

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE

SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

VOL. VIII

LONDON

ALFRED HOLNESS, 14 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1919

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN, AT
THE DARIEN PRESS, EDINBURGH

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Peace—and After.

IT is a matter for sincere thankfulness that the Great War has come to an end, after more than four years of suffering and bloodshed.

Truly recent months have been marked by a succession of momentous events, occurring with a rapidity altogether unprecedented. Empires have fallen, crowned heads have been brought down, and a wave of socialistic revolution has passed over Europe. Probably after a time this wave will have spent its force, and may give place to another change in the world's politics, in the opposite direction.

But victory has its dangers as well as its blessings. It is just at such a time the Christian needs to be on his guard, to walk humbly, and not to be drawn away in the current of the world's pride and boastfulness.

We need to view things "in the sanctuary," in God's presence, where we see everything in a true light. There we learn how passing and empty this world is at its best, and how infinitely superior the heavenly portion which belongs to the Christian in a risen and glorified Christ.

Abraham, the man of faith, enjoying communion with God on the mountain top, was a happier man by far than Lot, vexing his righteous soul in the polluted cities of the plain. He was a real testimony for God, while Lot (type of the worldly Christian) was no testimony at all.

May we be enabled to rise to the height of the heavenly portion that is ours—"blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"—and to make it our own by faith.

F. G. B.

A Word to the Lord's Servants.

IN Philippians iii. the apostle Paul speaks of himself as one running a race, pressing towards the mark, and he says, "This one thing I do," etc. Do we know something of a heart devoted to one Object as his was? His single purpose in life was, not a worldly one, but entirely outside the current of this world. His desire was to "win Christ," to be with Him in the complete and perfect state of resurrection, with a view to which he had been taken hold of by Him. Is it so with us? Have we let go other objects which hinder our hearts' occupation with Christ and separate them from Him? Is not the lack of this whole-hearted devotedness to Him the hidden cause of much of the weakness with which we often follow in the path which the Lord has marked out for His servants?

Or, again, are we hindered from taking this path with decision, and from walking in it with a firm and unfaltering step when we are in it? Shall we dishonour the Lord and grieve the Holy Spirit by showing by our ways that we do not find sufficient attractiveness in Christ to fill and keep our hearts? In the glory we shall have no other object. Should we not allow Him to break even the last bond which hinders us from being entirely His? Or shall we attach ourselves to earthly things until death snatches them from our grasp?

"Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ [as] Saviour"; it is from heaven that the life of the Christian morally flows. It is from there we await the Saviour who shall change these bodies of humiliation and transform them into the likeness of His body of glory. It is according to the same "working," viewed here in its

full result in glory, that He has power to "subdue" our hearts and to subjugate them to Himself. This power is found in the knowledge of what He is, such as He is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the blessed and glorious scene in which He dwells. . . .

May the Lord give us the grace to learn and appreciate the path of true service, in His presence (the only place where this knowledge can be acquired), and to find strength to walk in it. It is only in so far as we walk in His path that we can be truly His servants. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me."

From the French.

"Blessed is He that Readeth."

Revelation i. 3.

IN beginning a new year after the conclusion of the terrible war, which has no doubt been responsible for the sacrifice of more human lives than any previous one in the world's history, we cannot do better than meditate afresh upon the closing testimony of the Spirit of God to the churches on earth, in immediate anticipation of the Lord's personal return.¹

It is upon this last book of the Bible that special blessing is announced in drawing the reader's attention to it, so that each one may become more and more acquainted with the Lord's final message to His saints on this earth, who are also supposed to be "watching" and waiting for His coming.

¹ The word "quickly" is added seven times if we include chap. ii. 5, where the word is doubtful; and indeed the passage would seem to have more force if it be omitted there, because the emphasis would then be thrown on the *personal* return of the Lord, who does not in that case employ one of His angels. The other passages are ii. 16; iii. 11; xi. 14 (where it is applied to the "third woe"); and xxii. 7, 12, 20.

Furthermore, let us not lose sight of the fact that such a hope supposes not only an expression of longing desire on the part of those whom He has washed from their sins in His own blood (verse 5), but that it signifies also that degenerate condition of things, nominally Christian, on this earth, seeing that nothing less than His coming in Person could possibly correct their hopeless disorder and corruption.

Unsparring judgment must ultimately put an end to this state of things, in which, however, the world glories, for the satisfaction of its self-seeking vanities ; but that can only be brought about when heaven is "opened." It will not then be to own the personal glory of the Son of God, who consented in His baptism to be identified with sinners (Matt. iii. 16), but to let the "white horse" out, on which He rides "in view of treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. xix. 11-16).

In the meantime He is the God-given and "Faithful Witness," the "first-begotten from the dead," presenting thus, in His own Person, the *resurrection* to which all His redeemed followers look forward. For we must not forget that *before* He comes in glory to this earth, He will already have gathered secretly to Himself every one of those for whom He gave His life, and who are destined to be "for ever with Himself" (1 Thess. iv. 17). This fact characterises the whole book.

Besides being the faithful Witness of all God's love and grace, manifested in His person, and in His resurrection, for those whom He has redeemed at such a cost to Himself, He is also "the Prince of the kings of the earth" ; so that all their *authority*, if rightly exercised, can only flow from unfeigned subjection to Him. It must therefore take its character from Him,

in whom alone its true source is found; and the right exercise of it should be to His glory.

This two-fold glory, personal to Himself—first, the *resurrection* as the outcome of His death, in which His love was proved to the uttermost; and, secondly, His *return* in glory, when “He cometh with clouds,” is the necessary fruit of His death, as we see in verses 5, 6, and 7. “Even so, Amen,” expresses the Holy Spirit’s response, at the close of verse 7, in the hearts of the whole redeemed company. He Himself is “the first-born *from the dead.*”

Then follows in verse 8 what we may call the Lord’s own signature to this preface to the book: “I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

We have here to note that in the two other cases in which these words are found, there is a first and a second addition. The words, “the beginning and the ending,” in verse 8, as well as the first line of verse 11, are now understood to be an interpolation of early copiers, so that we have in the book only *two* repetitions of “Alpha and Omega.”

Rev. i. 8 should read, “I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God.” That is the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet, or, in principle, the beginning and the end of all divine communications, all being really summed up in our blessed Lord’s person. To that is added in chap. xxi. 6, the words, “The beginning and the end.” Finally, in xxii. 13, there is the further addition of “The first and the last.” All that is in blessed harmony with the gradual unfoldings of the book as a whole—absolutely complete in itself.

In following the order of the first chapter, we note that John’s testimony really begins with verse 9, in which he states how it was that he was chosen to

be the messenger of all that follows in the book. He was himself a prisoner, their "companion in tribulation," during the reign of Domitian; it was in Patmos, a rocky and bare island, over forty miles distant from the coast of Asia Minor, and where he had probably a cave for his dwelling.

No comfort of any kind was to be expected from the pagan emperors of those days. But the Lord honoured His servant in giving him the wonderful unfoldings of the future, reserved for the world where He Himself was crucified.

Two things of deep interest strike us in verse 10. John himself was "in the Spirit," and the day chosen for the revelations to be made was "the first day of the week," especially set apart as the particular day on which the Lord first appeared to His disciples, when risen from the dead (John xx. 19).

This is surely of supreme importance for all of His redeemed, and the more carefully to be guarded now, as it has of late been called in question by some who, as of old, seek to set it aside. We may always note that the efforts of the enemy are directed against everything that would tend to give the blessed Lord His true place in the hearts and-thoughts of His redeemed.

Let us see to it "that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8). Satan is very busy in seeking to distract and worry the saints in various ways; our safety is in holding fast to the letter of Scripture, and directing our conduct accordingly, "Blessed is he who *reads*, who *hears*, and who *keeps* to what is written" (verse 3). Occupation with the Lord prepared John to be His messenger to the churches.

It was then on the Lord's day, which we call Sunday, that John heard from behind him "a great voice as of

a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (verse 11). All these were on the mainland north-east of Patmos; Laodicea, in the neighbourhood of Colosse, being the furthest away, in a mountainous part, and a hundred miles or so from the coast.

For each of these separate Churches John received a distinct message. No doubt it was divinely ordered, so that, in the mercy of God, we might have in them a complete sketch of what was to take place, until the moment when all the saints will be caught up together, *before* the Lord takes the judgment of the so-called "Christian" part of the world into His own hand.

Personal responsibility and failure will be dealt with between Himself and His saints alone, before He deals with the outward profession, which will go more and more astray as long as the time of His patience lasts. There is only one "Faithful Witness," and that is the blessed Lord Himself, who is the "first-begotten from the dead." *Our* future position depends upon what He wrought through His suffering and death, though individual rewards will be given as deserved by each one responsible to please Him (1 Cor. iii. 10-15; Col. i. 10). May we all be more stirred up in this respect, as the moment of His calling us away draws nearer.

In John's day each Church received its appropriate message; we have the advantage and privilege of profiting by them all. And here it is again that the encouragement applies: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." W. J. L.

After the Grave the Glory.

NOT only are the death and dust of the saints precious in the sight of the Lord, but Holy Writ draws aside for us the curtain of their future, so that we who still remain here may be cheered as to all our loved ones, young or old, whom the Lord has called to Himself.

This is ministered in two ways:—By the direct teaching of such words as, “To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. i. 23); to be “absent from the body” is “to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. v. 8); “We shall be like Him” (1 John iii. 2); “Fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. iii. 21; etc.). Also by what is disclosed to us through the miracles He wrought when on earth.

It will be remembered that, in the record of “things which Jesus did,” we are given glimpses of three sad homes distressed by the sorrows of death, and of how the Lord Jesus brought them wonderful relief. In each case—the only three cases of the kind mentioned in the gospels—He wrought a miracle and made death the means to manifest His power and His love.

The *first* was at the gate of the city of Nain. Here was a widow who had lost her *only son*; “and when Jesus saw her He had compassion on her and said unto her, ‘Weep not,’” but to the dead He said “‘Arise.’ And he that was dead *sat up* and began to *speak*. And He delivered him to his mother.” The others “glorified God saying, That God had visited His people” (Luke vii. 11-18).

The *second* one was very similar. This was at a ruler’s house, whose *only daughter* had died; or was, as Jesus called it, “sleeping.” To the sorrowing parents He said, “Why make ye this ado, and weep?” then

turned to her and said, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel *arose* and *walked*." (Mark v.).

The *third* case was somewhat different. Here it was an *only brother*, so far as we can judge (John xi.); but instead of saying again, "Weep not," He now Himself wept with them and over them. Then when they came to the grave, and had at His command rolled away the stone—for, bless God, there are no stones too heavy for Him to roll away—"He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.' And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'" Yes, freedom as well as life is His purpose for all His own. And the first thing we read of him afterwards is, "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him" at supper.

So whether it was the death of an only son, an only daughter, or an only brother, neither of them was beyond His voice to reach or His power to raise; while the three mourning circles they left behind them equally appealed to His compassion and sympathy. And they found in Him One—the only One—who had a power, in the midst of the sorrowful circumstances, that could dry their tears.

The sight of the Lord Jesus and the sound of His words in these three scenes have yielded untold comfort to sorrowing hearts; while they are a token and pledge of what He will yet accomplish for us in its proper time, as well as for the loved ones we mourn over. Full well do we know that, as surely as He raised one—an only son—to life, to *speak* again; another—an only daughter—to *walk* again; and a third—an only brother—to *feast at the table* with Himself, so will He manifest His grace in its blessed fulness by and by.

He will give each of us and our loved ones, who have fallen asleep, to both *walk* with Him in white, *speak* and *sing* to His praise, and partake *with Him* of the fruit of His death in the fadeless glory that will fill the heavens and the earth. There is but a brief space of time ere this takes place, for He is soon coming again; and His miracles here are but the gleams of that glory shining for faith outside its courts. W. M. R.

Everlasting Punishment—i.

WHO does not feel the deep and solemn significance of everlasting condemnation, endless woe? The Lord Jesus Himself, and the Holy Ghost by the pen of the inspired apostles, have brought to light and confirmed it with all precision. Yet numbers make light of it, and not a few boldly deny it altogether.

We consider it a duty to testify, from the infallible Word of God, against the errors put forth by those who deny everlasting punishment, and to safeguard those who may be in danger of being drawn away from the truth and brought under their influence. The suggestions and reasonings of the human mind often lead us astray: the Word of God alone casts its clear light on our path, and is the spring and source of all undiluted truth.

One school of these false teachers proclaims universal salvation, which includes even the devil and his angels. Another denies that the souls of all men are immortal, and maintains that all impenitent sinners, after suffering for a time, will be annihilated. "God is love," say the former; and from this precious and irrefutable truth, the advocates of this system draw the conclusion that the eternal damnation of the wicked is irreconcilable with this love.

Now it is true that God acts according to the fulness of His love. That love was manifested from the very beginning; it unfolded itself in its fullest, brightest lustre, when God gave His only begotten Son to die for sinners; and it will shine in unhindered clearness when the last enemy shall be destroyed and God shall be all in all.

And it is also true that this love will never suffer a child of God to be delivered up to the sword of coming judgment, for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," and he that believeth on the Son "shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." But he who presumes to assert that all men are in the relationship of children to God gives the most positive evidence that he does not know the truth of Scripture. We are only saints of God "by faith in Christ Jesus," and we can only cry "Abba, Father" when God has sent His Spirit into our hearts. It is only those who "receive Him (Christ)" and "believe on His name," who have the title to take the place of children of God (John i. 12); we need to be "born again" and receive Christ by faith (John iii. 3-8).

The assertion, therefore, of a universal salvation on the ground of filial relationship, is nothing but an invention of the human mind; it deadens the conscience and undermines and shakes faith in the truth of everlasting condemnation. Let us not deceive ourselves! The love of God is boundless and infinite; but is His righteousness, holiness, and truth less perfect? Has His love at any time set aside the fulness of His other attributes? Ah! all those will surely perish eternally who despise His love and scorn His righteousness.

If we look through Scripture we shall find this righteousness of God continually. The thunders and commands given at Sinai revealed Him as the God who is jealous in visiting the sins of the fathers upon

the children, and by no means clearing the guilty. But, above all, if we place ourselves for a moment, in spirit, upon the spot, where, in the hour of darkness, under the overpowering weight of our sins, the cry rose up to God from the lips of the dying Saviour, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?", do we *there* see a love which turned aside the stroke of God's justice from the head of the only begotten Son? Never before had such a cry of anguish reached the ear of God, who is a God of love; and yet the sword of justice did not delay a single moment in striking the avenging blow. God saw our sins on the head of Him who voluntarily gave Himself up to death for us, and that was enough to turn away His countenance from the Sinbearer, and to execute on Him, in all its severity, the judgment hanging over the sinner.

At the cross, in all its fulness, God's perfect righteousness was manifested. The atoning work was so complete, and God has found such a perfect satisfaction in that sacrifice, that now the true believer can rejoice in the full enjoyment of His perfect love. But that same righteousness will meet the sinner who turns away from such a Saviour and opposes such infinite love to the end, with the same unmitigated severity as when the Saviour bowed His sacred head to its death-stroke—His righteousness is as perfect as His love.

We must therefore entirely reject a system which chooses a love for its foundation which is not in harmony with the character of God, but is a mere phantom of the imaginative mind, excluding divine righteousness, holiness, and truth. Even an earthly ruler does not merit the reproach of want of love to those under his rule because he punishes evil-doers; on the contrary love imposes it as a duty upon him.

Précis of articles in the "Bible Treasury," 1868.

Letters from a Christian Soldier in Egypt.

THESE letters, from H. R. M., contain an account of christian work in Egypt, chiefly amongst soldiers, for more than a year up to June 1918. They are most encouraging, as showing how the grace of God wrought in blessing to souls. They are, however, too long for publication in this magazine; but a few remarks, suggested by the perusal of them, may not be out of place.

It has been the experience of many young men, in connection with the war, to find themselves, like H. R. M., taken entirely out of circumstances in which they have been brought up in christian homes, and thrown amongst ungodly comrades. Though trying in many ways, this experience often works for good, if such make a decided stand for Christ. It puts to the test the reality of the truth we have professed; it casts us entirely upon God as our resource and refuge; it teaches us our own weakness and our need of dependence on Him for daily strength.

In Egypt, this was a remarkable work of God, begun and carried on in a spirit of prayer. Sinners were converted, Christians were helped, and in spite of opposition, the truth was proclaimed. The blessed hope of the coming of the Lord was one of the leading truths brought forward, though it was opposed and refused by some of the professed preachers of the Gospel. Another truth much to the front was the presence and power of the Holy Spirit—how important this is in all real work for God.

But one of the principal things which strikes us in reading over these notes is the absolute importance of the prayerful study of the Word of God. Mere emotion soon passes away and leaves the soul powerless

and a prey to all kinds of sentimentalism and self-deception. The only thing to steady the soul, to build us up in the truth, to equip the man of God for conflict with the enemy, and those who oppose the truth, is the Word of God. But it is not a cold intellectual acquaintance with the word; but that word learned and fed upon in the presence of God, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

When living in the home circle we are prone to run in a groove, satisfied with going to meetings, but without much soul exercise as to the work of God and the spiritual needs of the great world outside. The writer of these letters says: "It seems to me that there are many Christians who do not personally and individually realise their own need of spiritual awakening, or the need of those around them. Anyway the Lord had to bring me out here to learn it, and to make me feel the more for others. . . . I frankly confess that I should never have worked for the Master, as I thank Him I am now doing, if opportunity had not been thrust in my way; it is only by His grace that I have been enabled to enter into it and carry it on."

Thus God often uses circumstances to put us into positions where we are made to feel our responsibility in service, and our need of dependence on Him. Trying as must have been the persecution which took place when Stephen was stoned, yet these scattered ones "went everywhere preaching the Word." The Lord Jesus is still the same blessed and powerful Saviour. His name is still the centre of gathering, the Holy Spirit is still here and the Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. May He stir up all His people to more earnestness and devotedness while waiting for His return!

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

Compromises.—When it is a question of fundamental truths, compromise is fatal. See what the apostle says in Galatians i. 8, 9—“Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you . . . let him be accursed . . . If any man preach any other gospel unto you . . . let him be accursed.”

The following is a weighty sentence:—“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” (*Coll. Writ.*, J. N. D., xx. 411).

* * * * *

The moment we have got peace, and are free to think of something besides self, every ray of glory we can perceive in connection with Christ brightens up the interest of our souls in Him.

* * * * *

The Lord's Remembrancers.—“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in all the earth” (Isa. lxii. 6, 7, *R.V.*). If the godly remnant of Israel—the Lord's remembrancers—are taught to pray earnestly for the restoration and glory of Zion in such touching words, surely *we* (Christians) should desire, with even greater earnestness, the rising of the bright and morning star—the return of our beloved Lord and Saviour.

“ Although ”—“ Yet.”

Habakkuk iii. 17, 18.

“ Although ” the fig and olive fail,
The vine no clusters rich should yield,
Nor flocks nor herds be in the stall,
Nor fruit be found in any field.

“ Yet ” may we rest in simple faith,
For ev’ry need, as time goes by,
On Him who keeps the trusting heart
From faithless fear or fretful sigh.

“ Although ” dark clouds hang o’er our sky,
Though troubles rise and fears affright,
“ Yet ” will we joy in God alone,
Whose acts are just, whose paths are right.

“ Although ” the silent grave may close—
Our dear ones’ dust its portals keep,
“ Yet ” One who wept with Mary says,
“ I am the Life,” Thou need’st not weep.

Soon, very soon, at His command,
That sleeping dust shall leave the grave,
In resurrection-life transformed ;
Proof of His mighty power to save.

E’en *now* our souls adoring bless
The peerless name of Him who guides ;
“ Although ” our path be rough and steep,
“ Yet ” safe we are, whate’er betide.

M. E. B.

“O Lord Revive Thy Work.”

THIS is a prayer we need to pray earnestly and continually. We want revival in the going forth of the Gospel to poor sinners, and revival within, in the hearts of the people of God. It is easy to become formal, cold, and powerless, if not kept by the grace of God, in constant exercise of soul and in nearness to the Lord.

God has richly blessed us, but we need, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to rise to the blessed privileges that are ours. How it would brighten our meetings and attract others to Christ as the centre for their thoughts and affections, if only the saints of God lived and walked in the conscious enjoyment and daily realisation of their place in Him!

The apostle Paul speaks of the “great conflict” he had for the Colossian saints, that they might possess the full knowledge of “the mystery,” in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. What is this “mystery,” which, as we read in Ephesians iii. 3, was made known to Paul “by revelation”? It is the union of Jew and Gentile, in one body, with the Head in heaven, by the Holy Ghost. The danger was lest these believers should fail to “hold fast the Head,” even Christ; lest they should lose the conscious realisation of their union with Him; being drawn aside by philosophy on the one hand or tradition on the other.

Is there not a danger of this to-day? The world takes many seductive shapes. It may be, seeking a name and a place here; it may be, getting absorbed in business, politics, or something else; or it may take a seductive religious form. It is, in a word, anything which turns away the heart from Christ.

We live at a time, not only of general spiritual

weakness, but when those to whom much light and truth was graciously given of God some eighty years ago, seem to be *fast letting it slip*. At such a time there is surely need for special grace and faith. We read of Abraham that he "staggered not" at the promise of God through unbelief, but being "strong in faith" gave glory to God.

Truly the energy and perseverance of faith is called for now as much as ever, because one of the most difficult things is to keep the saints up to the realisation of the *heavenly* calling and portion that is theirs as members of the body of Christ, united to the glorified Head in heaven.

The apostle sought to safeguard the Colossian saints by showing them how closely they were identified with Christ. Not only are we "dead with Christ," but "risen with Christ," who is our life; and so linked up with Him that when He is manifested we also shall be manifested with Him in glory.

May the Lord revive His work and enable us to rise to the height of the calling and privileges that are ours. If special grace is needed for times of much weakness and brokenness, as it is, let us remember that He is able to supply all our need and to make all grace abound towards those who trust in Him.

F. G. B.

Faith's Answer to Known Love.

(*Revelation i. 5-7.*)

HOW encouraging it is for us to notice the answer of faith prepared, as we may say, beforehand, the moment the blessed Lord is personally introduced, in verses 4 and 5 of this first chapter, as "the faithful Witness," and "the first begotten *of, or from,* the dead!" Verses 5 and 6 necessarily give expression to

divine affections which are produced in the hearts of the redeemed by the Holy Spirit (here represented in a peculiar way as "seven Spirits before the throne") Their thanksgiving flows forth to Him who, at such cost to Himself, became, in resurrection, the Author of all their blessing: "Unto Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us a Kingdom—priests unto His God and Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Such an expression of faith and love comes here in its due place from those who know the Lord as their personal Saviour. Besides this, He has His true place in their midst, and yet as the One in whom all authority is vested, even over "the kings of the earth."

It is important for us to remember this as a *fact*, though, for the present, it is not outwardly manifested, since God in mercy puts off the day of judgment, which will not take place until all the saints are safely housed in heaven.

We find a description of the judgment in as far as dealing with the nations is concerned in chapter xix. of the book, when He that is "Faithful and True" will finally come forth in righteousness, to "tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (chap. xix. 11-16). But, in protracted mercy, the Lord puts off the day of judgment as long as possible. Judgment is His "strange work"; for He delights in mercy, far more than we ourselves do, especially when it is a question of getting our own "rights" recognised.

But at the beginning of the book, it is no question of the Lord's dealing in righteousness with a guilty world, —doubly guilty, first in crucifying Christ, and then in persecuting His saints—but rather of what He is for those who believe in Him. Three things are presented

in these verses: first of all, a full and complete redemption through his blood; secondly, the twofold character of the saints in blessing, as kings, and as priestly intercessors for others; and lastly, the added privilege of waiting for His coming again, which is now our daily hope.

However much we may fail in manifesting these things in our conduct and relation to others in our surroundings, which indeed should greatly humble us, still it is a comfort to know that He abides faithful; there is no failure in Him. That is especially recalled in the message to Laodicea, the last of the seven Churches in Asia (chap. iii. 14). He there speaks as "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness."

Such was the apostle's comfort at the close of his life, in writing to his beloved Timothy: "If we believe not, yet He abideth *faithful*; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13). And we may notice in passing a further testimony to the same thing, contained in the word, or rather name, "AMEN."

The Lord takes that title in addressing Laodicea, and we find it *twice* in Isaiah lxx. 16, though it is unfortunately lost to the ordinary reader, through its being translated by the words, "of truth"; but in the original, it is "God-Amen." The fact is of deep interest as giving increased force to the closing address of the Lord to the Churches in Asia.

What a blessing it is for us, in the midst of the unrest and turmoil of these latter days, to know that the Lord has everything in His own hand, exercising patient grace towards a world that knows Him not. He is in no hurry to judge, but is watching and waiting until the settled time for judgment comes, after He shall have removed His saints out of the present scene. All passing events are really under His unseen control.

If we believed it as we ought to do, we would be more quiet and restful in times of unrest and disorder.

For ourselves, as forming part of the great company of the redeemed, it is the *fact* of the Lord's death and resurrection which opens up to us a participation in the blessings of which He is the dispenser, when the ordained moment shall have come for Him to bestow them. They will be shared by all those who have, like Paul, finished their earthly course, as well as by those still living at the time of the Lord's return. All do not pass through martyrdom, like Stephen, but when their time comes they know that the Lord "receives their spirits," and, as Paul says, "To depart and be with Him," is "far better" than remaining here, even when engaged in the most blessed service, such as Paul's, and for which he had been specially prepared.

In accordance with this, we notice also that before any separate message is given to John, appropriated to the actual state and condition of the Churches in Asia, the most important thing for him was the "voice" which the apostle heard, and which "he turned back to see" (ver. 12).

A vision of the blessed Lord himself occupies the latter part of the chapter, recalling those given to Daniel, in chapter vii. and ix. of his book. Everything must be measured by what He is, in His own personal glory, as well as by His interests in the redeemed, for whom His precious blood was shed.

This is indeed the love which we find expressed in three ways in Galatians and Ephesians v. : "He loved me and gave Himself for me," our individual portion. Then "He loved us and gave Himself for us" is true of all the redeemed. Finally, "He loved the Church and gave Himself for it," answers to the fulness of His own heart. May we be enabled to realise it and dwell upon it more and more.

W. J. L.

Strangers and Israel.

SINCE so much interest is now centred on the Jews' future, a word or two as to those who will enjoy possession of the Holy Land *with them*, namely, *the strangers*, may be in season.

It will be remembered that God commanded His people, on their entry into Canaan, to exterminate its inhabitants because of the latter's wickedness, and lest they also should worship their idols and follow their sins. Their success in this was only partial and temporary. Their failure and neglect to finish their task was succeeded by the bitter consequences pronounced by Moses, "The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high ; and thou shalt come down very low" (Deut. xxviii. 43).

In long years afterwards these "strangers" come into view in a new way. David and Solomon set them apart to help the men of Hiram, King of Tyre, in the building of the first Temple, that long-looked-for place where Jehovah would put His name. Of them, 153,600—numbering one in ten of the adult male population of Israel as counted by David—were thus hired (2 Chron. ii. 17). This act, interesting in itself, is, however, but a sign and forecast of the still greater privilege in store for them in God's sovereign purpose, as we shall notice below.

After Israel's cruel experiences in the past, and Solomon's complete ascendancy in the world-wide triumph and unsurpassed glory of his reign, we might naturally expect that the days of the stranger as spoiler of Israel's peace were over for ever. Yet as with the people of yore, so also with the King himself. In a comparatively short time after God had established him in his kingdom, his heart turns away from

Jehovah, he builds high places and idols to the gods of these same strangers, and, with his many wives, bows down to worship them.

As might be expected, God's judgment would correspond with the gravity and depth of this sin. It led, though not at once, to the Jews being exiled from the land and the stranger being left in possession of it. This domination of the stranger, which remained till the Messiah came, is true at this time, though the land is in British hands; and it will abide so till He comes again to establish His kingly rights. What depth of reproach surely lay behind the Saviour's simple yet accusing question, as He looked at the Roman penny handed to Him—"*Whose is this image and superscription?*" Was it not the token of the stranger's hold on Immanuel's land, and the silent witness of His people's sin?

Now that the war has given a turn to events, so far as Palestine is concerned, which few expected when it began, the minds of many people, even outside of Zionism, are looking towards a happier day when, according to promise, Israel will be reinstated in their land as peaceful freeholders, every man sitting under his own vine and fig-tree. But in the consideration of this restoration there are *two striking facts* connected with *the stranger* which are generally overlooked.

First, that *God will reserve for him also a special place in the Holy Land.* The following are what we may call the terms of his title-deeds:—"And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to *the strangers* that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; *they shall have inheritance with you* among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in

what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. xlvii. 22, 23).

God who, in the wilderness, proclaimed Himself to be One who "loveth the stranger, in giving him *food* and *raiment*" (Deut. x. 18), yet conferred on him, later, *privileged service* in building His house in Zion; will enlarge greatly on both, by giving him *the right of undisputed inheritance* in Palestine. They and their kings will yet build Zion's walls, *minister to His people* (Isa. lx. 10), and *build in the temple* of the Lord (Zech. vi. 15. See also Isa. xlix. 20-23; lxi. 5).

Secondly, that *God promises special spiritual blessing to strangers in that millennial time.* Their feeble faith will be encouraged. They will be instructed not to say, "The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people." For "also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants . . . *even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My House of Prayer*; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar, for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others (strangers) to Him, beside those (*i.e.*, Israel) that are gathered unto Him" (Isa. lvi. 3-8).

How blessed! What plans of unspeakable grace and glory are our God's!

W. M. R.

Everlasting Punishment—ii.

GOD has proved His love to the sinner in the gift of His Son. Nevertheless we read of Him, "Thy right hand is full of righteousness" (Ps. xlviii. 10), and "He shall judge the world in righteousness"

(Ps. ix. 8). It is impossible that one attribute can exclude the other; on the contrary, they are in perfect harmony in His nature.

It is objected, "How can God, who is righteous, pronounce everlasting punishment on sins committed during a short and limited period?" But let us ask, who is to determine the punishment of sin? It is quite evident that the duration of that punishment cannot be dependent on the length or brevity of the time in which the sin is committed. A person may commit a crime in five minutes, on which the best earthly government pronounces punishment of imprisonment for life, or even of death. And not only the deed itself, but the motives which lead to it, and other circumstances, may mitigate or aggravate the sentence.

Can man, who is the guilty one, be at the same time the judge to fix the duration of the punishment of his own sins according to a divine and righteous scale? What folly! And what is to be said of the sinner who, in spite of all God's warnings, the reproaches of conscience, and the entreaties of God's love, still refuses the proffered grace and mercy? But if we want to see God's judgment upon sin in all its fearful reality, let us fix our gaze upon the cross, where Christ bore that judgment in His own body on the tree.

Has God given His only begotten Son, and has the Lord Jesus willingly given His life to free the sinner from a punishment which is only temporal and passing? Was it not because He, bearing our sins and made sin for us, bore the awful weight of the wrath of a righteous and holy God? Did it need such a sacrifice, if the consequences of our sins was only a temporal punishment? Surely not. And truly this infinite price of redemption testifies that the damnation of the lost

must be also unlimited—never ending ; hence the Word of God speaks of “eternal judgment,” “everlasting torment,” “the fire that never shall be quenched,” and the “worm that dieth not.” And who are we that we should dare to judge God’s ways ?

“But,” say our opponents, “it is proved that the word ‘eternal’ used in Scripture does not always denote endless continuance, but often a temporal or limited state”; and they quote various passages to bear out this contention. Let us go to the root of the matter, and we believe we shall fully prove to the reader how untenable this objection is.

Taking an example from everyday life—if a person says to his friend, “I give you this book, it is yours *for ever*,” he simply expresses his intention not to ask the book back again so long as it exists. But would the friend be in any doubt as to the meaning of the expression “for ever”? We believe he would not. And so with the cases quoted from the Old Testament; the meaning of the words “for ever” denotes the unchangeableness and continuity of a condition during the existence of another state of things bound up with it. Where, then, is the other state of things relative to the everlasting damnation of the wicked which is of limited duration, in connection with the eternity of condemnation ?

Let the reader consider carefully such passages as John iii. 36 ; 2 Thessalonians i. 7-9 ; Luke xvi. 22-26 ; Revelation xiv. 11 ; Mark ix. 43-46. Now where is there anything limiting the period for which the wrath of God “abides,” or which weakens the fact of “everlasting destruction,” or cools the “burning tongue,” or removes the “great gulf, fixed” which separates the saved from the lost ? If, therefore, the Greek word translated ‘everlasting’ or “for ever” denotes, in some cases, a

limited period, this does not justify anyone in transferring the same meaning to cases in which the Word of God clearly and unequivocally places before us a different signification. Even heathen writers have used this word to describe a never-ending condition, and the Greek language possesses no word by which it could give a more precise expression of the uninterrupted continuance of eternity.

The Scriptures also employ this word in several passages in a sense, the unequivocal character of which even the most determined advocates of the non-eternity doctrine must admit. When, for instance, the apostle Paul says, "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18), does the force of the contrast leave the true meaning of the contested word "eternal" at all in question? Certainly not. And the same might be said of the first verse of the following chapter, where the "building of God," which we receive at resurrection, is said to be "an house not made with hands, *eternal* in the heavens," in contrast with the earthly tabernacle which is "dissolved."

Précis of articles in the Bible Treasury, 1868.

Prophetic Studies—ii.

The King of the North.

THIS title is found only in Daniel xi. The first King of the North was Seleucus I. (B.C. 312-280), one of the four successors of Alexander the Great. His dominion at one time included Asia Minor, and reached from the Egean to India. There were constant wars between the various Kings of the North and of the South, that is between the Kings of Syria and Egypt; Palestine lay between the two.

One of the former, Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 175-164), is referred to in verse 31 of Daniel xi.; he was well known in history as a particularly wicked man, and he it was who polluted the sanctuary at Jerusalem, and took away the daily sacrifice. This is also the subject of prophecy in Daniel viii. 11.

But the important point for us to understand is, as to the future King of the North. As is well known, there is a break in Daniel xi. at verse 35, where it passes on to the events of the last days. The last King of the North is the one referred to in verses 40-45, where he is said to come against "*the King.*" This latter is a personage well known in prophecy, the false Messiah, King of the Jews, the Antichrist. The King of the North attacks Jerusalem with a vast army—the attack being partially successful (Zech. xiv. 2),—and then passes on to Egypt. Finally he comes to his end under the judgment of God on the mountains outside Jerusalem.

The latter part of Daniel viii., verses 23-27, where we have the explanation of the vision, carries us much beyond the earlier part of that chapter, and brings before us the time of the end. The personage there described as the "little horn," arising out of what had been the fragments of the empire of Alexander the Great, we take to be the last King of the North. This King will occupy the territory north of Palestine, which has hitherto been under the rule of Turkey, and in part, of Persia.

His character is described in Daniel viii. as being crafty and insidious, and deceiving the Jews by his policy; thus turning them away from the true God and making them forget Him. His military power will be derived from elsewhere, doubtless from the "Gog" of Ezekiel, or Russia. Various scriptures make

reference to a Power north of Palestine, who is unquestionably the future King of the North.

In the Psalms, the "Songs of Degrees" (Ps. cxx.-cxxxiv.) have in view this closing period; and Psalm cxx. speaks of a man characterised by "lying lips, and a deceitful tongue," which well answers to Daniel viii. 23-27. In Joel ii. 20, the Lord says He will remove far off from them "him [that cometh] from the north" (new translation), evidently referring to the future deliverance of Israel from this same enemy.

At the time we are now speaking of, after the rapture of the saints at the appearing of the Lord, there will be two great groups of Powers in the world, besides, of course, others—the Western Confederation, under the Roman beast of Revelation xiii. 1-10, in league with the Antichrist at Jerusalem; and the Northern and Eastern Confederation under Gog or Russia. To this latter the King of the North belongs.

Prophecy speaks frequently of "the Assyrian" of the future, as well as of the past. We take it that this title covers, in a general way, this Northern Confederation. In Psalm lxxxiii., Assur is said to give help to the nations bordering on Palestine, who "take crafty counsel" against the godly ones amongst the remnant of Israel. And further "the Assyrian" is, we know, the *last* enemy to be put down before the millennial reign begins; it is with his destruction that God's indignation against Israel will cease (Isa. x. 25). The ten tribes, which are now hidden from our view but known of God, will probably return after that.

No doubt Russia, which is now broken up into a number of minor states, will be reconstituted as an empire, and will take a leading part in the events of the last days (Ezek. xxxviii.-xxxix.). But it seems

extremely improbable that it will ever again be allied with the Western Powers, as formerly. It belongs to an entirely different group of nations, and plays a different *rôle* at the end. It is, as has been remarked by others, the last phase of "the Assyrian" of prophecy. More than likely also, Germany, north of the Rhine, will be found associated with this Northern Confederation of Powers.

As to the end of the King of the North, who is said to "stand up against the Prince of princes" (Christ, who will have been already manifested in judgment according to Revelation xix.), he will be "broken without hand" (Dan. viii. 25). What is puny man, however boastful he may be, in presence of the One who can "break the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel"?

No doubt the present proposal of a League of Nations, to prevent future wars and bloodshed, is honestly and well meant. But Scripture shows that it will come to nothing, except in so far as it accomplishes God's purposes. Men forget that this world is guilty of crucifying the Son of God, and that God holds the world responsible for that awful act on man's part. Moreover, the Christian knows that the world is fast going on to judgment, and that there will be no lasting peace till Christ comes, puts down His enemies, and reigns over a renewed earth in power and glory.

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Since the foregoing was written great events have taken place, and with extraordinary rapidity. The Central Powers have surrendered and are much broken up, thus opening the way for the return of the Jews to their land, and the regrouping of the nations and occupation of countries in a way suited to fall in with what prophecy points out. Who will occupy the

territory north of Palestine (Syria) formerly under the rule of the King of the North, it would at present be difficult to say.

Meantime, the blessed and joyful hope of the Christian's heart is the rising of the bright and morning star, and for this he looks and waits during the dark night of Christ's absence. Let us earnestly join in the cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." F. G. B.

"Looking for Jesus."

ON a British war-ship, doing patrol duty somewhere in the Mediterranean, were a number of converted men, who had hoisted their colours, not only as serving their earthly king and country, but as belonging to and in the service of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

One day after boat drill, etc., when one of the boats returned alongside, a young christian officer on board had occasion to look aloft. Whilst so engaged, from the deck of the war-ship, a snapshot was taken of him looking heavenward, on which, when developed and mounted, the sailor photographer wrote underneath, "Looking for Jesus," then placed it in the cabin of the young christian officer. Though done, doubtless, in irony, it was a telling testimony from his comrade, that he had not failed to confess that he knew and loved and was "looking for Jesus," his Lord and Saviour.

In 1 Thessalonians i. 10 two great coming events are declared, the first, Jesus is coming; the second, wrath is coming.

The Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the only Deliverer from "the wrath to come." Is He *your* Deliverer? U. G.

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

“MY Name.”—In Malachi there is much importance attached to the name of the LORD. We read in chapter i. 6 about those who “despise My name,” in iii. 16 there are those who “thought upon His name,” and in iv. 2 the coming of the Lord as the Sun of Righteousness is presented to those who “fear My name.”

What we find so much to-day is that we have lost the sense of what is due to His name. The result of this is that, when brought face to face with His Word, we are often surprised to find the distance to which we have gone, and exclaim, as Israel did then, “Wherein hast Thou loved us?” “Wherein have we despised Thy name?” “Wherein have we polluted Thee?” etc.

What is needed is to give the Lord *His right place*, and what is due to His name and interests, which are centred in His people, by which we mean *all saints*.

From notes of a Reading in London.

* * * * *

Christ's Humiliation.—In Philippians ii. we get the *grace* of christian life, and in chapter iii. the *energy* of christian life; Christ is before us in both chapters. Shall I ever forget the humiliation of Christ? Shall I ever forget that He was truly man, giving Himself for me . . .? Never! never! through all eternity. I shall never forget His humiliation on earth. While seeing Him in glory animates the soul to run after Him, what feeds the soul is the “bread that came down from heaven.” That produces a spirit that thinks of everything but itself.

* * * * *

Obedience.—Everything we pass through in this world is one of two things; either an occasion of obedience to the new man, or a temptation to the old.

The Spirit of the Day.

IN view of the lawless spirit of the day, and the uprising and agitated state of the masses in most countries, what a blessing it is to have the pure and clear light of the Word of God. In that light alone can we judge of everything in its true character as God sees it.

We learn from the Scripture that lawlessness and the socialistic spirit of self-will shall increase more and more as the close of the dispensation draws near; when the restraining power of the Holy Ghost is no longer here, there will be nothing to hinder the progress of evil and the revelation of "the lawless one" (2 Thess. ii.). Thank God, this will not be till the true church is taken to glory, "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" at His coming (1 Thess. iv. 15-17; Rev. iii. 10).

But, in truth, Christ is the test for everything, as well as the perfect example for the Christian. In Him we see One who, in passing through this world, "pleased not Himself," and always did the Father's will. Though co-equal with the Father as to His divine person, yet was He ever loyal to the place He had taken as man; and His whole life here was a life of obedience and dependence, devoted to the Father's will and glory.

May we learn of Him, follow Him, and seek to reproduce, even in some small measure, the traits of that divine life so blessedly expressed in the lowly and obedient path of our Lord Jesus Himself. Thus we shall be preserved from the spirit and tendencies of the world around us, and of the age in which we live.

F. G. B.

What Have We Learned from the War?

IN the years which have just passed, when the hand of God was laid upon the world in judgment, the nations of the earth should have learned righteousness (Isa. xxvi. 9). But Christians ought to ask themselves what profit *they* have got from the past calamities, and whether this long trial has brought about a change in their life and conduct.

Doubtless the moral results following upon all that has taken place have been very diverse, but surely they have a voice for us as to the increasing need for prayer, for uprightness and holiness in our walk, and for faithfulness and definiteness in our testimony for Christ. Let us "consider our ways," and may this retrospect lead to serious awakening in the consciences of the saints individually, as well as in the assemblies.

But the special point we desire to consider, and the question we would ask is, Have we, and the many who have felt it to be their duty in obedience to the civil and military authorities to go through these combats, gone through them as *morally strangers* here?

The whole position of the Christian is involved in this question. Christians are in the world, whilst their Lord is no longer here. They should understand, first, that they are no more of the world than the Lord Himself; and further, that they are sent into the world by Jesus, as He was sent by the Father. Their origin and their starting-point as witnesses for Christ, is not of the world but of heaven.

We have heard much of "patriotism," but what is patriotism, and how is it to be viewed from the Christian standpoint? In the judgment of the world it is one of the loftiest of virtues. It consists in loving and exalting one's country, in defending its rights, in

making sacrifices for it, and devoting one's self to its interests in every way. This is considered most unselfish and praiseworthy; but are these the sentiments which should characterise the Christian?

Let us ask, Was the apostle Paul a patriot, as some have said? Before his conversion he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and at all times filled with a sincere love for his nation as God's people. But the heavenly glory having shed its light upon him, he had seen Jesus in that glory, and his country was henceforth *heaven* with all the treasures which it contains. His warfare was for the heavenly inheritance, he fought for the rights of that country, and he longed to triumph in the conflict that he might see the Master whom he loved exalted in His Kingdom after having put down all His enemies. In a word, the patriotism of Paul was an *exclusively heavenly patriotism*.

But the patriots of this world often afford an example which is well calculated to humble us who are *heavenly citizens*, and whose portion it is to seek a "better country," that is an heavenly one. For more than forty years the people of Alsace have lived a life apart from those who tried to conquer them. They never ceased to turn their eyes, their hearts and their gaze towards France, their earthly country. Separated from it, they lived as strangers in the midst of their oppressors. They have now recovered their country. Let us act as they have done, towards our heavenly country; let us be *without a country* as regards the world which has rejected our Saviour.

We possess a country from which, for the moment, we are separated; let us be faithful to it with all our heart. Let us proclaim its beauty, boast of the splendour of its capital, cultivate the complete liberty which is enjoyed there; but, above all, let us exalt the

greatness of our Sovereign Lord, who has made us citizens of His glorious domain, and who desires to associate us with His reign and His glory.

In order to espouse the cause of their nation some Christians have, at the same time, defended its ambitious projects, and even its crimes and perjuries; and many of them have perished, having naturally to share the fate of the world to which they had assimilated themselves. But where there has been submission to the authorities in the fear of God, and a walk as morally strangers to these conflicts, these have been marvellously spared, and God has manifestly blessed them. A correspondent has told me that none of the houses which gave them shelter in France have been struck by projectiles, incendiary or otherwise; they have been also the objects of deliverances often marvellous.

Beloved children of God, may we be kept from national pride which boasts and exalts itself on account of our victories, but always thank God for *His* deliverances. May we grow in humility, which, for the Christian, is to abase one's self. And may the Lord confirm His own, at this critical time, in the possession of all the truths which it is His desire to teach them by these sad calamities. Then they will be able to bless Him that, having been cast into the furnace like those of old, their bonds have been consumed; and the trial of their faith will be found "unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

From the French (abbreviated) of H. R.

Fragment.—Every mark of the world is a reproach to him who is heavenly.

“I AM,” the Source of Blessing.

IN the Apostle John's opening address to the seven churches, in the small province then called Asia, which gave its name gradually and finally to the whole continent, it is important to notice that the salutation comes from Him “who is, and who was, and who is to come.” Attention is called to this at the end of the second note in the “New Translation,” to the effect that “*essential being*” is put first, then time *past*, “who was,” of which the Old Testament is the abiding record, and finally the *future*, “who is to come.” All this is really contained in “I AM.”

The first words, “WHO IS,” carry us back distinctively to God's revelation of Himself to Moses, when He commissioned him to bring the children of Israel out of their Egyptian bondage, into the land of Canaan. We can all appreciate Moses' diffidence in presence of such an apparently hopeless task, which he expressed in the words, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Exod. iii. 11).

Judged of humanly, the task must, in every conception of it, have appeared impossible. The Egyptian monarchs were all powerful, the Israelites abject slaves, since six or seven generations at least—all *born* into slavery, with no thought or prospect of any change in their manner of life: how was it possible for them to hope for any deliverance? What could they do? and where could they go? Besides all this, they had long lost all sense of what God had been to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Who was there among them that recalled God's promise to Abraham, that after their time of affliction, they should, “in the fourth generation,” return into the land of Canaan?

(Gen. xv. 13-16). A generation, in those days, counted for at least fifty years, and they had been over 200 years in Egypt, gradually more and more enslaved.

Even for Moses himself, a new revelation of God was required, in order to give point and effect to His promise of deliverance. Consequently, we find four successive unfoldings of the new name, assumed in virtue of it, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exod. iii. 14).

All depended upon God Himself, and on what He was in His unchanging nature. Secondly, it was He Himself, so known, that was sending Moses, who was commissioned to say, "I AM hath *sent* me unto you." Thirdly, He was the God before whom their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had walked, and as such to be known for ever, "unto all generations." Fourthly, in that character, He was about to bring all the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage (vers. 15 to 17).

The name "JEHOVAH" really expressed in one word, in the Hebrew language, this personal identity in *time*, whether past, present, or future. Consequently also, every experience of His ways in the past became a guarantee of what God would be found to be in the future, meeting all the needs of His people, at every moment of their chequered history.

We must not forget that He had already made Himself known to their fathers as the "Almighty," and such He must necessarily remain for ever. Abraham's "perfection of *walk*" depended on it, when received in simple faith (Gen. xvii. 1). Later on, the Israelites were to follow in his footsteps with the added experience of all that Jehovah was for them. "Perfection" was required of them also in this respect (Deut. xviii. 13).

We, as Christians, know it in a more intimate and blessed way through the new relationship brought in

by the Lord Himself, who says, "I *and* the children whom the LORD has given Me" (Isa. viii. 18; Heb. ii. 13). The blessing and value of it depend upon the relationship according to *His* estimate of what it involves, however feeble our appreciation of it may be. Our enjoyment of it is through faith which comes "by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But alas, do we not often miss the sense of it, through our careless reading of His holy Word, and our fitful appreciation of His providential care? What is the remedy? It is surely in the SON, who makes the Father known. We need to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Him (2 Peter iii. 18).

Do we not thus perceive the *necessary* consequence of the declaration, as uttered by the Lord Himself, namely, that with Him in our midst, we are brought to know God as the FATHER of the Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently as *our* FATHER as well?

In our case, the revelation is fuller, and the contingent blessing of a higher order, than Israel ever could know, as being continually and necessarily under the law. This is the apostle's argument in Romans vii. Our new relationship of "sons" carries with it a new responsibility, for in the Sermon on the Mount we read, "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew v. 48).

In Abraham's case, "perfection" was to be before the ALMIGHTY (Gen. xvii. 1); for Israel, with JEHOVAH (Deut. xviii. 13); but for us, with the FATHER, as we have just seen. This is not the means or way of entering into the relationship; but the responsibility of those who *are* there, and who are supposed to know and enjoy it.

What marvellous blessing lies in this divine *fact!* May the Lord enable us to receive it in simple faith,

and joyfully to act upon it, not only as individuals, but also corporately, in our relations with all other Christians, equally so blessed.

We would only add here to what has been already noted on page 5 above, namely that "Alpha and Omega" are both *vowels*. The first is A, and begins the alphabet in most languages, copied no doubt from the Hebrew, whereas Omega is the closing letter of the alphabet in the *Greek* language of the New Testament; it is a long O, which has no counterpart in Hebrew.

The first repetition of the words in chap. xxi. 6, affirms the perfection of the *book*, to which nothing is to be added; it is wholly of God. That is emphasised by the addition of "The beginning and the end." The final passage is xxii. 13, a divine seal upon the whole of the communications made to John. They are "the *true* sayings of God," made by Him who is "holy and true" (chap. iii. 7). His words necessarily set forth what He is Himself, who in the beginning was "the WORD" (John i. 1).

That is again insisted on in chap. xix. 9, just as John was about to see the heavens opened, and He, who is "called the Word of God," comes forth "to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

In chap. xxii. 6, we have another repetition of the statement, there applied to the renewal of "all things." "Write, for these *words* are true and faithful." The "words" set forth what He is Himself, as in fact He presents Himself to the Church in its Laodicean stage at the close, in chap. iii. 14.

When everything else fails, "He abideth faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13). He is "the AMEN, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Let us then be careful not to lose sight of the fact that the divine assertion as to who and what He is in His own blessed Person, is first of all presented in direct connection with the promise of His *coming*, in the preceding verse 7. May we not also add that the following verse 8 has a value of its own, viewed as a divine seal to all that precedes it, in the first chapter of the book, including the salutation from the holy Trinity, where the words, "Who is, and who was, and who is to come," are applied definitely to God. The salutation is in the first place from God Himself, who is, and was, and is to come; then "from the seven Spirits which are before His throne," here presented, and explained as "the direct agent of power in the sevenfold perfection in which it is exercised."¹

Lastly, Jesus Christ is brought in as "the faithful Witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." W. J. L.

"Men of War that could Keep Rank."

WE hear from many quarters, religious and political, of the useful lessons that are to be learnt from the great war, now in the mercy of God brought to a close. Schemes of reconstruction and improvement fill the air, and leaders of men in this and other countries vie with each other in hopeful suggestions for the betterment of the world.

The church (we use the word in the commonly accepted way), joins also in the call to Christians generally for restoration and renewed effort. Whatever we may think of some of these proposals, it surely behoves us to consider if God is not teaching us all something by what He has permitted to happen in so

¹ *Note*—See Synopsis, vol. v. page 496.

many professedly Christian countries; and whether He has not something to say also to those who are debtors to grace for much clear light about the true character of the day in which we live. Never perhaps in the world's history has more striking evidence been given of devotion to King and country, than that which has been shown by this and other nations. Men and women of all classes and creeds, irrespective of position or circumstances, have willingly sacrificed beloved sons and their dearest possessions for the common cause.

All this reminds us of that splendid scene described in 1 Chronicles xii. 38, "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king." All the tribes contributed their "bands that were ready armed to the war," and the scene was one of great national unity and rejoicing. To turn from this to the beautiful pictures of unity and fidelity that followed the day of Pentecost in the early chapters of "The Acts," is to turn from national earthly blessing to spiritual and international blessing, but there is much of the same oneness of heart and purpose, and a similar character of devotion to Jesus, the Lord's Anointed.

Alas, that in both cases we have to admit that the brightness soon passed away, unfaithfulness was all too soon manifested, and, in each case, the anointed of God soon lost the first place in the affections of his followers.

In this present day it is almost universally admitted, wherever there is a true sense of what Christianity is, that the spiritual condition of God's people is low. Declension is very manifest, and even where the Lord Jesus is known and held as God's appointed and all-sufficient centre, this weakness is also acknowledged.

The Lord's people have necessarily had to take their share in the sufferings, trials, and bereavements that have fallen to the lot of so many, and the result is too often seen in distraction from "patient continuance in well doing." Hands are hanging down, knees are feeble, the sheep are suffering from want of food, and the lambs of Christ's flock are straying through lack of loving and patient shepherding.

Men of the "Issachar" mould are needed, "that have understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." What Israel had to do in that day, was firstly to give David his appointed place as the Anointed of God; and we in our day shall do nothing right if the Lord has not His place as the first and chiefest in all our thoughts and desires.

For this, too, men of the Zebulun stamp are in demand, "Men who could keep rank and were not of double heart." The margin gives us an alternative reading of the latter clause, they were "without a heart and a heart." How often have we heard during the last four years of the whole-hearted self-sacrifice of Britain's people, as well as those of other countries; and is it in the cause of Christ and His church, that the lack of these elements shall alone be found?

The lack of men that can "keep rank" has been particularly evident in the church of God. All too soon Christ lost the pre-eminent place in the hearts of His people, and disunion and disorder speedily followed. *My* flock, *my* ministry, *my* views were allowed to obscure the true relation of the flock, to the Divine Shepherd, Who "died that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad," and their spiritual well-being consequently suffered in proportion.

There are two special features, amongst others, easily

discerned in this bright Hebron scene, that have their counterpart to-day in the history of the Spirit's acting in the church. God raised up David to reinstate the Ark that had lost its place in Israel, and this effected, so far at least, a restoration of united action for God amongst the tribes of Israel. The same thing in principle has taken place in the church's history. God has wrought in these last days for the recovery of long forgotten truth as to the true centre of worship and unity—Christ in the midst—and for a time there was a rallying on the part of His people, rich with blessing and promise.

Alas that we should have to add that here too disunion, separation, and general decadence soon followed. But, wherein lies the remedy? Happily the foundations remain, they are of God. No failure on our part can affect them. We have to seek for no new sources of power and blessing, but to betake ourselves in faith and dependence to the abundant provision of our God and Father, laid up for us in the Son of His love. *His name, His word*, are the all-sufficient bonds for the unity of the saints, and the Holy Spirit is the only power for effectuating that unity. Our many failures in the past to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of the truth, and in the face of the assaults of the enemy, might fill us with shame, but thank God His word is as of old, "My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not."

Then there is another point ; what was recovered in David's day was handed down to those who came after, and this is enjoined upon us as to all those "unsearchable riches" connected with the person and work of Christ, and embraced in the faith of the gospel. The second Epistle to Timothy is particularly worthy of our attention to-day, the whole of it may be regarded as an

exhortation to devotedness in service to the Lord and His people; to fresh energy in winning souls too, and the last fervent appeals of a war-worn veteran indeed.

How appropriate to our subject, for instance, is the opening of the second chapter of that epistle, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

We see that the Lord has need of soldiers that can endure hardness, of patient labourers, and of faithful men. Of stewards too, that will be faithful to the charge entrusted to them; to keep the good deposit of the truth committed by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in them (chap. i. 14).

T. R.

Everlasting Punishment—iii.

LET us further remark that, if "everlasting damnation" is not really *everlasting*, what security have we that the same word, when it refers to life, to salvation, to glory, to the inheritance of the redeemed, has the meaning of an unending condition? The Word of God says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 41, 46). It is the same word which is translated "everlasting" and "eternal" in both cases, and the one is as eternal as the other.

Nothing can be more decisive and more solemn than the teaching of the Word of God in such passages as 2 Thess. i. 9; 2 Peter ii. 17; Jude 13; Rev. xiv. 10-11; xix. 3, etc. And, on the other hand, we have

such expressions as "everlasting habitations," "eternal weight of glory," "everlasting glory," "everlasting salvation," "everlasting kingdom," "eternal inheritance."

It is clear that if the reality of the never-ending condemnation of the wicked is in question, then faith in an unbroken, continuous state of happiness is in question also. Whoever denies the perpetuity of the one condition has no foundation for the perpetuity of the other. If it is not true that the wrath of God "abides" on the unbeliever, what security have we of everlasting life for the believer? Indeed everything loses its certainty as soon as man sets himself up to judge of the thoughts and ways of God.

We find this same word "everlasting" or "eternal" applied to God (Rom. xvi. 26), to the Holy Spirit (Heb. ix. 14), to the Creator (Rom. i. 25), to the King eternal (1 Tim. i. 17), to God's throne (Heb. i. 8), to God's existence (Rev. iv. 10); and no one will assert that the Greek word translated "everlasting" or "for ever" gives any ground for doubt as to the unchangeableness and endlessness of the existence of God and His Kingdom.

Is it not presumption to interpret a passage of Scripture according to one's own fancy, in order to gain support for a system or a theory? And does it not become still more evident, when in the seventy-one passages in the New Testament in which the word "everlasting" is found, by far the greater number refer to God, to the Holy Ghost, to salvation, to life, to the inheritance and glory of the redeemed, that this places the significance of a continuous, endless perpetuity beyond all doubt? How can any one consistently take five or six passages, as he likes, out of seventy-one, and give to them a meaning which forms an exception to the whole?

And what is the consequence of this false teaching?

On the ground of a so called love—but which excludes the righteousness of God, and dresses in the glittering robes of a mercy which drags the exalted majesty of the character of God in the mire of human weakness and changeableness—they preach to the unrepentant sinner, that a limited amount of the torments of hell are able to bring about that which the presentation of the perfect grace of God in the gospel did not accomplish for him.

But they forget that when the wrath of God falls upon men, they will not repent, but blaspheme (Rev. xvi. 11-21); and Scripture says “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still” (Rev. xxii. 11), and that outside the heavenly city are “dogs and sorcerers” etc.; the wicked find their place in “the lake of fire.”

No doubt those who do not wish their sinful ways disturbed will lend a ready ear to sophistry and human speculations, which lull the soul to sleep; instead of taking the salvation which is offered them in Christ, that they may escape the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Let us testify to poor sinners that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”; and that, for him who now despises the sacrifice of Christ, there remains nothing but a “fearful looking for of judgment . . .” (Heb. x. 27).

Let us warn sinners that man, whether saved or not, must one day face ETERNITY, and that he will dwell for ever—either in everlasting glory or everlasting damnation. And then—ah, but it will be too late!—the dreaded reality will chase away all human deceptions. And let us testify to all that the mighty arms of Jesus are ever open to receive every weary heavy-laden one, and to bestow upon him the blessing of never ending life and glory.

Précis of articles in the Bible Treasury 1868.

My Shepherd's Care

O BLEST, Eternal Lover,
 My Saviour, Lord, and Friend,
 No height or depth can measure
 A love that hath no end.
 The springs of heavenly comfort,
 Found by my heart, how sweet!
 To nestle in Thy bosom,
 The weary soul's retreat.

Mid storms of life then teach us,
 More of Thy gracious care;
 And lead us, Faithful Shepherd!
 To pastures green and rare:
 By waters still, refreshing,
 Thou bid'st our hearts recline;
 To taste e'en here their sweetness,
 And learn Thy love divine.

The darkness that once shrouded
 My heart so full of sin,
 Is changed to joy and gladness,
 And all is peace within:
 While now Thou liv'st in glory,
 Thy saints in Thee made meet;
 We tell the blessed story,
 Till Thou, Thine own, shalt greet.

L. G.

“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”
 It is not what He *gives*, which assures the heart, but
Himself.

Spiritual Decline.

THE need of awakening and revival is felt on every hand amongst Christians. Spiritual decline and its causes is a subject which has occupied the thoughts and pens of some teachers and preachers of late, and it is a very solemn and a very important one.

It is well to look at things as they really are, to be honest, and to judge ourselves in the light of the Word of God. We cannot but deplore the worldliness which has crept in amongst Christians, the want of a definite testimony for Christ; as well as the lack of a love and value for the Word of God ministered without adornments and attractions, which there once was. Lack of principle and a sense of what is due to the Lord is another mark of spiritual decline too often seen.

What is the real root-cause of all this? We cannot doubt that, just as in the early Church, decline began *inwardly*. It was loss of *heart*, decline of love to Christ, which showed itself in Ephesus; and this is equally the case now. How solemn and touching is the word of the Lord, "Thou hast left thy first love!"

We would like to draw attention to the following pointed remarks on this subject:—

"Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. ii. 4). It is plain that here, as ever, is the first departure, the general but sure symptom of declension. What injures, and finally ruins, is invariably from *within*, not from *without*. In vain does Satan seek to cast down those who, resting on Christ's love, have Him as the cherished object of their soul and life. Was it not thus when the epistle to the Ephesians was written by Paul? Had they now left their first love? Was it with them as once when Christ was all, and flesh only evil in their eyes? Alas! the failure in this respect. They had here relaxed, not in their works: these went on diligently. There were works, and labour, and endurance. But where now the work of faith?

Where the labour of love? Where the endurance of hope? The power that produced the mighty results was no longer active, nor could be. The effect continued; the spring was gone. They had relaxed in their first love. It was all over with them, unless they judged themselves, and in the power of the Holy Ghost gave Christ His place. W. K.

Let us listen afresh to the word of the Lord, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." *His* love has in no way changed or abated, and we can always count on *His* grace. And it is just because there is no change in Him that He is quick to discern the loss of love on our part and is sensitive as to it.

May we, and all God's people, take His word to heart—"Repent"; and show it practically in those "first works" which alone can flow from communion with, and devotedness to, the One who has so loved us.

F. G. B.

Faith, Hope, and Love.

I OFTEN feel that saints are so much occupied with the things of time and sense that we do not give at all the place we should to the things of eternity. The stone before the wheel which hinders progress in the path of many is, that they allow the things of time to outweigh the things of eternity. What we need is to reverse this.

There are three things in 1 Corinthians xiii. 13: faith, hope, and love. We are going to part company with the first two, but the last will remain for ever. When we are with the Lord we shall not need faith, for we shall be in actual possession of what is ours now by faith. Hope, which so sustained us here, will be left behind, because we shall be in the full fruition of all that the grace of God has given us. But love is

of God, and of Him alone it could be said that He loved without a motive, for God is love. Love in its fulness will be known in glory, without one single thing between the Lord and our souls.

O that we might enter more into the blessings that Christ, in His love, has made ours! Take the coming of the Lord—if I am always looking out for His coming, what an effect it will have in setting me free from things here and drawing my heart to Himself. And do you think that the man who is looking for the coming of the Lord will do his work or business anything the worse? It is the one who has his heart in heaven and his head here who will be most free from the burdens and anxieties of life, and the most able to do his work or business as it should be done.

In view of the prevailing unrest and the disturbed state of things (and I often think we may be called on to go through a test for which many are little prepared) it is our privilege to go through it all calm and peaceful, because occupied with Christ and eternal things, and we know that we may be with the Lord at any moment.

From a brief address by J. A.

“What Thou Seest Write in a Book.”

(Revelation i. 11.)

FAR away from the saints to whom he had loved to minister the word, and kept a prisoner by the Roman Emperor on the barren rocky island of Patmos, and, it seems, in a cave for a dwelling-place (said to be half-way up the hills), but having no companion with whom he could converse, it must have been a wonderful relief to John to hear that “great voice,” as of a trumpet, saying, “What thou seest write in a book.” In the midst of his isolation, a new kind

of ministry was opened up to him, and little did he think that it would serve the Lord's saints in many successive generations, when he would be no longer on earth.

The words, "Write in a book," have thus a very special signification, not merely as an order given at that particular time, but also as an evidence of the Lord's care on behalf of many generations, as yet unborn, who would turn to that "book" for guidance, long after its inspired author had left this scene. The main point for John, as well as for us, is that it was wholly inspired, literally so, and in the very words of the blessed Lord Himself, who appeared to John on that particular occasion.

After hearing the seven churches named to whom copies were to be sent, John "turned back" to *see* the voice which spoke with him; and having turned, he saw "seven golden lamps, representing those seven churches in Asia," at that time a small province in which those churches were to be found. Ephesus was near the coast about 18 miles inland, and Laodicea the furthest away, up in the mountains to the east of it not far from Colossæ, which is not mentioned in the list given. We must remember that there were no roads worth the name, in those days, nor means of travelling except on asses.

When John turned round to realise whence came the voice, whom should he see but the blessed Lord Himself, whose disciple he had been, and one of the first four chosen by Him? (Luke v. 10, 11).

It is interesting to notice that he never mentions himself by *name* in the fourth Gospel, of which he was the author. In the Revelation he had to depart from this rule, in order to accredit the Book which he was commissioned to write.

The seven golden lamps cannot be considered as a sort of development of the well-known "candlestick" in the Tabernacle, that Moses had been ordered to make (Exodus xxv. 31, 32); they were entirely separate, the perfect number, seven, being in both cases used characteristically. But in the Revelation it is not a question of additional light in *one* place, but rather of separate lights in different places, throughout the small province of Asia, as it was then called, and which gradually gave its name to the whole of the western coast including the provinces of Caria, Lydia, and Mysia. For Europeans, the name was gradually transferred to the whole continent.

The main object of the vision John was privileged to see was, of course, not the "lamps," however important that designation was, as applying to the seven churches, but rather the *fact* of the Lord's personal presence in their midst, as a proof of His interest in them for *time*, as well as for eternity. They were all equally dear to Him, being His witnesses on the earth which had cast Him out, and chosen from among the Gentiles, though not of course excluding any Jews who might receive in simplicity the testimony as to His divine person.

But the character which the Lord assumes in the inspired record is that of "the Son of man," or "a son of man" (recalling the description given by Daniel in chap. vii. 13; or again the words, "a man" in his chap. x. 5, 6).

His *humanity* is thus brought vividly before our souls.

The description given in the Revelation combines the figures used in both of these passages of Daniel. In the former one, it was the moment of His investiture in the kingdom which would not pass away, as all

others had done; in the latter, it was the answer to the "beloved" prophet's prayers and fasting, with a revelation made to him personally as to the Persian kingdom, in which a very large proportion of his countrymen were still captives.

It has been remarked that He is not presented¹ here in the *Jewish* character of the Christ, though John's disciples recognised Him as such (John i. 41); but rather what He was in His own *divine nature*: the "Word," which "was God" (i. 1, 11); and again, as "the Son of GOD," in verse 34. It was the great mystery of godliness, of which Paul reminds Timothy in his first epistle (iii. 16).

In this connection, also, the last verse of the chapter is full of beauty, for there the Lord speaks of Himself to Nathaniel as "the Son of MAN." In Him the heavens are "opened," and the heavenly character of His saints is unfolded, inasmuch as the angels of God "ascend and descend" upon Him, as in the case of the "ladder" which Jacob saw (Gen. xxviii. 12). We note that in all these cases the "ascending" is put *first*, thus showing that God, in His grace, begins with His saints just where they are found, and as He looks upon them, whatever their spiritual condition may be.

We do well to note also the order of the description given. Verse 13, drawn from Daniel x. verses 5 and 6, calls attention to the general outward appearance, or what we might call *clothing*, whereas the following verses describe what is personal to the Lord Himself.

The words, "down to the feet," *added* to the description given by Daniel, show that it is not here a question of active service, but rather the picture of One whose humanity is *unrevealed*, while His presence upon the earth, like one of the children of men, is un-

¹ See "Synopsis," small edition, vol. v, p. 500.

questionable. Secondly, the golden girdle is not "about the *loins*," as in Daniel x. 5; but higher up, indicating the affections, the exercise of which, in divine *righteousness*, is the necessary result of all the Saviour's sufferings upon the cross as the sin-bearer. We, through grace, enjoy the blessing of it already, but His person is unfathomable, as He had said Himself, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27).

Personal details follow in the succeeding verses, all to be found in Daniel vii., except the *feet*, which is reserved for chapter x., emphasizing thus the Lord's humanity. There is another point of difference to be noted, namely, that the "fiery flame," here ascribed to the "eyes" as in Daniel x. 6, is, in Daniel vii. 9, a prominent character of the *throne*; and the "wheels" are added there, recalling Ezekiel's description in his opening chapter and speaking of judgment to come.

The addition of the "two-edged sword" of Hebrews iv. 12, and of the sun shining in its strength as in chapter x. i., recalls many passages in which these figures are used, as for instance Ephesians v. 13. At present it is still the time of the Lord's patient waiting ere the moment of judgment begins; but when that moment comes His first act will be to call out of this scene, "in the twinkling of an eye," every one of those who really believe in Him. May we lay it to heart in order that true exercise of conscience may characterise each one, so that we may not be left on the earth at that terrible moment.

W. J. L.

"The Mind of Christ."

"**WE** have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16). This does not mean being Christ-like in mind, as in Philippians ii. 5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," where the object

is to impress on us that lowliness, meekness, etc., which characterised Him here. In Corinthians it is a different word which is translated "mind," and means the intelligent or thinking faculty. I cannot know what is passing in another person's mind; but the wonderful fact is that, having the new nature and being indwelt by the Holy Ghost, we have the mind of Christ.

Referring to the use of Isaiah xl. 13 in this passage in Corinthians, a writer has said, "The apostle ascribes to the Christian the mind or intelligence of Christ, in whom God's wisdom is, and thus appropriates to us now by grace, as possessing the Holy Spirit, that which, belonging characteristically to God, is wholly independent of man and undiscoverable by him." How much better than the wisdom of this world!

The Foundations.

"If the foundations be destroyed what shall the righteous do?" (Ps. xi. 3).

BUT the foundations *cannot* be destroyed, and this Scripture does not say they can be, although it is sometimes quoted as if it did, and that it were possible for the foundations of our faith and hope to be destroyed.

In a day when the resources of civilisation are said to be "tested as never before," and governments and kingdoms are shaking to their very centre, it may be well to briefly glance at some of the foundations laid by God Himself, on which the blessing of His believing people rests for time and eternity.

First then, let us turn to Isaiah xxviii. 16, "Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, *a sure foundation*; he that believeth shall not make haste." This latter clause is quoted twice in Romans ending

with "shall not be ashamed" (ix. 33 and x. 11). This is the greatest possible help and encouragement in a day like the present, for it declares that the confidence of the Old Testament saint and the New Testament saint rests upon the same broad and enduring basis. The hopes and joys of the former centred in Zion, and the promises of God as to glory and beauty connected therewith; and they await a future day for their display and consummation. That future day is in the purpose of God irrevocably fixed, and with Him "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

The first epistle of Peter connects *our* hope and blessing with that same foundation, and gives us not only security, but the delightful addition, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious," or "is the preciousness" (margin, 1 Peter ii. 7). What is said of Abraham is, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," while Hebrews xii. declares that "*ye are come* unto mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Moreover, Galatians iv. 26 says, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all," or our mother" (new translation).

Is it not a priceless possession to be a partaker of this hope "that maketh not ashamed" in a day of disruption and distress,—a hope that will not fail us under pressure from whatever quarter it may come? Neither the political or the religious outlook need depress us if we are building, or rather are built, upon this truly laid, tried, and secure foundation, Christ and His work. He who builds on this foundation "is like a man building a house, who digged deep, and laid the foundation on the rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could

not shake it: for it was founded upon the rock" (Luke vi. 48). It shall not be said of him, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." No! he has counted the cost, and reached the bed-rock of things in his soul with God; and so, turning from self and all else, rests upon the foundation laid by God in the cross of His beloved Son, both for time and eternity.

The foundations of the earth may be out of course (Ps. lxxxii. 5), but He who challenged Job with, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" and, "Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?" has placed His poor believing people of all ages upon the precious foundation of the death and resurrection of Christ; and we have no need to fear that our lack of faith, our weakness, or even our failures, can have the effect of moving that foundation.

Winstanley, the builder of a former lighthouse on the famous Eddystone Rock in the English Channel, off Plymouth Sound, had such confidence in his work that he wished he might be in the lighthouse when the strongest gale raged that ever blew. Poor man, he had his desire, and perished with his structure.

No such fate can overtake those who are built upon God's foundation, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Upon the confession of His name—"this rock"—He builds His Church, "and the gates of Hades"—the power of the unseen world—shall not prevail against it; much less can the powers seen and temporal, be they what they may.

The great ones of this world tremble at the "vast issues at stake." Principles and powers are alike declared to be in "the melting pot," but "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," and along the path that begins there, can alone be found the secret of that rest

in God, which keeps the soul in peace now, and ends in the deep fruition of His presence for eternity. "I will cause them to inherit substance"; "I will fill their treasures," is the promise of wisdom to those that wait at her gates (Prov. viii.).

"*Cannot*" is the word God has written to show us how unchanging is His purpose. Our part is in the things that remain, that "*cannot* be shaken," and we have received a kingdom that "*cannot* be moved."

T. R.

Pride.

IF we look back over the history of man in all ages as found in the Bible, we shall find that one of the chief causes of the ruin and failure that marked that history was pride. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" says the proverb, and so it has ever been.

The great nations of the world have been a proof of this. We read of the pride of Judah, of Israel, of Moab, of Assyria, of Edom, etc. It was when Nebuchadnezzar said, "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?" that the voice from heaven fell announcing impending judgment.

When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy on the subject of overseers in the Church, he told him that such an one should not be a novice, "that he may not, being inflated, fall into the fault of the devil" (1 Tim. iii. 6, new trans.). The sin of Satan and what led to his downfall, was pride (Ezek. xxviii. 17).

We find Moses also, that faithful servant of God, warning the people, in Deuteronomy viii., to beware lest they should forget the Lord their God, lest when they

had eaten and were full, their heart should be lifted up with pride and they should say, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." The tendency of the heart is to accredit *ourselves* with the blessings and privileges God gives, and use them to make much of man; thus the very blessing becomes a source of danger, if not held in communion with God.

Israel was to remember that it was not for their goodness or righteousness that God gave these blessings, but entirely in sovereign grace; this is just what we so easily forget. But, as Moses also foretold in his prophetic utterance in Deuteronomy xxxii., "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." Having got away in soul from God, the very blessings which He gave were a source of self-glorification, and they turned aside after idols and sacrificed to demons, attributing to them the very mercies God in His grace had bestowed upon them. Such is the human heart by nature, yours and mine, dear reader, too!

We see the same principle coming out in the history of the Church. The last phase of it is a sad example of this. In Laodicea they were saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." How blinding and darkening to the soul is the effect of pride, taking away all spiritual perception as to our real state! It may be the result of truth taken up at second hand and held in the intellect, without having found a place in the heart and conscience. Let us remember what is written, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. viii. 1).

The history of the recovered truth, brought to light at the early part of the last century, affords another illustration of what we have just spoken about. The possession of knowledge and of truth, if it be not held

in the soul in communion with God, involves the great danger of our becoming heady, high-minded, and self-occupied. We think of *ourselves*, *our* special truth, *our* company, instead of being occupied with Christ, who was indeed *the* meek and lowly One. And so subtle and deceptive are the workings of the human heart, that we can fall into pride and self-complacency before we are aware of it. Oh, if the Lord's people had only kept humble as they started, and remembered that everything we have received was due to His sovereign grace, how different things might have been to-day!

It has been truly said that the next best thing to being humble is to be humbled. Sometimes the process is trying, for God may have to use the rod of discipline to bring about what He desires for our good. Hence the cause of many of the trials, sorrows, and difficulties which come in our individual path, and in the Church of God. The place of confession and self-judgment, coming really from the heart in the presence of God, is the only place of restoration and blessing.

We may devise ways for a measure of corporate restoration of communion amongst believers, and we may rightly desire this, but nothing will ever have God's approval unless there is a right *state of soul*, and a practical walking in true lowliness and humility, in keeping with a genuine owning of the ruin of the dispensation, at the close of which we have now nearly arrived.

F. G. B.

CHRIST "humbled Himself," always going down, till there was no place lower; but His *moral* glory was always shining out (Phil. ii. 5-8).

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

“**U**NTO Him.” “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb. xiii. 13). It is not go forth from one system to another, from one set of opinions to another, from one company of people to another. No: but go forth from everything that merits the appellation of a “camp,” to *Him*, who “suffered without the gate.” The Lord Jesus is as thoroughly outside the gate now as He was when He suffered there more than eighteen centuries ago. What was it that put Him outside? The religious world of that day: and the religious world of that day is, in spirit and principle, the religious world of the present moment. . . . Christ and the world are not one. The world has covered itself with the cloak of Christianity; but it is only in order that its hatred to Christ may work itself up into more deadly forms underneath. . . . Oh! then, dear Christian reader, let us go forth *unto Him*, bearing His reproach. Let us not bask in the sunshine of this world’s favour, seeing that it crucified, and still hates, with an unmitigated hatred, the beloved One to whom we owe our present and eternal all, and who loves us with a love which many waters cannot quench.

C. H. M.

* * * * *

The Patience of God.—To Israel God sent testimony after testimony, prophet after prophet, as it is expressed, “Rising up early and sending them.” We find this expression eleven times in Jeremiah.

“The idolatry that began in Egypt, and their contempt of the word of Jehovah, were not altered by their enjoyment of the promises, but characterised this people until their rejection of Jehovah. But on God’s

part we see a patience that never belies itself, the most tender care, the most touching appeals, everything that could tend to bring their hearts back to Jehovah; interventions in grace, to lift them out of their misery, and bless them when in a state of faithfulness produced by this grace, through the means of such or such a king; rising up early to send prophets, until there was no remedy. But they gave themselves up to evil; and, as shown by Ezekiel and Stephen, the Spirit of God returns to the first manifestations of their heart, of which all that followed was but the proof and the expression" (Synopsis ii. 387). Such is man, and such is God!

* * * * *

A Word on Money.—A Christian was once asked how he could be so happy now that he had "come down" in the world. His answer was, "When I was rich I had *God in everything*; now that I am poor I have *everything in God*." "Coming down" often means "going up," spiritually. A sovereign before the eye may shut out the fairest landscape; so much has money often narrowed the spiritual vision and shut out Christian joy.

* * * * *

Heavenly Things.—How many Christians walk as if the coming of the Lord were a fable, without a thought that the present age is an evil one! It is sad that through lack of spirituality it should be so with saints. If their affections were only set on heavenly things, things here below would no longer act on them.

* * * * *

A Christian who is not dead to the world is but a stumbling-stone to every one who seeks to follow Christ.

A Sure Foundation.

“ Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation ” (Isa. xxviii. 16).

“ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ ” (I Cor. iii. 11).

THE mighty stone by God was laid
When Jesus came His love to tell ;
A sure foundation it was made,
Stronger than all the powers of hell.
Its peerless worth is only known
To Him who laid that precious stone.

Believing souls by faith repose
On Christ's divinely finished work ;
And peace—deep as an ocean, flows
Where once dark clouds and fears did lurk.
True “ living stones,” ere time foreknown,
Are built on Christ, *the* living stone.

The time draws near when Israel's night—
That long dark night, will soon be o'er ;
And to that land, their own by right,
They'll soon return from every shore :
Their heart unveiled, with joy they'll own
The Christ of God as Israel's stone.

The whole creation groaning lies
In pain and sorrow—fruits of sin ;
To save himself man vainly tries,
But finds no light or peace within.
Life, light, and joy, are theirs alone,
Who rest on God's foundation stone.

M. E. B.

“Behold, the Bridegroom.”

ABOVE and beyond the many voices which make themselves heard on every hand, we hear the cry still sounding which woke the virgins after the long sleep of the middle ages, and later, “Behold, the bridegroom ; go forth to meet Him ” (Matt. xxv. 6, N.T.). It should move our inmost hearts and souls, amidst the solemn events which pass so rapidly around us, to know that *He is coming*.

It was a separating hope, as expressed in the words which distinguished the early Christians, who “went forth,” and which should mark believers now, in “going forth.” They gave up many earthly honours and comforts, and parted with even religious prepossessions, to serve and await their coming Lord. But He did not come *then* ; time was left to test the steadfastness of their faith, and the result was that in the end “they all slumbered and slept.”

Let us note that the midnight cry, which awoke the virgins from their sleep, “Behold, the bridegroom,” was not the recovery of orthodox theology merely, but the presentation to the soul, of a *living Person*, who was coming. It was Christ Himself, and this it was that gave its freshness and energy to the cry.

But the Lord did not come immediately on the recovery of the hope ; time was left again to test the effect of it on those who profess the truth, and to test also the state of the heart.

Drawing near the close of the dispensation as we are now, what response are we giving to the midnight cry ; what effect has it upon us ? In a word, where are our hearts ? Are we “like unto men that wait for their Lord” ? These are serious and practical questions which we do well to consider at the present moment. F. G. B.

“My Son, Give me Thine Heart.”

(Extracts from a young soldier's letter to his mother).

MY DEAR MOTHER,—You will wonder and be anxious at my long silence. . . . I have been ill for three months . . . so I waited until I was better, and now I have good news to tell you. It belongs to one night just before Christmas. Oh! shall I ever forget that night? We were a bit surprised in the morning that we were in for fighting that day. The troops were astir with the dawn. . . . We had not got far when the boom of cannon told us that a battle for life and death had begun.

Things went on all right until we got about five hundred yards from the enemy, when I got hit with a piece of shell in my foot. However, I managed to limp along and keep on. Then my company got orders to reinforce the supports. . . . We did not get far before I was struck to the ground. Luckily it did not burst, or I should have been blown to pieces. I felt so queer, when all at once I seemed to see your dear face close to mine. I remember a comrade came and undid my belt; then I suppose I must have been unconscious. I must have lain like that for hours, for when I woke up it was dark, and the stars shining.

There was a strange quiet all about me. I put out my hand and touched a comrade, but though I called he made no answer, and I knew he must be dead. I tried to lift myself up, but fell back exhausted, then I knew what had happened. The fighting had ceased, and I was left among the dead, with others of my poor comrades who had fallen.

Oh, it was a shock to find myself lying there powerless to help myself, a dull ache all over me, and a sharp pain when I stirred. Doubtless, there was a big number

of dead comrades around—how soon should I be dead? Oh, mother, I can't tell you the awfulness of that moment—I was alone, and, believe me, within a few minutes of death.

Something that Mr —— once said to me . . . as a lad, came to my mind: "You'll want God one of these days," he said, "and don't forget He is waiting for you, waiting to be gracious to you." Then I thought of some verses you taught me as a youngster—oh! you were a good mother to your boy—and bits of hymns.

I tried to put a verse or two together of this one:—

"Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me;
Bless Thy little lamb to-night," etc.

You would never believe how there, under the starlit sky, those simple words soothed, but they made me think. I, ——, was no longer a little lamb; I was a black sheep, old in wickedness—a wandering sheep. I sobbed my heart to God, and asked Him to forgive me all my sins for Christ's sake, and He settled it there and then out in the cold night. He said, "My son, give Me thine heart," and I answered, "Lord, it is Thine."

The terrors of death left me, for One stood beside me who took away all fear, and I wept for joy. I am writing this very fully, and from my heart. I feel you, dearest of mothers, will understand and rejoice.

Well, they came round in the morning to bury their dead. I remember clutching at a comrade's arm as he was lifting the next poor chap . . . but I had no voice to speak, or soon became unconscious. When I awoke I was in the Base Hospital, where they have been very good to me. Sister would have written . . . but I wanted to tell you the good news myself, and soon I shall be with you. . . . When I get home we will thank God together, won't we?—Your loving and dutiful son,

T.—

“Alive for Evermore.”

(*Revelation i. 18.*)

WE often think and speak of “eternal life,” especially when seeking, from John iii. 16, to bring home to others this main feature of the Gospel, as the appanage, or divinely-appointed accompaniment of faith, in this sense, that he who believes *has* it ; but do we at the same time sufficiently insist upon the fact that it is particularly set forth in the blessed Lord’s own person, even as He said to His disciples in John xiv. 6 : “ I AM the way, the truth, and the life ? ”

He is the *way* to the Father, as the conclusion of the verse shows : “ No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Again, “ If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.” Many other passages prove this, as John vi. 44, inversely, and 1 John ii. 23.

He is also “ the *truth* ” about the Father, and therefore no one can know anything at all of the relationship as so expressed, and much less enjoy it really, apart from communion with the SON, in the sense of feeding upon what He enjoys, in as far as that is possible for us at the present time, through the ministrations of the Holy Ghost. For the Lord says again in speaking of the Spirit, “ He shall receive of *mine*, and shall show it unto you ; all things that the Father hath are mine : therefore, said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you ” (John xvi. 14, 15).

Besides that, He is “ the *life*,” not only as the eternal guarantee of its unbroken possession by the believer who has it in believing, but also as setting it forth in His own blessed Person. For in Him we learn what the life is, and what are the relationships in which it can be enjoyed ; so that every real Christian may under-

stand what his privileges are, as well as the responsibilities which are inseparable from them.

And this knowledge of eternal life lies at the foundation of all *true* Christian intercourse, teaching us not only what it means to be a true believer, in sure possession of blessing and relationships which are *eternal* in their character, but also that it is impossible to remain isolated, or apart from other believers, without at the same time losing the blessed sense of the family character, and the joys that accompany it.

All this is opposed to fallen human nature; for it is a solemn and searching fact that the Lord's discourse in John vi. did not attract His audience. In it He speaks four times over of raising up, "at the last day," those who believe in Him, and thus belong to Him; but that blessed assurance had the effect of driving away "many disciples," who had followed Him in Galilee until that moment, and especially so in the neighbourhood of Capernaum. For "He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him" (chap. vii. 7). Still, the Jewish influence was very strong in Galilee also: they murmured at Him indeed, whereas in Jerusalem, on two occasions, they "took up stones to stone Him" (John viii. 59; x. 31).

The opposition of the human heart to the truth of God was more or less manifested everywhere; and when we learn to judge ourselves in His presence, we find out the truth of this, and become conscious of it, for the flesh always "lusts against" God's Spirit (Gal. v. 17). Consequently, the inward struggle must go on, even in the heart of a true believer.

For that also we need to be equipped with "the whole armour of God, in order to be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand" (Eph. vi. 13). The enemy of our souls will not let us alone,

but the Lord will not allow him to have the upper hand. And in this connection also, how precious is it for us to have the assurance that He is "alive for evermore," confirming thus the closing word of Matthew's gospel: "Lo, I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the age."

At the same time we need to *watch*. That is not only prominent in our Lord's discourses, as at the close of Mark xiii., but also in Paul's epistles, as we find in 1 Corinthians xvi. 13; Colossians iv. 2; 1 Thessalonians v. 6; 2 Timothy iv. 5; so in 1 Peter iv. 7, and Revelation iii. 3. We are never left to our own resources, but we have to learn in practice what it is to be always dependent upon the Lord, who says, "Without Me, ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5).

Let us add here a word of caution, as well as of encouragement; for with all our watching, however earnest and uninterrupted, what should we do were it not for the Lord's presence and unfailing protection? We must expect trouble in this world, since Satan is the prince of it, and he will not leave us alone; but our comfort is that the Lord watches over His saints, both to grant them His needed assistance, and to encourage them in dependence upon Himself. So we find in the Psalms not only examples of His care in this respect, but also definite statements and needed exhortations concerning it, as in Psalm l. 14:—

"Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the MOST HIGH." That is God's millennial name, as we see at the close of Psalm lxxxiii., and ever true for faith that counts upon Him. JEHOVAH was His name in connection with Israel, but the "MOST HIGH" is "over all the earth," and is, consequently, applicable to Gentiles as well as to His chosen earthly people of Israel.

God reminds His people of His care in the past, in order to encourage them for the future: "Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee" (Ps. lxxxi. 7); also, in Psalm xci., in the last three verses we find in epitome, so to speak, a delineation of Christ's resurrection in answer to His devotedness in going down into death, as He says, "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do" (John xiv. 31). We copy here the words in full:—

"Because He has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him and honour him. With *long life* will I satisfy him, and show him *my* salvation" (Ps. xci. 14-16).

How wonderfully precious are these words, as showing the infinite value set by our heavenly Father on Christ's death and resurrection, so that He could say, "I am not alone," and again, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. ii. 13). And this is a quotation from Isaiah viii. 18. That never could have been said, had not Christ accepted to go down into death for them, bearing their sins "in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24).

The more we ponder on these things, the more our souls rest in joy, in the certainty of His resurrection, and the blessed assurance that He is "alive for evermore." And this is not merely an indisputable fact, but the utterance of His own lips, as so risen, and the consequent divine certainty that He "dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9).

Blessed be God, "He is alive for evermore," and our hope is to be "with Him" for ever (1 Thess. iv. 17).

May the Lord keep us truly watching and waiting for His coming—*hearing* Him, watching *daily*, “*waiting* at the posts of His doors” (Prov. viii. 34). Such as do so are truly “blessed.”

W. J. L.

Three Exhortations.

“Let us draw near.”

“Let us hold fast.”

“Let us consider one another.”

(Heb. x. 22-24).

IT has been often pointed out that the Epistle to the Hebrews is mainly one long exhortation. In proof of this we find the simple words “*Let us*” repeated about fourteen times.

Of course, there is more than this in the epistle, for nowhere in the New Testament can there be found a more important setting forth of the person and work of the Lord Jesus, as the One of whom all Old Testament scriptures speak. From the majestic opening sentences of the first chapter, to the sublime peroration with which it closes, this is the theme.

We would draw attention, briefly, to the three exhortations at the head of this paper, as they follow verse by verse after the declaration of the tenth chapter, which reaches a climax in its nineteenth verse.

Step by step, if we may so say, the Holy Spirit leads us up to the heavenly sanctuary, the temple “not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

The precious blood of Christ is shown to be the means by which the conscience of him who would approach to God has been perfected for ever. That same blood has opened up the way of approach, and sanctified the place where the worshipper stands in the presence of God. But even so, there is the sense of

weakness ; and lest the one approaching should be overawed by the majesty and glory of this divine sanctuary, which he enters as a priestly worshipper, the finishing touch is added, "And having a great priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

What an exhortation for a Hebrew to hear, if in truth any apprehension of who and what God is has affected his conscience and heart, and what an exhortation for us Gentiles, who were in the outside place, to enter into ! When the conscience and heart are awakened by grace to some sense of the distance morally between us and God, we learn that it is ours now to realise what the value of that work is that permits the voice of God, as it were, to invite us to "draw near."

Having thus touched the highest place, we come down to earth, and the place where faith is confessed, where, too, faith is tried ; and so the voice, in perfect fitness, says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering." Needful and salutary word is this ! A little later, faith and its confession by those gone before, becomes the chief theme of the epistle ; here it is just one brief exhortation. And knowing well how much we need the daily help of the Lord, the faithfulness of Him who has promised is put before us. May the Lord give us to heed this exhortation for it is a day of trial and testing, a day that needs patience, perhaps more than any other God-given quality. The faith is assailed from every quarter, and the saint's faith is in danger of being *worn down*, as the soldiers say ; but "Let us hold fast our confession *without wavering*, for He is faithful."

And there are others in the path besides ourselves, thank God for that ; for to be thinking of others, and seeking to bear the burden of others, is, in itself, a help

to us. "Let us consider one another to provoke" (not the flesh, but) "unto love and to good works."

It is quite natural in times of trial and danger to be occupied with our own troubles, and to think our trials greater than those of others, but the Hebrews were not strangers to trials, they had endured "a great fight of afflictions"; and "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods"; and so we see how appropriately this third exhortation to consider one another, and exhort one another, follows the other two; "and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

The apostle gives us a beautiful sample of this consideration and provocation in his letters to Timothy, and again in that to the Philippians. May the Lord give us grace to wait upon Him, and so learn something of the apostle's spirit as meeting the needs of our day.

T. R.

The Land and the People.

IN view of the events now taking place in connection with the resettlement of Jews in Palestine, it is of interest to connect together the past and the future of the land, as we find it in Scripture. From the time of Abraham till the Israelites crossed the Jordan, it was the subject of promise. We know with what a longing desire Moses prayed, "I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon;" but he was only allowed to view it from afar, and the word to him was, "Thou shalt not go over this Jordan."

It was the place where God's eyes rested continually, the land of delight, "A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." But above and beyond the blessing

of Israel, there were particular reasons why this land should have been the object of special interest in God's sight. There it was that Christ was to be born, and there He lived, and taught, and died, and rose again. From the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, He ascended to heaven, and His feet will yet stand upon that mount in a future day.

That land, above all others, witnessed the blessings bestowed on an earthly people, God's people, who were so highly privileged in having God dwelling among them in the house which was built for His habitation. Alas, it witnessed, also, how deep and how terrible was the failure and sin of Israel, in spite of all God's patient grace. Unbelief, hardness of heart, rebellion, idolatry, had marked their history. Then Christ came—the last test of the heart of man.

When He was born, a usurper, an Edomite king, ruled the land; and the hearts of the people, and especially of the religious leaders, were utterly opposed and away from God. And yet at that very time, God gave a remarkable testimony in the visit of the magi from the East. No doubt, the teaching of the prophets had spread outside Israel, and some at least, even amongst these poor Gentiles, were expecting the coming of the King of the Jews. God gave them the sign of the star, and when they came to Jerusalem, and had found the young child, they worshipped Him, and presented their gifts. But this remarkable visit, instead of touching the heart of the king and his guides, only drew out their cruel hatred, and showed the hard-heartedness of the rulers of the Jews, who, though they could interpret the prophecy of Micah, had no heart for Christ.

But there was, even then, a little remnant who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem, of whom we have

a beautiful picture in Luke ii. Spiritual darkness and pride characterised the religious leaders of the day; light and spiritual intelligence was alone with the unknown and despised remnant, who were led and taught by the Holy Spirit and the Word. The whole of the Lord's life was a manifestation of the love and grace of God; but He had to say at the end, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," "They hated Me without a cause." Such is the heart of man!

Now, if we pass on to the gathering of Israel in the land in a future day, we shall find from the Scripture that their state will be much the same as when the Lord was here. They are, at the present time, in unbelief and spiritual blindness, they do not own Christ as their Messiah, save a very small remnant who have been converted and become Christians. This is the force of what is written, "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 32).

And, again, the Lord told the Jews of His day that the unclean spirit (of idolatry), which went out at the Babylonish captivity, would return seven times worse; and, He adds, "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. xii. 45).

After the close of this present dispensation by the coming of the Lord for His saints, a state of things similar to that which existed when He was on earth, will be found again. The Jews, or, at least, a sufficient number to represent the two tribes, will be gathered back to their land, and they will be characterised by the same spirit of unbelief as of old. Before Pilate they said the awful words, "His blood be on us, and on our children," and, consequently, they are under God's judgment to this moment, and will so remain until they repent (Zech. xii. 10-14).

In due time the land will be ruled by a usurper—the Antichrist, the false Messiah—who will be in league with the Western Powers, as Herod was with the Romans of old. The land will then be the centre of war and desolation, in spite of all that the League of Nations may do to prevent it. This we learn from Zechariah xii., xiv., and many other Scriptures. But there will be a little remnant just as there was in the times of our Lord (“the third part” they are called in Zech. xiii. 9), who will witness for Him, amidst much persecution and trial, and for whose deliverance He will appear when the right moment comes.

Such is, briefly, the teaching of the inspired word, and it cuts athwart many of the thoughts of men, who arrange and plan according to their own ideas for the settlement of the Jews in Palestine, looking at the matter simply from a national or philanthropic point of view. God, however, has said, “The land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me” (Lev. xxv. 23), and He has *His* purposes which *must* be carried out; man is but an actor in the great drama; and God’s purposes all centre in Christ and in the establishment of His kingdom on His holy hill of Zion. Thus the Christian, who is guided and enlightened by God’s word, is informed beforehand, and is kept in peace, knowing that God moves behind the scenes and controls the actings of men, even of those who do not own Him or believe His word.

And just as before the Lord came the first time, the coming of the King of the Jews was more or less expected in the world, though only understood by the remnant; so now, even if it be in a vague kind of way, the coming of someone, who will fill up the outline of prophecy, is before the minds of many of the great men of the world.

In a book recently written by Sir Andrew Wingate, "Palestine, Mesopotamia, and the Jews," he brings together very concisely the remarkable series of events which led to the deliverance of Palestine from the Turkish yoke. And not only has the hand of God been evident in that deliverance, but also in the striking way in which the various events have taken place which cleared the way for the liberation of the land from Russian and German domination. The Russian revolution and its results led to the breaking off of the old treaties, by which England was bound in respect to the possession of Constantinople, Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Holy Places; and the defeat of Germany in the war set aside her claims to the domination of those eastern countries, which it had been the ambition of the Kaiser to advance. Thus God's over-ruling hand has been evident, and the way prepared for the settlement under the protection of the Western Powers.

From Isaiah xviii. it would seem that Israel will be restored by some distant maritime nation outside the limits of the then known lands (perhaps England?). But in verse 4 we find that God considers and judges man's work; and, seeing Israel was still unrepentant, all comes to nothing, and they are again oppressed by the nations (ver. 6). When *God's* time comes, however, they are finally restored and blessed (ver. 7). All is known and ordered in His counsels beforehand.

F. G. B.

Patience.—Patience is not indifference. A patient man takes all that tries him, and bears it in the presence of God; *there* he finds the Spirit of God shedding abroad the love of God in his heart (Rom. v. 5).

Bolshevism and Anarchism.

THESE twin evils represent the uprising of the human will against organized government and against God. They are essentially infidel in their theories. It is out of just such ever-restless elements, called in Scripture "the sea" (Dan. vii. 2; Rev. xiii. 1-10), that the Roman beast will arise. He will be a powerful leader of men, something like the first Napoleon, and will be required in order to control the masses, and bring about order. This will be *after* the Church of God has been translated to heaven at the coming of the Lord, the Holy Ghost having gone with the Church, and Satan having come down to earth in great rage, knowing that he has but a short time. The events happening now all point towards the approach of that time. Such will be the end of Christendom, and of these highly-favoured lands. "The ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein" (Hos. xiv. 9).

Burdens.

"CAST thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. lv. 22). Whatever the trial or difficulty may be, cast it upon the Lord. It is not that the trial goes always . . . but "He shall sustain thee." That is better than the trial going. It is the direct coming in of God to ourselves, to our souls; the sense of his interest in us, His favour, His nearness, that He comes to help us in our need. God is a sure help, and He will sustain us.

Mary at the Tomb.

“The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early,
when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre” (John xx. 1).

ERE the dawn, already breaking,
Darkness still obscures her way,
Mary, filled with deep affection
Will not wait for light of day :
Darkness cannot cloud affection,
Love is strong to overcome,
Thoughts of Jesus, all prevailing,
Fill the soul His grace has won.

And at last, affection answered,
From His lips she hears the word :
“Mary !” says the faithful Shepherd—
Gladly then she owns her Lord.
All the darkness now is vanished,
Great her rest and peace within,
As alone, in His blest presence,
All her joys are found in Him !

Then to her He gives the message
(Sweet reward for love to claim)
To my brethren bear the tidings
Of that peerless, priceless name,
“Father !”—now in resurrection,
I proclaim Him Mine and yours ;
Precious, fullest, richest blessing,
All, the Father's name assures !

“When to that transcendant glory
I ascend in triumph great ;
Still I will not leave you orphans
Homeless and disconsolate.
I am coming, coming for you,
Carry far and near the word,
Of the resurrection glory
And the coming of your Lord.”

G. M.

What the Church is to Christ.

IT is sometimes well to look at the people of God from the divine standpoint—what they are as seen in Christ—as well as in their actual condition in this world. Balaam, under God's compelling power, viewed Israel "from the top of the rocks," and, seeing them thus, he says that God had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither seen perverseness in Israel. But we know that, as to their actual condition at the moment, they were indeed a perverse people (Numb. xxiii. 9, 21).

Moses, in his day, pleaded with God for them at the moment of their deep sin in making the golden calf, saying, "Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against *Thy* people" (Exod. xxxii. 12), although he had to say of them, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you" (Deut. ix. 24).

With what patience also our blessed Lord Himself bore with the failures of His disciples. Did He not speak in words almost excusing them when sleeping in the garden of Gethsemane, when they ought to have been watching with Him in the hour of His sorrow, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41)? How little they felt the need of watchfulness and prayer in view of the solemn circumstances of the moment, and the power of darkness. But the Lord, who loved them truly, could look upon them with perfect patience and forbearance, although He felt deeply what the cup which He was about to drink involved.

Let us, then, remember what the saints are to Christ, even though they so little rise to the privileges that are theirs, and, through their want of watchfulness, the

wolf has so sadly scattered the sheep. They are precious to Him, because they are redeemed at the cost of His shed blood—those for whom He died. They are dear to Him also as the gift of the Father, “the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world”; they are those who are to share His glory in the coming kingdom (John xvii. 22), and those who are to have the unspeakable privilege of beholding His personal glory in the Father’s house above (ver. 24).

That the Church of God is set in this world as a responsible witness for Christ is quite true, and we should never forget it; also, if we look at its actual condition, we have much to deplore and to confess. But this in no way alters the fact that “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” His is a love which no failure can set aside; indeed, the very failure of the Church calls that love into activity. And one day He will present the Church to Himself, fully up to His heart’s desire; glorious, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. v. 25-27).

May the remembrance of these facts strengthen our faith, and enable us to count on God for blessing, even though the worldly and divided condition of the Church, as seen in this world, is such as to cause us grief, and sorrow of heart. Nevertheless, as we have said, the Church is that which is dear to Christ, precious in His eyes, and it is our privilege to seek to serve His people in our little measure, and to pray earnestly for “all saints.”

F. G. B.

Fragment.—Christ “gave *Himself*”—His grace, His righteousness, His acceptancy with the Father, the excellent glory of His Person, His wisdom, etc.—all is consecrated to the welfare of the assembly.

The Salvation of the Lord.

“**F**EAR ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD” (Exod. xiv. 13). The Christian, in reading these words, instinctively thinks of another salvation than that to which Moses referred; but a salvation of which Israel, saved at the Red Sea, was a fitting type: the salvation of lost sinners through the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the salvation which not only needed that lost sinners should believe; but also believers, already saved by grace, do well to continually observe it. “Stand still, and *see* the salvation of the Lord”—see it by faith, take a firm stand, and view its full result. Let it absorb us, let it take hold of our souls, let everything else be forgotten, meanwhile. Let us survey its dimensions as one takes in the majestic view of some mighty mountain, or allows to sink into his mind something of the vastness of the sea, or the immensity of space.

The salvation at the Red Sea was great. Pharaoh and all his hosts were in full pursuit of Israel, while immediately in front of God’s chosen people was no less a barrier than that of the Red Sea itself. The people were in great fear.

The salvation of the Christian is also great. It is great because of the heights to which the Christian is raised in Christ, great because of the mighty Saviour who undertakes our cause. It is great because of the unfathomable depths of suffering, darkness, and woe from which we have been rescued, great because of the strength of our enemies that have been defeated. It is great because of the crimes of such horror which have been forgiven, great because of the untold suffering and shame inflicted on the Redeemer in our room and stead. “Stand still, and *see* the salvation of God,” poor troubled

soul, until thou art fully assured that thy redemption is accomplished, thy salvation eternally secure!

The salvation at the Red Sea was complete, "Israel saw their enemies dead upon the sea-shore," "There remained not so much as one of them." Amongst our enemies, are our sins. It is sin which robs a man of all that is really worth possessing. It robs him of heaven, it robs him of peace, it oftentimes robs him of happiness in the life that now is. It robs the Christian of communion with God, of fellowship with his brethren, of the privileges of prayer for the time being. But now let us deliberately, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God"—see all this sin, which brings such a blight and curse upon us, perfectly taken away at Calvary. Let us hear God say with a living voice, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). It is *all* the sins, not some of them, "There remained not so much as one of them."

The salvation at the Red Sea was very evident. We read that Israel *saw* their enemies dead. The Apostle Paul in his preaching was careful to make the death of Christ and its results plain to the minds of his hearers; he writes: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes *Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*" (Gal. iii. 1). The devil, through false teachers, had to a great extent succeeded in turning the Galatian saints away from God's salvation. The Epistle to the Galatians is, so to speak, the Holy Ghost's call to them, and others like them—to all of us in fact—to "stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" once more. The apostle assures these wanderers that if righteousness and all the blessings which it brings can be obtained in any other way but by the death of Christ, then Christ died in vain. To

rest solely and always on Christ for salvation is "to obey the Truth."

It is the salvation of *the Lord* we are called upon to understand, that is to say, what the Lord has accomplished Himself. Israel had nothing to do but "stand still, and see it." Our salvation is *of God* in its original design, in its preparation, in its predictions, in its accomplishment on the cross, and in its application to the hearts and consciences of those who believe.

The salvation at the Red Sea was personal. No doubt it was national also, but let us not miss the personal note. The individual Israelite was called upon to "stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" for himself. We cannot be saved in a crowd. Perhaps too many of our hymns are adapted to the corporate salvation, rather than to the individual. We need to acknowledge the collective truth in our worship, but we must not obscure the reality of it for the individual soul. It is the strength of personal faith, the glow of individual experience, the ardour which each believer can bring into the worship of our assemblies, that gives force and triumph to the voice of our praise. Hence we find Israel singing in these strains: "The LORD is *my* strength and song, and He is become *my* salvation. He is *my* God, and *I* will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and *I* will exalt Him" (Exod. xv. 2).

T. H.

"At His Feet."

(*Revelation i. 17.*)

WE were noticing last month (see p. 71), how *love* and *life* go together in Psalm xci. 14-16. They are seen in their perfection in the Person of Christ. His love to the Father was shown in His

laying down His life, in order that there might be a *family*, which alone, could adequately set forth what the Father's name implies, and composed of those who are righteously delivered from the death they deserved, and from judgment to come. At the same time, they were to be taken out from the descendants of fallen Adam, being all under sin.

Christ's incarnation enabled Him to set forth the divine personality expressive of the *relationship* which it was to introduce, and which, up to that time, was to be seen in Him alone; but God's purpose was to have a family, such as no merely human desire could ever express: for it must needs be *heavenly* in its character. Angels, however perfect in and for their special service, could never set forth *this* purpose of God.

Adam had indeed been created in God's image (Gen. i. 27), and he was thus fitted to rule over all God's creation; but he was not immortal on that account, and he had to be tested in respect of constant dependence upon his Creator, not as a mere animal, but as a "living soul," undying in its very nature, and whose blessed enjoyment was to be a real communion with the God who had formed him in order to rule over all creation.

The enemy's object was to defeat this by raising a question as to the *limits* of his enjoyment in the paradise where his life was to be passed in untrammelled communion with his Creator. If Adam entertained the doubt, all the blessedness of his intercourse with the God who had formed him was necessarily lost. The enemy knew this, and so arranged his temptation, addressed first to the "weaker vessel" (1 Tim. ii. 14), in order to insure his success. In this way paradise was lost, and "God drove out the man," and cherubim with a flaming sword hindered any approach to the "tree of life" (Gen. iii. 24).

But there was more than mere exclusion from paradise; for *death* had come in as an absolute certainty, cutting man's existence short (Gen. iii. 3). Satan's first object was gained. In his temptation, he took care to insert the word "surely," so as to turn aside the thoughts of Eve from the *fact*, by interposing a possibility of *chance*; and to this day, that is the form which every thought of death takes in the human mind. God's Word as to it is not entertained, because it is, of course, not relished.

It must, however, be learned in some way; and for the Christian it is a necessity of his moral being, not at the *end* of his earthly course, but at its *beginning*, so that he may "bear it about in his body" (2 Cor. iv. 10), and thus apprehend in practice the moral value of it for his soul.

In this respect, is it not a blessed place to learn it, as John did, at the feet of Jesus, when the Lord lays His right hand upon him, while reminding him how He Himself had died, and was "alive for evermore," the "keys of death and hades" being in His hands? In no other hand, surely, would we wish them to be. "Hades" is a vague word, meaning, literally, "unseen," and applied to the abode or the condition of those who are no longer living. The keys being in the Lord's hand is an assurance that whether, as Christians, we live or die, "we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8).

But while learning death and its effects, as applied to our own persons, not from the point of view of our feelings in the loss of those dear to us, but of what it is in reality, the separation of soul and body, how exceedingly precious is it for the Christian to have the Lord's thoughts about it, and that in two ways: what it was for Himself who has gone through it, and what it is for us who have to face it at the moment appointed by

Himself! The *issue* is already known, as seen in Him; and the *fact* in no way interferes with our being His for ever, as the fruit of the "travail of His own soul" (Isa. liii. 11).

Still there is more than this in what John saw, and especially in the words "Fear not," coming from His own lips, when the risen Lord laid His right hand upon him. John's condition at that moment brought him, as it were, to the end of himself, so that the Lord became everything to him in his condition of utter helplessness. When the Lord laid His right hand upon him, he felt that all the future was in the Lord's love and care, and the great fact of death, as followed by resurrection, had a fresh value for his soul.

The consequence of this was twofold: in the first place, all those who are the Lord's *must* rise, because He is risen; secondly, they must, in the life to come, express in their own persons what He is, as risen. These two things are taken up in Isaiah viii. 17, 18. The former verse insists upon the fact that the only resource is in Jehovah Himself, and the latter shows the result of His hiding temporary His face from the house of Israel; for He will take them up in grace by and by, in a new way.

But this precious secret is confined to His own "disciples," taken at first from Israel, during the Lord's life-time. This is what we read:—

"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples; and I will wait upon Jehovah, who hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold I, and the children whom Jehovah hath given Me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from Jehovah of Hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Sion."

The blessed purpose of God as to the future is thus unfolded, not as a mere fact in history to come, but

more especially, expressed by the Lord Himself as a consequence of His own resurrection, He being the living centre around whom all His redeemed will gather.

“At His feet” is the blessed place where these secrets are unfolded; the Lord’s right hand upon John dismissed all fear, giving His disciple the assurance of all future blessing, based upon the great fact of His own resurrection, when death, as far as He was concerned, was past for ever. Christ Himself is the “first fruits”; afterwards “they that are Christ’s” will be manifested “at His coming” (1 Cor. xv. 23).

How precious it is indeed for us to cherish in our souls the Lord’s word: “Fear not,” and to learn in His resurrection the absolute certainty, as well as the measure and the character of our own to which we look forward. The body “sown in dishonour” is to be “raised in glory” (1 Cor. xv. 43). W. J. L.

The Lord’s Coming.

MANY who use the expression, “The Lord’s coming,” have apparently very vague ideas as to its character. The first act is not His coming *to the earth*; but in the clouds, whither He will call out and gather to Himself every one of those who really believe on Him—so that no true believer will be left on earth at all at that moment. But His ways of grace are by no means finished by that assembling of His saints. For He will work amongst the Jews, many of whom will believe and be the martyrs of which Revelation vi. 9-11 speaks. Besides these we find those of the *nations* who are saved “out of *the* great tribulation”;¹ they are Gentiles, ultimately saved. Finally,

¹ The article is very important here, as it is a reference to the actual state of things, not to the sentiments of those who pass through it.

there are those of the faithful remnant, also martyrs during the last three and a half years of the "man of sin" (Rev. xiii. 15). The beast and the Antichrist, or false prophet, are dealt with when the Lord comes in judgment (Rev. xix. 20); and after having also put down "the Assyrian," or the last enemy of Israel (Isa. xxx. 31, 32), He will reign gloriously for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 4).

Spiritism.

A CORRESPONDENT, writing on the above subject, says:—

"So very many bereaved in this war, and with relatives 'missing,' are seeking by this agency to gain word of their lost ones, and even believers are being ensnared in this way. . . . Many *young* people have passed away, and they are seeking to be in touch with loved ones here. Also with some there is a feeling that perhaps God is allowing this method of communication now in order to alleviate the terrible distress of those bereaved."

One would desire indeed to sympathise with, and feel for, those who have lost dear ones in the war, but this is no reason why any one should have recourse to a practice so plainly forbidden by the word of God. We have a crafty enemy, Satan, who would fain use these painful circumstances to delude and ruin souls.

Scripture is most decided in its denunciation of all dealings with the other world, and those who attempt it become the victims of a power stronger than man. One of the reasons why King Saul perished was "for asking counsel of one who had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it" (1 Chron. x. 13). Amongst the grievous sins of Manasseh, one was that he "dealt with familiar spirits and wizards"; and the good King Josiah put

away "the workers with familiar spirits and the wizards" which were in the land (2 Kings xxi. 6; xxiii. 24).

This sin is classed with the most wicked doings in the Old Testament history, and any dealing with such is forbidden in the strongest manner by the law:—

"The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people" (Lev. xx. 6).

"There shall not be found among you any one that . . . useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer [a consulter of the dead]" (Deut. xviii. 10, 11).

The old practices against which God's people were so solemnly warned are now dignified with the modern name of "psychical research," and reduced to a "science"; but it is really Satan deluding men, who become victims of his deception, being deceived by evil spirits who personate the dead.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God," says the Apostle John (chap. iv. 1). This is not a question of having to do with the spirit world, but of testing the spirit who speaks through a prophet, "for many false prophets are gone out into the world." Such persons did not "confess Jesus Christ come in flesh," that is, they did not bring a true Christ. Nor did they own God's word through the apostles, "he that is not of God heareth not us." This test is equally true now, and he who has to do with spiritism puts himself into the hands of Satan, who is ever ready to dishonour Christ, and to ruin souls.

F. G. B.

Sent into the World for a Purpose.

“As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you” (John xx. 21).

THESSE words of our adorable Lord are full of encouragement for all His disciples in all ages.

They speak, first, of definite authority. Time after time He affirmed that the words which He uttered had been given to Him of His Father to speak; and the works which He did had been given to Him of His Father to do. When men found fault either with His words or actions He referred to them as being those of the One who has sent Him. Each one of His people is, so to speak, “a man under authority.” And good will it be for us if, when our words or deeds are found fault with, we are always able to refer the fault-finders to the Master who has sent us, and say in truth, “You are not quarrelling with me, but with Christ, for I am doing what He would have me do.”

Again, although the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father, He came willingly. He could say, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” And the great apostle to the Gentiles in his turn could say, “The love of Christ constraineth us,” though a deep sense of responsibility was ever present with him. “Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.” God loves a cheerful giver. Our service should be an offering, not a tax.

Our Lord, although sent into the world, was not of it, and never became of it. “Your time is always ready,” He said to His brethren. Yes, they were of the world, and being in their own element, they could move about freely. But *His* time was not always ready. He had to wait for the set time of Him who sent Him. And so it is with these sent by the Lord Jesus. They also are not of the world. They are not to govern their

lives by the world's spirit and maxims and points of view. They have to obey their marching orders, given by their Lord in heaven. But just as Christ enjoyed the peace of the Father in the midst of the world's unrest and opposition, so He bequeathed His own peace to those who sought to represent Him in the same scene of enmity to God and hostility to His ways.

Lastly, our blessed Lord could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." His meat was to do the will of Him who sent Him. And in this respect, too, the servant is to be as his Lord. We are to follow His steps by bearing fruit to God. We have no business in life but to do the will of Him who sent us. The one and only end of our lives is to glorify God.

If the text with which we started lays hold of our hearts and lives, what abundant moral results will it produce. It will bring about *submission*. We are not our own masters, we are to obey the commands of the One who sent us. A sent servant goes about his master's business, not his own. If he uses his master's time or money for his own ends, he is guilty of embezzlement. How dare we squander time and talents in self-seeking if the Lord of glory has sent us into the world to serve Him?

If Christ has sent us, then His *almighty power is at our back* while we are acting within His instructions. Wonderful thought! He who sends us will not leave us in the lurch, for we go not to battle at our own charges or in our own strength. Oh to trust and go forward, even when we feel nothing but weakness! There is almighty power at the back of the word that bids us stretch out the paralysed hand. If we believe, we shall walk and carry on the conflict in His strength, and thus we shall prove the power of His enabling.

It has been said that Moses was the most disinterested of men. And why? Because he was faithful in all God's house, and did the will of Him who sent him. If we can say, "I am doing my Lord's will," what matters it if we are kept in a humble, obscure sphere?—we shall not envy the prominent brother. A dewdrop accomplishes the will of God as effectually as a thunderstorm; the little violet glorifies its Maker as much as the tall sunflower. A notable saint of the eighteenth century said that if two angels were sent by God, one to rule a kingdom and the other to sweep a crossing, neither would find fault with his appointed work. The one who swept the crossing would do his business as cheerfully and zealously as the one who ruled the kingdom. Yes, and it will be better for us, in that great day, that we should sweep a crossing, if that be the will of Him who sent us, than rule a kingdom, if that be not His will.

"I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro ;
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know."

It gives *peace* of mind and deep *satisfaction* of soul to realise that we are doing the will of Him who sent us. We are prone to dictate to God our Father what we are to do, and we may have to learn by experience what it is to have a broken will—and perhaps a broken heart—before we are ready to submit to our Lord's directions as to our service, and to acknowledge that the end of life has been fulfilled if we accomplish His will.

For the least of us "nobodies" God has a purpose. Only a few can be like the giant liners that forge their way across the Atlantic; but every one of us can resemble the small but busy craft that help to carry on

the world's commerce. Our text will prevent us from dissipating our energies in busy idleness, or sinking in the apathy of indifference because we have small gifts and no position. Those who have the smallest talents are in most danger of settling down in a state of lethargy, but the words, "The Lord has sent me into the world," sound like a trumpet-blast, awakening us to renewed activity and giving force and driving power to the life. If we are inclined to forget that our labour is not in vain in the Lord, and, looking at our own weakness and apparent lack of success, are ready to cry almost in despair, "Who am I?", may we summon up fresh courage and may our faith be strengthened by remembering *who has sent us*. E. A.

Christ and the Church.

IF the Church be the bride of Christ, she ought to desire as such to glorify Him during His absence. Her heart must be given to Him, she must receive her directions from Him alone. If looked at as the house of God, she must keep herself pure on account of the holiness of the Spirit who dwells therein.

If the Church be the pillar and ground of the truth, she will not be able to endure anything but the truth, which is the basis of her existence; for the glorious revelation of Christ, who has accomplished her redemption (God manifest in the flesh, preached to the Gentiles, received up into glory), has given her being; and she is the witness of it.

Conscious of being the bride of the Lamb, she will have the affections proper to such a relationship; she will long for the coming of the Bridegroom to receive her to Himself. She will understand that she belongs to Him in heaven; and consequently will not mix

herself up with the world, nor confound *her* expectations with the coming of Jesus to judge the world, while yet she firmly believes it.

She knows that, when He appears, she will appear *with Him* in glory. Thus, separated from the world by the Spirit who is the power and earnest of this hope, she will seek to realise it as much as possible upon the earth, for "He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." . . . The presence in the Church of the Holy Ghost, who gathers the members in one body, will be the power of life and testimony.

J. N. D.

The Resurrection of Christ.

WHAT a glorious deliverance is that which is wrought by the resurrection of Christ, who . . . transports us by virtue of an eternal redemption, and by the power of a life which has abolished death, into an entirely new sphere, where evil cannot come, nor any of its consequences, and where the favor of God in glory shines upon us perfectly and for ever! It is that which Christ has won for us, according to the eternal love of God our Father, who gave Him to us to be our Saviour.

At an unexpected moment we shall enter into this scene, ordained by the Father, prepared by Jesus. The power of God will accomplish this change in an instant: the dead shall rise; we shall be changed. The last trumpet is but a military allusion, as it appears to me, when the whole troop wait for the last signal to set out all together.

J. N. D.

“Love in the Truth.”

LOVE one to another was one of the last lessons our blessed Lord impressed upon His disciples ere He left this world to return to the Father. Love, in its blessed and divine character, had been truly exemplified in Him, even as he said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; *as I have loved you.*” His was a love which rose above their failures and shortcomings, and was not turned aside by them.

Love is *the* one of the three christian virtues (faith, hope, and love) which will last into eternity, when the others have ceased, and it is the greatest of the three.

True love is not blind to the faults of the one who is its object, but it is not turned aside by those faults; if it were, how could God bear with any of us to the end of our earthly path? Another feature of true love is that it is jealous of anything which would disparage its object. Of this fact we have an illustration in the writings of John, the apostle of love; for none is more uncompromising than he is as to the allowance of anything that would in any way cloud the glory of the Lord Jesus, or disparage Him.

There is, moreover, a very practical aspect of the subject which we do well to consider. Is it not the case that love to one another is much hindered by the condition of the people of God, and by the divided state of the Church? Love, in the scriptural sense of that word, springs from the possession of the new nature, from the fact that we are members of the one family of God. He who loves God must love his brother also. And who is my brother? Everyone who is born of God (1 John v. 1). This takes us entirely out of sectarianism.

The Apostle Paul could write to the Thessalonians, “Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

And, indeed, ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia." To the Ephesians he spoke of their "love unto all the saints," and to the Colossians he says "Put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." There are fifteen features of love given us in 1 Corinthians xiii.; but it is love as found in the scene which is not its proper home; that is, in this world.

This love is just the opposite of the selfishness and hardheartedness which governs the heart of man, naturally. In the epistle just referred to it comes in very suitably between chapter xii., which speaks of gifts given of God for the good of the Church, and chapter xiv., which instructs us as to the way in which those gifts should be used for edification, etc. But they must be exercised in the spirit of love; without it, all is but as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And may we not truly say that, whilst maintaining the truth in its purity and integrity, the spirit of love and forbearance would go far to overcome many of the painful and trying difficulties which alienate heart from heart, and which so sadly divide the people of God to-day? We believe it would. F. G. B.

Worship.

NOW God is known in the blessedness of His presence, where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus. There Jesus Himself has said He would be in the midst of them. Sweet encouragement for the feebleness of His people! If there were thousands of disciples gathered in one place, how great soever the encouragement given by such a work of the Spirit, the presence of Jesus Himself—the most precious of all things—is vouchsafed, even to two or three of the least of those that are His, if it is truly

in His name that they are met. Let it be only His name in which it is done.

The fleshly pride which loves to make much of a gift, and would claim lordship over God's heritage—human arrangement which would seek to avoid simple dependence upon God—the narrowness which would welcome upon the ground of peculiar views—none of these is in the name of Christ. Those who unite in the name of Christ embrace, in heart and mind, all those who are His—all the members of His body; they embrace them in the principle upon which they are met: otherwise it would not be in His name that they were united; for one cannot exclude from the power of His name those that are His. His heart embraces them; and we are not united according to His heart, if, in principle, our assembly does not embrace them. Clearly His name does not embrace the world, nor sin, nor that which denies the truth which that name reveals.

From a paper by J. N. D., Coll. Writ. vii. 179.

“Destroy this Temple.”

(John ii. 19.)

SUCH was the blessed Lord's answer to the Jewish cavillers who demanded a “sign” from Him, when He interfered with their iniquitous habit of using the courts of the temple as a place for exposing their merchandise, and convenient for money-making. “Destroy this temple,” He said, “and in *three days* I WILL RAISE IT UP.” They answered, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” But “He spake of the temple of His *body*.”

The divine comment follows: “When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered

that He had said this unto them ; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

John the Baptist, in carrying out his divine mission, had already borne witness to Him as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and also as the only One who could "baptize with the Holy Ghost"—a very different thing from water-baptism. And this was in no way the result of John's own discovery or conviction, but a distinct *revelation* from God the Father, so that he, as the Lord's forerunner, was enabled to bear witness to Him, saying: "I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bear record that this is the SON OF GOD" (chap. i. 33-34).

Now all this is of the deepest importance, not only as accrediting the ministry of John the Baptist, which, of course, it does in the fullest way, but more especially as pointing out spiritually who the "Lamb of God" was in divine purpose, being, as the evangelist sets forth, "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," who alone can make the Father known. Also the blessed Lord Himself states, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the SON *will reveal HIM*" (Matt. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22).

John's testimony was evidently needed in order to get the people to own themselves to be *sinner*s, and thus prepare the way for the Saviour, even as his father, Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, had declared (Luke i. 76); and that was according to the testimony of the angel who had announced his birth (ver. 17). It was clearly only those who confessed

themselves to be *sinner*s, who could profit by the work of the Saviour, as soon as He appeared. John himself had no gospel to preach, but he was the forerunner needed to introduce the Saviour and His atoning work on the cross, on behalf of those who confessed that they were *sinner*s.

We have thus brought before us both His *person* and His *work*; consequently, also, the effect for us of what He wrought, when He accepted the humiliation of becoming the only "LAMB" which could take away the sin of the world, and thus accomplish, in reality and divine purpose, that of which every other sacrifice was but a faint type or figure.

But the sacrificial title of "LAMB" also brings vividly to our minds the *necessity* of His *death*. Nothing short of it could avail to accomplish the atonement; since death is "the wages of sin" (Rom. vi. 23). Once those wages paid divinely, as was the case in every sense upon the cross, the full result of the blessed Lord's sufferings is opened up to every sinner, who believes God's message concerning the Person and the work of His beloved Son.

When, however, we come to the details of the way in which God's purpose of grace could be effectively carried out, so as to satisfy the demands of divine righteousness, we are faced with the terrible fact that His own favoured people of Israel were to be the instruments employed by the enemy to bring it about. They knew not what they were doing, so blinded were they, and unmoved by all the miracles of grace and mercy of which they had been the witnesses. But the Scripture states, "He came unto His own, and His own *received Him not*" (John i. 11). The apostle recalls that at the close of Romans x.: "To Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands

unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Isaiah lxv. 2).

Death had to come in. All Scripture had foretold it from the earliest days. Every sacrifice, appointed by the God of Israel for His chosen people, bore witness to its *necessity*, but no other sacrifice than His own could possibly suffice; His alone was spotless and perfect. And every believing soul can now, in full measure, enjoy the result, and take up the apostle's word, "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" (Gal. ii. 20).

It is not a question of helping me to draw near to Him, so to speak, in order to enjoy His grace, but He has satisfied every demand of divine righteousness, in making a full atonement according to *all* that God's holiness required.

Adam had to be *driven out* of paradise, as soon as communion with His Creator had been broken by his disobedience, and he must needs return to the "dust from which he was taken" (Gen. iii. 19). Outwardly that is the case with all his posterity; but on the principle of *faith*, there is the power of drawing nigh to God now through the eternal value of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and we are exhorted so to do (Heb. x. 19-22; James iv. 8). The bringing in of a better hope, through His suffering for sin, has completely changed for the believer, fallen man's position as an outcast.

But all our present position and blessings as Christians, depends upon His death on the cross; and such was the sign He gave to His unbelieving people when He sought to exercise their consciences as to maintaining outwardly the holiness which becomes God's house in the midst of His earthly people in Jerusalem. The temple which was *then* to be

“destroyed,” was *not* the wonderful building raised up on the old site, and greatly added to by Herod, but His own “body”; for it is only through His atoning sufferings and death, that any sinner can be redeemed and brought nigh to God. He must die, but not to remain in death, which would have put everything into the power of the enemy. In His resurrection, that power and thralldom is for ever broken, and we are already in the enjoyment of the “better hope,” through which we can draw nigh unto God (Heb. vii. 19). Hence comes the exhortation, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised.”

The efficacy of His atoning work is the foundation of all our assurance and blessing, and the Lord is ever present to sustain and comfort, and guide us by His Spirit. His death and resurrection is the basis of our faith and hope.

W. J. Í.

“Oh that I Knew where I Might find *Him*.”

SUCH was the anxious inquiry of a man some four thousand years ago, who sought to find God.

He was not a bad man, but pre-eminently a good one, “perfect, upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” For wise and gracious purposes God was passing this man, Job, through times of great stress

and trial. Testing such as falls to the lot of few, was allowed by God to fall upon him—bereavement, loss of property, and bodily afflictions follow rapidly upon one another; and this deeply interesting and instructive book of Scripture, called after his name, gives us a remarkable account of the exercises of soul he passed through under these trials.

His three special friends came to sympathise with him in his afflictions, but through not understanding the purpose of God in these trials, they only added to his sorrows. Conscious of no evil in his ways, Job writhes under their suggestions, which all spring from the commonly accepted idea, that all suffering in this life is a sign of God's displeasure; and falls upon us in chastisement, or correction for some departure from the path of rectitude; and so their suggestions only arouse in Job self-vindication.

Our space will not permit of dwelling upon these lessons so full of instruction. We must confine ourselves to the plaintive cry of Job at the head of this paper, because it voices a need in the souls of great numbers to-day. Would that they were more numerous—true, real, anxious inquirers after God.

In seeking to interpret God's ways by his own wisdom Job had missed his way, and his friends were no help to him in finding it. They represent a large number of all classes and creeds who profess to be seeking God, although there is now no excuse for this ignorance since God has been fully and perfectly manifested in His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as set forth in His Word which we call the Bible.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel we read of several who found this blessed answer, and the actual words used by one of them is, "WE HAVE FOUND HIM" (ver. 45).

In verse 41, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, says, "We have found the Christ," and the day after Philip finds another seeking soul, and says, "We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph."

This same chapter declares in the most emphatic way that Jesus is God. The Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us, is the One who was in the beginning, by whom all things were made, "and without whom was not anything made that was made."

But the aim of this brief paper is not to point out any of these wonderful and blessed things, but simply to direct inquiring souls looking hither and thither in the chaos of this world, and the maze of man's reasonings and their own difficulties, to Jesus. He is in Himself the one great solution of every question that mind, heart, or conscience, can raise as to where God is to be found.

An old hymn says, "We meet our God in Jesus Christ, and fears and terrors cease;" but that is not all; questioning and reasoning and restlessness cease too. It is His own word, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

If you want to know even what *sin* is, I point you to Christ, for in His death He "was made (to be) sin for us"—He "*who knew no sin,*" "*who had no sin,*" "*who did no sin.*" There, on the cross, sin was shown up in its true character, and measured in the balance of the righteousness and holiness of God, it involved the forsaking of Jesus by God.

If we want to learn what righteousness is therefore, we go to the same person, and the same place to learn it.

Again, if I want to know what God is towards the sinner, towards a world that departed from Him, I

find the answer in the Son, sent by the Father; for "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

To find what man should be for God—meek, lowly, humble, dependent, obedient—spending Himself for others, loving His neighbour as Himself; I look again to that blessed Man of Nazareth, and my heart says with deepest satisfaction and rest, "We have found Him."

In the verse following that from which our heading is quoted (chap. xxiii. 2-4), Job says, "I would order my cause before Him (God), and fill my mouth with arguments." But how different is the end of the controversy when Job says, again, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth."

Full of instruction is this. Many a man, with much less justification, has been ready to reply to God's claims by His Word, with a mouth full of arguments; but the inevitable result of getting consciously into the presence of God is, to silence every argument, and bring us to the confession, "I know that *Thou* canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from *Thee*."

Happy those who take such a place in this day of grace, while God waits in long-suffering patience, willing to bless and save through the precious blood of Christ. Oh, weary anxious soul, casting about amongst the best of this world's wisdom, treasures, or promises; searching height and depth to find satisfaction and rest for an aching heart, look to Jesus, and realise, in very deed, what it means to find God.

T. R.

“Moses and the Prophets.”

THE above words, spoken by Abraham to the rich man who had died, are given in the parabolic account in Luke xvi. There our Lord unveils the unseen world for a moment, so as to teach us some needed lessons. The significance and import of these words is so very important, and they bear so distinctly on questions of the day, that it is well we should consider them for a little.

The rich man pleaded that someone from the other world might be sent to his five brethren, to warn them, lest they should come into the place of torment in which he himself was. But the answer given by Abraham is, “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them,” and it is further replied that, if they would not hear them, neither would they be persuaded if one rose from the dead.

Moses and the prophets were God’s witness in the Scriptures for that day; *we* have a much more profound and complete testimony in having the New Testament as well. Indeed, so complete is the revelation contained in the Bible, that the most solemn warnings are given against either adding to or taking from it (Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32; Prov. xxx. 6; Rev. xxii. 18-19).

Now the fact that God has given an adequate and complete revelation in the Bible settles many questions of the day, for those who believe it. If the Scriptures were believed, there should be no difficulty, for example, as to such questions as “Where are the dead, can we hold communication with them?” But the unbelieving scientists, who speculate on these questions, and others of less learning though, perhaps, more to the front as popular writers, neither understand nor honour God’s word. The result is that they are groping in the dark;

and, intruding into a sphere which is beyond their ken, they become the dupes of evil spirits; bringing ruin upon themselves and those that follow them, in the end.

The simple Christian, guided by God's Word, knows that those who have died believing, are "absent from the body" and "present with the Lord," awaiting the resurrection of life. Those who have died unbelieving and out of Christ, are, to use the words of Peter, "in prison," awaiting the resurrection of judgment. And if people will not believe what God has made known on this subject, we have the authority of Luke xvi. for saying that they would not hear even if someone came from the dead.

Take, again, the question of the "Silence of God," as it is called. Is God silent now? If by this is meant that God does not act in an openly miraculous way as He did on many occasions of old, this is true, and there are good reasons for it which we need not go into now. But God does act and control in providence and government, though not in the same open way. It has been said that "God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind." His actings are plain enough to be discerned by the man of faith. In another sense God is not silent, for He speaks through His Word which is a *living and abiding* Word, suitable and sufficient for all times. Men may neglect or despise the Scriptures, but they are responsible, because God has given an adequate revelation in His Word, and that will judge them at the last day.

This brings to our mind a remarkable passage in Romans i. referring to the origin of heathenism, which has occupied so large a place in the world's history. God had given a testimony in creation, and a conscience,

which left them "without excuse." But they turned away from Him, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools . . . for this cause God gave them up. . . . And even as they did not think good to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind," etc.

Now, if *they* were "without excuse," what is to be said of Christendom, which is turning its back upon the full light of the testimony contained in the Scriptures? The answer to this question is given in 2 Thesalonians ii., "For this cause"¹—that is because they would not receive the truth in the love of it—"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," etc. Nothing is more solemn, indeed, more awful, than judicial hardening and blindness; and this is what is coming upon Christendom. God's patience is great, but His judgment comes in the end; and when it does come, there is no escape.

But our part is to treasure His Word, to feed upon it, to learn of Christ in it, in a spirit of prayer and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

F. G. B.

Resting and Using.

WE are ever hankering after rest in the things of time and sense. But God is the home and resting-place of the redeemed soul, and He loves us too well to allow us to rest in the things that

¹ Note here the same words, "for this cause," as in Romans i. 26. The heathen knew God at one time; but the *will* was adverse and they gave up God, and for this cause God gave them up. So it will be with Christendom; the *will* is against God and the truth, this is the cause of apostacy. So also with Israel in the wilderness; they gave up God for an idol, and God turned and gave them up to idolatry (Acts vii. 41-43). Retribution is stamped on God's judicial dealings.

belong to this time state. If we have not a strong enough principle to keep us from resting in the things down here, our ever-watchful Divine Teacher will drive us out of our nests by means of adverse circumstances.

In 1 Corinthians vii. the apostle mentions a twofold principle by which the believer is to govern his life with reference to earthly things. Firstly, we are to see that we use the things of the world in such a way as to leave us as free as possible to attend to eternal things (see vers. 32, 35); and, in the second place, we are reminded that the things of this world are only temporary, and therefore are to be viewed with comparative indifference (see vers. 29, 31).

Natural interests we all must have, in some measure. They would seem to serve a similar purpose to that served by those fibrous substances which enter largely into the composition of our food. These substances do not nourish the body, but are needful to enable the organs of assimilation to functionise the more efficiently. While down here it is not our place to give *exclusive* attention to things spiritual. Natural interests might also be compared to the instruments used to sharpen our tools—the faculties of body and mind—and so enable the workmen to produce better work. But in view of the tendency to rest in natural interests and find a home in them, we are helped by the following principle—a principle which the Apostle Paul constantly alludes to in both his letters to the Corinthian believers: “*Use the world so as to gain ultimately the most spiritual profit.*” The pleasure which is incidental to using the world in this fashion is not sinful, but may even be helpful, for God “has given us all things richly to enjoy.”

The two words “rest” and “use” aptly sum up the

way in which we are to avoid worldliness on the one hand, and an unwise asceticism on the other; we are to USE the things of the world, things material, things temporal; we are to REST our affection on things above, things spiritual, things eternal. E. A.

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

All One.—All the religious relationships of the soul, all the points by which we are in contact with God, agree to form all believers into one in this world, in such a manner that no man can be a Christian without being one with all those who are so. We cannot exercise faith, nor enjoy hope, nor express Christian life in any form whatever, without having the same faith and the same hope as the rest, without giving expression to that which exists in the rest. Only we are called on to maintain it practically. J. N. D.

* * * * *

Light and Love.—In Genesis xvi. we read of one who said, "Thou God seest me." The result was she knew she had sinned. So it must ever be when the light which maketh manifest shines into our hearts. In John i. we read of one to whom the Lord said, "I saw thee," and that one was at once attracted to Him who is the Son of God. Yes, God is love as well as light. His light shining into our hearts shows us what we are in His sight, in order that we may turn to Him and learn His love for us in the gift of His beloved Son who "gave His life a ransom for many," and, drawn to Him, find joy and satisfaction for our hearts. A. H.

“The Dew.”

“My speech shall distil as the dew” (Deut. xxxii. 2).

As precious dew of heavenly birth,
Renews the parched thirsty earth ;
So to His tried and needy ones,
The word of God as dew becomes.

It falls in sacred heavenly power
Upon the heart, in silent hour ;
Then as we tread life's arid plain,
We walk with strength renewed again.

It fills the heart with holy calm,
It heals our griefs as sweetest balm,
And when the spirit oft would faint,
Revives the weary way-worn saint.

If with the word the mind is filled,
'Twill by the Spirit be distilled ;
Rich fragrance yield from day to day,
As we pursue our heavenward way.

Then let us ever daily feed
On Christ—who meets our every need—
Who, found in all the sacred word,
Sustains our souls along the road.

So e'en the burden of the day
We'll bear, with Him our strength and stay ;
And praise, from hearts filled with the word,
Will rise as incense to the Lord.

M. E. B.

Our Resources.

SEVERAL correspondents have referred lately to the seriousness of the times and the growth of the apostasy in Christendom. In view of this, it is well that we should turn to the Word of God for that light and encouragement which we need in an evil day.

The Apostle Paul, in addressing the elders of the Ephesian Church for the last time (Acts xx.), brings before them two resources which can never fail—God and His Word. In their responsible place, as those whom the Holy Ghost had made overseers, it was theirs to feed the Church of God and to care for the sheep.

But before telling them to take heed to the flock, he says, “Take heed to *yourselves*.” This is most important. If there is not practical godliness and consistency, truth in the inward parts, and a good conscience on the part of those who seek to minister to others, they will be little help, if indeed they are not a hindrance, in the Church of God.

Paul himself had set the example. He was not merely a man going about preaching, with ready-made audiences to hear him; but one who went through the most arduous labours, suffered persecution, and earned his living, at least for the most part, by his trade. Nor was he one who satisfied himself with public preaching and neglected individual work: he taught them “publicly and from house to house.” His whole heart and soul was in the work, as well as his remarkable gifts as a servant of God.

These, then, are the resources the apostle put before them:—

(i) **God**.—Bereft as they would be of apostolic care, they were cast over upon God. Could He ever

fail. those who trust Him? Impossible! Men may fail, and they do, but "God is faithful" (1 Cor. i. 9; x. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 13) and changes not. There is far too much leaning on and looking to men of name and note in the present day, instead of trusting God; hence the prevailing weakness and want of stability in the things of God. Let us remember the word, "Let no man glory in men."

(ii.) **God's Word.** — The word, when read in humble dependence on God and with prayer, always brings the soul into the presence of God. It rebukes us when we need it, and it is that by which the man of God is equipped for every good work. It is also that by which we are built up in our most holy faith and established in the truth. Indeed, without a prayerful study of the Word of God there can be no real progress of soul, nor can there be that freshness and simplicity which results from being consciously in His presence. Above all, it brings the heart into touch with Christ Himself, and quickens the affections for Him who is indeed the worthy One; the centre of all God's thoughts, now given to us to be the centre of ours.

Amidst the siftings of the times and the dangers which surround us, may we prove, practically, what the resources are which God has provided: they are sufficient for every phase of the ever-increasing apostasy, if we only use them in faith.

F. G. B.

"Continue."

"**R**ECONSTRUCTION" is a fresh watchword for many to-day. In the political and religious world it is the foremost word, brought to the front after the devastating and destructive five years' war. But a far longer war of a far more terrible

character has been raging for centuries, viz., good and evil have been at war for well-nigh 6,000 years. Moreover, the aftermath of this late, almost world-wide war on land and sea, in the air and under the water, has induced and is manifesting evil of a character well-nigh unprecedented.

For true believers in Christ, those who are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, there is the danger of being caught in the tide of the world's efforts for "Reconstruction" apart from Christ. At the same time it is true that the people of God should always seek grace to learn the lessons of the circumstances through which God allows them to pass, whether in the Church or in the world.

What and where, then, is the resource and the lesson-book of the child of God to fit and furnish him for the evil day? Is it not that each and every believer in Christ is commended to God, and to the word of His grace?

God's new creation, His reconstruction, began nearly 2,000 years ago, when the foundation was laid on the Rock of Ages. The death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ laid the basis: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars." Speaking of Himself when here, He said, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And the apostle said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." But, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

But what saith the Scripture as to God's resources?—
 "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, . . . that the man of God may be perfect,

thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Again, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; *continue* in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

So it was with Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, they "persuaded them to *continue* in the grace of God." Paul himself had set the example; he could say before Agrippa, "Having obtained help of God, I *continue* unto this day." It was the test of which the Lord Himself spoke, to those Jews which believed on Him, "If ye *continue* in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (John viii. 31).

It is not "Reconstruction" that is wanted, but to know the truth and to *continue* in it.

U. G.

"Alive for Evermore."

(*Revelation* i. 18.)

SUCH was the comfort administered by the Lord Himself to John, when, in his solitary cell in Patmos, the effect of the vision he had just seen was such as to bring him to the point of death. He laid his right hand upon his servant, saying: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades." The present effect of such a communication becomes evident, if we call to mind the Lord's word in John xiv. 19, referring to His own departure:

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: *because I live, ye shall live also.*" The following verse adds a further effect: "At that day ye shall *know* that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." How wonderful and far-reaching are God's ways of grace.

The assurance above mentioned refers evidently to the presence and operation of the **Holy Spirit**, and of **His** abiding presence with the disciples on earth, of which the Lord had just spoken for the first time, in verses 16 and 17, in anticipation of **His** own departure: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive."

It is important to notice that **His** personal presence here on earth did not produce faith in the multitudes who saw **Him**, notwithstanding all **His** miracles, though, when satisfied with bread, they were quite ready to "take **Him** by force and make **Him** a king" (chap. vi. 15). But now that the Lord has gone back to heaven, the **Holy Spirit**, who, as it were, replaces **Him** on earth, can and does take of **His** things to reveal them to believers, not merely as a matter of knowledge, but as bringing us into the present personal enjoyment of a new relationship, of which we see the full and perfect expression in the **Son**, "the only begotten, in the bosom of the Father" (John i. 18). It is only in the person of the **Son** that we can learn what this relationship is. May the Lord help us to feed on it in a worshipping spirit, and enjoy it more, not for ourselves only, but as the full present portion of all **His** saints.

Moreover, the words "for evermore" carry us on, in thought and meditation, to the eternal state, wherein we shall behold the whole company of saved ones as the reflection of **His** blessed person. For, though knowing **Him** as the Saviour, we do not yet see in believers the *effect* of **His** work *in our bodies* as well as in our souls. We are already

“the children¹ of God”; but not yet “transformed,” as will be the case at His coming for us. And surely nothing short of that wonderful change can satisfy the heart of our Saviour, who even consented to “bear our sins in His own body on the tree, in order that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness”; for it is by the stripes that fell upon Him that “we are healed” (Isa. liii. 4-6; 1 Peter ii. 24-25). We were all indeed “like sheep going astray”; and it is only through His gracious intervention that an asylum of peace and rest has been opened up to us, so that we might have a “Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,” whose loving care can never cease or fail on our behalf.

But while waiting and watching for the completion in glory of all His purposes of grace towards us, we have already the assurance that He who, once for all, bore our sins in the untold suffering of body and soul upon the cross, is already our blessed and glorious representative in the Father’s house above. For He has given expression to His own care and thought in this respect, saying to His disciples: “In My Father’s house are many mansions [that is ‘abodes’]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to *prepare* a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know” (John xiv. 2-4).

These words were too much for Thomas, who was only thinking of human knowledge. But his difficulty led to a further unfolding of the truth for our present

¹ It is well to be reminded that the general exactness of our Authorised Version fails as to the distinctive use of the word “sons” in John’s writings. As a rule, he avoids it in speaking of believers, reserving “Son” for the Lord Himself. Exceptions may be observed in xii. 36, “sons of light,” and in xvii. 12 and xix. 26, which explain themselves, the former referring to Judas.

blessing and advantage. His difficulty is indeed the forecast of our own at the present day, occupied, as we naturally are, with things of time and sense. If we only had our eyes and hearts set upon the person of the Saviour, all these uncertainties would disappear, and our hearts would at once embrace the truth as set forth in His person, who said: "I am the **way**, and the **truth**, and the **life**" (John xiv. 6).

The Lord explains it all in the verses which follow. He is the *way* to the **Father**. No one can come to the Father unless by Him. He is the only One who sets forth in His own person the *truth* as to all that the Father is on behalf of every believer. He is also the *life*, which is, through faith, the believer's portion already, while awaiting here on earth the blessed moment when every saint will, at the Lord's coming, be instantly transformed into His likeness. Then, in the twinkling of an eye, he will realise the eternal blessing of being so transformed, as never to have any more thoughts or feelings, in kind or in degree, different to that which the Holy Spirit produces, through fixing the affections upon the Saviour's person.

As we meditate upon these things, how blessed and precious do those words "for evermore" become. The future for the believer does not depend upon a moment of entrancement; but, in every detail, it can only be measured by the Saviour's own joy, who says to the faithful servant: "Enter into the joy of *thy Lord*" (Matt. xxv. 21, 23). The believer's duty is to be "faithful" in everything that his Lord has committed to him during the period of His absence (Luke xvi. 10-13).

It is not then a question of doing "great things," as Saul once said to David (1 Sam. xxvi. 25), but of being faithful "in that which is *least*"; for that is the best indication of character, as the Lord states in Luke

xvi. 10. And thē result is shown by Him in the distinguished place conferred on any of whom it is true; see the following chapter xix. 17. Such an one is so recognised when the "nobleman" returns, "*having received the kingdom.*"

All these things, precious and encouraging as they are, pale, however, before the blessed *fact* of eternal life, enjoyed now as the believer's known possession, and presently as seeing Him, who is "alive for evermore."

W. J. L.

The Secret Place of Thunder.

WHEN we were children we were afraid of thunder. If we happened to be out in a thunderstorm we took refuge under a tree, and then we trembled lest the lightning should strike the tree. At such times we were especially afraid if we had a bad conscience. What is the origin of fear? Fear springs from a bad conscience. As soon as Adam had partaken of the forbidden fruit, he and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God. When God called Adam, the man replied, "I heard Thy voice in the garden and I was afraid." He was not afraid of God before the fall; he did not know what fear was.

The only way to get rid of fear is to know "the perfect love which casteth out fear." There is the fear of death, the fear of judgment, the fear of having to answer to God for our sins. But when we have learned sufficiently that God is love, and how His love has been manifested, we shall find all our fears dispelled. This perfect love which casteth out fear does not mean man's love to God, but God's love to man.

Before God reveals this love to man He teaches him thoroughly his dire need of it; and the "still small

voice" of His love, in His dealings with us, is often preceded (to use a figure) by storm and tempest, as it was at Horeb when He made Himself known to Elijah.

The law of God at Sinai was ushered in with thunder and lightning. There was blackness, darkness, and tempest, and the mountain burned with fire. Even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake"! The law is called "the ministration of condemnation"; it is also called "the ministration of death"; so that it was in harmony with its character that it should be introduced to Israel in this tempestuous way. Its object was to give the knowledge of sin. Those who have learned by the instrumentality of the law that sin is exceedingly sinful, find a sweet rest afterwards when they come to believe that Christ bore their sins in His own body on the tree. In Psalm lxxxi. we find God speaking to His people of the way in which He brought them out of the land of Egypt, and verse 7 contains these remarkable words, "Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder."

At Sinai, then, the people were in great trouble, and they called upon God. If Moses exceedingly quaked and feared, so did many more. They said, "Let not God speak to us lest we die." Men have told us that when they were drowning the sins of their whole lives were suddenly brought before them. It may have been something like this with many at Sinai. The place of finding out sin may well be called the secret place of thunder. From an external point of view there is nothing secret about thunder; everyone near enough can hear it. But men feel the terrors of God's law in the most secret recesses of their souls. The outward demonstration at Sinai, producing terror, was a type, while solemn conviction of sin is the answer to that type. For instance,

the Apostle Paul gives his own experience of this matter. He says, "I was alive without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." When the law of God was brought home to him, by the Spirit of God, in solemn convicting power, he felt himself to be lost. Was not that, for him, a secret place of thunder ? It was a time of trouble, and it meant death and condemnation to him.

But it is most important to observe that in the secret place of thunder God answers and delivers. He says, "*I answered thee in the secret place of thunder.*" What is really God's answer to man's fear and terror on account of his sin ? Listen ! "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." We also read that God made Christ to be sin for us. It is Christ who takes the place, under divine judgment, of the condemned man, and in so doing, saves him perfectly and for ever from all judgment and condemnation. Those who know this for themselves are able to sing :—

"The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do ;
My Saviour's obedience to blood
Hides all my transgressions from view."

The foul and guilty conscience can be cleansed of every stain by the blood of Jesus. Sinai was a terrible place. We read that if so much as a beast touched the mountain it was to be thrust through with a dart. And people with evil natures are pierced, as with a dart, by the condemning words of God's law.

But the perfect balm for every wound which sin has made is found in the sacrificial death of Christ for sinful men. It was thus that God answered our cry of distress when we felt the terrors of His righteous law, as we read, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but

that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is the "perfect love" that casteth out fear, the one mighty fact above all others that the devil would prevent us from believing. He does not mind what we hold if we disbelieve this truth. But may this love of God constrain us to live for Christ.

T. H.

Angelic Interest in Men.

IT is a most sublime truth that God Himself, the Creator, is interested in the welfare of fallen humanity. The incarnation, the life, death, and victorious resurrection of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the proof of this. God was manifested in flesh; He was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; in Christ's life men saw what God's attitude to them was—an attitude of love and grace. Yea, further, the death of Christ declares the fact that the only One who knew no sin was made sin for us, our sins being laid upon Him, our Substitute, our Saviour. The resurrection tells of God's satisfaction with the sacrifice—of justice satisfied; and as a result, the sinner who believes is justified.

Our business is now that of ambassadors from heaven's court, saying to rebellious men, "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 18-21).

But we have also in the Scripture the fact that angels are interested in men; and if it seems a minor truth, it must be for our profit, for all Scripture is "profitable," etc. Amongst other things, we may see their interest in the redemption work accomplished, whereby we are reconciled to God and brought into association with a risen and glorified Christ.

First, then, as to angels' interest in our redemption (1 Peter i. 12): the apostle speaks of the positive fact of

believers having now received the *end* of their faith, the salvation of their souls. He says that the prophets of old were interested in this glorious theme, and were conscious that men of a future day—our day—were to enter into the full blessedness resulting from the sufferings of Christ.

The Gospel preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, through human lips, tells fully all this blessing, and he adds that angels desire to look into these things. *They* need no redemption, not having sinned; but that which is God's greatest work, His chief pleasure, demands their attention. For God's work in grace surpasses His handiwork in creation. Here, in the salvation of sinners through the cross—

“ His bright character is known,
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of His glories brighter shone—
His justice or His grace.”

In that cross mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other. Thus the claims of God's throne against us are met, and the flood-gates of His love are opened, so that He might righteously save even such as we are.

Secondly, we may see that when a man is saved, his life, experiences, trials, etc., are angels' interest and solicitude. We learn, for instance, that they minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. i.), as they ministered to the Captain of our salvation.

If we turn to 1 Corinthians iv., which tells of a life second only in interest to that of Jesus Himself, we see that Paul's experiences (and ours also) are engaging the attention of angelic hosts. In contrast with the Corinthian saints, who were full, were rich, and were reigning as kings, as Paul says, he and his companions were hungry, weak, and accounted the offscouring of

all things. Yet being reviled, they blessed; persecuted, they suffered it, even as their Master. Retaliation was no part of His ways, nor was it of theirs. The apostle felt his trials, for almost in a parenthesis he said he would to God they did reign, for then he would reign with them. But he knew that the Saviour's path is the saint's path, and, happy man, he was content to have it so (which they were not), and he graciously says, "be followers of me." He and his companions were as victims, appointed to death, reserved to the last act in the great drama; but what a spectacle they presented to angels' wondering eyes! Oh for grace to do likewise!

The third point we desire to notice is found in Ephesians iii., the leading chapter in Scripture dealing with the subject of the church, there called the mystery. It is so called, not because of being incapable of being understood—for it was revealed to Paul and he was made minister of it, to make all men see its administration—but on account of its being "in God," hitherto hidden from the sons of men. Chapter ii. shows how all distinction between Jew and Gentile is gone; the wall of partition being broken down, both are reconciled to God in one body, and both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Here, in chapter iii., we are told that we Gentiles are fellow-heirs of the same body, etc. In this work of God's grace, where those before estranged are now seen in happy fellowship, the angels—principalities and powers in heavenly places—learn, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God. They shouted for joy at Creation (Job xxxviii. 7) and they were heralds of the incarnation (Luke ii.), learning there God's power and grace. But here, in the church—"the lesson-book of the angels"—they see the display of His manifold

wisdom. So the last verse says, in a note of worship, "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." And we shall add our eternal Amen.

P. W.

The Hidden Path or Wisdom's Way.

"There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it" (Job xxviii. 7-8).

THERE is a path to sight unkown,
 A lowly path but sure ;
 'Tis found by those of contrite heart
 Who are in spirit poor ;
 And all who walk therein with God
 Are hidden and secure :—

Hidden from all the surging strife
 Upon this world's highway ;
 Freed from its vain delusive hopes,
 Which quickly fade away ;
 Far from the empty pride of life,
 Which o'er the heart holds sway.

'Tis marked by One in lowly guise,
 The blessed Son of God ;
 Obedient to the Father's will
 In all the path He trod ;
 His deepest joy was ever found
 In hearkening to the word.

Lord grant that we, with single eye,
 May trace our heavenward way :
 With those who love Thy blessed name,
 And never from it stray ;
 But walk in fellowship divine
 Till dawns the perfect day.

M. E. B.

At the Lord's Supper.

HERE it is that the love of Christ comes home in a very special way to the *heart* of the believer.

It was on the same night in which He was betrayed that the Lord Jesus instituted this feast. His soul was not too much weighed down by the sorrows of the moment and the anticipation of the cross, to look forward through all the ages and say, "This do in remembrance of Me." And it is to continue "till He come," when it will be no longer needed, for we shall sing His praises above.

His was a love stronger than death, a love which the many waters could not quench nor the floods drown, a love which would go through all in order that we might be saved. And His work in atonement for sin was of such infinite value that God has been fully glorified by that sacrifice, which has gone up as a sweet savour to Him.

O blessed and glorious Saviour, when shall we exchange faith for sight, when shall we see Thee and praise Thee as we would? When shall Thy church, so scattered here, surround Thee in heavenly glory, and sing Thy praises worthily?—Hasten the day of Thy coming, we pray Thee. *Then* Thy praises shall fill the courts of heaven; but even here, amidst the ruin of this world, we can say, from the depth of our souls, Thou art the chiefest among ten thousand; the One who loves us and has washed us from our sins in Thine own blood. To Thee be the praise, and honour, and glory for ever and ever, Amen!

Jesus—The Resurrection and The Life.

“ I AM the resurrection and the life ” (John xi. 25).
 Are your souls quickened to know that the power of death is put away, wherever the presence of Jesus is recognised? Are you looking out in joyful anticipation to that time when the presence of the Lord shall raise and quicken your mortal bodies? When bodies and souls alike shall partake of His holy likeness, released from sin, released from the power of death and of Satan? . . . Then our rest shall be glorious, for we shall rest with our all-glorious Head. Our joy shall be complete, for we shall enter into the full joy of our Lord.

Till that time, dear friends, let us live in this blessed expectation, having our lights burning, waiting for the morning light when our Lord shall appear—living witnesses of the truth of God’s promises; for He will surely come; He will not tarry. Amen. J. N. D.

The Past, Present, and Future.

THE *past* may awaken a sigh,
 When we think on our life’s former ways;
 Unworthy, alas! of His love,
 Whose grace should adorn all our days.

The *future* on earth may be drear,
 Though it end in the glories of heaven:
 Let the *present* be spent in His praise,
 Who the *past* has so freely forgiven.

J. G. D.

“Preach the Word.”

THIS exhortation is as much needed to-day as when it was written, perhaps even more so.

2 Timothy, from which we quote, was the last of Paul's epistles, written from his prison at Rome not long before his martyrdom, and when the state of things in the Church was anything but encouraging.

But it was just at such a moment that a word like this to his devoted son in the faith, Timothy, was required most of all. When things are at sixes and sevens in the Church, and when indifference and unbelief prevails in the world at large, we are in danger of becoming discouraged and of getting weary in our efforts to maintain and proclaim the truth.

One cannot but be struck, as one speaks to people in various places, with the immense need of souls around us. The masses are careless and indifferent, as much so or more than before the war; but some here and there are willing to listen to the truth and have an ear for it.

Let us not be weary in well-doing, but proclaim the gospel of God's grace to poor sinners as far as we can and in any way we can, while the day of grace lasts.

We, who cannot go abroad on missionary work, have a work to do at home; and, indeed, the spiritual darkness and indifference in these favoured lands is amazing, and it is increasing. The Apostle Paul testified of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, “publicly and from house to house.” This is an excellent example for us.

There is plenty of work to do if we are really in earnest about it, without waiting for great opportunities. Well, then, let us beseech God for the perishing souls around us in true earnest prayer, and seek to bring

Christ before them, either by preaching or visiting and circulating gospel magazines, or in any other way we can.

F. G. B.

Service and Testimony.

OUR brief reference to the Lord's words in Luke xix. 17, on page 120, leaves room for further consideration, inasmuch as the whole question of service in its various aspects is affected by His presentation of the matter. Our thoughts are more or less confined to various details which seem to absorb our attention, whereas the apostle's remarks, in 2 Corinthians ii. 16 and iii. 5, serve to show that the whole life of the Christian is involved therein—he has to be faithful in little things as in the greater.

In the first place, we have to remember the solemn statement of the apostle in his appeal to the Corinthians, at the close of chapter vi. of his first epistle: "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are *not your own*? For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your *body*." And secondly, Christians are set in the world to be "a sweet savour of Christ" to every one: "of life unto life" in those that are saved, and "of death unto death" in those that perish. It is no wonder that he adds, in the second passage referred to: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

The expression "letter" refers to the law of Moses, "written and engraven in stones," as the apostle goes

on to show. But the life of a Christian, energised by the Holy Spirit of God, is to be as a book "written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God . . . in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. iii. 3). That which is written in the heart is manifested by the life and practical walk of those so blest.

Does not all this go to prove that every detail of our life and character, as long as we are in this world, should be effectual in their testimony for *good*, to the glory of God, who has so loved us as to give His blessed Son in order to secure our redemption, and now operates by His Holy Spirit to produce in us the fruit which He looks for?

May the Lord help us to think of it more, and lead out our hearts in prayer, both for ourselves and for our brethren, that such a testimony may not be fruitless? Self occupation is always a hindrance, though we may not feel it so at the time. The only way in which the Lord can be pleased with us is by our constant meditation and feeding upon Himself. Then all the impulses of our spiritual being take their form from Him upon whom we feed.

Is not this the meaning of the Lord's exhortation in John vi.? "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (vers. 53-57).

Without this spiritual nourishment for the soul there cannot be growth and energy in the life of a Christian. All our history in thoughts, words, and ways depends

upon that on which our souls feed. Let us be mindful of the blessed Lord's personal occupation with every one of those whom He has bought at such a price, in order that there may be some answer in all our life and ways that can please Him! The time is short, and we are called to wait, moment by moment, for His return, when all such service must necessarily come to an end.

The young ruler's question in Luke xviii. 18: "What shall I do *to inherit* eternal life?" puts the whole matter upside down. He wanted to work in order to *get* life, whereas we are exhorted to be diligent in service because we *have* it. Is not the Lord's own estimate of service clearly set forth in His parable in Luke xix. 11-27? During His absence all His servants were charged in the same terms, "Occupy till I come." But of the three instances given of His appreciation, only the first is called a "good servant"; he had a reward in accordance with what he had done; whereas, he who had done nothing loses even the little that he was supposed to begin with. All these things are "written for our learning," surely, in accordance with what the apostle says of the Old Testament scriptures (Rom. xv. 4).

W. J. L.

The Lord Jesus Leading the Praises of His People.

SINGING in scripture is the highest form of expressing the heart's joy. On that account no doubt we read, "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms." Though our blessed Lord was truly the "Man of sorrows," as described by the prophet Isaiah, yet we find four unique instances in which He is said to sing, each of them invested with the deepest interest.

The first took place on earth on that last dark night,

ere He died. In "a large upper room, furnished," He had instituted the memorial supper in remembrance of Himself. The feet-washing and the heart-searching conversation which accompanied it having closed, we read, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mark xiv. 26). Everything points to His having been one of the company who sang, as truly as of those who walked to Olivet, where He next speaks.

What a sight! Behind Him was lifelong reproach and rejection by priests and people, while only a few minutes previously Judas had left them on purpose to betray his Lord; before Him loomed Gethsemane and Calvary, embittered by man's and Satan's malice. Notwithstanding this, which He alone knew of, they could join in singing this hymn.

What devotedness to God's holy will do we see here; what perfect calm and delight in God; what wondrous care for His poor disciples, from whom He was to be separated, shown in the fact that He could, even at such a time, participate, as no doubt He did, in a psalm of praise to Jehovah! For such was their custom after the passover—

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

The *second* instance of the Lord singing is in Psalm xl., "And He hath put a new song in My mouth, even praise unto our God" (ver. 3). Generally the first five verses of this Psalm are used to express the experiences of the saved sinner. But when we come to examine carefully, we find that it is the Lord Jesus, *as raised* from among the dead, who is speaking in them,

prophetically no doubt; and that the rejoicing in the third verse is His, as also that in Psalm xxii. 23-25.

The "horrible pit" and "miry clay" of suffering and death, towards which He was approaching when they sang the first hymn, is now past. Having "loved righteousness and hated iniquity" to the extent of suffering on the cross—where he fully met God's righteous claims in respect of sin, so that it could be divinely put away—God indeed "heard" His "strong crying and tears." He is now risen, and the Holy Spirit, foretelling the Kingdom, salutes Him in those wonderful words, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Ps. xlv. 6, 7).

This mighty deliverance and Jehovah's power manifested in raising Him from among the dead, together with the glory that His death brought to God, so absorbed the blessed One, that He could celebrate it with a "new song," saying: *He* hath put a *new song* in my mouth, even praise to our God." Yet how little do we, as His people, now quickened and raised with Him, enter into the import to us, or to Him, of His resurrection, as here revealed.

His *third* song is noticed in Hebrews ii. 12, "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." Space forbids notice of the remarkable use of Psalm xxii. made in this verse, or the interesting fact that it occurs in this epistle, which speaks less, perhaps, about the assembly (or Church) of God than any other. Here the Lord Jesus is not only *risen* but *glorified*; "crowned with glory and honour," after "tasting death" and "sufferings" (vers. 9, 10).

Before His death He had taught His disciples that, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Here, He adds another blessed fact, namely, that those who are assembled give Him still another occasion for *re-joicing*, "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." His aim and desire was that, during the present period of His rejection by the world, His own should be found simply gathered together in His name for worship, edification, and service; but not at all as members of so many "societies" organised according to human expedients, as have since sprung up. We have a glimpse of such gatherings in Matthew xxviii. 10, 16. Directions for their conduct are found in 1 Corinthians xiv., and the characteristic unity of such an assembly is very evident in verse 23. No person or object was to be before them but the Lord Jesus; and the effect was that any who "dropped in," as we say, would be *edified*, and in no way scandalised.

Seeing how deeply important to Him is the gathering of even "two or three" around Himself, and what joy it gives Him to be in their midst, to lead their praises to God, let us ask ourselves: Have we that affection for Himself, that will seek no other name as a centre of gathering? And, secondly, for our own consciences: Do we understand the blessedness and divine importance of this? Have we confidence to count alone on Him for all we need in the way of guidance, etc., while thus assembled? If so, we may rest assured that He is more than sufficient for us, and delights to be trusted.

We may note also, in passing, that on each of the three occasions above mentioned, others are associated with Him in His singing: "They sang," in the first case; the song specially stated to be to "*our* God," in

the next ; and here it is "in the midst of *the Church*."¹

The *fourth* and last instance of His singing is in Zephaniah iii. 17, "He will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will rest in His love ; He will joy over thee with *singing*." It may be said that this, like much in both the psalms and the prophets, is figurative language. Yet, if so, we would ask : Figurative of what ? Surely of the deep joy the Lord has over the restoration and national re-establishment of His earthly people Israel, in their own land, in the coming millennial day.

After filling the Church's cup to the full, in this dispensation, and translating her as His bride to glory, His fathomless grace is not yet exhausted ; for in the next dispensation, He will fill Israel's cup with blessing also (Isa. lxvi. 19), and through them that of all the nations of the earth. He does it "with joy" and "with singing," as stated by Zephaniah. W. M. R.

"Yet Not I."

CORNELIUS was a man who feared God and wrought righteousness, and these facts prove that he was born of God (Acts x). His devotedness was the result of the new life that was in him. But he had not trusted in the finished work of Christ before Peter was sent to him. Probably he was in trouble about his sins, and Peter's visit coincided with the bitterly felt need of his heart. A self-righteous man is

¹ Anticipatively the Lord leads the praises of His people now (Heb. ii. 12), though the primary application of Psalm xxii. is to a future day, when He will join in (if not lead) the praises of the "great congregation," that is, the whole twelve tribes of restored Israel. Then they will be found once more in their land, restored on the ground of sovereign grace, and it is deeply touching to see the Lord leading their praises (see Psalms cxliv., cxlv. ; also cvi., cvii., cxviii., cxxxvi).—[ED].

satisfied with himself, but not so one truly born again. Peace only comes as one believes the Gospel of Salvation, and is sealed by the Spirit of God.

But after a man is saved, atonement having been made for his sins, then comes the difficulty with regard to his sinful self. We have to learn, experimentally, that Christ must supersede self in each one of us. Not only must we be delivered from the old man; but the new man, that which constitutes henceforth our abiding personality, learns to take the place of subjection to, and dependence on, Christ.

Joshua needed to learn the lesson of being superseded, even in his God-given position, by a greater Captain than himself. "It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him. . . . And Joshua . . . said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of Jehovah am I now come" (Josh. v. 13-15). Joshua thought until now that he himself was captain of the host of Jehovah. He needed to find out the full significance of this word, "Nay." Christ has a deliberate *nay* for everything that is not of Himself. We have to learn, not only the evil of the flesh—our old nature—but also our own nothingness. The precious treasure of living truth is carried in an earthen vessel, but the excellency of the power must be seen, and felt, and owned to be of God, and not of us. Paul needed a thorn in the flesh to guard him from associating the excellency of God's power in any way with himself.

In Galatians, the apostle is led to contrast the new man, and Christ living in him, with the pretensions of the flesh. As long as people could entertain the thought of being circumcised and keeping the law, they had not learned that a new creation alone availed for life before

God. The apostle writes, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). Here we find two paradoxes, as men would call them, but, according to the tenor of the apostle's teaching in Romans, quite intelligible. First, he tells us he was crucified with Christ, yet at the same time he tells us he is alive. Again, but although he is alive, it is no longer himself that lives but Christ that lives in him.

Observe, the Ego ("I") which was crucified is a very different Ego from the Ego which lives. That which was crucified with Christ is the old man, that which lives is the new man. Is not that, then, sufficient, some might ask?—No; we are only at the end of the first paradox.

The apostle goes on to say, "And yet no longer I but Christ liveth in me." If we understand practically the difference of christian experience, as seen in Romans chap. vii., and that in chap. viii., we shall apprehend the force of this second paradox. All through the conflict in Romans vii., the Ego which is born of God is in a state of strife with sin in its members, and the new man, in himself, is seen to be inadequate for full deliverance. In Romans viii. the Spirit manifestly takes the place of self. Those who have not already done so, will find it profitable to count over in Romans vii. the number of times that the letter "I" is used; and also in Romans viii. the number of times that the word "Spirit" is used. In the normal Christian life, the Spirit, *not the new Ego*, is opposed to the flesh, and is victorious. "It is no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." The Holy Spirit identifies Himself with the new "I," *in the name of Christ*. It is by the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body, it is by the Spirit that we are led, it is by the Spirit we groan, it is by the

Spirit we live, and it is by the Spirit we are made free from the law of sin and death. Some of us have seen the importance of waiting for, and owning the action of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. But what about the action of the Holy Spirit in the individual life of the Christian? This consideration ought to come home to us all. Am I guided by the Spirit of God in my business transactions? Am I guided by the Spirit of God in disposing of my money, either in giving to, or withholding from, anyone? The great questions of relaxation and recreation—which many have to consider if they would avoid breaking down—are also within the province of the Spirit of God. It is a practical dependence that we learn.

At the same time the apostle guards against leaving us occupied with ourselves in a subjective way. Some have become morbid by being so occupied. The apostle goes on to say: "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The Spirit of God does not occupy us, unduly, with ourselves; that is often the work of Satan, as we shall find, if we follow on to know the Lord. But may we truly learn that, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," and may the inner motives and actions of our lives be controlled by the Spirit of God!

T. H.

Landmarks of Inspiration (ii).

WE have often been struck with the way in which the various parts of the Bible bear witness to the divine origin of the book; we might say naturally and without design on the part of the writers.

We have a striking illustration of this in the

addresses to the seven churches given us in Revelation ii. and iii. Here are letters addressed to each of these seven churches, selected out of those which were then well known in the province of Asia. All these addresses were doubtless called forth by, and suited to, the particular state of each assembly at that time. Yet no intelligent reader could doubt that they give us a concise, but wonderfully accurate history of the professing church from the beginning to the end. Let us briefly go over the special point on which the emphasis is laid in each case.

In Ephesus we have loss of first love to Christ; the root of all the subsequent failure. In Smyrna persecution, allowed of God, in order to hinder or arrest decline, and to refine and purify the church. This covers about the period from the emperor Diocletian to the cessation of the heathen persecution A.D. 325. In Pergamos there was the settling down into the world and its ways; dwelling where Satan's throne was, and the allowance of evil doctrines within. This dates from about the time of Constantine. In Thyatira the church was merged into the world, and all sorts of evil doctrine and practice was allowed. Here also the church had become a bitter persecutor of the true saints of God, distinguished as the remnant or "the rest." This gives us the Romanism of the middle ages.

The address to the church of Sardis brings in a kind of fresh start, but there was the failure to go on with the light and truth given at the Reformation (which was a work of God), and the church became cold and formal, and leaned on the worldly powers for countenance and support. This gives us Protestantism subsequent to the Reformation. In Philadelphia there is little strength, but keeping Christ's Word and not

denying His name which is precious to Him ; and He sets before them an open door. All this is the fruit of God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. Such was the remarkable recovery of truth at the early part of the last century.

Finally, in Laodicea we find pride and boastfulness, but a lukewarmness and indifference to Christ which is utterly nauseous to Him. And this is the close of the church's history on earth.

These addresses give us, then, a brief history of the professing church ; but not as a mere historian would write it, as a series of events or what led up to them, but disclosing those *inward* motives and springs which were at work in each case, as seen by the Lord Himself, from the beginning to the end. At the time they were given, however, they were more of the character of prophecy than history ; for the events had not then taken place.

Now, why was not all this given as an outline of what was to take place in the future, instead of in the form of seven letters to seven churches which then existed in the Roman province of Asia ? One reason was, no doubt, because if a history, or prophetic sketch, had been given at the first, the early Christians might have said, "If all these things have to take place, how can we be looking for the Lord's coming as that which might be at any moment?" To *them* the form in which this historic outline was given, in no way militated against that hope ; which was always the proper hope of the church. But *we*, who look back on the past history, can see at once that these addresses were more than merely letters to seven churches which then existed ; they were a sketch of the whole history from beginning to end. Indeed the number *seven*, which signifies completeness, and the particular features

of the churches selected, furnishing the suited elements for this outline,—confirms this thought.

Could any merely human writer have designed a sketch so perfectly accurate (not merely from the *outward* aspect of the church, but as giving the *inward* principles at work in each case) and given in such an admirably recited form, long before the history unfolded itself? Impossible! It is one of those landmarks found so often on the pages of the inspired book, which prove conclusively, yet without effort on the part of the writers, the wisdom and foreknowledge of God which is found throughout the entire Bible.

F. G. B.

Four Facts for Faith.

1. **Sins Forgiven.**—One of the blessings the Saviour-God bestows on those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is the forgiveness or remission of sins: “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Rom. iv. 7). So he says by the prophet, “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more”; again, “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Confession of sins to God brings cleansing and forgiveness, through His appreciation of the value of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanses the believer, and makes him “whiter than snow.”

2. **Sin Condemned.**—There is a difference between “sin” and “sins.” *Sin* is the root which produces the evil fruit—sins. Now, if we take God’s Word, *sin* is said to be “condemned,” *sins* are “forgiven”; and so we read that “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). The scripture also teaches us that “we are dead to sin,” and, “being made free from sin, and

become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. vi.).

Thus deliverance from the *power* of sin—indwelling sin—is given to the faith that accepts and acts on the fact that God condemned sin in the flesh when His Son was made sin on the cross. Faith condemns what God has condemned; sin has no dominion over us; it is dethroned; its power is gone for him who believes.

3. **Self Crucified.**—When Christ was crucified, every believer in Christ was crucified with Him. Thus the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). In chapter i., Christ gave Himself for our *sins*; then our sins are gone, cleansed by His blood. In chapter ii., He gave Himself for *me*; then *I* am gone; the old "I" is crucified; and there is now the new "I" (which is not an improvement of the old)—"yet not I," but Christ liveth in me.

Thus the blessed fact for faith to lay hold of, is that Christ—yea Christ beyond the cross and the grave, Christ in resurrection and in glory—is now the believer's life. For "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Faith accepts and believes what God has said: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

4. **Satan Crushed.**—Satan it was that started the first lie against God and His Word. The curse of God was pronounced upon Satan in the first book of the Bible, Genesis; and in the last, Satan's defeat and doom is foretold. John in his epistle says that the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

And finally, in Hebrews ii. we find that one of the

reasons why our Lord Jesus took part in flesh and blood was that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Even now, for the true believer, Satan's power is broken; so that death, of which he wielded the power, is no longer the "King of terrors" for us. The Lord Jesus has set us free by His death; His resurrection is the glorious proof that Satan has been vanquished in the last stronghold of his power, in death itself, and we are delivered from the bondage in which we were held. U. G.

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

"In Thee do I put my Trust" (Ps. xvi. 1). In Christ we see a man in this world, feeling its sorrows and trials, experiencing hatred, rejection, reproach; yet passing through it all in perfect calm and peace. This is, indeed, far removed from the idea of *fatalism* of which men speak. His was a path of obedience to the Father's will, dependence upon Him, trust and confidence in Him; in all and every circumstance taking everything from the Father's hand. This is the One who says to us, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me." May we be enabled to do so more and more!

"Now, in this brief interval,
 He satisfies my heart;
 And teaches me how fully
 He doth His grace impart.
 I live in Him up yonder,
 And here He lives in me;
 While from that place He sends me
 His witness here to be."

Lessons from Psalm lxxviii.

“THEIR heart was not right with God,” such are the words we read in Psalm lxxviii. 37: this was the chief cause of the bad moral state in which the people of God were then found. *God* had not His place in the heart, consequently they turned aside after false gods, human inventions, and the vanities of their own minds.

This is a most instructive psalm, well worthy of being read and pondered over in the presence of God. It contains much that is most suitable to the day in which we live; it speaks to us now, as truly as it did to those concerning whom it was written. It says that the professing people of God “tempted God in their heart,” they “spake against God,” they said, “Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?” they “believed not in God.”

In spite of all God’s grace and provision for them, His miracles, and the wonders they had seen or heard of, His constant forbearance and mercy; yet, when each fresh test came, they “set not their heart aright, and their spirit was not steadfast with God.” What was wrong, was the *inward state of the heart*, the failure to walk in the consciousness of *having to do with God*. This led to hypocrisy and self-deception—“they’ did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues,”—as well as to more open apostasy. Alas, what depths of folly we can go into if we are not walking in the light with God, in His presence, and with a good conscience!

Truly, *our* place, as belonging to the Church of God, the body of Christ, is much higher and nearer to Him than was Israel’s; but for that very reason our responsibility is much greater. “Remember, therefore, *from whence* thou art fallen,” said the Lord to the church at

Ephesus, when they had "left their first love." He judges according to the first estate of the Church, according to the privileges and blessings conferred.

In love, the Lord recalls the Church to its first estate, and He looks for the practical expression of it, not in mere activity, but in true repentance and in "first works" done out of love to Him. There can be no doubt that one of the greatest needs of the present day is just this—an honest owning of our real state, collectively as well as individually; truth and uprightness before God, and practical godliness and consistency in our daily life and walk. It is in such a walk alone that "first works," pleasing to God, can be done.

But to return to our psalm—the close of it shows us that the only real remedy for failure is God's infinite and sovereign grace. This will surely triumph in the end, after the sad history of Israel's failure and God's judgment for their sins and wrong doings has come to a close. We read that God "chose" the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which He loved; and He "chose" David, His servant, when He was nothing in himself, to feed Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance.

The true David will yet surely bring in the future blessing of Israel; as well as present the Church to Himself, fully up to all that His heart could desire. This is a fact well calculated to strengthen faith amidst the difficulties and besetments of our path here.

F. G. B.

Consequences.—Are we sufficiently true-hearted to God and His Word to be above the dread of consequences?

“Wash and be Clean.”

(2 Kings v. 13.)

HOW simple, and withal heart-searching, are God's ways! We have a remarkable illustration of this in the history of Naaman, the successful general of the King of Syria's army. It is all the more extraordinary, as the disease of leprosy, with which he was afflicted, is contagious, so that lepers had, as a rule, to dwell *alone* (Lev. xiii. 46).

We have no details of his inner life, nor of his previous history, beyond this, that “by him Jehovah had given deliverance unto Syria” (ver. 1); but the fact of his leprosy and its cure is the one outstanding feature, which remains both as a warning and an encouragement to every succeeding generation. It is thus recorded in the Scriptures of truth.

As a warning we may surely receive it, inasmuch as his own reasoning very nearly prevented his profiting by Elisha's directions; and how often is that the case with each one of us! But the encouragement is there also for anyone in analogous circumstances, to “go and do likewise,” in obedience to instructions divinely given, which take no account of human distinction and glory.

At the present day, in countries where leprosy is common, those afflicted by it have to live apart from association with others, in establishments prepared for their reception; and that is in accordance with the Scripture above referred to: “He is *unclean*; he shall dwell *alone*; without the camp shall his habitation be.” The disease itself is even now said to be incurable.

Another striking feature in this account is, that the object of God's grace was a Gentile, *not* descended from Abraham. The Lord refers to it, when he preached for the first time in the synagogue of Nazareth; but

those who heard Him were so "filled with wrath," that they endeavoured there and then to cast Him down the precipice just outside the city (Luke iv. 27-29). Such is the religious man's opposition to the gospel of God's grace towards sinners; for the religion in which he trusts, and for which he seeks a reward, appears to him to have lost its value, if "works" are of no account.

The Lord distinctly states that the *only* leper cleansed in those days was "Naaman the Syrian"—not an Israelite in any sense—but a Gentile, hated nationally by those of Jewish race, and possessing no special promises from God on which he could rely for personal acceptance, or for prosperity and blessing. In his case *alone* was divine intervention shown, not by any personal communication made to him, but through the artless assurance of a little captive Israelitish maid, who waited on Naaman's wife.

Simple childish conviction is often far truer and more effective than the calculated supposition of elders who can reason naturally, and even truly. So it was in this case. As a captive, she bore no ill-feeling towards her mistress or her master, and, in a child-like way, showed that she had no doubt whatever as to the power of God's prophet in Samaria. Her desire began with "God," showing how she herself recognised His power and His presence, as well as His initiative. And that is of extreme importance.

"Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

And we may note that she made no fuss about it; she only expressed artlessly to her mistress her own assured realisation of her heart's desire. She does not suggest the possibility of her master *asking* for anything; his simple presence with the prophet was

quite enough! What a lesson for us all, proving, as is so often the case, that a child's sense of God's presence and power is more effective than the reasoning of those who can boast of considerable knowledge!

The words of the little maid were reported to her master, and through him reached the ears of the King of Syria. But they acted according to *human* thoughts and wisdom, and prepared, on a grand scale, for a visit *not* to God's prophet, but to Israel's *king*.

That led to King Joram rending his clothes: he could do nothing, nor did he see any ground for such a request, but rather an occasion of quarrel and war. Elisha heard of it, and sent a message to the king inviting Naaman to his house; but instead of personally awaiting him, he sent a messenger to say to him:

"Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (2 Kings v. 10).

Such an answer, given, not personally as showing respect to his lordship's position and authority, and much less to his prepared present of gold and silver, led to his turning back in a rage. But his servants, wiser than he in such circumstances, ventured to say: "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean?"

What could he do but humble himself and obey the order? We read that "he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (ver. 14).

The effect of this on his soul is of the greatest interest. "He returned to the man of God, he and all

his company, and came and stood before him, and said: Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now, therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant." He had the privilege of seeing and speaking personally to Elisha, and thus of learning a more important lesson for his soul, namely, that Jehovah will never be a debtor.

And is not this a lesson for each one of us at the present day? Times and circumstances vary considerably, but divine principles remain unchanged, marvelously and variously as they are set forth in the Scriptures of truth.

Let us note also that when the Lord Himself refers to this example of God's grace, He insists upon the fact that it was unique (Luke iv. 27). So was also the other case He reminded His hearers of, namely, Elijah's visit to the Sidonian widow at Sarepta during the time of the great famine.

In each case it was a *Gentile* that was so favoured, and his hearers were so enraged when He mentioned it, that they sought thereupon to destroy Him, as mentioned above.

Leprosy is, even at the present day, an incurable disease, but surely the Lord would have us apply the whole history morally to ourselves, teaching us what divine grace can do for a sinner, so that each one of us, in humbling ourselves, may have the opportunity of profiting by it. Nothing could be more personal, nor more unlooked for, from our point of view; but "what is impossible with men, is possible with God." (Mark x. 27). May the Lord give us to prove it!

W. J. L.

“Accepted,” “Acceptable,” “Approved.”

THE Saviour-God in His abounding and infinite love, bestows upon all who are His children by faith in Christ Jesus, redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. In His sovereign love He makes us to be “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us *accepted* in the Beloved.”

Every believer is thus brought out of darkness into light, out of distance into nearness, out of death into life, out of Adam into Christ, out of the old creation into the new. So we read, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” etc.; this is what God has done.

Thus, our being “accepted in the Beloved” is the sovereign act of God’s grace, and it is ours in consequence of His appreciation and estimation of the work accomplished by His own Son on the cross. God has manifested His complete satisfaction with that work by raising Christ from the dead, setting Him at His own right hand, and crowning Him with glory and honour. In virtue of that work, infinite in its cost, we have redemption through His blood, and God’s love has been perfected with us, in that we have boldness in the day of judgment, and we know that, even now, we are “accepted in the Beloved.”

But while our *acceptance* is all of grace—the free, sovereign grace of God in and through Christ—our *acceptability* has to be gained, sought after, and thus obtained.

The first part of the epistle to the Ephesians declares what God *has done* for every believer in Christ; in the latter part we have the “beseeching” to walk worthily, to walk not as other Gentiles walk, to walk in love,

to walk as children of light ; proving what is *acceptable* to the Lord.

So also in 1 Timothy ii., believers are exhorted to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, and children are told to requite their parents : these things are said to be *acceptable* before God.

Finally, in 2 Corinthians v. 9, the apostle speaks of being zealous to be *acceptable* (or agreeable) to God (new trans.).

The believer's *acceptance*, as we have seen, is complete, and admits of no change, it results from what God has done for him : his *acceptability* depends on his walk or conduct, hence the exhortations to walk in a way well pleasing to God.

We now come to the word "*approved*." It is said of the Lord Jesus Himself, that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man;" "And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth"; "Never man spake like this man"; and Pilate testified, "I find no fault in this man." Such was the testimony borne to Him as He passed through this world, and He has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

In the epistle to the Romans the apostle shows us that in order to be "acceptable to God, and *approved* of men (chap. xiv. 18), the Christian is to serve Christ in a spirit of love and grace towards his brother; bearing with his conscientious weakness, if need be, and seeking his good and blessing. Do we seek this "acceptability" and "approval" in our christian service and conduct ?

U. G.

A New Relationship, a New Mission, and a New Power.

John xx.

CHIEFEST of all the "days" in the ways of God with man upon the earth, is the resurrection day, that wonderful morning when He who had laid down His life took it again, and rising from the dead, Victor over death and the grave, left behind in the tomb in the garden, the silent witness to His victory.

Great, indeed, were the events of that day to His own—the world was to see Him no more till He comes in a different way and character—but for them (His own which were in the world) great changes were to be known as the result of His death and rising again.

Let us consider some of these changes, as given us in this chapter.

First in order, if not in importance, is the new *relationship* contained in the message committed to Mary Magdalene, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and (to) My God and your God." No more were they to address God as the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; or to base their claim upon His mercy, or on the covenants made with their progenitors. God would now be known to them as the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," a step—and a great step—in advance upon Exodus vi. 2; for now the day had come which the gracious Master so often spoke of as "*that day*," in the never-to-be-forgotten interview recorded for us in those four wonderful chapters of this Gospel (xiii.-xvi.), when He, the Lord from heaven, discoursed to the heavenly family of heavenly things. There was no longer any need to say, "*If* I tell you of

heavenly things" (John iii. 12); the day had come when they should know the full meaning of those words, "I in My Father, ye in Me, and I in you."

He was about to leave them in a hostile world, where an enemy reigned, who, if unable to overcome them by direct attack, would change his tactics, and seek to "wear out the saints." Oh, how often in the experience of this time of waiting have the saints succumbed to the wiles of the foe, who can entice into slumber in the enchanted ground (of this world) the pilgrim, whom the lions in the path have been unable to turn back. Hence the injunction, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

But *now* there was to be a new *mission*, a fresh sending forth, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Having shown them His hands and His side, with the marks of His passion so distinctly there, and having doubly fortified their hearts with peace, won for them at such a cost, He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye (the) Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

This is not yet Pentecostal power; for that, they were still to wait (although "not many days"); but for such a mission, where is grace to be found? "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world," said the Lord in that wonderful prayer, just before the cross (John xvii.); and some seven times in that matchless intercourse with the Father the Son speaks of Himself as "sent." And now by His inbreathing He imparts the capacity to understand, and appreciate, and enjoy the relationship and the responsibilities that His resurrection had brought them into. "I am come," He said, that they might have

life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Life in the power of the Holy Spirit is now theirs by His inbreathing, and thus equipped they enter upon a new era, to represent Him in the world that had cast out the Sent One of the Father, who came "to take away our sins," and "that we might live through Him."

To be followers of the Messiah, come to establish His kingdom and assert the rights of God; to see crooked paths made straight, and the rough ways smooth before His beneficent sway had been their hope, but all this was changed by His death; and now they have to get through a world such as this, while He is absent and the wills of men are unchanged.

Then He says, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." They would not then be alone; henceforth they would be under the guardian care of another Comforter, and He would lead them into all the enjoyment of their new relationship with God, furnish them with the grace and patience needed by those sent of the Father and the Son into the world; and withal endow them beyond this with the power to bind and loose sins (governmentally, of course) upon transgressors.

Such were some of the characteristic blessings consequent upon the resurrection of Christ, and their gravity may well oppress the disciples, had not the "Spirit of Truth" been the crowning gift of all. It was not in the way of "cloven tongues like as of fire" that He came upon them here; testimony to the nations does not seem to be so much in view as the *reproduction* of the ways and works of the heavenly Sent-One (Christ), in the world to which the Father had, in grace, sent Him.

For this, the Spirit was given to bring His words to their remembrance, "to take of His things and show

them unto them," to "testify of Him" and "show them things to come."

Filled with His peace and His joy, every question as to sins and their acceptance settled by those pierced hands and side, they were to show forth His excellencies (1 Peter ii., 9) in the world that had cast Him ignominiously out.

How far, indeed, have those who believe on Him through their word, departed from this blessed path! And why? Because we have not kept before us, in that path, the One who was sent into the world, and who kept His word in the perfection of dependence upon God which marked Him "always."

What, alas, has been the actual unbelief of His people as to these very gifts, we have been briefly looking at! Vast numbers of believers, ignorant of their standing, and robbed of their joy and peace in believing, know little or nothing of the path He walked in; because the presence of the Holy Spirit on the earth is denied in practice, if not in profession.

May the Lord, who so graciously bears with all this forgetfulness and unfaithfulness, stir up His people in these last days of the Church's history upon earth, to seek to know the true character of the heritage to which they have succeeded by His death and resurrection.

T. R.

Landmarks of Inspiration—iii.

Numbers Employed in the Bible.

AMONGST the many landmarks of inspiration in the Bible, the way in which it employs numbers is well worthy of our attention. Let us look, briefly, at some instances of the use of the number **seven**. The significance of this number in Scripture

is well known, namely, spiritual perfection or completeness, whether in good or evil.

In the Old Testament it is applied to the seventh day, when God rested from all His works after the six days of creation. That day was to be kept holy, because God rested, and it was to be a day of rest to Israel as well as to their bondservants, because they themselves had been bondservants in Egypt. It prefigured that complete period of rest which remains to the people of God in the millennium and the eternal state.

In the "feasts of the Lord," seven figured prominently. The feast of unleavened bread, which followed the Passover, was to be kept seven days. After the offering of the "wave-sheaf" (Christ in resurrection) they were to number seven Sabbaths complete—fifty days, to Pentecost. The feast of tabernacles was to be kept during seven days,—a complete period; it was to be a time of rejoicing, typifying that future day when Israel, restored to their land, will enjoy rest and peace under Christ, their true Messiah.

In the sacrifices the number seven had a large place. We read frequently, in Numbers xxviii., of seven lambs; and the blood of the victim was to be sprinkled seven times. In Ezekiel xlv. 23, we find that, in a future day, they will prepare during the feast of unleavened bread, "seven bullocks and seven rams daily for seven days." This is because the sacrifices offered during the millennium look *back* to the perfect work of Christ, in virtue of which Israel will stand accepted before God.

Within the Tabernacle there was the seven-branched golden candlestick, typifying the full divine light of the Holy Spirit, shining over against the golden table of showbread with its twelve loaves. (Compare Zech. iv. 2, and Rev. i. 12 and 20).

In the historical and figurative teaching of the Bible

the number seven is frequently found. God told Noah that He would wait "yet seven days" before sending the flood, and Noah himself waited seven days to see if the waters were abated from the earth. There were seven years of famine and seven years of plenty in Egypt, of which the seven fat kine and the seven lean kine, and the same number of ears of corn, in Pharaoh's dream, were a figure. In the case of leprosy, which was a figure of sin, there was to be a definite period of testing, seven days; also seven days the cleansed leper was to remain out of his tent, until restoration was complete.

Jericho was compassed about seven times on the seventh day, by seven priests, bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns. And, as the epistle to the Hebrews tells us, the walls of that city fell "by faith." It was important that Israel should learn, in this the first barrier to their entry upon the land, that victory depended upon *God's* power, not man's, and this in the most complete manner as to the time and the means used. Solomon was seven years building the temple, at which time he held a feast "seven days and seven days," typical of the better days of the kingdom yet to come. Nebuchadnezzar's punishment for his pride and self-exaltation lasted seven years — a complete period, figurative of the times of the Gentiles, when God's hand in government is not owned by the nations.

In the gospels we have the feeding of the four thousand with seven loaves and some fishes, and seven baskets of fragments taken up, the latter typifying that complete provision which the Messiah will make for the remnant of His people in a future day. In Matthew xiii. we have seven parables spoken by our Lord, which give a complete picture of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Finally, in a book so full of figures and symbols as the Revelation we might expect to find a good many sevens, and so it is. We have seven churches with their seven angels, or representatives, seven golden candlesticks, seven stars, seven spirits, typifying the fulness of the Spirit's power; seven seals, trumpets, and vials, seven thunders. The lamb has seven horns and seven eyes, the perfection of power and wisdom. The dragon has seven heads and ten horns, completeness of ruling power, associated here with the empires of the west under the Roman beast of chapter xiii. 1, which has the same number of heads, and is the instrument in the hands of Satan for the carrying out of his designs.

We have only very imperfectly looked at the use of this number, but enough has been said to show the remarkable unity which pervades the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. If the sixty-six books of which it is composed were the work of ordinary uninspired men, each of them would, naturally, use numbers in his own way, simply as required to express the subject in hand, without any connected and uniform system. But here we have books written by many and varied authors, extending over hundreds of years, all following a definite system, or plan, even in regard to the numbers employed.

Truly God's *works* are "great," His *thoughts* are "very deep," His *name* is "excellent," and He has magnified His word above all His name. He who would deny the overruling and directing power of one master mind, as seen in the whole structure of the Bible, as well as in the commands and thoughts of God of which it is the revelation, understands very little about it indeed.

F. G. B.

“The Secret Place of Thunder.”

“*I answered thee in the secret place of thunder*” (Ps. lxxxix. 7).

THOU answeredst me in secret place
 Of thunders deep and loud,
 When fear of death o'erwhelmed my soul,
 And justice cried aloud.
 Thou answeredst me—I heard Thy voice—
 My spirit leaped within :
 “Repentant soul, thy sin is purged,
 For Christ hath made thee clean.”

And since Thy love hath cast out fear,
 Thou dost, in secret, still
 Answer each longing of my soul—
 Reveal Thy perfect will.
 But not by mighty thunderings now,
 Thy voice I hear, O Lord ;
 But in the peace which Jesus gives,
 According to Thy word.

A. E. S.

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

“**The Whole Heart.**”—We find this expression six times in Psalm cxix., in reference to seeking after God, and keeping His Word. It is just the opposite of the “double heart” of which we read in Psalm xii. 2, and the “double-minded man” of James i. 8. The heart it is which influences the life and walk of the Christian, and surely Christ fully claims “my soul, my life, my all.” It is precious to note that in Jeremiah xxxii. 41, Jehovah promises to the people returning to Him in repentance, “I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My *whole heart* and with My *whole soul*.”

The World of To-day.

IT does not require a deep insight into the state of things in the world to-day to see the spirit of lawlessness and insubjection to authority which prevails. Democracy being the popular form of rule, and power being vested in the people, governments have to follow the prevailing wish of the masses.

But democracy is no true remedy for the wrongs from which the world has suffered in the past. Nor does it bring peace, as many mistakenly imagined it would. The truth is, the evil lies much deeper than such as could be met by any form of popular government; it arises from the selfishness which rules the heart of fallen man. The world does not want to believe it, but God has said that the heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Unless the heart is changed—and it never will be—neither democracy nor socialism will remedy what is wrong.

But governments—such as they are—are responsible to represent God's authority, to punish evil doers, and protect the weak. It is for this purpose that God has ordained the "powers that be," and for this they are responsible.

What is the Christian's place in connection with the government of the world? It is well we should consider this in view of the lawless spirit of the day.

He is to be in subjection to the higher powers, to submit to them, to do that which is good, so that he may have praise of them. He has not to *make* the powers, but *to be subject* for conscience sake (Rom. xiii. 1-7).

Let us remember that we are *passing through* this world on the way to glory, but we are not *of* it. Our

Lord never once interfered to settle political questions of His day, or to set the world right. In His prayer to the Father (John xvii.) He said twice over, respecting His own, that they were not of the world, as He was not of it (vers. 14-16). The Christian is *in* the world; he has to do his daily work or business in it, to live "soberly, righteously, and godly"; but his *heart* is elsewhere. His calling, his hopes, and his citizenship are *heavenly*.

It is remarkable that in none of the epistles do we find any reference to the political questions of the day. Not that we need to suppose that the apostles and the early Christians were unacquainted with these things, but in the freshness of the work of God, and the divine life in their souls, they walked as those who were *morally strangers*, and whose interests were elsewhere.

And it is our privilege to enter by faith into the heavenly portion we have in Christ, and thus to be delivered from being caught in the party strife, and the vain pursuits of a dying, fading world. Nothing more hinders the soul's progress in divine things than worldliness in its many shapes and forms. We cannot have two objects in life; we cannot be loyal to Christ, and yet love the world; we cannot serve two masters at the same time: it must be Christ or the world.

F. G. B.

Power.—I believe everything is in ruin and confusion, but there is no ruin or confusion in the power of Christ. I never can think of a power of evil that is not below His power.

Justification.

AS to justification, there is a point I must remark. Two things unite in it: first, there is the blood which has washed us from our sins; and this is perhaps properly called justification. But in fact we may add to it our acceptance in the Beloved. If any one doeth righteousness, he is righteous, as He (Christ) is righteous. For doing righteousness is what flows from the life of Christ in us; but inasmuch as we live of this life by the Holy Spirit, we are united to Christ, and we enjoy His righteousness before God, accepted in the Beloved.

Of this, the resurrection is the pivot; for it is the proof of justification, and it introduces Christ in the power of this eternal life (in which we share) into the presence of God. It is around the person of Christ, viewed as risen, that all the truths found in the word turn. The union of the church to Him is its complement. The resurrection leaves all that could condemn us behind it in the tomb, and introduces the Lord into the new world of which He is the perfection, the Head and the glory. Now we are one with Him.

J. N. D.

God for Us.

IF God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31). We have the great and blessed truth derived from it all—*God* is "for us": if so, "who can be against us?" It is the great central truth of grace: God is for us. He is for us, in giving, in justifying, and in securing that in all difficulties nothing shall separate us from His love. And first, in giving, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"; with *Him* given, we can reckon on receiving everything else.

Sychar.

THROUGH the green pastures of the Word
My spirit wanders free ;
I love the hill of Nazareth,
The lake of Galilee.

Fair Cana's happy bridal feast,
The grief and joy at Nain ;
The glory-mantled mountain's top,
The cities of the plain.

But, dearer to my soul the scene—
More dear than words can tell—
A lonely, weary traveller
Beside an Eastern well.

The cloudless sun upon His head
Pours down its fervid heat ;
The burning desert sand is spread
Beneath His weary feet.

No shadowing rock for His relief,
No gracious sheltering tree ;
Distressed, deserted, and athirst,
With none but God to see.

The One at whose Almighty word
The first-born fountains burst ;
Panting and travel-stained, and weak,
Sat by the well athirst !

Ah, had He breathed a single word
Across the rocky brim,
The happy waters would have heard
And leapt to succour Him.

No brimming bucket waited Him,
No pitcher there to dip ;
No friendly hand to hold a cup
To Jesus' parched lip.

But, miracle was never wrought,
 To ease the Saviour's pain ;
 The thirsty lips unceasing sought
 A sin-stained soul to gain.

Oh ! bow with me by Sychar's well,
 And there adoring think ;
 The Lord of fountains thirsted there,
 That all the world might drink !

A. W.

“Be Ye also Enlarged.”

(2 Corinthians vi. 13.)

AT the time when the Apostle Paul wrote the *second* epistle to the Corinthians, he was apparently somewhat oppressed with the thought that his *first epistle* might have proved too strong for them (see his remarks as to this in chap. ii. 1-10). That referred no doubt to his having at that time in his first epistle considered them as “carnal” in chapter iii., and as self-confident in chapter iv. Besides that there was open sin undealt with of which we read in chapter v., and the worldliness in walk and ways which is referred to in the following chapter vi. But he was “comforted,” inasmuch as the effect of his first paternal warning was already making itself felt, and he was therefore finding relief from his “affliction and anguish of heart,” accompanied as it had been with “many tears” (2 Cor. ii. 4).

All these things led him to unfold in detail the character of his ministry, but not in any way or measure as the effect of a desire for place or position amongst men, as is, alas, so often the case at the present day. On the contrary, his service was marked by patience, while enduring sorrow, suffering, and persecution ; for he and his companions were being

carried on "by the power of God," in order to unfold "the word of truth" by which they themselves had been morally transformed" (2 Cor. vi. 4-10).

Paul and his companions were indeed proved to be suited instruments for making the gospel known to numbers of the heathen, brought up in gross idolatry. That was not through having been idolaters themselves which their Jewish religion had of course prevented, but simply through the power of the Spirit of God, united to "unfeigned love" for others, which burned in their souls. His love for the Corinthian believers was the fruit of the constraining power of the love of Christ, and he longed to see their love abound in this way one towards another, and that it should increase their interest in the unconverted, in a similar way and degree.

Such were the feelings which led to the unburdening of his heart towards them, as expressed in verses 11-13: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged."

This exhortation is accompanied by a negative one in the following verse: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The former one calls for our special attention and prayers, while the latter is a needed word at all times, considering the dangers and temptations with which Christians, both young and old, are surrounded in this world.

The following verses give striking examples of this separation, and morally speaking, opposition as that between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, faith and unbelief, righteousness and unrighteousness. Unless the heart is true, and the affections really set

upon the Person of the Saviour, there can be no outward manifestation of the life of a Christian such as should be for the glory of God.

But it is not sufficient to act negatively, so to speak, in avoiding the entanglements so readily found in this world, or, as the apostle suggests, in 1 Corinthians v. 10, to "go out of the world." That might be an easy way of getting rid of our responsibility, but God would not be glorified thereby. He has given us of His Spirit in order that we may walk worthy of Him in the midst of all possible entanglements, in this scene where our lot is cast.

This it is, surely, which calls for enlargement of heart, not only as to things to be diligently avoided, but also in those various phases of *choice*, which are set before the Christian. Such was indeed the blessed example set by Moses, when every worldly advantage was offered to him by the King of Egypt (Heb. xi. 24-26). He chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." And "the recompense of the reward," which he was given to realise, was put to his account as "the reproach of Christ," the counterpart of that being his place and portion in the glory to come. Besides that, he was used of God in a way that no other man had been, or who lived subsequently, in writing one fourth part of the Old Testament. And so we read as follows:—

"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face; in all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. xxxiv. 10-12).

We cannot expect those favoured days of old to be repeated in our time, or in any subsequent time on earth: but let us not forget that, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Then follows an exhortation needed at all times: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one to another, according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xv. 5-6).

In every state and condition of things on earth, and at every time, we do need to be sustained and strengthened by *grace* which is from above, and is no product of earthly circumstances in any sense at all. For, as the apostle says: "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out"; but we have to "fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 7, 12).

The more we weigh these things, the more we are enabled to act in principle, according to the "choice" which Mary made at Bethany, and which Martha envied, but did not imitate. She was *more* occupied with the Lord than her sister Martha, although any bystander might have thought that she was *doing* much less. The heart must have some object, and if not controlled by that which is altogether superior to it, will spend itself in that which the preacher of old stated as everywhere true, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." (Eccles. ii. 11).

To be "like-minded one to another," would be a very poor measure indeed, if it were not for the added words "*according to Christ Jesus.*" This it is which necessitates enlargement of heart; and may the Lord enable us to emulate and to imitate it! The "time

is short," as the apostle reminded the Corinthians (chap. vii. 29), so there is all the more need for encouraging one another to make the best use of it while it lasts.

As long as we are left here on earth, there never can come a time when the heart does not need enlarging. The *measure* given is infinite, and can only be realised in eternity; but what a mercy it is to find the exhortation, which sets before us the divine measure.

And surely, the more our hearts go out to our brethren whom we are privileged to know in this world, the more shall we enjoy communion with the Lord, in the perfect scene which He has prepared for us in the "many mansions," or "abodes," in the Father's house. In view of being with Him there, it is our privilege to *watch* and *wait* for His return to that heavenly meeting-place "in the cloud," *close to this earth*," though not of it (John xiv. 3).

The attitude of *watching* is insisted on at the close of Mark xiii.: "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

W. J. L.

"The Things Concerning Himself."

WHEN the Spirit of God guides the saints into all truth, their hearts are filled with joy and peace in learning of Christ who is the truth. This is very marked as we meditate upon Luke xxiv., and the lessons it teaches us from the events of the first day of the week, after the Lord's resurrection. He was now risen from the dead, His work upon the cross, with its immeasurable results for God's glory and our blessing, having been finished.

The Man of Sorrows had been in this world, He had gone down into the depths, the very "dust of death,"

in love to the sinner, and the effect of the work which He accomplished will extend to the ends of the earth. Those who believed on Him were delivered from sin and Satan's power, and Christ was to be known and enjoyed by each of the saved ones as their *all*. These blessings were to be theirs from the moment of their call, till their translation to be with Him for ever in glory.

This love of Christ comes before us blessedly in this chapter (Luke xxiv.); from the opened grave with which it begins, to the opened heavens with which it closes. The two disciples were going about eight miles to the village called Emmaus; their hearts were sorrowful, but the Man of Sorrows had trodden the way before them. *Now* He was the victor over death, possessing all the rights which belong to the Son of man according to Psalm viii., and finding His delight in the "excellent of the earth" according to Psalm xvi.

As He journeys with them He unfolds to them in all the Scriptures "the things concerning Himself." When they drew near the village, they press Him to stay, and they get the crowning blessing—the veil over their minds is removed; their eyes were opened, and they knew Him: this was after He took the bread and blessed, and brake it.*

And here we learn a precious lesson ourselves. Let us only walk in communion with Him, and we shall realise His presence in the midst of those gathered to His name. *We* do not go there to have our eyes opened, but to enjoy *His* love; and we, for our part, have our hearts filled with the sense of that love. Jesus Himself manifests Himself to our hearts.

Then they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem to tell the eleven the things which were

* Though this was not the Lord's supper, it reminded them of it.

done in the way, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. And He who changed their grief into joy in their small meeting; now, by His presence, forms and fills the great meeting of Christianity.

In John xx. 22, we find the Lord meeting with His disciples, and breathing on them, communicating the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of life and liberty; and in Luke xxiv. 49, He speaks of sending the "promise of my Father"; all the living effects of whose presence are seen in the Acts, and will continue till the Lord comes back again for His own.

We know that the Holy Spirit dwells in the church at this moment; He it is who is the power for service and testimony for Christ in a world full of opposition, and under the power of darkness. And by the power of the Spirit it is that we understand the truth as to Christ risen, and the glory of His person, and His work. When our eyes and our hearts are opened to behold Him, the Spirit enables us to enter into the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and to realise what the things are which God has prepared for those who love Him.

Stephen looked up into the opened heavens and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and Paul's ministry fills in, for us, all the details connected with the opened heavens, the Son of God, and our place in union with the glorified Christ. May we, as we look up into those opened heavens by faith, ascribe all glory to the name of our triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

H. E. P.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."
Truly we can, for "This I know; God is for me."
(Ps. lvi.).

Landmarks of Inspiration—iv.

WE have frequently referred to the unity of design which runs through the sixty-six books of which the Bible is composed as an evidence of the ordering of God, who by His Spirit guided those who wrote. It would be impossible otherwise to account for the fact that so many writers, whose work extended over such a long period of time, and who if left to themselves would be influenced by such a variety of ideas, could all work with the same end in view.

Besides this, there is interwoven even with the historical accounts contained in the various books, a typical and prophetic meaning, which is apparent to every student who looks a little beneath the surface. Much of this typical bearing of what is found in the Old Testament could not have been understood at the time, but with the light of the New thrown upon it, it becomes evident; and we can now see that God's wisdom and foreknowledge arranged all beforehand.

A large portion of the Old Testament, for example, is rich in typical foreshadowings of Christ as well as in prophetic predictions concerning Him. These foreshadowings are often found in the life history of persons of whom it speaks. Thus Adam was a type of Him who was to come, Moses of the Prophet whom God would raise up like unto him, David of the rejected and suffering but afterwards exalted one, Solomon of God's King reigning in peace and tranquility. Here the unity of purpose, which had the end in view from the beginning of the Bible, is an undeniable proof of a wisdom and prescience which can be attributed only to the work of the Holy Ghost, who controlled the minds and guided the pens of those "holy men of God" who spake as they were moved by Him.

Let us briefly refer to some of those passages found in the Scriptures which attribute the communications given through the sacred writers to the Holy Spirit as their Author.

Our Lord said, in reference to Christ being the Son of David, "David himself said [speaking] in the Holy Spirit," etc. (Mark xii. 36). Both here, and in the corresponding passage in Matthew, the Lord attributes David's words in Psalm cx. to the Spirit of God. David himself says in another place, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). So also the Apostle Peter says, "This scripture . . . which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before"; again, "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His holy prophets" (Acts iii. 18, 21), and again, "Lord, Thou art God . . . who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said" (Acts iv. 25). Here the words are ascribed to God by His Spirit, as Peter says in his epistle, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Let us turn now to the words of the Apostle Paul to the Jews in Rome. Paul, by his early training at the feet of Gamaliel as well as by the deeper teaching of the Spirit, must have been well versed in the Old Testament; and the Jews to whom he spoke were also doubtless well acquainted with it. He says, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet to our fathers," etc. (Acts xxviii. 25). This is another testimony, from another apostle, to the fact that it was the Holy Ghost who spoke through the prophet.

The inspired writer of the epistle to the Hebrews bears witness to the same truth, saying, "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice'" (iii. 7); again, referring to Leviticus xvi., "The

Holy Ghost this signifying," etc. Those to whom this epistle was written no doubt fully acknowledged the divine authorship of the Old Testament, so that the way in which the quotations are introduced would be quite natural and suitable in their minds. The same is seen in the account given in 2 Chronicles xxxvi. of the close of the history of the two tribes then in the land, just prior to the captivity: "Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD" (ver. 12, 21, 22).

In Isaiah lix. 21 we read that the Lord said, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth"; again, "I am the LORD thy God . . . I have put My words in thy mouth," with which we may compare the remarkable prophetic utterance of Moses respecting the Lord Jesus, "I will raise them up a prophet . . . and will put My words in his mouth," and the Lord Himself said, "Moses wrote of Me."

Finally, we read in Zechariah vii. 12, "The words which the LORD of hosts hath sent by His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets," etc.

Many more quotations could be given, but enough has been said to show that the sacred writers fully recognised the fact, both in the Old and New Testaments, that the scriptures were given by inspiration of God. Let us hold tenaciously to this, because, in the present day, Satan is making every possible effort to disparage the Bible. Many of the attacks come from professedly Christian men holding high positions in the churches, and there is therefore the greater danger that the faith of even true believers in its reliability and sufficiency should be shaken.

Thank God the Bible is a *revelation from God*, and it stands like a rock against every attack; it will endure for ever when the critics are gone and forgotten. For us, believers, it is the divine foundation for our faith,

the guide for our path, the solace of our hearts in times of trial and difficulty ; and, above all, it is that which reveals the glory of the person of Christ, who is our Life, our Saviour, and our Hope. F. G. B.

Schism and Heresy.

IN 1 Corinthians xi. we have important help toward deciding the difference between these terms as well as the precise nature of each ; “ For first, when ye come together in an assembly, I hear that divisions exist among you, and in some measure I believe [it] ; for there must be even sects among you that the approved may become manifest among you ” (ver. 19).

Schism is a division within the assembly, while they all still abide in the same association as before, even if severed in thought or feeling through fleshly partiality or aversion

Heresy, in its ordinary Scriptural application as here (not its ecclesiastical usage), means a party among the saints, separating from the rest in consequence of a still stronger following of their own will.

A schism within, if unjudged, tends to a sect or party without ; when on the one hand the approved become manifest, who reject these narrow and selfish ways ; and on the other the party-man is self-condemned, as preferring his own peculiar views to the fellowship of all the saints in the truth. (Compare Titus iii. 10, 11). W. K.

The coming of the Lord is the pole-star of the Christian, as well as the climax of all his hopes and expectations.

“The Lord’s Day” and “The Lord’s Supper.”

(*Revelation* i. 10; *1 Corinthians* xi. 20.)

THESE two are bound together in a certain way, because the same word for “Lord’s” is used in both passages, and only there in the New Testament.

The “Lord’s Day” is the day which specially belongs to the Lord; it is the resurrection day, the first day of the week for the Christian. On that day the early disciples met together to break bread in remembrance of His death.

The “Lord’s Supper” is the supper which specially belongs to Him, it is not an ordinary meal as the Corinthians were mistakenly making it. How precious to have both the “day” and the “supper” set apart by Him, in His gracious love and forethought, so that He might speak to the hearts of His people by calling to mind the greatest proof of His love in His death upon the cross!

If our souls are in touch with the Lord Himself, and if we are walking in communion with Him during the six days of the week, then we shall come on the Lord’s day with baskets *full* (*Deut.* xxvi.), to return to Him in worship, out of overflowing hearts, of the precious fruits of His grace, wherewith He has so richly blessed us. This is the true secret of a happy Lord’s day morning meeting, where the Holy Spirit finds the heart in tune and ready to his touch, so that thanksgiving and worship may arise, without effort, to the glory and praise of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The *law* was like the door which shut up “all under sin”; *grace* is the key which opens it.

“I am Jesus”—“I, Jesus.”

THERE is much comfort and help to be derived from even a brief meditation on the two occasions on which the Lord Jesus called Himself by His own personal name, “Jesus.”

The first was on that memorable occasion when Saul of Tarsus was going, in the bitterness of his soul, on his journey to Damascus to persecute the Christians. Just as he drew near the city, and when he probably thought that he would soon be able to accomplish his designs, there shone a light from heaven upon his path, and Saul fell to the earth and heard the words, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” And in reply to the question, “Who art Thou, Lord?” the answer came, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

What a depth of meaning was wrapped up in those words! It was as much as to say, “Saul, Saul, in persecuting My people you are persecuting Me; they are a part of Myself.” And then, that no mistake might possibly be made as to *who* it was that spoke, the Lord calls Himself by that lowly name, “Jesus”—which we do not find Him doing when on earth—“I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

We know that Paul was afterwards the chosen vessel to bring out fully and doctrinally that blessed truth of the union of the members, in one body, to the glorified Head in heaven. Do we go through this world daily in the consciousness of the fact, “I am united by one Spirit to every member of the body of Christ and to the glorified Head in heaven?” What a profound effect it would have upon us if we did.

The other place where the Lord calls Himself by His personal name as man, “Jesus,” is in Revelation xxii. 16. Just at the close of that book, which is a

book of judgment all through, He takes up again the word with which it opens in chapter i. 1, and in that personal and touching way presents Himself to the heart of His church, not only as the rightful inheritor of the royalty which belongs to the house of David, according to Isaiah xi. 10 and 1, but in the peculiar and *heavenly* character in which He stands in relationship to His *church*, as the "bright and morning star."

It is not our purpose to dwell upon this doctrinally; but, at the close of another year, let us ask ourselves, "Am I waiting and watching for the rising of the bright and morning star?" Let the darkness be ever so great, let the world be ever so fast asleep in the arms of Satan, let the professing church be ever so forgetful of the church's proper hopes and calling—nothing changes the brightness of the "bright and morning star."

Be our time here short or long, be the way that lies before us rough or smooth, this blessed and cheering hope is well calculated to sustain and encourage the people of God in the path of faith, till He come.

F. G. B.

"Prince of Peace."—When Christ shall reign, He will be "Prince of Peace" as Son of David, and peace shall be on the earth. Christ must have the pre-eminence in all things, and have every sort of glory, as Son of God, Son of man, Son of David, etc., all things being put under Him, and not merely Israel or the Gentiles. We shall sit with Him on His throne, as now He sits on the Father's throne. *Now* we are seated in heavenly places *in* Him, not *with* Him as yet, on high.

Rest.

(*Matthew xi. 25-30.*)

NEVER did the perfection of the Lord of glory shine with more brilliancy than at the moment of His rejection—" *At that time* Jesus answered and said," etc. (ver. 25).

These words fix our attention on the preceding verses, in which we see that the most privileged cities had rejected Jesus. At that hour of suffering His heart turned in perfect submission to the Father, and in the full consciousness of His relationship with Him, as well as in entire dependence on Him, He *gives thanks*.

None of the councils of God were yet accomplished ; the path of His sufferings and death presented itself in all its solemn reality before Him. Nevertheless, it was the path which the Father had traced out for His beloved Son in order to accomplish His thoughts of love ; who, finding His sustainment in the will of the Father, joyfully accepted what was pleasing to Him.

The Lord's one object here below was the glory of God and the blessing of those whom it was the will of the Father to lead to the knowledge of Him. " All things are delivered unto Me of My Father," etc. (ver. 27). From His rejection and death there was about to accrue a glory much more excellent than that of Messiah of Israel : that of the Son of man, under whose feet *all things* will one day be put, according to the testimony of Psalm viii., " Thou hast put all things under His feet." On the other hand, the most absolute judgment is pronounced on all the wisdom of the flesh, " Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent," etc. Man's wisdom is folly, because it leads him to reject the Lord of glory. So says the

prophet, "The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isa. xxix. 14).

If divine things are hidden from man, it is because he does not desire them when they are offered to him. But, on the contrary, if there is a heart burdened under the weight of its misery, whatever the cause may be—a heart laden with the burden of sin, and who sighs after deliverance—the Lord does not turn away from such an one. He who is clothed with this character is one of the "babes" to whom Jesus is pleased to reveal the Father's name.

The moral state of "a little one" is in absolute contrast with the pride and unbelief of the wise and prudent of this age, whose heart has never been broken by the power of the word. Those to whom the Lord reveals the Father's love have been reached by that word; it has produced in them a consciousness of their powerlessness, an implicit confidence in what God says, as well as a judgment of their own will, and of the pride and pretensions which constitute the moral state of fallen man.

The Son reveals the Father; but His own personal glory, the union in Him of deity and humanity, remains an inscrutable mystery, known only to the Father, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." It is this infinitely great and glorious person who invites us to come to His feet in order there to find *rest*. The sinner who hears His voice finds, in the first place, rest of conscience in hearing His word. He is freed from the heavy burden of his sins, learning by that word that the Saviour has borne the whole weight of them on the cross. It is thus that He gives rest. We must come to *Him*; He is here very near to us, the same as when He trod this defiled world and was

delivered up on the cross. He says still to every weary soul, "Come to Me." He invites us to draw near to Him without fear; His love is unchangeable; He is the Rock; His work is perfect.

To those who have answered to His invitation, and found rest and peace for their troubled consciences, He addresses the second call, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Christ ever walked here below in the yoke of the Father's will. He invites us to follow Him, bearing *His* yoke. For Him, His soul's rest, in the path of suffering, was found in absolute submission to the Father's will, and in walking in the path marked out for Him. The Father saw well that His Son should meet with despisal, rejection, and death in the path of obedience which led Him to the glory. The perfect man accepted, with joy, what the Father had decreed, and invites us to walk in the same yoke as He did, It is in this path that we find rest—His rest—in sweet intimacy with Him. Do we know this rest in our days of trouble, agitation, and ruin?

J. B.

(*From the French.*)

A Morning Without Clouds.

(2 Samuel xxiii. 4.)

DAVID'S career had been a stormy one, more or less, from his youth, at which time he had to meet with a lion, as well as with a bear, while keeping his father's sheep. But that peaceful occupation favoured his becoming an adept in the use of the sling, which had distinguished the Benjamites four hundred years previously.

At that time there was, indeed, no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes, as we are told in the last verse of the book of Judges. Those left-handed Benjamites could "sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not miss" (Judges xx. 16). That distinction would, however, have been but of small value in David's case had it not been accompanied with the courage needed to face such foes as fell to his lot, with no one to assist or defend him. The giant Goliath could not daunt him, though all the Israelites fled at his approach (1 Sam. xvii. 24).

His subsequent reign of forty years had been so successful from this point of view, that he was enabled to leave to his son, Solomon, a territory far larger than that which King Saul, his predecessor, had known, to say nothing of his clever choice of "Mount Zion" as its centre. The like of that fortress was scarcely to be found elsewhere; and its suitability, both in character and its central position in the land, was unequalled. Saul had been content with a pomegranate tree "in the uttermost part of Gibeah," in the land of Benjamin; but no such place as that could satisfy David's warlike instinct. The words "uttermost part" seem to indicate that it was concealed from probable attack.

Towards the end of his reign, having made great preparations for the temple which his son, Solomon, was to build, it was reserved to him to furnish the minutest details of its construction, as well as for the vessels and implements necessary for divine service therein, including the standing cherubim with outstretched wings, under which the ark of God was to be finally placed (see 1 Chron. xxviii. 11-19). His closing word to Solomon sums it all up: "All this the LORD made me understand in writing, *by His hand upon me*, even all the work of the pattern." But David w a

never to see it with his eyes. The construction took place after his death.

This is all the more interesting, as giving point and character to his "last words." According to our modern phraseology, David was the architect, and Solomon the building contractor; but there is no hint of any of these things in his "last words." His thoughts were elsewhere, under the guidance of the Spirit of the LORD. In reviewing earthly things, he found failure everywhere; his house was not what it ought to have been with God; but his eyes and his heart rested on that which was then unseen, namely, the revelation specially made to him by the Spirit of God, of a just and perfect RULER to come, such indeed as was never to be found in *his* house, or in that of his descendants.

The One to come was to be "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth—a morning *without clouds*" of any kind. And he adds another feature, that of "clear shining *after* rain."

This is of the deepest interest, and we need hardly say that it can only be fulfilled at the Lord's personal coming. But there is to be a blessed preparation for it in the rain which fertilises the parched earth. Were there more faith, more definite counting upon God's mercy; in spite of human failure, might we not count upon showers of blessing *before* "the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings?" (Mal. iv. 2).

Does not all this lead us to self-judgment in respect of our own ways? If there were a truer estimate of our moral condition, coupled with that enlargement of thought, which takes in, with true heartfelt care for the Lord's interests, His *whole* church on earth and His glory, which should be uppermost in our minds, who shall say in what gracious measure He would meet and answer it? His thoughts are infinitely beyond ours, and if we

recall His unfailing care of His ancient people in the wilderness, we should find enough to lead us to expect a large measure of blessing at the present time. The cloud never left the people when there, in order to shield them from the heat (Isa. iv. 6, xxv. 4, xlix. 10). And the prophet adds that Jehovah will comfort His people.

God's ancient people of Israel knew nothing of the "night" which culminated morally in the cross of Christ, when God "hid His face from Him." But they are called to look forward to the "morning without clouds," of which "the Rock of Israel" spoke to David

And that is our hope also. How it turns our thoughts aside from earthly hopes and expectations, to fix them upon that which is eternal, even though unseen! (2 Cor. iv. 18).

But the rising of the Sun of righteousness, which closes the canon of Old Testament scripture, opens up to us a vista of glory which far exceeds the contrast between day and night. The words, "without clouds," remind us that all hindrances to the enjoyment of it will be for ever removed; whilst the effect of its brightness leads us into far deeper thoughts of what it is in itself, as well as its universal effect upon the world dependent upon its shining.

The portion of the church is wholly heavenly; but that does not exclude interest in earthly things in the age to come. Consequently, we read in Revelation xxi., that the twelve *foundations* of the heavenly city, "the holy Jerusalem," bear "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb"; whereas "the names written on the twelve gates" are those of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The foundation is thus heavenly, whereas the privilege of enjoying it does not exclude the earthly people.

All this is precious for our souls, and may the Lord lead us to enjoy it more while waiting and watching for the "morning without clouds."

W. J. L.

"This Same Jesus."

"NO change Jehovah knows": Jesus is Jehovah, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Saviour of His people from their sins. "I, even I, am the LORD, and beside Me there is no Saviour," says the prophet: "Neither is there salvation in any other," says the apostle.

Every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has gained everlasting blessing by His first coming. Through His death and resurrection, all who rest on His finished work have a sure foundation, as secure and stable as the throne of God. They have an eternal salvation, for Jesus, their Saviour, lives to die no more. He is now at the Father's right hand, exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Christ died, in love, upon the cross, accomplishing there the mighty work of redemption, whereby God has been glorified and every demand of His throne fully and eternally met. That work "stands unchanged"; it is everlastingly perfect; its efficacy, its results, its value are the same eternally: immutable as the One who died there—it knows no change.

The person of the Lord Jesus, His work, His word, His name, form an impregnable place of safety for all who possess Him as the Captain of their salvation. He has never lost a battle or a man. His worth, His work, and His word are for ever unchanging and unchangeable, forming a three-fold cord which, like the scripture, "cannot be broken." This "thrice blessed ground,

where life and where joy and true comfort abound," cannot be shaken; it is unmovable. It stands as the Rock of Ages, where the feeblest and youngest, as well as the oldest and strongest believer finds a solid resting place for time and eternity, though all around be trembling and tottering. As the inspired word says, "But Thou remainest"; "Thou art the same"; "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

"This same Jesus" is coming again; the very One who died and rose and ascended to heaven. The One who ever lives to make intercession for His people, sustaining them in their wilderness journey; and able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him. In His love to His own He is coming to take them to Himself, so that they may be with Him and like Him in the Father's house for ever.

"Jesus is coming! His saints to release,
Coming to give this warring earth peace;
Sinning and sighing and sorrow shall cease—
Jesus is coming again."

U. G.

Other Men's Consciences.

DO we not sometimes forget that we are responsible, not only to keep a good conscience ourselves, but to have respect to the consciences of others?

In 1 Corinthians x. 29 the apostle says, "But conscience, I mean, not thine own but that of the other." It was a case of eating meats offered to an idol; and another Christian, who had a conscience about it said, "This is offered to an idol." In such a case one was not to eat of it. We ought to respect the conscientious scruples of a saint, however weak, though one who had knowledge might himself be quite free to partake, seeing that an idol was

nothing. We should not wound the weak conscience of others.

The same principle is found in Romans xiv., where it is a question of eating certain meats and observing days, probably amongst those who were Jews. As to this, the apostle says, "For if on account of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer according to love. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (ver. 15).

There can be no doubt that we have sadly failed in making our own cast-iron rules (written or unwritten), and expecting every one to conform to these. In many cases we have not walked "according to love," nor have we made sufficient allowance for our brethren who do not see as we do. Let us remember the solemn word, "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died" (1 Cor. viii. 11).

Alas, how many a weak one has been turned out of the way, instead of being considered in a spirit of Christian love and grace and forbearance; and this, not only in the matter of meats, etc., but in many other ways also.

F. G. B.

"Thy Word."

"THE sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Ps. cxix. 160, R.V.). Jehovah's word, in its completeness as well as in every detail, *is truth*. What is here predicated of the written word might also truly be said of the living Word, Christ Himself. He was "the truth," and all His ways and acts were characterised by truth. In the prayer in John xvii. the Lord says, concerning the Father's word, "Thy

word is truth." It was that divine testimony, given of the Father, to which He bore witness in the world.

Again, every one of Jehovah's judgments endure for ever ; and heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Jesus shall never pass away. He is, in Himself, the eternal One who could say, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. xxii. 13).

This world is full of lies and deceit, and religious lies are the worst of all. Satan is the father of lies, and the prince and god of this world. This is why his most deadly and unceasing efforts are made to shake men's faith in the scriptures of truth ; but this is the very reason why we should be all the more earnest to uphold God's word, in its completeness, to the very end.

Atonement.

BEHOLD the Saviour who, in love,
Died on th' accursèd tree ;
Come from the glory, from above,
To suffer all for thee.

Hear how He groans, in that dark hour,
Beneath the awful load
Of sin and death and Satan's power,
Bearing the wrath of God.

'Tis done ! the precious ransom's paid—
In solemn voice He cries ;
And then He bows His sacred head
Beneath the stroke, and dies.

Behold Him break death's iron chain,
And now in glory shine :
O Lamb of God ! was ever pain,
Was ever love like Thine ?