

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE

SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

---

---

VOL. III

---

---

LONDON

ALFRED HOLNESS, 14 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1914



# INDEX

---

	PAGE
A Letter to a Young Christian - - - - -	3
A Pilgrim's Song (Poetry) - - - - -	160
A Word on Christian Worship - - - - -	1
Armageddon - - - - -	219
"Be Strong" - - - - -	81
Brief Summary of Future Prophetic Events - - - - -	198
Christ Our Advocate - - - - -	104
David and Jonathan - - - - -	120
Divine Love (Poetry) - - - - -	220
Eternal Life - - - - -	215
Fragments - - - - -	36, 60, 100, 103, 159, 180, 235
Grace - - - - -	11
"Him that Loveth us" - - - - -	121
"Impossible" - - - - -	225
"Little Children" - - - - -	6, 26, 44
Notes and Gleanings - - - - -	18, 42, 62, 82, 102, 123, 202, 222
Peace - - - - -	61
Questions and Answers - - - - -	59, 118, 138
Reconciled and Saved - - - - -	205
Short Notes on Second Timothy - - - - -	13, 37, 56, 78, 95, 113, 135
"Sow Beside all Waters" - - - - -	101
<i>The Bible—A Personal Testimony</i> - - - - -	23
The Blind Man at Bethsaida - - - - -	193
The Church of God, etc. - - - - -	50, 68, 90, 130, 143, 173, 182
The Crisis in Europe - - - - -	161, 181
The Days of Scripture - - - - -	74
The Gospel of God - - - - -	163

The Last Words of Peter	-	-	-	-	-	32
The Power of the Cross	-	-	-	-	-	63
The Present Crisis and Prayer	-	-	-	-	-	221
The Sympathy of Christ	-	-	-	-	-	201
The Three Rests	-	-	-	-	-	41
The Title "Jesus"	-	-	-	-	-	197
The Title "Son of Man"	-	-	-	-	-	233
The Two Resurrections	-	-	-	-	-	176
The Universal Fatherhood of God	-	-	-	-	-	155
The Voyage of Life (Poetry)	-	-	-	-	-	119
"Thou Art the Same"	-	-	-	-	-	1
True Sayings	-	-	-	-	-	55
Unbelief	-	-	83, 108, 124, 149, 166, 187, 208,	-	-	227
"Watchman, What of the Night?"	-	-	-	-	-	141

## “Thou Art the Same.”

THE beginning of another year reminds us that time is quickly running its course. Change and decay is written upon everything beneath the sun; but we can look up and say, “Thou art the same.” This word, “the Same,” which occurs twice in the epistle to the Hebrews, may be taken as a title of Christ. We find it both in the Old and New Testaments; for example, Psalms cii. 27 (quoted in Heb. i. 12); Deuteronomy xxxii. 39; 2 Samuel vii. 28; Nehemiah ix. 6; Isaiah, ix. 6, etc. (new translation). In contrast with everything else, He never changes. The earth and the heavens shall pass and perish, yea all of them shall wax old as a garment and shall be changed as a vesture; but (blessed truth) “Thou art the same.” When all created things have passed away, then He who created all remains, the unchanging One.

And the same character of change and transition applies, not only to creation, but to all the rituals and ordinances connected with the old dispensation. The whole Jewish economy, with its “gifts and sacrifices . . . meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation,” though established by God Himself, must give place to Him who is the antitype of all the types, and who abides for ever the unchangeable, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

The history of the Church, too, from Pentecost onward, has been one of change and failure as a witness for Christ in the world. The characteristics of Laodicea are to be seen around us, only more and more apparent as the present dispensation draws to a close. But Christ is, in His own person, the “Amen, the faithful and true

witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Head of the Church in resurrection, beginning of that new creation from which the Church ought to have taken its character, He is, Himself, all that the Church ought to have been; but, alas, which it was not. He is the faithful and true Witness. Christ never fails, and He will surely make good all the promises as well as the purposes and counsels of God.

What a stay this is to the soul that trusts in Him! We know full well that failure has marked everything entrusted to the responsibility of man; but there is One who never fails. His saving grace and His keeping power are the same now as ever. His ability to maintain the soul amidst all the adverse circumstances and difficulties of our path is unchanged. We can, therefore, face the future, in dependence on Him, with the fullest confidence.

And then, let us ever remember that His coming as the bright and morning star should be more and more real, more precious to the heart, as each day goes by. Has the lapse of time in any wise weakened or changed Christ's love to His Church? Certainly not. The moment for which we wait is that moment for which He also waits. The present is the time of the "patience of Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 5; Rev. i. 9, R.V.), but it is fast drawing to a close. When that moment arrives He will, in obedience to the Father's will, rise from the throne on which He sits, descend from heaven, and give utterance to that assembling "shout," the blessed expression of all His love for His Church, so long delayed in its full fruition. *Then* all His saints will rise to meet Him in the air, each one clothed in a body like His own.

Oh, to enter the new year with this hope burning brightly in our souls! Not held as a dry theory in

the intellect, but known as a living reality in the heart, and producing its powerful and practical effect in the life. How it would shed its bright and gladsome beams into the souls of those who really feel His absence here! How it would detach us from this present evil world through which we are passing! How it would illuminate and vivify every other truth of God's word!

May God graciously grant this to be the blessed experience of both the writer and the reader, as well as of all who love His name in sincerity and truth!

### A Letter to a Young Christian.

**M**Y DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—. . . He who sows simply for his own pleasure will find as he goes on that all he has laboured for passes away. On the contrary, he who sows for God and for eternity will, by God's grace, gather abundantly of the fruit of his work; for He will have caused the seed to spring up, even as Christ Himself will rejoice in the fruit of the travail of His soul. He has already entered into the glory, because He has endured the cross.

I hope you understand more clearly each day that, for the Christian, it is not merely a question of being honest and good, and of living a life directed and controlled by the morals of the world and natural conscience, but of walking as Christ walked.

We are called to be epistles of Christ, known and read of all men, and this is no small matter. What seriousness this should give to our whole life; and at the same time what grace and what beauty! To be the witnesses of a Saviour God, not only as a prophet proclaiming the message which God has entrusted to

him, but with the overflow of a heart filled with that which we proclaim; what a glorious privilege!

That this may be so, we need to feed upon Christ and be kept near Him; and we must become better acquainted with Him by means of the word which testifies of Him. We have to learn Himself, His thoughts, and His will. The heart must be enlarged and brought under the powerful influence of His love. Our path must become ever more narrow, ever more completely a path of obedience. This explains these beautiful prayers of Paul for those whom he loved in Christ (Eph. i. 15-23; iii. 14-21; Phil. i. 8-11; Col. i. 9; ii. 1, etc.). We must not be content merely to be pardoned, justified, saved, to have no fear in meeting God or death; but we must live in communion with Him and *serve* Him. We should not remain children, but grow by the knowledge of God and His will, even up to the stature of full-grown men. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Watch and pray. My prayer for you is the same that Paul offered for the Philippians (Phil. i. 8-11). Pray and watch over yourself, that those with whom you come in contact do not become a snare to you. Think often of the "plain of Jordan" (Gen. xiii. 10), into which Lot gradually went down, until he found himself in the midst of Sodom. But above all, fix your mind upon Jesus who died for you, in order that you might live for Him. What can the world afford us? It is the place where Christ, peace, love, and the salvation of God are not known. What but torment and misery can be found there?

We need more simplicity and perseverance of faith in asking God to come in and bless: Christ never sent away empty those who came to Him.

I trust that, through grace, the trial through which

you have passed will bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness, which it is God's will to produce. Nothing happens by chance; even the very hairs of our head are all numbered. We have to learn patience, then experience, and then hope. It is remarkable to see how, at the beginning of Deuteronomy, before they entered Canaan, Moses reminds them of all the way by which God had led His people, in order thus to teach them obedience and confidence in Himself. It is in this way that we can get the blessing of all discipline.

God our Father is above all. We should be looking for Jesus, who is coming to bring us, and all who are washed in His blood, into eternal blessing with Himself. Never forget that we have been separated from the world by the cross, and united to Him by the Holy Spirit.

Dear young friend, may God keep you in His presence in the consciousness of His love; as the prodigal son after he met his father, and had been brought into his father's house, clothed with the best robe, and the object of his father's delight! In Christ we are there already, and by the Spirit we can enjoy heaven and all the Father's love, who finds His good pleasure in us. Many Christians, even redeemed ones, often remain in the state of the son before he met his father; they see their sins, they know there is love and abundance of bread in the father's house, but they do not yet know how they will be received. Or, it may be, they think that they could enter there as "hired servants," for they measure the Father's love by their own thoughts. But, in Christ, we are already beyond verses 20 and 21 of Luke xv., which correspond to the cross and conversion. The resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, have led us much further. We are in Christ before God.

J. N. D

### “Little Children.”

THE unfolding of practical Christianity in John's first epistle is as remarkable as it is instructive: it supposes that the Gospel has been read. In the Gospel we have the revelation of the Father, in the person of the Son, as the Lord said to Philip, “He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father” (xiv. 9-11). So also in chapter i. 18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” The Gospel sets forth Christ as the WAY, the TRUTH, the LIFE: the *way* to the Father, “No man cometh unto the Father but by me” (vi. 37; xiv. 6); the *truth* about the Father, so set forth that we may be brought into the relationship it implies in all its blessedness, and may, by the Holy Ghost, be enabled to cry, Abba, Father (xx. 17; Gal. iv. 6); and finally, the *life* expressed in Himself, so that by spiritual feeding upon Him we live that life in the relationship which was ever His. This, of course, could only be through the power of the “Spirit of truth” dwelling in them, that the disciples were about to receive when the Lord went away. In view of that He could say, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (xiv. 16-19).

Based upon this wonderful and infinitely blessed revelation given by the Lord Himself, the epistle of John sets forth its effects in detail—the mutual relationship of Christians one to another, as responsible to keep the “new commandment” which the Lord gave to them on the night of the Last Supper, after Judas had gone out (John xiii. 31-35). When John wrote the epistle, it was “old” in the sense that nothing could be added to it, nor change it in any way; but in another sense it was still “new,” because it had

to be carried out in different conditions, the Lord having gone away and the Holy Spirit having been given (1 John ii. 7-8; iii. 24). The "light of the world" had been put out, through the rejection of Jesus (John xii. 35-36); but in as far as the new commandment was kept, there was still a light maintained; for Jesus had said, "By this shall all men *know* that ye are *My* disciples, if ye have love one to another" (xiii. 35). It was feeble, surely, but still there was sufficient reality in it for John to be able to say, "The true light now shines." When we see Jesus again "as He is," we shall all be changed into His likeness, and then the darkness will have passed for ever. Now it is "passing"; for so the word in 1 John ii. 8 ought to be read: "The darkness is passing, and the true light already shines." However much failure there has been and is in keeping the new commandment as it ought to be kept, there is still through grace a testimony for the truth in this world, and it is with Christians that this "light" is found. They have ever been objects of the world's enmity and persecution, and Satan does all he can to attack and blot out the word of God; but it remains, and the gospel still goes forth more widely than ever. If there were no truth and no vitality in it, there would be no call for the enmity and opposition of adversaries. The apostle encourages the Philippians in their afflictions by saying, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. i. 27-30).

When the Apostle John described the natural development of a Christian with reference to the truth received, and which has to be shown out in practical life and conduct, he makes use of three figures, easy to be understood: fathers, young men, and little children.

The "fathers" represent complete maturity; "young men" those who have to wage the battle of life; and "little children" express what a Christian is, as distinguished from an ordinary man of the world, what constitutes a Christian as such, or, we might perhaps say, what Christianity is in its elements? \*

If we take the three terms in the order of their development, the "little child" represents the class of persons treated of, much in the same way as a newborn babe represents the human species, without any question being raised of growth, development, or relative differences in size, strength, or ability. All the members are there, and no fresh members are added during the process of growth. There may be imperfections as to capacity of hearing, speech, or even sight, which may be manifested later on; but the several members are there already, needing use for their natural development. Similarly we find this

\* It is important to notice that the word here used for "little children" is applied to the Lord nine times in Matthew ii., and translated "young child." It only occurs *twice* in this epistle, in chap. ii., verses 13, 18. Every other time the term occurs, it is represented by quite a different word in the original Greek. In the R.V. this distinction is sought to be maintained by introducing the word *my*, in italics, before it. The passages are:—ii. 7, 12, 28; iii. 7, 18; iv. 4; v. 21. It is indeed a touching expression of affection, used by the aged apostle to the younger Christians to whom he was writing. Elsewhere it is used once by the Lord Himself in John xiii. 33, and once only by the apostle Paul in Galatians iv. 19.

This word, however, serves to mark the simple divisions of 1 John ii. Verse 12 closes the first paragraph. Verse 13 contains the three classes referred to in the text; verse 14 speaks of "fathers" for the second time; verses 14-17 are three and a half verses concerning the "young men"; lastly, verses 18 to 27 refer to the "little children." Verse 28 returns to the usual form of address adopted by the apostle.

This note is added, too, as a warning of the want of spiritual discernment, which, alas, continually characterises the R.V. In this case, the arrangement of the paragraphs adopted by the revisers throws the whole passage into confusion.

simple character of the "little children": "Ye *have known* the Father." Christian relationship, in its most blessed feature, is there from the start. We are born into the relationship set forth in the Son. This is not a matter of experience, attainment, or growth: "Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ *is* born of God" (1 John v. 1).

The second stage spoken of supposes conflict. Oftentimes it is one of the first experiences of a converted soul, especially if the change occurs late in life. The word is, "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." When the Lord was going to the cross, he called Satan, three times over, "the prince of this world" (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). And every Christian has to find that out in practice, in some way or other. The world, led by Satan, cast Christ out, and condemned Him to the death of the cross, and now "the whole world lies in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19). What a mercy it is to know that the Lord has "overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). Consequently the Christian finds himself born into a world whose chief has no power over him, for "that wicked one toucheth him not"; yet he has necessarily to experience conflict. And the victory is gained, not in a human way, by apparent success, but it may be in martyrdom, in following the footsteps of the blessed Lord Himself. Such was His word to Peter (John xxi. 18-19); such also the assurance of the Apostle Paul (Phil. i. 20; ii. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 6-8)

The third stage, those addressed as "fathers," express the matured state of soul at the end of the Christian course, which is in simple and full agreement with the beginning. Much is undoubtedly acquired in the way of knowledge of the Word of God, and knowledge of

the Lord, but nothing is added to the relationship which characterised the start in life. In repeating the words adapted to their advanced condition, the apostle has nothing to change, nothing to add; he simply says, "Because ye have known Him that is from the beginning." They have found out one thing which the beginner cannot be supposed to know, namely, that what they started with has remained to the end; it is known, no doubt, in a deeper way, but nothing has been changed as to the relationship in itself. And what a comfort that is! The world is always going after something new, endeavouring to penetrate into the unknown; the Christian goes quietly on from the start, knowing God as his Father—in communion with the blessed Lord Himself, according to His first message to His disciples after His resurrection: "My Father and your Father, my God and your God" (John xx. 17). The One that he has known from the beginning is the One whom he will find in eternity, when gathered in with the Lord into His Father's house (John xiv. 1-3).

Let us note finally that the apostle uses three times the word, "*I write*," in verse 13, addressing respectively "fathers," "young men," and "little children." In the following verses we find three times the word, "*I have written*," and in the same order, the last being to the "little children," who are especially addressed in verses 18-27. And the word to them is most striking (in verse 21), "not because they know not the truth, but because they know it, and that no lie is of the truth." It is a question here of inward, conscious knowledge, not the same as acquaintance with a person such as we find in verse 13. It is the absolute certainty of Christianity from the very commencement, depending not upon growing faculties of perception or fresh discoveries, but upon the unchanging character

of the Word of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" . . . "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true: and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John v. 10, 20).

The Lord grant that, in a day of increasing uncertainty in the world, all our readers may be more and more satisfied to rest in the simplicity of the truth "as it is in Jesus"! W. J. L.

## Grace.

*Luke vii. 36-50.*

**I**N reading the gospels we may find many illustrations of the wonderful grace of God which was manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ; but the one presented in Luke vii. is particularly instructive.

One of the Pharisees had invited Him into his house, and as He sat at meat there came in one of the very last people we should have expected—a poor woman, whose only recorded name is "sinner."

Why did she enter such a place as the house of a proud, self-righteous Pharisee? Because she knew—she had an inner consciousness in her soul—that there was One there who had a heart for sinners, and who never turned away from any sin-burdened soul. And as she stood behind the divine Saviour weeping, her tears showed that she had a broken heart, and her box of ointment testified to her appreciation of the Person who was there. It was Jesus; He who was none less than God manifested in flesh; the God who was both light and love. If she saw herself in the light, in all

her depravity, she knew that the love and grace of the Saviour would not turn aside, even from such a sinner as she was.

We do not hear that she said one word, but her acts showed that she could appreciate the Person who was there. And here is a most instructive lesson, namely, that the true way to understand what is suitable to God and to know Him, is to be in His presence with a contrite and humble heart, sensible of our own needs.

But what a contrast she was to Simon the Pharisee! His heart was as hard as the nether millstone, and as dark as midnight. Never having seen himself as a guilty sinner, the beams of divine grace had never illuminated his poor dark soul. And having no true sense of his own sins, he had no true appreciation of the Person of Jesus. He spoke "within himself" saying, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner." Poor blind Pharisee! he could not understand grace, that grace of which the Lord Jesus was Himself the living manifestation. But he stood in the presence of One who could read his every thought; for he had not said it openly but "within himself."

In answer to Simon's reasoning the Lord spoke the short parable of the two debtors, to illustrate the fact that the grace of God can meet *every* case—the worst and most depraved sinner, as well as the moral and respectable sinner. Indeed, nothing will do for either but grace; but the one who has the deep consciousness of being forgiven much will love much.

Simon had not even treated the Lord with the ordinary civilities of life in an Eastern country. He gave Him no water for His feet, no kiss, no anointing of the head with oil; he did not consider the Lord to

be even a prophet. Such is the estimate which man's heart, when untouched by grace, forms of the blessed Saviour, Son of God. The woman, on the contrary, had lavished everything upon Jesus. Her thoughts about Him were right and true for He was a holy Saviour, but a Saviour whose heart was filled with love and compassion for every sin-burdened sinner.

And it is blessed to see that the Lord pronounces forgiveness of sins twice at the close of this remarkable scene. First He says to Simon, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven"; she had not to speak for herself, the Lord shows that, out of pure love, she had done towards Him just what Simon had failed to do. And she got what Simon did not get, the forgiveness of her sins; because her broken and sin-burdened heart turned to God and trusted fully in Christ.

Then He says to the woman herself, "Thy sins are forgiven." Could she not leave that house happy, in the consciousness of forgiveness pronounced by One who had both the love and the authority to pronounce it? Yes, truly, His word was sufficient for her.

And in the light of the much fuller revelation *we* possess in the New Testament, we know well that a full, free, and eternal forgiveness of sins is now proclaimed to every sinner who repents, on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ. Reader, trust Him and it is yours.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter i. 1-8.*

**T**HIS was, doubtless, the last epistle that the apostle Paul wrote, and it was written, we might say, under the shadow of his departure, for he tells us that that time was come.

His wonderful zeal and earnestness in the work of

the Lord was now about to come to a close, and the churches, which he had been the chief instrument in planting, and which he had watched over with such earnest solicitation, were about to be deprived of his care and guardianship. In these circumstances he turns to Timothy, his dearly beloved son in the faith, and looks to him to carry on the work, which now, more than ever, needed to be guarded and watched over, being soon to be deprived of his thoughtful care and ministry.

The bright days of Act ii., when the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved, had long since passed away; times of trial and testing had come, and many had grown cold. Already the Church, as to its outward testimony for Christ, was being marred and ruined. And if it was so *then*, even in apostolic times, as all the later epistles show, what is its state *now*? Alas! the outward professing Church is one vast ruin, broken up into fragments and enclosing within its bosom, all sorts of things which are contrary to God. That this would be so, the apostle Paul himself had foretold in his address to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx.), and in other passages. The tares have been sown in the field by the enemy, and the crop is ruined. The fowls of the air, those unclean things, have lodged in the branches of the tree of professing Christianity. Even true Christians are sometimes cold and worldly.

But this is just the very reason why there is a call for a decided and faithful testimony for the Lord, and more earnestness in maintaining His truth in its purity and simplicity. If the shadows of the coming apostasy are even now falling around us, let us seek grace, in true humility, to maintain the standard of the truth.

This epistle is addressed, not to a church or company of saints, but to an individual, to a servant of God, for his guidance and encouragement. In the first epistle

we find directions as to what is suitable in the Church of God in its order; but the second instructs us as to the path of the individual saint or servant in a day of disorder. It is therefore particularly valuable to us at the present time.

The apostle speaks in the first verse of the "promise of life [the life] which is in Christ Jesus." In view of the ruin of the Church, as that which should have been a united testimony for Christ, he brings before us that which no state of failure could possibly touch or affect; that is *life*—eternal life, as he calls it in Titus i. 2. And, no doubt, it is here that Paul's ministry comes nearest to that of John. It was the special province of the apostle John to unfold for us that eternal life which dwelt ever in the eternal Word, and which was manifested in Him down here in all its blessedness. And it is this same life which is given to us. We find in the epistle to Titus, that it was the subject of promise before the ages of time. What a comfort then, and an encouragement to faith, to know that we possess that life, which, in Christ, has proved its superiority over death and every adverse power; a life indeed which no collective failure of the Church can possibly touch or affect!

Paul thanked God, whom he served from his forefathers with a pure conscience, that he unceasingly remembered Timothy "night and day." How many assemblies and individuals he must have borne up before the Throne of Grace in prayer! This is a lesson to us, for there is much preaching and writing in the present day, but is there not a lack of earnest prayer—prayer for the servants of God as well as for one another? Paul was a man of like passions with ourselves, and he longed to see Timothy; moreover, he had now been a prisoner for about four years, but he

did not forget Timothy's tears, shed, perhaps, on the first or second occasion when he was arrested. Then, in referring to his godly parentage on his mother's side (his father having been a Gentile), he desires that Timothy should rekindle the gift of God which he had by the laying on of Paul's hands. Unquestionably Timothy was an exceedingly gifted servant, but do we not all need the same exhortation in our measure? There are many difficulties and discouragements in the path of service for the Lord, and we are ever in danger of letting our hands hang down and our knees become feeble, especially when there is not much apparent result of the work. There is always the tendency, too, to become slothful and to love our own ease. But let us remember the exhortation, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

God has not given us the spirit of cowardice (ver. 7). It has been pointed out that the word translated "fear" in the A.V. in this passage (only used here in the New Testament), means cowardice. This is important, because reverential fear *of God* in the soul is right. And the fear of God it is which takes away the fear of man (Luke xii. 4-5), but the fear of man bringeth a snare. If, like Peter walking on the water, we get the eye off Christ and get occupied with the winds and waves, we are filled with fear; but the remedy is not to think about ourselves, but to fix the eye of faith on Him who is able to keep, and who has all power in heaven and on earth at His disposal for the carrying on of His work.

Instead of a spirit of cowardice, God has given us three things—the spirit of power and of love, and of a sound mind. We are often disposed to look upon

“power” as some outward display, but this is a mistake. The Lord Himself never used His power for display, or to magnify Himself, but always and only for the glory of God. After feeding the five thousand with two barley loaves and a few fishes, He went into the mountain alone to pray as the dependent and obedient man. So also, when about to speak that life-giving word which could raise from the dead the man who had lain four days in the grave, He lifts his eyes to heaven and thanks the Father beforehand for having heard Him. And when the armed band came to take Him in the garden, He does not ask for “more than twelve legions of angels,” but allows Himself to be taken. In the exercise of this spirit of perfect dependence on the Father, He could pass through the most trying circumstances in perfect calm.

“Love” comes next in order, for without it we are nothing, and it never fails. It is said to be the “bond of perfectness.” Indeed, if there is not this, the “power” may be used in an overbearing way, as has been too often the case. Paul had apostolic power to deal with that which was wrong, but he says to the Corinthians, “Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness.” His exercise, even of apostolic power (which we do not now possess) was always in a spirit of grace and with a view to restoration. Thirdly, we have “a sound mind” or “wise discretion.” This comes in to balance all. The servant of God has much need of this wise discretion; how much trouble would have been saved in many cases if there had been more of it! But it is only in the presence of God that His will can be learned; in dependence on Him and from His word alone, can that wisdom be obtained which is needed to meet the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed. These three things—power, love,

and a sound mind—are just what the Christian (and especially the servant of God) wants, particularly in days of difficulty and trial.

F. G. B.

### Gleanings and Meditations.

**THE “ifs” of Scripture.**—When the Christian is viewed as “in Christ,” there is no “if”: we *are* in Him. When He is viewed as a pilgrim here, he is on the road to actual glory, and has to reach the goal: here “if” comes in, and danger, and the need of being kept. But then we have the fullest assurance that we shall be kept and shall never perish, but be confirmed to the end, and the good work completed. Thus dependence on God is maintained to the end, and confidence in His faithfulness.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Cross.**—We are apt to consider the cross simply in respect of our sins. In coming to God it is the only right, the only possible way. But when, at peace with God, we weigh what it is, we shall find every moral question brought to an issue there. Man in absolute wickedness, that is rejecting God in goodness with scorn and hatred; Satan’s full and universal power over them; man in perfectness in Christ—absolute obedience and absolute love to the Father; God in righteousness against sin in the highest way (“it became Him”), and infinite love to the sinner; all is brought out on the cross in Christ, and all to our blessing, and so that we should be in glory with Him, and like Him, as the fruit of the travail of His soul—a blessed portion.

\* \* \* \* \*

**God’s House.**—How complete, how perfect, is God’s work! He gave Jesus to die for us, and He has sent down the Holy Ghost to teach us, to assure

our hearts that the Lord Jesus Christ has done everything for us. He has fitted us for His house, and we have all in Him we need. He gives us the moral qualities of the dwellers in the house, the new nature that can enjoy the glory of the house. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee." Nothing but praise becomes those who shall dwell in God's house; it will be their unwearied, untiring employ—continual praise. . . . Now what is your walk in the way to the place you are going to? Is it in keeping with the character of the house? Are your ways suited to the house God has prepared for you? Is the hope of the Lord's coming your daily delight? Does it influence you in the ten thousand details of your every-day life? Or are you so walking hand in hand with the world that the very thought of His coming fills you with shame? May the Lord grant you grace to take heed to your ways! May you walk well-pleasing in His sight, caring more for His glory than your own ease! "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah." J. N. D.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Returned Captives—Ezra.**—Separation from evil is, in a great sense, the principle of communion with God. The truth, the knowledge of God, life in Christ, is the positive ground, means, or secret of communion, surely; but separation from evil must accompany that. For if we meet the blessed One Himself, we must meet Him in conditions suited to His presence.

Ezra soon found that the returned captives had practically forgotten all this. They had mingled themselves with the people of the land. They were involved

again in that evil from which the call of God had separated them. They were defiled. . . . Ezra sets himself to the work of reformation. . . . He was, indeed, a vessel that had purged itself for the Master's use . . . There is no miracle; no display of glory; no mighty energy bespeaking extraordinary divine presence; nothing is seen out of the common measure, or beyond ordinary resources. Service is, if done and rendered according to the written Word, for the glory of the God of Israel, and in the spirit of worship and communion.

It is but a sample of what service with us at this day might be, and, as we may add, ought to be. Ezra, throughout, does not listen to expediency, or yield to a difficulty, or refuse diligence and toil; he maintains principles, and carries the Word of God through every hindrance.

J. G. B.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Fruit-Bearing** (*John xv.*).—How is the Christian to bear fruit? By abiding in Christ and Christ in him. Abiding in Him we take to mean that constancy of communion with Him which it is our blessed privilege to enjoy. We are made partakers of the "divine nature." We live of His life. The source is in Him, but the stream is in us; and so livingly united is the stream to the source, that it can be said, "Because I live ye shall live also." And not only are we to abide in Him above, but He is to abide in us down here. What intimacy, what ineffable grace! The more we enter into and enjoy this in daily life, the more we shall bear fruit to His praise and glory.

## A Word on Christian Worship.

THE Christian (that is, in the true sense of the word) is one who is saved and justified. His sins are all forgiven, he has a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, and an unimpeachable title to the glory. He owes everything to the Saviour who has saved him at such a cost. He can look up into heaven, opened now for faith, and can call God his Father. The Holy Spirit has been given to him that he might know and enjoy that blessed relationship, and cry "Abba, Father." He is set on his road heavenward with the very joy of heaven filling his soul. And the blessed *source* of it all is to be found in God Himself. It is *His* joy to have a people before Him in love; so near to Himself that this nearness can only be expressed by the words, "taken into favour in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

Now, if the realisation of all this, in the power of the Holy Ghost, fills and animates the soul, how can we but worship? Worship has been said to be like the overflow of a vessel too full to contain itself. Worship is not prayer (though closely linked with it), it is not asking for anything. It is the spontaneous overflow of a heart filled with the joy of the love of God, shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. It is the giving back to God out of what He has given; as David said, "Of Thine own have we given Thee." In worship, Christians have sweet communion together, they can "joy in God," who is known without a cloud between Him and the soul.

Heaven will be the home and sphere of true, intelligent worship. There God and the Lamb will be worshipped by myriads of the redeemed, in the perfection of communion, without let or hindrance,

There not one note will be out of tune, and not one voice will be silent.

But in heaven, as we have just said, there will be no hindrance to full adoration and worship, as is often the case here. That old nature, "the flesh," which so often hinders us now, will not be in heaven. Nor "*self*," in the ten thousand ways it comes in now; nor anything that pertains to this defiling world.

Now, let us just consider what are some of the chief hindrances to worship, so that we may seek grace that they may not come in when we are gathered together.

If the soul is not at liberty in the presence of God, if there are doubts and uncertainties as to our acceptance in Christ, how can there be true worship? Again unjudged evil allowed, either collectively or individually, must hinder worship, because the Spirit of God is grieved, and has to rebuke us for our wrong-doing. So also, if we get occupied with ourselves instead of with Christ, this hinders worship. We may be thinking well of ourselves, perhaps trying to display ourselves in some way; or thinking of one another, possibly even finding fault with each other, instead of thinking of the Lord and His love and grace—what a hindrance this is!

When the disciples came together on the first day of the week (John xx.), though the Holy Ghost had not yet come, they were "glad when they saw the Lord." He filled their hearts and thoughts, and hence there was joy at seeing Him whom they loved.

Now, suppose only half a dozen true Christians are assembled together in the name of the Lord and in accordance with His word—saints who are walking godly and seeking to please Him in daily life—there may be weakness and not much gift, but should there not be joy and real worship? It must be so, if the

love of the Father and the Son fills the soul. Weakness there may be, but weakness in itself is not failure or sin. Indeed, if felt and owned, it casts us more entirely on the Lord, so that the soul, filled with the sense of His grace, may rise in worship to Him, not by human efforts or aids, but by the power of the Spirit.

Oh for that simplicity and dependence which counts only on the Lord! Just to come together with hearts engaged with *Him*, and free from *self* and the many wandering thoughts which, like unwelcome visitors, sometimes crowd into the mind even at such times as this.

A musical instrument, if it is to produce a melody where each string yields its proper note, must be *in tune*. And so if everyone who comes to a meeting for worship, comes *in tune*, just ready to respond to the touch of the blessed Spirit of God, what times of happy worship and blessing we might experience. And why should it not be so? May we know more of seasons such as this!

### The Bible—A Personal Testimony.

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely-given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of GOD by it, to adore His perfections—of JESUS, the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God—to ministers of that Gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case. That work, which is ever God's, was wrought in me by means of the written word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what

the Bible will be to such a one. If I have, alas! failed in thirty years' arduous and varied life and labour, I have never found it fail me. If it has not failed for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will for eternity. "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it is from thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so—none but God could do this, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God—so does the Book that divinely reveals Him come *from* and elevate *to* Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by.

I avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner here, my deep, divinely-taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. While of course allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as God's word. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself.

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength, for nearly thirty years—have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the Word of God. In the beginning of that period I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church, and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy spirit is

needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are ; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when it is received, it must have been true before.

And here I will add, that although it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power, yet divine truth, God's word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the wrong-doer, though he may hate it. And so the word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in *grace* (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it ; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny the truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose keen edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of *grace* as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now ; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in such a way, in His love, is perfect joy. The word will tell you the truth concerning yourself ; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.

Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the word is to read the word itself.

J. N. D.

## “Little Children.”

1 John ii. (*continued from page 11*).

IT is well worthy of our notice that, in the remarkable chapter under consideration, the apostle begins with the “fathers,” and as we have seen, adds nothing which could suggest the least uncertainty as to what they had received from the first moment of their spiritual existence, or even that added to it in the sense of replacing or setting aside any portion of what they began with.

The Apostle Paul uses the comparison of a “child” in a human way in 1 Cor. xiii. 11: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” This is in connection with divine things partially entered into and enjoyed now, while looking forward to full and perfect knowledge when we shall see the Lord as He is, and “love” shall have its full energising character, answering to God’s own nature. So elsewhere, “If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man love God, the same is known of Him” (1 Cor. viii. 2, 3).

All that, referring to human apprehension, is true; but in the Epistle of John it is a question of God revealed in Christ, and of the present, actual, eternal *relationship* with God, that flows from it in communion with the SON, who alone could make the Father known. Nothing can be added to this, and it remains, thank God, eternally. In the “Word made flesh,” who dwelt here below for a time, “full of grace and truth,” the glory seen was indeed the glory of the only begotten of the Father (John i. 14).

So the Apostle Paul, when speaking of this subject,

states, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 9; compare 2 Tim. ii. 13; 1 John i. 3). God's eternal purpose was to have many "sons" in glory; how was this to be accomplished? His Son became man in order to do His will; and in view of that glorious consummation, He says, speaking now as it were from the glory where He is, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me" (Heb. ii. 9-13).

All this divine work has been carried out by Christ, who, in identifying Himself with the objects of His grace by suffering for them on the cross as their sin-bearer, has become "the captain of their salvation," and is about to come again to receive them, that where He is, they may be also (John xiv. 1-3). With this the believer begins; sonship is his portion. The "new-birth" ushers into it, or in other words, the expression "born of God" describes a soul who has received Christ. It is no longer a question of national privilege, as that of the Jew, who boasted his descent from Abraham (John viii. 33, 39), nor of any action or fruit of human will, desire or effort, but "of God," who, of His own will, begets by "the word of truth" (John i. 11-13; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17, 20; 2 Cor. iv. 6). This is God's creative work, and there is a sort of illustration of it in the resurrection of Lazarus. In his case, death and corruption were covered by human grave-clothes, but one word of Jesus brought him outside the tomb, where it was an easy matter for those who put the grave-clothes on him to "loose him and let him go." Life and soundness were there already, or there could have been no object in taking the grave-clothes off.

The more we consider this work of God from the

standpoint of His glory, the more our souls are brought to enter into its perfection, for the present joy and blessing of every one who is "turned to God," to serve Him and to wait for His Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). The first word of the New Testament committed to writing, described an infant church as being "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. i. 1). Here the spiritual "little child," begins his career, and the "fathers," at the end of their course on earth, fall back with increased delight upon One well known in practical life and walk, who was at first for them God revealed in Christ, and still remains for them that which He had ever been. "That which was from the beginning" of the Lord's manifested life on earth, "heard, seen, and handled" by His disciples, was and is "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested" in the Person of the Son on earth. So the Lord could say to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Again we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He had declared Him" (John i. 18; xiv. 6-11; 1 John i. 1-3).

To the disciples, and to multitudes of others, it was given to see the Son when He was here on this earth, to hear His words and witness His works of grace and power during the three years of His ministry (John xviii. 20, 21). But *we* have the additional advantage of knowing all the results of His *death* and resurrection, now made known by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven after Jesus had taken His place on high with the Father (John vii. 37-39; xvi. 7-16). The Lord forbade His disciples to leave the city of Jerusalem and begin to carry out their commission to preach the gospel among all nations,

until they were endued with the power of the Spirit from on high (Luke xxiv. 49).

It is consequently utterly impossible for any one to return to the state or condition of partial knowledge, which we notice in the disciples who accompanied the Lord during His ministry on earth. No one can believe in Christ now, but in a Christ who has died, is risen and glorified, and is soon coming again, first to receive His own saints to Himself, and afterwards to judge the world that persists in unbelief. Many lose themselves in speculations and reasonings as to a process of transformation in the soul, based upon what might or might not be understood by those who, in the gospel history, were looking for the kingdom to be set up by Christ then, either during His ministry or after His resurrection (Acts i. 6, 7). All such inference is foolish and mischievous to the last degree. The apostle Paul would know nothing but "*Jesus Christ and Him crucified,*" a gospel which was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Cor. i. 21-24; ii. 1, 2).

When that gospel is preached, it is either received, or it is not. If it "be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them." If it is received, it is the effect of a divine operation, described, as the apostle shows, in Gen. i. 2: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Light was introduced where there was only darkness before (2 Cor. iv. 3-6). We have this treasure in earthen vessels surely, when experience, often bitter, casts a shadow on our life's history; the treasure, however, is there notwithstanding, and the more trying the experience, the more the

soul is cast upon God and His faithfulness. But that adds nothing to the treasure which is unalterable,—God revealed in Christ, His glory shining in the face of Jesus,—our unchanging portion both for earth and heaven (see John xvii. 24).

Now this change, or passage from darkness to light, is just what is called being “born again” in John’s writings. And Paul clinches it by saying, “Ye are all sons\* of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26). The Holy Ghost is afterwards given, not to make us “sons,” but because we are sons already, by faith in Christ Jesus. There is no intermediate state. Either a soul believes or it does not; if not, as the Lord says, the wrath of God abides on it (John iii. 36).

John, in his epistle, does not go into any detail of what takes place in the soul progressively. His subject is Christianity in principle, in contrast with the denial of it by “antichrists.” The Jewish form of unbelief was the denial that Jesus was the Christ (or “Messiah”) that all natural descendants of Abraham expected would come, as announced by the prophets. This was the great subject of discussion with the Jewish leaders in John viii. (and see xii. 34); they were well acquainted with the Scriptures, but refused to own that Jesus was the promised Messiah; and He definitely told them, that until they had crucified Him they neither would nor could know Him: “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, *then* shall ye know that I am He” (verse 28; xii. 24, 32, 33). No life-giving knowledge of the Son of God is possible apart from His death and resurrection; nor can there be the knowledge of forgiveness of sins without it. But when that truth is received

\* The word for “sons” here is exactly the same as in the following chapter (iv. 6, 7). Unfortunately it is weakened in the A.V. by the word “children.”

in the soul definitely, the Spirit is given. So says Peter in Acts ii. 38; and it was proved in Acts x. 43, 44. Paul's question also to the believers he found in Ephesus supposes the same thing (Acts xix. 1-7). The Lord promised it to His disciples after His resurrection; they could not be witnesses for Him on earth, after His departure, without the Holy Ghost (John xv. 26, 27). Consequently a "Christian" as such, according to God's thoughts, supposes the knowledge of forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus, carrying sonship with it, and supposes also the reception of the Holy Ghost, as "seal" or "unction" (*i.e. anointing*), in connection with Christ's return to the Father on high (John xiv. 16, 26; xvi. 7, 13, 28).

This complete picture of a Christian, so to speak, is what the apostle presents by the figure of a "little child," that is, as we have already seen, what a Christian is in God's account, according to God's eternal purpose and choice in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. i. 1; Titus i. 2). It is, in fact, the result of the Lord's humanity, revealing sonship, and of His death, resurrection, and present glory with the Father (John xiii. 31-35; xvi. 28). Our responsibility is to receive God's estimate, and hold it in our souls so that we may be found practically walking here to the glory of Christ, keeping His "new commandment," given for the first time, after Judas had gone out, on the very night in which he betrayed his Master. We cannot love one another as He has loved us unless our hearts are continually feasting on His love, measured by His laying down His life for those whom He honours by the name of friends (John xv. 12-15).

The present glory of the Lord Jesus is the mainspring of the believer's practical life and walk, as He said when giving the new commandment: "Now is the Son

of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." Similarly the blessing and joy of eternity is expressed in His last prayer: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24).

It is interesting to notice that Peter, addressing the Jews who were astonished at the miracle performed on the impotent man, began with the fact of the Lord's present glory (Acts iii. 13). Here the "little child," or new-born soul begins, and here the "fathers" end, while waiting to see the Lord face to face (1 Cor. xiii. 12). "They know Him that is from the beginning."

W. J. L.

## The Last Words of the Apostle Peter.

*2 Peter, Chap. iii.*

**T**HE last words of good men are always arresting, and when these form the closing message of an apostle of Christ, they are of absorbing interest.

In 2 Peter, chap. iii., we have Peter's parting message to the people of God. In it he warns them of the state of things on the earth in the "last days." It predicts the destruction of every created thing and the establishment of new heavens and a new earth, and prescribes in earnest words what behaviour becomes believers in view of it all.

The chapter divides itself into four parts, and each part opens with the same words, "Beloved be," which bespeak the apostle's deep affection and the urgency of the need. To take these four divisions in their order we find:—

I. "**Beloved . . . be mindful**" (vers.1,2).—"Be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles" (R. V.). He charges home upon their "pure minds"—not certain favourite texts, or chapters, or books, but the whole Bible. This sacred volume is one organic whole. To cut out of it, as is done to-day, one verse, or chapter, or book is to slight the prophets and apostles, to violate Peter's parting charge, and, worst of all, to set aside the authority of the Lord Jesus who speaks through them.

They were to cling to all the Scriptures, because scoffers would arise to deny their contents. These, it is true, would admit the voice of "the fathers," and allow that the world had a beginning. But they would single out the promise of the Lord's coming again, for scoffing attacks in spite of the fact that no single truth is given such a large place in the Old as well as in the New Testament. Thus our apostle paints perfectly the state of things in the present day.

It is worthy of note that the last written comments of that gifted expositor, Mr W. Kelly, just before his death, were written on these last words of Peter. He says—"Men of philosophic minds, who might be generally correct in moral ways, but were beguiled into such an abandonment of the truth, as we have already in agnosticism, positivism, and the like, they stand on phenomena, on things seen, on matter. They do not openly hate the name of the Lord Jesus, and have no words too lofty to express their admiration of His life, and ministry, and death; but their dream of human progress is so judged and cut short by His return to judge the living, that they all unite with open mouths to decry His return to judge the habitable earth. Hence their description here, 'walking after

their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming; for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' ”

It is scepticism that would set Nature and its so-called “laws” above the God of Nature and Revelation: “For this they *willingly* are ignorant of, that by the Word of God (not “the fortuitous concurrence of atoms”) the heaven were of old, and the earth, standing out of the water and in the water (*i.e.*, at the creation): whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water (*i.e.*, at the flood) perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (vers. 5-8). This is fully foretold in Ps. cii. 26; Isa. li. 6; Hag. ii. 6, 22, and the Gospels.

To use “the laws of nature,” therefore, as a basis to scoff at the Lord’s return is willing and wilful ignorance of the Scripture, and greater folly than that of a murderer who scoffs at the gallows while on the way to his execution.

It is striking that the believers of the early Church were taught to look for the Lord’s coming, and to believe in His millennial reign. “But,” say some, “since He did not come, it proves they were mistaken.” Also “the revival in this last century of this same teaching has not come true, therefore, such efforts as those of John Nelson Darby and others, who preached it, were more or less waste.” Well, what is the remedy for such teaching? Simply to “Be mindful” of The Book of books, in all its parts.

II. “**Beloved, be not ignorant**” (ver. 8).—Ignorance is not one of the things inscribed on the Christian’s banner. The true believer is he who has “been with

Jesus," and though he may have ranked with "unlearned and ignorant men," *He* gives him knowledge and makes him bold (Acts iv. 13). Seeing, therefore, that they were in danger of giving up "that blessed hope" through the scoffing of men, or the Lord's delay, the apostle's corrective was, "Don't be ignorant," and he sets them to read the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels.

There they would learn that the Lord was not slack or neglectful as to His promise, but was long-suffering, not willing that any sinner should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And, as a thousand pounds is little more than a sovereign to a man of great riches, so a thousand years is as a day to the eternal God. Time with Him passes no quicker or slower than suits His will and purpose and saving grace. But the day of the Lord *will* come as a thief in the night; and the heavens and the earth, in whose stability the scoffer has such confidence, *will* pass away in flame and smoke. So he adds, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God?" (vers. 11, 12).

No mightier motives can sway the saint of God than to "know," on divine authority such as this, that his Lord may come at any moment. That though He delays, it means salvation to souls still unsaved. Yet all moves on irresistibly, according to a divine plan, towards the eternal state, the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Let us then say, in the words of the Psalmist, "I have stuck unto Thy testimonies," guarding and keeping them both in our walk and our words.

**III. "Beloved . . . be diligent"** (ver. 14). There is a Welsh proverb which says, "Slow of foot is every

hope"; and as the Lord's coming has been deferred, the child of God may grow weary and become slack in his ways and walk. When the evil servant said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," he began "to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." In order that those to whom he wrote might be preserved from falling into a condition of forgetfulness of the Lord's return, Peter counsels them to "be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless." "In peace" as to our sins, our circumstances, and a hostile world; "without spot and blameless," before God and man.

How sad "to be found of Him" *not* ready through dabbling with things that make us ashamed, and rob us of spiritual energy and Christian usefulness! But—

"Watching and ready may we be,  
As those that wait their Lord to see."

**IV. "Beloved . . . beware"** (ver. 17). "The error of the wicked," in teaching and in practice, rolls onward as a mighty stream. The danger in this case is, lest the believer should get caught in its rising tide. He is therefore to "*beware*," and not to fall from steadfastness, but to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To watch against evil only is not enough; there must be also the definite growth in the knowledge of the Lord personally. In view of all this may both the writer and the reader take heed to Peter's last loving words: "*Beloved, be mindful; be not ignorant; be diligent; beware.*"

W. M. R.

—————

In a day of laxity we need most of all to hold the truth of God inflexibly.

W. K.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter i. 9-18.*

**T**IMOTHY was not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of Paul who was now a prisoner. If the testimony were something which was popular, there would be no need for the exhortation not to be ashamed of it. But what is really for God at any time in the Church's history never can be popular, because fallen man has no desire after the things of the Spirit. And even worldly-minded Christians are sometimes the greatest opponents of the truth. The "testimony of our Lord" was, doubtless, concerning a risen Christ, rejected by men but glorified in heaven. If Paul had preached the law and circumcision he might have been popular, the offence of the cross would have ceased. But to give no quarter whatever to the religion of the flesh; and to preach the cross which made nothing of man, and the calling of the Christian as not of the world but united to a glorified Christ, *this* drew down upon him hatred and persecution. He was a prisoner because of his faithful testimony to these truths. And Timothy was to "suffer evil along with the glad tidings." Naturally, we do not like this; poor human nature, even in the Christian, likes an easy path and to be thought well of by men. But is this the true path of the servant? Does not our Lord say, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me?" and His was not an easy path. If we are really standing for God and His truth, we are sure to experience something of the trials which are connected with the testimony of the Lord.

It is in the Gospel—that which appears weak in men's eyes—that the power of God is shown. He *has* saved us—there is no hesitation about this, no misgivings

or doubts; and He has called us with a holy calling. It is not a question of obtaining righteousness by the law or works, which man never could do, but of God's free and sovereign *grace*, and of His purposes, given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time. Thus the stability of the believer's position is fully assured, for what could change the purposes of God given us in Christ Jesus before the world was? These purposes have now been made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has "abolished death." This is a remarkable expression, for we know that death still exists in this world. But, for the Christian it is annulled, its power is broken, and Christ has set free from the fear of death those who all their lifetime were subject to bondage. In 1 Cor. iii. 22, death is said to be "ours," Instead of being like the policeman who brings the guilty man to the bar of justice to be judged, it is that which opens the door so that we may enter into the presence of our best friend. Christ has the keys of death and Hades; He has authority over them. None of His people can pass into the domain of death without his permission, and when He pleases they will come forth in the full power of resurrection-life.

How encouraging, then, is this passage in Timothy. It shows us that life (as to the soul) and incorruptibility (as to the body) are brought to light by the Gospel. The Christian has already eternal life, and when Christ comes he will receive a glorified body. Life and incorruptibility were always true, even in the Old Testament times, but through the Gospel they are *brought to light*. And of this Gospel Paul was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

If Paul exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony, he could say of himself, "I am not ashamed," and of Onesimus he could say that "he was not

ashamed of my chain." And the reason was that Paul well knew *whom* he had believed. It is not "in whom," but he had before his soul *the person*, the One who had met and overcome every enemy, the risen Christ. What a sustainment to the Christian as he pursues the path of faith, and especially to the servant of God who has to stand in the forefront of the battle with the responsible testimony of God. All such are in a place of peculiar danger, and need special grace every moment that they may be kept. But there is One who has gone before, who never swerved from the path of obedience and dependence, however great the subtlety of the enemy in his efforts to seduce Him from it. He, too, witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, and has now taken his seat on high, there to carry on His people's cause and represent them before God. The apostle speaks here with no uncertainty. Not only had he become acquainted with Christ at his conversion; but during years of service he had experienced what Christ was to him, and hence he could say, "I *know* whom I have believed." And so he speaks with full assurance that He was able to keep everything connected with the testimony which he had committed to His keeping until that day, that is, until the day of manifestation.

Timothy was to have an outline of sound or wholesome words which he had heard from the apostle. This is of all importance for us also in a day when man's mind and man's reason is so active in framing theories. Have we really a relish and appetite for "sound words"? Alas, it is too often the case that Christians are looking for novelties or something to amuse the intellect. And when we think of the vast amount of so-called religious literature which pours from the press in the present day, much of which is mixed up

with bad doctrine and all kinds of things to make it sell, how we need to be on our guard that we be not turned aside from the wholesome words that God has given us in the Scripture of truth! These sound words Timothy had direct from the apostle himself; they were no cunningly-devised fables, but the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and they are written down for us in the Scriptures.

The good deposit of the truth, Timothy, as a faithful servant, was to keep by the Holy Ghost. It is not human strength or learning which is to be relied upon for the maintenance of the truth, but the word of God, vivified and illuminated by the Holy Ghost who dwells in the believer. This was of all the greater moment, inasmuch as many were turning away from the apostle who was the special vessel of the truth, not liking the path of whole-hearted devotedness and refusal to compromise any part of that truth as it was given by God, in which Paul walked. What puts us to the test is the length of the way, and constant opposition in one way or another. It is easy to go on with the current in times of revival and blessing, but quite another thing to stand for God and persevere in days of discouragement and difficulty. But, if we take the case of David, there cannot be a doubt that, spite of all his failures, he was more in the mind of God when hunted like a partridge on the mountains, than when enjoying circumstances of ease and outward prosperity afterwards. The same thing is true in the history of the Church.

F. G. B.

## The Three Rests.

“**C**OME unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” These touching words were not spoken from heaven, or from a distance. No, they fell from the lips of Jesus, who, though much more than a man, truly, was a real living man on earth; yea, the most humble and lowly of men. But before He could say that blessed word, “Come,” He must Himself have come down into this world; having done so, He says to the poor, weary, heavy-laden sinner, “Come to Me and I will give you rest.” This is the first thing we want—**Rest of conscience about our sins.** But in the Lord Jesus and His finished work, the one who believes finds the most perfect and absolute rest. There are no doubts, no uncertainties, no unsettled questions between the soul and God, once we have found our all in Christ as a Saviour.

Then when we have got *that* rest, there is another rest we want for our daily path—that is, **Rest of heart about our circumstances.** How is this to be obtained? It is to be had by taking up His yoke, as the Lord says, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.” His was the yoke of perfect obedience and submission to the Father’s will. There is no path so happy as the path of obedience; it delivers us from the restlessness of the flesh, it enables us to pass through the trials and difficulties of life, taking everything from a Father’s hand. This yoke is not like that which the Pharisees imposed; theirs was indeed a heavy burden which they bound on men, but which they would not touch with one of their fingers. No, it is that yoke which our blessed Lord Himself bore,

and which He invites us to take up; for He has marked out the path for His people to walk in.

But there is still another rest. It is, **The future rest in glory.** "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." *There* everything will be in harmony with God's will, and with His holy nature. To it we are going on, and that with no uncertain step. But on the way it is our privilege to experience the blessed companionship of Him who has trodden the path before us, and who, when He calls His sheep to follow Him, goes before them in the way. And even if trials do come, there is One to lean upon who, if He said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," said also, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

### Gleanings.

**THE Value of the Blood.**—It is the blood of Christ which gives peace, and imparts perfect justification, divine righteousness, purges the conscience, brings us into the holiest of all, justifies God in receiving the believing sinner, and constitutes our title to all the joys, the dignities, and the glories of heaven.

The paschal lamb, as the ground of Israel's peace (Exod. xii.), is a marked and beautiful type of Christ as the ground of the believer's peace. There was nothing to be added to the blood on the lintel; neither is there anything to be added to the blood on the mercy-seat. The "unleavened bread" and "bitter herbs" were necessary, but not as forming, either in whole or in part, the ground of peace. They were for the inside of the house, and formed the characteristics of the communion there; but **the blood of the lamb was the foundation of everything.** It saved them

from death and introduced them into a scene of life, light, and peace.

C. H. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Power of Faith.**—Faith acts on God's behalf, and reveals Him in the midst of circumstances, instead of being governed by them. Its superiority over that which surrounds it, is evident. What repose to witness this amid the mire of this poor world!

My brethren, let us abide in the place of faith, apparently a more difficult one, yet the place where God is found, and where grace—the only precious thing in this world—flourishes, and binds the heart to God by a thousand links of affection and gratitude, as to One who has known us, and who has stooped to meet our need, and the desires of our hearts. Faith gives energy; faith gives patience; and it is often thus that the most precious affections are developed—affections which, if the energy of faith makes us servants on earth, render heaven itself happy, because He who is the object of faith is there, and fills it in the presence of the Father.

Nature makes us impatient with circumstances, because we do not sufficiently realise God, and draws us into situations where it is impossible to glorify Him. On the other hand, it is well to observe, that it is when man had thoroughly failed, when even David's faith had been found wanting, and—departing from Israel—he had thrown himself among the Philistines, it was then that God gave him the kingdom. Grace is above all failure; God must glorify Himself in His people.

J. N. D.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Christ died, then I am clean—not a spot within.”  
The Lamb, the accepted sacrifice on the throne of God, where the heavenly hosts can behold Him, where the

Father sees the Son having accomplished His work, and the Holy Ghost bears witness of Him—what can a poor sinner say to that? “God’s mercy and love—not a cloud above!” That sacrifice has been accepted for me. . . . “By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” It is the value of the work wrought, and not the value of the faith. Either the sacrifice of Christ has settled the whole question, or it can never be settled. It is done; He has sat down. We are sanctified—set apart to walk as Christ walked—apart in body, soul, and spirit. G. V. W.

### “Little Children.”

1 John ii. (*continued from page 32*).

AS compared with the “young men,” addressed in verses 13-17 of this epistle, it is very noticeable that matters of *doctrine* should be referred to when “little children” are in view. We might naturally have supposed that it would be just the other way about, but this is surely an additional proof that the expression “little child” is used to fix our attention on what a Christian is in *principle*, that is, his start in life, as we have already seen. For him everything depends on the testimony received.

Once that is settled, and his relationship with God entered into, a newly-converted soul soon finds that he has to cope with fresh difficulties, arising from the attacks of Satan, and the opposition of the unbelieving world around. Before the change in his position and conduct is known, the struggle is more definitely with the enemy, who is loath to find a soul escaping from his grasp. And this is the first thing stated by the apostle in verse 13, “I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.” But this

conflict must not be expected to cease as years roll by, and the words are consequently repeated at the end of verse 14.

The enemy is ever vigilant, whether under the form of the "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. v. 8), or in the more insidious form of a serpent seeking to entangle again, through the pollutions of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, any that had apparently "clean escaped from those who live in error" (2 Pet. ii. 3, 18-22). Hence the needed exhortation as to these dangers in verses 15-17 of our chapter.

We must remember, too, that these two forms of the enemy's power are spoken of in connection with the blessed Lord's path on earth, in Psalm xci. 13, "Thou shalt tread upon the *lion* and the *adder*." These words denote the principles of evil in Satan's efforts; then follow two others which set forth their violence and activity, "The *young lion* and the *dragon* shalt thou trample under feet."

He had not only to meet Satan personally at the beginning of His ministry, when He "bound the strong man" by three passages of Scripture taken from the Book of Deuteronomy (Matt. iv. 1-11); but He continually encountered his opposition, when "spoiling his goods" by delivering those who were powerless to escape from his torments (Matt. xii. 22-34). He treated the Pharisees, who continually opposed Him, as a "generation of vipers"; John the Baptist, having already been obliged to do so previously (Matt. iii. 7).

Let us then ask the question, What has the young Christian as protective armour or weapon to enable him to stand in this continual conflict, and be an over-comer? Three things are mentioned in verses 14-17, namely, the Word of God, the Father's love, and the will of God, to which he must needs be ever subject.

These are just what we find in the Master Himself. By the words, "*It is written*," He resisted the enemy, and bound him; by the *Father's love*, in the enjoyment of which He lived, He measured all His service, whether in life or death, and explained to His disciples the character and measure of His love for them (John xiv. 31; xv. 9); and finally, the *will of God* was the source and energy of His service, whether in patiently awaiting the appointed moment for carrying it out, or in self-sacrifice, even to the death of the cross (Ps. xl. 8; John vi. 38; viii. 29). "Not my will, but Thine be done," was, so to speak, His motto for all service and suffering here (Luke xxii. 42).

Our privilege it is to learn these things practically, in company with the Lord Himself, following His footsteps through this world, where He lived and suffered for us. May we indeed realise this privilege in cleaving to Him, so that the world may have no attractions for us, and also that the work of the Holy Spirit within us may not be thwarted either by the lusts of the flesh or the pride of life. How much we need the apostle's exhortation, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5). Everything was in His power, as His miracles constantly proved; but He came to serve, and show us, by His example, how to live for, and serve, others (Matt. xx. 25-28; John xiii. 15).

We now come to these verses 18-27, especially addressed to "little children." The first word is, "It is *the last time*." The aged writer, the last who survived of the apostles, had not yet left this scene, and his words remind us of Paul's parting address to the elders of Ephesus, when he finally took leave of those amongst whom he had earnestly laboured for three years (Acts xx. 19, 28-32).

In neither case, was there any hint of the world at large getting better, or that the proclamation of the gospel would do more than separate out from the heathen a comparatively small company, to be followers of the Lord in the world where He was crucified. All scripture shows that the glory held in reserve for the saints must be preceded by suffering for Christ's name sake here below (2 Tim. ii. 10, 12; 1 Pet. i. 6-13). John is careful to show that the enemy would be very busy and would continue his work of opposition, until at length it should culminate in the appearance of the "Antichrist," or "man of sin," about which the Apostle Paul speaks, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, ii. 7-12. And we must not forget that those two epistles to the Macedonian converts were the first part of the New Testament committed to writing, while John's epistle was probably the last, if we except the Revelation.

We can thus understand that the prophecy as to the increase of evil in this world is characteristic of apostolic testimony. God has had, and will have to the end, His own people gathered out of it; but at the close, there will be unsparing judgment, when the protracted time of God's forbearing grace shall cease.

At the time when John wrote his epistle, Jewish synagogues were still the places where the Old Testament Scriptures were most readily found, though the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as Paul's Epistles, were beginning to be copied and distributed amongst the churches. But Jerusalem had been already destroyed by the Romans, and the Temple burned, and it was not long before the persecution of the Christians became general. All these things served to put believers to the test as to the reality of their confession; but God in His mercy watched over His saints, and over His word also.

Two denials of the truth are specially noted by the apostle—the Jewish form of unbelief which would never admit that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, the Christ, that they professed to look for; and secondly, that of the scoffers against the truth, who refused the apostolic testimony that Jesus was the **Son of God**; in other words, “they denied the Father and the Son” (verse 23). The former are called liars, inasmuch as all Scripture, of which the Jews were the guardians, *proved* what *they* invariably denied; the others are called “antichrists,” as the embodiment of satanic opposition to Christ, because they would not receive the gospel when it was preached. The Antichrist will set himself up as God, in the place of God, “above all that is called God, or that is worshipped” (Dan. xi. 36; 2 Thess. ii. 3-4). This principle of evil began to show itself already in the apostle’s time, and it is asserting itself continually with increasing boldness and effrontery in these modern times.

The Jews had the Old Testament, but they had not the story of Christ’s life on earth. It is, therefore, easy to understand that it required the knowledge of Christianity, preached by the apostles, in order that there might be a bold denial of it. That is why the name of “antichrist” is so appropriate. The apostle says, “They went out *from us*, but they were not of us” (verse 19). As to the Jews, the Lord had said, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John v. 43); that one will be the antichrist.

Against all this insidious working of evil and satanic energy, one thing alone was necessary, namely, to *abide* in that which they had heard “from the beginning.” This “beginning,” in the Epistle of John, is the mani-

festation of Christ, "the **Son** in the bosom of the Father," in this world (John i. 14, 16, 18). "Of His fulness have all we received." Nothing can be added to it, and nothing must be allowed to be taken from it. The meaning of the word "transgresseth," in verse 9 of John's second epistle, is, going beyond or adding to "the doctrine of Christ," whether by way of human explanations, or philosophical additions to what had been given at the first through the apostles. "He that knoweth God, heareth us," he had said; "he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John iv. 6). This is an unfailing test, and here we must "abide."

There is indeed a "promise" (verse 25), yet to be fulfilled, when Jesus shall return to receive us to Himself **in His Father's house**, and we shall know and enjoy for ever, *with Him*, that "eternal life" of which He is the living expression to our souls now. We shall then have been changed into His own image; and His personal glory will be reflected in every one of His redeemed. What untold joy that will be, when we shall "see Him again" (John xiv. 1-3; xvi. 22). The moment we shall see Him, we shall be "like Him" (1 John iii. 2). But the *relationship* into which the believer is brought, is true of him *already*; he abides "in the Son, and in the Father."

This is Christianity in principle. The Lord keep us from letting it slip in any measure. We are not left to ourselves. The Holy Ghost, here called the "anointing" (possibly an allusion to Psalm ii. 6-7; \* and see Acts x. 38) has been given, and He "abides." So that we are not dependent upon human teaching or clever-

\* In Psalm ii. 6 the word translated "set" is literally "anointed." It is the *verb* corresponding in Hebrew to the *noun* "Messiah."

ness, but have simply to cleave to what was given "at the beginning," in the message conveyed to the disciples by Mary Magdalene, the first words spoken by the Lord after He was risen from the dead: "I ascend unto My Father *and* your Father, and to My God *and* your God" (John xx. 17).

W. J. L.

## The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the world.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers.*

Matthew xiii. 44-46 ; xvi. 16-19.

IT will be enough for our present purpose that we have read these Scriptures, as, if the Lord will, we are to have several opportunities of considering together the very important subject of "The Church," as we see it in the Scriptures, and as we find it to-day in the world.

We shall, no doubt, travel over ground that is somewhat familiar to many here, but we can, I know, count on their forbearance and prayers for others younger in the Christian life.

To-night, then, we are to look more particularly at the Scriptures which give us the truth as to the foundation of the Church. But first let me ask if we may take for granted that all here are saved, that each one is a child of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? And then, the question of our acceptance in Christ being settled, we are amongst that company that wait for the Son of God from Heaven.

Having started with that point settled, I am going to suppose some one amongst us was converted quite

recently, for I want to take the youngest Christian by the hand, so to speak, and try to show him the way—what is the will of God concerning this most important matter of our fellowship with our fellow Christians.

It is well that we should start with the will of God. The Lord Jesus said, “If anyone will do His (God’s) will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God” (John vii. 17).

Now, if you had been brought to God in the days of the Apostle Paul, you would not have needed anyone to stand up and talk about what the Church is, in quite the same way as you need it now. There were then only three things existent in the world—the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. It says in the Acts of the Apostles, speaking of those who had been imprisoned, “And being let go they went to their own company” (Acts iv. 23), and, “The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved” (Acts ii. 47).

All the saved were together then, but to-day we find numbers of God’s true children in various sects and denominations, and gathered together in different ways; and we are obliged to seek guidance as to where we should go, and what we should do.

Now I believe the first thing to do, is to say, “Lord what wilt *Thou* have me to do?” And then wait until *He* shows us.

Would the Spirit of God lead you in one way, and me in another, as to this all-important matter of our fellowship with our fellow Christians? As we shall see as we look at the Scripture, it is expected that we should be found together. Is it not said of the Lord Jesus that “He died that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (John xi. 52)? It is natural, then, spiritually natural I might perhaps say, that Christians should be found

together; our Lord says, "And there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John x. 16).

Well, all this leads up to the subject of the Church, the assembly of God. But it is necessary to be clear as to what is meant by the word Church. Many people when they speak of the Church, mean the Established Church of the land as distinct from dissenters; so, if a young man talks of "entering the Church" he means that he is adopting the ministry of the Established Church as a profession.

To "join a Church" means to become a member of a certain religious body, and "to form a Church" means to set up a certain denominational cause, or body, where one does not already exist. Now all this makes it the more important that we should understand what is really meant by the term "the Church" in the Scriptures.

The word itself "*ecclesia*," which is so translated, means literally, "a called-out company," and denotes an assembly of called-out persons.

Now, turning to the passage we have read in Matthew xvi., we find the word "Church" for the first time in the New Testament. It is only used in the gospels twice, and both times in Matthew.

In commenting on Peter's confession of Himself as "The Christ, the Son of the Living God," the Lord says to him, "Thou art Peter," (*Petros*, a stone), "and upon this rock I will build my Church." He gives to Peter a new revelation of His purpose to build His Church on the rock "*Petra*," of His own name. It would be an assembly of called-out ones, or in other words, they would be stones in the building which was to be the habitation of God upon the earth.

You notice that I have substituted the word "Assembly" for "Church," because it expresses better

what is meant by the word in the original, and could not be so misused as the word 'Church' often is.

But when we speak of "called-out" persons, it raises a question of called out from what? Surely, called out *from the world to God*; and this alone, if understood and acted upon in faith, would settle a good many questions. For how could you have a national Church, or a Church that included saved and unsaved, if it is to consist of persons called out from the world for communion with God, and to walk in nearness to Him?

Now, here at once, we are obliged to compare what we have found in the Scriptures with what we see around us; and if we have to refer to what is around us, it is not in order to find fault needlessly. We want to help one another, rather than to find fault with one another.

Suppose, for example, what is generally known as an united gospel mission were to be started in this locality, and that there are converts; what often happens is that there is an agreement beforehand that the converts are not to be advised which church they should join. That question is, by consent, to be left to the individual's choice, or shall we say to his conscience.

Now, the youngest believer here can see that such a question would be unnecessary in the days of the apostles; but now it is a question often raised, and, I believe, gives the young converts a false start that often affects the whole of their after-life.

If you are a believer you belong to God's Assembly; you are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13), and therefore you are already a member of the Church of God. How can you join what you already belong to? You are not only a saved soul, forgiven and justified, but also a member of the body of Christ, which is a further truth we shall seek

to glean something about, if the Lord will. Besides this, we are also members one of another.

Now, turning to the first Scripture we read to-night, from the parables of Matthew xiii., let us ask, What is the treasure? And again, What is the pearl of great price?

The Lord Himself, in His explanation of the parables, tells us that "the field is the world," and I have no doubt that the treasure hidden in the field is the Lord's people looked at as hidden in the world, and of value in His eyes. I turn to this Scripture to show, first of all, that there is something in this world which God calls a treasure—something which is of such value in His eyes that Christ sold all that He had, and bought the world for its sake.

So, again, the pearl of great price is not salvation, nor even Christ Himself, but the Church, for which the Lord Jesus gave up all that He had to possess it.

Now, turn to the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, verse 25, where we get this beautifully confirmed in the words, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

There is no mention of the Church in the Old Testament, although the headings of the chapters in our Bibles often speak as if the contents were about the Church. The third chapter of the Ephesians (verses 5 and 9) distinctly tells us that God had not made known unto the sons of men, but kept hidden in Himself, this mystery, or secret, of the Church.

But there is one aspect of the Church that has its counterpart in the Old Testament, that is, God dwelling in the midst of a redeemed people. To bring the children of Israel out of Egypt was a work of power and mercy. It was a deliverance for them with all its accompanying blessings, but Exodus xix. 46 tells

us a further truth—"I am Jehovah their God that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them."

This is really the one great distinguishing feature that marked off the children of Israel from all other nations or peoples on the earth. God was in their midst. Everything connected with them took its character from what He says, "Let them make me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them" (Exod. xxv. 8).

T. R.

### True Sayings.

I NEVER saw a person yet who was occupied with himself, who, to repeat the words, was not occupied with himself, and self-occupation is the greatest mischief in the world.

It is not knowing we are nothing, but being it, which is the point.

The corruption of the best thing is the worst corruption. It was idolatry in Israel. It is apostasy in Christendom.

Satan sifts to get rid of the *wheat*. The Lord sifts to get rid of the *chaff*.

There will never be a second Saviour to deliver from the sin of refusing the first One.

Show me a man of prayer, and I will show you a man of power.

No prayer, no strength. Feeble prayer, little strength. Much prayer, great strength.

“That Sabbath day was an high day” (John xix. 31).  
 “An high day” with ceremonial man, was the day that  
 Jesus lay in death.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter ii. 1-18.*

**T**IMOTHY, Paul's own son in the faith, was exhorted to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. “Be strong” is an exhortation we find often in Scripture, and surely we need it much, for it is easy to be discouraged and to grow weary in the work of the Lord, especially when things are dark or trying. But this is the very time we have to look above for that grace and strength which we need. We can never gain strength by getting over-occupied with the difficulties, but by looking to Him who is above them all and whose grace never fails. While Peter's eye was on Christ he was able to walk on the water, but the moment he began to look at the winds and waves he began to sink.

Timothy was to take his share in suffering, like a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It is easy to go about preaching, especially for those who are gifted in this way, without having anything at all to suffer. But how few are prepared for trials and discouragements in the work!

We have, then, three illustrations, each of which set forth qualities needed for service—the soldier, the athlete, and the husbandman. The soldier, when on military service, is to devote his energies to the one thing which engages him, he is not to be entangled with other matters. The athlete is to strive according to the rules of the game; he is not to do his own will or use his energies according to his own ideas. The

husbandman has to wait in patience for the results of his work of sowing and cultivation, in order that he may reap in due time.

Let us ponder over these things; as the apostle says, "think of what I say"; it is well we should take his words to heart if we truly desire to serve and please the Lord. And what a precious little word follows, "the Lord will give thee intelligence in all things!" Paul prayed for the Colossians that they might have the full knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual intelligence. It is not a merely intellectual knowledge of the truth that is wanted, but that spiritual intelligence in the things of God, which is learnt in His presence and which He alone can give, by the efficacious ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Timothy was exhorted to "remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to My gospel." Why "of the seed of David?" It is, doubtless, because all the promises of God with regard to this earth will yet be made good in Him who is to reign over the house of David for ever. He is the true heir of all that, in the counsels of God, belongs of right to the royal house of David. He is now the *risen* Christ; raised from among the sleeping dead in virtue of that resurrection-life which He gives to His people; a life which has already displayed its victorious power over death in Him.

Paul himself was the true example of what he sought to impress on Timothy. At his conversion the Lord had said to Ananias, "I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for My name's sake," and he himself gives us a list of his sufferings in 2 Cor. xi. 23-28. Here, in second Timothy, he says he suffered trouble as an evil-doer [even unto bonds. To the Corinthians he has to say, "Ye have reigned as kings

without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." They were reigning *now* when they ought to have been content to be nothing, and to suffer for Christ's sake. Are we content to take the place of reproach and suffering now, while waiting for that day when Christ shall reign, and all His saints with Him? Alas, how little we are prepared for it in this easy-going and selfish age, and how chafed and complaining we become if things go against us! But the reward will be given by the faithful Lord, and if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him in that coming day of glory. The path of the servant, if he really stands for God in this world, cannot be an easy one, but there is the encouragement, "If we suffer, we shall reign with Him."

Timothy was to charge them earnestly before God not to strive about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. When Christians occupy their time striving about vain speculations and questions, often mere hair-splittings, it is a sure sign that the soul is not in the presence of God. The schoolmen in the Middle Ages were much occupied in these things; and, sad to say, many who ought to know better in our day are so also. But it is only nibbling at the husk, while the kernel is left untouched. It may be that those who do so have become tired of the plain and simple truth of God, and perhaps even despise those who teach it; but there is no food for the soul in empty speculations. And some teachers try to satisfy the cravings of restless souls by bringing out novelties, speculative ideas which amuse the mind. They are at best but barren and vain reasonings, which only puff up with pride and subvert the hearers. Anyone conversant with the state of the Church to-day must see that these things do immense harm, because they do not

stop merely with the persons who listen, but they spread like a gangrene in the body, and increase to more ungodliness.

But Timothy was to be diligent to show himself approved to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. One-sided and unbalanced views are a constant source of error, but the teaching which gives us *the truth* as found in the Word of God, rightly applied and evenly balanced, is of great value. It is not like one who is always pressing some favourite idea, but giving each truth its due weight and application. This is what truly helps the soul and edifies the saints.

We have here an instance of two who thus fell into these profane and vain babblings, Hymenæus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection had already taken place. Probably they spiritualised the resurrection, and said that since we were already risen with Christ there would be no other resurrection, *i.e.*, no resurrection of the body. And they got adherents, as almost any false teacher will, who puts forward his ideas with sufficient assurance and persistence. They had already overthrown the faith of some. F. G. B.

### Questions and Answers.

*Q.* "Mine ears hast thou opened" (Ps. xl. 6). What does this Scripture mean, especially the word "opened."

*A.* The word translated "opened" is literally to "dig" or "hollow out," as in Job vi. 27—"Ye dig for your friend," the word "pit" being understood, as necessary to complete the sense, so that we might well say "prepare," and translate, "Ears hast thou prepared for me." The sense considered morally is well given by the Septuagint translators, from whom that part of the quotation in

Hebrews x. 5-7 is taken, "A body hast thou prepared me."

The meaning is, Thou hast, by means of a (human) body, made it possible that every action of mine should be on the principle of obedience. Adam was formed in this way out of the dust of the earth (as indeed were the animals), but *his* body was animated by the breath of the living God (Gen. ii. 7, 19). When tested, however, by simple obedience to God's commandment, he failed, and lost Paradise. Christ, on the contrary, never having been in a position to obey, for He was Creator, accepted the human body, by which He ever showed what true obedience was, even to death, and the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 5-8). "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38).

The words in Isaiah l. 4, 5, are altogether different; "wakeneth," in verse 4, referring to the habitual dependence of the perfect servant, and "opened" in verse 5, to the deep exercise of soul, and need for being sustained divinely, when obedience was tried to the uttermost. Of this, Gethsemane and John xii. 27, 28 are blessed examples. How little we know of it!

---

*Fragments.*—Let us remember each morning that we start with the certainty of life in union with Christ at the right hand of God. Thus beginning the day above, and seeking to act in the power of life down here, we shall be able to keep the remembrance of these things upon our souls.

The preparation for active service is in secret with God. We learn our own weakness and need of dependence in communion with Him. *There* the battle is really fought. Power for active service is acquired, not *in* active service, but in intercourse with God in *secret*.

## Peace.

**“PEACE with God.”**—Peace with God is founded entirely on the death and resurrection of Christ. It does not rest on our doings, our feelings, our experiences, or anything of the kind. The work on which it is based was done entirely outside of us, done *for us on the cross long, long ago*. Christ was “delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification; therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God.”

The moment we look, in faith, entirely away from ourselves and rest in Christ, we *are* justified and we *have* peace with God. He says so; that is enough.

**“The Peace of God.”**—Here we have a step further. The Christian starts with “peace with God” as to the question of his sins, but when that is settled he finds there is also “the peace of God” about the circumstances and difficulties of life. The peace of God is that peace in which He dwells; nothing disturbs Him.

Dear fellow-believer, are you sometimes pressed with burdens and anxieties? Then just bring them to God in prayer and supplication and lay them down at His throne, and you will get *His* peace instead of your cares. That peace will garrison your heart and mind, just like a regiment of soldiers would garrison a city against the enemy (Phil. iv. 6-7).

**“The God of Peace.”**—This blessed title of God, we find often in the inspired Book. Is there unrest and turmoil in the world? Yes, but God is above it all as the God of peace. Is there unrest and confusion in the Church? Truly there is, but God is the God of peace, *He* is not the author of confusion. Is Satan active in this world? He is, but “the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Is man’s

will at work producing infidel speculations and reasonings? It is as active to-day as ever, and the withering influences which flow from its activities are as rife now as ever, also; perhaps more so: but the Christian who is let into the secret of God's mind in His Word, is at peace. He can say,

“Through scenes of strife and desert life,  
I tread *in peace* my way.”

We are brought to know God, the God who is infinitely above all the petty activities of the mind of man, and therefore we can pass on in calm and repose. The great achievements in which man boasts so much are but for the moment; his speculative theories are as variable as the waves after a storm, and as evanescent as the mist before the rising sun; but “the God of peace” abides the same for ever. What a stay to the soul this is!

### Gleanings and Meditations.

**N**O **C**ondemnation.—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is the believer's standing, and how wonderfully complete it is! His sins are all forgiven, and he is justified. But this is not all. We *were* “in Adam,” but now we *are* “in Christ,” in a *risen* and glorified Christ. It is “our new position entirely beyond the reach of everything to which the judgment of God applied.” “Could there be a question there of sin, or of wrath, or of condemnation, or of imputation? Impossible! It was all settled before He ascended thither. Christ is there because it is settled. That is the position of the Christian in Christ.”

Has any reader lingering doubts and uncertainties? If so, let him just set his Amen to this statement of

Holy Scripture given us in Romans viii. 1 ; resting upon it in faith, and all will be settled now and for evermore.

\* \* \* \* \*

**First Love.**—“First love is not the love of Christians *amongst themselves*, but love to Christ, or, to be more exact, *the love of Christ, known, tasted, and realised in the hearts of believers*. In fact, first love, as with the magnet, is not measured by the feeble magnetism imparted to the needle of the compass, but by the magnetic pole which communicates that magnetism to it. That love is poured out by the Holy Ghost into the heart of the believer.

H. R.

### The Power of the Cross.

**F**OR all who are accustomed to preach the gospel to the heathen, or even to those who, in so-called Christian lands, have no more knowledge of the truth than the heathen, there is no need to insist upon the power of the cross, which is felt and owned by those who are saved by the preaching of it. The apostle would know nothing else, nor would he seek any wisdom of words which might effectively introduce the subject to the learned who prided themselves on their scholastic studies and acquirements. The Greeks sought after wisdom, and to preach Christ crucified was “foolishness” to them, but the apostle would remind the Corinthians that he “determined to know nothing amongst them save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. i. 22-23, ii. 1-2). One word for him described both his preaching and the effect of it. “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Cor. i. 17-18).

Baptism has, of course, a value of its own. The apostle himself had felt it at the time of his conversion, for he would not eat and drink until he had gone through it (Acts ix. 18-19). Moreover, the Lord had expressly ordered it in His closing words to His disciples (Mat. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16). But it was a rite performed by human hands and might be, as we know it has been, terribly abused; whereas the preaching of the cross brought men face to face with God in judgment: and the question was forcibly pressed home upon the hearers, almost, we might say, as in the blessed Lord's own final words to the Pharisees, which sealed their condemnation, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. xxii. 42).

Everything for them turned upon their appreciation of Him. If any of the heathen who heard the preaching saw nothing in it but the death of a malefactor under the curse of God,—for the Scripture had said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13),—they found themselves with the thief who insulted the Lord with his last breath: "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us" (Luke xxiii. 39). If, on the other hand, their consciences were reached, and they stood self-condemned, they became the spiritual companions of the other thief, who, owning the justness of the sentence which lay upon him (whereas Jesus had "done nothing amiss"), turned to Him and said, "LORD, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." He found relief from his own merited condemnation in owning Jesus as his "Lord." And, as the apostle says, no one could do that "but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). He had not to wait long for the blessed answer from the lips of the Lord Himself, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 40-43).

Having, however, learned this first lesson, which is the believer's start in life, there is another equally important, but much more difficult to lay hold of; and it has to be faced, for it is the great secret of a holy life. In the words of the apostle, it is thus expressed, "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." In his own case, God often came to his help by the means of persecution, and the dangers that confronted him in his apostolic service, so that he could say, as a matter of personal experience, "We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us" (2 Cor. iv. 10-12). It has pleased God to leave on record for our instruction the incidents of his remarkable life and service, so that there might be no doubt as to the meaning of these words. All are not favoured in the same way, but the principle is the same for every Christian. It is no question of schooling oneself by self-mortification, as was very common from the early days of Christianity, and has been imitated all along the Church's history, but rather of accepting from God, and for the glory of the Lord Jesus, that path in life in which He ever walked in dependence upon God, and which culminated in the cross. In that path, whatever the difficulties met with, the Christian will always be sustained.

As a confirmation of this, it is well to notice that when the Galatians were very early turned aside through Judaising teachers who imposed upon them the yoke of the law as a substitute for the path of faith, the apostle with many tears sought to draw them back to the power of the cross. This characterises the whole epistle.

We find three principal applications: (1) "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20). In those remarkable words we can almost hear the dying thief speaking. It was, as we have already noticed, the apostle's start in life. And the curse which attached to that particular death is treated of in the following chapter iii.

Then (2), "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts" (v. 24). Let us weigh those words, *have crucified*. The apostle does not present it as an attainment to be striven after, but again as the start in practical life and conduct, wrought out in the soul by the Holy Ghost. He does not say, "ought to crucify," but, as in 2 Corinthians iv. 10, "*bearing about* in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." This works in two ways, meeting every incident of practical life in this world. We are either active or passive: we act, or seek to act, on the one hand, or, on the other, we suffer from what is done to us, justly or unjustly. The former is represented by the word "lust," the flesh and will being active (see James iv. 1-3). The latter is represented by the word "affections," or "passions," as in the margin; that is to say, everything that affects us contrary to our feelings, desires, or will. Nothing meets this more effectually than the cross of Christ. How did He express Himself, when crucified between the two thieves?—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." How would this calm our souls when ruffled, or ill-treated! He came to do His Father's will, and did it in perfect dependence, and in every respect. And then again, as to the *activity* of our nature, different in every case, both in measure or in kind, would not the simple question bring us to our right senses, Should I do it, or wish to do it, if I expected to be in my coffin in half an hour?

In Colossians iii. 3 we read, "Ye *are dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God." No doubt we have often felt that that is very strong language. It does not say, ye ought to be, or, strive to be dead, but *ye are. . . .*" It is indeed the strongest word in this respect. But it has to be accepted in *faith*, as we find it in Romans vi. 10-11, when the "reckoning" of faith is brought before us, as an exhortation. First of all, we find the *fact* as to Christ on the cross, "In that He died, He died *unto sin* once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." It is no question here of dying *for* our *sins*, which He bore in His own body on the tree; that is treated of previously in the epistle. Here, it is the practical life, thus set before us, with the consequent result for the Christian, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Sin* is dealt with in its root and principle. We all know that a dead man does not sin; he cannot do so, because he is dead. And this state or condition is practically adopted by the Christian, not as a matter of *effort* or *self-occupation* in any form, but in having his attention fixed upon the cross of Christ. It is the *reckoning* of *faith*.

Most young Christians leave this aside as being too hard, too stringent; and then, to excuse it, they add, too difficult to understand. But with patience, and again a reference to 2 Corinthians iv. 10, quoted above, we see how it is practically wrought out in the soul, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. . . ." The more we meditate upon Him and upon His cross, the more readily we are rebuked, when there is anything in our ways and bearings that contradicts it. May the Lord help us all in this, by the power of His spirit.

(3) Returning again to Galatians, we notice now the *third* application of the cross in chapter vi. 14, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the *world* is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This is also a serious matter as regards our surroundings in this world. It is comparatively easy to leave the world, as many have sought to do by shutting themselves up in convents, and such like, but they forget that the world is in their hearts, and the hankering after it remains, and perhaps in a more insidious form. But again, it is another matter when the world leaves us, and "casts out our name as evil for the Son of man's sake" (Luke vi. 22). Such was the cross to the Lord Jesus, and only in company with Him, can we learn its power, as led by the Holy Ghost.

W. J. L.

## The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the World.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers.*

I Peter ii.

IT is well known to many here, no doubt, that in one aspect the Church is now the house, the dwelling-place of God on the earth; and in another aspect it is the body of Christ. It is the first only of these two that we are considering to-night.

Let us turn now to the first epistle of Peter, chapter ii. Peter does not in his epistles use the word Church (except in one passage where the translation is questionable), but he gives us this beautiful picture of what the whole body of Christians are, "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." He also tells us in the first

epistle that "judgment must begin at the house of God," but I am not going to speak of that to-night.

Paul was the "chosen vessel" to unfold what the Church is, and he distinctly tells us in the epistle to the Ephesians, that it was committed to him by special revelation. To that epistle we shall, if the Lord will, turn on a future occasion; but for the present we will refer to chapter ii. only, for this thought—"In whom (Christ) ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (ver. 22).

This dwelling of God, by the Spirit in the Church must not be confused with the indwelling of the believer by the Spirit. Scripture declares both things plainly. In 1 Corinthians iii. 16 we get the first fact—the saints on the earth, as a body, are the temple of God; and in chapter vi. 19, we find the second, that is, the believer's body, individually, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Many other scriptures also bear this out.

But to return to our subject of the foundation of this building. Let us suppose a Jew converted on the day of Pentecost, and a Gentile converted by the preaching of Paul some years after, meeting together, and conversing about the salvation of their souls, and other blessings, which now through grace they enjoy. They speak of many things common to both, but presently the converted Jew says, "We have lost the temple, we have lost the land, and where are we now to turn to find the house of God, His temple?" Well, Peter writes to comfort such, and he says to them, "You have something better—better even than all the ancient things given of God."

Yes! better than all those precious things enumerated in the blessing that Jacob invoked upon the head of Joseph (Gen. xlix. 25), "for ye are," says he, "redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ," and "Unto

you who believe He is precious," . . . "Unto whom coming, as unto a living stone. . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house," etc.

The Lord Jesus said, "I will build"; Peter says, "Ye are built up."

A few thousand bricks tipped on to a piece of land do not form a building—a house. But here we have living stones, built up by the hand of God Himself, into a spiritual house—a holy temple. God *has*, then, got a dwelling-place on the earth.

The temple of old on Zion's hill was composed of great stones, and costly stones (1 Kings v. 17); but each stone in God's spiritual building cost more than all the temple, for each one is redeemed at the cost of the precious blood of Christ. The house of God now is composed of "living stones," and it is these stones that praise God.

Many Christians to-day regard a building as the house of God, and it would perhaps seem a ruthless thing to tell them that there is no such thing on earth now as a sacred building, in God's sight. They have no idea of how much they lose by not seeing what the house of God really is. It is our privilege to praise, and I want you to get hold of this thought, this fact of living stones built into that house by the hand of God. If only converted last week, you are a stone in that building, and the purpose of it is that God should dwell there, and get that which is acceptable to Him. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John iv. 23).

Let us remember, then, that whenever there is an assembly of Christians gathered together for worship, we do not go there as individual believers only (which, of course, is true in its place), but in the confession of this truth, that God dwells in the Church, the assembly

of saints on the earth; and this presence of God now regulates everything. By His Spirit God rules and directs there.

So you see, however important it is for us to be clear first of all as to our individual standing with God, it is of equal importance that we should also learn our place in the house of God, and how God would have us to walk with regard to all others of His children on the earth.

To return to our illustration of the two converted persons. The Jewish brother says to the Gentile, "It was not like this formerly. I could not have sat with you at the same table, it would have been wrong." And this brings out another thing characteristic of Christianity—God has made "of twain one new man." (Eph. ii. 15).

Peter does not speak of this, but in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, Paul makes known that "in Christ" all the distinctions that once existed are done away, and that "in Him" is found another wonderful truth, namely, *one new man*. Paul was the chosen instrument to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the administration of this mystery.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The truths that we have so far been dwelling upon are more particularly connected with the aspect of the Church as "the house of God," and before we take up the scriptures that speak of "the body of Christ," we must look a little at what may be called the *history* of the Church.

This we shall find in the book of "The Acts," which is the only authentic history we have of the Church in apostolic times.

The question may well arise from what we have said

—if the Church is not to be found in the Old Testament and was still future when the Lord Jesus was on the earth, when did it begin? It began on the day of Pentecost. As is often said, the birthday of the Church was at Pentecost.

Then was fulfilled the promise of the Holy Spirit, given by the Lord Jesus in John xiv. 17. Also, “He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you”; the further blessing promised in the verses we have read (Acts ii. 1-8); “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” . . . “Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” These were almost the last words of the Lord Jesus before ascending to the Father, and they were fulfilled a few days after, “when the day of Pentecost was fully come.” Then the Spirit “filled all the house where they were sitting,” and “sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”

This baptism of the Spirit is not repeated. The Holy Ghost then came down from heaven to abide forever in, and with, the Church.

Everyone can understand the unity so perfectly and beautifully formed by the Holy Spirit thus present (see Acts ii. 41-47, iv. 32-35, v. 12-16; vi. 6-7, etc.). Facts of the deepest interest as to the establishment and growth of the Church follow; but these we must leave for the present.

Before we go any further, I must refer to the scripture we read from 1st Corinthians xii. 13, because of its bearing upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit: “For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” The former part of this verse clearly relates to what took place at Pentecost, and the latter shows

how, by conversion, we are individually made to participate in the blessing.

Note also how scripture always speaks of *one* Spirit; not one for the Jews, and another for the Gentiles, but *one* Spirit.

Now, returning to what we read in the early chapters of the Acts, it is clear that there was no difficulty then in finding the Church, the assembly of God, at Jerusalem. There could be no question of where the converts were to go, or with whom they should have fellowship. From Pentecost on they were added to the company, the Church that then existed.

But alas! that happy state of unity and concord was soon lost. The spread of the truth also brought about another thing to which I must draw your attention; that is why I read the first few verses of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

It is an important point and will help in our inquiry, because it establishes the fact that a local assembly in a Gentile city, composed probably of both converted Jews and converted Gentiles, is addressed as "The Church of God which is at Corinth." We shall have to refer to this epistle again, because very special instruction is given us in it as to both aspects of the Church—in the first part, questions of walk, behaviour, discipline, even matters of eating and drinking are taken up, and then from the tenth chapter onwards, much that relates to "the Body"; with the ordering and government of the local assembly, exercise of gifts, and so forth.

With so much to consider we shall have to touch upon many things very cursorily, and I fear feebly, but one counts on the Lord to make up to us in His rich grace for what at best can only be a poor presentation of such momentous truths.

T. R.

## The Days of Scripture.

**I**N the apostle Peter's parting words, we find the terms "The Day of the Lord" and "The Day of God." The consideration of these, as well as other "days" of scripture, is of importance. We will therefore look at them in their order.

**I. "The First Day"** (Gen. i. 3-5).—Early in January, Professor Turner delivered some popular lectures to young people at the Royal Institute. The *Daily Chronicle*, in reporting one of these, stated that if any of the young folks had been brought up to believe the old-fashioned theology, with its orthodox views of the story of creation, they must have had some rude shocks during the evening. The writer of the article also clearly showed that, like many others, he himself had never understood the early chapters of Genesis aright; and he assumed that the teachings of science and of scripture, as to creation, were wholly at variance.

If he had, after listening to the Professor and before taking up his pen, read soberly the first chapter of the Bible, and let it speak for itself, he would have seen that there was nothing there in conflict with science, and therefore no deed for shocks.

If any reader is perplexed on this point, let him read over carefully the first three verses of Genesis. It says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What lapse of time there was between the creation and the earth becoming without form and void we cannot say. No one can tell when the "beginning," in verse 1 was, or how or when the earth *became* "without form and void" (see Jeremiah iv. 23). The interval between verses 1 and 2, for anything we learn in the Bible to the contrary, may

cover a prolonged period. If any professor or journalist can produce evidence of the great antiquity of the earth, scripture leaves the fullest room for this.

Through not seeing this, many people have experienced serious but needless difficulties as to the story of creation. In order to escape these, some have tried to find room for the great age of the earth in other ways; for example, by making the seven days of creation seven long periods. But they have thereby only got into greater confusion.

The fact is, when the ages of which geologists speak are placed where they ought to be, namely, between verses 1 and 2, these difficulties disappear, and even children have no cause for shocks.

When in verse 3 we have the beginning of the earth as fitted for man, *time* begins to unroll itself. By God's fiat darkness flees. He says, "Let there be light; and there was light." Thus we have *The First Day*. This day, like the other six days of the chapter, was an ordinary one of twenty-four hours. On that day, God started His work of preparing the earth, which had previously existed no one knows how long, for man's abode. In six days He set it in order like a house for its new tenant.

II. "**The Sabbath Day**."—This was the seventh day of the week of creation. On that day God "rested from all His work." The day was re-enacted and given to Israel alone of the nations as *a sign* between them and Jehovah for ever (Exod. xxxi. 13-17), and also to commemorate their deliverance out of Egypt (Deut. v. 14-15). When they return to Palestine once more, in a coming day, they will hallow the Sabbath (Ezek. xliv. 24). It was a link between them and Jehovah as regards *temporal* blessings on the earth.

III. "**The Lord's Day**" (Rev. i. 10).—This is the

first day of the week, a day entirely different from the Sabbath. As the Sabbath was a sign between Israel alone and God, so the Lord's Day distinguishes Christianity. It links believers with the day of our Lord's resurrection and the spiritual blessings of the new creation through Him. The early Christians sometimes kept two days for worship, the Sabbath Day and the Lord's Day. But the latter, the first day of the week, was clearly set apart, according to God's mind, as receiving divine sanction, for Christians (see Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2).

On that day the people of God came together to break bread in remembrance of their Lord, also for worship and service. We find, too, that they were instructed to put aside a portion of their money on that day for the needs of their poorer brethren. Let us follow their example, and maintain the true character of the Lord's Day.

IV. "**The Day of Salvation**" (2 Cor. vi. 2).—This covers, not twenty-four hours, but a long period. Its dawn was Bethlehem's manger. It takes in the whole of the present time, between the Lord's first coming to die and His second coming to assert His rights, and take His people to a land where there is no night. In this day, salvation and the knowledge of Christ is preached worldwide, without any restriction. It has already lasted nearly two thousand years, through the mercy of God. The passage in 2 Corinthians vi. is quoted from Isaiah xlix. 8, where the prophet had more especially in view the future day of the personal reign of Messiah, who would not only raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel, but be for a light to the Gentiles and for salvation unto the end of the earth.

V. "**The Day of the Lord**" (2 Pet. iii. 10), is a

term of *moral* significance, and is connected with *judgment*. It will begin soon after His saints are raised (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), and the final scene will be the judgment of the "great white throne" (Rev. xx. 11-15). It may be looked at as a "day" of something over a thousand years. Its morning will be the coming of the Lord, its glorious noontide will be His millennial reign over the earth, and its dark eveningtide will be the resurrection of all the wicked to stand before the throne of judgment.

It should be noticed, however, that the scriptures, regularly when speaking of the "Day of the Lord," refer to what will introduce judgment on the earth. It will be a time of darkness, persecution, and judgment (see Amos v. 18-20; Zephaniah i. 7; ii. 2; iii. 8, 16-20; Malachi iv. i.; Joel i. 15, ii. 11). Yet it is cheering to find in Joel ii. 32, that even then there will be deliverance in Zion and Jerusalem for those who call on the name of the Lord in sincerity.

"**The Day of God**" (2 Pet. iii. 12) has the same meaning, but is looked at in contrast with man's day of unbelief and scoffing. God has given man many thousands of days, most of which he has misused; but this "day" He reserves to Himself. Because of it the elements—the heavens and the earth—"will melt with fervent heat," thus ushering in an order of things suited to God Himself.

"Then with our Saviour, Lord and Friend,  
The *one unbroken day* we'll spend  
In singing still His praise."

W. M. R.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter ii. 19-26.*

**B**UT, whatever the folly of men may be, God's foundation stands sure. This is an immense stay to the soul in a day of confusion, and the ruin of the Church as to any united testimony. It may be difficult to discern who are the Lord's, since Satan has contrived to mix up the Church and the world so completely; but, thank God, "the Lord knoweth them that are His." Then the responsibility of the individual comes in, "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord withdraw from unrighteousness." The Lord cannot link Himself with evil; it is ever true that holiness becometh His house, and all connected with it.

Christendom has become like a great house where there are all sorts of vessels, some to honour, and some to dishonour. We cannot alter it or purge out the leaven from the house, though of course an assembly is responsible to purge out known evil, either in doctrine or practice (see 1 Cor. v. 6-13; Gal. v. 9). Neither can we leave the "great house" of profession; this is plain. What, then, is the path of the individual Christian in such a state of things, who wants to be pleasing to God? The divine principle always remains true that the path of obedience in such a case is *separation from evil*. This was so from the time the world began to go into idolatry, and God called out Abraham, all along the line to the days of the Reformation, and it is so still. The call comes to the individual christian who desires to walk with God, to purge himself from the vessels to dishonour; and he who does so, in doing it, will be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

However, it may here be remarked that there can be no doubt that this passage has been used by some, in cases to which it could not be justly and fairly applied. There ought to be all possible forbearance with those weak in the faith, as the apostle teaches us in Romans xiv., etc., and every effort made not to stumble a weak brother. Then in cases of difference of judgment about a confused question of ecclesiastical discipline or the like, it is surely a serious mistake to brand those who differ from us as vessels to dishonour. While maintaining the truth and the responsibility of each to separate from proved and known evil, let us not fall into an opposite error of refusing association with such as cannot see eye to eye with us respecting some question where there is fair ground for a difference of judgment. Indeed, the apostle Paul's own patience and forbearance, as all His epistles testify, is surely a lesson we need to ponder over seriously.

Timothy was to flee youthful lusts : it might be desire for the approval of men, for power, or for many other things. There were four things which he was to pursue—righteousness, faith, love, peace. What a beautiful combination this is! If it were only righteousness there might be hardness and severity. Have we not seen examples of Christian men, very righteous, but sadly lacking in love and peace? On the other hand, if it were only love, it might degenerate into indifference to evil, which is neither love nor grace in the true sense. These things Timothy was to follow after, not alone, but “with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” What suited instructions for each individual Christian as to his path in the difficult times of the last days! He cannot mend the state of things in Christendom, which is becoming worse and worse. And it is not God's purpose to reconstitute the

Church of God as it once was. But each one whose object it is to please the Lord, has his path clearly marked out as to the principles which should guide him, however great the evil and confusion may be. What is wanted is humility, a mind subject to the Word of God, a heart governed by Christ as the object, and thus free from those selfish motives to which we so easily become victims. This is indeed a "pure heart." And it is interesting to remark that we find this same expression in 1 Timothy i. 5, where it is linked up with "a good conscience and faith unfeigned." In 1 Peter i. 22, a "pure heart" is connected with fervent love to the brethren. Thus the Christian is not left in isolation; he finds others of the same mind and purpose with himself, and is glad to be identified with them.

Foolish and unlearned, or undisciplined, questions Timothy was to avoid. These were but the outcome of human pride and reason, and only ended in strife. But the servant of the Lord must not strive. Of course, in another sense, we are to strive, when it is a question of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3); but this is another matter. In general the path of the servant of God is to go on in peace. Nor is he called to act the part of a drill sergeant over a company of soldiers, issuing his word of command and expecting everyone to obey at once on pain of punishment. No, it is his blessed privilege, in meekness to set right those who oppose themselves, trusting that God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that thus they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who had been taken captive by him. This recovery was, that they might no longer do their own will, but God's will.

F. G. B.

## “Be Strong.”

“**W**ATCH ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. xvi. 13). If this exhortation was needed in the days of the apostle Paul, it is surely needed now.

“**Watch ye.**” We need to be on our watchtower, for Satan is ever seeking to bring in something between the soul and Christ. This is his constant aim. It may be that he uses false doctrine or worldliness, or things which cause strife and discord among Christians, for this end.

We are fast drawing to the close of the dispensation—Christ is coming. The present is no time for half-heartedness or that lukewarmness which characterised the Church at Laodicea. Let all who truly love the Saviour and await His speedy return beware of it! We need to seek, humbly and earnestly, for power and grace not to be carried along with the current. We need to **stand fast**, to stand for the truth of God, to persevere, not to grow weary in the fight of faith because others grow weary and give up. It is not a battle of a day and then done with; what the Christian wants to-day is perseverance, and this demands the constant exercise of faith in God and His unchanging Word.

What should we say of a soldier who, in the day of difficulty and discouragement, deserted the colours, retired from the campaign, and sought a path of ease and self-pleasing? We should say that such a one was not worthy to be enlisted in the service of his king and country. But no! It is just in times of trial that the exhortation comes with peculiar aptness, “**Quit you like men, be strong.**”

But let us remember that the battles of the Lord

cannot be fought by human strength or valour. We read of some who "out of weakness were made strong," and the one who was perhaps the most earnest and gifted servant of all (save our blessed Lord) has said, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Also, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God."

Then, again, he who carries on a combat must not be ignorant of the strength and devices of the enemy, so that he may be able to meet them successfully. The Christian soldier is weak in himself; he can only be fitted to meet the enemy, in the presence of God, deriving his strength from communion with Him. Even though he has on the "whole armour of God," he needs to be found on his knees, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

For the little while that remains may we be enabled, through grace, to be loyal and true-hearted to Christ, to "stand fast in the faith," to "be strong," not in our own strength but in His, who ever lives in the presence of God for us.

### Gleanings.

**A GOOD CONSCIENCE.**—There must be confession when we do or say what is wrong (1 John i. 9); and if there be not confession, our communion will assuredly be interrupted. Communion, with unconfessed sin upon the conscience, is a moral impossibility. We may talk of it, but it is the merest delusion. We must keep a clean conscience if we would walk with God. There is nothing more to be dreaded than moral insensibility, a slovenly conscience, an obtuse moral sense that can allow all sorts of things

to pass unjudged ; that can commit sin, pass on, and coolly say, "What evil have I done?"

**Faith.**—Faith is not ignorant, not indifferent, not reckless. It *brings in the living God*. It looks to Him, it leans on Him, it draws from Him. Faith is the only thing that gives God His proper place ; and, as a consequence, it is the only thing that lifts the soul completely above the influences of surrounding circumstances, be they what they may.

**Obedience.**—What is the antidote to self-will? *Subjection!* Subjection to what? Is it to what is called the authority of the Church? Is it to the voice of tradition? . . . To what then? To the voice of the living God—the voice of holy Scripture. This is the grand remedy for self-will, on the one hand, and submission to human authority on the other. "We must *obey*." This is the answer to self-will. "We must obey *God*." This is the answer to mere bowing down to human authority. C. H. M.

## Unbelief.

**I**N a day of reasoning and questioning, even about matters which are supposed to be, and ought to be, "most surely believed amongst us," there is a danger, common even amongst Christians, of treating *unbelief* as if it merely applied to doctrines, so that the warning of Hebrews xii. 1 comes to be regarded as having little practical application—"Let us lay aside every weight, and *the sin* which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." We need constantly to be reminded that unbelief is an evil weed, with deep and spreading roots,

and it soon springs up in any soil that is favourable to its growth.

This is all the more evident when we consider the character of the epistle, and that it was addressed to those who were familiar with the Old Testament, numbers of whom were imbued with its divine authority to the extent of considering that the only thing necessary for them was to add the *facts* concerning Christ to the types and prophecies which went before, in order to have a complete knowledge of the ways of God; and they continued to observe the ceremonial law very much as it was practised before Christ came. We read that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"; and later on, that the many thousands who believed were "all zealous of the law" (Acts vi. 7; xxi. 20). To such indeed was the Epistle to the Hebrews particularly addressed, and it is, on that very account, of very special value to us at this present hour. For are we not exposed to the same danger that beset the pious men of those times, namely, of letting slip the truth, while comforting ourselves that we are irreproachable if we maintain intact the traditions of the elders? We easily forget that the greatest opposers of the law, when Christ was here, were the Pharisees who boasted in their knowledge of the Scriptures, and were continually trying to set the Law of Moses in opposition to Him. They were the chief movers in plotting His death (Matt. xii. 14).

These indisputable facts ought surely to speak loudly to us in two ways; firstly, to show us that the knowledge of the letter of Scripture is not the same thing as having the heart and conscience brought into God's presence; that is, what we call "conversion," like that of the Thessalonians, who were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to

wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10); and secondly, that unbelief is a mental characteristic which forms a part of our moral being, and often shows itself where least expected, even amongst those who profess to worship the true God.

There is no part of the New Testament where *faith* is more largely insisted on, and described with so much detail, as in the epistle to the Hebrews. It was written to those whose life and character and boast depended upon their national traditions as embodied in the Old Testament writings. How stirring then is the warning addressed to them, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of *you* an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; but exhort one another *daily*, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 12, 13).

In this particular statement, the apostle was referring to their origin, when God first called out the people to be pre-eminently His own (though all the earth belonged to Him)—a people whom He set apart from all the nations, making them the objects of His special care, as we read in the *first* message sent to them through Moses from Mount Sinai, as soon as they had reached the "holy mount." It is referred to by Peter also in his first epistle. The words are as follows:—

"Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus xix. 3-6).

Let us mark well those words, "obey My voice

indeed." It is written that "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). The Word of God is efficacious to produce the result He seeks for, as in the beginning, when He said, "Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. i. 3). The principle is ever maintained through the Scripture; "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. xxxiii. 6). So the exhortation in Proverbs iv. 20, "My son attend to My words; incline thine ear unto My sayings"; compare that with chapter xxii. 17-21, which shows that not only is divine *certainty* thus communicated to the soul that hears, but also the power is given to "answer the words of truth" to others that we have to do with in the world.

What sustained Caleb when he, as one of the spies sent by Moses, brought back his report of the land of Canaan?—Not what he had *seen* there, but simply what he had *heard* from God, and kept "in his heart" from the time that they left Egypt (Joshua xiv. 7). Forty-five years of patient waiting, not through any fault of his, made no difference to him; for his soul was set on God and His unchanging word. With that he was enabled to give his simple testimony when ten out of twelve spies were overwhelmed by the difficulties they had perceived in Canaan; and thus he withstood the reasoning of those who only judged by what they *saw*, and discouraged the hearts of the people from obeying God's word to go forward. Six hundred thousand men spoke of stoning him, but he was as undismayed before them as he was by the giants of Hebron forty-five years after (Num. xiii. 25-33; xiv. 1-10). God's Word has the same power for us now, and is still able to quench in every heart the risings of unbelief.

The Apostle's word in Hebrews iii. is mainly drawn

from Psalm xcv., which, in a few words, sums up the forty years of "provocation" in the wilderness; for at that time the repeated intervention of God in favour of His people was continually met by murmuring, whenever they were confronted with a fresh difficulty. And when we go over the history in detail, we may notice that God's interventions regularly *preceded* the difficulties of their wilderness journey; but they never seemed to profit by the lesson, or lay it to heart, so as simply to trust God and appeal to Him on every occasion.

While they were still in Egypt, God put a difference between them and the Egyptians, and in a very marked way, in the latter plagues (Exodus viii 22, 23; ix. 4, 26; x. 23). Very probably that gave them courage to carry out the instructions as to the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood on the night of their leaving the country. But what faith there was did not last very long; for they all murmured as they approached the Red Sea, when they found that the Egyptians were pursuing them. God came in again in a most marvellous way, never to be forgotten. They had to own it when they saw the effect of their deliverance, which accomplished at the same time the destruction of all the Egyptian host. But even that did not hinder their murmuring when, in the wilderness, three days after, they "found no water." Their song showed the first effect on them of an accomplished salvation, but how long did it last? And if we look back upon our own histories, short as they may be, can we not trace, in the working of our deceitful hearts, the same features of unbelief of which we read in their remarkable history?

One thing is, however, very noticeable, namely, that until they got to Sinai, God met their murmurings by

instantaneous deliverance; whereas after that the law was given, and their responsibility clearly established, murmuring was generally met by governmental discipline and judgment, shortened indeed by the intercession of Moses. But they had to learn under the rod, and often very severely, lessons that should have been familiar had they attended to God's ways of grace.

And have we not all cause to lay to heart the solemn lesson of Sinai, enforced by the repeated warnings as to idolatry—as great a snare for us as it was for them? Not to the unbelieving world, but to saints recently delivered out of it by the preaching of the Gospel, were the words written, “Neither be ye idolators, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (1 Cor. x. 7). They had actually heard the voice of Jehovah God uttering the ten commandments, and trembling under it, had said, “Let not God speak with us lest we die”; and yet, when left to themselves during the six weeks of Moses' absence, they must needs make the golden calf, and attribute to the image their mighty deliverance from the crushing hosts of Egypt. But was it indeed only for *them* that all this was “written aforetime”? (Rom. xv. 4). Is there not with each one of us the tendency to be more influenced by what we *see* around us, than by what we have *heard*; and the growing unbelief of Christendom through the investigations and pretended discoveries of modern science—is it not just a counterpart of what is shown in the history of the Israelites? Their request to Aaron, “Make us gods to go before us,” was soon followed by eating and drinking, and then dancing round the golden image. Such is the human heart, so prone to “unbelief, in departing from the living God.” How different to the blessed Lord's

resistance to all Satan's efforts, whether by wiles or by an open declaration of himself! One simple word sufficed: "It is written!" (Matt. iv. 1-11).

Were it not for what is written, should we not have thought it difficult to credit that such turning aside from the living God, so sudden and so complete, after all they had experienced of His goodness and mighty power, was a thing impossible? And yet what do we find in the Gospel history? It was in the midst of that same people, and amongst them alone, that all the Lord's words were spoken and His miracles wrought; and yet their leading men, who boasted in the possession of the Scriptures, and in Moses to whom God spake, were the very ones who incited the common people and the Gentiles to have him crucified. "We know that God spake unto Moses," they said, "but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is" (John ix. 29). If that was the case with those who knew the letter of Scripture, and saw it being fulfilled before their eyes, though not in the way they wished for, is it astonishing that the same unbelief should beset us, with even greater advantages through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus bringing us into present relationship with God?

And it will not end there. Unbelief will go on increasing in Christendom—the most favoured part of the earth—until at last it will be given over to "a strong delusion, that they should *believe a lie*: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). Those days are not far distant. May the Lord grant us to be warned in time, and to heed the many exhortations suited to the circumstances and times in which we live!

At another opportunity we may be enabled to consider how unbelief is met and the believer delivered from it.

W. J. L.

## The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the World.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers.*

Rom. xii. 4-21 ; 1 Cor. xii. 12-18 ; 1 Cor. iii. 10-17.

**B**EFORE we go on to the further consideration of the Church as the body of Christ, I would draw your special attention to these verses in Romans xii., because of their practical bearing on our relations to one another. Here we are plainly taught what is always true, whether we recognise it or not, and whether we are walking together or not; indeed what is true, however much we differ in our paths, namely, that we *are* one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another. And this is true of all Christians, and not only of those with whom we may be more directly in the same fellowship.

This is most important for us to remember, and shows us how wonderful and many-sided the truth of God is; and how much there is to learn as to what unity is.

We have already noticed that neither Peter nor James mention the Church in their epistles, except in what I may call a casual way; and John only in one of his three epistles, somewhat similarly. This again shows us how large the truth is. There is a unity which is not dependent on our walk at all, but flows from the nature we possess in common with all other Christians, as born of God. This is the side of the truth dwelt upon by the apostle John, and love to one another is its normal and natural consequence.

The Lord Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Then again, look at the thrice-repeated prayer of the Lord Jesus in John xvii., "That they all may be one," etc. All this belongs to the new nature, its instincts and its characteristics. The gospel and epistles of John present this side of the truth more particularly. Its source is in God Himself, and it was manifested here on earth in absolute perfection in Jesus, the Son of God.

We see, too, the wonderful character of the inspired Word in this, that God uses Peter to give us one line of truth, Paul another, and John another. Peter's line may be said to be the *government* of God, Paul's, the *counsel* of God, and John's, the *character* of God—"God is love," "God is light," and so on. I have referred to this to show that, whatever differences may exist among Christians as to their walk and associations, there is that which is true of them always, both individually and collectively.

Our acts may practically deny it, but it is nevertheless true, that we *are one body* in Christ, and being members of Christ, we are members of one another. To see how this truth affects our behaviour towards one another, we have only to turn to Ephesians iv. 25: "Speak every man truth with his neighbour," etc. Why? Not only because it is sinful and harmful to lie, but, "for we are members one of another."

I have already spoken a little of 1 Corinthians xii., especially as to verse 12, and the presence and manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. Perhaps there may be opportunity later on to look further into this; but before we turn to Ephesians, I must call attention to the verses we read in 1 Corinthians iii., to answer some questions raised at the close of the last address, and because of its importance in helping us to understand the condition of things around us to-day.

Here we find that there are various builders who build on the one foundation laid by the Apostle Paul as a wise master-builder, and that the work they build is to be tested in a future day (verse 13). There is the builder who builds gold, silver, precious stones, whose work is approved, and He himself rewarded; the one who builds wood, hay, stubble, and whose work is condemned and he suffers loss, although he himself is saved; and the builder who defiles the temple of God, and is himself destroyed.

Does not this enable us to understand that there might be much that is built into what is outwardly the house of God upon the earth that is not of God; and that the true character of the work may not be seen by many until the day that reveals everything. All the later epistles contain solemn warnings as to this sad condition of things, consequent upon man's failure in what is committed to his responsibility. It prepares us for all kinds of evil in the Church, and necessarily raises the question of our position in relation to it.

Are we to remain in association with evil because it is there? or is there a path indicated in God's Word for those who seek what is consistent with His name? One thing that is always important to remember is, that the chief point in understanding the Word of God is to **believe** it. Then, as I have said, there is also the desire to *do* His will, to obey. You may depend upon it, that what has always characterised those who have learnt most in the school of God, and been most help to others is, that they were ready when they knew the will of God to **do** it, and to do it at all cost. (See James i. 25, etc.)

I cannot find in Scripture that it was ever the will of God that His people should remain in association with evil, even if linked with His name; and it is

therefore important that we should see the difference between that aspect of the Church in which *man* has a part in what is built, and that which *Christ* builds, against which the gates of hades—the powers of the unseen world—shall not prevail.

For the sake of our young friends here let me relate a little incident that occurred a few years ago in the West of England. I was on my way one Lord's Day morning to a neighbouring gathering, and got into conversation with a fellow-passenger who happened to be going to spend the day at the village, where we had for some time had a gospel tent. He wondered why I should be going there, so I told him my errand was to preach the gospel in the evening, in a temporary room that had been erected to replace the tent when the summer was over. "Oh yes," said he, "I know, and then you will be having a little church built, I suppose, to replace the room, and the laying of a foundation stone, and so on, when you have established a little 'cause.'"

"As to that," I replied, "I can assure you we shall not have any foundation laying—the foundation of my Church was laid nearly two thousand years ago; but I shall be only too thankful if God blesses His word, and through our means some true stones are built on the one and only foundation. 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. iii. 11)."

This brings us back again to Ephesians ii. 19. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners . . . but are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone," etc. Thus far we have gathered that the foundation of the Church is Christ, the Holy Spirit is the power that builds (often working unseen and

noiselessly, but never in vain), the saints are the temple, and God by His Spirit dwells in it as thus builded together.

Let me again remind you that this does not affect or deny the truth, that our bodies are individually the temple of the Holy Ghost; both things are plainly taught us in the Scriptures, as we have seen.

One very striking thing in connection with the Church is the call, or conversion, of the Apostle Paul. The first intimation of the peculiar place the Church has in the heart of Christ, is given in the words that arrested Saul on his way to Damascus:—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou **Me**?" Not, Why persecuted thou Mine—My sheep, My people, My saints—but **Me**. These poor despised people that you deem unfit to live are a part of Myself.

Now this is a great help to us in understanding what the apostle lays so much stress upon in the Epistle to the Ephesians; because to him was entrusted the revelation of this mystery, and there more especially it is unfolded to us. That which had been hid in God, not even hidden in the Scriptures, is now unfolded to this "chosen vessel." Unlike anything that ever existed before, or could exist, there is the unique and wonderful fact that Christ, glorified in heaven, is the Head of His body which is upon the earth. That body is composed of all believers.

I know people often speak of the Church militant on earth, and the Church triumphant in heaven; but the body of Christ is always, in scripture, seen on earth.

Every thoughtful reader of the Bible feels that when we come to this epistle (Ephesians), the Spirit of God opens out the truth of the Church, and the true heavenly character of Christianity, with a fulness and

depth that is met with nowhere else. The Colossian epistle is perhaps nearest to it in this respect.

In the end of the first chapter we are told that God has raised Christ from the dead, and given Him to be "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." It is difficult to enlarge upon this because of the greatness of the subject. Christ is the Head of the body, over all things; He fills all in all, and the assembly is His fulness. This, as has been said, can only be true of the Lord in resurrection, and as exalted to the right hand of God.

What a marvellous place this gives the Church! Is this what men speak of as "high church?" No, indeed, it is the very opposite; their idea robs the Church altogether of its true heavenly character.

On the next occasion we meet, I hope, if the Lord will, to look a little further into these wonderful truths concerning the body of Christ.

T. R.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter iii.*

**P**AUL warns Timothy against the perilous or difficult times of the last days. This warning comes with special force to ourselves, who live just at the close of the dispensation. He gives a list of some eighteen forms of evil which would be made manifest, and these are very similar to the list of about twenty-two evil things which are enumerated in the first chapter of Romans as found amongst the heathen. It is a solemn thing to think that professing Christianity will end with much the same characteristics as heathenism. The last on the list in Timothy is "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of

godliness, but denying the power thereof." Could anything better describe the present state of Christendom, with its forms and ceremonies and rituals, than this? It is always a serious thing to turn away from light and truth known and professed, and this is what is being done on all hands, even in these highly favoured lands of ours. If we turn to the first epistle, chapter iii. 1-3, we shall find that the form of evil there referred to points more to what was seen in the Romanism of the Middle Ages; but chapter iii. of the second epistle is given by the Spirit of God, no doubt specially in view of the end of the present dispensation.

From all such Timothy was to "turn away." This is the simple path for the obedient servant. And God will make manifest all the evil of these servants of the enemy in the end. What a contrast Paul himself was to these professors who only served the flesh and the devil! He could speak of "my doctrine," the centre and substance of which was a glorified Christ on high, to whom all true believers are united in one body by the Holy Spirit. Indeed he begins verse 10 (after speaking of the evildoers and teachers) with those two words of contrast, which we find again in verse 14 and in chapter iv. 5, "*But thou.*" It was as much as to say—"If I have to speak with grief about evil men and their teaching, here is what I have to say to *you*, son Timothy." In verse 10 he enumerates nine things which were exemplified in himself—his pure and wholesome doctrine, his conduct, his constant aim, his faith, his longsuffering, his love, his endurance, his persecution, his afflictions." Let us ponder over them thoughtfully, for they show us the qualities which are needed for true service. The path of the servant of God is not one of ease and self-pleasing, but a patient endurance in trials and conflicts, proving in all these things Christ's

suffering to sustain the soul in every circumstance in which He may allow us to be placed.

Thus the apostle was himself the living exponent of the truth he taught, which entailed upon him so much suffering and tribulation. He never accommodated himself to the religion of the flesh in order to escape persecution, and he tells us that persecution will be the portion of all who truly follow in his steps. Not that we should seek to make ourselves a kind of martyr, or bring trouble on ourselves by our own crooked or disagreeable ways. It is easy to do this; but persecution *for Christ's sake* is quite another thing.

We find in verse 14 of chapter iii. these two little words we have already referred to in verse 10, "*But thou.*" He had just spoken of evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, and now he turns to Timothy, to guide and encourage him in view of it all. He was to continue in the things which he had learned and been assured of. That word "continue" should have great meaning for our souls. If others give up the truth, why should we? Only let us be assured that it is the *truth*, learned from the apostle through the Scripture for which we contend.

And what is the great resource for the faithful in a day such as second Timothy contemplates? It is not to be found in the Church, or the decrees of Councils, or human organisations for the maintenance of church order. No, it is in the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. "All scripture\* is God-breathed"; it comes from God, and it is inspired of God. And what is the Scripture? It is, we believe, the body of revealed

\* It has been remarked by some writers that the word *graphe*, used in the New Testament about fifty times, is there invariably and only used of the Scriptures.

truth, given by God in different ages through the instrumentality of vessels raised up and fitted by Him. Every added revelation confirms and throws its light back on what went before; so that every type and shadow of the Old Testament portrays for us some truth or fact which we can enjoy in the fuller light of the New. This body of revealed truth it was given to the Apostle Paul to complete, as he says, "to complete the Word of God" (Col. i. 25). The writings of John, etc., which were later in point of time, do not add new truths, but instruct us as to the Person of Christ, eternal life, etc., so that we might be established and fortified against anti-Christian teachers, and the workings of a spirit of error. They also tell us of the judgment of the professing Church, and of the world.

The "Scriptures" had a well-known place and designation amongst the Jews, to whom the "oracles of God" were committed. Our Lord Himself put His seal upon them in the fullest way. He met and vanquished Satan with the word, "It is written." "The Scriptures cannot be broken," said He; again, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears"; "Ye search the Scriptures"; and at the solemn hour of the cross, every testimony of Scripture must be fulfilled. In His risen condition He instructed His disciples out of the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. Peter speaks of "the other Scriptures" besides Paul's writings; thus showing that the sacred oracles had a very definite and recognised place as being from God.

Their divine inspiration, and the communication of the truth they contain, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in the very words taught by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. ii. 13), is a truth which it is of the greatest moment we should strenuously maintain in this day. Remark, it is not said here, in Timothy, that

the Scripture *contains* inspired words or thoughts; but that it is itself inspired: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." He who gives up the truth of the inspiration and authority of Scripture gives away the key of the whole situation and surrenders the citadel of the truth to the enemy.

And here we would like to draw attention to a warning given by the late W. Kelly in his notes on 1 John. "You have only to look at the daily papers, or in the monthlies or the quarterlies of our time, and you will find evidence in the religious organs, as much as in the worldly journals, that the apostasy is impending. They cannot hide, but betray the preparation for it.

"'Higher criticism,' falsely so-called, is the devil's device to throw dust in people's eyes about Scripture. Where is the word of God left for faith? If Scripture be denied to be the word of God, where is the Church, the believer, or the lost sinner? Where is Christ the Lord, or God's testimony to His grace and truth? No ground at all abides for faith. Make it an uncertain thing, the word of man (Elohists and Jehovists, senior and junior, with redactors too!) really, rather than the word of God, and you lose God's saving love, grace, and controlling power which kept infirm and erring man from a single error, that there should not be a flaw in all Scripture as originally given of Him. This is what God intended, as it is what the apostle Paul pronounces authoritatively in his latest epistle (2 Timothy). That too was the proper time for it. He says that not merely all Scripture in a general way is given by inspiration of God, but 'every Scripture,' every part of the Bible, each part of the Old Testament, and each part of the New Testament, every bit of it is God-breathed. Blessed be God that so it is. Can

God lie? Has God any need to repent, or alter His mind?

“O the wickedness of man, and in particular of Christendom! For it is most distressing to see this scepticism unjudged in all the denominations, great and small. Not one of them escapes its withering influence more or less, and especially in their leading or energetic men.”

These Scriptures are adapted to every emergency and every need of the soul. They are for teaching, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God should be complete, fully equipped for every good work. Of course it is quite true, and indeed a fact of great importance, that in order that the Scripture should be understood and applied aright, we need the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit. But, thank God, this is available for the most simple soul who counts on Him, and whose only motive and desire is to please Him. The “man of God” is the man who stands for God in the crisis or in the circumstances in which he is placed. It could not be said that every Christian is a man of God; though of course every man of God now is a Christian in the true sense of the word; and in addition to this, he maintains the truth of God and witnesses for Him here. F. G. B.

---

*Fragment.*—The life of our adorable Saviour was a life of gravity, always grave and generally straitened—not in Himself, for His heart was a springing well of love—but because of the evil that pressed Him on every side. I speak of His life and of His own heart. With regard to others; His death opened the flood-gates, in order that the full tide of love might flow over poor sinners.

## “Sow beside all Waters.”

THE summer is upon us again. Let us remind our readers that there is a large field for the distribution of gospel books and tracts in the country parts and villages of our land. The need is very great and the work is open to all, whether brothers or sisters. The enemy is busy disseminating false doctrines on every hand.

Christian reader, let us be in earnest and remember our responsibilities in respect of souls perishing around us. Soon our opportunities to serve our blessed Master will have come to a close; “the night cometh, when no man can work.” It is true there is much indifference amongst the people, but this is all the more reason for earnest believing prayer, and persevering effort to spread the glad tidings of salvation wherever we can.

Preaching the gospel in halls, cottage-meetings and the open air is very good, but individual work is most important also. Many souls can be reached in this way, who could not be spoken to otherwise. Opportunities often arise for a word with those who are sick or confined to the house from various causes.

Thank God, the blessed gospel of Christ is as fresh and powerful to-day as ever.

“Blest Lamb of God, Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till every ransom'd saint of God  
Be saved to sin no more.”

Let us remember the word, “Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,” and “Let us not be weary in well doing.”

## Gleanings and Meditations.

**G**RACE.—Directly grace acts in the heart, it gives the consciousness of sin; but, at the same time, the love of Christ reaches the conscience, deepening the consciousness of sin; but if this is deep, it is because the consciousness of the love of Christ is deep also.

**No More Remembrance of Sins.**—The certainty that God will *never* remember our sins and iniquities is founded on the steadfast will of God, on the perfect offering of Christ, now consequently seated on the right hand of God, and on the sure testimony of the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of *faith* that God will *never* remember our sins.

**Faith Tested.**—Faith tested is faith strengthened; it is to have learnt your weakness, but to have learnt the faithfulness of God, His tender care even in sending the difficulties, that we may be there with Him.

**God's Ways.**—God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work, and not think much of man's busy movements: they will accomplish God's [purposes]. The rest of them all perish and disappear. We have only peacefully to do His will.

**The Power of Death.**—It was by the power of death that the Lord destroyed all his strength who had the power of death (Heb. ii. 14). Death is the best weapon in the arsenal of God, when it is wielded by the power of life.

J. N. D.

\* \* \* \* \*

“**Manna forty years**” (Exod. xvi. 35). — What grace on God's part, that He never withdrew the supply of manna all through the wilderness journey. No, not even in consequence of the murmurings, discontent,

and rebellion of the children of Israel. It was a type of Christ incarnate, the true bread come down from heaven; upon which, thank God, it is our blessed privilege to feed by faith, until we reach the heavenly rest where we shall see Him as He is and be for ever like Him in glory.

“**Two mites, which make a farthing.**” The poor widow gave her all to the offerings of God. She might well have kept back one mite and thus given half her resources; but He who knew all things took notice of the fact that she gave *all*. As someone has said, “her divided gift showed her undivided heart.” May we follow her example and be enabled, through grace, to yield to Him who alone is worthy, “all we have and are.”

“**All that is in the world . . . is of the world**” (1 John ii. 16). The world is a system which man has built up to satisfy the cravings of an unsatisfied heart, and to minister to his vanity. It may be gross and wicked in the form it takes, or it may be polished and refined. It is absolutely opposed to the Father, and it is a snare to the Christian.

It is only as Christ fills and satisfies the heart that we can keep clear of its seductions. “*'Tis the Treasure we've found in His love that has made us now pilgrims below.*” Yes, so it is. It is by feeding on the word of God and living in the daily enjoyment of the heavenly portion we have in Christ, that we are kept from lusting after the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlick of Egypt.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Fragment.*—I cannot live *to* God till my accounts are settled *with* God. I have no fortune to spend until my debts are paid.

## Christ our Advocate.

Numbers xix. and 1 John ii.

**I**N studying the ordinances and ceremonies of the Levitical economy, nothing is more striking than the jealous care with which the God of Israel watched over His people, in order that they might be preserved from every defiling influence. By day and by night, awake and asleep, at home and abroad, in the bosom of the family, and in the solitary walk, His eyes were upon them. He looked after their food, their raiment, their domestic habits and arrangements. He carefully instructed them as to what they might and what they might not eat; what they might and what they might not wear. . . .

In all this, we read in unmistakable characters, the holiness of God; but we read also, as distinctly, the grace of God. If divine holiness could not suffer defilement upon the people, divine grace made ample provision for the removal thereof. This provision is set forth in Numbers xix., under two forms, namely, the blood of atonement, and the water of separation. Precious provision! a provision illustrating, at once, the holiness and the grace of God. Did we not know the ample provisions of divine grace, the lofty claims of divine holiness would be perfectly overwhelming; but being assured of the former, we can heartily rejoice in the latter.

Could we desire to see the standard of divine holiness lowered a single hair's breadth? Far be the thought. How could we, or why should we, seeing that divine grace has fully provided what divine holiness demands? An Israelite of old might shudder as he hearkened to such words as these, "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean

seven days." And again, "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel" Such words might indeed terrify his heart. He might feel led to exclaim, "What am I to do? How can I ever get on? It seems perfectly impossible for me to escape defilement." But, then, what of the ashes of the burnt heifer (ver. 9)? What of the water of separation? What could these mean? They set forth the memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ, applied to the heart by the power of the Spirit of God. "He shall purify himself with it the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean; but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean."

If we contract defilement, even though it be through negligence, that defilement must be removed, ere our communion can be restored. But we cannot get rid of the stain by any effort of our own. It can only be by the use of God's gracious provision, even the water of purification. An Israelite could no more remove, by his own efforts, the defilement caused by the touch of a dead body, than he could have broken Pharaoh's yoke, or delivered himself from the lash of Pharaoh's taskmasters.

And let the reader observe that it was not a question of offering a fresh sacrifice, nor yet of a fresh application of the blood. It is of special importance that this should be distinctly seen and understood. The death of Christ cannot be repeated. "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." We stand, by the grace of God, in the full credit and value of the death of Christ; but, inasmuch as we are

surrounded, on all sides, by temptations and snares; and as we have within us, such capabilities and tendencies; and, further, seeing we have a powerful adversary who is ever on the watch to ensnare us, and lead us off the path of truth and purity, we could not get on for a single moment, were it not for the gracious way in which God has provided for all our exigencies, in the precious death and all-prevailing advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not merely that the blood of Jesus Christ has washed away all our sins, and reconciled us to a holy God, but "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," and "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." He is ever in the presence of God for us. He represents us there, and maintains us in the divine integrity of the place and relationship in which His atoning death has set us. Our case can never, by any possibility, fall through, in the hands of such an advocate. He must cease to live, ere the very feeblest of His saints can perish. We are identified with Him and He with us.

Now, then, Christian reader, what should be the practical effect of all this grace upon our hearts and lives? When we think of the death, and of the burning—of the blood, and of the ashes—of the atoning sacrifice, and the interceding Priest and Advocate, what influence should it exert upon our souls? How should it act upon our consciences? Should it lead us to think little of sin? Should it cause us to walk carelessly and indifferently? Should it have the effect of making us light and frivolous in our ways? Alas! for the heart that can think so. We may rest assured of this, that the man who can draw a plea, from the rich provisions of divine grace, for lightness of conduct or levity of

spirit, knows very little, if indeed he knows anything at all, of the true nature or proper influence of grace and its provisions. Could we imagine, for a moment, that the ashes of the heifer, or the water of separation would have had the effect of making an Israelite careless as to his walk? Assuredly not. On the contrary, the very fact of such careful provision being made, by the goodness of God, against defilement, would make him feel what a serious thing it was to contract it. Such, at least, would be the proper effect of the provisions of divine grace.

The heap of ashes, laid up in a clean place, gave forth a double testimony; it testified the goodness of God; and it testified the hatefulness of sin. It declared that God could not suffer uncleanness upon His people, but it declared also that He had provided the means of removing it. It is utterly impossible that the blessed doctrine of the sprinkled blood, of the ashes, and of the water of separation, can be understood or enjoyed, without its producing a holy horror of sin in all its defiling forms. And we may further assert that no one who has ever felt the anguish of a defiled conscience, could lightly contract defilement.

A pure conscience is far too precious a treasure to be lightly parted with; and a defiled conscience is far too heavy a burden to be lightly taken up. But, blessed be the God of all grace, He has met all our need, in His own perfect way; and, He has met it, too, not to make us careless, but to make us watchful. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." But then he adds, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2).

C. H. M.

## Unbelief.

**W**E have seen how large a place in the history of God's ancient people of Israel is occupied by the account of their *unbelief*, and how it was accompanied by provocation of Him who, at Mount Sinai, caused His voice to be heard by them all, from the midst of the fire, "in the day of the assembly." It was this which led them to say, "Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not" (Deut. xviii. 16). Such an expression of their feelings helps also to explain the change in God's ways towards them, already noted, namely that subsequently, their murmuring called forth chastisements, which had not been the case before.

And does not this same fact enable us to perceive the hidden cause of unbelief, namely, the condition of the fallen creature already manifested in Adam and Eve, when, on hearing the voice of the Lord God in the garden of Eden, they hid themselves behind the trees (Gen. iii. 8)? They had not as yet heard of grace, so that there was nothing to attract their hearts; for they had only judgement to expect, judgment which was to be immediate. It was God Himself that they feared. How bitterly then was Satan's lure to Eve verified in their case! The hope of becoming "like God," ended in their being in heart opposed to God, before they knew it (Rom. i. 28-30). They no longer cared to retain in their knowledge the God whom they had once known, and in whom they had found all their delight.

Herein, too, we find the contrast between ourselves and the Blessed Lord, who consented to become man, and to die, in order to retrieve a ruined race; and yet, in the prospect of it, He said, "I delight to do Thy

will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart” (Ps. xl. 8).

The turning away in heart from the living God, at the very moment that He causes His voice to be heard, is thus shown to be the hidden *root* from which all unbelief springs. It was the case with Israel, as with Adam in the garden, and the source of the constant “provocation,” to which the apostle refers. How important then becomes the Lord’s invitation, “Come unto me!” Being in heart away from God, our first duty is to answer to His call, and draw near.

“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving . . . . O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways; unto whom I swore in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest” (Ps. xciv. 2, 6-11).

Nothing could exceed the importance of that manifestation of God on Mount Sinai, not by any visible form, but by the *voice* that all the people heard, accompanied by the *fire* which set forth in principle what God was. Moses recalls it over and over again, showing the people how it distinguished them from all other people on the face of the earth, and was the source of all their moral greatness, besides affording a vivid recollection which should have kept them ever after from idolatry (see Deut. iv. 10-12, 24, 32-36; v. 2-4, 22-26). And yet it was before that very mount, during

the temporary absence of Moses, that the people induced Aaron to make the golden calf, and they showed themselves quite ready to attribute to the idol of their own fabrication, their deliverance from the land of Egypt! Such is the desperate character of the human heart, and all this is recalled for our instruction (1 Cor. x. 7). The tendency in every heart is to follow Satan's allurements, and get away from God; how often is that found with bitter experience, in Christian families!

Now it is quite true that in Hebrews xii., Mount Sinai, and the manifestations of God's presence which took place there, is presented in *contrast* with Mount Zion, around which centres *Christian* privileges and hopes; but surely this is not done with a view to lessening its value for every soul, exercised as to the meaning of present relationship with God: for indeed, the end of the chapter recalls the twice repeated word from Deuteronomy iv. 24, and ix. 3, "For also *our* God is a consuming fire" (ver. 29). But this very fact serves to bring into greater prominence the *grace* which is the divine remedy for the natural tendency to get away from God. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). By no other could we have the true unfolding of what God is; and only by the grace revealed in Him, can we profit by the revelation (John i. 18).

The judgment of all evil still remains what it ever was, and it is to the SON that all judgment is committed, but the time for its execution is as yet deferred; for Jesus said, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John v. 22; xii. 47). In the meantime we have the revelation of God's *grace*. At Sinai, God was unrevealed, even to Moses; He remained in the "thick darkness" (Exodus xx. 21).

Even amid prophetic revelations of grace and goodness, Isaiah had to say, "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour" (chap. xlv. 15). But "everlasting salvation" shall come for Israel, and "glory" as well; whereas, for us, we have both already in Christ, and in the knowledge of His work and His love. It is only by grace that we can stand (Rom. v. 1; 1 Peter v. 12). By grace we profit by the revelation of God Himself in the person of Christ.

What an unspeakable blessing it is for us to be able to look back upon the fullest judgment of sin that ever could be accomplished, when the blessed Son of God took our sins upon Himself, and underwent the forsaking of God upon the cross! That is our start in life, and we who once were afar off, are now "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. i. 13). That is the great cure for unbelief of every kind. Every rising of doubt in the heart is stilled by it. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans viii. 39). It is in the cross that we learn what Christ's love is, and how upon a righteous basis, He can make the Father known to such as we are in our fallen condition, and bring us even now into a kind of "sonship" which he alone knew, and had ever enjoyed.

Had Adam known *grace* in the garden of Eden, he need not have hid behind the trees. But only judgment was before his soul then. And is it not blessed to notice how the Lord wins the heart of the Samaritan woman, so that He draws from her lips the prayer, "Give me," before He gently reached her conscience sufficiently to give her the conviction that He knew all her past history? With such a sense deepened in the soul, we may be enabled to say with the psalmist,

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts” (Ps. cxxxix. 23-24).

But we must not forget that it was on Mount Sinai that the *first* intimation of forgiveness was given, in answer to Moses' intercession for the people. No explanation is found as to *how* it could be carried out, while maintaining to the fullest extent the righteousness of God. On the contrary, it seemed to be shrouded in another mystery, which remains the paradox of the Old Testament, for how could God “forgive iniquity, transgression and sin,” if He did not at the same time clear the guilty (Deut. xxxiv. 7)? Some indications of the solution were given prophetically from time to time, resulting in David's marvellous association of righteousness and salvation in Psalm li. 14, and Isaiah's assurance, “Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”; but the chapter begins with, “Who hath *believed* our report?” (Isaiah liii. 1, 6-12). And to this day the Jews are forbidden to read it.

Later on, further unfoldings of God's purpose were vouchsafed, when Daniel received the message, about 560 years before its accomplishment, that Messiah should be “cut off” (ix. 26, compare Isaiah xxii. 25); and twenty years later, to Zechariah were confided further details of the rejection of Christ (chap. xi. 11-13; xiii. 7). But when the Lord was here, not one of the disciples dared to ask Him a word about His assurance that He must suffer at Jerusalem, though He repeated it four times, when he undertook His last journey from Galilee, in view of the cross. The subject was indeed too painful for them, and they were afraid to face it (Luke ix. 22, 51; xviii. 31-34; etc.). Little did they believe that, at the last, they would all forsake Him and flee (Matt. xxvi. 31, 56; John xvi. 32). Indeed we may well ask ourselves. Who could bear up

in presence of such sorrow? But we have to learn God's side of all these workings of grace and wisdom, so that all rest of heart may be found in Himself, while, as to ourselves, only self-judgment becomes us.

It could not be until the cross that the great enigma of the Old Testament was solved. But it was solved then by the word of self-judgment uttered by the poor thief to his companion, "We indeed justly"; he was thus compelled to turn to Jesus, and say, "Lord, remember *me*." Little did he think that the prophetic word had already furnished the very words in Psalm xxv. 7; but his soul was absorbed by the fact that while he was suffering for his own crimes, Jesus, who "had done nothing amiss," was suffering beside him and *for him*. Death must needs follow, but after death, it was the Lord who would settle everything. God could not clear the guilty, the wages of sin must be paid; but once the wages were paid by the Lord of glory, the fullest forgiveness becomes the portion, in righteousness, of him who believes in Jesus.

A few years pass, and the blessed apostle himself takes up the words so vividly, that we seem to hear the dying thief once more, "I through the law am dead . . . I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I live in the flesh, I live *by faith*, faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 19-20).  
W. J. L.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter iv. 1-8.*

**T**HIS chapter begins with a particularly solemn charge to Timothy. The charge was before God and Christ Jesus, who was about to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His

Kingdom. It must have come with special emphasis and seriousness to Paul's youthful but trusted helper in the work of the Lord, now that he himself was soon to be withdrawn from the sphere of his labours. The first thing was, "Preach the word." No matter what the state of things may be in the professing Church, the responsibility to "preach the word," to announce it as a herald would a message from a king, can never be set aside. People may say that the day for the gospel is over, or that the testimony of the Lord is set at naught; but let not the servant of God be deterred by the coldness and apathy of some or the opposition of others. The responsibility can never rightly be ignored to "preach the word." The very difficulties and needs of the hour ought to stir us up to be instant in season and out of season.

Even the prevailing deadness and apparent lack of results is no reason why we should be the less earnest; rather should we be the more so. And the work of the Lord (whether it were reproof, rebuke or exhortation) was to be carried on, not in a hard or haughty spirit, but with all longsuffering and doctrine. Forbearance with the weakness or even the peculiarities of others, as well as soundness in doctrine, is much needed by all who desire to serve the Lord.

The time would come, says the apostle, and doubtless it has long since arrived, when they would not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, would heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears. It reminds one of what we read in the prophet Jeremiah, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" To a great extent it is the people who

make the preacher, especially if he is hired and paid for his work; they like the man who suits their tastes and ideas. But the time would come when they would turn away from the truth, and be turned unto fables. Alas, there are many "fables" proclaimed now even from the pulpits of our land; anything to catch and amuse a congregation that likes a certain amount of religion on Sunday, but they want to be catered for according to their desires; and that is very often, anything but Christ and the truth.

But the servant of the Lord must in no wise fall into the spirit of the age. He has to please his Lord and Master, not to please men: "If I yet please men," says Paul, "then am I not the servant of Christ." In verse 5, we find those two little words to which we have drawn attention twice before, "*But thou.*" It is just as though the apostle, after he had warned Timothy against each successive form of evil, turned to him with the heart of a true shepherd, to give him special instruction and guidance in view of the state of things. And these instructions are eminently suitable to us to-day, as well as to Timothy in his day.

He was to "watch (or be sober) in all things, endure afflictions." There is truly much need of that sobriety of mind and judgment, which is not easily carried away by new ideas or moved by every wind of doctrine. It is surprising how even godly men are misled by plausible and specious reasonings. The great safeguard is simple faith and entire dependence on God and His word. To witness for the truth may, and no doubt will, entail suffering, but the exhortation given here is "endure afflictions."

Then, Timothy was also to carry on the blessed work of proclaiming the glad tidings. And oh, what a need there is for this in our day! True, there are many

earnest men labouring in that field, but it only touches a very small part of the work which is to be done, and the prevailing indifference is a cause of discouragement to many. But, thank God, the work of the gospel will go on till the Lord comes for His Church, and any one who makes light of it, or puts it in a secondary place, only shows how out of sympathy he is with the thoughts and desires of a Saviour-God, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Paul's departure was just at hand and in view of this he looked to his faithful son, Timothy, to carry on the work so dear to his heart. How touchingly the aged apostle speaks of his departure! "I am already being poured out," he says. He had spoken to the Philippians about being poured out as a libation upon the sacrifice and service of their faith, and to the elders of the Ephesian Church he had said, "neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24). What whole-hearted self-surrender to the claims of Christ! Would that we saw more of this spirit in our day! "The time of my release is come," he says. It was a martyr's death, he well knew, but then he would be free from every hindrance and at home with the Lord whom he loved and served. Looking back over his life, there are three things which he could say he had done—"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

The apostle does not here dwell upon the great achievements he had accomplished in his missionary journeys, nor the wonderful manner in which God had used him in the conversion of thousands of souls, as

well as in planting and building up the Churches in the faith. But this one sentence contains, we might almost say, his brief autobiography, written just before his death. In it he contemplates, more than anything else, what grace had enabled him to do in persevering to the end in a life of entire devotedness in the service of Christ. Men may have shining gifts of oratory, etc., and draw thousands to hear them preach (and if they preach the true gospel, this is well), but what God values is constancy, perseverance in the face of trials and difficulties, and the maintenance of the truth in power and freshness, when the general tendency around is one of weakness and decline.

Probably the third chapter of Philippians gives us the key to Paul's untiring devotedness to the end. Was it not that Christ so completely governed and controlled his whole life and soul, that he could say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," "This one thing I do" etc.? His was a life governed by Christ as the object, and lived in the ungrieved power of the Holy Ghost, at least to a very large extent. Herein his service and testimony was maintained fresh and bright even to the end, and his loyalty to the truth committed to him remained steadfast and unchanged.

But the Lord, who knows how to appraise everything at its true value, and who will not forget any act of true service done for His glory, will surely reward each according to His estimate of their work or testimony. Here the apostle speaks of a "crown of righteousness" which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give to him in the day of manifestation. And it is not only to him, but to all those who love Christ's appearing. Remark, it is not here a question of the *coming* of the Lord for His saints or the

“rapture” as we call it; but of His *appearing*. Why so? Because in these epistles of Timothy and Titus, where the responsible path of the servant is in view, it is the appearing or manifestation of the Lord which is brought before us. *Then* everything will be made manifest in its true light, and the rewards will be given righteously by the Lord, the righteous Judge. If we truly “love” His appearing, the conscience must be good, the walk must be consistent, and the life and service must be such as will meet the Lord’s approval when He appears, however feebly that service may have been done by us.

F. G. B

### Questions and Answers.

Q. What is the meaning of “firstborn of every creature” (Col. i. 15)?

A. It is better translated, “firstborn of all creation,” as in the R.V. It is not firstborn in point of *time*, but in point of *priority* or dignity. It says of David, though he was the eighth son of Jesse, “I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth” (Ps. lxxxix. 27).

Christ, when He comes into the creation which is His own work, naturally and rightly takes the first place in it, for all was created *by* Him and *for* Him (Col. i. 16). In John i. 3, creation is attributed to the Son in the most emphatic and positive way. To create is a divine prerogative, no one can do so but God. He who creates must be before that which is created, and must have divine power to accomplish it. It is a strong assertion of the Deity of our Lord.

Q. What is meant by “the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. iii. 14)?

A. Adam was set up in Eden as the head of the first creation, but he failed and was driven out. Christ is Head of the new creation. In Col. i. 18, He is said to be the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. The one who is Head of the Church in resurrection, is the one who is

the "beginning," the first *in* this new creation and the one *from* whom it originates.

In Rev. iii. 14, we find that the Church had failed as a witness for God, and Laodicea, which was neither cold nor hot, was about to be spued out of Christ's mouth as nauseous to Him. Christ Himself, then, takes the place of being the "beginning," the originating cause and source, as well as the one in whom the characteristics of that new creation, where all things are of God, were manifested. The Church *ought* to have taken its character from this new creation but, alas, it did not, and Christ Himself becomes the true archetype of what it is.

## The Voyage of Life.

### ON A GALE AT SEA.

Loud howls the gale, and the heavens are dark,  
But swift o'er the waves scuds our fast-sailing bark ;  
Her path through the billows is circled with foam,  
But the harder it blows, she the fleeter flies home.

'Tis thus with the Christian : afflictions may cloud,  
And darken life's sunshine with gloom like a shroud ;  
The waves of temptation around him may rise,  
And storms of adversity blacken the skies.

But the gale drives him swifter o'er life's troubled sea  
To the haven of rest, where his heart longs to be ;  
And the waves that around him so fearfully swell,  
Bear him fast to the home which his soul loves so well.

His compass is faith, and his chart is the Word,  
His pole-star the coming of Jesus the Lord ;  
His anchor is hope ; his affections the sail  
That he spreads up aloft to the favouring gale.

And soon shall life's perilous voyage be run,  
Its dangers be over, the harbour be won ;  
Where tempests assail not, where conflicts all cease,  
And he'll anchor secure in the haven of peace.

J. G. D.

## David and Jonathan.

A TOUCHING and instructive picture is presented to us in the opening of 1 Samuel xviii. David had just been the instrument in God's hand for the accomplishment of a wonderful deliverance for Israel. The great champion, Goliath of Gath, before whom none could stand, presented himself during forty days, defying the armies of Israel. But he had been met and overcome—slain with his own sword—and the victorious David returned from the battle with the head of the giant in his hand.

This was a type of One greater than David, the Lord Jesus, who has met and overcome the enemy for us. Through death He has broken the power of Satan; and in virtue of what He has done we have obtained a full and complete deliverance.

But no sooner had the victory been won, and the victorious David returned from the fight, than "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul." Jonathan did not go down to the battle, *that* was fought by David *alone*, but he shared in the results of the victory won by another. And is it not so in our case too? Our Lord Jesus did the work alone, we enjoy its blessed results.

It is said twice over in our chapter that Jonathan loved David "as his own soul." Yes truly, he loved him; not only for what he *had done*, but for what he *was* in himself, and this was a deeper thing. In proof of this he stripped himself of his robe and his garments, even to his sword, and his bow, and his girdle, and gave them to David. Is it so with us? Do we respond to the claims Christ has over us, body, soul, and spirit?

## “Him that Loveth Us.”

**N**O wonder the inspired seer in Patmos should break forth into a note of worship and adoration the moment the name of Jesus Christ was mentioned (Rev. i. 5). Many glories adorn His blessed person, for He is “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth”; but in what relationship does He stand to *us*? What is He to His Church? Ah, *we* can say, He is the One who “loves us!”

His love is a present fact, but it is past and future also, yea, it is eternal. It is a perfect and divine love, which spared nothing and gave up everything; not only His life, but even “Himself” for His Church (Eph. v. 25). In His love He died for us in the past, He lives for us in the present, and He is coming for us in the future.

That love, too, is a holy love, it could not bear one spot upon those who are its objects; therefore He has washed us from all our sins. There must not be one thing incompatible with the holiness of God, nothing on which His eye could not rest with perfect complacency. But such is the efficacy of His blood that it does not leave one spot on the believer before God. And just think of the cost! Could it be more or greater than “His own blood”?

This touching presentation of Christ Himself personally to the heart and affections of His Church is all the more remarkable coming in where it does, because the book of Revelation is a book of judgment—judgment

on the professing Church, and judgment on the world. Christ is about to take the kingdom and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

But He has “made *us* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.” Christ Himself will enter upon the possession of the kingdom in association with His Church, which will be linked up with Him in His reign. Wondrous and ineffable grace of the divine and loving Saviour! And it is not only that He gives us a place of *power* as kings, but He has made us priests. A priest is the *nearest* in access; this is the blessed place He brings us into—a place of nearness to God and His Father.

How could John do otherwise than give voice to the worship of the whole Church—“To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen”? Yes, truly, it is ours to join in this ascription of praise flowing out from the hearts of His saints even now. Soon we shall do so in a better and brighter scene above, when we shall see him face to face. But even here it is our happy privilege to begin the song of praise, and to give expression to the heart’s adoration and worship due to the One who loves us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood.

And so, as we meditate upon the extent and depth of the love of Christ as shown in His death, we can say:—

“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,  
 He's 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."

### Notes and Meditations.

"**MAN'S Littleness.**"—Such was the heading of a paragraph in a public paper respecting the sad loss of the "Empress of Ireland." It brings home to us forcibly the fact that there are circumstances which may arise, against which no foresight can make provision. Every precaution had been taken to provide the ship with the best appliances to hinder accident and to save life ; but, alas, it was all of no avail.

It is yet another voice from God Himself to teach us that man, with all his great achievements and boasted advance in knowledge and science, is a weak and puny creature in the face of a catastrophe such as this.

May He comfort the hearts of the sorrowing, and lead many unsaved ones to ask themselves the question, "How would it be with me if I were thus suddenly called into the presence of God?"

. . . . .

"**This Side Jordan.**"—The two tribes and a half settled *this side Jordan*. It was not in Egypt, but it was not in Canaan. Speaking typically, it was "on this side of the power of death and resurrection, applied

to the soul by the Spirit of God." It was the land they had chosen for their cattle and their possessions. After a time, when the sin of Israel exposed them to attacks from their enemies, these were the very first lands that fell into the hands of those enemies.

The two tribes and a half may follow this course if they will (*i.e.*, settling this side Jordan), but we cannot come out of Canaan to join them. Alas! these beautiful meadows, well suited to feed their flocks, have found but too many Lots, and tribes of Israel, to settle in them to their loss. The shoals that are met with in our Christian voyage may perhaps be safely crossed at high tide; but at low tide skilful pilotage is needed to avoid them, and to float always in the full current of the grace of God in the channel it has made for itself. But there is a sure and steadfast pilot; and we are safe if we are content to follow Him. God has given us what we need for this. Perhaps we must be satisfied with a very little boat; but the unerring pilot will be in it.

J. N. D.

## Unbelief.

**I**T does not require much exercise of conscience before God as to the true character of sin, in order to profit by a door of escape opened up to us from the judgment about to fall upon this world. And hence it is that in the great majority of conversions of which we hear at the present day, this exercise of soul must come afterwards. One would not in any way discourage the simple presentation of John iii. 16; but it certainly should be accompanied by a call to *repentance*, of which we find no mention at all in John's Gospel. Nor do we even find "forgiveness of sins"

there, except in an administrative sense; that is to say, in the Lord's instruction to His disciples whom He was about to leave, so that they might know how to act towards those who should present themselves for admission into their recognised company. The great subject of John's Gospel is the *Person* of the Son of God.

But on the other hand, there is no need to leave that gospel in order to maintain the balance of truth in a young soul, encouraged to confess the Lord's name by the repeated assurance that "Whosoever believeth in Him **hath** eternal life." If the Lord's words to the impotent man, healed at Bethesda, when He met him again, were duly pressed, there would soon follow deep exercise of heart in the presence of God, which every recipient of the gospel would feel keenly. What is more heart-searching than the words: "Behold, thou art made whole: *sin no more*, lest a worse thing come to thee" (John v. 14)? And do we not find that again, at the beginning of chapter viii., in the case of the accused woman? The Pharisees wanted to have her stoned, but when Jesus had spoken His words of relief, "Neither do I condemn thee," He added a fresh injunction as to her future conduct, "Go, and *sin no more*."

Again, in the same chapter, after having told the Pharisees, "Ye are of this world, I am not of this world," He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin; and the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever: if the **Son**, therefore, shall make *you free*, ye shall be free indeed" (viii. 23, 34-36). And the Epistle of John gives a further confirmation to these words: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even *as He walked*"; and

when the apostle speaks of our being presently made absolutely like Him, at His coming, he adds, "Every man that hath *this hope* in **Him**, purifieth himself even as **He** is pure" (ii. 6; iii. 1-3).

There is no escape from the conclusion that God demands from every Christian an absolutely spotless life—holiness not in ways only, but in words and even in thoughts, for all are before God's holy eyes, who cannot tolerate evil (Ps. cxxxix. 1-12, 23, 24; Hab. i. 13). It is this conclusion—the only right one—which leads to all the inward conflict detailed in Romans vii., ending with the despairing cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The sequel shows that the deliverance is already at hand, in the death and resurrection of Christ; but that is inoperative if the eye is turned away from **Him** through *unbelief*. We are thus again confronted with the past history of those who had been brought out of Egypt, and delivered from the enemy's power, but who never entered Canaan at all. The divine comment is, they "could not, because of *unbelief*" (Heb. iii. 19). This is, as it were, our spiritual looking-glass (Jas. i. 22-25).

It is a comparatively easy thing to admit that sinners far from God are characterised by unbelief; they are indeed, whether they know it or not, wholly under its power, and all the efforts of Satan are directed to keep them in darkness and under its blinding effects. But all the history of the Old Testament proves how greatly it affected even those who had been brought into relationship with God. Even Moses, blessed instrument as he was of making God's mind known to His people, was not himself free from it, and one failure, near the end of his earthly course, led to his being prevented from entering the promised land. Aaron was associated

with him at the time, and the Lord spake unto them both, "Because ye *believed* Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Numb. xx. 12). Both of them had to die before the Jordan was crossed.

What a deep significance is thus added to the apostle's conclusion quoted above, "They could not enter in because of unbelief!" Does not this fact appeal to us all, and show increasingly the need of being kept to the end, even though we be not tried as many of the martyrs who "resisted unto blood, striving against sin?"

No attempt at settling questions as to our state or feelings, by any accepted doctrine or theology, will ever satisfy a soul desirous of walking with God. We must be kept "looking to Jesus," feeding upon Him. It is an immense mercy to know that every righteous claim against us on account of sin has been settled once and for ever at the cross, and that in two ways: first, as to the judgment of our *sins* which the Saviour took there upon Himself once for all. In consequence we are now brought to God in perfect acceptance, because the judgment due to us was borne by Christ, and is therefore past. Secondly, we find that the evil principle of our nature, *sin* in its root and working, was dealt with as well; for He died to it, and "in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." On that blessed fact the "reckoning" of faith is based, which leads practically to a life of holiness pleasing to God (Rom. vi. 7-15). And that lesson is not learned in a day.

But even when it is learned, faith must be fed by continued intercourse with the Lord. There may be plenty of good works outwardly, while there is a gnawing root of uncertainty in the soul, because its condition

is not maintained by feeding upon Christ. The cases are not rare in which outward activity hides for a time secret unrest and unhappiness.

*Doctrine* is the first thing pressed by the apostle in his final exhortations to Timothy, but he follows it up with "manner of life, purpose, *faith*, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions," and exhorts him to *continue* in the things he had learned, referring him to the holy scriptures (that is, of the Old Testament, which he had known from childhood) as "able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 10-17). Not a line of the New Testament was written when Timothy was a child, taught by his mother and grandmother.

When we speak of faith and of unbelief, its opposite, we instinctively turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Yet, in comparing it with other parts of the New Testament, we find in it very little of what may be called specific Christian *doctrine*. Some have neglected it on that account, thinking it concerned only Christians of Jewish origin, and they have in consequence got much damage to their souls. It is quite true that it was addressed to those who were conversant with the Old Testament, and whose religious life consisted of ceremonies typical of the death of Christ, but it was written in order to show them that since Christ had come, all the types were accomplished; and in going back again to the shadows they must inevitably lose the substance (Col. ii. 17). That is what the professing Church has done all through its history, and the tendency at the present day is to revert to the shadows, which proves how weak Christianity has become in the hands of those who profess to teach it. Simple faith is fast disappearing in Christendom, and the Lord has said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find

faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). Hence the importance of our getting aroused, praying always that we may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke xxi. 36).

To revert again to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we do not find there the unfolding of our present relationship with the **Father**, for which we look in John's gospel and epistle, but we find Christ all through it as the **Son**. We find no mention there of the mystery of the Church, "the body of Christ," such as we get in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians; but we do get the blessed fact that all who belong to the Church have a "*heavenly calling*," and their names "are written in *heaven*," where Jesus is, in the very highest place, after having purged our sins, and accomplished the atoning work needed for the realisation of the will of God to have "many sons in glory" (ii. 10-13; iii. 1; xii. 23). And this was the subject of lasting joy which the Lord set before His disciples in Luke x. 20.

There is no epistle which sets forth more definitely the basis of all Christian confidence as to our present acceptance, through the value in God's sight of the precious blood of Christ, and the holiness of God's presence accompanied by the inward joy of being there, which is what *true sanctification* means (Ps. li. 12).

Everything that the Christian needs to know about himself, as to his position, surroundings, prospects, and hope, he finds in that epistle, not by looking at himself and searching his own heart, but by "looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith" (xii. 1-2).

W. J. L.

## The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the World.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers.*

Eph. iii. 1-12 ; iv. 1-16.

I HAVE already called attention to the special character of the truth given us in the epistle to the Ephesians, and must now confine myself to our particular subject, lest we should lose our way in the vastness of the truths here spread out before us. Let me, in passing, ask you to mark how the Holy Spirit speaks of "*all things*" in the tenth and eleventh verses of the first chapter, and then in the end (twenty-second verse) we have, God "hath put all things under His (Christ's) 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."

Now, looking at the second chapter, we cannot but be struck with the use of the word "together," and how the saints are associated with Christ in a collective way all through. Beginning with our quickening, we find that in each of the operations of God toward us, and then in the resulting activities and graces, we are looked at as connected in this wonderful way with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first chapter we are *elected together* in Christ, in the second, *quickened and raised together*, in the third *heirs together*, in the fourth *growing together*, in the fifth *walking and working together*, and in the sixth *fighting together*. Everywhere it is the corporate unity of the Church in all its varied privileges, and our individual path and service flows from this.

All this prepares us for the exhortation with which the fourth chapter opens. We have been seeking to gather up the true character of our calling—the Christian calling. We find that the Church has a place in the mind and ways of God that nothing else has; that it was an entirely fresh revelation, given through a chosen vessel, Paul, and in the third chapter he emphasises the special character of the revelation of this mystery of Christ and the Church. The word mystery means secret, something not hitherto made known; but when revealed it is, of course, a secret no longer. Beautiful it is to see that it is spoken of as “unsearchable riches of Christ,” preached among the Gentiles; and Paul desires to make all men see what is the “*administration*” of this mystery, for so, I believe, the word “fellowship” in the ninth verse should read. It is, I suppose, somewhat in the same way as when we speak of the administration of a great railway system, or a vast shipbuilding concern. And this helps us to understand what the tenth verse says, that angels learn in the Church lessons of the all-various wisdom of God that they can learn nowhere else;—“in order that now, to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies, might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God” (N.T.).

This, then, is the calling that the apostle beseeches the Ephesian Christians to walk worthy of, and none the less are we to listen to that beseeching voice to-day.

We may well ask ourselves if we have got hold of this truth; and do not let us suppose that it is entirely a question of knowledge, although both wisdom and knowledge are prayed for (chap. i. 17-18). In the end of this third chapter, how much is said of the *love* of Christ! and the apostle’s prayer is that the saints may

be strengthened with power by the Spirit in the inner man, in order to the apprehension of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ; while in the first chapter the prayer is that they may be enlightened in the eyes of their heart (ver. 18). It is the intelligence of affection, rather than of mind.

Turning now to the fourth chapter, we find this touching exhortation, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

The proper place of this exhortation is easily seen. Our vocation or calling, has been set out before us in the second chapter, and amplified in a sort of parenthetical way in the third. It is surely true that we must know our "calling" before we can walk worthy of it, and it is not too much to say that it is impossible to "rightly divide the word of truth" unless we see the calling of the Church.

Another thing that is very clear is its *collective* character. It is with other Christians that we have to do, both in the "spiritual house" and as members of the body of Christ, consequently the need of these graces, "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." It is the absence of these graces, quite as much, perhaps, as the ignorance of truth, that has brought about the present confused and divided state of the Church.

What is it then that we are to endeavour to keep? Not the unity of the body, for that cannot be broken, but a unity that has been formed by the Holy Spirit, "one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling." Let us pause here a moment to see what is the character of this unity, and we shall find its basis in the fifteenth

verse of the second chapter, "one new man," formed in Christ of the two discordant elements of Jew and Gentile. The second feature is that both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (ver. 18), and the third is in the twenty-second verse, "builded together for an habitation of God by (or in) the Spirit."

Now let us keep these three points before us, for it is clear that much is made in this epistle of the great fact of Jew and Gentile being both "reconciled unto God in one body by the cross." Peace and all the other blessings are looked at in this connection of the "one new man" made of twain.

Further, it is important to see that this unity of the Spirit is not merely similarity of sentiment, or agreement upon points of doctrine or Church government, but the oneness of the body of Christ actually formed by the Holy Ghost; and the exhortation applies to its *practical* manifestation on the earth. It is presented here from three different points of view, in connection, severally, with the Holy Spirit, with the Lord Jesus, and with God the Father.

In the fourth verse, therefore, it is the real essential unity of which the Holy Ghost is the power and bond—"One body, one Spirit, one hope;" verse five gives us a wider sphere which might include profession, as owning "One Lord, one faith, one baptism;" but there is a still wider sphere in the sixth, declaring God as Father of all, above all things, everywhere; yet only *in* those that are His children by faith.

Now as to the practical application of these mighty truths to you and me, in a day when we find everything around us, amongst Christians generally, in direct contradiction to it. How are we to obey this scripture, or answer to this exhortation? We have been seeking to learn something of the true character of our calling,

and if we find ourselves in associations that practically deny these truths; we find any exercise of conscience met with all kinds of arguments, and persuasive reasonings, to keep us from the path of obedience.

I can remember when, as a very young Christian, I was told that it surely was the right thing to remain where the Lord had found me, although the more I read my Bible, the more I found myself linked with what was contrary to scripture. Another argument that often carries much weight is used by the Romanist and the Episcopalian, who each claim to have the Holy Catholic Church. Now I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and belong to no other, but that is a totally different thing from the Roman Catholic Church, or the English Catholic Church.

This is the Holy Catholic Church that we are reading about in this epistle; for catholic means universal, and if the term can be rightly applied to the Church at all, it surely can be only applicable to the Church of God, which is composed of every living member of the body of Christ on the earth. I am a member of that Church, and I decline membership of any other; I would not, therefore, desire to be identified with any body, or company, or association that denies it. Quite recently a lady who had been for many years a believer, told me she had seen dissent to be wrong, so had been received into the Established Church by baptism. Now, had she been a Jew or Mohammedan one could have understood this; but for a Christian, who had been for many years a member of Christ, and baptized as a Christian long ago, to consent to such an anomalous proceeding, only shows how little Christians understand what the Church is. Of course, the clergyman who persuaded her to take such a step might really think he was justified in doing so, because he no doubt believed

that his was the one true Church, but that is only another proof of the ignorance of what the unity of the Spirit really is.

Only let us get the true thoughts of God about *His* Church once clearly before our souls, and then if we honestly seek to walk worthy of that calling, in simple dependence, taking our stand simply and solely upon what grace has done for us, we will be kept from numberless snares and entanglements, into which dear children of God frequently fall. There is much in this fourth chapter of Ephesians to which we have had no time to refer, but one or two further points must be taken up next time, if the Lord will. T. R.

## Short Notes on Second Timothy.

### *Chapter iv. 8-22.*

PAUL desired Timothy to come to him soon. He was aged and now a prisoner for some four years or so, and he was truly a man of like passions with ourselves. Demas had forsaken him, being overcome by the love of the world; other fellow labourers had left, perhaps to serve the Lord in other fields. It is well for us to note here that though Mark had left the apostle on another occasion, not being prepared for the hardships of the way, and had been the cause of a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas, yet, Paul did not keep up any feeling against him, but, on the contrary, desired his presence and help in the ministry. Have we not often been saddened by the way in which some (perhaps even trivial) failure in a brother has been kept up against him for years by others, who seem as if they could neither forgive nor forget? So it ought not to be.

The apostle warns Timothy against one who showed determined opposition to the work, and who did many evil things against him; but he can leave him with the Lord, who "shall reward (for so it ought to read) him according to his works." At his first answer before Nero none stood with him, but all forsook him. How trying this must have been to this aged and faithful witness for the truth! Yet he does not complain, he only desires that it may not be laid to their charge. But there was *One* who did stand by him in every trial, and who never failed; the One who Himself had witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.

It is interesting for us also to note that, on the very occasion when we might say that Paul failed most (if indeed, we might venture to say this of such a servant as he was!) that is, when he declared himself to be a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, etc. (Acts xxiii. 1-10)—it was *then*, the night following, that the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified for Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Truly the Lord judgeth not as man judgeth; He acts in grace which rises above all our shortcomings and failures.

The epistle closes with the assurance that the Lord would deliver him from every evil work and preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom, and then follows the usual note of worship, "to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

It was the apostle's last communication to the assemblies he so dearly loved, and gives us, by inspiration, the closing message from God through this chosen and gifted servant, who had been so marvellously used in the planting of those churches which he had watched over with such loving care and solicitude, yea, often

with tears, that they might be found to the glory and praise of God. He could write to the Thessalonians, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own selves, because ye were dear unto us"; and to the Corinthians, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

But he had lived to see the beginning of that decay of first love and spiritual energy in the Church, and even those workings of Satan, which went from bad to worse, till they reached a climax in the gross darkness and corruption of the Middle Ages.

There is, no doubt, a certain analogy in a small way, between the state of things in second Timothy and that which exists now. God most graciously recovered, about eighty years ago, many precious truths long lost to the Church—truths which even the Reformation, blessed as it was, failed to bring to light. Amongst these we might mention, the peculiar place and calling of the Church as distinct from Israel, united to the Head in heaven by the Holy Spirit; the power and presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly; the bright hope of the Lord's coming as the immediate expectation of the Christian; and, along with these, a full and clear declaration of the Gospel, bringing out an accomplished redemption and a knowledge of the believer's place in Christ.

*We* live in the time when these truths are on the wane as to their vital power and freshness in the hearts of the saints of God. The world and other influences having sapped the foundation of that simple and whole-hearted energy of faith and devotedness, which, at the first, was satisfied with Christ and the

truth, and could find its all in Him. And as to the religious world outside (so called), it is marked by worldliness, indifference, the spirit of Laodicea, and even by the most open apostasy from the truth.

What is to be done? What is the path of the saint of God, who desires simply to please Him, to-day? It is, we believe, to be in the place of humble dependence on God, afar from all pretentiousness and pride. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones"; and, bless His name, **He is able** to "revive" all those who truly take this place. It is ours, too, to enjoy, in our own souls, the love of Christ which never changes, and to find in His Word the guidance and spiritual food we need from day to day. Days of difficulty and trial are just the time for individual faith to shine the brighter. Thank God, Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," and He can never fail those who trust in Him alone.

F. G. B.

## Questions and Answers.

*Q.* "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John i. 7). (*a*) Who is the "he" of this verse? (*b*) Is the believer's being in the light dependent on his walk? (*c*) Does our having fellowship one with another, as Christians, depend on our walking in the light? (*d*) Is that the force of, "If we walk"?

*A.* (*a*) "He," as regularly in John's epistle, is God revealed in Christ, the SON (John i. 18). There is a remarkable instance of this in the Epistle, ii. 27 to iii. 3, where

the thought passes instinctively from "Christ" in verse 28 to "God" in verse 29, back again to "Christ" at the end of iii. 1, and then, in verse 2, from "God," the antecedent, to "Christ," expressed by "Him" at the end of the verse.

(b) Certainly *not*. He cannot, as a believer, be anywhere else but in the light. For all outside are in the darkness in which this world is kept by Satan. Paul's preaching was to turn them "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4-6). But, this being in the light, each one is responsible to "*walk* as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). The "light" is God, revealed "as He is." The walk measured by it, is "as Christ walked." The former (i. 7) is the *position*; the latter (ii. 6) the *measure* of holiness in *walk*. In other words, the believer's walk is dependent on the light in which *he is*, Christ being the measure of it, and the Model to be ever followed.

Attention to the wording of the verses makes this very clear. John i. 7 reads, "as HE IS in the light," but chap. ii. 6 reads, "as HE WALKED." The word "walk" in i. 7 serves to indicate our responsibility, that is to say, we are bound to "walk" according to the revelation of God we have received. The walk depends upon our being in the light. No believer can get out of the light in that sense; that is, he cannot become an unbeliever again.

(c) Fellowship one with another is a *necessary* consequence of being in the light. "We love Him because He first loved us"; and everyone that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him (1 John iv. 19; v. 1). Love is a "commandment." The power for obeying is the Holy Ghost given to all that are "sons" (Gal. iv. 6; 1 John iii. 24; iv. 13; v. 8). The character and the perfect measure of obedience is seen in Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us (1 John iii. 16).

(d) This question is already answered. But we do well to notice that the word "if," as constantly employed in this epistle, serves in many cases as the introduction of

some fact, on which the sentence following it, depends. I may say to a young man, verging on manhood, "Remember if you are a man, you must put off childish things" (1 Cor. xiii. 11). So saying, I do not call in question the fact of his having arrived at that state, but desire to make him see his fresh responsibilities (compare Gal. iv. 1-6). This use of the word "if," in the sense of "that being so," characterises the closing verses of chap. i. Only we must remember that in the case of confession of sins, which is ever a duty, when called for, no sort of doubt is thrown upon the responsibility of doing so, but rather we find the blessed encouragement from a faithful Saviour-God, ever true to Himself, who is not only ready to forgive, but to go deeper in His mercy, to deal with the hidden root, which, unperceived, led to the fall. In David's case, the prophet's message carried him back to the moment of his being made king over all Israel, when, flushed with the sense of authority over 30,000 men, and with all the nobility of Israel at his beck and call, he forgot to inquire of God and His word as to the way of bringing up the ark (compare 2 Sam. xii. 7-8 with vi. 1-2, and 1 Chron. xiii. 1-5).

May we not also draw valuable instruction from all this history? A root of evil may exist unjudged for years before it results in a fall.

In David's case, the unperceived root of pride which his exalted position (legitimate in itself perhaps) produced, was yet dangerous as affording an opportunity for Satan to trip him up.

He had judged the evil of copying the Philistine's "new cart" to convey the ark to Zion; but it does not seem to have occurred to him to judge the self-satisfaction consequent on having a standing army ten times as numerous as Saul, his predecessor.

## “Watchman, what of the Night?”

**THE CALL.** This was the burden of Dumah, or Edom. A voice calls out of Seir, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman what of the night” (Isa. xxi. 11).

Edom is a type of the world in its dislike and contempt for the people of God. The Edomite rejoiced at the calamities which came upon God’s people, on account of their sins; theirs was a proud spirit of dislike and hatred. The taunt uttered from Seir was, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”

But let us consider the moral import of the question as it affects ourselves. For the Christian, this is the night, because Christ is absent. He who was the true Light, has been put out of the world; such is the character of this present evil age. As long as Christ was in the world, He was the light of the world, but now He is no longer here, and hence it is morally night.

**The Answer.**—But the Watchman’s answer is full of encouragement for the soul: “The morning cometh.” While the dark clouds of judgment impend over this guilty world, which lies in the arms of the wicked one, the Christian is already delivered from the wrath to come and is bound for heaven. His true and lasting home is the glory, which he shall share with Christ, his Lord and Saviour.

Are we so in the current of God’s mind, and in communion with Him that we realise that this is the night, because Christ is no longer here? Then, if so, we can thank God that “the morning cometh.” Have we to sorrow because of the present scattered condition of the Church of God, the lack of a decided and faith-

ful testimony for the Lord, and the poor response given to all His love? Truly we have, but let us encourage ourselves with the thought that "the morning cometh"; all will be set right then.

Israel as a nation awaits the *day* of millennial blessing, but the Christian looks *up* heavenward during the darkness of the night, and awaits the rising of that harbinger of day, "the bright and morning star." When *He* comes, the dark night will have passed away for ever, and the morning of joy will be ushered in. And as the Christian watchman seeks to discern the signs of the times, he sees already the shadows of the coming apostasy fast falling around him. Who that is acquainted with what is going on in Christendom, can doubt that the truth of God is being given up, and that unbelief in the Bible and evil doctrines of all kinds are advancing with appalling rapidity? But it is our happy privilege to look up in expectancy, and to realise that the "night" is now fast drawing to a close, and that the morning will soon break upon us with all its joy and gladness.

What effect should this have upon us as we wait? Our loins should be girded about for service, and our lights burning in testimony, and we ourselves like men who await their absent Lord. *Now* is the time to witness for Christ and serve Him; how quickly it passes, and how rapidly the sands in the hour-glass are running out!

But, for the world, there is the dark and ominous side of the picture as expressed by the watchman, "And also the night." As surely as the morning of joy is coming for the saints of God, so surely is the night of judgment coming for the world. This is a solemn and serious consideration.

**The Added Words.**—Yet, even still, the door is

held open for repentance, as witnessed by the added words, "If ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come." Christ waits in patient and long-suffering grace; but not for ever. Soon the door will be shut, and the night of judgment will have settled down upon this Christ-rejecting world.

Meantime, may we be found building up ourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping ourselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, for His name's sake!

## The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the World.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers—No. 5.*

1 Cor. x. 14-21 ; xi. 20-34 ; Matt. xviii. 19-20.

**B**EFORE we pass on, let me point out the grace of the Lord in providing for the maintenance of His assembly, His provision "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ"; also the ultimate object of all the love and care expended upon it, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

We see here (Eph. iv.) that, as the ascended, victorious Head of the body, Christ has received gifts for men, and has conferred them on men, who are His servants, for the edification of the Church. That we "may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in

the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (vers. 15 and 16).

So that there is, so to speak, a twofold character of supply; one from without, through these gifts, and another from within, through every joint of supply contributing its quota to the whole, but each, and always, deriving from the same blessed source, Christ glorified on High. Could love do more? Could Divine wisdom and grace be more perfectly displayed?

We may sometimes hear a child of God say, "But I have no gift; and amongst the Christians I meet, there is very little gift." Well, remember this, dear brother, or sister, you are at any rate a joint of supply, with a distinct place in this wondrous mystical body; and let us value the love and grace that has set us in such a place, and seek to answer to it.

Another thing, over which I must pass in the briefest way, is the unfolding in the fifth chapter of the great mystery of the Church as the *bride* of Christ. Here again His love is the prominent theme, "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." Then the unique relationship of husband and wife is referred to, to bring out the great truth of the relationship of the Church to Christ, closing with the words, "This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

\* \* \* \* \*

We must leave much that is of the deepest interest and special bearing on our subject, and turn to the verses we have read in the first epistle to the Corinthians for instruction as to the scriptural way in which Christian fellowship is expressed. No one will question, I suppose, that the Lord's Supper, besides being the most touching memorial of the death of

Christ, is the act by which the fellowship of believers is expressed, as members of the body of Christ.

The apostle speaks (xi. 23) of having received as a distinct revelation from the Lord, what he delivered to the Corinthian saints respecting this precious feast; and it is important to notice what is here added to that which is given in the gospels respecting it. In the one scripture, we are expressly told that the bread is the communion (or fellowship) of the body of Christ, and the cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ; and in the other "for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 26).

So we see that in the Lord's supper, it is not only true that we remember the Lord who died for us, according to His own expressed desire, "This do for a remembrance of me," but, by so doing, we have part in the fellowship of the body of Christ. "We being many are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" (loaf). This in itself ought to be sufficient to decide who should, and who should not partake.

It is very generally understood among orthodox Christians that participation in the Lord's supper is the sign of membership of some particular church or body; but what I want to point out is, that it is the scriptural way in which the membership of the one body is expressed. Not my membership of any particular church or body of Christians, but, by partaking of that supper with others, I express the simple fact, an important and blessed fact too, that I am a member of the body of Christ; not by choice, or education, or man's persuasion, but by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The danger of sectarianism is a very real one, and

although I readily admit that many of the sects around us owe their existence to an effort of godly men to separate from evil, or perhaps to confess to some special truth or truths that they think should be prominent, still the fact remains, that the Lord's supper is the great witness to the unity of the body, of which we are all members (if believers) by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Unity with the Head (the risen Christ) by the Holy Spirit is the only scriptural bond of union, and what a new believer is introduced into, is that unity which unquestionably existed in the beginning. "The principle, or ground of gathering, is that of all Christians being one in Christ, and as such they form the Church of God on the earth." Let us seek to get this most important principle clearly before us, and it will save us from many pitfalls and snares, not the least of which is sectarianism.

My young friends will now perhaps understand more clearly what I have said about the *oldest* Church, and why I could not join *your* Church if you formed one.

Take a well-known fact as an illustration. The late Mr Spurgeon, whom all regard as a true servant of God, after many outspoken protests against the downgrade tendency of our times, separated from the Baptist Union, and with others, formulated a creed for another Church or Union, by which it was hoped to exclude certain evils, and embrace all essential truth. What was wrong in this? Well, at the risk of being told that I am finding fault with my betters, I say such an act is wrong in principle, by whomsoever it may be attempted, because it is not for us to form Churches, but to seek to conform to what is already formed by the Holy Spirit.

It is not *our* unity, but “the unity of the Spirit,” that we are exhorted to endeavour to keep.

Now another question arises, that is the question of discipline. If we gather together around the Lord Jesus, it is as the Holy One and the True One that we know Him, and everyone feels that the Lord’s Table should answer to the character which belongs to it as the table of the Lord. Hence the exhortation of the fifth chapter of this first epistle to the Corinthians. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened” (ver. 6, 7). Mark that word, “as ye are unleavened.” That is the character of the assembly of God in its true state in the mind of Christ, and we ought to seek that it should be so practically.

Before we leave this part of the subject, let us try and summarise a little what has been before us. We have been trying to learn what the unity of the Spirit is; namely the divinely-formed link of relationship that exists outwardly between all the Christians on the earth to-day. He formed the unity, and He gives the grace to apprehend it, and to keep it. We have, I trust, learned that what a young believer is introduced into, is the body of Christ, God’s assembly on the earth; and that by partaking of the Lord’s supper, he expresses his participation in that place of blessing and privilege.

Another step is, that there must of necessity be the due consideration of all that is consistent with God’s presence by the Spirit, and the name of Him around whom the Holy Spirit gathers His saints. This brings us again to Matthew xviii. 20.

Few scriptures have been of greater blessing to the Lord’s people, in all times and circumstances since the Lord uttered them, than the words, “Where two or

three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them.”

I question if it is possible to make too much, for young believers especially—of the importance of Christ as the centre. If I may give you another little bit of personal experience,—I remember attending a large meeting of Sunday School workers when quite a young Christian, and being much impressed with some lines quoted by one of the chief speakers. I do not know the author of the lines, and forget the name even of the speaker, but the words remain,

“ Wouldst thou go forth to bless,  
Fix well the centre first,  
Then draw the circle round.”

They acted upon me, probably in a different way from what might have been expected by that speaker, for soon after I was led to know the centre that God has fixed—Christ in the midst; but they were deeply impressed upon my mind and heart. Christ in the midst of the assembly is God’s divine centre. Let me impress that upon my young brothers and sisters here. If you would work with God it must be from His centre. If, for instance, your work, your gift, is that of an evangelist, look at the verse again in the fourth of Ephesians that we passed over with just the briefest comment. Where is the evangelist in verse 11? In the centre. First, we get apostles and prophets, they are connected with the foundation, then the evangelist who works out *from* the centre, and gathers *to* the centre (Christ), souls that are to be nurtured and built up by the pastors and teachers.

It has been too much the custom to regard the Church as simply an enclosure for saved souls. This is true in its place, but if we look at the tenth chapter

of John we see how the Lord changes the figure He uses in the parable. He does not bring the sheep out of the fold of Judaism, into the "fold" of the Church, but says, "And there shall be one *flock* and one shepherd" (ver. 16). The vital power of Christianity is not like a hedge, or wall, around the sheep, but the attraction of the Person in the midst. What keeps the sheep together is following the Good Shepherd.

May the Lord keep us near Himself, within the range of His voice.

T. R.

## Unbelief.

LET us now turn to consider more particularly what is presented to us in the Scriptures for the present time, that is to say, ever since the blessed Lord came Himself into this world—God manifest in flesh. It is as to this that the efforts of the enemy are especially directed, in order to keep mankind in the thralldom of unbelief. We have been looking at what faith is in itself, so largely set forth in the epistle to the Hebrews, but I think all will be agreed that the object set before us, which forms, exercises and develops faith, is to be found particularly in the gospel of John, where Jesus is presented as the **Light** of the world.

The world lies "in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19), and "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4). Here it is then that we must expect the conflict to be severe and continued, and to confront us in unexpected ways. The world's darkness was not a momentary phase, nor merely a condition of things in which intelligent people might grope after light, as the nations of old did, before Christ

came (Acts. xvii. 27). Each one is naturally darkness, because "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7; Eph. v. 8). And nothing could set forth more clearly how great this darkness was, than the coming into the world of Him who alone was the Light. The way in which He was received by His own people, who possessed the scriptures of truth to enable them to understand who and what He was, only made the darkness more apparent. "He came unto his own" indeed, but "His own received Him not" (John i. 11).

In following the Gospel history, three things come before us: His *Person*, His *works*, His *word*. As to the first, we are confronted with this amazing fact, that the only place in Galilee where they sought to put the Lord to death was at Nazareth, where His home had been for thirty years! In Jerusalem, the leaders sought to stone Him more than once; but the reasoning of the country people who went there at the feast of tabernacles, shows clearly that it was not in *their* minds at all to get rid of One who had done so much for them (John vii. 20). While he was in Galilee, it was "the scribes which came down from *Jerusalem*," who charged Jesus with having Beelzebub, and "took council to destroy Him" (compare Matt. ix. 34, xii. 14, 24, with Mark iii. 22). Those who, during those thirty years, had had opportunities of watching his quiet, unobtrusive, perfect life, remained unaffected by it; and when Jesus revisited Nazareth, after having shown his works of power in Capernaum for some time, He was unable to act similarly at Nazareth "on account of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii. 58). Even Jesus " marvelled at their unbelief" (Mark vi. 6).

How truly were the words of the prophet fulfilled, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him;

He is despised and rejected of men!" (Isaiah liii. 2, 3). There was nothing in the Lord's appearance or in His ways, which answered to the selfish desires of the human heart. The quietness of His life, which lasted for a generation, had no effect in drawing out inquiry as to who He was, and when for the first time He stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth to read, they were scandalised at His venturing so to do, seeing he was known only as the "carpenter," or the "carpenter's son" (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). His "sisters" seemed to have more attraction for them, but anything morally above the level of their rough country life they would not recognise. Even Jesus said, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mark vi. 4). Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and sought no honour from man (Phil. ii. 8; John v. 41). The light, however and wherever it shone, served to make the surrounding darkness, in a moral sense, to be what it once was in Egypt, a "darkness to be felt" (Exodus x. 21).

\* \* \* \* \*

But what was the effect of His *miracles*? The Lord did not trust Himself to those who believed through them, because "He knew what was in man" (John ii. 23-25). Now miracles, of whatever kind they may be, appeal to sight and sense, as well as to a natural power of reasoning upon cause and effect. They are adapted to man in his fallen condition, and do not necessarily make any appeal to heart or conscience. If it is a mere question of divine power, altogether beyond our comprehension, we may see proofs of it everywhere in the creation which surrounds us day by day, but to which, as a rule, we pay no attention at all. We expect the sun to rise every morning, and forget that

God promised that it should do so "while the earth remaineth" (Gen. viii. 22).

If, again, we think or speak of miracles in the sense of what appears to us *contrary* to the order we are accustomed to, we have in our minds some standard of comparison, and esteem as miraculous any fact that does not seem to fall in with our ideas of "natural order." That such effects may be produced by witchcraft or Satanic power, is shown in the case of the magicians of Egypt, who were able, up to a certain point, to imitate what Moses and Aaron wrought by God's command; but in that case, there was a limit to their powers, which should have proved to bystanders that God was above them. We do not, however, read of any such effect having been produced.

Anything that brings us into the presence of God, affects the conscience, and that leads to a manifestation of the enmity with which the heart is full. So that from this point of view the opposition of the pharisees is not to be wondered at. They tried to excuse themselves by attributing the Lord's power to Beelzebub or Satan; but, as the Lord showed them, that only made the matter worse, and exposed their folly, for how could Satan cast out Satan? Moreover, all the Lord's miracles were miracles of goodness; and besides that, He gave His *disciples* power to do them, a thing which no prophet had ever done. They must have known this, yet they were only hardened.

And is it not striking that no such supposition of using Satanic power was ever advanced, when the miracles were wrought by the Lord's *disciples*, either while He was with them, or afterwards? On the contrary, all the leaders owned the "notable miracle" performed by Peter and John, on the impotent man at the gate of the temple (Acts iv. 16). But it only

aroused their enmity against the apostles who ascribed it to the *name* of Jesus of Nazareth whom *they* had crucified (Acts iv. 10).

John the Baptist did no miracle, nor could he tell anyone that the sins they confessed were forgiven. His mission was to preach "repentance," and numbers responded to the invitation; whereas, the Lord showed divine interest and compassion for every affliction as well as power to meet it, but those who had seen most "repented not" (Matt. xi. 20).

All His mighty works of power and grace ought, we might think, to have produced the conviction that the God of Israel was working in their midst; but any such intelligent conclusion, however honest, was not conversion, and the Lord did not trust it.

Nicodemus went further desiring to have some personal testimony from Jesus Himself, but the Lord met it at once by insisting on the necessity of new birth, which was a complete enigma to the teacher of Israel, upright man as, no doubt, he was.

Now all must admit that Nicodemus's case was exceedingly remarkable. He had both learned, valued, and taught the scriptures of which the Jews had the sacred deposit, and by which he, as an orthodox Pharisee, "thought" he *had* eternal life; for so the Lord states it of them in John v. 39. But like all such, he had no idea of what "eternal life" implied, when the Lord made use of the term. That is shown in the *only* passage in the four gospels where "eternal life" is found, in *human* lips, with "have," instead of "inherit," a Jewish idea referring to the *future*. This is in the lawyer's question (Matt. xix. 16). The Lord, in His answer, drops the word "eternal," and uses the expression "enter in," implying that every fallen man was in the position of Adam, driven out of paradise, and,

consequently, not in the place where the tree of life remained under the care of the cherubim who refused all approach to it by any who was not perfect as God had made Adam ; for he had lost all right to it.

Nicodemus was like all the rest, outside paradise ; but he had spiritual discernment to recognise, and honesty of heart to own, that Jesus *was* a teacher “ come from God,” because of the miracles He performed. That was a great point, and he went to Him to hear from Himself further needed truth, on the lines, of course, to which he, as a learned Jew, had always been accustomed. Moreover, there was conscience-work in the presence of the God of Israel, for he was well aware that his fellow-Pharisees did not recognise Jesus as such a teacher, and he did not know what his intercourse with Him might result in ; so he went by night.

According to current theological teaching, prevalent in certain quarters, Nicodemus then possessed the qualifications of a “ new-born soul.” They dare not, of course, say that he *was* such, for the Lord absolutely refuses it ; but all their reasoning is on those lines, and, however plausible it may seem, is thus scattered to the winds ; for Jesus said to *such a man*, “ ye must be born again.”

An event wholly unprecedented had taken place ; the **Son** who is ever in the **Father's** bosom, had come into the world, and thenceforth everything and everybody had to be judged of and dealt with in connection with **Him**. Jesus said, “ We (*i.e.*, the Father and the Son), speak that *We* do know, and testify that *We* have seen ; and *ye receive not Our* witness ” (John iii. 11). Jesus treats Nicodemus as He treated his coreligionists in chapter viii., except that He unfolded more to him in answer to his honest appeal ; and it is precious to see

the result, however timidly expressed, at the end of chapter vii., "Doth our law judge any man before it *hear him.*" But we must reserve this subject for a future occasion.

W. J. L.

## Some Questions of the Day.

### The Universal Fatherhood of God.

**I**S God the Father of all Men?—In a certain secondary sense of the word "Father" He is, but not in the primary and deeper meaning of that word.

The Apostle Paul, when speaking at Athens, quoted the heathen poet, "We are also His offspring"; and he wrote to the Ephesians concerning "One God and Father of all." In this sense God is father of all as Creator and Ruler. Also He is good to all and shows mercy and kindness to His creatures. He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust.

We use the word "father" ourselves, in a somewhat similar manner, as when we say of a man, "He is the father of that scheme, or plan, or invention," by which we mean that he is the originator of it.

But while admitting that God is called "Father" in this wider sense, we must carefully distinguish it from the deeper signification of the word as applied to those who believe the gospel and receive Christ by faith as their Lord and Saviour. We read in John i. 12, "But as many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (R. V.)

Here the fact of the *birth-tie* is brought in, and in this deeper and truly Christian sense of the word

“Father,” it is restricted to those who believe on His name and are born of God.

This is an all-important distinction, because it proves that there is no vital link with God as Father, apart from new birth. Those who had the right to take the place of children, were those born of God, and only they. To suppose that God brings fallen man into the relationship of a child, apart from being born again, is a false and fatal delusion. Man “in the flesh” cannot please God; the mind of the flesh is “enmity against God.” We need a new life and a new nature by faith in Christ Jesus, we need the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit through the word of God, before we can be brought into vital relationship with God as Father.

Equally false with the idea of the universal fatherhood of God, is the common doctrine of **the Universal Brotherhood of Men**. “Come along my brother,” say some good people to a poor slave of sin who has sunk down in the social scale, and whom they wish to help out of the mire. Now, it is a very good and commendable thing to seek the conversion and uplifting of the fallen, or “submerged tenth.” Would that we were more conscious of our responsibilities towards such, and were enabled to reach them more than we do! But let us not fall into the serious mistake that such a man is our “brother” in the true Christian sense, until he is “born again.”

Let us be quite clear that, whether it be a question of the man who is moral, amiable and religious, or of the greatest profligate in the world; it is true of *all*, as plainly shown by our Lord, in John iii., “Ye *must* be born again.”

How is this new birth brought about? It is, as our Lord says, by being “born of water and of the Spirit.”

Water is the well-known figure used in scripture for the word of God in its active energy. And so we read, "Being born again, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth," and many similar passages.

When the word of God comes home to a man's heart and conscience, he sees himself in all his depravity as he never did before ; and it leads to repentance and conversion. The truth is, man is defiled as to his nature, and before he can be in relationship with God he needs to be born right over again. It is not mere improvement which is wanted, but a new life and a new nature.

But, to return to our subject, all men are, of course, our fellow-creatures ; and if people like to call them brothers *in this sense*, we see no objection ; but the true and Christian relationship of brethren depends on new birth, and cannot exist without it. The door of entrance into the *family of God* is not by creation, but by being born again. No man can see or enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again ; this cannot be too strongly insisted on in the present day.

The so-called Christian Socialism of our times is an attempt to remedy the existing evils without the new birth. It teaches that Jesus Christ was a great socialist and a great reformer ; and it is generally linked up with more or less unbelief in the Bible. Now, it is remarkable that Christ never set on foot one scheme of social reform or betterment of the masses. He came to do that which was a far deeper work, namely, to *die to save* the lost, not merely to improve man as he stands. He was not an improver but a Saviour. True, when a man is brought to Christ for salvation, he is not only saved as to his soul, but his whole life is changed. The drunkard will be sober, the thief is taught to steal no more, the swearer gives up

his swearing, etc. The man hates what he once loved, and he loves what he once hated. The fact is, he has got a new life and a new nature, with new objects, new interests, and new desires.

And the way to help the great sinner and the profligate is not to place him in a false position, but by telling him of the blessed fact that God loves the poor sinner, while he hates the sin; yes, even such a sinner, as he is. And the proof of it is that He gave His only begotten Son and has provided a Saviour for even the chief of sinners, for "Christ died for the ungodly." Yes, thank God, such is the value of the sacrifice of Christ and such the efficacy of His precious blood, that it can cleanse the vilest sinner out of hell, who will repent and believe the gospel.

But Satan's object is to hide or deny these truths, and to make people believe that the mere moralizing and improvement of man, socially or otherwise, is the point to be aimed at. There are many schemes and plans for this purpose, but the radical defect with them all is, that they fail to keep in view the great fundamental truth that man, be he religious and moral, or a sinner of the deepest dye, has "sinned and come short of the glory of God." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" again "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Deep down in man's moral nature lie the seeds of all the depravity which comes out in his life. Scripture declares, in the most emphatic terms, that he is a sinner, "guilty" and "lost."

The moralist must come *down* and take his true place before God, and the great sinner must be brought to the consciousness of his sins; and both alike must repent, and receive Christ as a personal Saviour, if they are ever to be in heaven.

It is blessedly true that all who have been "born again" have received eternal life by faith in Christ Jesus and are brethren in Christ. It should be our privilege and joy to own such an one as a brother, whenever we meet a fellow-Christian. But the idea of a universal brotherhood of all men is only a delusion and a snare, intended to set aside or deny the great foundation truth of the **absolute necessity** of being born again and thus made children in the family of God by the reception of Christ as a personal Saviour.

F. G. B.

---

*Fragments.*—How perfect are God's ways, how sure His testimony; holiness becometh His house. His judgments are unchangeable.

The slippery path of sin is always trodden with accelerated steps, because the first sin tends to weaken in the soul the authority and power of that which alone can prevent our committing still greater sins—that is, the Word of God, as well as the consciousness of His presence, which imparts to the Word all its practical power over us.

\* \* \* \* \*

In a war of antagonistic principles, the man who seeks to temporise, while proving he has no principle of his own, and loves no truth, will disappear and leave only the memory of his own folly.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is no equality in an alliance between truth and error; since, by this very alliance, truth ceases to be truth, and error does not thereby become truth. The only thing lost is the authority and obligation of the truth.

J. N. D.

## A Pilgrim's Song.

A PILGRIM and a stranger,  
 I journey here below ;  
 Far distant is my country,  
 The home to which I go.  
*Here* I must toil and travel,  
 Oft weary and opprest,  
 But *there* my God shall lead me  
 To everlasting rest.

It is a well-worn pathway,—  
 Many have gone before,  
 The holy saints and prophets,  
 The patriarchs of yore.  
 They trod the toilsome journey  
 In patience and in faith ;  
 And them I fain would follow,  
 Like them in life and death !

So I must hasten forwards,  
 Thank God, the end will come.  
 This land of my sojourning  
 Is not my destined home.  
*That* evermore abideth,  
 Jerusalem above,  
 The everlasting city,  
 The land of light and love.

There shall I dwell for ever,  
 No more a stranger-guest,  
 With all Thy blood-bought children  
 In everlasting rest.  
 The pilgrim toil forgotten,  
 The pilgrim conflicts o'er ;  
 All earthly griefs behind us,  
 Eternal joys before !

PAUL GERHARDT (1607-76).

## The Crisis in Europe.

**I**T seems as if the terrible catastrophe of a European war, the spectre of which has so long been before the minds of our statesmen, was about to be realised.\* To quote the words of a public paper, "The shadow of an immense catastrophe broods over Europe to-day."

What is the Christian's place and consolation in view of it all? He can take comfort in finding his resource in God Himself, who is above all that transpires in this world. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee." Then it is our privilege, as well as our responsibility, to pray earnestly that God will give wisdom to our king, rulers and ministers, so that they may act aright at this very serious time.

It is not the place of the Christian, who truly understands the heavenly position and calling of the Church, to interfere in the government of the world, even if he could do so, or to meddle in its politics. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," said our Lord. "Our citizenship is in heaven," says the apostle. God is over all and, as has been truly said, "Gods ways are behind the scenes, but He moves all the scenes which He is behind."

Infidel unbelief looks merely at second causes and leaves God out, but we know from the inspired word that "He removeth kings and setteth up kings," He "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou?" (Dan. ii. 21 and iv. 35).

There is nothing stable beneath the sun: "Here we

\* This was written just on the eve of the war.

have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." The scripture tells us that all things will be shaken, but we receive "a kingdom which cannot be moved," and it is *outside* this world, with all its changes and its uncertainties. When Christ takes up the government of the world, then all will be set right, but not until then. God says; "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it to Him." (Ezek. xxi. 27).

But a time such as the present should lead us to serious reflection. What has God got to say to us in all this? Has not the pride and boastfulness of man, both in the world and in the professing Church, been rising to a height of late years? Have not unbelief in the Bible, and indifference to the things of God been terribly on the increase? No one who is at all acquainted with what is going on around us, can doubt it.

It is something of the same spirit as we find in Nebuchadnezzar of old, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" But he had soon to learn that "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

There can be no doubt that God has spoken of late in a remarkable way. There was the loss of the "Titanic" then of the "Empress of Ireland," which showed man's powerlessness in such circumstances, on the sea. Now we are in the midst of the catastrophe of a European war.

But, thank God, the Christian's true hopes and interests are outside it all. His real and lasting home is heaven, where Jesus is. But oh, how prone we are to settle down in this world as though it was our home,

and to forget that our place and calling is *heavenly*, as united to a glorified Christ above!

And everything seems to point to the fact that the coming of the Lord is near. It is indeed a blessed and cheering hope that He is coming to take His people *out of this world to Himself*, to the place He has prepared for them in the Father's house. This may take place to-day, to-morrow or **at any moment**. May we be waiting and watching with joyful expectation for the rising of "the bright and morning star"!

## The Gospel of God.

*Notes of an Address on Rom. i. 1-3.*

**I**T is always refreshing to the spirit to meditate on the fundamental principles of the gospel, which reveals what God is.

We read of "the gospel of God," and it was these few words that were before my mind. They place us at once in the presence of God, and we have to listen to what He says. Remark, it is **God's** gospel. Paul did not receive it from man or through man. It came direct from on high, when a light from heaven shone round about him and he saw that blessed One, Jesus, whom he persecuted.

Man put out of the world Him who was the Light, but God raised Him from the dead and set Him on high, when He had accomplished redemption. There He sits in all the glory of God.

No wonder such a light shone round Saul, when the light blazed into his soul and revealed to him the Saviour in whose face all the glory of God shines. At that very moment he was exceedingly mad in persecuting the saints, when the Lord of glory, the Son of God, Jesus, appeared to him.

But it was the face of the Redeemer, and there was manifested, not only the *glory* of God, but His *grace*. It was this which drew from Saul the question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

That grace met him in all his sins and taught him—not what he should "do," but what he should "suffer" for Christ's name's sake.

Paul had a different place from those who had been called during the Lord's life-time. He was separated to God to bear witness, not only to a risen Christ, but to an ascended and glorified Christ. Peter spoke, *first* of the sufferings of Christ, and *then* of the glory; Paul saw Christ, not as the suffering One, but as the glorified One. He, therefore, begins with the glory, and it was the glory of the Saviour who was dead, but is now risen and ascended. After such a sight of that glory he could return into the world to suffer and to witness for Christ here.

What we have before us in Rom. i. is "the gospel of God." God Himself is its **source**, and it therefore becomes every soul to listen to the glad tidings He has sent forth. "The heavens declare the glory of God"; but it is not the glories of creation which are set forth in the gospel of *God*. Creation unfolds what God is in His majesty and His power, as well as His goodness and mercy; but the gospel is that which comes straight from the very *heart* of God Himself and finds its objects here below. It tells us of God's *grace* in sending His Son to die to save the lost, and bring them to enjoy peace with God in the light.

But this is not all that we find in the gospel. God has raised His Son from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, the Captain of our salvation, in order that He might have His redeemed ones with Him and bring many sons to glory. He has ascended to the

right hand of God; and not only does He save from hell, but He takes His redeemed to the glory.

In John xiv. the Lord says, "I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again and receive you unto myself." Not only shall we sit with Him and be displayed in the glory, but we shall be *with Him in that place He has prepared*, enjoying unhindered communion and fellowship with Him with an ungrieved Spirit, at home in the Father's House. Even now we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ;" surely that brings us to the height of the gospel.

Moreover we are also sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise and are brought into the blessed nearness of union with a glorified Christ. And what will be displayed in heaven? The bride of Christ, arrayed in fine linen clean and white. The false woman, of whom we read in Rev. xvii., who pretended to be the bride on earth, was decked with purple and scarlet, and had a golden cup in her hand. Her assumed pomp and grandeur was all of man and Satan; but the true bride is arrayed in that which grace delights to confer upon her. The fine linen is the righteousness of saints; it is enough for Him, the heavenly Bridegroom. How simple, yet how precious in His sight, and it is all His own doing and His own grace!

How worthy is the gospel of which this is a part, to be called "the gospel of God"! Coming down from the highest, Christ stooped to the lowest, to carry up with Him on high His Bride, and to set her in the fullest glory where He is. Words fail to express the blessedness of it—brought from our former state to share His glory—the glory he has earned as Son of man.

It is the gospel of God **concerning His Son**. The One who was born in the manger, who walked this earth, persecuted and despised, and who hung upon the

cross. That One was Jesus, the Saviour, *our* Lord. Well may we own Him as *our* Lord for we are not our own, but are bought with a price. He is glorified in bringing poor sinners, saved by grace, into this wondrous place.

Even if men reject this gospel, God must be glorified. If He is not glorified in grace, He will be in judgment, for His Son must be glorified. All judgment is committed to the Son of man, and all must honour the Son, either as subjects of His grace or of His judgment.

Who can adequately describe the blessings of that gospel which is concerning God's beloved Son? How His grace calls forth our thankfulness! Surely it is a gospel worthy of God, and nothing less could be worthy of Him.

If such be the gospel of God, what is its effect on us? Are we going on with the world and its ways? Christ was not of the world, neither are we. In our daily walk and practice, we should show forth that we are redeemed by His precious blood.

May God give us to know more and more of His grace, and may He grant us a deeper knowledge of all He has given us in and through Him whom He delights to honour.

D. H.

## Unbelief.

**N**ICODEMUS'S gentle warning to the Pharisees who were determined at all cost to lay hands upon the blessed Lord (John vii. 50), is of touching interest, as showing the state of his own soul with reference to what he had *heard* at his first interview with Jesus, by night (John iii. 2). And does it not really contain the great secret of all personal interest in the Saviour, much more perhaps

than Nicodemus himself was conscious of, at the time. The Lord summed it all up in one short verse, in answer to the cavils of the Jews :

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *heareth* my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto judgment, but is passed from death unto life” (John v. 24). [It is well to remember that the word often translated “everlasting” is the same as is elsewhere rendered “eternal.” In all these passages in John, it has the same meaning.]

This is again confirmed by the Lord at the beginning of His prayer, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John xvii. 3).

There was no possibility of knowing God in this way, apart from the coming of the **Son** into this world (John i. 18); and no personal acquaintance with Him, nor any conclusion drawn from the miracles He wrought, however correct in itself such conclusion might be, could ever lead any soul into the enjoyment of what He was in His own Person, or give the consciousness of relationship with Himself, the Son, who alone could and did make the Father known. His *word* needed to be *heard*. And when that *word* was heard, two things, previously unthought of even by His disciples, laid hold of them: first, the necessity of His death in order to bring any sinner into relationship with the Father; and secondly, the gift of the Holy Ghost, after He had ascended to the Father, in order to make that relationship, as a present thing, good in the souls of those who had believed His word (John x. 11, 15; xii. 24; xiv. 26; xvi. 7, 14).

And we may notice here, in passing, that when the Holy Ghost did come, as promised, on the day of Pentecost, the first testimony given to the Jews through

Peter was as to the Lord's death, resurrection, and session at the right hand of God: "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear" (Acts ii. 22-36). Their condemnation was that they had crucified that blessed One, and upon their owning it in true repentance, the Holy Ghost was given to them also (Acts ii. 38).

From the outset of John's Gospel, as also in the Epistle, seeing and hearing the Son are practically inseparable. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you," he says, "that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 1-3). That is the meaning of "receiving" Him, in John i. 12. Those who do so are "children of God," they enter into the relationship which the Lord Jesus expressed in His own person—Himself, the eternal **Son**.

But we must be careful not to fall into the delusion that seeing and believing were practically the same thing. On the contrary, as we have already noticed, those who for thirty years had been accustomed to see Jesus, saw nothing in Him which was different to what they considered common to all men. They were totally ignorant of His inner life, and despised Him because He was separate from the world, not recognising in Him any right to read the Scriptures in the synagogue at Nazareth, because He had not gone through the regular course of study, as did all their Rabbis. Like the Jews at Jerusalem, during the feast of Tabernacles, their thought was, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John vii. 15). They had no idea whatever of anything divine in His person.

More than that, the gracious words which fell from His lips, at which they "wondered," had no real attraction for them. His word served to stir up envy in their hearts, because He was as they thought "Joseph's son"; and the moment He intimated that God's grace had of old reached out to the Gentiles, and even to enemies of Israel, they were filled with rage and sought to take His life.

Such is man in his natural condition. Unbelief is deeply rooted in his heart, and God's grace only excites his anger. The pharisees, who were supposed to know the scriptures, and to teach them, attributed to satanic power works of mercy dealt out unsparingly to every needy soul; and the fact that the Galileans were attracted to Jesus on that account, only led the pharisees to curse them, because they were ignorant of the law (John vii. 49). They boasted in the law in spite of its sentence of death, because it enabled them to rule over the poor who could not read, and they were determined at all cost to get rid of Christ, the only Saviour. But to profit by His salvation they must needs take the place of sinners, and that they would not do. On that account, John the baptist had treated them as a "generation of vipers," when some of them went to his baptism, because they only did it to maintain their credit with the people, on whom John's preaching had such an extraordinary effect: "Think not," he said, "to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matthew iii. 7-9).

Do not these very pharisees, outwardly respectable, present a vivid picture of the world around us, in so-called Christian countries? Is not the prayer of the pharisee in the temple—not really to God, but "with

himself"—as true to-day, in exposing the feelings of the natural heart, as it was when Jesus was going to Jerusalem to suffer on the cross? (Luke xviii. 11-12, 31-33) The fact of a publican being in the same place, and pleading as a sinner for mercy, only drew out the detestation of the self-righteous man. Unbelief of God's word, which they professed to know and teach, culminated in unbelief in Christ, the living Word, "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy iii. 16).

How little did Saul of Tarsus, in the days of his religious zeal, think of the uniform testimony of the scriptures which he afterwards quoted with such convincing power in his epistle to the Romans, proving by what "is written" that "every mouth is stopped and all the world guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 9-19). All the world is "guilty," whether they know it or not; *all* are "under sin."

And here is surely the explanation of why it was that the Lord's *words* had no attraction for the pharisees, who boasted, in spite of all, that they were "Abraham's children." They would not humble themselves under John's call to repentance, notwithstanding the extraordinary power of his preaching, though unaccompanied by any miracle; and consequently they hated and despised the Lord in spite of all His works of power. They dared not answer the Lord's question as to the character of John's ministry, whether it was "from heaven or of men," simply "because they feared the people who all held John to be a prophet indeed" (Matthew xxi. 23-27). These self-constituted teachers of the people, took refuge in the humiliating "We cannot tell"! Such is man at his best estate! And here we find the true secret of the unbelief of our natural hearts. It is even as the Lord said to them, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and

seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 44).

Now comes the searching question, What is it that can meet this unbelief and remove it? We are shut up to this, that not miracles, but the reception of divine testimony can alone produce saving faith. And the *conscience* is the avenue by which truth enters the soul. Where there is any honesty of heart, we must own that what God says of us in His word is *true*; but important as that is, we do not thus get deliverance. Another question immediately follows, namely, that if I am a sinner hopelessly lost, how does God deal with me—in judgment or in grace?

If I only know of *judgment*, such as will, alas, overtake a Christ-rejecting world in the day which is to come, I shall be disposed to call to the mountains and to the rocks to fall and hide me from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Isaiah ii. 19-21; Rev. vi. 16-17). But Jesus said, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John xii. 47). Judgment which is wholly given to the Son, because He is the Son of man, is reserved for His second coming to this earth. At the present time, we can still rejoice in the fact, that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17).

God cannot abate one atom of His holiness in order to meet man in his lost estate. The law was based on the first warning of God to Adam in paradise, namely that disobedience was to be punished with death. In as far as we are concerned, it may be summed up in this, that "death is the wages of sin." But just here it is that the grace of God meets us; for "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

And there can be no intermediate state: either, we are, as sinners, under the sentence of death, or as believers, in the enjoyment of eternal life. John iii. 35-36 is perfectly clear as to this: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all* things into His hand; he that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Or, in other words, "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life" (1 John v. 12).

We may indeed thank God for such simple words, which bring to nought the unbelief of our natural hearts. God's word is true and must stand for ever. All those reasonings which seek to accommodate divine things to human ideas, come to nothing in presence of God's word.

And how beautifully the *conscience* work referred to above is shown in the history of the conversion of the Samaritan woman! The Lord had spoken to her of a truth that no human ear had ever heard before, that is that the Father was seeking for worshippers who should worship Him in spirit and in truth. His grace and gentleness won her heart so as to draw from her the prayer, "Sir, give me this water," and then He so gently touched her conscience that she left her waterpot, and went her way to the city, saying to the men, who knew what her life had been, "Come, see a man, which told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" What moved her was, not that she knew Him, but that He knew her,—all her past life, though He told her the least possible; and in His grace her heart found rest. May it be so with each one of us, who may listen to His voice now!

W. J. L.

## The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the World.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers—No. 6.*

1 Tim. iii. 14-16; 2. Tim. ii. 19-26.

**W**E enter to-night upon a somewhat different line of truth from that which has been before us from the Epistle to the Ephesians and other parts, and we all feel the difference directly we turn to that which speaks of man's responsibility in carrying out practically the truth committed to him.

No one can fail to see, I think, the great difference between the two epistles to Timothy. There were not many years between the dates in which they were written, yet the first may be said to give us the path of the servant when the house of God was in order, and the second, directions for his walk when that house has got into disorder, and bad doctrines, and evil practices are doing their corrupting work.

We have been looking at the Church from what I may call the divine point of view, somewhat as when Balaam viewed Israel from the top of the rocks, having had his eyes opened by God to look at the people from above. Thence he saw only the position of blessing God had given them before Himself, their standing in grace, and their unity, as the twelve tribes of Israel.

In the same way we have been considering the corporate blessing of the Church as the habitation of God in the Spirit, the body of Christ on the earth, and His people gathered by the power of the Spirit around the divine centre. To follow the history of the Church from the time when the first converts, "walking in the

fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix. 31), is a serious study, and to turn to the consideration of the causes of declension that led up to its present state, is always a painful task. But the truth must be faced, and thank God, He has provided for His people under all circumstances, foreseeing all, and in His infinite wisdom preparing beforehand for every exigency, that the faithful may be encouraged to continue in the path of dependence upon Him, and Him alone.

No doubt the first downward step, from an outward point of view, was the giving up of faith in the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. This special manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, was the object of the enemy's attack. Satan's effort always is, to rob the people of God of what is the special feature of God's dealings with them at any particular time, or in any dispensation; and so he at once sought to weaken faith in the unseen, but truly real, presence of the Spirit. I am not forgetting what the Lord says to Ephesus in Revelation ii., as to the decline of first love, but I am speaking now of what was the more apparent reason of failure. The Ephesian decline was not so evident, except to Christ Himself; for works of faith and patience still abounded there.

We read in Acts v. that immediately on the setting up of the Church on the earth, when the devotedness of the saints was marked by the surrender of their earthly property; a man and his wife were led by Satan to agree together to deceive the Church, by laying at the apostle's feet a part only of the money realised by the sale of their lands, and pretending it was the whole. They sought in this way to get a reputation among the saints for the devotedness they did not

deserve, while they retained part of their property for their own enjoyment. But they would never have attempted such an imposition if they had believed in the immediate presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly. They did not believe that a Divine Person was in the company which they thus attempted to deceive, and we all know how solemnly God resented this fearful slight offered to Him, in that very early stage of the Church's history.

It is not many steps, so to speak, from that to Pergamos, where the evil effects of reliance upon the world had become apparent. It was man and his power, instead of God present in the Spirit. I do not refer further to what is to be learnt from the Revelation, because it is suggested that a special opportunity should be given for considering the connection between what has been before us, and the addresses to the seven Churches of Asia; but there can be no doubt that this unbelief in the presence of the Holy Spirit was rapidly followed by setting up a man as the vicar of Christ on the earth.

This was accompanied by a general decline, and the heavenly character of the calling was lost, so that the metropolis of the Church was made to be Rome instead of heaven. If where the head is, locates the metropolis, then it is clear that if Christ is the Head of the Church, as we have already gathered from scripture, heaven, and not Rome, or London, or Canterbury, is the great centre of administration, and the Divine Operator on the earth is the Holy Ghost.

Surely it is a sad form of unbelief, very little felt as unbelief, that Christians should so forget and ignore this great fact. Look at the hymns sung by the majority of Christians, many of them written by godly men too, and it is very apparent how the people

of God have been deprived of the blessing to be gained by the presence and help of the Spirit. Thank God it has not driven Him away.

Nor are we any of us free from this danger. I remember hearing of a well-known servant of the Lord meeting another Christian labourer who was on his way to what is called a "United Prayer Meeting." The latter begged his brother to accompany him, and he replied somewhat to this effect, "I should be glad indeed to kneel down with so many fellow-Christians, for I am sure there is much need for prayer, but tell me now, who is going to preside over your meeting to-day?" "Well, *I* was asked to do so to-day, but I shall be very glad if *you* will." "Oh, no, no," was the reply, "that would be worse still, for I couldn't do so with a good conscience, I could not join in a prayer meeting where the Holy Spirit was not at full liberty to lead."

That, you see, is the point. Faith in the presence of God dwelling in the assembly, is the first lesson in "knowing how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." When that is lost, it is easy to see how dependence on human resources takes its place.

T. R.

### The two Resurrections.

THE popular idea of a general resurrection, when all will be raised together, both the wicked and the just, is quite contrary to scripture. There are two resurrections, distinct both in character and in time.

The first is the RESURRECTION OF LIFE.

The second is the RESURRECTION OF JUDGMENT.

} John  
} v. 29.

Between these two events, as we shall see later on,

there is a space of over 1,000 years. The "first resurrection" will take effect when Christ comes into the air for His people. Then, as we learn from 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, "the dead in Christ shall rise first (*i.e.* before the living saints are changed). So also 1 Corinthians xv. refers to the same time when it says, "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (the living) shall be changed."

The "resurrection of judgment" will take place at the close of Christ's millennial reign. It will include all who have died in their sins in every age of the world's history. That this is so, is clearly taught in Revelations xx. 5, "The rest of the dead (*i.e.* the wicked dead) lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Resurrection is a blessed truth for the believer. The Saviour said, as He approached the grave of Lazarus, in the very presence of death, and when the weight and sorrow of it pressed upon His spirit, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." He did not say, "I raise the dead," though it is His voice which will call them forth from their graves; but He was, in His own person, the Resurrection and the Life. Christ possessed a life which death could not hold, and He rose from the grave in the power of that resurrection life.

It is this life which He communicates to His people, and it is a life which has already demonstrated its victorious superiority over death in Him. Therefore when He, the Victor over death and the grave, appears again upon the scene, all His saints will be quickened, as to their bodies by His life-giving word.

And here it is blessed to remark that our resurrection follows the pattern of the resurrection of Christ

Himself. He rose out from amongst the mass of sleeping dead, and we, too, are raised *from amongst* the dead, leaving the unsaved dead behind. Christ ascended to heaven in a glorified body, and we are raised in glory and ascend to meet him in the air. "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." He was the true "wave-sheaf," the firstfruits of the harvest of resurrection, waved before Jehovah, and the pledge that the rest of the harvest of all His risen saints would follow (Lev. xxiii. 10-11). What wonderful grace to be there identified with Him!

A resurrection out *from amongst* the dead was a thing unknown even to the orthodox Jews, though they believed in a resurrection *of* the dead. Martha spoke of this latter to the Lord on the occasion of Lazarus' death. But when He told His disciples that they should tell no man about the transfiguration till "the Son of man were risen from among the dead" (Mark ix. 9), they questioned with one another what the rising from amongst the dead should mean. That *some* of the dead would rise, leaving the mass of dead in their graves, was something entirely new to them. And how little it is understood in Christendom to-day!

So also in Luke xx. 35, we find that the Lord spoke of those who should be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from among the dead. Now if all the dead were raised together, there would be no priority given to those who share the resurrection-life of Christ and are, therefore, entirely distinct from the wicked dead.

We have a very strong form of expression used by the apostle Paul in Philippians iii. 11—translating literally we read, "The resurrection which is out from amongst the dead." It was to *this* the apostle says he was pressing forward as one running a race. No matter what lay in

the way, he had this before him; to be one day conformed to the image of God's Son, made perfectly like Christ in glory.

That triumphant resurrection-chapter, if we may so call it, 1 Corinthians xv., gives us the inspired answer to those who denied the resurrection. It is occupied with the resurrection of the saints, not with that of the wicked. We have all borne the image of the earthy (Adam), but we shall bear the image of the heavenly (Christ). Glorious prospect! Christ has become, in resurrection, the Head of a new race, who partake of His risen life. Already *He is our life*, and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). This is a precious and encouraging hope.

Those who are "earthy" have the character of the earthy (Adam); but, on the other hand, those who are heavenly (and this takes in all believers) have the character of the heavenly One (Christ). Death and the grave are the end of all here; but, thank God, life in the power of resurrection and victory over death are the portion of every believer in Jesus. And remark that when the saints are raised it will be with an incorruptible and glorified body; this, of course, could not be said of the wicked.

Clearly, therefore, the resurrection of the saints is entirely distinct, both in character and in time from the resurrection of the wicked. The one are raised at the Lord's coming, as being already sharers in the eternal life of which Christ Himself is the source, and in the power of which He rose from the dead. The others are raised at the very close of the world's history, to stand before the great white throne of judgment (Rev. xx. 11-15).

But, for the believer, resurrection will be the blessed

culmination of all his hopes; to be realised when the Lord shall come. When His resurrection "*shout*" shall gather together the sleeping dust of all His blood-bought people, *then* we shall be "for ever with the Lord."

F. G. B.

---

*Fragment*—**Salt is good**, etc. (Luke xiv. 34-35).—  
 "Salt" is grace in spiritual energy; that is, the saints being witnesses in the world of the power of holy love, instead of selfishness. Whatever enfeebles attachment to Christ destroys power. It is not gross sin that does it, which of course will be met and judged; but it is the little things of every-day life which are apt to be chosen before Christ. When the world creeps in, the salt has lost its savour, and we show that a rejected Christ has little power in our eyes.

The Lord keep us in the path with Christ, where all is bright and blessed. If the film of this world has been drawn over our spiritual vision, hiding Christ from us, He alone can remove it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"**THEY KNOW HIS VOICE**" (John x. 4, 5).—It is not the sheep's knowledge of the stranger that keeps it from the snares which he tries to set for it; but there is *one* voice which is known by the sheep, the voice of the Good Shepherd, and they know that what they hear is not *that* voice. It is thus the simple are kept; the wise wish to know everything, and are deceived.

J. N. D.

## The Crisis in Europe.

THE events now happening on the Continent, which are, we believe, without a parallel in the world's history, ought to fill every Christian heart with grief and sorrow. Not a few true children of God are to be found in the vast armies engaged in this terrible conflict. They much need our prayers and sympathy in the very trying circumstances in which they are placed, no doubt in most cases against their will.

How many homes are being desolated and hearts plunged in sorrow at this sad time! God is speaking solemnly, and this ought to lead even the most careless to serious concern as to their soul's eternal welfare. Indeed, we all ought to feel it deeply, and to see what God has to say to us at such a moment. Oh to turn in more earnest prayer to *Him*, who is a stronghold in the day of trouble, and the unfailing resource of His people in every hour of need!

Many are asking, "What has the Bible to say respecting the events now taking place, and are they the fulfilment of prophecy?"

As to this, we must remember that the present period, which runs from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord, is a parenthesis in God's direct dealing with the government of the world. He is now gathering *out of* the world a people for His name. In fact, the place and calling of the Church is essentially a heavenly one.

Prophecy has to do with the earth, and has in view the setting up of the Kingdom under Christ as the true Messiah, with Israel, owned again as His people, and Jerusalem as the centre of His government.

We have endeavoured to go into these matters somewhat in detail in a series of articles in last year's

volume of this magazine, and we can now only enumerate, very briefly, the chief prophetic events of the future. This will be found on page 198.

The most one can say of the events now happening is that they will doubtless *prepare the way* for those of which prophecy speaks, and which will take place *after* the rapture of the saints at the coming of the Lord.

One great comfort to the Christian is, that nothing can happen but what God allows; and that everything that does happen can but contribute to the accomplishment of His purposes, all of which are foreknown to Him.

### The Church of God.

(As we find it in the Scriptures, and as we see it in the World.)

*Notes of Addresses to Young Believers—No. 7.*

1 Tim. iii. 14-16; 2. Tim. ii. 19-26.

THERE is no need for me to point out the evils that exist in the professing Church to-day; scripture abounds with proofs that the truth would be corrupted. The Lord Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to "A man which sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way" (Matt. xiii. 24, 25). The Apostle Paul warns the elders of Ephesus, that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock, also "from among themselves should men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx. 29, 30). John says, "Even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they

might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Then again, every one knows the solemn character of the epistle of Jude, the second epistle of Peter, and this second epistle to Timothy, from which we have read a short portion of the second chapter.

I often think that Gideon's answer to the angel's salutation expresses the thoughts of many Christians who ponder seriously the state of the Church. You will remember that Gideon was threshing wheat to hide it from the Midianites, and the angel saluted him with the words, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Gideon's reply is, "If the Lord be with *us*, why then is all this befallen us?"

The angel said "with thee," but Gideon puts himself with the people of God, and answers as one who keenly and rightly felt their condition. How many times have we felt like saying, "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?" And it is a good thing that we should be so exercised, rather than be carried along with the current, saying, as so often is said, "we must agree to differ," and thinking that nothing else is of consequence so long as we are assured of the salvation of our souls.

This is an unworthy compromise; we should *grieve to differ*, and pray that we all may be "likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. ii. 2).

Again we ask, What is the remedy? Is there no resource but separation? After all we have seen as to the oneness of the body of Christ, and the blessed power of the Spirit breaking down the dividing wall, and forming of the once discordant elements one new man in Christ, how sad is the confession that, in order to be true to the Name of the Lord, one has to turn away from a great deal that bears His name.

Some one says, Why not begin again afresh? Many have had some such notion of an ideal Church: that starting anew with all the past experiences to profit by, we may escape the effects of the ruin man has wrought. I remember many years ago being much attracted by a certain movement of this kind, that laid claim to the audible voice of the Spirit appointing fresh apostles, and many other equally extravagant pretensions. But, apart from the fact that the particular movement I refer to was associated with grave errors as to the person of our adorable Lord, let me ask, "Where in the scriptures have we any promise of such restoration?" These portions we have been considering to-night would surely be the place where we might look for such promises of restoration and rebuilding, if such there are.

But we look in vain for even a hint of the kind, and what we do find is the plainest intimation that things would wax worse and worse, until the whole ends in full-blown apostasy.

Now let us remember that all this is perfectly known beforehand by the Lord, and provided for in the fullest way, so that we have directions on the one hand for separation from evil, that the name of the Lord should not be used as a cover for anything inconsistent with what He is as the Holy and the True; and on the other, the most blessed provision to meet the needs of the darkest day. In a word, we have HIMSELF.

Now, therefore, when evil of all kinds is found in the professing Church, and when that which bears the name of the Lord is a shelter for so much unrighteousness, we see the need of this injunction to "depart from iniquity," and to "purge oneself from vessels to dishonour." This Scripture clearly shows that a time would come when vessels both to honour and dishonour

would be found in God's house. To think of separation from true children of God must be always a sad thing, to be undertaken only of necessity, and never except they are so associated with evil, that to have fellowship with them, is to be necessarily associated with that.

I am not, of course, referring to sectarianism pure and simple, because with a great number it is thought to be the right thing. You make choice of your church, or denomination, or whatever it might be called, and allow others to do the same. Such separation as that entails is only felt to be a matter of mutual accommodation, and to class it amongst the evils to be separated from is to bring upon oneself severe condemnation.

But what of this word, "If a man therefore purge himself from these"—these vessels to dishonour, that are in a house which is still owned by the Master as His? Does it not answer the question for a godly soul, of what is to be done when the evil is too strong to be purged out? As to the one condition, when it arises, we have the scriptural injunction—"Purge out the old leaven,"—"Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. v.); and, as to the other, "Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" . . . "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 19-21, R.V.).

It is a wise saying, "Never go before your faith, nor lag behind your conscience." But it is well to remember that conscience is not an infallible guide; the word of God alone is that, and conscience can only be trusted as it answers to the light from outside—from God through His word.

We started these meetings with the hope, by God's blessing, of being some little help to any young believers

who were desirous, in this day of confusion, to know and to do the Lord's will as to their association with other Christians, and to learn from the scriptures what the Church really is. I trust we have not met in vain. We have surely felt the gracious help of the Lord, and His good hand upon us, but we cannot close our inquiry without feeling the practical effect of the comparison between things as they should be and things as they are. This is where the difficulty arises, when our eyes have been opened to see that all sectarianism is condemned by scripture, and that to do our own will, and choose our own way, is sin.

But we have also found that God has foreseen, and, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, provided for this very day, so that there is a path pleasing to Him, and full of encouragement and blessing to us, if we will only walk in it.

The presence of Christ in the midst of two or three gathered to His name, the Holy Spirit here on earth to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and the word of God in all its perfection and adaptability, still remain. All that is needed in us, is dependence on God and faith in Him.

Strange it is, no doubt, to a young Christian, that this path should be the object of the direct attack of the enemy, assailed from all sides, yet clearly the one where the support of the Lord is found. But was it not always so in the history of the Church? Look back over the past ages of persecution and trial, and does it not sometimes seem as if the power of the world would triumph over all. There have been times when the last flickering light has been apparently extinguished, and often, no doubt, the thought had arisen in the hearts of the poor hunted sheep of Christ that He had forgotten them. Why is it the will of God that "the

annals of the Church should be the annals of blood," as someone has truly said? Why should she not be carried on the wings of power, from triumph to triumph, until all the forces of evil are overcome? Ah! Why?

These are questions that will only be answered, and their true explanation known, when "the mystery of God is finished" (Rev. x. 7). It is not yet proclaimed, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the *power* of His Christ." No! we are as yet in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ, and our comfort is His word, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end." May He graciously help us to discern what is well-pleasing to Him, and give us faith to walk accordingly, for His Name's sake! T. R.

### Unbelief.

**B**EFORE considering with greater detail the divine testimony which, as we have seen, can alone produce saving faith (see p. 171), it will be well for us to look more closely at the kind of unbelief which so easily besets us, and which is a prominent feature in the Gospel of MARK. It is a common habit in so-called Christian countries, where people are more or less acquainted with fundamental doctrines, to assume that all are believers except those who are openly opposed, and who go by the name of infidels; but if we look nearer home, we may discover that unbelief is by no means confined to such.

The true test for every honest heart is the place which *Christ* has in it. It was the constant prayer of the Apostle Paul for those who had already received the gospel from his lips, and whom he addresses as "saints," that Christ should "dwell in their hearts by faith" (Eph. i. 1-6; iii. 14-19). He had, if we may so say, begun his spiritual existence, just where the

dying thief finished his, when the paradise of God was opened to him in the Lord's gracious answer to his prayer, "Lord, remember me" (Luke xxiii. 42, 43). The dying malefactor confessed to his companion, "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds," and the apostle says, "I, through the law, am *dead* . . . I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 19, 20). But, in agreement with the Lord's assurance, "To-day thou shalt be with me," Paul also could add, "Nevertheless I live. . . ." Then follows the qualification which is the real key to the whole matter, "Yet not I, but *Christ* liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live *by faith*,—faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me," (R.V.). Christ filled his heart; consequently his desire and prayer was that all the saints should enjoy that privilege.

We may then, with true heart-searching in the presence of God, ask the question, Is it so with us? Or, to make it more personal still, Is it so with *me*? And if not, why not? How was it with the disciples themselves who were the Lord's constant companions on earth?

Matthew shows that unbelief was most prominent at Nazareth where, as Luke says, Jesus "had been brought up" (Luke iv. 16). Mark adds a touching word as to the Lord's sympathetic feelings, "He marvelled because of their unbelief," mentioning, as Matthew, how it hindered His doing many mighty works there (Mat. xiii. 58; Mark vi. 5, 6). Does not this simple fact prove that the Lord did not seek to produce faith by any process of intelligent reasoning of which man's unregenerate heart is capable? On the contrary, the facts show that all such *natural* reasoning, which jarred with deeply rooted prejudices, only made unbelief the more grossly apparent, combined as it was with bitter hatred against Christ.

How contrary to this was the Lord's reassuring word to Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, when he heard that his dying daughter had already passed away. And Jesus gave it before Jairus had even time to express his feelings, "Be not afraid, only believe!" Both Mark and Luke mention it (Mark v. 36; Luke viii. 50). Faith in the Lord's person was not produced by the act performed, nor did Jesus allow it to be marred by the fact that the entrance of death seemed to render His gracious intervention needless. "All laughed Him to scorn" when He said, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth."

How precious and comforting to every tried soul is the account which accompanies the story of Jairus, as given in the first three gospels, and is interwoven with it! The woman's faith and assurance conveyed a moral certainty for her, "If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole"; and when she was discovered, though all fearing and trembling, the Lord graciously attributed the healing to her *faith*, adding a reassuring word that the like affliction would not occur again, "Go in peace, and be whole of thy plague" (Mark v. 34). Such is the sort of faith which He expects from us.

In pursuing the history, especially of His disciples, we find, however, how little they reached up to it, though the Lord Himself counted upon it. In the wilderness of Bethsaida the famished multitudes had no lodging, and the only thing to be done, according to the disciples, as evening drew on, was to send them away; but Jesus said, "Give *ye* them to eat." There was but little resource to draw upon, but the Lord would not allow them to seek for anything that was not ready to hand. He gave thanks for the infinitesimal supply, and then passing it on to the disciples, enabled them to obey His command in feeding five thousand

men. The precious lesson was, with slight modification, repeated in chapter viii., in a way which brought into further prominence the Lord's *compassion* on those who had been with Him "for three days." In both cases, the remnants which remained over after all had been satisfied, exceeded the original supply. Notwithstanding all this, both lessons seem to have been lost on the disciples, when the Lord bid them "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod." Missing entirely His meaning, they began to reason, saying, "It is because we have no bread." And Jesus had to remind them of both occurrences, going over with them the two occasions when he had satisfied the multitude, saying, "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" (Mark viii. 14-21).

The passage over the sea of Galilee, in the little boat with Jesus, was fraught with such lessons. On a previous voyage across, *one word*, as they were about to start, ought to have stilled every rising fear when the wind arose, and the storm increased in violence: the Master had said, "Let *us* pass over unto the other side." They, with their increasing fears, used a plural which practically excluded Him, when they awoke Him and said, "Master, carest *Thou* not that *we* perish?" We may well be astonished at such a question in such circumstances; but ought we not to apply it to ourselves with true heart-searching, and ask if we are any better, any more trustful, than they? Jesus, in His grace, met their fears and quelled the storm, but He had to bring pointedly home to them their unbelief, and say, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have *no faith*?" (Mark iv. 35-41).

In the cases of the needy multitude His *power* and

*compassion* were called in question; in this other journey it was His *word*, so simple and precise, which seemed to fall ineffectual to the ground. And let us not lose sight of the fact that all this referred to the twelve disciples who had been especially called of the Lord, and had been witnesses of His grace and works of power from the beginning. The Psalmist had written of old, "He sent His *word* and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions," as also from their "distresses" (Ps. cvii. 20). But here they were in the presence of the Lord who had given the word of old, and who was Himself the living expression of that word; and yet the disciples themselves were found no better than unbelieving Israel, who could not enter into the promised land when God had brought them to it. Are we any better to-day? Is not the exhortation of present application, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12, 19). Does it not show that the presence of the living Lord with them on earth (before the Spirit was given), was, in itself, no cure for their unbelief?

Then we ask, Is there no deliverance from it? The next chapter of Mark furnishes a touching answer to the question, showing how He answers when there is confession and prayer. He had led three of His disciples apart in order to give them a glimpse of the glory to come in association with Himself in spotless purity according to the "*power* of the resurrection" of which Paul speaks in Philippians iii. 10 (compare Mark ix. 1-10). The disciples "questioned one with another what the rising *from* among the dead might mean," but they did not ask the Lord, and probably the time was not come for them to understand it until after the Lord Himself had gone through death for

them. The passage, of course, does not say that they *believed* it.

The other disciples, left to themselves for a time at the foot of the mountain, found themselves powerless in presence of a sad case of suffering, notwithstanding that the Lord had given them authority over the unclean spirits (Mark vi. 7). They themselves were perplexed at their own helplessness, and later on asked the Lord about it (ix. 28). When, therefore, Jesus came down from the mountain, all gathered around Him, and the father of the afflicted child said to Jesus, "*If Thou canst* do anything, have compassion on us and help us." The Lord at once turned the "if thou canst" on him who made the petition, showing that it was simply a question of faith: "If thou canst BELIEVE, all things are possible to him that BELIEVETH." The poor man then brought his unbelief to Jesus as to the only One who could deliver him from it, crying out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." At once the longed-for answer came. Confession and prayer go together, and Jesus must have His true place. But all the passage is of the most solemn import; for the Lord's rebuke to His disciples implied that their want of faith rendered it well-nigh impossible that the Saviour could remain longer with them (ver. 19). Indeed He had come to the end of His sojourn in Galilee, and was about to begin his last long journey, visiting a considerable number of villages and towns, but on His way to Jerusalem, in order to suffer on the cross.

Further lessons are in reserve. Four times over on the way did the Lord solemnly warn His disciples of the suffering that was before Him (Mark viii. 31; ix. 9-12; ix. 30-32; x. 32-34). It was too much for them; they were afraid to ask Him what He meant.

They did not believe He could die, even after He had said it for the fifth time in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 27, 28); and when the multitude brought by Judas came to take Him, "they all forsook Him and fled" (ver. 50). They had to witness His death before they believed His word about it; and they did not believe even the testimony of Mary Magdalene who had first seen Him arisen from the dead. He had Himself to come and "upbraid them with their unbelief and hardness of heart," because they disbelieved not only Mary, but also the two witnesses who had seen Him on their journey to Emmaus (Mark xvi. 10-14). It was only "after that He was risen from the dead" that the disciples believed the first intimation Jesus had given to the Jews of what was before Him, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 19-22).

And yet John the Baptist had said when he first saw Him, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

It will of course be said that the Holy Ghost had not yet come (John vii. 37-39). That is true; but the *word* of Jesus had a value all its own; and those who were nearest to Him *believed it not*. W. J. L.

### The Blind Man at Bethsaida.

"And He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town" (Mark viii. 22-26).

**I**T is a great thing to see "every man clearly," that is, according to God's estimate. "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." This is readily discerned when God ONLY is before our eyes (Ps. lxii. 9).

The world, being away from God, sees man from its own standpoint, and would encourage self-improvement, self-reliance, self-advancement, self-exaltation—all for worldly advantage. Human influence thus deceives one.

Where is human influence supreme? In “the town.” In the country, one may wear an old coat. In the town one’s best is put on. Human influence is the hindrance to seeing every man (including oneself) clearly.

If the Lord works with a soul, he needs to be “led out of the town,” so to speak. And even then, if so be that he was brought up in “the town,” he does not readily see “every man clearly” till he looks up the second time (ver. 25).

We find constantly a double work of the Holy Spirit with souls. Conversion, short of deliverance, though so far a real work of the Spirit, does not constitute Christian standing (Rom. vii.-viii.).

The woman who touched the hem of Christ’s garment was “healed immediately,” but there was a further work needed to bring her to *confession*. In this connection “she came trembling and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.” But there was no “trembling” or confession in connection with her touching Him. Her confession of Him was in the boldness of faith, “before all the people,” in spite of the human influence of the crowd, and besides, it was with lowliness.

The blind man in John ix. had a very partial knowledge of the One who had opened His eyes, till he was cast out of the synagogue and met *Him* who was also cast out, or rejected, and who revealed Himself to him as “Son of God,” thus showing a double work in the man who had been blind.

Another instance of the same may be seen in the "younger son" in Luke xv. His coming to himself with conversion of heart was one thing; his meeting his father and having the "best robe" put on was quite another. So also God sovereignly dealing with a soul, and that one coming to Him, are not the same thing.

In the case in Mark viii., it was not till the man looked up the second time that he saw "every man clearly." "All flesh is as grass" is a comprehensive view of mankind as fallen; but men in exalted positions are likened to trees, as for example, Nebuchadnezzar.

The first mention of a city or town is in a solemn connection; "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, . . . and builded a city." A poet has said, "God made the country, man made the town."

But let us now consider a little the "*grace* of God" in contrast with the pretensions of fallen man. The true effect of grace, when known in communion with God, who is the living source of it, is to draw and separate the soul to God. "Barnabas . . . seeing the grace of God, rejoiced, and exhorted all with purpose of heart to abide with the Lord" (Acts xi. 22, 23, R.V.).

Mary also, under the effect of grace, "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word" (Luke x.). Drinking at the living fountain, she humbly received of His fulness, and so she was brought to understand what the Lord was for her, in contrast to the more legal effort of Martha to serve Him. Mary's attitude was that of restfulness, not idleness as Martha thought. Moreover, she was thus fitted for lovely service in devotedness afterwards. And it was of such service, carrying with it the Lord's approval, that He says, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

What a contrast was what she had done (and at such a fitting moment) to Judas' betrayal mentioned in the very next verse!

Among many other instances of those who had "tasted that the Lord is gracious," we might mention the *one*, out of the ten lepers, who did not go "to the priest," but humbly "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell on his face giving Him thanks" (Luke xvii.). With him the influence of "the priest" was *nil*. Being brought to God in the liberty of grace, he was no longer governed by that order of things; the nine, being under legal religious influence, went to the priest.

It is true the ten were told to go, and if bent on "doing their duty," as people say, all would have gone; but with the one who returned, "the gratitude of faith was a readier reasoner than the instruction of the law." He got no rebuke for not going to the priest; on the contrary the Lord said to *him*, but not to the nine, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

Man as created, in himself, is an utterly weak creature, and could only stand in dependence on, and obedience to, God. Having become sinful through disobedience to God, he became utterly alienated from Him in the spirit of independency. Hence he cannot stand by himself, and having turned away from God he must join in union with his fellow-man. Unionism began in Genesis xi. The idea of a "city and a tower" was that of a great confederacy and centre of union. "Babylon the great" will be the full development and expression of what began at Babel; and it will be finally judged by God. Unionism, socially, religiously, and politically, was never stronger in the world than at present; and it will be stronger still under the "beast" and the antichrist (Rev. xiii.).

But God will be "for a sanctuary" for His people (Isa. viii.). This is given as an encouragement to the faithful remnant of Israel, and it is so now, and will be so always.

In a world where man is away from God there is always the danger for the believer too of departing from Him (Heb. iii. 12), and unionism is a great snare.

But there is an object of attraction for us outside this world; "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me" (John xii. 32). Again, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking steadfastly on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith" (Heb. xii. 1, 2). c.

### The Title "Jesus."

THIS title of our Lord is employed about 246 times in the gospel of John, 151 in Matthew, 87 in Luke, and 81 in Mark. It means "Saviour," for "He shall save His people from *their sins*." This carries with it a good deal more than saving them from their "enemies," which is also true.

It is remarkable that the name of Jesus should be found so frequently in the gospel of John. This has to do partly with the style of narration of each evangelist, and John uses the pronoun "He" much less often than the others and the name itself more often. John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and he it was who lay on Jesus' breast at supper and asked the question, "Lord, who is it?" The name of "Jesus" must have had a peculiar charm for John.

Our Lord never applied this title to Himself when here below, unless we consider as an exception, in His prayer in John xvii. 3, "Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast

sent.”\* He delighted to call Himself “Son of man,” which He almost always used. When risen and glorified, He said to Saul of Tarsus, “I am Jesus”; and at the close of the book of Revelation He says, “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches.” That book is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him.”

Thus the gospel of John, which more than any other is fragrant of His divine glory as Son of God, yet uses the personal name which specially belongs to Him as man the most frequently of all. And the Lord never gives up the condition of manhood which he took when born of a woman. He still uses the title “Jesus” Himself, even when glorified. How close He is to us, though infinitely above us!

We never find the disciples address the Lord as “Jesus”; it was always “Lord,” “Teacher,” etc.

It is at the name of “Jesus,” too, that every knee *must* bow—of heavenly, earthly, and even infernal beings. Atheists, scoffers, infidels, demons, and even the devil himself will have to own that “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” in that day when they cannot resist. Not, indeed, to their salvation, but to their eternal ruin.

Thank God for the infinite grace which has led us to bow to Him now in the day of grace, and which has made that name to us “the sweetest name on earth”!

### Brief Summary of Future Prophetic Events.

1. **T**HE coming of the Lord into the air to raise the “dead in Christ” and change the living—all being caught up to meet Him, and pass in with Him to the Father’s house (1 Thess. iv. 13-18; 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; Rev. xxii. 16, 20, etc.). Note: we must be careful

\* In Matt. xvi. 20, “Jesus” should be omitted.

not to confound the Lord's coming *for* His saints, with His appearing *with* them in glory and in judgment on the nations.

2. The **gathering back of the Jews** (*i.e.*, the two tribes) to Palestine. They return in unbelief, not accepting Christ as the true Messiah. This return, however, may take place, to some extent, before the rapture of the saints referred to in No. 1; and it may not be completed for some little time after that event.

3. The **rebuilding of the temple** at Jerusalem and the re-establishment of the Jewish system of worship.

4. The **rise of the revived Roman empire**, forming a confederation of powers of the West, with its ten subordinate kings under one head or chief (Rev. xiii. 1-10).

5. The **revelation of the antichrist** or "man of sin," who is a kind of false prophet or false Messiah. The seat of his authority is Jerusalem, and he acts in league with the head of the Roman empire (Rev. xiii. 11-18; 2 Thess. ii. 3-12, etc.).

6. The **judgment of the apostate professing church**, called "Babylon the great." It is destroyed by the infidel powers, the kings of the earth of that day (Rev. xvii. 16-18, etc.).

7. The head of the Roman empire **breaks the covenant** which he had made with the unbelieving Jews, and puts a stop to their system of worship (Dan. ix. 27). The godly remnant of the Jewish nation, who will be prepared of God to receive Christ as the true Messiah, suffer much persecution at this time. It is to this period our Lord refers when He speaks of the "great tribulation."

8. The rise of the confederation of powers North of Palestine, frequently designated in the prophets under the

title "**the Assyrian**," including doubtless Daniel's "king of the north." These hosts invade Palestine and lay siege to Jerusalem. The city is partially taken, and they then proceed to Egypt (Zech. xiv. 2 ; Dan. ix. 42, 43). The final phase of this confederation is the "**Gog**" of Ezekiel, *i.e.*, Russia, and its dependent kingdoms (Ps. lxxxiii.).

9. The **appearing of the Lord** in glory and in judgment on the head of the Roman empire, the antichrist, and their armies (Rev. xix. 11-21).

10. **After this the Lord**, whose feet stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4), comes to execute judgment on "Gog" and his hosts, who had returned from Egypt to Jerusalem (Dan. xi. 44, 45 ; Ezek. xxxviii.-xxxix.).

11. The return of the **ten tribes** of Israel

12. **Satan is bound** and cast into the abyss for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 3).

13. Various acts of **judgment** on the earth by the Son of man, including that of the **living nations** (Matt. xxv. 31-46). These prepare the way for the glorious millennial reign of Christ over the earth, with Jerusalem as the centre of His government.

14. After the thousand years, **Satan is loosed** for a little season and gathers the nations against Jerusalem. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and destroys them. Satan is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx.)

15. The great session of **judgment** of all the unsaved, called the "**great white throne**" (Rev. xx.) After this there is **eternity**—an eternity of blessing for the saved and of judgment for the lost.

F. G. B.

## The Sympathy of Christ.

**T**HERE are many sorrowing hearts at the present time as a result of the terrible war now raging in Europe. In such circumstances we all naturally look for sympathy.

It is said of our blessed Lord Himself, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." To Peter He said in the garden of Gethsemane, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Thus He *did look for* and value sympathy in sorrow, though He received little or none.

But with the Christian who has to pass through sorrow, it is not so. There is One who has been in this world and who knows what it is. Jesus has the same heart of compassion as He had when He raised the widow of Nain's son and delivered him to his mother, when He groaned and wept at the grave of Lazarus, when He relieved many a sorrowing heart.

We read that, "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Jesus had a truly human heart. Having been once in the path of suffering, and being now out of it all and exalted at the right hand of God, He is able truly to sympathise with His people.

Again, "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart." Yes, our High Priest never fails in His priestly service in the presence of God. He bears His people on His heart and on His shoulders, according to all the value of His person, before God, and He knows how to feel for them too.

Let us then take comfort from these blessed facts,

and remember that the Christian's High Priest never wearies, never fails, never ceases to think of His people. Sorrows and trials may come across our path, but He has trodden the way before us, and He knows well what it is. He is, therefore, perfectly qualified to sympathise.

It is only a little while and we shall see Him face to face; but, till then, it is His own desire that we should know and experience the blessedness of His company and the comfort of His sympathy on our way to the rest of God.

### Notes and Gleanings.

**THE Cross.**—The cross is to be viewed in two ways: first, as satisfying God's claims; secondly, as expressing God's affections. If I look at my sins in connection with the claims of God as a Judge, I find, in the cross, a perfect settlement of these claims. God, as a Judge, has been divinely satisfied; yea, glorified, in the cross. But there is more than this: God has affections as well as claims; and in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ all those affections are sweetly and touchingly told out into the sinner's ear; while, at the same time, he is made the partaker of a new nature which is capable of enjoying those affections and of having fellowship with the heart from which they flow. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might **bring us to God.**"

C. H. M.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Riband of Blue** (Num. xv. 37-41).—Blue was the heavenly colour. This riband was to be attached to the fringe of the garment, and it was to be worn continually. Thus, while it was near the ground, it was not on it so as to become bedraggled or defiled.

Do we bring what is heavenly down into the circumstances of everyday life? As the apostle says, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth"?

There is much to try the saints of God at the present time, and we cannot, and ought not, to be indifferent to it; but let us be occupied with those things that are above, having the word of God continually before us and in our hearts, so that we may be kept clear of the influences of this world through which we pass.

J. A.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Bible.**—Objections against Scripture are always the creation of unbelief. Difficulties, where they exist for us, should only exercise faith in God. The word of God is always in itself not only right, but fraught with light. It makes wise the simple; it enlightens the eyes. "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."

Never let the breath of suspicion as to it enter your soul. Invariably, when you listen to the written word of God, range yourself on His side. You will never understand the Bible otherwise. You may be tried; but be assured that you will be helped out of the trial. The day may come when nobody appears to lend you a helping hand. What is to become of you then? Once allow your soul to be sullied by judging those living oracles, and real faith in the Bible is gone as far as you are concerned. If I do not trust it in everything, I can trust it in nothing.

W. K.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Extracts from a Letter.**—We are indeed living in sad and perilous days. This is what "civilisation" in its most Christian form, and modern "culture," has come to. Man's boasted accomplishments are only

a veneer to cover a heart which is no more changed than when they cried out, "Away with Him . . . Crucify Him," and shed His blood at noonday.

The big guns, maxims, and modern weapons are only changed tools for the dagger, the bow, or the flint axe; the hearts and hands are the same. May the many who boast of the "inner light" and man's "goodness" realise their folly, and face the naked truth as set forth by God, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Culture is not conversion; man is lost, and needs a new life. The nebulous schemes for the world's amelioration are no substitute for new birth. Oh, may the present terrible crisis give an impetus to the pure gospel!

Another thing one feels much in these days is, how little God's people have entered into their true position as "in Christ." The most warlike and bellicose are professing Christians, and their conduct calls forth the reproaches even of the thoughtful socialist and agnostic. Such truths as "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," "Our citizenship is in heaven," seem to have not the least hold on men to-day, and show them to be "earth-dwellers" in all but lip and tongue.

There is a need for the clear gospel more than ever, and for the setting forth of the elementary truths of the believer's *heavenly* hope, and his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, with its attendant responsibilities.

Christians, too, need to learn and take to heart the truth as to the coming of the Lord, the Church—her object, and character, and hopes; the Holy Spirit as the

power for worship and the distributor of gifts in the assembly, the one body, and the Lord's appearing in glory. The cardinal truth of the righteousness of God, as set forth in Romans, is also much needed.

## Reconciled and Saved.

*Brief Notes of an Address on Colossians i. 9-29.*

**T**HIS epistle is addressed to the saints of God—true believers. It speaks of the condition they had once been in as unconverted, “alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,” steeped in sin. But now they were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and reconciled to God.

Thus it is that God in mercy comes in, reaching us where we were, and bringing us to Himself, through grace and on the ground of redemption, not by anything that we could do. Many people say, “I do my best,” but what is the best a dead man can do? Even had we power, what would our best be? God is a God of holiness and truth, and before one sin could be forgiven, He had to give up His only begotten Son, in whom was no sin, for the salvation of the sinner.

In grace God stoops down to the place we were in, and if we try to raise up ourselves, is it, think you, by so much less that God would stoop? But He will not have that: He goes the whole length, and what He does is sufficient to satisfy Himself—His justice, His holiness, His truth.

The apostle goes on to tell what God does for those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; you get that in his prayer for them. He prays “that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will.” In what way? It is “in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Many read the word and know it well as

to the letter, but they have no knowledge of *His will*. Their minds and intellects are accustomed to take up the word, without seeking God's will. But man's thoughts must not be brought in to interpret God's thoughts. If we would be right, God's thoughts must form our thoughts. It is only divine wisdom and spiritual understanding, by the Holy Ghost, which can give us the knowledge of God's will.

Then he says, "Walk worthy of the Lord"—worthy of Him who ever did the will of God, and who went to the cross in obedience to His Father's will, to save poor lost sinners. Surely, if redeemed, we bear fruit in some measure! There is no power at all to please Him before we are redeemed, and even afterwards we have no strength in ourselves; we are strengthened "according to the power of *His* glory."

It is thus that we get power; first, for patience all along the path while waiting for Him—bearing trial, it may be, with long-continued patience—then long-suffering one with another. "Giving thanks unto the Father," that is the spirit of worship. We are brought to know, not merely a God of justice, but the love of a Father's heart; and we know Him according to that love that gave up His Son for us.

Note the word "**hath**" in this prayer—He "**hath**" made us meet. It is a thing *done*. Poor sinners, once steeped in iniquity, haters of God, now made meet for the inheritance, as becomes sons of God! Eternity alone can suffice to utter all His praises, and this is the God we are brought to know in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We were in darkness under the power of Satan, for he has power over all who are not redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. But we are delivered *from* the power of darkness, and brought *into* the

kingdom of the Son of God's love. Satan has power in the kingdom of darkness; the Son's power is felt in the kingdom of His love. It is not called the Kingdom of Christ, nor the Son of man, but the Son of God's love—the One whom He gave up for us.

The apostle then goes on to tell *who* that Son is who has redeemed us, and this gives us confidence to lean on Him. Adam was made in the image of God, but that was marred. The second man *is* "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." The first-born always had a special place, so Christ takes, of right, a place above all. None filled the heart of God as He did, none could do God's will as He, and He has the highest place. All things were created by Him, and surely as Lord of creation, all He made belongs to Him. But creation is corrupted by the Fall, so He cannot take possession of what is defiled by man's sin. What has He done? He has laid the basis of reconciliation in the blood of His cross, and having gone down into death to accomplish that work, He will take up possession of the creation in the coming day.

But there is more; Christ is "first-born from the dead." He has broken the bonds of death. He went down under death, but it could not hold Him. The kingdom of darkness had no claim or power over Him who is the Prince of life.

"And having made peace," He is about to "reconcile all things unto Himself." The "things" are not yet reconciled, but it is God's purpose that they should be, and that on the ground of the work done at the cross. All creation will be reconciled according to God's eternal counsels, which nothing can shake.

As sinners, men need to be reconciled to God. It is not God who needs to be reconciled to the sinner,

but the sinner to God. When creation is reconciled, Christ will take possession and share the glory with those whom He has redeemed. This is still future.

But there is a present reconciliation; what is that? It is for those who were away from God. This brings in responsibility to receive God's message about His Son, and all who receive it are *now* reconciled to God. So we read, "And you . . . now *hath* He reconciled." Believers are already reconciled. It is not through ourselves or our works, but through Christ's death. Our works fail, but His work can never fail. For the Christian, everything is found in Christ. All is sure and complete in Him.

Who can say a word against those redeemed ones? What can Satan say against a people redeemed by One who has entered his kingdom and taken them clean away from under the power of darkness? They are "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight." They are thus presented in the sight of a holy God—a God who judges according to holiness, righteousness, and truth,—as already reconciled to Him in virtue of the death of Christ. What triumphs of divine grace!

D. H.

### Unbelief.

**W**E have spoken of the coming of the Holy Ghost, promised by the Lord to His disciples, shortly before He left them (see also page 167). And the question may easily arise in many hearts—Does not His presence and action preclude the manifestation of unbelief in those to whom He is given, because they have been brought into the blessed relationship of sonship (Gal. iv. 6)? It is a sad reflection that the answer must be given in the negative, whether we look at Christendom as a whole or consider more

particularly those who are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to the former, Stephen's final address before the Jewish Sanhedrim in Jerusalem sealed their condemnation with these solemn words: "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it (Acts vii. 51-53). Peter had already said to them, on a former occasion, "We are His witnesses; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts v. 32). That was almost a repetition of the Lord's own words, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xv. 26-27).

The Jews boasted in the possession of the Scriptures, of which they had ever been the guardians with the most scrupulous care, and the Apostle recognises this immense and distinguishing privilege (Rom. iii. 1-2). He adds indeed, "What if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" In no wise. But the statement itself suggests that a large majority of them did not believe the scriptures which testify to Christ. Indeed they were the chief opposers of the Lord during the whole time of His public ministry, not in Jerusalem only, as we find especially in John's gospel, but even in Galilee, where they plotted His death (Matt. ix. 34; xii. 14, 24).

And the great mass of the Jews at the present day follow in the steps of their leaders and predecessors, who demanded of Pilate that Christ should be crucified. They also refuse entirely the New Testament, and forbid the reading of certain parts of the Old Testament, such as Isa. liii. and the end of Dan. ix.

If we restrict our inquiry to the Gentile position of the Church, does not its whole history (especially from the beginning of the fourth century, when they accepted the rule of Constantine in order to put an end to persecution from without), show that whenever they sought authoritatively to maintain order, they acted in contravention to the Lord's command, and rooted up the wheat, with the avowed object of getting rid of Satan's "tares" (Matt. xiii. 28, 29)? In other words, they branded the true servants of God as "heretics," thus fulfilling the Lord's own prediction, "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service; and these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor Me"; and again, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also" (John xv. 20; xvi. 1-4). Unbelief in the human heart is rampant everywhere.

It is easy, of course, to flatter oneself that true believers in the Lord Jesus are an exception to the general rule. But the Epistle to the Hebrews, written at the beginning of the Church's history, is a conclusive proof to the contrary; and the facts we have had occasion to notice in the course of our study, all bear witness to the facility with which unbelief lays hold of us. It is indeed an unspeakable privilege to possess the Holy Ghost, who takes of Christ's things to show them to us (John xvi. 14): what could we do without

it? But it is nevertheless true that we stand by **faith**, and have to walk in lowliness and dependence upon God (Rom. xi. 20-23). Hence the apostle was most anxious that those to whom he had first preached the gospel should stand fast in the **faith**, and that their faith should not depend upon man's wisdom, but upon God's power (1 Cor. ii. 5; xvi. 13). He would not rule over their faith, but be a helper of their joy through it, for, he says, "by faith ye stand," and he desired to see it "increased" (2 Cor. i. 24; x. 15; 1 Thess. iii. 5, 6; 2 Thess. i. 3). They had to "continue in it" (Col. i. 23); and that was a main point of the apostle's exhortation to "his son Timothy" (1 Tim. i. 19); he further intimates that it was possible to err from it (1 Tim. v. 12, vi. 10; 2 Tim. ii. 18). What joy for him to be able to say at the end of his course that he had kept it (iv. 7)! James speaks of the reality of faith as shown by its **fruits**, quoting both Abraham and Rahab as memorable examples; and Peter and John give it a first place in their exhortations (1 Pet. v. 9; 1 John v. 4). Jude shows how we need vigilance to contend for the truth received (ver. 3), and to be built up in it, "praying in the Holy Ghost" (ver. 20). The Revelation of John shows how it will be tried in the last days, and has to be accompanied with patient waiting upon God (xiii. 10).

May the Lord render us more than ever attentive to His Word; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). When that word lays hold of us, it is, as the apostle shows, accompanied with divine power, as when God said at the beginning, "Let there be light," light there was immediately (Gen. i. 3). Satan's effort is to obscure it, whether as prince of the powers of darkness to prevent it shining, or as blinding the minds of those that believe not (2 Cor. iv.

4-6; Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12). And in moments of weakness, saints of God in all time have fallen more or less under this terrible power of the enemy. It may be only momentarily, as in the case of Moses, who held a unique place as God's mouthpiece to the Israelites, and who knew Jehovah "face to face" (Deut. xxxiv. 10); but the incident is a proof that the danger exists, and hence the need of the exhortation, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 12-13).

And the case of Moses is all the more remarkable, as it reveals the unseen and hidden cause of failure, by which anyone may be overtaken through want of attention to God's word. The character and glory of the priesthood, as being entirely of God, was in question; and we should remember that all Christians are "priests" by His appointment (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6; v. 10); and that will be maintained in the resurrection (Rev. xx. 6). Paul's preaching was one continual exercise of it in God's presence (Rom. xv. 16).\* The Greek word here translated "ministering" proves it, as also does the word "offering up," in the same verse. More than that, it was on this ground that the Lord, in associating the disciples with Himself, defended them from the accusations of the Pharisees, in Matt.

\* In this respect, the closing word of the Lord's ministry in Galilee, as given in Mark's gospel, is of deep importance: "Everyone shall be salted with fire," either in its preserving power through self-judgment (Deut. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 29); or as the final reward of unbelief. Then He adds, "And every **sacrifice** shall be salted with salt," indicating by the word "sacrifice," those who, through God's Word and Spirit, are gathered together out from the world and set apart for Him."

xii. 5. The responsibility connected with this character of the "royal priesthood" in testimony, is shown by the apostle's words, "As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 17). Do those who "show forth God's praises" in preaching the gospel, think of this as they should?

But to return to the case of Moses. Shortly before that time, the rebellion of Korah, in his effort to monopolise the priesthood, had brought condign punishment on himself and his associates, and had led to God's vindication of His own appointed priest by the budding of Aaron's rod (Num. xvi. 5, xvii. 1-11). It was that particular rod, kept in the tabernacle, which Moses was ordered to take in his hand when he went to speak to the rock in Kadesh, and he obeyed; but when he came there, he seemed to forget his instructions, and instead of speaking to the *rock*, he addressed the *people*, calling *them* "rebels"; and laying aside the rod that had budded, he smote the rock twice with his own rod (Num. xx. 11). For that error he was debarred from entering into the promised land, and God turned the word "rebel" against His servant, at the time of Aaron's death in Mount Hor, saying, "Because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah" in Kadesh (Num. xx. 24; Deut. xxxii. 48-52). We have already referred to this briefly (see p. 127).

Nevertheless, this question of the priesthood is of the greatest importance for us all, and may help us to understand why a failure, which we might easily condone as trivial, was dealt with so severely. The rod that budded indicated that God's authority was accompanied by life-giving power; and in our case, as Christians, it depends upon the gift of the Holy Ghost. Moses, in a moment of sorrow and holy indignation,

lost sight of this absolute dependence, in all things, upon the God of Israel; the people had "provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Ps. cvi. 32, 33). And may that not happen at any time to a Christian, even to one of mature years? God put it down to unbelief, "Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. xx. 12).

There is perhaps nothing which is less believed by Christians at the present day than the operation of the Holy Spirit in all His varied functions. And how small comparatively is the number who really believe in the universal priesthood of which Peter speaks,—holy and royal—"holy," to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of worship, "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and "royal," in order to show forth by a consistent walk, and the proclamation of the truth, "the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

Satan's object is ever to obscure this light, as to the reception of the gospel presented to those who are still in darkness (2 Cor. iv. 4); and, secondly, to prevent Christians from beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord, and thus hinder them from being conformed to His glory through the operation of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 6, 17-18). The Lord's glory, only partially seen, caused Moses' face to shine, and the apostle shows that a like effect is produced morally in the Christian through the Spirit taking of Christ's things to enable the believer to enter into and reproduce them.

That can only be done through the patient reading of the Scripture, and living in the power of what is there revealed. The Lord said to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he

wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 46, 47). The reception of divine testimony can alone produce saving faith, and it is accompanied by deep exercise of the conscience in the presence of God, as we have seen in the case of the woman of Samaria (John iv).

Want of attention to minor things often leaves Christians weak and profitless, as Nehemiah points out to the returned captives, recalling the case of Solomon (Neh. xiii. 26.) The Christian has to remember that he is not of this world, but has a *heavenly* calling. May the Lord engrave it on all our hearts. W. J. L.

## Eternal Life.

JOHN xvii., 1-3.

**I**N order to know God and enjoy His presence we must have a life and nature suited to Him, we must be "born again," and thus be "made partakers of the divine nature." It has often been said that eternal life is not merely eternal existence, which even the wicked have, but a life capable of knowing God and enjoying communion with the Father and the Son (1 John i. 1-3).

The Lord Jesus, whose heart of love left nothing undone which was needed for our blessing as well as for God's glory, has Himself made mention of that life at the opening of His prayer in John xvii. It is there connected with that precious title of God which gives its character to the whole prayer, that is "Father," as in ver. 1.

The Father had given to the Son power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to those He had given Him. His divine glory as the eternal Son is fully established in this gospel, but what is so remarkable

throughout is, that He never leaves the place of subjection He had taken as man. For this reason He takes everything as "given" to Him of the Father. Moreover, the authority which has been given to Christ is far wider than if it were over Israel only; it is over "all flesh"; and this with the object in view that He should give eternal life. But remark, those to whom He gives it are those given Him of the Father, and none others. There is therefore this double bond which endears them to Him, and which links them up as the special objects of the love and care both of the Father and the Son. Not only are they those for whom Christ died, but they are the gift of the Father; how precious they must be to Him as such!

Objects of the solicitude both of the Father and the Son, Christ gives to His own eternal life. It is no evanescent or precarious thing, connected only with this world, and which might be lost some day; it is **eternal**. Therefore, as we find in chap. x. they shall never perish or be lost. The very nature of the life, as being "eternal," carries us beyond *time*, with all its changes and uncertainties, and brings us into that which never changes.

The Christian is one who participates in the life which dwelt ever in the eternal Son. Of this life Christ, the last Adam, the head of a new race in resurrection, is Himself the source and spring and fount. But the stream flows through every believer, and so livingly united is this perennial stream in us with its source in Christ, that it could be said, yea He says it Himself, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

But we shall find that the Lord, in His prayer, proceeds to speak of that which characterises and belongs to this eternal life. It is known, it is exercised

and enjoyed, in the knowledge of God as *Father* and of *Jesus Christ* as the sent One.

The Lord had been more and more preparing His disciples for this during His stay with them on earth. He had been telling them of the Father, slow learners as they were then. But when the Holy Ghost would be come, they would be capacitated to enter into that knowledge in a far deeper and more spiritual way.

These names of "the Father" and "the Son" speak to us, not of the law which was given by Moses, or the legal dispensation, but of **grace**, and of our **relationship** with God as His children. What a sweet and precious privilege to be able to look up to heaven, and take into our lips the very words of Jesus Himself and say, "Abba, Father!" This belongs to **every** saint. Oh that they knew and enjoyed it better;

All along the ages, up to the first coming of Christ, such a privilege had never been known. Abraham and the patriarchs knew God as "Almighty," "the eternal God," their faithful guide and protector in the land of promise. To Moses and Israel He made Himself known as "Jehovah," the self-existing One, who would surely make good the promises to the fathers. But who had ever heard that blessed name of "Father"? No—it awaited the coming of Jesus, the only begotten Son, who dwelt ever in the bosom of the Father, to make known the secrets of that bosom, and to declare that new and wondrous relationship into which we are now brought in His infinite grace.

This the Saviour did ere He left this world, from the resurrection side of an empty grave, through the lips of Mary, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." Nor does He cease to make known the Father's name even now

in glory (doubtless by the Spirit, using the word), for He says in the last verse of our chapter, "I *will* make it known."

And so eternal life, as *we* (Christians) know it, is inseparably linked up with that which it was the mission of the Son to reveal for our soul's joy and comfort, namely, with the knowledge of "the Father and the Son." This is, in fact, **Christianity**, which was just about to dawn: in contrast with Judaism, which was passing away. It is a unique and blessed place of nearness to God, which will not be the portion of saints even in the kingdom by and by.

The title, "the only true God," is in contrast to the false gods of the nations. The Gentile world lay in heathen darkness, bowing down to idols, "gods many and lords many"; they knew not the true God. The Jewish world, in its pride and ignorance, knew not and rejected Jesus Christ, their Messiah, the sent One of the Father. All, save those few who were born of God, were utterly dead in sins and alienated from Him.

But this life eternal of which our Lord speaks is in no way limited to one nation or people; it is "the eternal life" for all, Jews or Gentiles alike. The "only true God" was now revealed in the Son, who is "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." We know the true God revealed in Him, and every believer possesses the eternal life of which He testified. In fact one could not be a Christian at all, in the true sense of the word, without possessing that life.

And how precious to remember that it all flows from the infinite love of God! The Father it was who sent the Son, and who is the source of every blessing.

But let us never forget that all this blessed revelation is not given us to puff up the intellect, or to feed

the imagination, but to give to the believer the certainty of that which is ours in Christ, and to form and mould our everyday life and walk. And when these truths are known, not in a cold intellectual way, but when they lay hold of the heart and conscience, they will surely produce a life in keeping with the grace bestowed, a life of humble dependence on God, and of obedience to His word and will. F. G. B.

### Armageddon.

**T**HE battle spoken of in Rev. xvi. 16 has nothing to do with the present war in Europe.

It refers to an event still future, and the name being mentioned in Hebrew would point to the fact that Israel will then be coming into prominence again. The drying up of the Euphrates, mentioned immediately before, means the removal of the natural boundary between east and west, so that the way of the kings from the east (Japan, China, etc.) might be prepared.

It will be the great final conflict of nations from the east and west, the "kings of the whole habitable world," who are gathered together at the place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

This word is the Hebrew form for Jezreel. It is the plain of Esdraelon, on the western side of Palestine, and was the place where the Kings were overthrown, of which we read in Judges v. 19, "The Kings came and fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."

In a future day it will be the scene of the great universal conflict of assembled nations, when God is about to assert *His* rights to the government of this world, so long under the power and oppression of Satan.

## Divine Love.

The hart panteth after the waters,  
The dying for life that departs ;  
The Lord in His glory for sinners,  
For the love of rebellious hearts !  
Call back all the days of the ages,  
All snow-flakes come down from above,  
All flowers of summers departed, . . .  
But think not to measure His love.

Behold Him, O soul, where He told it,  
Pale, bleeding, and bearing thy sin ;  
He knocketh, saith, " Open beloved,  
I pray thee to let Me come in :  
Behold, I have borne all the judgment,  
Thy sins, O beloved, are gone ;  
Forgotten, forgotten for ever,  
God seeketh, but findeth not one.

" Behold, with what labour I won thee,  
Behold in My hands and My feet,  
The tale of My measureless sorrow,  
Of love that made sorrow so sweet.  
A flax-thread in oceans of fire,  
How soon swallowed up it would be !  
Yet sooner in oceans of mercy  
The sinner that cometh to Me."

H. S.

" **As** the Father hath loved me, **so** have I loved you "  
(John xv. 9).

" Thou hast loved them **as** Thou hast loved me "  
(John xvii. 23).

## The Present Crisis and Prayer.

THERE are many reasons why earnest prayer is called for at the present moment. The great Powers of Europe being engaged in deadly conflict with one another, many valuable lives are being lost, many homes desolated, and much suffering is being entailed upon the people of this and other countries. God is speaking plainly and solemnly in the terrible events which seem likely to mark the close of this year, and possibly even of this dispensation. The destinies of nations hang in the balance, and no one but God Himself knows what the end will be.

Should not all these things lead us to earnest prayer at this solemn and critical moment?

We can be thankful that many efforts are being made to bring the Gospel before the soldiers, in the camps and in the field, and that the Scriptures are being widely distributed. But let us earnestly cry to God to own and bless His word, whether preached or printed.

Then again, not a few true believers are to be found in these great armies; they much need our prayers and sympathy. Even those of us who are most occupied can spare some time for special prayer, if there is the sincere desire to do so.

Thank God we find so much encouragement in His word to pray *at all times*, and the need and call for it is surely great. The Word says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," "Pray without ceasing," "Continuing instant in prayer," "By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," etc.

Not only is there a call for prayer on behalf of our

soldiers and sailors just now, but for the servants of God labouring in foreign fields and at home. Everything is affected by the war in some way, and the position of many true labourers for the Lord is made more difficult by it. Indeed the interests of Christ and the needs of His people are wide, varied, and urgent.

When we come together in our meetings for prayer, do we take in, as we ought, the breadth of those great interests? Do we think over what the needs of the present moment are, and look above for guidance as to what we should pray for? Oh, to be kept from formality and routine, to be simple and confiding, to remember that we are not speaking to one another, but into the ear of the living God! We often lack *definiteness* in our requests. When we come to a prayer-meeting, it is not merely to repeat truths before God, but to ask Him for what we want, and to thank Him for what we have received.

Let us remember that prayer moves the heart of love of our gracious Father, which moves the hand of power to accomplish His will. And it is His desire that we should come into His presence in all liberty and confidingness, pleading the value of the name of Jesus, of which He has said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

### Notes and Gleanings.

**N**OW that Turkey has entered upon war with the Allies, events seem to point even more plainly than ever to the close of the present dispensation. Turkey is the ruling power in Palestine, and that land will be the centre of the great drama of future

events of which prophecy speaks. It is God's land, too, and is called "Thy land, O Immanuel."

There can be little question that Russia will have authority over Asia Minor, north of the Holy Land. She is, doubtless, the last phase of the confederation of powers of the north designated in the prophets by the title "the Assyrian," and finally "Gog" (see Ezek. xxxviii.-xxxix.; Ps. lxxxiii.; Isa. x. 5-12; xiv. 24-27; Micah v. 5-9, etc).

We know also that the antichrist will rule over the apostate Jews, and set himself up as the Messiah in Jerusalem. He will act in league with the head of the revived Roman empire (Rev. xiii.; 2 Thess. ii. 4; Dan. xi. 36-39, etc.). *How* the Roman empire, with its ten subordinate kingdoms, will be reformed, it would not be safe to say. It is, however, important to remember that this will be brought about by a man of remarkable military and diplomatic skill, something like Napoleon; only, no doubt, much more infidel and openly blasphemous against God and His people. His character in these respects is delineated in Revelation xiii. 1-8; Daniel. vii. 23-26, and other passages.

Thank God, the Christian's hopes and expectations lie outside it all. *We* wait for God's Son from heaven, who is coming to take us to Himself *before* that hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell on the earth.

---

It may be said, why do you set so much importance on the coming of the Lord?—I believe there is no testimony without it; you have no right goal. Everyone is a witness for something. Lot was a witness of what a divided heart is; Abraham of what the walk of faith is. If a person is going to be a witness for God, he must have his goal marked out. . . . The coming of

Christ from heaven for you is the pole-star for the Christian. If a Christian is not looking for this coming, you may be sure that his testimony is not according to the mind of God.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“Behold, I come quickly.” Christ will have perfect delight in seeing His whole Church, and in seeing each believer *perfect*. When a painter has put the last touch upon his picture, he sees it complete, and he dare not add to it; another touch would spoil it. Not only is the joy reciprocal of the Church meeting Christ, and Christ the Church, but His joy will be the greater. The one is finite, the other infinite.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

The very inward life of the believer is formed in connection with the coming of the Lord. . . . The soul formed on His coming cannot be satisfied without Him.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

“Surely I come quickly.” Oh, it is the sweetness of that “I” presented there that so touches the heart! “I come,” not “I stand at the door knocking,” but the Lord speaks of Himself coming for His bride. Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only object before our hearts? We have here not alone, “I am the bright and morning star,” but “I come”—presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness of what He is.

Have not some of us known Him for years, and have we not found the attractiveness of His beauty deepening in our souls? What is all we have learned of Him here when compared with the thought of beholding Himself, looking on His face, seeing the One who died for us, the One that loved and watched over us from infancy—and oh, with what tender gentleness He has watched over us!

If I know His desire to come, am I able to say "Even so, come?" It is really having communion with that heart of His, whose every thought is the Father's will, and who has been waiting more than 1800 years to come, and take up the people given by the Father—He the Bridegroom, they the bride! G. V. W.

### **"Impossible."**

*Recollections of a short address by J. A.*

I WISH to speak to you a little about the four places where this word is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. I will turn first to chapter vi. 4, "It is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance." This is a word to professors who would turn away from Christianity. If they gave up Christ, there was nothing for them but judgment. It is encouraging in one way, because it shows us how full and complete the work of Christ is, that such awful consequences should follow any turning back and giving it up.

The next place I take up is chapter x. 4, "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Here again we see, by the very force of the contrast, the wondrous worth and value of the blood of Christ. In verse 19, we find that we have boldness to enter at all times into the holiest "by the *blood of Jesus*." There is only one other place I know of where this expression occurs, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

The blood of bulls and goats and all the sacrifices of old could not avail, they were but types and shadows; but the sacrifice of Christ is of everlasting efficacy and worth.

Look back now at chapter vi., verse 18, "It was impossible for God to lie." Here God graciously comes down to assure us of the certainty and stability of our blessings in Christ. There was the counsel and the oath of God. How could God change His word and His oath? It is impossible. Oh, beloved, it is well that our souls should be firmly established on the certainty of the divine truth of God, in these days of disturbance and unrest in the assemblies of God's people and in the world around.

The last passage at which I would ask you to look is in chapter xi., and I must say I feel how it puts one to the test: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." I well remember how, before God saved my soul, I hated God and the Bible. But for more than thirty years, I have learned deeper each day that the Bible is in deed and in truth *God's precious book*.

Have we faith to believe, not only that GOD IS, but that He is all that the book says He is, and that He is THAT for us? And He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The man of God is not a lazy man; no, he is diligent in the study of God's word, and I tell you he values it. Sometimes when I come home late and tired, the enemy says to me, "Now you are tired, and you know this poor frame cannot stand too much; just take things easy and go to rest." But do you know, those are the very times when I have had such blessed seasons alone with God over His word.

Oh, it *is* a real thing to learn from God alone in one's own room over the blessed Word of God, and to prove in this way that He is all He says He is to the diligent seeker!

## Unbelief.

ALL our examination of the Scriptures which have hitherto passed before us, leads to the definite conclusion that unbelief is as rife now as it ever was in the past. The Apostle Paul, at the end of his course, was careful to warn Timothy of the "perilous times" that were coming; for, says he, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith" (1 Tim. iv. 1). And, as has often been remarked, the description given of these "latter times" in 2 Timothy iii., is a terrible reproduction of the picture of the idolatrous Gentile world given in Romans i. The exhortation, "Fight the good fight of faith," of itself shows that it is no easy matter to stem the tide of increasing worldliness and self-seeking in all its forms. Those professing science were the most ready to err concerning the faith, and thus become tools of Satan for turning others away from it (1 Tim. vi. 12, 20-21).

When Paul was in prison at Rome, awaiting the sentence which he knew was coming,—Demas, who had long been his companion, sought for an easier path far away from the capital, where he could still continue his outward profession of Christianity in surroundings less exposed to the bitter opposition of the world. And is not that descriptive of the large majority of "Christians," at the present day? More trying times yet to come have been announced by the Lord and His apostles. Consequently, we ought carefully to examine the very foundations of our belief, lest we should be taken unawares, and carried away in the stream of personal hostility to the Christ of God.

The Lord is no longer present on the earth; He had to leave it before He could send, from the Father, the

Holy Spirit promised (John vii. 39 ; xvi. 7). In many respects the advantage to His sorrowing disciples was greater ; for the character of their ministry would thus be unrestrained, and so far in contrast to the Lord's (see Luke xii. 49, 50) ; besides which, until He had died and risen, it was impossible to make known the forgiveness of sins, which sets a sinner in perfect peace with the living God, the Judge of all. But on the other hand, there was a more definite appeal to *faith*, as the Lord said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ?" (John iii. 12).

When the promised Messiah was here on earth, all those instructed in the prophecies of the Old Testament hoped to see *at that time* the national restoration, which Zacharias called "the horn of salvation," in the house of David, often spoken of in the Psalms. It is very much what orthodox Jews of the present day are looking for, namely, the mercy sworn by oath to Abraham, that, as they express it, the God of Israel "would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke ii. 67-75). The miracles performed by the Lord tended to give definiteness to that hope, which came to its climax when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and the excited crowd cried, "Hosanna !" — Save, we beseech thee (Luke xx. 37-38). The leaders opposed it, however, and a week later, those cries were replaced by "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

After His resurrection, the Lord showed Himself to His disciples alone ; but they were just as intent as before upon the realisation of their Jewish hopes. That is clearly shown by their question, "Lord, wilt Thou *at this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel ?" (Acts

i. 6). Jesus reminded them that the Holy Ghost would come upon them, and the blessed promise was realised ten days after His ascension to heaven; but it was only through Paul's ministry that the extent of the blessing was unfolded, and the Jews, especially at Jerusalem, where the Temple was still standing, had the greatest difficulty in accepting the heavenly calling and hope which characterise Christianity. The disastrous effect of their teaching is exposed in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Alas, all the history of the Church proves that there has constantly been a tendency to refuse the "persecution," which Jesus foretold as the portion of His disciples on earth (John xv. 20; xvi. 33), and to settle down into a path of more or less conformity "to the course of this world," where Satan has his own way and leads his votaries in paths of their own choosing (Ephes. ii. 1-7). It was the Apostle's continual testimony against this, which was met by persecution wherever he carried the glad tidings of God's grace.

The power of the Holy Spirit is of course unseen and unfelt by the world, which lies in the wicked one (1 John iv. 3-5; v. 19). But before the New Testament Scriptures were committed to writing, God graciously accorded to the apostles the power to do remarkable miracles, in order to convince the heathen that the character of their testimony, though unaccompanied by worldly advantage, was nevertheless one of grace, tender compassion, and divine power. Such had been the Lord's ministry amongst the poor of the flock in Galilee; it was quite distinct from John's, whose unique mission was to call everyone to repentance. The effect in each of these two cases presented this remarkable contrast, that when there was something to do, namely, to confess sins in view of the setting up of God's kingdom,

the people did it: all Judæa and Jerusalem, including even Pharisees and Sadducees, went to his baptism; for all held John to be "a prophet indeed" (Matt. iii. 5-7; Mark xi. 32). And John "did no miracle" (John x. 41). But the Lord's call to repentance, emphasised by continual miracles which met every class of suffering and need, produced scarcely any effect upon the mass of the people in Galilee. Those who had seen most, especially in Capernaum, where He resided with His disciples, "repented not" (Matt. xi. 20). How this fact alone sets forth, in vivid colours, the unbelief which fills every human heart!

Miracles were to cease after a time. As soon as the epistles and gospels were written, copied, and translated, the written word became the incontrovertible test for faith, and by these inspired writings (including those of the Old Testament), every human pretension of knowledge or doctrine must be tried and judged of. Satan imitated miracles of old, and he has the same energy now. "Jannes and Jambres," the magicians of Egypt, withstood Moses by copying what Aaron did by power given to him by God; but they could not go beyond a certain point, as the apostle indeed mentions. Timothy had simply to avoid all these things and continue in what he had learned from his youth out of the written word of God, and heard from the apostle by the teaching of the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. iii. 8-17). That is also our safeguard at the present time. When the Lord was here on earth, there was much to see, as well as to hear from Him; now, however, the Scriptures of truth suffice for every need, and the power of the Holy Ghost makes them good in the soul.

This is of the utmost importance. God works by His word (James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23). But He works also by the Holy Ghost, who takes of Christ's things to

reveal them to us (John xvi. 8-15). Consequently we are, as the Lord said to Nicodemus, "born of water *and* of the Spirit." The water, in both Isaiah and Ezekiel, is a well-known symbol of the Word of God, which the teacher of Israel was well acquainted with (Isa. xliv. 3; lv. 10-11; lix. 21; Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 25-27). We find it thus in both its sanctifying and vivifying power.

There is, after all, nothing new in the enemy's work. If the Pharisees, who from their youth were learned in the Holy Scriptures, and were the professed guardians of them (as Paul owns in Romans iii. 2), were the bitterest opponents of the Lord Jesus, whose *words* they heard, and whose *miracles* they saw,—miracles both in their abundance and in their character such as had not been seen or heard of previously on earth (John ix. xi.),—is it astonishing that in this day of grace unbelief should be as prevalent as it is, in so-called Christian countries? The presence and the operation of the Holy Ghost is unseen and unknown by the great majority. His power is unfelt, except by those who in heart believe the Scriptures and have been brought to call Jesus, "Lord." This, as the apostle says, can only be truly done by the Holy Ghost. All others, by their refusal of Christ and His redeeming grace, take their place with the thief who, in the article of death, insulted the Saviour by putting Him in the same category with himself and his companion, saying, "*If* thou be the Christ, save thyself *and* us" (Luke xxiii. 39). The death of the cross carried the *curse* with it (Gal. iii. 13); consequently, he practically called Jesus "accursed." The other, who rebuked him, owned that he, as well as his companion, were righteously suffering that death, as being themselves accursed; and with the same breath he made the

exception in the case of Jesus, saying, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Then was his confession immediately followed by his turning to Jesus with the prayer, "Lord, remember me" (Ps. xxv. 7).

Here is the divine picture of the salvation of a soul. There is no middle place. Every human creature must take his place, so to speak, behind the one or the other of these two thieves. If I am behind the first, I practically say that Jesus bore His own judgment, according to the Pharisees' condemnation of Him; that is, I call *Him* "accursed." If, on the contrary, I own that His death was vicarious for *me*, and that He bore the curse which was due to *me* as a sinner, then I take my place as justly deserving the death which is marked by the curse, and address Him as my Lord. That, says the apostle, is "by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). All Paul's gospel, presented to sinners, was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness," because it turned on that simple fact. He was determined to know nothing among them "save Jesus Christ and Him *crucified*" (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2).

Only in so far as we take our place before God as condemned *sinners*, can we realise by simple faith the efficacy of Christ's death on the cross (Gal. ii. 20-21; 1 Tim. i. 15; Rom. iii. 19). The knowledge of Scripture alone, however extensive it may be, will not save the soul. In like manner, it is possible to marvel at the Lord's works, and yet not believe in Him; but notwithstanding, there is in His miracles a possibility of opening the door of mercy to one who cannot understand His words, as He Himself said to the Jews (John x. 38). The refusal of the Pharisees to take heed to His works of grace, sealed their condemnation, proving, as the Lord said, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John xv. 24).

After all, it is the reception in simplicity of the Lord's own words which binds the heart to Him, as He said to Thomas, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John xx. 29). But self-will is a great hindrance; there was none of it in Christ. And another solemn word of His exposes one of the greatest snares of Satan, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 30, 44).

W. J. L.

### The Title "Son of Man."

**T**HIS title of our Lord is found 31 times in Matthew, 26 in Luke, 14 in Mark, and 12 in John. It is always the Lord Himself who uses it in the gospels. Stephen employs it in his address in Acts vii., when he saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. It is found twice in Revelation, and in the quotation from Psalm viii., given in Hebrews ii. 6; it is also referred to in Philip. ii. 8; Ephesians i. 21, and 1 Corinthians xv. 27.

It speaks to us of the precious and wondrous grace of Him who, though the Eternal One, could say, "My delights were with the sons of men." And He will retain his humanity for ever!

At the close of John i. we find Nathaniel, type of the godly Israelite, owning Jesus as "Son of God" and "King of Israel," according to Psalm ii. But we know that, as such, He was rejected and refused. In His answer to Nathaniel, the Lord opens up a wider and fuller glory which belongs to Him as "Son of man." This goes beyond His relationship to Israel, and takes in His position as set over *all* the works of God's hands.

Daniel vii. gives us another glimpse of the glory of

the Son of man. There He is brought before the Ancient of Days (God, as such), and there is given to Him "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Thus His sway is universal, and His kingdom, unlike all others, is never taken away. In the end He will give it back to God, from whom He received it, so that God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) may be all in all.

But what is also remarkable here is, that we find later on in the chapter that the "Ancient of Days came"; so that the Son of man is Himself the Ancient of Days.

Turning to John xi., xii., and xiii., we have three relations in which Christ is found, each blessedly suited to the context. First, as Son of God, He raises Lazarus from the dead; then, as Son of David, He enters Jerusalem in triumph (though the title is not found in John); and finally, as Son of man He dies.

When the Greeks came up (chap. xii.)—Gentiles as they were—they asked Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." But this request brought before the mind of the Saviour a day still future, when not only Jews but Gentiles would share the blessing of His millennial kingdom. Immediately Jesus says, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." Before ever anyone could have a part in the blessings of that day, JESUS MUST DIE. Not one grain of wheat of the coming harvest could be stored in the granary of God, unless He, *the* grain of wheat, fall into the ground and die.

But in chapter xiii. we find even a fuller and richer unfolding of truth connected with this title. It was at the last supper; and immediately Judas had gone out,

the Lord, relieved of the presence of the traitor, says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."

A moral and personal glory attached and belonged to His person, which surpassed even that which would be displayed in the coming kingdom. Here the Saviour rises to the height of what God's nature demanded on the one hand, and to the full extent of the work He was about to accomplish on the other.

There was not one attribute in God's nature as a God of infinite holiness, righteousness, majesty, and truth, but was fully vindicated and glorified in that work which stands alone in the history of eternity—**THE CROSS**. And if God has been thus glorified by the Son of man, He has answered to it in righteousness and raised Him from the dead, and that "straightway"; not as waiting for the Kingdom, but crowning Him with glory and honour in heaven.

True, "we see not yet all things put under Him," though the moment when that too will be accomplished is fixed and assured in the counsels of God. But—blessed fact for faith! "we see **JESUS CROWNED**." What a joy to the heart of the Christian to know that the Son of man will be set over *all*, what a sustainment to his faith, what a pledge of the glory he is soon to share!

F. G. B.

---

*Fragment.*—"Lord, who is it?" (John xiii. 25). There was one near Him [at the last supper], the disciple whom Jesus loved. This love of Jesus had formed the heart of John—had given confidingness and constancy of affection; and consequently, without any

other motive than this, he was near enough to Jesus to receive communications from Him. It was not in order to receive them that he placed himself close to Jesus: he was there because he loved the Lord, whose own love had thus attached him to Himself; but, being there, he was able to receive them. It is thus that we may still learn of Him.

Let us remember that being near Jesus for His own sake, is the way of having His mind when anxious thoughts arise.

J. N. D.

### The Bright Morning Star.

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Rev. xxii. 16).

THE world's vain, worthless pleasures,  
Its treach'rous hopes and lies,  
Its rusty, worn-out treasures,  
As baubles we despise :  
We look for His appearing,  
The Morning Star so bright ;  
This hope our spirits cheering  
Beguiles the hours of night.  
We know by many a token  
We soon shall reach our home,  
For our Beloved has spoken,  
“Behold, I quickly come !”

J. G. D.