sorrows of her people, like another Moses, or Nehemiah, she forgets all that was her own, the security and honours of the palace, and went forth to look only on their burthens.

This was going on happily. She who had kept herself from defilement was the one to throw herself amid the afflictions of others. She had watched against personal entanglements, and was thus free to serve. She was already girded, and waited only for a call—right condition of every follower of Christ. The only due and suited attitude of one called to the holy honour of serving in God's house. Esther, the queen, now carefully acquaints herself with the state of her people throughout the realm of the king's dominion, and casts herself at once under their burthens.

I have before hinted at the occasion of these burthens of Israel, and it is well known. The haughtiness of the great Agagite, who at this time had the Persian monarch at command, had not brooked the holy refusal of Mordecai, the Jew, to bow down to him; and he had prevailed so far as to get the whole nation of Israel (then scattered captives through the Persian provinces) under sentence of death, which was to be executed upon them, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of that current year. Every Jew, therefore, it may be said, carried the sentence of death in himself—a sentence, too, pronounced by a power which thought it scorn ever to change its decrees (chap. i. 19).*

We might say that this same nation has been, after this manner, wonderful from the beginning and hitherto. The burning, unconsumed bush was their symbol of old, and is their symbol still. They were a people under sentence of death in Egypt, as much as afterwards in Persia, and have been of late cen-

*Persian power affected *two* divine prerogatives—never to change its decrees—never to allow mourning in the royal presence.

turies in Christendom, or all the world over. Did not Pharaoh utter another edict for their destruction? and was not God—who raised the dead, or who can dwell unharmed in a burning bush, or walk in a fiery furnace—their only Helper? and have they not in the times of modern Europe been alike wonderful? This decree of the Persian was but the expression of the common history of this people, scattered, and peeled, and meted out, and trodden down, whose land all the rivers, in the pride of their overflowings, have spoiled.

And as to Mordecai, the distinguished and godly Israelite of his day, the present faithful and lovely branch of the tree of God's planting, he seems to have been a genuine son of Abraham. He believed in Him who could raise the dead. "Abide ye here with the ass," said the Patriarch (Gen. xxii.) to his servants, "and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," though that lad was at that moment under sentence of death. And so Mordecai can surely count on deliverance coming, though the decree for destruction was speeding its way (iv. 14).

The present, therefore, was a moment of Israel's deepest depression. But the Lord had an arrow hidden in His quiver, or the appointed, though as yet unnoticed, stone of help, amid the smoothing, polishing waters of the brook, soon to be ready for the sling.

We have seen Esther beginning well, and going on well. She was in the "school of God." Communion was light and strength from the Lord Himself to her. She had strange and very blessed intimacy with Him; not that I speak of visions, or audiences, or trances, or any thing of that nature; no, nothing of the kind. "In these days there was no open vision." But there was within her reach, what is within the reach of faith in every age, *communion with God*.

She could trust God, like another Shadrach (Dan. iii.). If He pleased, she doubted not that He could deliver her; but whether He pleased it, or not, she had but to do her duty. She could, and would,

venture all in the cause of God. Her soul, like Shadrach and his dear companions, was prepared for any consequences ; "If I perish, I perish," says she. Precious, beauteous workmanship of the hand of God ! fashioned and graven indeed as both a lovely and serviceable vessel of His house !

But, more than this, Esther may be observed to stand in very near fellowship with the mind of God. She seems as though she had observed the divine method with these proud adversaries. For she takes God's own way, exactly, with wicked Haman. She is not in haste. She lays her plans to let the heart of that Amalekite fill itself to the brim with pride, that he might fall, according to the divine way, in the moment of his most towering presumption.

She has "the golden sceptre" on her side, and with it the king's promise to give her whatever she might ask, even to the half of his kingdom. But she is patient. She bids the king and Haman to her banquet of wine. They come—and again the half of the kingdom is put within her grasp. But she is still patient, and bids them a second time. Is this, I ask, mere patience ? Is this mere calmness and self-possession, or nothing more (however excellent that would be) than the contradiction of the heat and impatience of the wicked ? Is this merely virtue and a well-regulated heart, as opposed to the passionate way of an Herodias when in possession of the same offer ? (Mark vi. 23). It may have been all this, but it was more. It was the way of one who *knew and imitated God's way in like cases*. The Lord—in possession as He is of all power—is patient, and even for 400 years can bear with an Amorite, till the measure of his sin be filled up (Gen. xv. 13-16). So here, the one who had learnt from Him, the one who had been in the school of communion, can, though in possession of the resources of a kingdom, be patient also, and let the "man of the earth" go on to the full measure of his sin. She bids Haman and the king a

second time to her banquet. And Haman that day went forth joyful, and with a glad heart. He called his wife and his friends, and rehearsed all his greatness and prosperity to them ; telling them, moreover, as the very climax of his haughty thoughts and self-complacency, how queen Esther had, again, invited him and the king alone to her banquet of wine on the morrow. This is much to be observed. I need not say how all this loftiness of man was brought down in a moment. The story is known well among us. The day of the Lord was signally upon it all.

History has been said to be "the narrative of the prevalence, by turns, of the several counteractive powers that sway the world ; and ordinarily it happens that at the very moment when a certain power, as with a flourish of trumpets, is proclaiming its triumph, it does, in that blast of pride, announce the appearance of its rival. Despotisms have, on many signal occasions, thus boasted, and thus fallen, in one and the same day." How true is this in *God's* histories, which a thoughtful, reflective mind thus discovers in the general course of the world's affairs ! And how have we found it so in this history of Haman !

Nor need I say how Esther and Esther's people were delivered in the moment of deepest depression ; and how the controversy between hope and fear ended in the most glorious and wonderful triumph of hope. The Jews had the sentence of death in themselves, but there is One who raiseth the dead, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning. "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day" (chap. viii. 16, 17). The month was turned, to them, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day. Esther was queen ; and as for Mordecai, he was "next unto king Ahasuerus, great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the

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wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

This I need not more exactly notice. But how profitable is it to watch the spirit and the path of this dear and honoured woman! Her care to preserve herself pure—her deep sympathies with her brethren—her trust in the Lord, with decision of soul to do His will at all hazard! How full and instructive an example does all this set before us. And yet *circumstances*, as we speak, were much opposed to her. She was, I may say, "of Cæsar's household:" a condition in life which must have cost a true Israelite, a real decided Nazarite, much watchfulness of spirit and self-mortifying. But her walk with the Lord was so close and so genuine, that she appears to have reached some of the deepest secrets of His mind, acting on the great adversary, as I was noticing, precisely in God's own way—nay, in very near fellowship with Him; for we see that as soon as her plan had ripened the pride of the heart of Haman, that moment the Lord began to act upon him, and prepare the instruments of his destruction. For it was the very night which intervened between the two days of queen Esther's feasts, that the Lord sent that dream into the heart of Ahasuerus, which leads to the humbling of the haughty Amalekite (chap. vi.).

Let none say, then, that their *circumstances* are against them. Her's were eminently so. But decision of heart and singleness of eye kept her soul in communion with that strength, which is ever triumphant.

This was a time of crisis. There have been others like it in the progress of the government of the world—a time when the Master of the house rose up to shut to the door, or to discern between the righteous and the wicked. And in this crisis, in the days of Haman and Esther, as I observed, the great principles of God were expressed with peculiar decision—the *exaltation of the righteous in the moment of deepest depression, and the humbling of the mighty in the hour of their proudest thoughts*—characteristics, as I have also said, which

are given with striking and seasonable fitness to this little book, which closes Old Testament history.

But the subject addresses itself to *us*. There is to be another crisis in the earth's history, fearful and far extended beyond all. Every previous crisis will have been but a rehearsal and a shadow of it! Deep and deadly *security*, like that in which the generation of Noah was folded, who "knew not" in the midst of their marriage feasts, and buying and selling speculations, till the flood came, will be one feature of that day. *Prosperity* and its companion, *pride*, will give form to that day also. And I ask, Is not the mystery of such a day now working? Are not things taking a strong direction that way? If one may speak for another, the heart is conscious that the world is *prospering*. Are not the accommodations and embellishments of human life increasing to a wonder? Is not this generation very loudly congratulating itself on what it has attained, silently pitying those who spent their days before present advantages were known, and boasting in expectation of refining and multiplying the resources of every future hour?

I believe these things are so, and that the heart is conscious of it. *The world is prospering*—and we know not how soon it may be, that if any one refuse to help forward the common self-satisfaction, he must be treated as a common enemy. And what a mistake we may judge it to be, to think "that the suavity, the tolerance, the blind indifference, and the enlightened liberality which now are the garb of the infidel spirit, belong to it by nature, or would be retained a day after it had nothing to fear." The sentence of death has not gone yet from the wounded pride of the Amalekite against the whole nation of the godly. No, it has not worked to that. The day will not come yet, but the mystery of it is abroad. The pride itself has begun to labour in the heart—the throes and energies of that passion, which is to be the parent of such a decree, may, even now, be moving secretly, and be felt, and welcomed, and nourished.

Where is strength to be gathered? If pride and intolerance be nourished in some hearts, is *faith* in ours? Esther may read us a lesson upon *victory in an evil day*. She stood in such a day, and stood more than conqueror. Before it came she had kept herself, and refused to defile her garments. She had been in "the school of God," and learnt the way of strength and victory there, in communion with Himself, when circumstances were all against her.

And let me add that this communion is to be *simple* and *affectionate*; not such as will feed itself with high thoughts and strange thoughts, but such as will find *Christ in the sureness and perfectness of His work for sinners, the great thought, the precious thought, the animating, invigorating, though simple truth, that tells upon the heart with divine and wondrous virtue*. There is danger of this ceasing to give character to an age like the present, where there is a vast and varied quantity of qualifications and arguments, rather than fervour and simplicity of spirit—where, as the natural result of intellectual and religious progress, "the glory of Christ, as Saviour of man, which should be always as the sun in the heavens, shines only with an *astral* lustre." But—times of difficulty demand simple, nutritious, strengthening truth—"a different order of things around us would, presently, bring into play the more powerful elements of the moral life. Events may be imagined which would mar our levity, and break up the polished surface that reflects our ease, and lead us home to the first principles of the gospel, and quite sicken our taste for everything but those principles; and it is under such an impression that the *gospel* (simple, plain truth of God's grace and salvation) will assume its just dimensions in our sight, and the glad tidings of mercy be listened to with a new and genuine joy."

True, and also seasonable in this day of many a busy speculation, are these meditations. And most seasonable are the words of the blessed Lord Himself to His disciples, in the day that He began to talk to

them of their coming troubles. “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. xvi. 26). Here is truth for the strengthening of the heart against the day of evil. For those words speak the excellency and the value of the glories which are to follow the day of evil. Our Lord uses the language of the merchant. He speaks of profit, and loss, and exchange. He contemplates a bargain—and, for the comfort of the believer, He decides *that* a bad bargain that man would make who would take the whole world (supposing that he could get it), in exchange for a share in the glory that is to be revealed. He is not (though this is the general apprehension) in this passage, so much settling the question of *personal safety* as of *profit and loss*.

And we all know the power of bright and sure expectations, though they may be still distant. Man will toil through dangers, weariness, and mortification to reach such. And the Lord here witnesses to us the sureness and the brightness of our expectations—affirming His word, shortly after, by unveiling for a moment, on the holy hill, the very region of these promised glories. And if we believe His competency to handle these weights and measures, and to try comparative value—and, then, if we believe His truth in giving the result of such trial, or the judgment—our hearts will be further fortified for “every trying hour.”

Peter, as it were, unconsciously vindicated the Lord’s verdict on the value of the glory, when he said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” O, can we look to Him, and say, “Thou shalt choose our inheritance for us”?—*Anon.*

PRAYER is prayer, let it come from the weak or from the strong. It is not the heart or lips from which it comes so much as the ear that it goes to which is the **great thing**.

EPHESIANS I.

IT has been well observed that we shall never be the people we ought to be until we have learnt what a people we are. By the epistle to the Ephesians the Holy Ghost teaches us *what a people we are!*

It is interesting and instructive to note, first, that directly the Apostle has given the superscription in verse 1, and the benediction in verse 2, his over-charged heart finds its relief *in worship* (verse 3). It reminds us, in this respect, of his second epistle to the Corinthians, and of Peter's first epistle, as well as of Rev. i. 5, "Unto Him that loveth us," &c. Impressed with the magnitude of the blessing of which he was about to write, he could not but break forth, under the operation of the Holy Ghost, in an ascription of worship to Him who was the source and the spring of that of which his heart was so full; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us note here the two distinct titles used. How much is suggested to our faith in this term, *the God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is what God *became* to Him who became Man in this world. It is not what He was to Him in eternity or ever the world was, nor is it what He was to Him during the successive dispensations of the Old Testament period, but what He became to His Eternal Son in connection with His redemption work as Son of Man, and, therefore, is fragrant with the grace that was displayed in His humiliation and obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; for not until the cross, if I mistake not, did the Lord Jesus say, "My God, My God."

And then how sweetly is the next title combined with it, the "*Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ," carrying along our spiritual affections in the current which flows from that precious relationship of children. For these things are not written to us as abstract truths, that may, or may not, have a bearing upon us. If He be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is that *for us*, and if the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is

that *unto us*. We are not outsiders, viewing Him at an immeasurable distance, but have been brought *unto God*, and, with the Psalmist, can say, "This God is our God." If, following the rule of Scripture, we may not say, He is "my Father" (words reserved for Christ Himself to use), we rejoice that something more even than this, and something sweeter, is found in the term we are now considering, the "*Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul could say, "My God" (Phil. iv. 19); the Lord alone said, "My Father." But He did say, "My Father and your Father:—My God and your God;" and, through mercy, we know Him both as the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These titles differentiate the contents of the epistle. In verse 4 we have eternal counsels answering to *the God*, and in verse 5 relationship answering to *the Father*, of our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter i. the prayer, being in relation to the divine power put forth in the Lord's resurrection and ascension, is, therefore, addressed to *the God*, while in chap. iii. the prayer, being in relation to every family in heaven and earth and to the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, it is addressed to *the Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In v. 20, we are to give "thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and in vi. 23, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Each of these expressions has its own fitting and ordered place, suitable to the truth in which it is imbedded. Observe, too, that the strains of worship noted at the beginning of the epistle proceed from what God is primarily, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and, secondarily, from what He *has done*, "blessed us," "chosen us," "predestinated us," &c. This, I believe, is ever the case.

To return. In i. 3 we have the Spirit of God signifying not simply that *we have*, but that we are *blessed with*, all spiritual blessings. Let us arrest ourselves there for a moment. Let us ask ourselves, Can it *be true*? It must be, for God has said it.

This leads to a more personal question, Do I *believe* it, and do you? Have our hearts bowed before the immensity of the fact which meets us at the very threshold of this magnificent epistle, that God, even the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has from all eternity chosen out of this world a people for the present and eternal glory of His Son, and has already, even now, blessed them, not only by saving them, but by bestowing *every* spiritual blessing upon them. How often there creeps over the soul the lethargic consideration—I am saved, and thus secure of heaven, and shall, by-and-by, enter upon a goodly inheritance, but my chief blessing at present is that I'm saved from hell and sure of heaven! Beloved saint of God, such a thought is dishonouring to Him who has apprehended us for glory together with Christ. Has He not said, "Whether . . . things present or things to come ; all *are* yours ; and ye *are* Christ's ; and Christ *is* God's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23)? Be assured that things present and things to come belong even now to those who are Christ's. If we *are* Christ's, they *are* ours. With them we are already enriched and endowed, and not merely so, we are blessed with them. By this I understand, not title, but actual possession and enjoyment ; not an estate held in abeyance for the rents to accumulate, but one held for present profit and use. Nothing, in this regard, could be more suitable, or more pleasing, to God than that we should, as His beneficiaries, take the benefits and advantages He has blessed us with. It may be something to be a claimant, and something more to be an heir-apparent, but we are much beyond both—we are heirs together with Christ, "joint heirs," and where is He? At God's right hand in the heavenlies, the place we are to occupy eternally, and it is *there* we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. *He* has actually gone there, is Himself in the heavenlies, surrounded with all the light and the glory of that transcendent scene, and we are there in Him. Could anything exceed "all spiritual blessings;" could any-

thing surpass "in the heavenlies;" could anything transcend "in Christ"?

But this has its distinctly practical side. It presupposes a condition of soul which receives with avidity what comes from God, and is able to appreciate *spiritual* blessings. Unto this end we must, as to the normal attitude and experience of our souls, be "in the heavenlies." It is there, and there only, this wonderful range and compass of blessing is to be found and enjoyed, and it is *in Him*—Christ—not a bit of it being ministered to us apart from Him. In few words, then, it is spiritual, it is heavenly, it is in Christ.

This last connects itself with verse 4, for it is in Him, also, that we were chosen. In the counsels of God from eternity each of us had his place before creation, and apart from every question of responsibility, and its breach, and its penalty. In His eternal purpose for the glory of His Son, as Son of Man, we were through grace embraced. Upon us as individuals, not corporately, or as part of a given number, but upon each of us, personally foreknown of Him, His sovereign choice had fallen "before the foundation of the world." How marvellous, and, we may say, how uncalled-for this grace!

But if thus embraced in His gracious counsels, it is that we may "be holy and without blame before Him in 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, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." His supreme delight, we well know, is in the Son of His love; to Him all His counsels relate, and if they embrace us within their scope, as also we are objects of the good pleasure of His will, this involves our being conformed to His image, "holy and without blame," *blemishless* and *blameless*, even as He pre-eminently is. Nor this only, but brought into the same relationship, adopted into God's family, constituted His children, and, as one might say, in the most emphatic way, blessed,

for it is "by Jesus Christ," and, moreover, "to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." How the Holy Ghost seeks, in all this, to rivet upon our hearts the singular blessings to which we are called ! Only contrast it with the blessing of even the most distinguished saints of the dispensation which had but shortly closed, and we may well find occasion to join with the Apostle in the worship he expresses, and which, I apprehend, continues to well-forth from his soul down to the close of verse 14.

Returning to verse 6, observe the words, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." *Why to the praise,* but because the making us acceptable before God in the Beloved is the very highest display of His grace towards us ? Let it be remarked that it is no judicial question that is here raised or answered ; it is no forensic term that is employed. We are seen to be before God according to the quality of His grace unto us in Christ Jesus, that is, even as He is, holy and without blame, children unto Himself, and graced in all the beauty of the Beloved ! Adore Him, then, my soul ; yea, more and more, because of His wondrous grace unto us !

There follows (verse 7) what we have in, and together with, the Beloved : "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which" (more correct rendering) "He has caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence ; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself : for the administration" (best reading) "of the fulness of times, viz., to head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in Him" (verse 10). Thankfully we own the value of His redemptive work, the forgiveness of our sins, and the aboundings of His grace toward us ; but onward very far beyond this are we carried, in the declaration that He has made known to us the mystery of His will, that, in the

fulness of times, according to His good pleasure and His eternal purpose, He will manifest the Son of Man, who is the Son of His love, in universal Headship, the all things of heaven and earth being headed up in Him, "even in Him." I need not say how far, how very far, this is, not, indeed, *above*, but *beyond* the Headship of His body—the Church! Let the eye of faith not only range over every family in the heavens and on earth (iii. 15), but over every created thing, whether there or here; all, even all, is to be brought under His supreme rule and authority, according to the mystery of God's eternal will. Herein is seen, then, in what His eternal purpose consists. In the next verse (11) is another element of our blessing, "In whom also (Christ) we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ: "in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory" (verse 14). In this we have divine title to our inheritance, according to divine purpose; thus, as it were, it is sealed unto us, and we, by receiving the Holy Ghost, are sealed unto it; and, moreover, in receiving Him we receive a divine and divinely-given earnest of the inheritance itself. Everything here, all may see, is of the plenitude of divine grace, unconditionally and irreversibly bestowed, to the praise of the glory of that grace, as we ourselves are to the praise of His own glory. My soul, yet more and more adore His matchless grace!

The concluding portion of the chapter (verses 15-23) shows us the place these Ephesian saints occupied in the Apostle's affections. They were in their first love (Rev. ii. 4), and their elders had wept

sore when he had last seen them (Acts xx. 37), and had fallen on his neck and kissed him! He ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers. What were his desires for them? Just the desires of the Lord Jesus for you and for me, beloved brethren; that the Father of glory may give unto us "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of our heart being enlightened;" that we "may know what is the hope of His calling—the riches of the glory—the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe—the might of His power" (margin) "which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies" (where we are already in Him, beloved), "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world" (or age), "but in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Who can fail to see how the Spirit of God seems here to exult in the resurrection and ascension, the exaltation and the glory of Christ, culminating in the Headship of His body, the Church. Let the reader prayerfully meditate on this rich and precious portion, nor fail to note how our own part in it is recognised in the words, "to us-ward who believe," the power that raised up and exalted Christ being held in abeyance to be put forth ere long towards every member of His body.

Finally, if I have made good my thesis that the Spirit of God shows us here, through the operations of divine grace *in time*, what *we are*, according to divine counsels *in eternity*, may I be permitted now to add that, as everywhere else and to the refreshment of our hearts, the same Spirit fails not to occupy us more largely and more blessedly with His own higher theme—the praise and the glory of Christ Himself? May our hearts open to this as the flower to the morning sun!

PORTERS IN THE LORD'S HOUSE.

1 Chron. ix. 17-34.

"IF any man desire oversight, he desireth a good work" (1 Tim. iii. 1). Work and not office is the thought, and most assuredly any who have ever been called of God to such a service have realised that it is no light matter to bear a burden of such responsibility.

But the very fact of the responsibility attaching to such service only emphasises its importance. And may we not well ask ourselves at the outset whether that oversight to which God attaches so much importance has the same value in our eyes? Or are we, in the democracy of the age, learning to despise any effort at godly care? The Lord graciously awaken all His beloved people to the fact that we *are* our brothers' keepers, and that He *has* intrusted some of His servants with the gift of oversight!

The porter, or gate-keeper, answered to the overseer in the New Testament. It was a position of dignity, and, in connection with the city government, was usually in the hands of old and grave men. The duties of the porter were to open and to close the gates morning and evening, and to see that none entered but those who were clean, and thus ready to come into God's holy presence. It will be seen that their position was no easy one rightly to fill, but one in which they needed all the grace and guidance of God on the one hand, and on the other the love, prayers, and submission (in the Lord) of their brethren.

There are three main points of interest in connection with the porters and their duties: first, they were Levites; secondly, they were under priestly control and guidance; and, thirdly, they were subject to the word of God—not to their own inclinations or prejudices.

The Levites were given to Aaron, the high priest, and his sons to minister about the holy things, to

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prepare and assist in their priestly functions (Numb. iii. 5-13). Work characterised them, as worship did the priests. They fittingly represent that service to which all in the Church are called—service of one kind or another. And as out of these Levites some were called to be porters or doorkeepers, so some of God's people are called to the special service of *care-takers*. Theirs it is to exercise in a spiritual way just the same care as to who is to be received, as of old the porters did as to who could enter the courts of the Lord's house.

If it be asked how we are to know them, and how they are to know they have been called, our answer is, Scripture gives us the qualifications for a man who desires oversight, and we are to recognise him by those qualifications; and the Spirit of God lays the service upon his heart and shows him the work he has to do. Let it not for a moment be thought that we are asking for anything like official ministry—we are simply claiming for the blessed Spirit of God the right to use in the Church those whom He has qualified and called for this special service. It is a gift—a gift to Christ for the service of His beloved people.

But, secondly, those Levite porters were to be under the direction of the Priest. This means, of course, first of all, that the Lord's servants must be subject to Himself. He is the only Lord and Master, and all are His servants. Higher honour there cannot be. Unless they are subject to Christ, they will not do His bidding, neither will they carry out His will. But this means they must be in communion with Christ; their own souls must be in a right state. If this be not the case, if the Levites are not subject to the Priest, there will be failure in one of two directions: they will be too easy and indifferent to the Lord's honour, and allow to enter those whom He would exclude; or, on the other hand, refuse those whom He would make welcome. Well may we pause and ask, who but one in communion with the Lord is

competent for such work? Let us not be misunderstood as saying that the doorkeepers *decide* as to who shall be received; that rests finally with all the saints; but the care and the work are with those whom the Lord calls.

We cannot emphasise too strongly this priestly side of the matter of reception and exclusion. An anointed eye is needed to detect leprosy, or its absence; and even where there may not be any out-breaking sin, there may be good and true reasons why some should be refused. If the soul be in communion with Christ, all this will be plain, when, alas! to the carnal mind there is nothing by which to judge. Eli is a picture of this; carnally indulgent to his sons, he would yet rebuke a true-hearted pleader at the throne of grace. It is in communion alone that we can see aright; and if communion be lacking, all else is *worthless*. Whenever times of difficulty come upon us, calling for this oversight, let us see to it that we are consciously in the presence of the Lord. Let the loose or hasty word be checked; let the worldly-minded judge themselves. It is no trifle, beloved brethren, to be engaged in such holy and solemn work.

It is instructive and significant that the Priest who had especial care over the porters was Phinehas—he who, in the days of Israel's sin at Beth-peor, stood forth in all firmness and executed judgment upon the wrong-doers. His very name is significant—"Mouth of brass"—the words of his mouth inflexible. Such is the character of our Lord as High Priest. If He has a heart to sympathise with His weak and erring people, His sympathy has nothing of weakness in it. Because He is our High Priest, and has made a perfect atonement for us, this insures judgment upon our ways, and the severest chastening when it is needed.

Let it be repeated, it is under subjection to our Priest and Lord in this Phinehas character—this

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inflexible firmness in judging evil—that any can be really porters, care-takers, in the House of God. Significantly does the Scripture add, of Phinehas, “and the Lord was with him.” Firmness, then, and sympathy are the controlling thoughts in oversight.

But, in the last place, the porters had a guide. In no case were they left to their own thoughts, feelings, or prejudices as to whom they would receive. Of Levi, again, it is said, “Who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant” (Deut. xxxiii. 9). No question as to family ties, love, or friendship can enter here. It must be simple firmness for the Lord; and this a firmness that has been already shown within the limits of one's own household—“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?). *Not a novice*” (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5). “Having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly” (Tit. i. 6). Here we see that the firmness has been in exercise in a circle where too often, alas! love degenerates into weakness.

But to return: they have an infallible guide. They might err in their opinion of a person, and in their feelings towards him; but if they go according to the word of God, they cannot go amiss. For instance, in the case of one suspected of leprosy, the directions for its detection were laid down so simply that there need be no mistake; and if the matter was not clear, the person was set aside until his true condition was manifest.

Beloved brethren! suffer a word of exhortation. Ye who have the care of the Lord's lambs and sheep laid upon you—as you think of the immense responsibilities intrusted to you, and of the qualifications for that care, do you not feel like saying, “Who am I?” Is there any thought of self-satisfaction, or self-

LETTER OF INTEREST.

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sufficiency? Nay, do you not feel, rather, like falling upon your faces, owning your own personal failure, and entreating the Lord's grace and guidance?

And we, beloved brethren, to whom, perhaps, the Lord has not intrusted in so direct a way the care of His people—have not we a work to do? Have we strengthened the hands of those who were seeking, in confessed weakness, and with many shortcomings, to serve Christ and His Church? Have we, by prayer, and in love, sought to uphold them? or have we, by our criticisms, our harsh judgments, our hastily-formed opinions, and, above all, our total disregard of their service, and of subjection one to another in the Lord, only weakened the little vestige of godly oversight there was left—only caused the feeble flicker of the lamp of testimony to burn more dimly?

If such be not the case, we need not shrink from the question; but if in any degree we have failed, let us all get low before our God, humbling ourselves under His mighty hand, and He WILL lift us up.—*Help and Food.*

 LETTER OF INTEREST.

THE TWO HEADSHIPS.

I DON'T think any one can be clear on the structure of the epistle who does not see very distinctly the difference between the two Headships of Christ—the one connected with resurrection (that of the race), and the other with ascension (that of the body).

There are two races only—that of the first Adam and that of the Last. The first, of course, embraces all who have human or natural life; the last, all who have divine or supernatural life. This latter the Old Testament saints undoubtedly had in common with us; for, although they had not conscious, enjoyed forgiveness, nor the Holy Ghost in person, they had

the life, and was *eternal*, though not displayed as such until aftr the Cross. It was the same divine life as we ha' (indeed, there is no other), with this difference, thawe have it "abundantly," which I take to mean in thnew, resurrection character and power of John xx.2. Christ is there, the risen Man, beyond the Coss, and can thus bring eternal life into display (2 Ti. i. 10). He is Head of the new creation, and, such, imparted the Holy Ghost, not in person then, lt in power, the power of that life which He, the risen Man, is, and which all have possessed, do possess, will possess, whom new creation embraces, and it embraces all who do not eternally perish with thold creation. Thus, "As in Adam all die, so in Clist shall all be made alive" is clear enough. Agn, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are hrist's at His coming." To me it is clear that "in'hrist" and "Christ's" are interchangeable or conveyable terms—(for proof see Gal. iii. 28, 29, 1 Cor. xv. 22,3)—and no one reading 1 Thess. iv. 16 and 1 Cor. xv.22 can doubt that these terms cover the Old Testment saints. They have the life, they are of the rac and will, therefore, get a place in the new creation when it is manifested. For there are but two—whher lives, or races, or creations—that Scripture dea with, and, in common with ourselves, the Old Testaent saints come into those which for the children God by faith (I do not say "sons") supersede the which pertained to the children of Adam. The Holy Ghost wrought with them and wrought in tm, and, little as they could know it, they had a fe which was Christ; and thus when He comes H will put in His claim for them as "Christ's," ar, by answering to His voice at the resurrection, ty will make manifest that they are then "in Him who, as last Adam, was the beginning of the creatn of God! And, I doubt not, the millenial sain in their way and in their day will share in the sne thing; but as new creation is not

perfected for us until we get our resurrection bodies, so for them also. There will also be sin in that scene and failure, so that it will not be at the beginning nor in the course of the millenium that new creation will find its full and worthy display, for the new heavens and new earth of that era are not the new heavens and new earth for eternity.

My last article was to make clear the distinction between justification and new creation, and to show that introductory to the latter is headship of race brought in ; and though you have not new creation in Romans, you have there that which is essential to it, and must needs come first in order, viz., the Head, "Him that was to come," and then collaterally the life, and the race, and the term "in Christ" expressive of new creation state. Thus the elements are there, though the doctrine is not polemically set forth. I connect then the being "in Christ" with Him as the *firstfruits*. Now this He was not in ascension glory, but in resurrection power, the Head of a new race which is inaugurated by His giving life abundantly (John xx. 22).

But in ascension glory, the same power which raised Him from the dead having set Him at God's right hand (Ephesian i. 19-23), He is Head of His body, the Church, and to this *union* is essential for us, not life only, and "in Christ" is not union, and therefore a further and a greater thing—the Holy Ghost must be given, not as for the former in power only, but in person, His own divine presence in the believer, and thus we get also the *Holy Ghost abundantly* (Titus iii. 6).

These distinctions clearly before the mind, you will find that subsidiary questions are easily disposed of. For instance, if it be asked through which of these two things are we set in heavenly places, I answer through both. I am there because as of the new creation I am "*in Christ*" seated where He is, and because in the membership of His body I am *united* to Him who is there as its Head.

1884.

W. R.

SERVICE IS A FAVOUR granted us ; seek the Lord's face and lean on Him. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace ; then go forth and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary often in body, but sustained and happy ; one rests beneath God's wings, and takes up the service again until the true rest comes. May communion with God be your chief concern, and the sweet relationships in which we are placed with Him. All is well when we walk in them. Yes, seek above all personal communion with the Lord.

LET GOD be everything, even in plain, common life. Be not like one slipping and recovering, slipping and recovering, as Christians often are, but advancing quietly and steadily ; increasing in separation to God, having "fruit unto holiness."

NAZARITESHIP.—The Lord Jesus was the true Joseph—a Nazarite, but without the *signs* of earthly Nazariteship, because He was Himself the reality of this type, and this strikingly proclaimed the ruin of the people. At the end of His course the Lord entered upon a second and *heavenly* phase of His Nazariteship. He sanctified Himself in heaven for His disciples, the true Nazarite, separated from sinners, and seated at the right hand of God, leaving His own here below to represent His Nazariteship. This brings in three things. (1) He denies himself wine, or what we may term *sociability* ; he cannot make friends with the world. (2) He lets his hair grow, or accepts the token of *dependence* and *dishonour* (1 Cor. xi.). He abandons his dignity and personal rights. (3) "He shall come at no dead body." Death is the fixed proof of sin ; the Nazarite must keep himself from all sin, from all defilement. Unreserved devotedness to Christ is the foundation of Christian Nazariteship.

"THOU GOD SEEST ME."—The simple consciousness that God sees us never goes beyond the knowledge that He is a Judge, or, at most, a Guardian to protect in difficulty and danger. Love, liberty, rest, joy in God are never known through the bare truth that God sees us. Believers do know this, but are entitled to the further and more blessed privilege of seeing God, of "seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews xi. 27). It is the contrast between Hagar and Moses. The Christian is brought in peace, by the grace of God, *unto God*, and he endures, not because God sees him, but because he sees God, Him who is invisible. He endures, he knows God in Christ. He has rest in His presence. And so it is all the way through. The new life is fed, nourished, and strengthened by faith, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." The Lord strengthen our faith.

THE WORLD goes on with its religion and its philanthropy. It does good, builds its hospitals, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and the like ; but its inward springs of action are not Christ's, nor unto Christ. Every motive that governed Him all the way along is wanting in men of the world, and the motives which keep the world agoing were not found at all in Him.

Not wanderers, but pilgrims here, for home we have in view,	} OUR GOAL.
And soon we shall be with the One who Holy is and True !	
And by His grace and with Himself, in His blest likeness too,	} HIS PURPOSE
Blameless shall each redeemed one stand ; this is His end in view.	
This purpose He has made us know, that we the journey through,	} OUR AIM.
Finding from Him all needed grace, His holy will may do.	

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