

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

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Our Resources.

A Message for the New Year.

WE are just entering another year and, in view of our need of spiritual strength for the way and the character of the world through which we are passing, it is well we should look at the resources we have to carry us through.

Israel of old had to travel many a weary journey through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, scorpions, drought and want of food; where, too, God even "suffered them to hunger"—and what was it all for? It was that God might humble them, prove them, teach them the lesson of complete dependence upon Himself, and do them good in their latter end (Deut. viii.).

But He *did* supply their need. He gave them the manna from above, He poured it down from heaven around the camp every morning very early, and they were to go out and gather it before the sun of that day's trial waxed hot. Day after day, month after month, year after year, God supplied their need, in spite of all their murmurings: for the manna never ceased all those forty years until they reached a land inhabited, even the borders of Canaan.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven," said the Lord Jesus. He is not only the giver of life, as Son of God (John v.); but, as Son of man, the food, spiritually, of the life He gives (John vi.). How blessed and sustaining to the soul to feed upon Him; to dwell upon all that He was in His path of perfect obedience to the Father's will and dependence upon Him, to see the outflow of perfect grace and love as He passed through this evil scene where everything was opposed to Him. It is, indeed, our privilege to learn of Him, to enjoy communion with Him, to contemplate all that He

was here below, and thus to realise the resources we have on our journey through the wilderness.

But there is yet another truth which we may link up with this. The Christian may consider himself, not only as a pilgrim passing through the wilderness, but as already dead and risen with Christ, a partaker of His resurrection-life (Col. iii.). The true centre and sphere of his heart's affections is *above*. He can look up by faith and see all the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, who is his object and his life (2 Cor. iii. 18). And *from heaven* he awaits that Saviour who is about to change this body of humiliation and give it a fashion like His own (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

When Israel crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan, they fed upon the old corn of the land. It was the store corn, that which grew in the land. It typified Christ—but Christ glorified above, the food, spiritually, of the new man, the sustaining portion of the new and heavenly life which we have in Him.

Is this really our portion even now? It is: and may we be so detached from the world and its allurements that we may rise to a fuller and a better appreciation of this "old corn of the land," the spiritual food suited to a heavenly country, which we have in a heavenly Christ! No wonder that the apostle prayed that the saints should walk worthy of the Lord and respond to such infinite love and grace.

Now these are great practical truths. Not mere ideas which we can speculate about, something to please the intellect, but *truths* which should form and characterise our life and walk in this world. It is only by entering into them by faith, in communion with the Lord, that they become really our own, our enjoyed portion from day to day.

Should the Lord spare us during the coming year, and should He tarry, may we, too, prove what inexhaustible resources we have in Him.

Testimony of the Heavens.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the expanse showeth the work of His hands. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech and there are no words, yet their voice is heard.”—Ps. xix. 1-3. (New trans.)

THE silent heavens testify to God as Creator. It is a scene far removed from man and his corrupt state. The constellations have not only been created by God, but they are sustained in the place He has designed for them. The epistle to the Romans makes it clear that, since the knowledge of God's eternal power and Godhead is, and has been, manifested in what He has created, man is without excuse. Although having once had the knowledge of God, he has not glorified Him as God (Rom. i. 19, 20, 21).

When we consider the wonderful power of the Creator and gaze upon the wonders of His creation, especially as shown in the heavens, we are impressed with the smallness and inferiority of our own surroundings as compared with the vastness of infinite space.

Doctor Shapley, of Harvard University, who was attached to the Mount Wilson Observatory, near Pasadena, California, where the discovery of the unsuspected size of the star Betelgeuse was made, now announces that there are stars still larger than that one. Antares, for example. He says:—“The mere statement of the dimensions of these monster suns, as expressed in millions and millions of miles, means nothing to us. Our minds are unable to realise the significance of the figures. The sums mentioned are beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Here is one way in which the size of Betelgeuse may be grasped after a fashion:—Suppose a boy of six years of age, standing on its equator, should fire a rifle horizontally: suppose the bullet to continue its flight at the same velocity, and at the same height from the surface. By the

time it had encircled that vast sphere . . . the boy would have grown to be a man of seventy-five years."

Granted, then, that these wonderful constellations are far beyond our ken; yet there *are* wonders that we are favoured, through grace and by faith, to enter into. These are indeed greater and more sublime than anything in the heavens. There is, for instance, that great wonder presented to us in the fact that God has been revealed in the Person of His beloved Son. The eternal Word, who dwelt ever in the bosom of the Father—in the closest and most intimate place of nearness to Him—"became flesh" and dwelt among us.

And yet more: He, the eternal One, died a death of shame and reproach upon the cross. Small as this world is, it has been the theatre of the most momentous transactions which ever took place, even in eternity itself. Perhaps we might even say that "It is finished" (John xix. 30) is more wonderful than "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. xxxiii. 9). Truly the blessed, holy, Son of God, not only "became flesh," but He "became dead" and is alive for evermore.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is another great wonder which the Spirit of God brings before us in Scripture. He was declared to be Son of God with power by resurrection of the dead (Rom. i. 4); and having laid down His life as a voluntary act and in obedience to the Father's will (John x. 18), He came forth from the tomb in the power of resurrection-life as the victor over death and the grave.

When the women came to the sepulchre to look for Him, they found the stone already rolled away. And may I here add a thought which comes to my mind: it was not in order to let Him out that the stone was rolled away, but to let them in. Death, with all its power, could not detain or retain the Prince of Life.

The created universe gives us, indeed, a wonderful idea of the glory and power of God; but the glories connected with the Person of Christ and His atoning work, to which I have referred; whereby the great *moral* question of sin was settled finally and for ever, open out to us an infinitely wider view of the divine glory and power than ever was witnessed in creation. May we, as we meditate upon it, understand and appreciate it better.

J. P. (*Montreal*).

God's Centre of Worship.

Psalm cxxii.

THE manifestation of God's nature and claims, and that which suited Him, was different in the Old Testament from their manifestation in the New, but the same principles of righteousness and holiness pervade both. A beautiful exemplification of this is seen in Psalm cxxii. Let us look a little at some of the verses. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." In reading this, we naturally think of the temple, forgetting that in David's time the house of the Lord was only a simple tent pitched for the ark at the very time that the tabernacle, with all its vessels and service, was elsewhere, and Solomon's glorious temple had not yet been commenced. How poor such a house would appear to the heathen when compared with their beautiful temples and gorgeous services. But faith knows that where the Lord is to be found, there is His house, and it can rejoice at the invitation to go thither.

Where is the house of the Lord God in our time? Where two or three are gathered to His precious name. Not in the sounding aisles or under the gilded dome of lofty cathedrals, but where a few "living stones" (and all true believers are living stones) are gathered to His name on the ground of His word, according to the truth. False teachers

are now proclaiming that not all believers are living stones, but only a select few; also that simple believers are not necessarily priests, but only those more advanced. The Lord be praised that John does not say in Revelation i. 6, made "some of us" kings and priests unto God and His Father, but made "us"; thus all, without a distinction, are both living stones and, by right, priests.

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." Why did Jerusalem need gates? The gates and walls round a fortress are very irksome, when one is in a hurry to enter a city. Many a detour of half-an-hour or more one may have to make in order to reach a house within a stone's throw. Gates are meant to keep enemies out, but also to let friends in; and a city surrounded by enemies within short distances, like Jerusalem was, needed gates and walls. Many Christians are now impatient at the restrictions which Scripture imposes on the assemblies of God, as to receiving into their fellowship; but these restrictions are never meant to keep out those who love the truth, who are therefore friends and not enemies.

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Here you have no breach through which an enemy could enter. O how sad that Christians are often so little compacted together, even when meeting one another weekly for worship or service. Fellowship is a divine thing, and was introduced from the first day of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the Church of God. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." These two things preceded and gave character to the breaking of bread, and should always precede it. If we go to the breaking of bread without true and hearty fellowship with our brethren and sisters, we profess to give outward expression to a fellowship which does not really exist. I fear we have too little time for the Lord and for the saints of God, and give the blessed Lord too little opportunity to

prove to us that the words we say of Him are true, "Make thou My service thy delight, thy wants shall be My care." Those houses and families that are often visited by God's children receive a special blessing. May the Lord, in this day of distance and coldness, compact us closer together.

"Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." God always has His own centre for us, and faith acknowledges that centre and is obedient, even if that centre is as unimposing and simple outwardly as David's tent for the ark. Satan's effort is to separate and scatter the saints of God, and he still has his Jeroboams, as in Israel's day, to provide alternative places of worship, saying: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." In such a day of confusion it is indeed difficult to know the right centre and the right path to follow, but "the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." And we can still hope that some will find it like those in 2 Chron. xxx. 11, who "humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." O what joy to be able to say: "Lord, through Thy grace I believe that I am just there, where I feel I ought to be, if Thou shouldst come to-day"!

"For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." Wherever God dwells there will be concern to exercise godly discipline and judgment of what is evil. Whenever evil practice or evil doctrines intrude among God's people, simple and sincere Christians feel it. Whenever a strange voice brings what professes to be "new light," which claims to be blessed new truth, honest Christians feel uncomfortable and would flee from it; but the enemy uses all his powers of persuasion to prove to them that the strange voice is a good one, and that they are silly frightened sheep who are dull of hearing. If we listen to the enemy's explanations we are lost. But

alas! how true it is that looseness of doctrine often prevails, because looseness of walk has not been judged.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.” It is well for each one of us to know his own sphere of responsibility while having at the same time the welfare of the whole Church of God in view. I am often surprised to see how some take such an interest in the work of Christians at a distance, where they have no opportunity of helping, but you do not see them bringing any strangers to the Gospel meetings in the very place where their own responsibility lies. We can serve the whole church best by working diligently on our own allotment, while rejoicing that others are growing even better fruits than we are favoured with ourselves.

May our thoughts ever be, as in the last verse of our Psalm: “Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good”; our love to God and to His church overflowing in active service for the good of others.

T. W. B.

Friends of David—I.

2 Samuel xv.

THE life of David, varied and eventful as it is, is especially interesting to us on account of the way in which he so evidently prefigures our Lord Jesus Christ. At times his history helps us as believers, encouraging us to wait upon God and obey His word; but it also warns us of the sad consequences of departure from the path of faith. Of this latter we have a marked illustration when he feigned himself mad in order that he might find shelter by casting himself upon a worldly power. We are never so mean in the eyes of others as when we get out of communion with God and join fellowship with the world, adopting its methods of gaining the end we have in view.

(Continued on page 9)

But as a type of Christ, David is often to be seen by the eye of faith, which can discern Him in those pages of Holy Writ which testify of Him as set forth, typically, in the lives of His servants. And when the Holy Spirit enables us to see Him thus, even in the historical books, we can but pity those who read these books only to criticise their contents. Is it not much better to allow the Word to criticise us, and to say with the psalmist, "Order my steps in Thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps. cxix. 133)?

David, at one time in his history, was called to behold his throne occupied by a usurper, his son Absalom. And here I may remark that, though the cause of David's trouble was so widely different from that of the Lord, there is a certain analogy in the position in which He, the true king, was found, as the despised and rejected One. But if the world did not know Him and would not have Him, God the Father knew and appreciated all that He was and set Him at His own right hand in the highest place of dignity and honour, as we sometimes sing,

"He fills the throne—the throne above,

He fills it without wrong;

The object of His Father's love.

Theme of the ransomed's song."

We, believers, look up by faith and see Him there even now, and we say from the depth of our souls, "Thou art worthy!" But it is blessed to know that this is not enough for God, for Jesus will yet be owned as universal Lord even on earth. And so we sing again,

"Royal robes shall soon invest Thee.

Royal splendours crown Thy brow."

But David had men who were loyal to him even whilst the usurper was still on the throne. We can learn a profitable lesson for ourselves as to how our Lord would have our lives formed during His absence, in considering how some of these men acted. And so our song continues,

“Christ of God, our souls confess Thee
 King and Sovereign even now!
 Thee we reverence, Thee obey—
 Own Thee Lord and Christ alway.”

When David had to flee from Absalom he was accompanied by many whose hearts were proof against the flatteries of his subtle and rebellious son, and who assured him at the outset that they were “ready to do whatever their lord the king shall appoint.” This was the crucial point. “Ready”! yes “ready”—how fine their attitude!—ready—not to choose for themselves but to do *his* bidding, whatsoever that might be.

It has been said of those obedient servants, the angels,—that if one were sent to rule a kingdom and another to sweep a crossing, they would each do their appointed work, the one as well as the other. Readiness for service lies at the foundation of all the teaching of this interesting chapter. Three men are brought before us denoting three things which should find an answer in the life of everyone to whom great David’s greater Son has endeared Himself. Let us consider them briefly.

First, Ittai, whose name means “with the Lord.” He was one who had been attracted by David and had become attached to him when the latter was in Gath. He had seen his exploits and his admiration and affection had been won. And now, when given an opportunity to return to his place, he beautifully confesses his allegiance to David, saying, “As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, even there also will thy servant be.” And truly the words “my lord” were no mere phrase with Ittai, but he sincerely owned David’s lordship over him. This reminds us of the words of Paul, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

The lesson we may learn here is, attachment and devotedness to Christ; personal fidelity and nearness to Him. How we should covet this—and surely the Lord desires and values it beyond all else. May His excellencies be made so real to us as to produce it. Ittai was a stranger and an exile because of David; we are not of the world because Christ was not, and He is our treasure, the One who has captivated our hearts; this is the true motive:

“ 'Tis the treasure we've found in His love
That has made us now pilgrims below ”

Ere closing our consideration of this aspect of christian life, it is well to note that we learn from Revelation iii. that the church, as its history draws to a close, will have its Ittais, as seen in the Philadelphians; and the men of Israel whose hearts were not proof against seduction and flattery will have their counterpart in the Laodiceans. May we have the grace to be loyal to Christ and a joy to Him while He waits in patience for His throne; when, as His joint-heirs, we too shall reign with Him.

P. W.

The Day of Atonement—I.

Leviticus xvi.

THIS is a most important chapter, not only because of the truths it contains, but because it is very helpful towards a right understanding of many passages both in the Old and the New Testaments. There are three main truths set forth in it. (1) The blood on the mercy seat as that which met God's holy requirements, signifying propitiation; (2) The sins confessed over the scapegoat, signifying Christ as our substitute; and (3) The reconciliation of all things.

And first let us say a word as to the high priest's dress. He was not to wear the special high priestly

garment with its gold, precious stones, etc., but the simple linen garments. This was Jehovah's command and it had its meaning. The linen garments spoke of Christ's perfect and personal purity and righteousness rather than of His high priestly position. For Christ's work as our High Priest began, properly speaking, when He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high *after* He had made purification of sins. He entered the holiest of all, that is heaven itself, *having* first obtained eternal redemption (Heb. ix. 12), and there His intercession is carried on for His people here.

Aaron was forbidden to go at all times into the holy place within the vail. Only once in the year, on the great Day of Atonement, was he permitted to enter there. He was to take a bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, for himself and his house. And for the children of Israel he was to take two goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

Leaving aside for a moment the bullock for Aaron and his house let us briefly consider the two goats. They represent two aspects of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ—for it required the two to complete the figure. They were to be set "before the Lord" and Aaron was to cast lots upon them—one for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. The high priest was then to kill the one on which the Lord's lot fell and was to pass within the vail with a censer full of burning coals from off the altar and his hands full of sweet incense, and sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat seven times.

Here everything prefigured Christ. The incense typified the fragrant grace of His presence, which indeed God alone could appreciate in its fulness. And the very strength of the trial to which it was subjected, of which the coals of fire remind us, only made the fragrance of the incense arise all the more before God. The blood was for atonement—a

word often misunderstood and under-estimated even by true Christians. Atonement was that which was absolutely necessary and required by the very fact of God's holiness, justice and righteousness, which had to be vindicated and satisfied as regards the question of sin.

Viewing then the work of the cross as that which has fully met all God's requirements—this aspect of it is what we might call the more important part, if indeed any part can be said to be less important in a work where everything was absolutely necessary. Similarly, when considering the offerings, we saw that the burnt offering—that is that aspect of the death of Christ in which God was perfectly glorified—came first; the sin offering, which represented God's provision for sins committed, came last. Here the goat for the Lord's lot is first in the divine order; it is what we may call the Godward aspect of the work of Christ.

We may fittingly recall here the words of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus was *God's* Lamb, the Lord's lot. Through the efficiency of His blood, presented before God, a full and complete atonement has been made:—"through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God." Every attribute of God's holy nature has been satisfied, yea even glorified, by that wonderful work accomplished once for all upon the cross. And as God's holiness and justice was infinite, so the One who alone could satisfy it must be infinite also.

Who could gauge the depth of those sufferings which caused the holy Son of God to say the solemn words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Truly they were beyond all human comprehension; yet, cost what it might, He obeyed, even to death. The fragrance of that perfect offering of Himself to God filled the holy place when Jesus said "It is finished," and bowed His head in death upon the cross.

We may find in the gospels many expressions conveying to us the Lord's own estimate of this work and its consequences. Take John xiii. 31, for example, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." Here the Lord, looking out upon the vast extent of the work He was about to accomplish, and viewing it in its Godward aspect, speaks of it as that in which God has been glorified, yea so glorified that, in righteousness, He would glorify the One who accomplished it, and that "straightway," that is, without waiting for the manifested glory of the kingdom.

Let us be careful also to bear in mind that these are great *realities*; *truths* and *facts* which must bring the most profound peace to the soul which rests upon them in faith, and which must likewise draw forth from the believer worship and thanksgiving to the Saviour who has done it all.

Next month we hope to consider briefly the second part of the great Day of Atonement.

F. G. B.

"A Father."

"I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."— 2 Cor. vi. 18.

THIS verse beautifully connects together three titles of God. To Abraham He revealed Himself as "God Almighty" (El-Shaddai), the God who could protect and sustain the pilgrims in the land of promise. To Moses He made Himself known as "Jehovah," the ever-existing One in special relationship to Israel, to be known and trusted as such. His millennial title, not mentioned in our verse, is "Most High."

But what is His relationship to the Christian? It is that of "Father"; this was never made known

till the *Son* came down here. The Lord fully declared it first after His resurrection, through the lips of Mary, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." In His prayer He commits those whom His Father had given to Him, to the keeping of a "Holy Father"; and He still continues to declare the Father's name to us even now, by His word and His Spirit, who is the "Spirit of adoption" or sonship (John xvii. 11 and 26).

How precious then is this relationship of Father! It speaks with a particular sweetness and intimacy to the soul of the believer, telling of grace, of His care, of the intimate and near place of a child.

The connection of our passage shows that, in coming out from the world and being separate from its evil, thus answering morally to the holy nature of God Himself, the believer now knows Him who had been all that His titles in the old dispensation implied to His saints then, in the new and still more blessed relationship of "Father."

There is in this passage also, as one has truly said, an instance of "a divine unity of mind in Scripture, which all the petty cavils of essayists cannot shake." And further, "That one verse embraces all the divine relations of God, and the dispensational connections of man with Him. It takes them all up to introduce them; though as isolated relationships quite different from one another in their abstract power, into that one new perfect one (Father) which has been revealed as the perfection of grace through Christ.

"But He hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes. The moral need of the soul, the wants of a new nature—it is by these we get to understand Scripture, not by our intellectual powers."

My Object.

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord I press towards the mark."—Phil. iii. 8, 14.

CENTRE of the glory bright,
In that place of cloudless light;
On the Father's throne above,
Object of the Father's love.

Hail!—exalted Saviour Thou,
Treasure of my heart e'en now;
Every longing satisfied,
Grace on grace in Thee I find.

Thou hast made my soul to burn,
Waiting here for Thy return:
That Thy promise Thou fulfil,
This my one deep longing still.

Onward, upward, still I press,
Thou my life, my righteousness;
Till—and O what grace is Thine!—
In Thine image I shall shine.

* * *

The Jordan Crossed.

ONE loves to stand on the bank of that river—already crossed—and to realise, while studying what Jesus was, the work and the wonders of Him who went down into it *alone* until all was accomplished. . . . Oh, that Christians—each one in the assembly—knew how to seat himself there, and there meditate on Jesus gone down into death alone, and death when it overflowed all its banks, bearing its sting and the power of divine judgment with it! . . . Thus in peace, in fellowship with Him, and with ineffable feelings of thankfulness, we return to the death of the Lamb of God: we contemplate it, we feed upon it. Our heavenly happiness and intelligence only increase our sense of its preciousness.

J. N. D.

Reading the Scriptures.

HOW remarkable are the reasons given in the Scriptures that we should read them!

(1) We find an epistle like the Corinthians including in its address *all* Christians, and, like God's Word in general, definitely embracing *us* as well as those to whom it was written. Observe the address: "Unto . . . all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's" (1 Cor. i. 2.). The message, therefore, which is contained in the whole epistle must be important for us in God's sight. This, no doubt, is why he makes the very strong claim advanced for the *written* testimony in chapter xiv: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." All was inspired of God.

(2) In the second epistle to Timothy the man of God is addressed—and every believer should aim at being a "man of God"—and the apostle adds that "*all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (chap. iii. 16, 17). Thus the Christian who reads and meditates upon *all* the Scriptures is the only one who is fully equipped; and his life and conduct will be formed by them.

(3) There is a most striking and unusual feature presented to us in the experiences of Israel as a nation and in God's ways with them. For, not only were these experiences and ways an example to us, but they took place in and with that nation in those far-off Old Testament times, in a way that had in view the needs and wants of our times also.

Thus we read: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (or types): and they are written for *our* admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (or ages) are come." Of no other nation is it recorded that the vicissitudes through which it passed, as well as its history, were divinely ordained so as to have such far-reaching consequences. And how gracious and considerate on God's part, that He had *us* (believers) in view, in thus providing material suited for our schooling so many centuries before we were born!

(4) Then, as to what are termed the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole—we find that God, in the New Testament, not only stamps them with His approval; but that these were written of old with the purpose in view of meeting our special and peculiar needs in this day. So we read: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4).

In those ancient times God foresaw what *we* would need in our day, and He caused His Word (that is the Old Testament) to be so written, that, in reading it, we might have patience (or endurance) in our difficulties, and enjoy "the encouragement of the Scriptures." Thus we can pursue our way with "hope" filling our hearts.

In all this we may learn, from God's gracious forethought and provision, that He sets the greatest value on our lives and our walk as Christians. And how imperative it is that we should read and meditate upon His Word so that our souls should be fed and nourished by it. It is as we do so, and only thus, that we shall be thoroughly furnished rightly admonished, and fully equipped to meet every difficulty of the way and every assault of the enemy, whether from within or from without.

W. M. R.

Jabez—or Turning to God.

“And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, because I bore him with pain. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldst richly bless me, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and Thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God brought about what he had requested.”—1 Chron. iv. 9-10. (New trans.)

IT is very noticeable that where there is faith and a *turning to God* He blesses His people individually. The Lord enlarged the borders of Jabez and kept him from evil so that he was not grieved. No outward foe molested him, for the hand of Jehovah was with him.

What an encouragement it is to the believer in Christ also, that on all occasions and under all circumstances, when the enemy assails or trials perplex, he has a resource in a faithful and forbearing God. Even when, as unregenerate, we turned to God at the first—like the Thessalonians of old who turned to Him from idols to wait for His Son from heaven and were brought into His service—He conferred on us a similar blessing. The reason why David was a man after God’s own heart was that he turned to God in his difficulties (and even in his sins) and never went aside after false gods. He entered into and responded to the thoughts of God in a most remarkable way. To him God was a God of blessing and grace.

In all our failures and shortcomings it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance and gives the desire to turn to Him. In virtue of the work of Christ on the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit we have access into the presence of God and draw near to His throne of grace, in order to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. iv. 16).

God Himself is the objective, whether in Judaism or Christianity, and His mind and will for His people is expressed in His Word.

The apostle Paul, when bidding farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus, commended them to God and to the word of His grace. How important it is, then, for the believer, to value the precious Word of God: not only to read it, but to study it and to meditate upon it prayerfully. We cannot rightly hurry over the Scriptures as we would over a newspaper or a secular book. To grasp the truth of God's Word and make our own of it we need the help of the Holy Spirit, who is able to open it up to us and to open our understanding so that we may comprehend its truths. For this, we need also the humble and dependent spirit of the babe. And let us remember that the whole Scripture revolves round the blessed Person of Christ as its centre.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews—believers who were not yet completely out of Judaism—for the purpose of entirely breaking the link with it before Jerusalem was taken, recalls their thoughts to God Himself. The One who spoke in times past to their forefathers by the prophets, was now speaking in His Son, and He presents Him as Heir of all things and Creator of the worlds; unfolding to them thus the glory of Christ's Person. In closing the writer prays that the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the power of the blood of the eternal covenant, would perfect them in every good work to do His will, doing in them what was pleasing before Him through Jesus Christ—and He adds, "To whom be glory for the ages of ages, Amen" (Heb. xiii. 20, 21. New trans.).

Jabez, the subject of our paper, asked great things from God, and his faith enabled him to draw upon the resources of God, who did not disappoint him. Our faith in God should never falter, and we are told that "if we ask anything according to His will, he heareth us; and if we know that He

hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him'' (1 John v. 14, 15).

We are not told that Jabez had his request granted at once; it may be that his faith had to be tested. And, dear reader, so it may be with us also. We too may need to be tested as to the reality of our faith and patience. May we in our whole path here, have the attitude of *turning to God* in every circumstance and at all times.

J. P. (*Montreal*).

The Scope of the Gospel.

LET us look a little at the scope of the Gospel. When we speak of the Gospel we think of all that the "glad tidings" makes known to us concerning God's wonderful purposes of blessing through Christ. It tells us of what God makes good to the believer in Christ and through His blessed work of redemption accomplished on the cross.

We will consider it briefly from four points of view:—(1) As revealed in the Scriptures; in which it is found either in prophecy, types, shadows, or direct teaching, from Genesis to Revelation. (2) Its scope as regards the far-reaching results of redemption. (3) The scope of its proclamation. (4) Its scope as to sanctification.

The Gospel opens out for us God's purposes in redemption; ~~(3) The scope of its proclamation.~~ to the fact that many of God's children are satisfied with a very shallow knowledge of it. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians xv. something of the Gospel which he preached, and which he received, of which the Scriptures bore testimony. It was based on the death and resurrection of Christ, as to which latter there was the most complete and undoubted testimony.

The Lord Himself, when risen from the dead, bore witness to the same (Luke xxiv. 44-49). In the first of these two passages, the one quoted from Corinthians, we find the words twice repeated, "according to the Scriptures"; and in the second we find "all the Scriptures," "from Moses and all the prophets." This should be a great comfort and encouragement to God's people in a day when Satan is putting forth so much energy to shake the foundations of our faith in the inspiration and authority of Scripture. The Gospel is borne witness to in all the Scriptures because they all point to Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world (John i. 29).

With this we might connect Genesis iii. 15, and Revelation i. 5. We may fill in many things set forth in varied types and ways between these Scriptures, which bring out the blessed truths of the Gospel of God's grace through a crucified and risen Saviour.

And now as to our second point—the scope of the Gospel in its results in redemption—we find in 1 Corinthians i. 30, that Christ Jesus is made unto us, of God, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Here there is nothing of man and his pretensions; Christ is everything, and the redemption which we have in Him carries us on till "mortality is swallowed up of life" and every trace of sin and its effects will be for ever put away.

The question we have to ask ourselves is, To what extent do we appropriate these blessed truths for our own souls so as to enter into and derive blessing from a full sense of their meaning?

So also we might refer to what the apostle says in Romans viii. 28-30, predestinated, called, justified, glorified. Let us notice the order of the words and remember that the sequence is *God's* and cannot be broken. The Gospel makes all this good to me; not according to my poor intelligence

about it, but because of the fulness of His grace shown in redemption. My *enjoyment* of it, however, does depend on my walking in communion with God, and, by the Holy Spirit, my being enabled to grasp the truth with the heart and intelligence, not merely as a theory.

And thirdly, as to the scope of the Gospel in reference to its proclamation, we may turn to Romans i. 16. No wonder Paul was not ashamed of it, seeing that it was God's power unto salvation, *world-wide*—Jew or Greek, it made no difference. Yes: it is God's power unto salvation to *every one* that believeth. Coming, as it does, from the very heart of God Himself, it knows no limit, unless indeed the limit that is placed to it by the unbelief of men. Has the reader responded to God's grace?

Finally, we have the Gospel in its connection with sanctification. For this we may turn to Titus ii. 11-15. Christ "gave Himself for us," in order to "purify unto Himself" a people zealous of good works. What more could He give than "Himself"? And it shuts out from our view many things that Christendom makes much of, such as traditions, rituals, religious formalities, etc.; giving us in place of these a real living Person, Christ Himself—our life, our righteousness, and the sanctifying object for our hearts.

Let us, then, not stop short of the scope of the Gospel. It originated in the thoughts and love of God Himself; and He will never rest satisfied till the *full* results of redemption are seen in that coming day when Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be *satisfied*.

E. H. W.

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

The Day of Atonement—II.

Leviticus xvi.

WE have already seen that the "Lord's lot," the goat whose blood was carried within the veil, gave us the truth of propitiation, whilst the scape-goat spoke of substitution. Christ's blood having been shed and God's holy claims with regard to sin fully met, the evangelist is now entitled to go out and proclaim the gospel of the grace of God worldwide. Christ is a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John ii. 2—the words "sins of" should be omitted).

Moreover, God's righteousness is said to be "unto all"—this answers to the first goat—and "upon all them that believe"—answering to the second goat. God has set forth Christ "a propitiation through faith in His blood"; for the blood on the mercy seat has so fully met and satisfied His holy and just demands that He can be just and yet justify the one who believes in Jesus.

In verse 17 of our chapter we find that it was commanded that there was to be no man in the tabernacle when the high priest went in to make atonement until he came out again. So God and Christ must be alone in the great work of Calvary, when darkness covered the earth and God hid His face from the holy sufferer during those solemn hours when He was making atonement on the cross.

In the case of the scapegoat, the high priest was to lay both his hands on its head; here he stood as the representative of the whole congregation. Then he was to confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins—the threefold repetition of the word "all" here shows how completely the goat stood charged, so to speak, with the sins of the people. The goat was then sent away, by the hand of a man standing ready, into the wilderness, where he bore upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited. Thus it is the believer's blessed

(Continued on page 25.)

privilege to know that all his sins are *gone*; lost in the land of God's eternal forgetfulness.

This is plainly the great truth of substitution. It shadows forth for us the One who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, on whom God laid our sins and iniquities; and now they are entirely gone from God's sight and memory.

Turning to Hebrews ix. 25-28, we have both parts of the Day of Atonement brought together in those verses—it is, however, a passage which is frequently misunderstood. Christ “has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” This is sometimes quoted and spoken of as though it meant that sin has been put away; but the passage does not say so, and as a fact, sin, as such, has not been put away, it is still here.

True, the believer's sins are put away and he is justified from all things, but this is quite another matter. What verse 26 says is that Christ *appeared* for a definite purpose, namely, “for the putting away of sin.” The work has been done upon the cross, atonement has been made, but “sin” will not be put away until it is entirely banished from the whole universe, and that will not be until the new heavens and the new earth.

Then in verse 28 we have the second goat, the one for substitution, “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” Carefully note here that it is “sins” not “sin”; and it is “many,” it does not say “all.” Christ's death is *available* for all, but it is only those who believe who avail themselves of it. It is when one believes the gospel that he is entitled to say that Christ bore his sins and put them away for ever.

It is true that there is a sense in which Christ “died for all” (2 Cor. v. 14) and “gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. ii. 6) but the truth of substitution does not come in here. Where that truth does come in, as in Matt. xx. 28, “The Son of man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many,” the

word translated "for" is a different one, and it is limited to "many."*

We now come to the third part of that which God ordained for this solemn day—the reconciliation of the tabernacle. The high priest was to make atonement for the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar of burnt offering, by the sprinkling of blood. Atonement needed to be made, not only for the *persons* but for the *things*, for even the heavens are not clean in God's sight.

Thus everything had to be reconciled by the blood. We have this same truth in Colossians (chapter i. 20), "By Him (Christ) to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in the heavens . . . and you . . . hath He reconciled." The "things" have not yet been reconciled; but believers are already reconciled to God. But the day is coming when, in virtue of the blood of Christ (to quote the words of the hymn) "All taint of sin shall be removed, all evil done away"; that, however, will not be until after the wicked have been cast into the lake of fire, and when the righteous shall dwell in the new heavens and the new earth.

In conclusion, let us say a few words as to the bullock for Aaron and his house. These latter represent Christ and the church—the latter looked at as the priestly family.

Needless to say, Christ did not need atonement for Himself personally, being without any taint of sin; but His people did. As Caiaphas prophesied, He was to die for that nation, and also to gather together in one the scattered children of God (John xi. 49-52). And in virtue of that blood, the believer now is washed whiter than snow and has

*It has been pointed out that, when strict substitution is intended, the preposition used is *anti*, as when Abraham offered up a ram *instead* of his son; so also in Matt. xx. 28, referred to above. Another preposition, *hyper*, "in favour of," "on behalf of," but not strictly in the sense of substitution, is found in 2 Cor. v. 14: and in 1 Tim. ii. 6, it is "a substitutionary ransom on behalf of all men."

access at all times within the rent vail, into the very presence of God Himself.

May we thus be better enabled to apprehend the Holy Spirit's mind in these instructive types, and to appreciate more fully the personal glory of the One around whom all truth centres and in whom the shadows of the Old Testament find their substance and reality.

This must produce, in our souls, a spirit of overflowing worship and thanksgiving to the One who accomplished all the will of God—and at such a cost to Himself!

F. G. B.

Friends of David—II.

2 Samuel xv.

AS we consider further the circumstances in which David was found at the trying period of his life when he was obliged to fly from Jerusalem because of his son Absalom, we find Zadok and his companions helping him. They left the city—not “in their simplicity,” as those who went with Absalom but—because of their fidelity to David.

Their business was in connection with the ark, and the proper place for it was the place God had chosen and where David pitched a tent for it. He therefore bid them to carry it back to the city. We may here recall that it was from between the cherubims that God promised He would commune with Moses of all things which He gave in command to Israel (Exod. xxv. 22). It was there the mind of God was sought and known; and, may we suggest that Zadok and others would doubtless be occupied with the interests of David before the throne of God.

We, believers, now have access, as priests, before God's throne at all times, and it is, for us, a throne of *grace*. What a blessed and wondrous thought, that believers now have the privilege of drawing near to the throne and occupying ourselves about the interests of the true David, who is both David's Son and David's Lord! And His interests are not

limited to one place or one nation, they are world-wide: so that, as we read of the work of God abroad as well as at home, we can bear up in our prayers the servants of God in foreign lands; this they earnestly desire us to do.

Hushai the Archite next appears on the scene. He was faithful to David and was his friend. Without justifying the way in which he acted, there can be no doubt that he was used of God to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, who was a subtle and bitter enemy of David, and thus David's prayer in verse 31 was answered. So it will be in the last days also: God will, in His own way, defeat all the craft and plottings of the Antichrist against the true Christ.

And *we* too have a lesson to learn from all this. How cleverly the great enemy, Satan, works; seeking in so many cunning ways to lead men to lower the dignity, deny the Deity, and set aside the eternal glory of Him Who is the Root as well as the offspring of David; David's Lord as well as David's Son. Christ it is who will bring to naught all the counsels of the wicked, and He will put down all His enemies, before He reigns in peace in the character of Solomon.

But what is He to us now—to His church? He is the One who "loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood," as well as the "bright and morning star," and as such He is coming for us *before* the day of glory dawns for this benighted world.

When Christ reigns Satan will be bound. To-day he is active, working against Christ. May we not be ignorant of *his* devices, but be used of God to turn his counsel into foolishness. This can only be done in dependence on God and using His word as our guide; thus we shall be enabled to exalt Christ and to be true to His interests, seeking to help those Christians who are in danger of being drawn away into error, and to uphold the truth.

P. W.

“Millions Now Living Will Never Die.”

The Truth on this Subject.

THE large number of lectures and the vigorous personal canvassing by which the “Russellites”—who for some time have assumed the title of “The International Bible Students’ Association”—have sought to disseminate their doctrines, have drawn public attention to the above. Books which speak of the new world, the coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, etc., have raised questions in the minds of many concerning prophetic questions, who hitherto were ignorant or indifferent as to them. The crowds they draw in some places and the pernicious errors they teach demand some notice, not only so as to warn souls against them, but also to examine briefly what the Bible really does teach; especially concerning the numbers of people who will never die.

First of all we would say that this paper is not designed to answer such books or lectures, except in so far as may be necessary in order to point out their flagrant contradiction of the truth. To Christians who know their Bibles, the manifold errors of these “Bible Students” need no exposure, being self-evident. But these teachers presume on the ignorance of the Scriptures which, unfortunately, prevails amongst so many, even of those who believe them to be the Word of God.

It will be found that the teachers referred to frequently quote texts that teach the very opposite of what they are intended to prove, while their statements as to the earthly Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ are a flat contradiction of innumerable Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments. For instance, they say that at a certain date “conditions would rapidly begin to take a peaceable form under the direction of the great Messiah, whose presence would be invisible but all powerful.” Let the reader compare this with Acts i. 11; Rev. i. 7; Matt. xxiv. 30, etc. Comment is needless.

But now as to the truth about these all-important questions—it seems to be almost unknown to many Christians, that the Scriptures do teach distinctly and definitely that numbers of persons will not die at all. It has very much been taken for granted that the salvation of God, made known by the Gospel, has only one end in view, namely, getting people to heaven when they die. It most certainly includes this, but it also embraces that most blessed fact, that “we (believers) shall not all sleep (that is, die) but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

Another Scripture, equally plain and definite, says, “We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (the raised dead) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 17).

The apostle plainly tells them that when Christ descends into the air, coming for His people, the first event which will happen will be that the dead *in Christ* will be raised; next that the living will be changed without dying; and finally that both companies will be “caught up” together, in their glorified bodies, and so pass into heaven. We might be tempted to think that all this would take some time to effect; but being God’s work, it will all be accomplished in a moment, in “the twinkling of an eye.”

In keeping with what we have just said, the Lord Himself made a striking announcement to Martha of Bethany in the well-known words, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” We know that this Scripture is frequently quoted with the word “eternally” added at the end, but it is not added in the Word of God and it mars the statement, which is designed to show the

victorious character of the life which Christ gives to all who believe on Him—a power and character of life which has been fully demonstrated in the case of the Lord Himself.

Had the Russellite preachers kept to the truth as we have it in Scripture, without distorting Scripture to suit their theories, we should have no need to oppose them. But when they advertise lectures on “Millions now living will never die,” they omit the one great essential condition which Scripture insists on, namely, that *those only* who are “in Christ” (dead or living) will participate in that privilege at His coming. The Holy Spirit, through the apostle, explains the “how and why” of this and reveals the mystery fully (1 Thess. iv; 1 Cor. xv. etc.). And it is well to remark, as it is also a very solemn consideration, that when the resurrection and judgment of the wicked is spoken of—an event which takes place at the close of the millennial reign—the words “in Christ” are *left out*, and the passage reads, “I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne” (Rev. xx. 12. R.V.): it does not say the dead “in Christ” as in 1 Thess. iv. 16.

The words of the Lord to Martha, to which we have already referred, “I am the resurrection and the life” etc., not only declare a special privilege for *believers*, but also convey to us a very important result of the Saviour’s death and resurrection. For when He who is the Victor over death comes again, death cannot subsist in His presence, so far as His people are concerned. *Then* “Mortality will be swallowed up of life,” “Death swallowed up in victory” and robbed of its sting, and all His people will participate in what He calls “The resurrection of life,” and what the apostle Paul speaks of as “The first resurrection.” But mark; this is only true of believers, those who have eternal life.

Next month we hope to go a little further into the subject.

T. B.

Scripture Notes and Gleanings.

IN the directions set forth for the carrying of the tabernacle and its furniture through the wilderness in Numbers·iv. special instructions are given for the “most holy things”—the ark, the table of shewbread, the candlestick, and the golden altar. All these, and the ark especially, spoke, typically, of Christ.

Aaron and his sons went into the tabernacle first and covered and made ready these things: then the Kohathites were not to “touch the holy things lest they die . . . they shall not go in to see the holy things even for a moment, lest they die” (R.V.). How peremptory was God’s ordering as to those things which symbolised Christ, though they were but a shadow of good things to come!

Modernism, Higher Criticism, and other forms of unbelief seek to draw aside, with rude hands, the covering of the holy Person of Christ, whom no man knoweth but the Father; only to manifest their own folly and inability to comprehend the Infinite.

But to faith, every detail of these things is precious. To take, for example, the ark only—it was to be covered first with the vail, which symbolised Christ’s flesh, His humanity as seen here below; then there were the badger skins, and then a cloth wholly of blue. Blue is the heavenly colour, and Christ was essentially “*the heavenly One.*” He was, both as to His character and His origin, *heavenly*. Just as the ark was conspicuous on its journey through the wilderness by the blue colour of its covering outside, so He was manifested as the heavenly Man, discernible at once as such by faith, in His path through this world.

“As is the heavenly [One], such are also the heavenly [ones].” What was true of Christ absolutely and fully is, or ought to be, true of the believer also. How far is it so?

“Stedfast.”

AT the close of that wonderful chapter, 1 Corinthians xv., the Apostle exhorts his beloved brethren, “**Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.**”

“Stedfast”—how important this is for us to-day when “drift” is one of the most marked features of the times. But God’s work needs men who are not carried hither and thither by every wind of doctrine, and who are not overcome by the seductions of the world or of Satan its god.

What we have in this verse reminds us of the words of the prophet of God to King Asa of old, and which were such an encouragement to him in removing the “**abominable idols**” which defiled the land, also in renewing the altar of Jehovah: “**Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded**” (2 Chron. xv. 7). *Afterwards we find that they sought the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.*

“Unmoveable”: here is another thing needed in this day of perplexity. The same Apostle exhorted the Colossians not to be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. The enemy sought to beguile them with enticing words—specious efforts to bring in something between the soul and Christ, in Whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It might take the form of human wisdom on the one hand, or venerable tradition on the other; but at best it was nothing more than “the elements of the world” and the work of the enemy.

“Always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Alas, how easily we get tired or discouraged, and settle down into a state which shows a lack of heart in the interests of Christ! Do we not often forget the claims of Him whose grace has brought us to Himself—and at such a cost? And He has given us the unspeakable privilege of serving Him here during this the day of His absence and rejection by the world.

Soon God is going to interpose, as this chapter has told us. Then Christ will come and make good in power all that belongs to the victorious eternal life which He has given us, raising His people from the dead and clothing them with bodies like His own. We triumph in His triumphs, and are already assured of victory; and then He will reward every little bit of service truly done in His name and with a view to His glory. Surely this is a stimulus and an encouragement to serve Him better now!

Psalm *xxiii.*

THE psalmist begins without any introduction. His first words are, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." This is the key to the psalm; for while the blessings spoken of are rich and abundant they do not take the prior place in the psalmist's heart, as this is given to the Lord Himself. And ought He not to have the first place in the believer's heart, no matter how rich and manifold his blessings may be?

We hear of green pastures in which the Shepherd, in His loving care, *makes* the sheep to lie down. Then when death is thought of, the psalmist "will fear no evil." And how is this? Because the Lord will be with him, and with His rod and His staff will comfort him. Are not these fine samples of faith which confides in His shepherd care?

Again, "My cup runneth over." It is not even a full cup, but an overflowing one. When the Lord gives He does so with no niggard hand.

Then let us note the psalmist's confidence as he looks forward to his pathway here: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." But he does not stop there; we come to the climax when he thinks of the unending future, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Other blessings there are which we need not dwell upon here. But they all go to show that whatever

circumstances the psalmist might have to pass through until reaching the house of the Lord, he was sure of being followed with goodness and mercy. May we not here say of David, that "he knew Whom he had believed"?

Let us now briefly turn to the 10th chapter of John, where our Lord announces Himself as the Shepherd of His sheep: "I am the good Shepherd," adding, "the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

Here we have a title of our Lord which must ever appeal to the believer's heart, as it so tells of His measureless love. Willingly He goes up to the Cross to lay down His life. "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself."

May our knowledge of that boundless love increase as we pursue our pathway down here! And of this we may rest assured, that we shall know and enjoy it far more fully when our good Shepherd comes, and takes us to be with Himself, to the place He has prepared in His Father's house of many mansions. Meanwhile, may those words of the psalmist be vocal in our ears, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow *me* all the days of my life."

Ere closing let us note one striking thing in our psalm, viz., David's individuality. He speaks much about himself, but mentioning the Lord's name first. For example, "the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," "He maketh *me* to lie down," and so on. This is very suggestive, and well worthy of our consideration.

In this favourite psalm we have, so to say, one of the Lord's sheep expressing himself as such, while, in the 10th chapter of John, the good Shepherd is speaking of Himself as such, and telling out what, in His love, He does for His sheep, even to the laying down of His life for them. Furthermore, let us observe how He counts upon His sheep hearing Him, for He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

May the desire be deepened in our hearts to hear the voice of our blessed Lord, and to follow, in some measure, small though it may be, in His own attractive footsteps until we see Him in glory above.

W. J. M. (New Zealand).

Hints on 1 Corinthians.

THIS epistle was written to the Christians in Corinth when they were divided up into parties, and is therefore very helpful in the present day when Christians are divided into sects. Young Christians are often perplexed at the controversies between different parties of Christians. It is suggested that they read this epistle, bearing in mind the following broad lines of argument:—

First, the whole epistle of 16 chapters may be divided into two parts, dealing principally with

- (A) The individual Christian.
- (B) Christians gathered together for instruction, worship, etc.

It is plain that individuals must be right in God's sight, before it is possible to have a company that is right.

Secondly, (A) referred to above, can be divided into

- (1) The attitude of the Christian towards the Lord Jesus Christ (chap. i.)
- (2) The attitude of the Christian towards the things which God reveals to us by His Spirit (chaps. ii. and iii.)
- (3) The practice of the Christian in regard to the *moral* evil that is in the world (chaps. v., vi. and vii.)
- (4) The practice of the Christian in regard to the *religious* evil in the world (chaps. viii. and x.)

Chaps. iv. and ix. come in by way of parenthesis showing how the truths of the other chapters have been put into practice by Paul and the other apostles.

In regard to (1): having weighed up what is involved in the full name Lord Jesus Christ, we are reminded that the world in its wisdom, and in the religion it had developed (Greek and Jew respectively) crucified Christ; but He is made to us, by God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Whom do we need outside Christ as leader?

As regards (2): the seeking after wisdom in an intellectual way, which characterised the Greeks and still characterises the "educated classes," is not the way to understand the things of God. These things are revealed to us by His Spirit. We (the believers) "have received the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (chap. ii. 12). This is perhaps the most difficult lesson for young Christians to learn in the present day. Our pride rebels against it. Let us then read these two chapters very carefully. Let us wait on God, praying Him to reveal His mind to us from His Word by His Spirit.

The principles which are brought out by the Apostle in (3), not only apply to the particular form of moral evil which prevailed in Corinth but also to the worldly pleasures of to-day. Among the various general principles two stand out clearly:—

Chap. vi. 12, "I will not be brought under the power of any thing."

Chap. vii. 23, "Be not ye the servants (or 'slaves') of men."

These two principles test our voluntary occupations and pleasures. Do we get enslaved by them, or are we under the control of unconverted people? If so, we should give them up.

As regards *religious* evil—in Corinth it was actual idolatry. To-day perhaps it is what masquerades as "broadmindedness." But some of the principles applied by the Apostle are to give God and the Lord His due (chap. viii. 6); not to act against our own consciences (verse 7); nor to offend someone else's conscience (verse 12); but to do what helps others (x. 24) and is for the glory of God (x. 31).

If we are willing to put these first ten chapters into practice as individuals, we may undoubtedly count on God bringing us into touch with others who are doing the same, and then we shall be able to carry out what is contained in the later chapters dealing with the way Christians should come together for the Lord's Supper and for instruction.

Having read so far will you read the first ten chapters of 1 Corinthians over again, slowly?

J. C. K.

The Darkness of Judgment.

“**A**ND darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. i. 2). It is a just inference that this darkness had not always existed over the waters, but it covered a chaotic state in which the earth was at that period. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” but “He created it not a waste” (Isa. xlv. 18). We do not know why it got into a state of chaos. The darkness, however, was dispelled by the Spirit of God, who hovered over the face of the waters.

So far creation. But let us now turn to another record of darkness: “And Jehovah said to Moses, Stretch out thy hand toward the heavens, that there may be darkness in the land of Egypt—so that one may feel darkness. And Moses stretched out his hand toward the heavens, and there was a thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another” (Exod. x. 21, 22, new trans.) This was a solemn and awe-inspiring manifestation of Jehovah's power, intended to act upon the King of Egypt.

But now we come to another scene of the darkness of judgment, but also of superabounding and infinite grace. It was at that solemn hour when Jesus, the holy Son of God, hung upon the cross. It is possible that no human eye was permitted to gaze upon that holy form while God made Him sin for us at the moment when atonement was being made during those three hours of darkness (Matt. xxvii. 45). The atoning sufferings of our

blessed Lord from the hand of God, when He was drinking the bitter cup and vindicating God's holy and righteous claims, being made sin and bearing our sins, took place during those three hours of darkness on the cross. This should never be confounded with His sufferings for righteousness' sake at the hands of men.

The deep and awful sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane, described in Luke xxii. 44, the cruel scourging and insults, and the painful ordeal of being nailed to the cross—all, in fact, that our Lord suffered up to the sixth hour—was not in atonement for sin. It was in those three hours, from the sixth to the ninth, that the question of sin was gone into and settled, finally and for ever, between a righteous God on the one hand, and the holy Sufferer on the other.

Then it was that nature veiled her face: to quote the words of another, "Darkness covered the earth—divine and sympathetic testimony of that which, with far deeper gloom, covered the soul of Jesus, forsaken of God for sin, but thus displaying incomparably more than at any other time His absolute perfection; while the darkness marked, in an external sign, His entire separation from outward things, the whole work being between Him and God alone, according to the perfectness of both" (Synopsis, J.N.D., iii. 252).

And after all was over, we have the testimony of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who had lingered at the cross, bearing witness to the fact that a soldier with a spear pierced the Saviour's side, drawing forth the blood and water—tokens to us of a perfect salvation. To this the apostle John refers in his first epistle (chap v. 6-9); but he takes the two things in the order of their application to us, viz., the water and the blood. Both flowed from the side of a *dead* Christ: the water for purification and the blood for expiation. Of these the Spirit is the witness, because He is the truth.

"If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father," says the blessed Saviour. We can rejoice because for *Him* the darkness of the cross is for

ever past, and He has entered into the joy and light of the Father's presence; for *us* He has won the place of light, joy, and liberty in the eternal sunshine of the Father's love.

J. P. (*Montreal*).

“Millions Now Living Will Never Die.”

The Truth on this Subject — Part II.)

BUT the “Russellites” will assert that what we have spoken of is not what they mean, but that they refer to large numbers of people who are to pass into the never-dying state *on the earth*. The important question here is: What does the Bible say about these things? Does it teach that there are those who will be saved and blessed on the earth, and if so, *who are they*?

We believe that it does. Let us then leave aside for a moment the meaningless and erroneous statements of these teachers and turn to the book of Revelation, chapter vii. Here we find described two companies of saints who are saved and blessed, and who will have their portion on earth. One is a Jewish company, figuratively numbered as 144,000, out of all the tribes of Israel; the other a great multitude which no man could number out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Of these latter the angel says, “These are they which have come out of *the* great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. viii. R.V. and N.T.)

It is quite possible that some readers will be surprised to hear that these companies are composed of people alive *on the earth*. Numberless sermons and hymns refer to the passage as descriptive of heaven and of heavenly occupations; but we desire to submit what we have just pointed out, to the careful and prayerful consideration of all such. Indeed, the whole bearing of the passage shows that they are a people on earth; for in the heavenly city above (Rev. xxi. 10-27) there

(Continued on page 41)

is no tabernacle; here, on the contrary, God shall "spread His tabernacle *over* them" (as it ~~should~~ read). and what is said as to their not hungering or thirsting or the sun lighting on them, is far more applicable to people living on earth than to those in heaven

In the first eight verses of Revelation xxi. we have the description of the *eternal state* of blessing for the saved: the first heaven and the first earth will then have passed away. Who are the favoured inhabitants of that undefiled world but the redeemed, the blood-washed saints of God? to be owned and blessed as His saints and His people. They pass into that eternal sphere of blessing, joy, and light, at the close of Christ's millennial reign over this earth.

Now as to the Kingdom of the Son of man—nothing can be clearer than that the Lord Jesus will come down in person to this earth (Zech. xiv. 4) and reign over it for one thousand years, generally called the millennium (Rev. xx. 4, 5). Preparatory to His righteous reign, the purging out and judging of everything that defiles will take place. Hence we read in Matt. xiii., where our Lord explains the "parable of the tares" to His disciples, "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall *gather out of His Kingdom* all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," etc. Also, in the gospels of Matthew and Luke we read of discriminating judgment in these well-known words, "One shall be taken and the other left."

And, where left? On the earth surely, to be blessed with all the promised millennial blessings of peace and righteousness: whilst those taken away are "gathered out" in judgment as unfit and unworthy of a place in the Kingdom.

Again, let us look at the judgment of the living nations in Matt. xxv., commonly termed the judgment of the sheep and the goats. If we try to forget what is usually taught about it, we shall find that this judgment is different in every way from the judgment of the raised dead at "the great white throne" (Rev. xx.).

It differs in every essential feature, except that the Lord is the Judge in both.

This judgment takes place at the *commencement* of the Lord's Kingdom on earth, whereas the judgment of the wicked in Rev. xx. is at the *close* of His millennial reign. The sheep are addressed thus: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." These pass into the earthly Kingdom without dying and are amongst "the nations [that] shall walk by its light; and the kings of the earth [that] bring their glory and honour to it," i.e. to the heavenly city (Rev. xxi. 24, new trans.)

Space forbids our saying more about this blessed and wondrous Kingdom, but truth demands a few words of warning and exhortation before closing.

First, let us remind our readers of the words of the Lord Jesus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see [or cannot enter] the Kingdom of God." Secondly, the truths herein mentioned give no sanction whatever to the delusive snare of "Russellism" or any other false system which teaches that there will be a "second chance" given to those who refuse the gospel of the grace of God now preached and made known in God's Word. Let the Scripture speak for itself as to this: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 7, etc., also chap. ii.).

These and many other Scriptures make plain two things—that the present day, when God is acting in free grace and long-suffering mercy, will soon be closed by the coming of our Lord Jesus to call His people up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17); and, on the other hand, the coming apostasy from the faith and even the outward profession of Christianity. It is then that the Antichrist will be revealed, and there will be a time of great tribulation such as the world has never known. Then, too, there will be the outpouring of the wrath of God as described under the seals, trumpets and

vials in the book of Revelation, clearing the whole scene of evil and preparing the way for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus, when "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

May the Lord grant that both the writer and the reader may be amongst the company of those who look for and who love His appearing!

T. R.

Peter's Testimony to Inspiration.

THAT the apostle Peter regarded the Scriptures of the Old Testament as God-breathed or inspired is plain from what he says when referring to them. Take Acts i. 16, "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before"; again, Acts iv. 25, "God . . . who by the mouth of His servant David hast said." In these quotations from the Psalms, he attributes one to the Holy Ghost and the other to God Himself, David being the mouthpiece or instrument to convey the communication to man.

Now if we examine the quotations in the early part of the Acts we shall find that it is quite remarkable the various ways in which they are introduced. For example, Acts i. 20, "It is written in the book of Psalms," "David . . . saith himself" (ii. 34), "For Moses truly saith" (iii. 22), "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (ii. 16).

We know that Peter was well versed in the Psalms and the prophets, and above all he was a man acting under the direct power and guidance of the Holy Ghost at that time. Let us observe also that he looks beyond the merely human instrument and recognises God, by His Spirit, as the source of those communications given of old—those very oracles of God of which the nation of Israel was the custodian (Rom. iii. 2): However unfaithful they may have been to the carrying out in practice of the truths they contained, yet the Old Testament Scriptures were assumed, without question,

to be divine communications. Like Christendom, which boasts in having the Word of God, the Jews were themselves condemned by the very Scriptures God gave them, but as to which they were either unbelieving or indifferent.

Peter, in his epistles, gives us still further proof of how entirely he entered into the mind of God as to the depth and value of the inspired Word. It was the "Spirit of Christ" in the O.T. prophets, he says, which signified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow. The prophets did not by any means understand their own prophecies; they searched out the time when these events would take place, and it was revealed to them that it was not to themselves but to us they ministered the things which are now reported to us. And let us note the addition, "by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (new trans.)

Now this proves unquestionably that those prophets of old were not guided even by their own wisdom or what they thought best, but entirely by a power outside and beyond themselves—the power of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, when we turn to the second epistle, we find Peter himself asserting this very fact in these words, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved [or borne along by] the Holy Ghost."

And further, we shall find that this is the ground always taken in the Word of God. It is never a question raised in Scripture whether such or such things may or may not be true: on the contrary, it always speaks, not with the voice of question or uncertainty, but with the absolute certainty that becomes the God of infinite wisdom, and of truth.

Men may doubt, question, or deny the truth of the Bible in whole or in part; but God presents His revelation, the truth, for the obedience of faith. This revelation of and from God carries with it adequate and sufficient confirmation to convince the man of faith that

it is indeed and in truth the veritable Word of God. So assured was the apostle Paul of the *source* of his teaching that he could say, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord," and he adds, "If any man will be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38).

In the first epistle, chapter i., Peter quotes the law; in chapter ii. the law and the prophets; and in chapter iii. the Psalms; such is the varied and diversified use of the O.T. in the New.

But the consummate skill and wisdom with which the Holy Ghost uses and applies the O.T. in the New is a most edifying and profitable study: it is, however, beyond our purpose now. Nevertheless we may remark that the way in which Peter touches upon the book of Exodus and the prophet Hosea is interesting and instructive to note.

Under the law the promise was made that Israel should be a "peculiar treasure" to Jehovah, but this was preceded by an "if"—it was, in other words, conditional on obedience. But they failed utterly, and the blessing was forfeited by their unbelief. They will, as we know, be restored in a future day, but Peter applies the passage to show that the believing remnant get the blessing now, before the nation as such is brought in.

So also with the quotations from Hosea i. and ii. In time past the sentence was pronounced by Jehovah, "Lo-ammi," "not My people," but Peter tells us that the believing remnant come in for blessing *now* on the ground of grace; and, in addition, we learn that it is not merely on this earth, but the *heavenly* blessing, into which Christianity introduces us.

The whole Bible bears witness to the fact that it was the one Divine Mind which inspired the book. Varied as its teaching, its histories, and its prophecy are, yet it bears the impress of uniformity of design as well as of purpose—that purpose being the glory of Christ and the heading up of all things, both in heaven and on earth, under Him.

F. G. B.

Othniel and Achsah.

Joshua xv. 16-19; Judges i. 11-15.

OTHNIEL and Achsah are presented to us as "ensamples," written for our learning. The things that happened to those of old time provide instructive object-lessons for our day and generation, and they are recorded in the Scriptures by the Spirit of God that we might profit by them. They help to stimulate and encourage, so that we may be strong and of good courage, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. Thus the Lord said to Joshua when he was just about to plant his feet on the promised land, "Only be thou strong and very courageous . . . that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt *meditate therein day and night*, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success." This is the true secret of strength.

Othniel, which means "lion of God," won Achsah, which some take to mean "lowly-minded," for his wife, and became the son-in-law of Caleb, the man of faith and the only one out of the six hundred thousand men who came out of Egypt (save Joshua) who got into Canaan. All the others fell in the wilderness—solemn lesson for us!

In both the chapters at the head of this paper we find the account of this, and surely a double record is, for us, a double reason why we should ponder over their characters as blended, so to speak, in their union; for without doubt Achsah was a real help-meet for Othniel. He, the bold "lion of God"; she, the "lowly-minded"; both earnestly seeking together a blessing and obtaining "the upper springs and the nether springs"—they are doubly blest.

Then we find later on (Judges iii.) that Othniel was the first of the judges, and a deliverer of the children of Israel after they had been in servitude for eight years

under Chushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia, because of the evil they had committed in the sight of the Lord. This name is said to signify "the Ethiopian of double-dyed wickedness"; but, however that may be, he was the rod in Jehovah's hands to punish his guilty people, as we read, "The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and *He sold them* into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim."

But when they cried unto the Lord in their distress, *He raised up* a deliverer in the person of Othniel, and the result was that the land had rest forty years. Such is His grace and willingness to meet the need of His people whenever there is true repentance and a turning of the heart to Him.

And are not the children of God to-day in distress in many ways? Surly, too, if they fasted and wept and humbled themselves under His mighty hand, turning to Him with true purpose of heart, He would hear and raise up an "Othniel" and an "Achseh" to work deliverance for them. Is it not because of their lack of "lion-heartedness" for His blessed name and word, coupled with their lack of "lowly-mindedness" in following in His footsteps, that we must attribute much of the weakness and confusion in which they are found? His hand in government has come upon them in the scattering which He has allowed in their midst; and indeed we can all plead guilty, as Daniel did in his day when he confessed, "*We have sinned,*" "*All Israel have transgressed,*" etc.

Yet, in His abounding grace, our God still listens for the cry from the hearts and lips of His people, so that He may bring in the "balm of Gilead" and recover the health of His own. Shall we not, then, respond to His grace and pray earnestly for blessing and revival for ourselves, as well as for the whole church of God?

U. G. •

*The beloved writer of this article, Mr. U. Goss, passed away to be with the Lord on January 24th, after a long and valued service in the work of the Gospel and ministering the Word among God's people.

Millennial Shepherding.

It was very blessed for the Psalmist of old to be able to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." So it is also for all believers now, and it will be no less so for restored Israel in the coming day. But these by no means exhaust the number of those who can say "The Lord is my Shepherd." For we find in Rev. vii., in addition to the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel, the Lamb in the midst of the throne shepherding a white-robed multitude so large that no one could number it, and one which is quite apart from the companies named above.

One of the elders beholding them said: "These . . . who are thy, and whence came they?" On closer observation we see that they are *before* the Throne and have come out of all nations and tribes, and peoples and tongues: these are they who have *come out of the great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (new trans.). The influences of hell, the might of Satan and all the death-dealing power of the highest developments of science and war, which will break on humanity in unexampled force at the great tribulation, leave this multitude safely folded. He that sits on the throne spreads His tabernacle over them. Hunger, thirst and the burning heat touch them not.

Why? "Because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall *shepherd them*, and shall lead them to fountains of water of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes" (new trans.).

It is blessed to lie down ourselves in God's green pastures according to the will and ways of our good Shepherd, but it is better still to behold His shepherd care in that day, and from the very throne on which He sits too, going out to this tried numberless crowd, providing for them in all their trials, washing them in His blood and leading them out to enjoy, in peculiar nearness to Himself, the blessings of the millennial earth as ordered by His own heart of love and hand of power. His shepherd care is like Himself, exhaustless.

W. M. R.

“Surely I come quickly.”

THESE, the parting words of the Lord Jesus to His church, given us just at the close of the inspired Word, come home in a peculiarly blessed way now as we approach the end of the dispensation. Have they lost any of their vital freshness because so many years have elapsed since they were written? Surely not: this could not be.

Yet we need to remind our souls of them, for we are so likely to hold them simply as a doctrine—a truth to which we assent—while they have not the place and power in our hearts and lives which they should have.

In a by-gone day, when the Lord was just about to appear the first time in this world, a remnant prepared of God were “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” Doubtless they were not thinking of earthly honours or anticipating high places in the Kingdom, but the Messiah, Jesus Himself, the *Person* whose coming was long expected and to whom their hearts were attached by the revelation of Him in the prophetic Word, formed the centre and object of their affections as well as of their hopes. Simeon and Anna were godly souls and they were in communion with the mind and thoughts of God at the moment.

How blessedly they were rewarded, and that even though the child born of the Virgin came upon the scene in such lowly circumstances and surroundings! No heralds announced His kingly birth, no princely garments were prepared for Him, no palace received Him. If heaven owned Him, as it did, earth thought a manger in a wayside inn quite good enough for Him. But all this was no stumblingblock to faith, even with those whose thoughts would naturally be occupied with the Messiah’s kingly place and honours in Israel. Anna “spake of *Him* to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

How is it with us? We have heard much truth and have learned much about the coming of the Lord: Are we "waiting for the Son of God from heaven" as the Thessalonians were? What is the Lord Jesus to our hearts, our souls, our affections? Does the ready response go up from our souls to His parting words, "Surely I come quickly"? It is a response, the necessary outcome of the affection created and kept alive by the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is associated with the bride, the church, in giving expression to the heart's desire: "the Spirit *and* the bride say, Come."

It is not heaven with its golden streets, its joy, its brilliancy; its freedom from sorrow, pain and suffering, that the bride desires to see: It is Himself, it is Jesus.

And as the day of His coming draws nearer, may the blessed Spirit of God rekindle the inward affections of God's people, acting with fresh power in the heart of each, so that many may be found in the waiting attitude, ready to "open to Him immediately."

The Sanctuary, the Starting-Point of God's Judgment.

"Slay utterly old and young . . . and *begin at my sanctuary*"
—(Ezekiel ix. 6). "For the time is come that judgment must *begin at the house of God*: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"
—(1 Peter iv. 17).

MEDITATION on the sanctuary of God as disclosed in Scripture, with the lessons to be gathered therefrom, is a most wholesome occupation: but the special way in which it is introduced by Ezekiel and the Apostle Peter is a much-neglected study.

In the book of Ezekiel (chap. viii.) we find that the joy and prosperity which was connected with God's Sanctuary in the days of the early kings had

entirely disappeared. Leaving out the nation's subsequent rejection of Christ, their long course of sin assumed in Ezekiel's time its blackest hue, in that even the ancient men had so deteriorated in their ways as to become leaders in idolatry, saying in their spiritual blindness, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth." In chapter ix. we see God's answer to their sin. Mercy and judgment are at work—*mercy first*, in that He commands the man with the inkhorn to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done" in Jerusalem; *then judgment*—in that He bids six of the city governors to take their "destroying weapons" and "slay utterly old and young but come not near any man upon whom is the mark, and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men."

In this connection we have exemplified a principle well-known in Scripture, namely, that the greater the light a man has, the greater becomes his responsibility and his sin if he should turn away from God.

For this reason, Israel's special privileges as a nation, and the nearness of their relationship to God, only tended to increase their guilt and intensify their judgment. It was one thing to *read* in their Psalms, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him," but quite another to *really* fear and reverence Him (Psalm lxxxix. 7). The light they had concerning what was suitable to God, whose assembly they were, made their sin inexcusable, and their judgment correspondingly severe. Moreover, while God had called them to mourning, they persisted in feasting; and at the very time when He looked for concern on their part as to their low condition and that of the house of God, "they are not grieved for the affliction of

Joseph," but are at ease in Zion, engaged with their culture and music, and cause the seat of violence to come near, so that God's heavy hand in judgment on them is the inevitable result. (Amos vi. 1-6).

When we come to speak of the present time, we see conferred on the Church of God still higher privileges and yet closer ties formed. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, were needed ere these could be created, and in nature and purpose they transcend anything Israel ever knew or will know. In the written Word, the Church is able to learn the full truth regarding her unique and heavenly position and calling, yet she, too, has sinned against light and truth, and her failures are even more flagrant than Israel's ever were. These, it is true, do not consist of idolatry and its accompanying corruptions as of yore (except, perhaps, in Roman Catholic countries). But in principle our guilt—the Church's guilt—is much more heinous, in that the teachings and practices we have espoused, in their spring and motive, defy both Christ and His Word, and are a challenge to God and to His glory.

For many centuries now the Church, which should have been a lightbearer, has been hand and glove with the world, and has willingly stepped in to adorn and bless, and even to amuse, its assemblies, instead of rebuking its sins. Her growing pride has discredited her testimony to her risen Head, and, like Samson, she has, in consequence, been shorn of her strength. There have been many gracious revivals from God in her history, but sooner or later she has reverted to her former corruption. The revival which took place in the early days of the last century—and which admittedly was the most remarkable since Pentecost—seems no exception to the rule. Unlike the movements of the days of Luther and of Wesley,

God, in this movement, revived, after long centuries, a remarkable testimony to the glory of the Person of Christ, the perfect and far-reaching nature of His atoning work, the personal presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the oneness and heavenly character of the assembly of God as the body and bride of Christ, the second coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as other great truths which had been choked by superstition and error since the days of the Apostles.

Many thousands all over the world were blessed by the preaching of these precious truths, and, in consequence, became detached from both the world and the worldly Christianity around them, and, as assemblies, were gathered alone to the name of the Lord. But even those who, in the mercy of God, came under the power of this exalted ministry, have to confess to loss of personal devotedness to Christ; to coldness of heart and much indifference in regard to the blessed gospel of God; to independency of spirit and to division. The lustre of these revived truths but exposes our corporate and public failures all the more, and who will deny that the trials of God's people generally at the present time are the governmental, if not the plenary, judgment of God upon us for sinning against such clear light, or that this is not His hand laid heavily upon us? The testimony of the Lord in our day is to a great extent a subverted one, and the world is given a false delineation of Christ's holy character. Therefore it cannot be expected that God will now tolerate such failure any more than He did its counterpart in Eden or in Israel. Consequently we find the solemn judgment of Ezekiel ix. presented as a foreshadowing of the chastisement He is compelled to inflict on the Church. For, be it noted, the Church is the only House of God which is recognised in Scripture at the present time. Hence we read in 1 Peter iv. 17, that "The time

is come that judgment must *begin at the house of God*, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

In the last of the seven Churches addressed in Revelation iii. the Lord is seen to rebuke, but He does so in love. The Church itself, being "lukewarm," He says, "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth," for they were self-complacent and proud of their acquirements, but in His sight wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Nevertheless, even though looked at as standing outside the door knocking, He still appeals to anyone who would hear His voice and open the door. And is it not a question we may well ask, "Where are *we*, and what shall we do?" May the Lord give all His people to-day lowliness of heart, humiliation, and dependence on Himself. May He give us to "hear the rod and who has appointed it." (Micah vi. 9.) Also to take to heart His Word, which says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me," for He sees that we are in great danger of falling into the lukewarm and indifferent spirit of the day, instead of truly watching and waiting for His return with our loins girt and lamps burning.

W. M. R.

Samuel.

IT is with exquisite pleasure that faith, searching in the Scripture, ever finds fresh proof of the fact that the same divine Spirit who inspired the New Testament also dictated the Old. Remarkable instances of this may be seen in many phases of Samuel's most instructive history.

The priesthood, given in connection with the law, was to maintain by its intercession the people's relationship with God; but, alas! the priests sinned most flagrantly, and had to be rejected and judged.

Hophni and Phinehas were slain in one day, and the Ark of the Covenant, Jehovah's throne among the people, delivered into the hands of the enemy. By God's power, freed from the enemy's hand, the Ark was brought back to Israel, but not to Shiloh, and thus, not being united to the tabernacle and the altar, the orderly priestly service was for the time being abrogated. It was not restored till David's directions were carried out by Solomon, and the Aaronic service rehabilitated under Solomon, the Prince of Peace, a type of the Lord in the millennium.

In the interval God takes up a prophet, Samuel, who was not of the house of Aaron, but of the sons of Korah, a Levite, and makes him the sole mediator between the Lord and His people. When all Israel was gathered together at Mizpeh, no sacrifice is brought or accepted for the whole people but one lamb. Thus the Holy Ghost has given us a marvellous type of the present time, when one sacrifice and one Mediator alone are accepted of God for the reconciliation of all who will come unto God by Him, the temple of Jerusalem, and all its priestly ceremonial, being set aside.

“And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.” (1 Samuel iv. 1.) It will be seen that the word “all” is very characteristic of Samuel's history. It is met with several times in the seventh chapter, and shows how whole-hearted and thorough he was in his service to the Lord. Under the Judges Israel had been most disunited, but now the loving heart of Samuel embraces all Israel, and for twenty long years, while the ark was at Kirjath-jearim, he prayed, exhorted, and testified, until we read, “*all* the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And Samuel spake unto *all* the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with *all* your heart, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts

unto the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines" (ch. vii. 3).

Samuel's activity is so quiet and unobtrusive that we are inclined to underrate the uncompromising courage needed for such an exhortation and the grasp of faith needed to expect such great things from the Lord. It would be well for us and for the Church at large if we could accustom ourselves to think more of and embrace, all Christians, far and near, in our prayers, and to expect great mercy and grace for them all. "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. iv. 2).

"And Samuel said, Gather *all* Israel to Mizpeh." Up to the present, Shiloh had been the place of gathering (ch. i. 3); now it pleased God to give a new centre for the whole nation. Many may have then demurred at the change; many may have said, "We should prefer to go to the old centre, where the priests are, and the tabernacle, and the golden altar, and the brazen altar"; but Samuel remained firm. It is even so in our day, when many say: "Why should we leave old associations, old Christian friends, our solemn church service, and go outside the camp to that which is God's Mizpeh in this our present time, where two or three are gathered together to the name of the Lord?" May we be ever ready to seek that centre which God gives us (Matt. xviii. 20), for there we shall find the Lord Himself.

"And I will pray for you unto the Lord." What terrible assumption it would have been for Samuel to take such a place, if it had not been in obedience to what he believed to be—and which the sequel proved it to be—the Lord's will. Could not the hundred thousands of Israelites meeting at Mizpeh pray for themselves? In v. 9, we find the answer, "and the Lord heard *him*"—not them. God

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wished to give a type of the one great Mediator between God and men, through whom alone men could be heard or accepted.

“And they gathered together in Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord.” In 2 Sam. xiv. 14, we find the explanation of this action. It is the expression of their utter weakness and helplessness collectively, whereas the fasting that followed brought it home to each one individually. Often, in the prayer-meeting, we confess our weakness and humble ourselves collectively, but on returning home we forget to apply the lesson to our own souls personally, and thus lose the blessing.

“We have sinned against the Lord.” Truly one can only marvel at the grace of God that upheld and gave him (Samuel) decision of heart to constrain all those unruly thousands to openly confess their sins before the Lord. How much this spirit of confession is lacking in our time! How many active, militant preachers of the gospel in our days would have said to Samuel: “Samuel, you are wasting time; the Philistines are armed and marching; be up and doing; marshal your praying hosts, and devise your plan of campaign!” Ours is a day when men are so anxious to be doing for the Lord, that they leave little over for the Lord to do, and thus the work crumbles to ruins so soon after it is built up.

“And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.” How often difficulties and differences remain unremedied because we have forgotten the pouring out of the water collectively, the fasting individually, or the confession of sins, that should precede the judging. Neglect of discipline in the gatherings of God's saints is the sure precursor of failure in testimony and of divisions. What an encouragement for steady, plodding, retiring, pastoral work do we find in the faithfulness of Samuel.

“ And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it up for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord.” When Solomon dedicated the temple he offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep as peace offerings. Now all Israel, gathered in Mizpeh, can only bring one lamb. Was it enough? Yes, quite sufficient, for it was a type of the one Lamb of God, as Samuel was a type of the “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim. ii. 5).

How remarkable that Eben-ezer, where the monument of thankfulness was erected, was the very place of their previous disaster (ch. iv. 1).

Now, in v. 13, we find the wonderful answer of God’s faithfulness to the “alls” of Samuel. “The hand of the Lord was against the Philistines *all* the days of Samuel.” The Lord will not be behind us or our debtor, but will answer our “all” with His faithful “all.”

How often, when the Lord has greatly blessed us and given us peace on every hand, we wax careless and are self-satisfied; but, through mercy, this was not the case with Samuel, for he answers the Lord’s most gracious “all” in v. 13, with an obedient and thankful “all” in v. 15: “And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.” Our great fault in the present day is a lack of judging evil in doctrine, practice, and association. There is a substitution of organisation and outward effort, for subjection to the word of God, and for humble waiting on the Lord for *Him* to act. Young and active men, who have become possessed of most precious truths through the teachings of elder brothers, who bought these truths very dearly, think they will be able to retain and proclaim such truths while, for the sake of numbers, associating with much that is unscriptural. But the “good deposit” can only be kept “by the Holy Ghost

which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. i 14), and He is grieved if we are callous as to evil associations. Thus there is a danger of their losing or corrupting those same truths; indeed, we have already met with such cases.

Bethel would remind them of God's mercy in taking up Jacob when a homeless wanderer, with nothing to call his own but his staff and his uneasy conscience. Gilgal would remind them of God's faithfulness in rolling away the reproach of Egypt, and bringing them safely through a Jordan that overflowed all his banks; the twelve stones in the Jordan showing where they deserved to be, and the twelve stones in Gilgal showing where mercy had placed them, safely in the land. Mizpeh would ever remind them that God had found a remedy after priesthood and law had both failed.

What a beautiful close to this divinely perfect chapter—the altar and worship.

T. W. B.

Purity and Partnership.

PURITY in the Christian is of the utmost importance, and there can be no growth nor any really spiritual service without it. The Apostle James, writing to the scattered tribes of Israel, who were on Christian ground, states that the wisdom that cometh from above is first *pure* (ch. iii., 17), and the Apostle John, in his first epistle, inculcates the importance of the individual believer, who has the hope of being like the Son and of seeing Him when He shall appear, *purifying himself* even as that blessed One is pure (ch. iii. 3).

The Lord Jesus, in His sermon on the Mount, refers to the blessing of those who are "pure in heart" for they shall see God (Matt. v., 8). Then the Apostle Paul charges his son Timothy, in his first epistle (ch. iv. 12), to be an example to the believers in various things, including purity. In

ch. v. 22, he adds, "Keep thyself pure." The servant of the Lord, to be successful in his ministry, has to guard his personal conduct in order to be able to impart the truth, in the power of the Spirit, to his hearers; and on the other hand there can be no spiritual reception of truth in those who are ministered to, without purity of heart and mind.

This is most distinctly seen in the ministry of our most blessed Lord, who, previous to ministering all that beautiful truth in the 14th to the 17th chapters of John's gospel, brings His disciples into the *condition* of being capable of hearing the truth, (which at that time was far beyond them), so that they might be able to make it their own after His death and the descent of the Holy Spirit. To be a partaker, or to have part with the Man who came out from God, the disciples needed *purity* (John xiii. 3). In the words of another, "They were to have a part with Him who came from God and went to God . . . but then they must be fit to be with Him there."

The Lord is here anticipating His subsequent service when, as the glory-girded servant on high, He would wash the feet of His own with the water of the Word, in order to remove defilement which they might contract in walking through this sinful world. In this portion of the Word He is already seen as having gone back to God, quitting His personal association with His disciples, and going to the Father. Peter does not like the idea of the Lord humbling Himself, and objects, but after learning that he could have no part, no companionship with the Lord unless he submitted, he yielded.

So it is with us, dear Christian reader. If we would be companions, or have partnership with the One who came out from God, and has gone back to God, it is needed that the Word should be applied to us in its cleansing and sanctifying power, so that we may be kept from defilement by the way, or be restored if need be. In these last and closing

days how important it is to “prove all things and hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). We can only do this by the study of and meditation on the Word of God. All decline in the soul of a believer may be traced to the neglect of the Word.

The writer has found it of the utmost importance in the reading of Scripture to endeavour to ascertain what is on the mind of the one who is ministering, be it the blessed Lord Himself or any of the authors of the sacred writings; otherwise, there is a tendency to arrive at a very superficial interpretation of what is written. The Scripture cannot be read as we would a newspaper or any other book, nor should it be read merely as a duty, though it is better to read it as a duty than not at all. We may here recall the words of the twelve in Acts vi. 4, “But we will give ourselves *continually* to prayer and to the ministry of the Word”; this, and Ephesians vi. 17, 18, show clearly the importance of the connection between the Word of God and prayer.

To arrive at a correct interpretation of any part of Scripture the writer has, as already remarked, found the necessity of ascertaining the mind of the one ministering. For many years portions of the Word which are universally quoted, such as the last six verses of Matthew xi., did not appeal to him as they do to-day. A dear aged brother, and occasional correspondent, pointed out the beauty in this portion of the Word, and urged the necessity of getting at the mind of the One ministering. Beginning at verse 25 we read, “At that time”—let us pause here for a moment and ask ourselves the question, What time? It was a time no doubt of bitter disappointment to the Lord, when the nation to which He had come in grace not only treated Him with the utmost contempt, but utterly rejected Him as the One sent of God. The Lord felt all this, but He submits to it all as the will of the Father. He submits to humiliation and rejec-

tion by His own people, for it was the final trial of the state of the nation, and He says, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (verse 26). It was sufficient for Him to know that it was the will of the Father to hide from those reasoners, who in their own estimation were wise and prudent, things that He would only reveal to "babes."

It was "at that time" that the Lord reviewed His ministry as being rejected. His mighty works at Chorazin and Bethsaida were without result. However, having been rejected as Messiah He finds a resource in the Father's purposes—which, indeed, existed before the world was—and which, at the very time when He was rejected, could not fail in their accomplishment. Though rejected as Messiah, yet He could say, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father"; and this was according to the counsels of God which centred in Him as the second Man. His Person was inscrutable in His incarnation, and only known to the Father, who sent Him. He invites those who labour and are heavy laden to come to Him, *the Son of the Father*. It is the passage out of Judaism into Christianity. It is on His mind to lead them from one system of religion where they were as Jews, on the platform of Judaism, under law, into that which is introduced by the cross and the descent of the Holy Ghost. It pointed to the new relationship and the knowledge of the *Father* (far beyond Judaism), into which the believer is brought consequent upon the cross and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

In conclusion, the writer would quote the words of a well-known writer, as follows: "Our safeguard against temptation is *the Word*, used by the discernment of a perfectly *pure heart*, which lives in the presence of God, and learns the mind of God in His *Word*, and therefore knows its application to the circumstances presented. It is the *Word* that preserves the soul from the wiles of the enemy."

J.P. (Montreal).

Evangelization.

IT is my firm conviction that no Christian is in a right condition, if he is not seeking in some way to bring souls to Christ. And, on the same principle, no assembly of Christians is in a right condition if it be not a thoroughly evangelistic assembly. We should all be on the lookout for souls, and then we may rest assured we should see soul-stirring results. But if we are satisfied to go on from week to week, month to month, and year to year, without a single leaf stirring, without a single conversion, our state must be truly lamentable. . . .

But in our preaching we should always seek to honour the blessed Spirit of God; to lean upon Him in our work; to follow where He leads, not run before Him. His work will stand: "Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever," "The works that are done upon the earth, He is the doer of them." The remembrance of all this will ever keep the mind well balanced. . . . The moment I make *preaching* the end, I am out of the current of the mind of God, whose end is to glorify Christ; and I am out of the current of the heart of Christ, whose end is the salvation of souls, and the full blessing of His Church. . . .

I often recall a sentence, "Heaven will be the best and safest place to hear the results of our work." This is a wholesome word for all workmen. I shudder when I see the names of Christ's servants paraded in the public journals, with flattering allusion to their work and its fruits. Surely those who pen such articles ought to reflect upon what they are doing; they should consider that they may be ministering to the very thing which they ought to desire to see mortified and subdued. . . .

It strikes me that we want awakening preachers. I fully admit there is such a thing as *teaching* the gospel, as well as *preaching* it. For example,

I find Paul teaching the gospel in Romans i—viii., just as I find him preaching the gospel in Acts xiii. or xvii. This is of the very last importance at all times, inasmuch as there are almost sure to be a number of what we call “exercised souls” at our public preachings, and these need an emancipating gospel—the full, clear, elevated, resurrection gospel.

But admitting all this, I still believe that what is needed for successful evangelization is, not so much a great quantity of truth as an intense love for souls. Look at that eminent evangelist, George Whitfield. What, think you, was the secret of his success? No doubt you have looked into his printed sermons. Have you found a great breadth of truth in them? I question it. Indeed, I must say I have been struck with the contrary. But oh! there was that in Whitfield which you and I may well covet and long to cultivate.

There was, in him, a burning love for souls; a thirst for their salvation; a mighty grappling with the conscience; a bold, earnest, face-to-face dealing with men about their past ways, their present state, their future destiny. These were the things that God owned and blessed; and He will own and bless them still.

I am persuaded—I write under the very eye of God—that if our hearts are bent upon the salvation of souls, God will use us in that divine and glorious work. But, on the other hand, if we abandon ourselves to the withering influences of a cold, heartless, godless fatalism—if we content ourselves with a formal and official statement of the gospel—a very cheerless sort of thing; if, to use a vulgar phrase, our preaching is on the principle of “take it or leave it,” need we wonder if we do not see conversions? The wonder would be if there were any to see.

(Written 1869).

C.H.M.

God's Tryings.

“Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him (Hezekiah) to inquire of the wonder done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart ” (2 Chron. xxxii. 31).

THIS touching and instructive passage in the history of King Hezekiah contains a much-needed lesson for every christian. He was a faithful man, and true to the Lord at a time when things in Judah and Israel were at a very low ebb. Of him it could be said, “ And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered ” (2 Chron. xxxi. 21).

However, when the ambassadors from Babylon came to inquire of the wonder done in the land, Hezekiah showed them all that was in his house, even the most sacred and precious things. The test was too much for him, he was caught off his guard, and fell into the snare of the enemy—*pride*.

And the secret of his fall was that, in this matter, “ God left him to try him.” There was but One who could stand in *every* trial, whether it came from the power or the subtlety of Satan; the One who could say, “ the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” In Christ, who walked the path of obedience and dependence perfectly, Satan could find nothing on which to work so as to accomplish his designs.

What a lesson and example for us! May we realise more deeply each day the need of keeping close to Him, learning of Him; of daily and hourly dependence on God and His word *before* the trial comes, so that when it does come (as it surely will) we may not be caught off our guard, but come off victorious in His strength.

The Plain Man and the Bible.

WHAT is the plain man to do nowadays, when the air is filled with the cries of those who say that the Bible is untrustworthy, and is not the veritable Word of God? He does not know a word of Hebrew or Greek, nor does he understand anything about Oriental literature. He is not qualified for scientific investigation.

Is any reader in danger of being shaken in his belief in the sufficiency and divine authority of the Scripture? If so, let him remember the words of the Psalmist, "The Lord preserveth the simple"; and let him depend on the infinite wisdom of God, of whom it can be said, "He giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (Dan. ii. 21).

Granted that the great scholars and deep thinkers of this age would despise such ones as "the simple"; probably they would boast, as did Prof. George Jackson not long ago, that, so far as scholars are concerned, the battle was over, and that his opponents were "a small and dwindling band." But the humble soul is satisfied to take the word of the Apostle in preference to those of any Professor. "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent . . ."; "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him." He knows that God has written "folly" on the boasted wisdom of this world, in order that no flesh should glory in His presence (1 Cor. i—iii.).

Then, again, the plain man can see that the Lord Jesus has said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25, 26). Granted, again, that the "wise and prudent" would

probably despise the "babes"; but, after all, it was they—these little ones of the earth—not the great or the learned, who had true spiritual wisdom when our Lord was on earth. Scribes, Pharisees, and doctors of the law were, almost without exception, in the dark; light and true knowledge was with the humble, and so it is to-day.

The plain man can see also that our Lord put His seal on the Old Testament Scriptures, and, for Him, "It is written" was sufficient wherewith to meet and vanquish Satan. All through His life He fully accredited the Scriptures, which, indeed, pointed in the most unmistakable manner to Him (read carefully Mark xii. 10; Luke iv. 17; xviii. 31; xx. 42; John v. 46; xii. 38—41, etc.). Then, in His risen state, He instructed His disciples *out of the three divisions of the O.T.*—Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms—in the things concerning Himself.

But, say the Critics, even He may have been mistaken, and this they account for by the "Kenosis" theory, as it is called. The plain man knows nothing about that; he does not even understand what the word means. Yet he does know that the Lord Jesus, the *living* Word, said, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son is willing to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). Even the most unlettered can see, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the written Word of God, that the mystery of the Person of Christ, God and man in one Person, is entirely outside and beyond all human comprehension. It is, in fact, known only to the Father who sent Him.

Is it not, therefore, evident to the most humble student of the Bible that to place "limitations" on the Person or divine wisdom of the incarnate Word, the "I AM," who, in divine love and grace, "became flesh," is nothing less than an insult to the

Son of God? And, further, is it not evident that man as such, unregenerate, can no more comprehend the written Word by his own power or wisdom, than he can the living Word?

We are reminded of the words of the prophet, "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what manner of wisdom is in them?" (Jer. viii. 9). But the plain man, when he reads the O.T., cannot but be struck by many evident proofs of the foreknowledge of future events which he finds there—a plain proof to him of a wisdom *more than human*.

Who could honestly question that such passages as Micah v. 2; Psalm xxii.; Isaiah liii.; Zech. xiii. 7, to say nothing of numberless others, have had an exact and specific fulfilment in the birth and death of Christ, as recorded in the N.T.? Naturally, the most simple reader would ask, "How can it be doubted that predictions such as these, written many hundreds of years before by various writers, have all had their exact fulfilment in the N.T. history? In truth, the unbeliever, who questions the truth of the Bible, is involved in far greater difficulty than the believer.

Then, again, the plain man can also judge by results. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He is, indeed, a better observer of the results he sees than the scholar, who is more occupied with theories and scientific investigations. He can see the wonderful change brought about in men's lives by the gospel contained in the Bible. But who ever saw drunkards, thieves, or other bad characters entirely changed and regenerated by Higher Critical ideas?

The Critics may say they have a purer faith, but who ever heard of a Higher Critic being an earnest evangelist or a man whom God has largely used to win souls? Or who has seen such an one engaged in the work of comforting the children of God, or

building them up in their most holy faith? The Critics can do much to pull down and take away the foundations, but nothing to establish or build up.

Every sober-minded student of Scripture will acknowledge the value of reverent and sound scholarship, but this is a very different thing from speculative theories and mere creations of the human mind and will. Consider the absurd patchwork of various authors in Genesis, Isaiah, etc., to which some have reduced the O.T., put forward thus:— $J^1, J^2, J^3 : E^1, E^2 \dots J E D ; P_x = P^*, P^4, P^6$, etc., and so on, with one combination after another. It needs little more than common sense to see the wilderness of folly into which these speculations lead us.

A just estimate of these Higher Critical theories may be given in the words of Prof. Wilson in his excellent book, "Is the Higher Criticism scholarly?" :—"They (the Critics) diligently pick out every instance of a superstitious observance, or a departure from the law, or of a disobedience to the Divine commands, as if these represented the true religion of ancient Israel. They cut up the books and doctor the documents, and change the text and wrest the meaning, to suit the perverted view of their own fancy. They seem to think that they know better what the Scriptures ought to have been than the Prophets and Apostles, and even the Lord Himself! They tell us when revelations must have been made, and how and where they must have been given, and what their contents could have been, as if they knew more about such matters than God Himself" (page 60).

Reader, let the language of your soul be:

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart."

Brief Remarks on the Seven Churches.—1.

Revelation ii. and iii.

IN these brief remarks we desire to bring before the reader the chief features set forth by the Lord in His address to “the angel”* in each of the Seven Churches.

(1) EPHESUS—*Meaning “fallen away.” Loss of “first love.” Period of first decline.*

It was not *outward* failure that marked Ephesus, for there were “works, labour and patience,” but *inward* decline. They had relaxed their first love; other objects had come in, and Christ had not the place He once had in their hearts. But the Lord acknowledges all He can that was good. They are judged according to the original estate of the church, what it should be practically, what it *was* as constituted by God. The “works, labour and patience” still went on, but the inward springs that produced them, the “faith, hope and love,” had failed. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 3.) This opened the door for evil men to creep in (see Jude’s Epistle), and for false apostles to arise, although, so far, they had been faithful in judging and refusing the pretensions of these latter.

The Lord notices also that they hated the “deeds of the Nicolaitanes.” We have no certain means of knowing who these were, but the word signifies “overcoming or conquering the people.” It points to the rise of a special class in the christian assembly, possibly to clerical assumption, which would be very likely to come in as zeal for Christ and the truth, as well as christian activity, prompted by love to Christ, declined.

Another form of evil which may have been included under this same title is Antinomianism—

*We take “the angel” to refer to the representative of the church; remark that the closing words of each letter are addressed to the church itself, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

doing evil that good may come; or what the Apostle Paul so strongly condemns in the words, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid"; and again, "Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." Later on, it developed into what Jude calls "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," and went on to the worst forms of evil and corruption.

It is evident that what is said to the church at Ephesus covers a broad ground, and goes on to the close of the professing church. God always judges according to the first estate, according to what the church was in its original standing; hence the failure is, as the Lord says, "*from whence thou art fallen,*" and it is so grave and serious in His estimation that Ephesus is threatened with the removal of the candlestick.

These are solemn considerations which it is well we should remember to-day. It should also be remarked that only the short space of about thirty years had elapsed from the time when the Epistle to the Ephesians was written. That epistle speaks much of the love of Christ; yet within this short period the church had lapsed from the freshness and devotedness to Christ which once marked it.

(2) SMYRNA. *Meaning of the word, "Myrrh," i.e., "Fragrant when crushed." Period of persecution.*

In order to arrest decline (which, as we have seen, began in Ephesus), God allowed persecution to come on the church, under the heathen Emperors. The same principle is true of the individual believer. If God sees us losing heart and going back in soul, He may, in order to recall us, allow persecution or trial to come upon us for our good.

We do not find this church blamed for anything; they were a poor, suffering people. But there were evils (not said to be amongst them) coming in

amongst professing christians, such as Ritualism—going back to “shadows” and losing hold of the “substance”; Legality—against which Paul contended in Galatians and Colossians, and which was really a mixture of law and grace, of Judaism and Christianity, destructive to both. Such, no doubt, were the doctrines and practices referred to in what is said in ver. 9, “The blasphemy of them, which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” It was that Judaising spirit which was the pest of the early church, and which we find again in the address to Philadelphia (chap. iii.). We have seen it ourselves in the Ritualistic and Romanist revival of the last century. It is simply the religion of the “natural man” in “christian” dress; the outcome of the loss of a full knowledge of redemption through the blood of Christ, and consequent falling back on works, ordinances, forms, rituals, etc.

(3) PERGAMOS. *Meaning of the word, “Marriage.” Period of World Patronage.*

This church was dwelling “where Satan’s throne is.” Historically, it was the time when Constantine adopted Christianity, and persecutions under the heathen Emperors ceased. The church was now united with the world in an “unequal yoke,” and placed in a position of worldly honour. She was forgetting her true place as separated from the world; a witness for Christ *in* the world, but not *of* it. The heavenly calling was abandoned; the christian’s place as a pilgrim and a stranger was no longer what characterised God’s people, but, instead, they were becoming “earth-dwellers” (Rev. vi. 10).

But here we find *individual* faithfulness coming out at the very time when the mass were lapsing into the world. “Antipas” (which, by the way, means “against all”) is mentioned by the Lord as “My faithful witness.”

Here, also, we read of those who “hold the doctrine of ‘Balaam.’” What was that? Well,

(Continued on page 73)

the false prophet had been hired to curse the people of God, but God turned the curse into a blessing. Then he tried another plan; he advised the king of Moab to *ensnare* Israel, and lead them into committing adultery with the daughters of Moab. In this, alas! he succeeded only too well. It is just what Satan has done with the church: seduced her to leave her place as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, and to commit herself to an unholy alliance with the world. Let us reflect upon this, and beware of being led into worldly associations and ways.

The result of this was the loss of spiritual discernment and decision for Christ; consequently, we find here those "that hold the *doctrine* of the Nicolaitanes," and this is even far worse than the "deeds." Progress in evil and decline followed upon the first failure, loss of "first love," and the church was gradually slipping down an inclined plane towards the complete darkness of the Middle Ages.

(4) THYATIRA. *Meaning "Sacrifice of labour," i.e., Repeated Sacrifice.*

Here we arrive at the dark period of the Middle Ages. Jezebel, in the Church, was *teaching* and seducing the servants of God. It was not now the Church *being taught* by the living Word of God; indeed, the Scriptures were almost entirely ignored, while rituals, sacraments, the pomp and show of ecclesiastical display — in a word, *man* — religious man, it may be—took the place of God and His Word.

The result was corruption upon corruption. The invocation of Saints, the worship of the Virgin, the idolatrous Mass, as well as many other evils, gradually took the place of the knowledge of God and of Christ as a personal and beloved Saviour. And they replaced also the simple and touching remembrance of Him in His death, such as was the happy privilege of the early christians (1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

Here, also, "Jezebel"—that wicked and idolatrous woman — corrupt herself, and corrupting others, held sway as a teacher. And there are even children of corruption born within the professing church. Persecution, too, of those who were faithful amidst it all, was a marked feature in this state of things. Sad results of departure in heart from Christ and loss of the light of God's Word.

But we have here also the promise to the "Remnant"—the faithful ones—of the coming of the Lord, and the mention of that cheering and *heavenly* hope of "The morning star." It is Christ Himself, "Our Hope," arising just at the darkest hour of the night of His absence, and before the "day" of millennial blessing for this earth. What a sustinment for faith at such a time!

Hints on 1 Chronicles xii.

IN 1 Samuel xxii. we find three classes of people drawn to David—those in debt, in distress, and discontented — types of the *sinner* who comes to Jesus. But in 1 Chron. xii. the different companies who came to David supply a remarkable series of types of *christians* who follow the Lord Jesus. David had not then been accepted as King, and similarly the Lord Jesus has not yet been manifested as King of kings. Many of the companies which came to David had marked characteristics, and on examination it is clear that the series show development of spiritual character which we do well to apply to ourselves. The following brief summary is suggested *with the hope that the chapter will be carefully read* from this point of view.

1. *Use of either hand in attack* (v. 2). We all know that practice and perseverance are necessary before we can throw a stone equally well with either hand. Our weapon is the Word of God (Eph. vi. 17). Let us first become familiar with it by diligent reading, then persevere in using it.

2. *Skill with shield and buckler* (v. 8). (Compare Eph. vi. 16). We must be on our watch for the "fiery darts" of the wicked, and persevere in the use of the shield.

3. *Courage to overcome difficulties* (v. 15). How often we allow circumstances to prevent us from wholeheartedly following the Lord. Reason, without faith, would have advised delay until the floods of Jordan had subsided.

4. *Definite confession* (v. 18). Let us own publicly that we are on the side of Christ, though He is not yet accepted as King by the majority.

5. *Understanding of the times and knowledge of what Israel ought to do* (v. 32). Our natural tendency is to think we know where our predecessors and our contemporaries have gone wrong, and what ought to be done in present circumstances. But true understanding of the times develops from the activities mentioned in paragraphs 1 to 4. Let us beware of setting ourselves up as authorities on the christian pathway, especially if we are neglecting the use of the Bible for ourselves, and apathetic as to spreading the gospel, or are succumbing to Satan's attacks, or faltering in difficulties, or shirking the confession that we are Christ's among our companions.

6. *Ability to keep rank, not double-hearted* (v. 33). All the preceding qualities seem necessary in every individual composing a company which will be "keeping rank." If we realise what serious dissensions there are among Christians, let us examine ourselves as to what is presented under headings 1 to 5.

7. *A perfect heart—of one heart* (v. 38). Here we have the natural consequence of putting the foregoing virtues into practice.

May God help us by His Spirit to apply these lessons to ourselves. When His beloved Son is manifested as King of kings, the "joy in Israel" of v. 40 will have its counterpart in heaven. Till then follow Him.

J.C.K.

“My Yoke.”

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me” (Matt. xi. 29).

IN order that we may understand rightly this portion of Scripture it is necessary for us to see that it is transitional in its teaching. That is, the Lord's object when He uttered these words was to lead His people away from Jewish hopes and legal bondage into the enjoyment of the christian relationship of children and of christian liberty.

In the gospel by John the Lord's rejection by the Jews is spoken of in the very first chapter, and then, consequent upon that, He speaks of bringing souls into the relationship of children—that relationship, which is peculiar to the christian state, is brought in. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John i. 11, 12).

In Matthew's gospel the transition mentioned above is not so quickly or so abruptly brought before us. One often hears this gospel spoken of as the Jewish one; however, be that as it may, we are told in the opening verse of the gospel that it is, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” As Son of David He is heir to the throne of David, and will one day sit upon David's throne; but as the son of Abraham He is the One in whom God's unconditional promises of blessing to all the nations of the earth are centred; as it is written, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. xxii. 18).

We may, I think, safely say that if we read up to the end of chapter x. we shall learn that the Lord was dealing almost exclusively with His earthly people; for we hear Him saying to the disciples in chapter x. (vv. 5 and 6), “Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But, after all the faithful warning of

John the Baptist and the gracious pleadings of the blessed Saviour, still they rejected Him, so that in chapter xi. they are likened to "children sitting in the markets . . . saying we have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented." This brings us to the point where the Lord utters His woes upon those cities which had been so highly favoured, "because they repented not." "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! . . . And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

He then, in the consciousness of the glory which was His by right as Son of the Father, rises superior to all that was now arrayed against Him. As a well-known and esteemed writer has said, "They strip Him of His Messianic robes, but it only brings out more fully the glory of His person and He reveals Himself as the eternal Son." They refuse Him as the Messiah, He reveals Himself as the Son. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

And not only does He rise superior to all the circumstances which were contrary to Him, in the consciousness of the relationship of Son to the Father, but in the knowledge also that the Father had given all things into His hand. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and 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. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We see here, from these closing verses, that the Lord's object in calling a people to Himself

was that He might first reveal to them the Father, in order to bring them into the relationship to God of children and then entreat them to let go that heavy yoke of bondage under which they were labouring, so that He might lead them into the liberty of grace. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Well might the late J. G. Deck sing:—

"Thy lips the Father's name to us reveal;
 What burning pow'r in all Thy words we feel,
 When to our raptured hearts we hear Thee tell
 The heavenly glories which Thou know'st so well.

No curse of law, in Thee was sovereign grace,
 And now what glory in Thine unveiled face;
 Thou didst attract the wretched and the weak,
 Thy joy the wand'ers and the lost to seek."

C.S.

The Two-edged Sword.

Hebrews iv. 12-13.

I DESIRE to insist on a certain character of the Word of God—its being an offensive weapon, the two-edged sword—a character in which we are far from making constant use of it. Doubtless the Word is, for us, much more than a sword; it is a lamp and a light, a refreshing stream and a food; it is a fountain of salvation, of life, of joy, of power and of knowledge—the revelation of grace and glory, the revelation of Christ to our souls. But, besides this, we are called to handle this Word, and to make serious uses of it, or rather, to use it in combat *in various ways*.

In order to become acquainted with and to make use of it, we have only to consider the way in which the Lord has used it; how He uses it now, and how He will use it.

As soon as He entered on His service (Matt. iv. 1-10), He took this Word as the sword of the Spirit

in order to fight Satan. Alone in the wilderness, without help, without any resource except this weapon, He reduced the enemy to silence and obliged him to flee. He leaves us this sword to handle in the same way as He did, against the same adversary.

In the Revelation, chapter ii. 12-16, it is with the sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth that the Lord carries on warfare against the evil in the responsible church, where Satan succeeded in placing his throne and introducing false doctrines, defilement, and sacrilegious union with the world. We also have to carry on warfare against evil with the same weapon, as did Antipas, the faithful witness; and we will receive reward for doing so. We have, in the midst of this Christendom which surrounds us, to fight against the wiles of the devil, who has his throne there, making use of the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

In Revelation xix. 15, it is with the sharp two-edged sword going out of His mouth that the Lord will execute judgment on the nations and will establish His Kingdom. As He was alone on the cross in order to bring in the reign of grace, He will be alone also in bringing in the reign of righteousness. But He will associate His saints with Him in order that they may share the fruits of His victory, even as He associates them with Himself now in the enjoyment of the results of His redemption work.

But in Hebrews iv. 12-16, the Word is said to be "living and operative, sharper than any two-edged sword." It is not directed against outside enemies, but *against ourselves*. This sword is taken out of the divine armoury; it is supremely intelligent, nothing escapes it; it knows how to penetrate into the most secret and subtle parts of our being. It divides between soul and spirit—even that which is clothed with the most captivating appearance cannot escape it.

Our lack of real success in the preaching of the Word often depends on the fact that we endeavour to apply it to the souls of others before we allow it to penetrate into our own. May we use it to judge ourselves, as well as for warfare with the powers of darkness outside.

H.R. (Vevey).

The Coming One.

THOU, Thou, Thyself, the bright, the Morning
Star,

Wilt soon arise, and chase our woes afar;
What gladness then—what bliss without a cloud—
Shall fill these hearts so oft with sorrow bowed!

Lord Jesus, shall we gaze upon Thy face—
That face of perfect beauty, love, and grace?
That blessed form, once nailed upon the tree,
Lord, shall these very eyes in glory see?

We shall, we shall! for Thou hast said it, Lord,
And faith rests ever on Thy changeless word.
“Surely I come—surely I quickly come!”
Amen; come, Lord, and take Thy people Home.

Soon, soon these ears shall hear Thy welcome voice;
How will its tones our waiting hearts rejoice!
Soon shall Thy presence all our longings still—
Our thirsting spirits drink at last their fill.

Lord, all Thy saints, now, and through ages past,
Wait for the blissful moment when at last
Thy voice, Thou Son of God, shall rend the tomb,
And call both dead and living to Thee, Home.

Lord Jesus, come!—The Spirit calls for Thee;
Thy bride is yearning sore Thy face to see,
Lord Jesus, come! our hearts within us burn,
To hasten forth to greet Thy glad return.

C. H. VON P.

“Be Strong.”

Haggai ii. 4, 5.

IT was a day of much weakness and very little to encourage so far as outward appearances went, when these words were addressed by God Himself to His servants and to the people. The ten tribes had long since been carried away captive, and the remaining two had been in Babylon for seventy years under Gentile oppression. Truly it is an evil thing and bitter to turn away from the Lord.

But now, through God's mercy, a little remnant had been brought back to their land. True they were in much weakness and disposed to lack energy in the work of God, but He sent His prophets to strengthen and encourage them, and He was ready to respond wherever the energy of faith was found, saying, “From this day I will bless you.”

In verse 4 of chapter ii. we get the words “Be strong” repeated three times, and more than once we have Jehovah's assurance, “I am with you.” They had *obeyed* the voice of the Lord their God and the words of the prophet sent by Him.

Here we have a most soul-sustaining and encouraging word for ourselves. The church of God is suffering to-day, not only because of our own failures and wrong doings, but on account of those of our forefathers. Yet where there is *obedience* to God's word and *faith* in Him, He is ready to respond to it. In such a path—the path of obedience—we can surely count on His word, “I am with you,” and having Him with us, we may well go forward in *His* strength which never fails those who trust Him.

In saying these few words our desire is—not to theorise or give expression to mere platitudes or truisms—oh, no: but may God stir us all up to more earnestness and reality, more energy in His service, and more devotedness to the Lord Himself, as the dispensation hastens on to its close. Time is short, our opportunities will soon be over.

Faith's Resting Place.

IF my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and His acceptance, as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work, and a perfect, infinite acceptance. "As *He is*, so are we in this world," so that herein is love with us made perfect, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment.

Now what men substitute for this is the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me. The effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest in lieu of redemption, whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despair when I see the flesh working. Having put the work of the Spirit in the place of the work of Christ, the *confidence* I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all.

All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit in me for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished—the *sure*, because finished, resting-place of faith, which never alters, and is always the same before God.

The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for doubting, because it was by reason of this, to atone for this, because you were this, that Christ died; and Christ is risen, and *there* is an end of that question.

J. N. D.

Brief Remarks on the Seven Churches.—2.

Revelation ii. and iii.

(5) **S**ARDIS—*Meaning "Renovation" or "Renewal," i.e., "Reformation."*

In Sardis there was a kind of new start. The light of the Reformation had broken in upon the darkness of the Middle Ages. The great truth of justification by faith was proclaimed. Remarkable to say, about this period also, the art of printing was discovered, and the Bible was translated and made accessible to the people. Great were the

blessings of the Reformation, when we consider the previous darkness and corruption.

Yet one cannot read this address without being struck with the Lord's severity—we might almost use that word—in His message to the church at Sardis.

It is true that the tyranny of Papal power and bondage had been largely broken and souls were brought to have to do *directly* with God through His Word: but the failure was, in not *going on* with the light and truth recovered. Hence the Lord says, "I have not found thy works *completed* before my God." There is always the danger of resting on what we know, perhaps even of boasting in it, without that energy of faith and devotedness to Christ which seeks to learn more of His mind and to walk in the truth He has given us.

Besides, the Reformers—good men as most of them were—leaned on the world and the secular power for help and protection, instead of being separated from the world to Christ. Many long-lost truths were recovered consequent on the light of God's Word being available to Christians: but sects grew up, with various forms of church government, and cold formality marked the general state of things as soon as the first energy which had produced the Reformation had passed away.

God, in mercy, raised up men such as Whitfield, Wesley, and many others to preach the gospel; but the distinctive place of the church of God, its hopes, calling, etc., were not understood; nor are they even now in the systems of Christendom.

(6) PHILADELPHIA — *Meaning* "Brotherly love."

In this church we find a revival of remnant testimony, coming in just towards the close of the dispensation, somewhat similar to what we get at the end of Malachi, the last of the prophets. The Lord brings no charge against them: there was weakness—"little strength"—but *He* had set before them an opened door.

The way in which He presents Himself is less judicial and more personal than in most of the churches—it is more *what He was in Himself*, the holy and the true One. This largely gives character to the address; for there runs all through it the thought of how Christ Himself had marked out the way, in His path here below. For example, the Father had opened the door to Him (John x.), and He opened it to them; He had kept the Father's Word and confessed His name, and now He says that they had kept His (Christ's) word and not denied His name; then in verse 12 He uses the words "*My God*" four times over.

Many and blessed truths, long lost to the church, were recovered through the energy of the Spirit of God. The church of God as one body, composed of all true believers, and united by the Spirit to the glorified Head in heaven: the rapture of the saints to meet the Lord in the air as the true and heavenly hope of the Christian, were seen. In connection with this, much light was thrown upon dispensational truth and the prophecies relating to the Kingdom and the government of the world; and Israel's place in the future as well as the present, became clear. The gospel of God's grace, bringing a present salvation and the full knowledge of accomplished redemption, as well as the believer's acceptance in Christ, were largely proclaimed.

The Lord brings no charge against this church, yet His word to "Hold fast" should sink into our hearts and consciences, for surely He intends this. We are always in danger of letting slip the truth; or even of accrediting ourselves with the truth He in grace has given us, indeed of boasting in it as *ours*. But the truth can only be maintained and retained in humility of soul, in that *dependence* in which He Himself walked, and in communion with Him. Let us not forget but ever remember this.

(7) LAODICEA—*Meaning "The people's saying" or "verdict."*

What marked this church was that they were “neither cold nor hot”—it was *lukewarmness*. This is a condition so hateful to Christ that He says, “I will spue thee out of My mouth,” as something utterly nauseous to Him. They had ceased to be a testimony for Him, hence they were about to be spued out. Along with this lukewarmness, there was pride and self-satisfaction, thinking they had no need to go outside themselves for anything; whilst Christ was *outside* the door, still lingering to see if *any* would hear and open.

It is important that we should bear in mind that all these addresses have in view the *professing* church; that which takes the place of being a responsible witness or lightbearer for Christ on earth. We know that no true Christian, no one having divine life, could be spued out of His mouth.

Then again, the way the Lord presents Himself to Laodicea is significant, “The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” The church had utterly failed as a witness, but He was the Amen, the One in whom all the purposes and promises of God will be verified and made good. He was *the* faithful and true witness for God on earth, and in Him all the features of the “new creation” were shown forth. He was the perfect expression, in His own person, of that new creation where “all things are *of God*” (2 Cor. v. 18).

In the Lord’s estimation, they needed everything—divine righteousness (*gold*), practical righteousness of saints (*white raiment*), and eye salve that they might see. And He adds these five descriptive words to describe their condition—wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked. How unconscious they were of it!

Is not the professing church to-day very much like this? Zeal there may be, but not for Christ and the truth. And where are we to find a walk in true

separation from the world? Spiritual power is replaced by human efforts to gain the people by supplying them with worldly entertainments, concerts, performances, social clubs, even cinemas, within the churches, etc., etc. There is, at the same time, utter indifference as to the truth relating to Christ's person; the virgin birth, His atoning death, and the inspired Scriptures. And all this claiming to be commendable and even boasted in as being "broad-mindedness"!

But let us remember that we are all in danger of being caught in the spirit of the age, even if we do not outwardly fall into these things, so that we need to be on our guard. Nothing can keep the soul but the Word of God, learnt in communion with God and in dependence on Him.

Ere closing, let us observe that there is a touch of much sweetness here, in connection with the promise to the overcomer, namely, what the Lord says Himself, "Even as I also overcame." When He was on earth it was just at the close of the Jewish period; the state of things was even worse than in the days of Malachi when hardness of heart and indifference to Jehovah's claims characterised the mass of the people. But He "overcame" in every sense of the word, and in every conceivable circumstance.

He met and overcame Satan in all his craft and subtlety, as the obedient and dependent Man, at the beginning of His ministry, answering him from the Word; and He met and overcame him again when Satan came at the Cross; where, by death, He annulled him that had the power of death (Heb. ii. 14). And between these two points, He ever walked in humility, separation from the world, and loyalty and devotedness to the Father, showing forth love in its true and divine sense. All these things should have marked the church, but, alas! they did not; indeed, the whole spirit of Laodicea had been the denial of them.

May we follow Him in His path, and eschew everything that savours of the Laodicean spirit of indifference to Christ and of satisfaction with ourselves.

“It is a Light Thing.”

2 Kings xx. 10; 2 Kings iii. 17, 18; Isaiah xlix. 6.

HEZEKIAH was a king who excelled all the other kings of Judah in his trust in Jehovah, and moreover, “he clave unto the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses” (2 Kings xviii. 5, 6); so it was no ordinary shock to him to be told, at the early age of thirty-nine, that he should “die and not live.” He might surely have claimed the promise of long life made to Israel in Deuteronomy v. 33, and vi. 2, and Isaiah’s message must have seemed to him an unmerited punishment, especially coming as it did at a time when Jerusalem was besieged by the Assyrian, and the king’s life seemed more than usually necessary to his people.

So he pleaded with God: “I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight.” It was not “sinless perfection” that he claimed, for in his subsequent song of praise he said, “Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.” No, it was but the truthful utterance of a good conscience, and God accepted his plea, and promised him healing, and fifteen added years of life, together with the deliverance of the city from the hand of the enemy, heaping one blessed “*I will*” upon another.

And now we find Hezekiah asking for a *sign* that the Lord would heal him. Was this unbelief, or was it faith? In Mark viii. 11, 12, we read that when the Pharisees sought from the Lord Jesus a sign from heaven, “He sighed deeply in His

spirit," and, refusing to give them a sign, "*He left them.*" But it is said of these Pharisees that they asked, "tempting Him." Was Hezekiah then tempting God in asking for a sign?

Let us turn to Isaiah vii. 10-13. There we find Jehovah speaking to Hezekiah's father, the idolatrous Ahaz, when he and his people were filled with anxiety and dread because the kings of Syria and Israel were leagued together to attack Jerusalem. "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above." In His marvellous patience and compassion, God stretches forth a hand of mercy even to *such* a man: will he have faith to grasp it, repenting of his past evil ways? No! With a pretence of piety and humility, but really in pride and unbelief, Ahaz makes answer: "I *will not* ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." And Ahaz's *refusal* to ask for a sign draws forth from the heart of God a sigh like that which came from the heart of Jesus when the Pharisees *demand*ed a sign. "Hear ye now, O house of David," He says through the lips of his servant Isaiah, "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" The Pharisees in asking, and Ahaz in refusing, a sign were both rebelling against God, and He who reads the hearts of men, knew what was the motive in each case.

But the son of Ahaz, in asking a sign, was *not* tempting God, but was evidently exercising faith (though perhaps not in its highest form), and God granted his petition without a word of rebuke, and even gave him the choice of two signs, a greater and a lesser, as if to test the amount of his faith. And how sublimely Hezekiah rises to the full height of what God is setting before him! We learn from his song (Isaiah xxxviii.) that during his illness his soul had been in the depths, but all that is past now, and when the prophet asks: "Shall the shadow go *backward* ten degrees, or go *forward* ten degrees?"

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the king replies in the triumphant confidence of faith, "It is *a light thing* for the shadow to go down ten degrees; *nay*, but let the shadow return *backward* ten degrees!" Hezekiah does not want a *small* display of God's power when God offers him a *great* one, and he gets what he asks for, though not without a fresh turning to Jehovah, who must ever be acknowledged in His place as the Giver. "And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord, and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz," or, as we are told in Isaiah xxxviii. 8, "So *the sun returned* ten degrees, *by which degrees it was gone down.*"

It seems that Hezekiah's faith advanced, and became more definite, step by step, as Jehovah encouraged and led him on. In his prayer we do not find the word "healing" mentioned: "Remember" is the only petition he ventures to make; but all is included in that word: God *does* remember, and promises him healing, and Isaiah directs a plaister of figs to be applied as the means thereto. Then the king takes courage to ask for a sign, it may have been tremblingly, but God, as we have seen, willingly grants it, and gives him the choice between a greater and a lesser display of power.

And now Hezekiah with one bound, as it were, sets his feet on the high places where God would have him walk (see Habakkuk iii. 19), apprehends God's thought, and claims the miracle which to human eyes would seem the more difficult of performance. God tested Hezekiah's faith, and Hezekiah, in response tested God's power, as God in a later day called upon Israel to do, saying, "Prove Me now" (Mal. ii. 10).

Have not *we* much to learn from Hezekiah? In our public and private prayers, do we not often fail to ask *great* things from our God and Father? Can it be that the reason for this is an unacknowledged fear lurking in the depths of our hearts that He will

not (or cannot?) do the *greater* thing? Do we not often forget Jeremiah's words: "There is *nothing* too hard for Thee," and Jehovah's response: "Is there *anything* too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah xxxii. 17-27).

Many of us are almost broken-hearted as we look around among those to whom the Lord has made known much precious truth, and who have been, though in great weakness, witnesses for Him in a day of declension and worldly religion.

We see, indeed, something to cheer us, in that there is more sense of our failure, less of the high-mindedness which was inclined to boast: "*We* are the people," more appreciation of the grace of God working in others who do not walk in precisely the same path as ourselves. We seldom hear now the dogmatic "We forbade him, because he followeth not with us." Thank God, if His chastening hand laid upon us in recent years has produced this softening and humbling effect! But, on the other hand, is there not a danger of our going, like the swing of a pendulum, to the other extreme, and letting go, or holding with a loose hand, many of the principles we once held so dear—compromising, and mixing ourselves up with things that are contrary to the Word of God, in order to show love to our fellow-Christians; or using unscriptural methods in order to attract more souls to listen to the Gospel? One generally finds that the dear saints who act thus (however good their motives may be) lose by degrees much of the precious truth they once held, and instead of helping others, gradually become assimilated to the ways of those with whom they so freely mix. On the other hand, many who hold fast the truth, and faithfully refuse all compromise, are lacking in patient, winning love towards erring brethren, and in zeal for the salvation of precious souls.

What is the remedy? How can we become of one mind as to these things? How can we best help one

another? Surely, the only place is in the dust at the feet of the Holy and Gracious One whom we have so dishonoured. But is the hand of God straitened? Is it too late to ask Him to "lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving" (Ezra ix. 8)? We believe, do we not, that our day of testimony for our Lord is almost at an end, and our rest is near—that He is very soon coming to take us home to Himself? But meanwhile, can we not unitedly beseech Him, as Hezekiah did, that "the shadow may return backward," as it were, that the blessed sunshine which not only shone upon us (as it has never ceased to do), but which was reflected in the ways of His people, may once more shine out from us upon the needy souls around?

Surely such a blessing is not too much for Him to grant: it is *we* that are straitened. He has said: "Open thy mouth *wide*, and I will fill it." Oh, may we indeed open our mouths wide, as Hezekiah did; so shall "the shadow go back," and "the sun return" to its place of a while ago. It may be but for a little while, for He is coming quickly; but is it not worth asking for? Let us not ask for what Hezekiah would have described as "a little thing," when God is ready to give us a greater one.

H.

The Judgment Seat of Christ.—1.

2 Corinthians v. 10, 11.

WE have recently received several letters in which is expressed a desire to obtain some light on the solemn subject above named; and as it is very probable that many other souls are exercised on the same point, we would give our correspondents a somewhat lengthy reply.

One expresses himself as follows: "I find myself in a difficulty at the present time. It is concerning a dear friend who has been for some time very

unhappy in the thought that all his secret thoughts, all the intents of his heart, will be manifested to all before the judgment seat of Christ. He has no fear or uncertainty as to his eternal salvation, nor of the forgiveness of his sins, but he recoils from the thought that the secrets of his heart will be there revealed to all."

Another writes to us in these terms: "In the light of the blessed truths of eternal importance which such passages as John v. 24; 1 John i. 7-9; ii. 12; Heb. x. 1-17 teach us, I desire to know how you understand the following passages which I quote in full in order to underline the words to which I wish especially to call attention.

'For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil' (2 Cor. v. 10).

'So then each of us shall give an account concerning himself to God' (Rom. xiv. 12).

'For he that does a wrong shall receive *the wrong he has done*, and there is no respect of persons' (Col. iii. 25).

"It is the interpretation and application of these passages which I desire to be made clear; and I have thought that perhaps you would not consider it unimportant to give me your thoughts on this subject."

We have found it interesting to consider the various reasons for anxiety which appear to exist in the heart in connection with the solemn subject of the judgment seat of Christ. The passages which our correspondent quotes are so clear and so precise on the subject that we can only take them as they stand, and let them have, on our hearts and consciences, the full weight and authority which they carry. "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ," "Each of us shall give an account concerning himself to God," "He that does a wrong shall receive the wrong he has done."

These statements are clear. Would we weaken their force, blunt their edge, or turn aside their point? God forbid! We would rather labour to

make a holy use of them in seeking to better comprehend by them all the vanity, the lusts, the propensities of our nature. The intention of the Lord is that we should use them in this way. He never wishes us to use them in a legal spirit to shake our confidence in Himself and His full salvation. We shall never be brought into judgment as to our sins (John v. 24; Rom. viii. 1; 1 John iv. 17, could not be more conclusive on this point). But then our service must be brought under the eye of the Master. The work of each one must be tested so that it may be made manifest of what sort it is. The day will declare it.

This is all very solemn and should cause us to be more watchful over our works, our ways, our thoughts, our words, our motives, our desires. The deepest sense of grace and the clearest intelligence of the perfect justification of us, sinners, will never enfeeble in us the feeling of the deep solemnity which attaches to the judgment seat of Christ, nor of our desire to walk down here in such a manner that we may be well-pleasing to Him.

It is well to see this. The apostle laboured to be well-pleasing to Him. He kept his body under lest he should be reprov'd (1 Cor. ix. 27). There is not a saint who should not act in the same way. We are already accepted *in* Christ, and as such we should labour in order to be acceptable *to* Him (*lit.* well-pleasing to Him). We should seek to give to each truth its proper place, and the way to bring about this end is to be much in the presence of God, and to consider every truth in its immediate connection with Christ. We are always in danger of making use of one truth to displace another in practice, and it is this that we should most carefully guard against.

We believe that there will be, before the judgment seat of Christ, a full manifestation of each one and of everything. There all will be exposed. The things which appear here below to be very fine and worthy of praise, and which are highly esteemed of

men, will be all burned up, as so much "wood, hay, and stubble" (1 Cor. iii.) Things which were published afar and which served to encircle a name with a wreath of earthly glory will be submitted to the penetrating action of the "fire" (1 Cor. iii.) and perhaps the greater part reduced to cinder. The counsels of all hearts will be manifested. Every motive, every intent, every purpose of the heart will be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. The fire will try the work of each one, and nothing will receive the mark of approval but what has been the fruit of divine grace in our souls.

All mixed motives will be judged, condemned and burned up. Everything prejudged, every false judgment, every evil suspicion in regard to another—all these and all of a similar character, will be brought to light in that great day and thrown into the fire. We shall view things then as Christ sees them, and we shall judge them as He judges them. None will be so happy as I to see all my stubble consumed. Even now, just as we grow in light, in knowledge and in spirituality, as we keep ourselves near Christ, as we become more like Him, we shall heartily condemn things which formerly we esteemed good. How much more still shall we do so when we shall be in the brightness of the light of the judgment seat of Christ?—(*Translated from the French.*)

Strangers and Pilgrims.

1 Peter i.

THE Apostle Peter, in this epistle, addresses the strangers scattered throughout the countries named in the first verse. Earth is not their home. They are pilgrims passing through it to a heavenly inheritance.

But they are spoken of also in another way, being "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Strangers here, and also God's elect.

And as to the inheritance itself. It is incorruptible, it fadeth not away, and is reserved in

heaven. And for whom is it reserved? "For you who are kept by the power of God."

Let us briefly ponder over this. Change is stamped upon almost everything down here, and we are saying so constantly. There is so little that lasts. But this inheritance will be otherwise; it will never end. It is reserved for us who are kept for it "by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

So the salvation here spoken of is in the future; and, adds the Apostle, "wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."

Therefore, while there is to be rejoicing, there may be grief also; as another Apostle has written, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The trial of faith is then referred to, and forcibly too: "Being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Whereupon an attractive climax, so to call it, is reached. And it is one disclosing that which moves and animates these poor hearts of ours while on the way to the endless inheritance. And this is the climax: "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though *now* ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

And since such is *now* our happy portion (notwithstanding the sorrow, if need be,) as, with the eye of faith, we see Him who loves us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, what will be the rapture of the hearts of the saints at the moment of His appearing, when we shall see His face, and be with Him for ever? W.J.M.—(*New Zealand.*)

The Number of the Beast.—666.

ABOUT the year 1880 I deliberated if it were possible to apply the expression in Rev. xiii. 18, "he that hath understanding," to anyone now. It seemed unfair to suppose that God's children have not understanding, so I decided to try and count the number of the beast. The way of adding up the value of the Greek letters in Lateinos, which, as Irenaeus says, would apply to the Roman Empire, or, as Protestants say, would apply to the Roman Catholic Church, did not appear to exhaust the question, so I proceeded to calculate.

If you have only one number wherewith to count, you must count it by itself, thus:—

$$666 \times 6 \times 6 \times 6 = 143,856$$

On looking at the next verse in Revelation, I found another number, that of those with the Lamb, so I put them in juxtaposition, thus:—

	144,000
Less the full power of the beast's number	143,856
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>
Difference	144

Leaving 12 x 12 the complete number of administration, and nothing lost but the noughts.

Now, some will say, "Why do you only multiply by simple sixes, why not put them in a line?" Well, let us do so:—

$$666 \times 666 = 443,556$$

If you deduct this total from 444,000 (the three fours again make the administrative twelve):—

444,000
443,556
<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>
444

You still lose nothing but ciphers. Thus the beast's number, extended anyway, accomplishes nothing against God's testimony. Is this only chance, or did the Lord intend it for our instruction? Let the reader decide.

T. W. B.

“For Whom Christ Died”

“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died” (Rom. xiv. 15).

“And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?” (1 Cor. viii. 11).

IT is well worthy of note that we find the words “for whom Christ died” in both these passages. Even the weakest believer is a member of the body of Christ, equally dear to Him as the most advanced in knowledge, and it is equally true of such that “Christ died” for him. Bearing this in mind how careful we ought to be not to cast a stumblingblock in the way of any believer, or act so as to hinder such in the christian course.

Yet how often this has been done by a lack of consideration for others or by a want of grace in our dealings with them. Many of God’s people need sympathy; they may be suffering in health, or it may be business troubles and difficulties arise in their path, which are difficult to meet. Young christians are often involved in these latter on account of the socialistic spirit of the day, or the oppressive actings of trade unions, which would compel every employee to become a member and conform to their rules.

All these things and many others call for our sympathy and help—real practical help—in entering into the difficulties with them and bearing them up in prayer before God. And experience shows that servants of God would often be more helpful to those to whom they minister by being more in touch with their actual needs. Besides this, a little more of what is sometimes called “sanctified common sense” would not be out of place in their ministry.

The case was mentioned some time ago of a gifted brother who went to a meeting where, during the war, there were a good many sorrowing hearts to be found. He gave a somewhat critical exposition from the psalms, which would have been very good

for students of Scripture who could enter into such things at their leisure; but the mothers who had lost their sons, or others who had lost those dear to them, were not helped.

It may be, also, that we are too much disposed to satisfy ourselves with lectures and Scripture expositions instead of entering into people's trials and sorrows by personal conversations in their homes. The apostle Paul taught "publicly and from house to house"; and, valuable as lectures are, they can never take the place of a word of loving sympathy and personal interest. How many, too, have been "turned out of the way" by a want of consideration and forbearance on the part of some who seemed unable or unwilling to look at things from any point of view but their own.

May we, then, while seeking to maintain the truth, feel for others and enter into their difficulties, remembering that the one whom Scripture calls a "weak brother" is one of those for whom "Christ died." To stumble such an one is to "sin against Christ," and this is a very serious consideration indeed.

Golden Bells and Pomegranates.

IN Exodus xxviii. 31, we read, "And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue." Blue is the colour of heaven, and reminds us that our great High Priest, of whom Aaron was a type, is heavenly and of heaven. Hebrews viii. 4, tells us that, "If He were on earth He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."

It is then enjoined, "And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent." In Lev. xxi. 10, the high priest is commanded not to rend his clothes. Thus Aaron was to be the type of One whose garments should never be rent,

but who remains a Priest in perpetuity. In Matt. xxvi. 65, however, the high priest was disobedient, and rent his clothes; thus, as I judge, forfeiting his office. How blessed that our High Priest "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

"And beneath, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about." It is remarkable that the fruit is first mentioned, before the bells which speak to us of testimony; thus, however, it should ever be in the life of a christian—the proofs of grace in our walk should be seen before we exhort others in open testimony. The hem or skirts of the high priest were the part nearest the ground and remind us that all testimony and all fruit-bearing amongst us on the earth is dependent upon our High Priest in heaven. What great care also the divine Author has taken to show that testimony and fruit-bearing in our life should go together. "A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate."

Do we not sometimes in our public prayers or devotional hymns assume a spirituality which we do not possess at home? How sad if any member of our families or households must say, "He is a different man in the meeting to what he is at home." Oh, for a transparent sincerity in prayer and worship, so that all simple hearts may feel that what is expressed in public is the outflow of real private exercise and communion with the Lord. May we be able to say, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress" (Psalm xvii. 3). The danger of transgressing in long prayers is very real; these are often in inverse ratio to our prayers at home. Long prayers at home have the effect of making us more concise and distinct in our public petitions; we know what we want, and do not wander.

The golden bell should contain no alloy. We dug up a golden sovereign in our garden last week;

it had lain lost for ten years or more, and it was bright and uninjured, with the king's profile clear and fresh upon it. The great centre of the Spirit's golden bell testimony is the Person of the Lord. Are we as careful as we should be that nothing of man is added to that truth which God has unearthed and restored to the saints from the ruins of Christendom, in leading us back to His word? Let us not forget, that the enemy has from the beginning of the Church's history sought to add something to the word of God and explain what God has not explained, and this especially as to the blessed Person of our Lord.

Christ was a real man, with all the tender sympathy and compassion of a human heart. He could say "My spirit," (Luke xxiii. 46); "My soul," (John xii. 27); "My body" (Matt. xxvi. 12); and yet He could also say, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). John the Baptist said, "After me cometh a *man* which is preferred before me: for He was before me" (John 1. 30). How well faith can understand this one and indivisible divine Person. How happy we are in thinking of Him as God depicts Him in His precious word; but how barren and empty our souls are when the enemy sends some in the guise of "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. xi. 15), to "explain" what God has not explained!

The pomegranate is a fruit containing many divisions, and each partition holds a seed in luscious juice. One such fruit divided into nine parts we find in Gal. v. 22; a divine number three times three, and in juxtaposition and contra-distinction to the world's number, four times four, of the works of the flesh.*

"The fruit of the Spirit" is an expression that might lead us to expect great and heroic virtues, and such they are indeed, but not in the eyes of men. They would gain for no one a degree at men's

*The word adultery is rejected by the best editors and by J.N.D.

universities, but they are precious to Him who was "meek and lowly in heart," for they express His nature: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control (New trans.) Surely it is not necessary to consider these lovely virtues and fruits of the Spirit one by one. They must be learned by each of us experimentally, and by the heart more than by the head. A child can understand them, while the oldest christian still needs to study them. Only in the Lord Himself were all these virtues perfectly displayed; but in dependence on Him, and taught by the Spirit, we may press on to be more like Him.

May we learn more and more to be zealous for the purity of the testimony, but never forget the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2. Cor. x. 1). It is distressing to find how often the enemy succeeds in hardening our hearts towards others when we seek to be zealous for the truth; and how often he persuades us to forget the holiness which becometh the house of the Lord, when we seek to walk in love, joy and peace with all christians. The Lord alone can give us grace to hold a right balance, and to speak the truth in love, thus ever showing the golden bell and the pomegranate side by side.

T.W.B.

The Judgment Seat of Christ.—2.

2 Corinthians v. 10, 11.

NOW what should be the practical effect of all this upon the believer? To make him doubt his salvation? To leave him in a state of uncertainty as to whether he is accepted or not? To make him question his relationship to God in Christ? Surely not. What then? To lead him to walk in holy carefulness from day to day, as under the eye of his Lord and Master; to produce watchfulness, sobriety, and self-judgment; to superinduce faithfulness diligence, and integrity in all his services and all his ways.

Take a simple illustration. A father leaves home for a time, and, when taking leave of his children, he appoints a certain work to be done, and a certain line of conduct to be adopted during his absence. Now, when he returns, he may have to praise some for their faithfulness and diligence, while he blames others for the very reverse.

But does he disown these latter? Does he break the relationship? By no means. They are just as much his children as the others, though he faithfully points out their failure and censures them for it. If they have been biting and devouring one another, instead of doing his will; if one has been judging another's work instead of attending to his own; if there has been envy and jealousy instead of an earnest, hearty carrying out of the father's intentions—all these things will meet with merited censure. How could it be otherwise?

But then some, like our correspondent's friend, shrink with horror from the thought of having the secrets of the heart manifested to all there? Well, the Holy Ghost declares that "The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. iv. 5). He does not say to whom they shall be manifested; nor does this in the least affect the question, inasmuch as every truehearted person will be far more deeply concerned about the judgment of the Master than about the judgment of a fellow-servant.

Provided I please Christ, I need not trouble myself much about man's judgment. And, on the other hand, if I am more troubled about the idea of having all my motives exposed to the view of man than I am about their being exposed to the view of Christ, it is plain there must be something wrong. It proves I am occupied about *myself*. I shrink from the exposure of "*my secret motives.*" Then it is very plain that my secret motives are not right, and the sooner they are judged the better.

And, after all, what difference would it make, though all our sins and failures were made manifest to everybody? Are Peter and David a whit less lappy because untold millions have read the account of their shameful fall? Surely not. They know that the record of their sins only magnifies the grace of God, and illustrates the value of the blood of Christ, and hence they rejoice in it. Thus it is in every case. If we were more emptied of self and occupied with Christ, we should have more simple and correct thoughts about the judgment seat as well as about everything else.

May the Lord keep our hearts true to Himself in this the time of His absence, so that when He appears we may not be ashamed before Him! May all our works be so begun, continued, and ended in Him, that the thought of having them duly weighed and estimated in the presence of His glory may not disturb our hearts! May we be constrained by the "love of Christ," not by the fear of judgment, to live unto Him who died for us and rose again!

We may safely and happily leave everything in His hands, seeing He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree. We have no reason to fear, inasmuch as we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The moment Christ appears we shall be changed into His image, pass into the presence of His glory, and there review the past. We shall look back from that high and holy elevation, upon our course down here. We shall see things in a different light altogether then.

It may be that we shall be astonished to find that many things, of which we thought a great deal down here, will be found defective up there; and, on the other hand, many little things which were done in self-forgetfulness and love to Jesus, will be sedulously recorded and abundantly rewarded. We shall also be able to see, in the clear light of the Master's presence, many mistakes and failures

which had never before come within the range of our vision.

What will be the effect of all this? Just to evoke from our hearts loud and rapturous hosannas to the praise of Him who has brought us through all our toils and dangers, borne with all our mistakes and failures, and assigned us a place in His own everlasting kingdom, there to bask in the bright beams of His glory and shine in His image for ever.

We shall not dwell further on the subject just now, but we trust sufficient has been said to relieve the minds of those dear friends who have consulted us on the point. We shall ever regard it as a happy service to communicate with our readers on any question which may happen to present a difficulty to their minds. We can truly say our desire is that the Lord would make this little magazine a channel of help and blessing to the souls of His people everywhere and that the name of the Lord Jesus may be magnified.

From Things New and Old, 1862.

The Kingdom of God in Mystery.

THE instructed Christian will not for a moment question the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Son of David, who is yet to reign upon the throne of David. But being rejected, crucified, and risen from the dead, He now sits upon His Father's throne waiting until the time comes for Him to take the kingdom.

Jesus put the Pharisees to the test by asking the question, "What think ye of Christ?" Also, how Christ could be David's son and yet David's Lord (Matt. xxii. 41-46). To His Church He says, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David" (Rev. xxii. 16). Both the prophets and the Psalms bear abundant testimony as to our Lord's fulfilling, in His own person, both these characters. But the question is, which of the two is His *present* position?

(Continued on page 105)

There is more in the answer to this question than may at first sight appear, because the Lord's place has a direct bearing upon His people's path and portion; this is true in every dispensation or age.

The throne of David was *on the earth*, and never can be anywhere else. To say that Christ *now* reigns on the throne of David, and that His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, is to subvert the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies. The throne of David is now vacant, and has been so for 2,500 years. But when "The times of the Gentiles" have run their course and the time comes to set up again the tabernacle (or house) of David, which has fallen down (Acts xv. 13-18), the throne of David will be re-established by, and in, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 34-37; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, etc).

But when here on earth Jesus distinctly refused to be made a king (John vi. 15), either by the acclamation of the crowd (for He knew what was in man); or the suggestion of Satan.

In answer to Pilate He said, "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36). Yet there appears to be a lingering idea in the minds of many christians, that Christ exercises a present and direct rule over this world, instead of His being in the place of the anointed but still rejected David.

To understand intelligently where we are to-day we need to mark also the difference between the kingdom of God in the *moral* sense—of which so many scriptures in the gospels speak—and the kingdom in *manifested* display, wherein God will deal more immediately with the suppression of evil, and the reward of righteousness. The "kingdom of heaven" parables, as given in Matthew's gospel, do not describe the millennial kingdom, for they speak of "things which have been kept secret from the

foundation of the world" (Matthew xiii. 35), and which therefore could not have been known to the Old Testament prophets, who write so fully of that coming kingdom. Neither do they describe a spiritual kingdom, for the figures used are of an earthly character so as to describe the present dispensation, in its various aspects, during the absence of the king.

The parable of the wheat and the tares, not only gives us instruction as to how to deal with the tares—"the children of the wicked one"—sown by him, but shows us plainly what will take place when the present time of God's forbearance with evil comes to an end and the preparation for His earthly kingdom is taken in hand by the Son of man. "Then He shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 37-43).

Until this takes place the wheat and the tares are to grow together in the *world* (not in the church), until the command goes forth, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn."

There will be no mystery about "the kingdom of the heavens," when it is set up in manifest glory. The above-mentioned parables are spoken of as "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," because the king is absent; the rejected One of this world is now sitting on the throne of His Father: He is not yet sitting upon His own throne.

Not that the moral government of the world is in abeyance now. Even here and now men reap what they sow. "Godliness has the promise of this life as well as that which is to come," and iniquity brings its own penalty, not always immediately or openly, but generally with sufficient definiteness to make it clear that this is the rule, the ordinary course of things. It has been said that "in the

Divine economy provision is made for human government; and the sword is entrusted to men, that rulers may be a terror to the evil-doer, and a protection to the good. Were it otherwise, society would be impossible. But while men are thus empowered to punish offences against human laws, the judgment of *sin* is altogether with God.

When light from God enters the soul by His word, it is *sin* that is judged; not crime or law-breaking only.

How important then it becomes to see, with some degree of clearness, where we are to-day in the course of God's ways with man, and the reason of His apparent non-interference with the growing evil of the world; as well as the path of trial in which the godly are often found. No miraculous interposition delivers the persecuted christian from the power of the tyrant, or shields him from the malicious torture of the blinded bigot. The blatant defiance of the sceptic, and the corrupting deceits of the jesuitical monk, alike go unpunished, at least so far as God's intervention in an outward way is concerned. Surely the chief explanation (if not the only one) is, that *grace reigns*; until the limits of God's longsuffering mercy are reached: and how soon that may be!

Yet how often do we detect in ourselves and in others the impatience of disappointment, rather than the "patience of faith." To quote the words of another, "Faith falters beneath the strain of the petty trials of our life. And while *He* is saying, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' our murmurs drown His voice; and, though professing to be followers of them who 'through patience and faith inherit the promises,' our petulance and unbelief put from us the infinite compassions of God. '*They* endured as seeing Him who is invisible,' *we* can see nothing but our troubles and our sorrows, which loom the greater, because viewed through tears of

selfish grief that blind our eyes to the glories of eternity."

May we realise that He sits now on *His Father's throne* on high to dispense grace and strength for our feeble feet on the path of faith, while very soon He will sit on the throne of David to dispense judgment, manifest His glory and publicly assert His royal rights.

T.R.

"Thou Art Worthy."

THOU, Thou art worthy, Lord,
Of glad untiring praise;
The Lamb once slain shall be adored
Through everlasting days.

Heaven's vault with praise shall ring,
Louder and yet more loud;
Millions of saints Thy worth shall sing,
Each heart in worship bowed.

"Worthy!" again—again!
Angels with saints combine,
Ascribing to the Lamb once slain
Honour and power divine.

The tide shall still roll on—
That tide of endless praise,
Till every creature to the throne
Its voice in blessing raise.

"To God and to the Lamb
Be glory evermore!"
Fresh praises still shall greet Thy name
From every sea and shore.

O Lord, that glad new song
'Tis ours e'en now to sing;
With loyal hearts and joyful tongue
We now our homage bring.

"Worthy!" we cry again—
"Worthy for evermore!"
And at Thy feet, O Lamb once slain!
We worship, we adore.

C.H. v. P.

The Golden Altar.

THE altar of incense, or as it is sometimes called, the golden altar, was made of shittim or acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold. It was about eighteen inches square and about three feet in height; it had a crown or border of gold round about, with horns, and rings for the staves by which it was carried. It was placed in the holy place, outside the vail; as it is said, "before the vail," "before the mercy seat," "before the ark of the testimony" (Exod. xxx. 6; xl. 5). Each morning and evening Aaron was to burn sweet incense upon it.

The gold, which was seen everywhere in the holy place, spoke of divine righteousness, suited to the presence of God who dwelt within the vail. This altar was not for the offering of burnt sacrifice, meat offering or drink offering, like the brazen altar, but for the burning of sweet incense. Although outside the vail, it belonged more than the other utensils of the holy place, to the holiest of all. In the account of Solomon's temple it is said, "also the whole altar that belonged to the oracle he overlaid with gold" (1 Kings vi. 22. R.V.).

The fragrance of the sweet incense—"a perpetual incense before the Lord"—penetrated within the vail, into the presence of God Himself. Typically, it prefigured the all-prevailing intercession of Christ, our great High Priest, always going up on behalf of His people. And His intercession is in keeping with the worth and acceptability of His person, before God.

But to reach the altar of incense the priest had first to meet the altar of burnt offering, which was the first thing met with when one approached God, coming out of the world (the camp). This is very significant, for we *must* have to do with the brazen altar before we can approach God as a worshipper at the golden altar. In other words, we *must* be

accepted in the value of the sacrifice of Christ and cleansed by His atoning blood; before we can worship in spirit and in truth.

Only, we should remember that *then* the veil was still unrent, and only the priests could enter the holy place; the people as such could not. Whereas *now* the veil has been rent, consequently the believer has free access to the presence of God at all times, and every believer is a priest, one as much as another.

There were two occasions on which blood was put upon the horns of the golden altar: on the great day of atonement (Exod. xxx. 10), and on the occasion of the high priest committing a sin (Levit. iv. 7). This showed forth the great foundation truth, that the original relationship of the people with God, as well as the restoration of their communion with Him, which had been interrupted by the sin of the high priest (who represented the people)—both these could only subsist on the ground of atonement by blood. In its journey through the wilderness, this altar was to be covered in the same way as the candlestick, with a covering of blue and over that the rough badger skins. There was the heavenly colour within, and outside the protection needed in going through the world. Christ was essentially “*the* heavenly One”: His people are “the heavenly ones.” How far is this practically true of us? And how much we need that watchfulness and protection from the defilements of the world of which the badger skins remind us!

We have several references to the golden altar in the book of Revelation. When the judgments under the seven trumpets were just about to be poured out, we have the Lord Jesus (in angelic garb) standing at the altar having a golden censer, ready to give efficacy to the prayers of saints which were ascending up before God. In the next chapter, we have a voice—the Lord’s voice—from the golden

altar; not acting in intercession indeed, but rather in judgment, which, in the end, would lead to the deliverance of His people.

It is true that those on behalf of whom this intercession is made are suffering saints of another day, after the church has been taken to glory; nevertheless it brings before us the precious and sustaining truth that *we*, as well as they, have a living High Priest at the right hand of God who is *always* interested in His people here. May this encourage us in our daily path, amidst the difficulties and trials of the way—till He come!

F.G.B.

Extract from a Letter.

“ONE has been impressed of late that church truth is being neglected by those who seek to reach the unconverted. May we seek to be divinely balanced. The Apostle to the Gentiles was both minister of the mystery of the church, and of the Gospel—both teacher and evangelist: the two cannot be divorced. . . . Someone has remarked that we must consciously be within the veil before we can be definitely outside the camp. . . . I remember being told, as a very young christian in India, of five things we are instructed about in the Word of God—an example to follow; a promise to claim; prayer to echo; duty to perform; and error to avoid. It is the Word which thoroughly furnishes us to all good works. If we have the truth itself we have no need to be acquainted with error. Knowing the voice of the Good Shepherd, we are sure that none other is of Him. The possession of His truth as revealed in Scripture provides an answer to all man’s errors, innumerable though they be.”

Reading the Scriptures.

A CORRESPONDENT has lately drawn attention to the neglect of Scripture reading by many, even amongst true believers. There can be no doubt also that family or household reading and prayer have not at all the place they once had.

It is not our object in this short message to write in defence of the Bible; we take it for granted that the reader truly believes it to be the veritable Word of God. But we would earnestly press upon the people of God the need of learning His mind from His Word daily. What has characterised the godly amongst men in every age has been that they drew their strength and vigour from God's Word.

How far do we know anything of the spirit of the godly man in Psalm i, who could say that he meditated in His Word day and night? And not only was this the case with the psalmist, but God commanded the very same thing to Joshua when he was just about to take possession of the promised land and carry on warfare there, so that he might thereby make his way prosperous and have good success.

The New Testament, as we know, contains many similar exhortations; indeed, if we do not feed upon God's Word we can never grow spiritually or get strength for the wear and tear of the way.

Is it not often the case that we allow the prayerful reading of Scripture to be crushed out of our lives by spending too much time at other things? No book or paper, however valuable it may be, can possibly take the place of the Word of God. Let us, then, exhort one another afresh to prayer and the study of Scripture; and let us have a fixed determination, through the grace of God, cost what it may, not to allow anything to divert us from giving time to meditation on the Scriptures of truth; even though, owing to pressure of work, that time may be more limited than we could wish. **F.G.B.**

Spiritual Power.

“**W**HEN I went to meetings similar to those about thirty years ago or more, there was much more spiritual power than there is now; you could not but feel and realise it.” Such was, in substance, a remark made recently at the close of a series of meetings, by one who has been some time on the christian pathway.

There can be no doubt that many, who really look at things as they are in the Church of God to-day, and weigh them in the presence of God, would often have to say much the same. Why this lack of spiritual power, and what is the remedy?

It may be that there are many reasons for the lack: one is the superficial state which marks the bulk of those who take the christian place. They are not truly separated from the world and from the spirit of the age—they are “world-borderers.” Another is the lack of a deep and heart-felt value for the word of God; feeding upon it in order that we may grow thereby, and judging ourselves and all else in the light of it. Is it not often the case that we are so taken up with other things that there is little time left for the word of God, which is more or less crushed out?

But one thing is clear to any thoughtful Christian, namely this, that if there is to be spiritual power and freshness in assemblies, or in public ministry, there must be individual walking in communion with God. There must be a moral state of soul in keeping with the truth we profess, and there must be practical godliness of life, and truth in the inward parts.

When the power of the Spirit was given at the commencement of the Church’s history, it was to men whose whole object and purpose in life was Christ, His glory and His service. They had their

faults and failings as we all have; but they were true at heart.

And if we turn to the one great and perfect example in our Lord Himself, what do we find? A walk in perfect communion with the Father, perfect obedience to the Father's will and dependence on His word, and hence the power of the Spirit in full measure.

Stephen was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" and "full of faith and power." But that power—God's power—is not, as the apostle Paul tells us, a human thing; it is *of the Spirit*. It is known and realised in felt weakness and dependence on God (2 Cor. ix. 12).

Now nothing can make up for the lack of this power of the Spirit. We may have eloquence, brilliant addresses, clever and well-chosen illustrations, etc., and yet if spiritual power is lacking, it is but an empty and unprofitable thing. If that power is lost, there is but one way to recovery, that is by what seems to nature the hard and trying path of self-judgment and true humiliation before God. There must be a "doing the first works," a practical state which God can own and in which *His* power is free to act.

May He lead us to consider deeply and prayerfully, this solemn, yet practical and important subject.

Fragment.—A distracted heart is the bane of a Christian. When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this, or that? rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him.

“Live of the Rest.”

THE interesting paper in our June number on “The Pot of Oil” opened up an avenue of thought which may be pursued with profit.

In 2 Kings, chap. iv., there is a story of a widow’s debt, distress, and of threatened bondage: also of the debt paid, of liberty secured from the creditors; and, better still, of a plentiful supply left over to live on after the debt is wiped out—“live thou and thy children of the rest.”

How beautifully this sets forth, in figure, God’s grace as told out in the gospel! For bondage not only threatened us but had us in its grip. Such was the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil over us. Our countless sins also had plunged us into a debt which no power on earth could clear us from. Then we heard the sweet story that, “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us,” and that “He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal. i. 4). Thus was our debt paid and our freedom effected.

But although we love to sing at times: “I’m only a sinner, saved by grace,” this is by no means all that is foreshadowed for us in the story of the widow. The oil ceased only when all her borrowed vessels were filled with it. But the sovereign power of God which had so far triumphed had still more surprises in store for her; for the prophet adds a further message (v.7), “Go sell the oil, and pay the debt,” and “live thou and thy children of the rest.” She was provided with capital whereon to live, and her children also.

How God-like this act is! It reminds us of the twelve basketfuls which the disciples gathered, that nothing might be lost after the many thousands had been fed from five loaves and two small fishes, or of the “bread enough *and to spare*” which the prodigal knew to be in his father’s house.

The widow's "rest" forcibly reminds us that we too have not merely liberty and pardon and peace, but a present portion in Christ whereon to live. By faith in Christ life eternal is communicated to us. But beside this, the food to sustain the life, the means to live on is given also. The Lord Jesus beautifully sets this before us:—"As the living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." (John vi. 57). It is Himself. We have therefore not to wait till our dying hour to know if our debt is paid and our sins forgiven; neither have we to wait till then to find in Christ the source of spiritual satisfaction and joy. We have Him *now* as the food of our souls; we "live of the rest." This is "life indeed," "seeing life," "tasting life"—the only life worth living—the life which the Son of God lived by the Father when here below.

What food to our souls it is to study the Gospels and find Christ there! Even so are we "by the same Spirit" able to look up into Heaven, (as opened to us in the epistles) and see Christ there, and know that God has made Him to us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." All that He is, all that He has won for Himself of exaltation and glory—and nothing less—now forms the blessed portion, "the rest," for His people to "live of" spiritually. Let us then sing heartily:—

Oh worldly pomp and glory:
 Your charms are spread in vain!
 I've heard a sweeter story!
 I've found a truer gain!

W.M.R.

God's Grace. Oh! when will the heart of man, even in thought, rise to the height of God's grace and patience?

Hints on Hebrews xi.

THIS well-known chapter may be profitably studied from many points of view, but perhaps young Christians will find a fresh interest in regarding it as a series of illustrations of the phrase in Heb. x. 38—"the just shall *live* by faith." The illustrations are arranged in groups which I have summarised as follows, but do not be content with a summary!

Group I., two illustrations of what "living by faith" produces for God.

(a) Abel brought the sacrifice acceptable to God. "Living by faith" means, in these days, a growing appreciation of God's thoughts concerning the sacrifice of Christ.

(b) Enoch pleased God. This is more important than pleasing men (even fellow-Christians).

Group II., three illustrations connected with the people and circumstances among which we live.

(c) Noah lived as one deserving judgment as much as those around him, but taking advantage of the means of escape provided by God. Moved with fear (why "fear"?) he prepared an ark.

(d) Abraham took the next step God showed him, without knowing the next-but-one.

(e) Sara "judged Him faithful" although the promise seemed a physical impossibility.

Do you see how these three things hang together, and how very practically they apply to us? (c) ought to characterise our daily lives in our homes and our businesses. (d) means prompt obedience directly God's will in any particular is clearly shown to us from His Word by the Holy Spirit. (e) means implicit confidence. But it is important to see that Group I. comes *before* Group II.

Group III., four illustrations of confidence in God's promises, as shown in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

and Joseph. This confidence was not shaken by

- (f) death, in the case of Abraham.
- (g) division, in the case of Isaac.
- (h) failure, in the case of Jacob, or
- (i) prosperity, in the case of Joseph.

Further, the last-named (Joseph) displayed complete assurance in the fulfilment of the promise given to his great-grandfather, although the fulfilment (so confidently expected) had not occurred in the lifetime of his great-grandfather, his grandfather, his father or himself. Is our confidence in the fulfilment of the promised return in the cloud of the Lord Jesus to take His own (whether "asleep in Christ" or "alive") equally assured?

The illustrations in these three groups are all of an individual character. Perhaps in a later number the remainder of the chapter will be reviewed. Will you apply the above to yourself and your own circumstances?

J.C.K.

The Judgment Seat of Christ.—3.

MY dear Brother,—In reading the article you have published on the "Judgment Seat of Christ," I was struck with the thought that it is not only a good thing to remember in order to excite us to vigilance and prayer amid the manifestations and snares here below, but also a matter essential to the fulness of our happiness in eternity. Now indeed we know only in part, and in a very feeble part. There is also the sense of numerous failures, of many thoughts to be condemned, of many acts which, in order not to own our littleness, we seek to cover up; conscience also, even an honest conscience, is not always secure from the pernicious influences of the evil around us which is ripening for judgment.

Does not worldliness on the one hand and indifference for the glory of Christ on the other often characterise the walk of the people of God in these

days? Who would, like Daniel, fast and weep in the palace of Babylon? Which of us would refuse, without regret, the portion of the king's meat and feed on pulse and water? In the moral state in which many of us are, the conscience, even where it is heard, realises with difficulty the measure of exercise before God which will reconcile it with the thought of God to call *defilement*, without distinction of circumstances, *everything which tends to efface the reproach of Christ*. Have we to look far for the carnal spirit of bondage which imitates the world even in its vainglorious external formalities? What shall we do with its glory if we are imitators of its frivolity?

If we submit this carnal spirit to the individual conscience, it will be very rarely judged in a manner sufficiently serious and deep. We tolerate contact with human elements and scarcely do we ask ourselves whether what we touch is not decidedly evil. We cherish a number of things which bear the character of the world and which will end with it, and if, in our innermost being, a question arises as to these, we reply: There is no harm in that. "There is no harm in that," such is the measure of exercise of many of God's children and the spirit with which we are all more or less infected, and under cover of which we see to-day many among us pursuing an object in quite a worldly way.

Now, when the Lord will have taken us to be with Himself where He is, when we shall have been made like Him, when we shall see Him as He is face to face, that which is in part will come to an end, because that which is perfect will have come. Then we shall be able to cast back a look full of divine light and intelligence, and magnify suitably all the daily love of the Lord Jesus, which we appreciate so little at the present time, and in the energy and abundance of which He cares for and cherishes the assembly.

But the remembrance of ourselves, of our wretched ways, our words, our acts, which will all be revealed in that day in their own true value and character—this remembrance of which nothing, absolutely nothing, will escape—who could bear it? Who, indeed, would wish to enter heaven where perfect repose is united with perfect glory with such a prospect?

We desire, perhaps, that all this may be forgotten; but forgetfulness is not compatible with the divine character, except as to that which concerns things already judged in the presence of God. Sin is forgotten because it has been judged in the person of Christ on the cross: "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17.) And the Father, who faithfully disciplines, will willingly forget the unfaithfulnesses of his disobedient children from the moment they confess them and repent in their hearts.

The judgment seat of Christ is for our service, in responsibility to the master. He is pleased to honour everything in which He is glorified without forgetting the least service, not even a cup of water; but He must consume, by the fire, everything which has not been done with a view to Himself (i.e., done in faith, "without faith it is impossible to please Him," "whatsoever is not of faith is sin"), not excepting a single vain thought, or what we might consider an insignificant act. Does not Paul in speaking of fornication, impurity and avarice as things which should not be even named among the Ephesians, add, "Nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not becoming, but rather giving of thanks"?

And if we are under a moral obligation to receive such an exhortation, how much more will the Lord solemnly have us to give account in that day wherein all we have done in the body, whether good or bad, will be examined!

But why doubt for a single moment our certain acceptance although all the defects of our feeble

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service will have been burned up? One blessed thought! In this, as in everything that relates to our heavenly portion, there will be final and complete triumph of the *grace* in which we have been received and by the power of which we stand! And in the fulness of this triumph we shall then be enabled to consider, with perfect joy, all that remains of our path in the desert, and to exalt Him who cares for us with such great tenderness and who does everything for us whilst we do so little for Him!

May the Lord, in directing the attention of souls to this important subject, cause it to contribute in establishing them in grace instead of troubling them, and fill us with a more true devotion and godly fear not to displease Him even by the slightest levity.

Yours affectionately.

Familiar Talks on the Fundamental Truths of Christianity.—1.

FOREWORD:—Our object in this paper (and in a few others which D.V. will follow) is to try and help young Christians—though not necessarily young in years—to a better understanding of the important truths that form the foundations of our faith. The Apostle Paul speaks of being “nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine” (1 Tim. iv. 6), which nourishment must precede any real joy and usefulness in christian service. It is not proposed to print formal questions and answers, but to incorporate in dialogue form such questions as may be received, if likely to be useful.*

The first and most important thing in any statement of, or enquiry after, truth, is to give their due

*NOTE.—Any questions bearing on these fundamental subjects may be addressed to “T.R.,” c/o W. M. Roberts, 27, Friar Lane, Leicester, and will, without reference to the writers, be answered in the text as far as possible, or replied to direct if cost of postage is enclosed.

place to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the divine inspiration of the Bible. There never was a day in the history of the christian faith when it was so necessary as it is now to contend for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and the Deity and spotless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of His Person as the divine Son of God (truly man withal) imparts all its value to the work of redemption which He accomplished on the cross. Hence its eternal efficacy and value.

We feel sure that only a brief reference to this subject is needed here; although we are contemplating the help of the sheep and lambs of the flock of Christ. They ought to be able at any rate to discern the voice of the Good Shepherd, "a stranger will they *not* follow, but will flee from him for they know *not* the voice of strangers" (John x. 5).

We have heard it asked among Christians, "Is he sound on the *three R's*?" This is an allusion, of course, to the old school-days' story of the "three R's" taught in our elementary schools; but the "three R's" of the christian faith stand for Ruin, Redemption and Regeneration.

We will take these in their order as our starting point. First, as to our *ruin*:—Unless we accept the truth of Scripture that man is ruined through sin, and that he is totally unable to extricate himself from that state and its consequences, we cannot properly appreciate the true value of or necessity for the death and resurrection of Christ. A great deal of the teaching of the present day is very defective on this point. Fair words and high-sounding phrases are often used to becloud the naked truth of our hopeless and helpless state by nature.

Then, as to *redemption*, or deliverance from the *ruin* of sin. We have only to turn to Romans iii. and take our place as by nature amongst the "all" who are under sin, and the "none righteous, no, not one." (v. 9-12). We bow in heart to the truth of these Scriptures, and of verse 23, which says that

“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We accept thankfully the precious statement of verse 24, and so stand before God (shall we not say?) “justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” for “we have redemption through His blood” (Col. i. 14).

But what about the other R—*Regeneration*? That means being born again does it not? Well, that is no doubt the way it is used in the formula referred to above, but the word itself occurs only twice in the New Testament (Matt. xix. 28, and Titus iii. 5) and in neither of these does it mean new birth, although the sentence in Titus is perhaps allied to it. But we will take it as commonly used, for the foundation fact expressed in the well-known words of our Lord, “Ye must be born again” (John iii. 7).

Now it is easily seen that the possession of this latter blessing, the gift of eternal life, or the impartation of a new nature, is a distinct thing from pardon, or the forgiveness of sins. The first epistle of John expresses these differences, “He was manifested to *take away our sins*”; “He was manifested to *destroy the works of the devil*”; and He came “that we might *live through Him*” (1 John iii. 5. 8; iv. 9). These are three distinct parts of the blessed work of the Son of God our Saviour—and there are many more. These made His death a necessity. They are all known and enjoyed now by faith in Him.

But our present object is to consider the nature and character of the standing we have before God in righteousness.

In setting forth the results of the death of the Lord Jesus, a mistake is often made between substitution and propitiation. The most orthodox and well-meaning of preachers sometimes proclaim to audiences of unsaved persons, in the open-air, that

“Christ Jesus bore all your sins.” Also a number of heedless and careless people are exhorted “not to turn from the One who suffered so much for them, and who died for their sins,” etc. If such statements are true, any hearer may turn away and say, “Well, if Christ bore my sins, I shall not have to be judged for them later on and that settles the matter.”

But this is a mistaken and unscriptural way of presenting the great truth regarding the death of Christ and our standing by nature, for it says, “He is the propitiation (or atonement) for *our* (*believers*) *sins*, and not for ours only but also for the whole world,” also “That by the grace of God He should taste death *for everything*” (Heb. ii. 10, new trans.). But neither of these Scriptures means that the Saviour bore the sins of every one or became the substitute for every one. There is a most important difference drawn throughout Scripture between “sin” and “sins” which, we might look at later on, if the Lord will. It is quite true that John the Baptist proclaimed the Lamb of God as the taker away of the sin of the world (John i. 29). That was the *character* of His work. But that He bore the sins of all the world or of every sinner is nowhere stated in Scripture. Yet we have the happy privilege and responsibility of going out into all the world to proclaim that “*Whosoever* will may come,” that “Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and through Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” He became the blessed substitute for *all who believe* on Him, and each believer can say, “He bore my sins in His own body on the tree.”

But we must now stop, hoping to resume the subject of justification next month if God permit.

T.R.

Seventy.

MY sixth decade was waning fast,
Each year seemed shorter than the last,
Rushing to join the mighty past,
At Seventy.

This was an epoch grave to scan,
The age divinely fixed for man
As his allotted earthly span
Was Seventy.

Then unbelief came on the scene,
Saying, "Whatever thou hast been,
Life now will but a burden seem
At Seventy."

"Thy days of bright activity,
With ample scope for energy,
All this must surely cease for thee
At Seventy."

"Strength failing, mem'ry giving way,
Trifles will soon as burdens weigh,
Senses seem dimmer every day,
At Seventy."

Then faith appeared and hushed the strain,
Displayed her dauntless shield again,
And whispered, "God will thee sustain,
At Seventy."

"Has He e'er failed thee on thy way?
In trials sore He proved thy stay!
Has He not kept thee day by day
Till Seventy?"

" 'Mid life's wrecked hopes He made thee prove
How constant, tender, was His love,
Supplying comfort from above,
Till Seventy."

"To thine old age *I'm HE*, what more
Can be required to bear thee o'er;
Then why forecast what lies before,
Past Seventy."

"The dreaded burdens ne'er may come,
Or coming can be cast upon
The ONE Who'll bear thee safely home
Through Seventy."

Then with a calm and placid mien
Came Seventy full upon the scene,
Saying, "A friend, I hope you'll deem
Old Seventy."

"I bring you precious gifts of love,
Each day their value you will prove;
They'll give a taste of joys above,
At Seventy."

"A lighter grasp of things earthward,
A closer clinging to the LORD,
More relish for His faithful Word,
At Seventy."

"A strength to bear, unknown before,
A keen desire to please HIM more,
Just counting on His boundless store
For Seventy."

And so I've proved, thus far along,
The Seventies do call forth a song;
In Christ's own strength I can be strong,
At Seventy.

As David in declining days
Could sit before the Lord and praise,
Reckoning as *done*, whate'er He says,
For Seventy;

So I, as evening shadows grow,
Find in life's sunset golden glow
A peaceful calm I did not know
Till Seventy.

On, on speeds time, the years fly fast,
The present soon will join the past,
To glory with the Lord at last,
Brings Seventy.

But I must now a tribute pay,
That Seventy's once much-dreaded day
Just brought me this, I gladly say,
Serenity.

Broadstairs.

The late J. R. FIELD.

Preaching Christ.

THERE is an urgent demand for faithfulness in maintaining the standard of pure truth, not in a spirit of controversy, but in meekness, earnestness and simplicity. We want to have Christ preached as a test of all that is in man, in nature, in the world. We want Christ preached as a victim, bearing all that was due to our sins; and we want Him preached as a model on which we are to be formed in all things.

This is Christianity. It is not fallen nature trying to work out righteousness by keeping the law of Moses. Neither is it fallen nature striving to imitate Christ. No, it is the complete setting aside of fallen nature as an utterly good-for-nothing thing, and the reception of a crucified and risen Christ as the foundation of all our hopes for time and eternity.

How could the unrenewed sinner get righteousness by keeping the law, by the which is the knowledge of sin? How could he ever set about such a work as "The imitation of Christ"? Utterly impossible. He "*must* be born again." He must get a new life in Christ ere he can exhibit Christ. This cannot be too strongly insisted upon. For an unconverted man to think of imitating the example or walking in the footsteps of Jesus, is the most hopeless thing in the world.

Ah! no. The only effect of looking at the blessed example of Jesus is to put us in the dust in self-abasement and true contrition; and when from this place we lift our eyes to the cross of Calvary, to which Jesus was nailed, as our surety, our sin-bearer, our divine substitute; we see pardon and peace flowing down to us through His most precious sacrifice. *Then* but not until then, we can calmly and happily sit down to study Him as our model.

C.H.M.

The Salvation of Souls.

“**I** CONFESS, to my shame,” writes the godly Richard Baxter, “that I remember no one sin that my conscience doth so much accuse and judge me for, as for doing so little for the salvation of men’s souls, and dealing no more earnestly and fervently with them for their conversion. I confess that when I am alone, and think of the case of poor, ignorant, worldly, unconverted sinners, that live not to God, nor set their hearts upon the life to come, my conscience telleth me that I should go to as many of them as I can and tell them plainly what will become of them if they do not turn to the Lord.

“And though I have many excuses, yet none of them do satisfy my own conscience, when I consider what heaven and hell are, which will, one of them, be the end of every man’s life. My conscience tells me that I should follow them night and day, with all earnestness, and take no denial till they turn to God.”

The Old Prophet (1 Kings xiii.) The old prophet at Bethel teaches us the lesson that, whenever God has made His will known to us, we are not to allow any after-influence whatever to call it in question, even although the latter may take the form of the Word of God. If we were morally nearer to the Lord, we should feel that the only true and right position is to follow that which He told us at first.

“I Come Quickly.”

IT is the Lord Jesus Himself who speaks, and as He is everything to the Christian's heart, His words must come with peculiar power and meaning. Four times over in the book of Revelation He says these words and they ought surely to make a deep impression upon our souls.

“I come quickly, hold fast” (chap. iii. 11); so the Lord says to the church at Philadelphia—that church which, though having little strength, had kept His word and not denied His name. What a stimulus to answer to what His infinite grace has bestowed, just at the close of the dispensation, on the eve of His coming again!

In the last chapter of the book the Lord says the same words three times. In verse 7 it is in connection with our responsibility to keep the words of the prophecy of the book; and in verse 12 it is connected with the Christian's responsibility in service for Him.

But at the very close, in verse 20, there is no question of responsibility; it is simply Christ's own testimony in pure *grace*, and it is His parting word to His church, “I come quickly.” In the two previous instances, where it is connected with our responsibility, there is, as someone has remarked, no response from the church. And we can well understand this, when we feel how poorly we have answered to all the privileges He has given. But here, at the close, where it is simply Christ's own expression of love and grace—of His heart's desires for His people—the response of the church goes up at once and without reserve, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Is this really the language of our souls? Oh, how we need to be constantly reminded of this blessed truth of His coming, so that it may not become a dry theory in our heads, having little or no effect on our lives! May the blessed Spirit of

God, who dwells in the church, and who has created within her soul those bridal affections which find their suited expression in the word "Come" in verse 17, so rekindle them afresh in the hearts of His people that they may respond with joyful alacrity, as in verse 20, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"!

"When I See The Blood."

Exodus xii. 13.

ON the paschal night the question was, How could God pass over the guilty, even if His people? The blood of the lamb sprinkled on Israel's doorposts declared that God, though expressly judging, could not touch those screened thereby. His truth and justice were stayed and satisfied before that blood. The destroyer was kept from entering. Not an Israelite perished within the blood-sprinkled lintels. It was a question of arresting God's judgment here, and destroying Satan's power in the type of the Red Sea. But the blood of Christ laid the foundation for the victory displayed in His resurrection.

But must not *I* see the blood? says many a distressed soul. It is well for me to estimate its value aright, and growingly; but no person can have solid peace on this ground. Nor was this what God told His people. It was, indeed, a token to them; but their assurance was built on this, that "when I (Jehovah) see the blood, I will pass over you."

The Israelite's business was, not to look at it for safety, but to keep within the shelter of the sprinkled blood, as to which God had thus pledged Himself. *It is He who sees the blood and passes over.* God alone estimates perfectly the blood of the Lamb; and faith means, not our estimate of it, but our confidence in Him. The blood is the token which recalls to us the love of God, as well as His righteousness.

J.N.D.

“It is a Light Thing.”

2 Kings xx. 10; 2 Kings iii. 17, 18; Isaiah xlix, 6.

(Continued from June.)

IN the first of the above-mentioned Scriptures we saw that Hezekiah, in faith, claimed the greater and more wonderful of two signs offered him by Jehovah, describing the smaller as “a light thing.” In the second, which is before us to-day, we find *God Himself* calling that “a light thing” which we should have considered great, and encouraging us with the promise of something yet more wonderful.

Again, we have before us an event in the life of another godly king of Judah, and he, too, was in sore straits. Jehoshaphat, though a truly God-fearing man, three times over dishonoured God, and brought trouble upon himself by his besetting sin of world-bordering (apart from the sin and suffering resulting to his family and people in later years by his marrying his son to Athaliah, the daughter of the wicked Ahab). At Ahab’s request he joined him in warring against the Syrians, and, being mistaken by the enemy for the king of Israel, he was in imminent danger of being slain, but his cry of distress brought God to his deliverance. Jehoshaphat had been unfaithful, but he had a faithful God, who did not allow him to perish, though He let him suffer something of the consequences of his sin.

On his return to Jerusalem the prophet Jehu was sent to meet him and rebuke him for his sin, but at the same time to encourage him in the good which God saw in him; and Jehoshaphat, thus rebuked and encouraged, set himself diligently to bring his people “back unto the God of their fathers.” This did not suit the enemy of souls, who thereupon brought against Judah a vast multitude of Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites. Yet in simple faith and dependence upon God the king led his people out with

songs of praise to meet the forces of the "roaring lion," and God fought for them, defeated the enemy, and gave to Jehoshaphat "rest round about" (2 Chron. xx.).

Surely he has learned his lesson now, and will never again seek for friendship with an enemy of God! Alas for the poor human heart! As Hezekiah, after God's great mercy to him, became lifted up with pride and used the visit of the Babylonian ambassadors to show off his own wealth instead of glorifying his God, so Jehoshaphat, who had resisted "the roaring lion," again fell into the snare of "the old serpent." "*After this* did Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly." It was a commercial, not a military, alliance this time, yet the sin was the same. But, thank God! Jehoshaphat was His child after all, and He did not say of him "Let him alone," but sent His winds, which broke the ships at Ezion-gaber, so that they could not go to Tarshish and Ophir for the wished-for gold. This time he appeared to have really learned his lesson, for when Ahaziah proposed a renewal of the attempt, "*Jehoshaphat would not.*"

But he was tempted a third time, for Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and brother of Ahaziah, whom he had succeeded on the throne, invited him to go with him to fight against the rebellious king of Moab. Incredible as it may seem, did we not know something of the weakness and folly of our own poor hearts, Jehoshaphat gave Jehoram the very same answer he had given his father two or three years previously: "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses"; and together they started for the land of Moab, passing through Edom, and being joined in their expedition by its king. It was through "the *wilderness* of Edom" they went, and it is no surprise to read that after seven days' journey "there was no water for the host; and for the cattle that followed them." "Whosoever will be a friend

of the world is the enemy of God," and if a child of God places himself in the position of an enemy, is it surprising if, sooner or later, he finds himself in a wilderness where there is "no water"? (See Jer. ii. 13.)

The king of Israel, the godless leader of the expedition, is filled with despair, but Jehoshaphat, though in a wrong position, knows where to turn for succour, and says, as he formerly said to Ahab, "Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah, that we may enquire of Jehovah by him?" Elisha proves to be not far off (for God was all the time occupied with His erring child) and the three kings go to him. With a scathing rebuke to Jehoram, the prophet turns to Jehoshaphat—for *his* sake alone will he interpose in this hour of stress. Once more had Jehoshaphat deserved to perish in the ungodly company in which he should never have been found, and once more did his faithful and gracious God deliver him, and this time not him alone, but those with him.

"Thus saith Jehovah," was Elisha's message, "make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith Jehovah, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts." The miracle was all of God, and yet they had their part to perform. That dry, desolate valley—truly a "valley of the shadow of death" it must have appeared to the three kings and their armies—must be filled with ditches, receptacles for the bountiful provision God was about to make. Does it not remind us of the empty vessels which the widow in the following chapter was told to borrow, and fill from her pot of oil? "*Borrow not a few*" was the prophet's exhortation, and it was only when there was not a vessel more to be had that "the oil stayed." And yet again we read in Psalm lxxxi., "Open thy mouth *wide*, and I will fill it." Oh, that we may, in our prayers, dig

plenty of *deep* ditches, borrow empty vessels *not a few*, and open our mouths *wide*! Surely our God would answer by giving bountiful supplies of grace, as He filled the ditches in the wilderness of Edom.

“And it came to pass in the morning when the meal-offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was *filled* with water.” It was at the time of the offering of the *morning* meal-offering in the temple at Jerusalem that Jehovah answered by *water*, and deliverance came, just as it was “at the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice” that Elijah appealed to Him, and He answered by *fire*, convincing Israel that He, and not Baal, was the true God (1 Kings xviii.). Though *we* may dig the ditches, it can only be through the Beloved One in whom is all the Father’s delight that any blessing can come to us.

But, wonderful as this miracle appears to us, and as it surely was, *God* says of it: “This is *a light thing* in the sight of the Lord; He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.” Oh, think of it!—a dry valley suddenly filled with water without wind or rain being seen; three perishing armies and their cattle saved from a fearful death—all this but “*a light thing*” in the sight of the Lord! Not deliverance alone, but *victory*, was in His plan for them, and the ancient enemy, Moab, was once more utterly defeated.

And what instruction may we find for ourselves in all this? Let us search our own hearts and ways. Has not much of the barrenness and weakness over which we mourn in the present day come through our tendency to mix with the world as Jehoshaphat did? Are not worldly ways and companionships tolerated among us which would not have been thought of a few decades ago? And has not this brought leanness into our souls just as Jehoshaphat’s worldly associations brought him into the danger of dying of thirst?

But yet there is hope! As Jehoshaphat turned to the Lord in his distress, cannot *we* turn to Him, confessing, and giving up all in our ways that has grieved His Holy Spirit, and in simple faith digging "the ditches" into which He is ready to pour His blessing? And when our thirst has been quenched at the streams of living water provided by our God, *then*—and not till then—can He give us victory over the enemy. A thirsty soldier cannot be expected to be a good fighter. But we must not rest satisfied with drinking. That would be "a light thing," as the Lord tells us. He feeds us and quenches our thirst that we may be able to fight for Him—to be good soldiers of Christ Jesus, overcoming the world, instead of making friends with it (1 John v., 4, 5), overcoming the wicked one, instead of being overcome by him (1 John ii., 13, 14). So shall we be able to re-echo Paul's shout of triumph, "*Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*"

H.

(To be concluded.)

Familiar Talks on Fundamental Truths.—2.

What is it to be justified?

IT is scarcely necessary to say that justification is a foundation truth of Christianity. "Justification by Faith" is the well-known doctrine over which the great battle of the Reformation was fought and won, after much toil and suffering, by Martin Luther and his contemporaries. How sad it is to think that the churches which gloried in their recovery of truth have in a great measure given up such an important foundation principle, and turned back in practice, if not in profession, to justification by works.

The Epistle to the Romans is that part of the New Testament where we find this doctrine fully

and clearly explained, and from the third chapter we learn, first that by deeds of law no flesh living shall be justified in the sight of God (verse 20), and that God justifies freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, all who believe (verse 24).

But wherein does justification differ from forgiveness?

Well, first of all, let us carefully note that the two things go together although they are different parts of the Christian's blessing. Paul announces in Acts xiii. 38, "Through this man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." Now turning again to Romans, we see that justification is that act of God, by which He accounts righteous all that believe in Jesus. It is not something that takes place in the emotional nature of the believer, although it may well excite the deepest emotion of our hearts to know that God does regard us as righteous in His eyes, and not only forgiven as to all our transgressions.

We might have been cleared of every charge against us, yet not accounted righteous.

But in what does our righteousness consist since it is not in what we have done? It was reckoned to Abraham on the principle of faith; and so it is for us who believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Abraham was a believer in God, or rather he "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans iv. 3). And have not we believed God? Is it not true to-day of every saved soul that we have believed God as to all His blessed testimony about His Son, our Saviour? Yes, we have believed the testimony that He set forth Christ to be a propitiation (a mercy seat) through faith in His blood—Christ who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

(Continued on page 137)

From whence then have we obtained the forgiveness of our sins, the cancellation of all our countless debts, if not through faith in the blood of Christ? Indeed we are "justified by His blood" and so we have the immeasurable blessing of not only knowing the forgiveness of our sins, but being "justified from all things." Oh, the wondrous grace of it all!

It is most interesting to trace how the Roman epistle brings us in this way—we who by nature are Gentiles and sinners—into line with all the faithful of past ages, and into the family of Abraham. We walk in the steps of our father Abraham. We "believe God" as he did.

Does not this produce happy experiences? Most certainly. To know ourselves forgiven and accounted righteous by God is surely calculated to give both peace and joy, consequently the fifth chapter of Romans begins with the notable words, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Clad in this robe, how bright I shine!
 Angels possess not such a dress;
 Angels have not a robe like mine—
 Jesus the Lord's my righteousness.

But there is something further declared about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. We read that the righteousness of God, without (or apart from) the law, is manifested thereby; "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and *upon* all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 21, 22). Now upon this point many dear Christians are much astray through having imbibed the theological dogma that Jesus came to fulfil the law for us in His life here, and that God substitutes this as His righteousness for man (believers of course) to stand in. But the more carefully and prayerfully we examine these Scriptures in Romans, the more clearly we see that there is nothing of the sort here said. The lucid state-

ments of the epistle admit of no such explanation, and, if we were not writing about the inspired word of God, which is superior to human wisdom, we should be inclined to say that the masterly argument of the Apostle Paul proves just the contrary.

It is no question of the absolute perfection of the life of the Lord Jesus in thought, word and deed. Every true Christian delights in the contemplation of the path of that Just One, who magnified the law and made it honourable. But the point is, whether His perfect life of obedience is what is imparted or reckoned to us, to believers, as the righteousness of God? And Scripture nowhere says this. Indeed it is remarkable it does not use such a phrase as the "righteousness of Christ" although He was, as we know, *the* righteous One. The *righteousness of God* is what is manifested, and what the believer becomes. And that, expressly through Christ's death and resurrection. Him who know no sin He made (to be) sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (R.V. 2 Cor. v. 21).

This in no way detracts from the righteous character of the law in itself, nor depreciates its place and purpose in the ways of God, while, even as to fulfilling its righteous requirements, it is plainly stated in Romans viii. 4, that the righteousness (righteous requirement) of the law is fulfilled in us that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And thus we see that, while the law could not, because of what it demands, give righteousness or life to such as we are; yet grace, free grace, confers it on the believer, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as to our practical daily life, the righteous requirements of the law are met by a Christian walking, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

T.R.

“Gold that Perisheth.”

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter i. 7).

A NATIVE of West Africa, living in a seaport town, was once asked, “What god do you worship?” It so happened that this town was supported by the palm-oil industry and the whole place was reeking with the smell of palm-oil. His reply to the question was, “The god of palm-oil.”

This poor native, in his ignorance of the true God, only expressed what, in principle, is true of many in Christendom. Men worship a god which appeals to their senses, their lusts and desires. Ambitious men, as a rule, worship the god called “gold” because it gives them power and position in the world.

But the true Christian has something much more precious than gold which only perishes. It is not that which would *appear* valuable in the world’s estimate, it is not fame or honour or what man would esteem precious. No!—It is that which we should least expect to find in such a connection, it is “the trial of your faith.” There are many things which cause us heaviness and sorrow now, but God allows them as a trial of faith, as He did with Abraham, Job and many others.

And our apostle declares that these very things are “precious”—much more precious than gold. They are like the refiner’s furnace which removes the dross from the pure metal; they teach us what we are in ourselves and that our whole dependence must be on God. It is written, “The Lord trieth the righteous” (Ps. xi. 5), and, as one has said, “He humbles us and proves us, that we may know what is in our hearts—feeds us with the bread of faith. But it is to do us good in our latter end.”

What God has in view in all this is that the

trial should work out to praise and honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. *Then* everything will be seen in its true light and we shall fully understand the *end* of His ways with us in every bit of discipline to which we have been subjected in our spiritual school-days here.

Then, too, we shall not merely know "in part," but even as we "are known," and see that God's gracious object with us has been to clear away the clouds of unbelief and brighten our sky so that Jesus Himself might be more precious to us. "Whom having not seen ye love"; faith is the realization by the soul of things *not seen*. The godly remnant of the Jews, in the last days, like Thomas, will believe when they see: the Christian is one who believes though he does not see.

And which is the more real—vision of faith or the vision of natural sight?—We say without hesitation, it is the vision of faith. That very Saviour, revealed to the eye of faith, has awakened within the Christian's heart a response to His love, so that Peter can say, "ye love": He is the centre for our heart's affections and the object which forms and shapes the believer's life here. And again, "ye rejoice"—and what a joy! It is "unspeakable," words cannot be found to utter it, for it is a heaven-born joy; and it is "full of glory," or "glorified." The light from the coming glory already illuminates the joy which the believer has in Christ, even amidst the trials and heaviness of the present time.

F.G.B.

"Follow Me."

Luke v. 27-39.

JUST two little words but full of power and meaning! These two words, "Follow Me," sank into Levi's heart: and with them came the authority of the One who cleansed the leper, pardoned and gave strength to the palsied man and did many other

miracles. But above all, Levi felt in those words the love of the One who came to take him, in the midst of his books and his counting-house, from all the material occupations of this world. He left all; for these words had touched both his conscience and his heart. He arose and followed Jesus. For him, old things had passed away, all things had become new.

This is indeed the result of *grace*, which addresses itself to all, without distinction. Levi was a despised man, not highly thought of by others: no Pharisee would like to eat at the same table with him; but grace goes out to seek poor sinners wherever it finds them. The heart of God knows no limits. The law was addressed to a small people (Israel); it was given to but a little part of the human race: grace is for all, it reaches out to all. It is like the heart and love of God, bringing joy, blessing and peace everywhere.

We, Christians, are glad to have our sins forgiven, are we as willing to leave all and follow Jesus? Self-righteousness does not understand this, and Jesus said He came only for those who had need of the physician, for the sick; this is the work of love. It is not that Jesus did not desire to save the Pharisees; but they would not come to Him for life and salvation. There can be no true joy and happiness in such a condition.

Sometimes one finds souls having the joy of the "old wine" (verse 39)—it may be that we have been engaged in philanthropic work or some other human activity which we look upon with pride and satisfaction. But it is, after all, only an artificial joy—our own works—the "old wine" cannot bring us true joy. The Pharisees fasted as well as the disciples of John, and they were surprised and even offended because the Lord's disciples did not do as they did.

But His disciples possessed the Source of all peace, all pardon, and of life; they had in their midst

Jesus, the eternal life, and we may say, heaven itself. Could they then fast and mourn? Would the friends of the bridegroom fast when the bridegroom was with them? This could not be: on the contrary, was not this their true joy? Truly it was; and it is the same for us.

The Bridegroom is not with us, it is true; the wickedness of men has driven Him from this world. He was crucified and slain, but He rose victorious from the tomb and brought to His disciples a new joy. It was no longer fear which caused the heart of His disciples to beat when Jesus said to them, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." And when, some days later on, the Lord left this earth, we know what great joy filled their hearts. It was just the same when the Holy Spirit came down on them all. All this is the "new wine." The "old wine" is the joy of having done certain works *myself*; and the old wine is for old bottles.

But *grace* has come in and it replaces the law, represented by the old bottles. It is this—grace—which brings with it joy, pardon and a new life; and these three things are communicated to the soul which believes on the Lord Jesus. A new life makes the man capable of enjoying the love of Jesus in heaven; he belongs to the heavenly sphere, his life is that of the Lord Jesus, in heaven; his hope is to be for ever with Him. This is what the new life is. Thus the new man has no happiness but in Christ. "Christ is my life," said the apostle Paul.

Let us further remark a little matter of detail, but one which is of large import: we must not put new cloth on an old garment. We cannot mend the old man. People often seek to improve him; we may, it is true, repress certain inclinations, but the old man is still there. But the one who believes has eternal life, and by it alone can we enjoy the wonderful things of God.

How sweet and precious it is to see the perfection

of the Word of God, and how everything answers in a perfect way to the needs of our souls! We need pardon and justification: the blood of Christ has procured them for us. We need a new life, in order to walk in a way that glorifies God and to enjoy heavenly things: well, this also is given us—given to those who believe on the Son of God.

And now: Have we all this pardon, this *present* cleansing? Are we all “Levis” who answer joyfully to the Lord’s call? These are personal questions, and they are very serious. Let us all answer as did Levi, to the words addressed to us by the Saviour, “Follow Me.”

For us, Christians: Let us ask ourselves this question, weigh it well—“Do I live in the reality of these things?” Alas, we see too often amongst Christians a return to the old life. The natural life in us craves for the “old wine”; we become weak, and we satisfy the desires of our own hearts. May we leave all that aside and have only one thought in our hearts and one purpose in life; to follow the Lord Jesus. *Then* we shall be filled with joy ineffable and full of glory.

A.L.

Fragment.—The Saviour has come to deliver me out of the condition I am in. All I have done, all my condition as a child of Adam, I am completely done with; I have got to the end of myself. Salvation is a big word. I have my place in the Man that is gone into paradise above, not in the man that was turned out of paradise on earth. That is the way grace appears: it is not mere help; it is salvation, the blood of Christ is the ground of it. I get my sins put away, my conscience made perfect, and Christ always appearing in the presence of God for me. There is not an instant of my life as a believer that Christ is not before God for me. I am now a man saved, justified, cleansed, made the temple of the Holy Ghost. There I stand in that Man in glory.

Our Substitute.

John i. 5; Matthew xxvii. 46; Heb. ii. 9-13.
(8.7 Metre).

DARKNESS had the world enshrouded—
 Dire result of Adam's fall!
 We, his children, in that darkness
 Wandered, guilty, helpless all.
 But Thine eye, Thou God omniscient,
 Looked in tend'rest pity down,
 And Thy Son, Thy heart's Belovèd,
 Thou didst send from heaven's throne.

Jesus! Thou amidst our darkness
 Camest down, the heavenly Light;
 But we would not have Thee, Saviour,
 Choosing still the shades of night.
 We despised Thee, and rejected—
 Nailed Thee to a cross of wood—
 Basely mocked Thy dying anguish,
 Patient, spotless Lamb of God!

Loud doth mercy boast 'gainst judgment—
 Mystery of Love divine!
 Sin condemned and God exalted
 In that wondrous cross of Thine!
 Thou didst call, and wast not answered,
 Lord, that *we* might answered be;
 That *we* might with joy behold Him
 God must hide His face from *Thee*.

Lord, the gloom is past for ever:
 We are with Thee in the light—
 Children in a Father's presence,
 Now no more the sons of night.
 Thou hast done it! Thou hast purchased
 Many brethren by Thy blood:
 Low we bow the head and worship
 Thee, Thou Firstborn Son of God!

C.H.v.P

“We Will Serve the Lord,”

THERE was a true ring about these words, spoken by Joshua to the people of Israel after he had brought them in and planted them in the land.

First, he puts the issue plainly before them, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua xxiv. 15): would it be the false gods their fathers had served on the other side of the flood, or would it be Jehovah? Idolatry was their besetting sin up to the time of the Babylonish captivity, when the unclean spirit went out, leaving the house empty, swept and garnished; but only to return in a future day, seven times worse than of old.

What is idolatry? It is something coming in between the soul and God, to take the place He should have in the heart as the object of reverential fear and worship. And is there not a danger of this even with the true Christian? Surely there is; hence the apostle John concludes his first epistle with the words, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

How many things may take the place He ought to have with us!—not gods of wood and stone it is true, but things which appeal to our natural desires in some way and displace Christ as the one and only object to fill and satisfy the heart.

But, if anyone felt disposed to question Joshua's right to thus exhort the people to make their choice, and to say to him, “It is all very well to tell us what we should do, but what about yourself, Joshua? Do you practise what you preach?” How magnificent his reply!—“As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” He speaks, not only for himself, but for his whole household. It was something like the reply of Moses to Pharaoh when the latter wanted Israel to leave their little ones and their cattle still in Egypt but to go themselves,

“There shall not an hoof be left behind.” And mark, Joshua does not say, “We will serve the Lord, but we will serve Baal a little also;” oh no: his words were clear and decided, as much as to say, “Whatever other people may do; by the grace of God my mind is made up, both for myself and my house, *we will serve the Lord.*”

God grant that many may be found, in these days of lukewarmness and mixture of the church and the world, to say with wholehearted decision, “Come what may, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD!”

Voices of Trust and Triumph.

True Incidents from Hospital Life.

I HAD gone to a workhouse infirmary to visit a sick Italian, but, being visiting-day, her bed was surrounded by friends and relatives, and it seemed of no use to try and get a word with her. So I went into another ward to see whether there were any patients there who had no visitors. But nearly every bed had one or more standing or sitting by it.

At last I found an aged woman sitting propped up by pillows, apparently alone and neglected among the many who had the comfort of being visited and cared for by their friends. *Apparently!* Why say *apparently*, when the fact was patent enough to all eyes? Ah! wait awhile, and you shall hear why. Going up to the bed, I asked its occupant:

“Have you no one belonging to you?”

The poor, paralysed features worked painfully, as she made a strenuous effort to speak, and then clearly and triumphantly came the answer:

“*Yes: Jesus Christ!*”

Not a word more could I get from her; those three words were all her poor, drawn lips had strength to utter, but it was enough. No, she was *not*

alone—was not neglected: the One who has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” was *with her* as she lay on a pauper’s bed in the workhouse infirmary, and now she has doubtless been for many years *with Him* in His heavenly Home. She *had* “Some One belonging to her”; she could have said “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.”

Could you say that, dear reader? Does Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of sinners, *belong* to you, and you to Him? *If not*, though you may be surrounded by loving friends and living in luxury, you are *alone* as regards your precious, never-dying soul, and will be alone—terribly alone—throughout eternity.

Oh, I would earnestly plead with you, do not go on as you have been doing, “without God in the world” (Eph. ii. 12). Turn *now* to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will find in Him a Saviour and Lord, in God a Father, and in heaven an eternal home—all “belonging” to you, and never to be taken from you

Some time later I stood by a sickbed in a Seamen’s Hospital. On it lay a Norwegian sailor, looking so terribly ill that at first I hesitated as to whether I ought to speak to him or not. At last I did so, doubting much whether he would be able to take in or answer what I said. As far as I remember, there was just a slight response to my question or expression of sympathy, and then, to my surprise and joy his poor, weak voice said in his mother-tongue, “Jeg ar saa glad—saa glad jeg har fundt Jesus” (“I am so glad—so glad I have found Jesus”). Oh, the joy of hearing that unlooked-for testimony to a Saviour’s love!

Later on the poor man’s reason gave way, and it became necessary to strap him to his bed. He lay thus for several days, with poor, bewildered brain and wide-open, wandering eyes; but even then, as I sat by his side, I had the joy of hearing him say on

more than one occasion, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13). And soon His Father, in His pitying love, took him Home to suffer no more for ever.

Can you say, "I am so glad—so glad I have found Jesus"? If not, *why* not?

August A. was a Swedish seaman, who had been for many months in the hospital, sometimes able to be up and about, sometimes confined to his bed. I had several talks with him and found him to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ though his confession of faith was not particularly clear or bright. One day, on going into the ward in which he lay, I was shocked to see the change in his appearance; evidently death was not far off. "I'm so sorry to see you looking so ill," I said, as I took a seat by his bedside.

"Don't be sorry—don't be sorry; *the Lord's got my soul*," was the dying man's reply, spoken in a loud, clear voice; and later on he raised his hand and pointed heavenward;

"I'm going *Home*," he cried, "*there—Home.*"

Two or three days later I found another patient in that bed; dear August A. *had* gone Home.

If you, dear friend, have given yourself into the keeping of the Lord Jesus, so that you can say with the Swedish sailor, "*The Lord has got my soul*" (see John x. 28, 29), you may be quite sure that whether you die or are still living when He comes to claim His own (1 Thess. iv. 13-18), He will take you safely "*Home—there—Home*".

Just one more story from the same hospital. William P. was a Devonshire man, who had, as he told me, been the "black sheep" of his family and had run away to sea in his youth. Year after year passed by and he sent home no news of his whereabouts. At last, consumption laid hold of him, and at a little over thirty he found his way into the Sea-

men's Hospital. He came one day into the ward in which I was having a talk with a Swedish sailor, far gone in the same disease.

After a little talk together about the only way in which a sinner can be saved, he told me that he knew the plan of salvation, but his heart was so callous that it seemed as if he could not believe.

Not long after that he was obliged to take to his bed. We had several conversations together, and he seemed to wish for the forgiveness of sins, and yet not to be able to come to the point of trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation. At last he told me what was the hindrance. He was too proud, he said, to confess to those he had wronged, and he felt that this was the barrier which was keeping him away from his Saviour. It was not till later that I knew what he meant. It was his parents to whom he referred—the poor parents who had been left all these years without any news of their prodigal son.

At last the proud heart humbled itself and he wrote home, to find that it was too late as far as his father was concerned, but that his mother was still living, and one can imagine with what mingled feelings of joy and sorrow she received that letter. The barrier was broken down now, and very soon, in reply to a letter which I sent him when hindered by home duties from visiting the hospital as usual, I received a few lines telling me that he had now come to the Lord Jesus. The way in which he expressed himself was not very clear or decided, and at first I rejoiced with trembling, but soon found that there was no need to doubt the genuineness of his conversion. Death was drawing very near by this time, but he knew whom he had believed and was at rest.

“*My Jesus!*” whispered his feeble voice one afternoon as I sat by his side. Another time I

quoted to him the verse, "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand."

"He's got 'em *both*" was the lovely response.

Weaker and weaker he grew, and now I hardly ventured to read or speak to him lest it should be too much for the poor failing frame. But I was allowed to hear one more testimony from those dying lips.

"I'm so weak and I can't pray, but I look at Jesus on the cross, and I say, '*Lord!*'"

Dear reader, have you ever done that—ever looked at Jesus on the cross, and said, "*Lord*"? It was not a crucifix dear William P. was looking at—no; he was looking with eyes of faith at the One who, having once hung on the cross as his Substitute, was now in the glory as his Representative. Oh, the peace, the joy, the triumph that may be yours, dear reader, if you, too, lift up eyes of faith to that peerless Saviour and claim Him as yours. It was for *sinners* He died and rose again; you are a sinner, then why not for you? If you but touch the hem of His garment, as did the poor woman of whom we read in the Gospels, His saving power will flow out to you. *God* is speaking to you by means of these voices from sick and dying beds. Oh, may it not be in vain!

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

C. H. v. P.

Hints on Hebrews xi.

(Continued.)

THE previous article dealt very briefly with the first three groups in this chapter, illustrating what "living by faith" really is. Many people would interpret the expression as "not being anxious because of our present and future circumstances," but in this chapter we have seen that there is a

positive and active meaning, and that the Spirit of God puts in the foreground what "living by faith" involves Godward.

This is illustrated, in one aspect, by the life of Abel, and in another aspect by the life of Enoch. Secondly, "living by faith" involves an active pathway of obedience to the Word of God; and, further, the overcoming of (humanly speaking) insuperable difficulties. Let us read again, and apply to ourselves, the first twelve verses of the chapter before we go on. These *activities* of faith are most important, and though we are reminded that the persons named all *died in faith*, the fact remains that they all *lived by faith*.

Thus we reach the third group, which emphasises the point that we should not be discouraged from living by faith because our predecessors died in faith. In the case of a man without faith "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," but there is no evidence of such a thing in the four cases mentioned in this group. Even when the object of faith was an earthly possession, the man who *lived* by faith looked beyond *death*. Now that the blessings promised to *us* are heavenly, how much more should our faith stand firm in spite of death! Although one generation after another has "died in faith" since the Lord Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly," yet we confidently expect the fulfilment of the promise will occur in our lifetime, and that we shall be among the number who are "alive and remain," to be caught up with those who have fallen asleep (I Thess. iv.). Is it not so?

As previously pointed out, the illustrations of faith named in these three groups are all of an individual character, but God's people are responsible *collectively* to live by faith, as well as *individually*.

Group IV., then, contains seven illustrations bearing upon living by faith *collectively*.

(j) The parents of Moses acted together in faith, in secretly preserving the life of their child. God puts it on record here for the third time so that we can be assured that it pleases Him when even the smallest possible company—two—act in faith in regard to even the most personal and intimate matter—a baby. (see Heb. xi. 23).

(k) Moses identified himself with the people of God in their adversity even at great apparent loss to himself socially and financially. How often Christians fail in this respect! Are we not often slow to identify ourselves with believers who are poor, or (as we may think) beneath us socially? Yet this, too, is involved in the life of faith and is necessary if we are to obtain “a good report” (verse 39).

(l) Moses forsook Egypt.

(m) Moses kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood. These two “individual” traits are essential if there is to be collective advance, as shown in the next two illustrations. He forsook Egypt in heart, before Israel crossed the Red Sea, in fact before the passover. Egypt here typifies idolatry and worldliness. Separation from such evils is a necessary preliminary to fellowship with one another in the pathway of faith. So, too, is the appreciation of the ground of deliverance. Verse 28 has a parallel in such a passage as 1 Corinthians x. 16. There can be no true communion with one another in the life of faith without the counterparts of (l) and (m), but if these exist, there will follow

(n) Conscious deliverance from the servitude of Egypt, and

(o) Victorious entry into the land of promise. Let us not shut our eyes to the weakness and failure of most companies of Christians in the present day; but in admitting this sad state of affairs let us seek to respond to the foregoing examples placed before

(Continued on page 153)

us by the Spirit of God so that the company among which we are found may triumph over physical impossibilities like the Israelites at Jericho.

(p) The final illustration in this group shows us the grace with which we should receive amongst us one who has faith. A company of Christians living by faith, on the lines of what has gone before, will not wish to be critical in its attitude towards one who has given proof of true faith in Christ, not even towards a Rahab.

J.C.K.

Cleansing of the Leper.

SOME dear brothers have supposed that the cleansing of the leper is a type of the restoration of a believer who has fallen into sin and been put out of Christian fellowship; but I am satisfied that such a thought places too narrow a construction upon one of the most magnificent chapters for enunciating the Gospel in the Old Testament. The individual Israelite was, with few exceptions, an unbeliever, and Israel as a nation was unbelieving. Although purchased on the ground of the paschal lamb (Ex. xv. 16) and redeemed (verse 13), and brought to God at the Red Sea, they had utterly failed to keep the law which they had undertaken to fulfil; and they were therefore sinners under the curse of a broken law, and in no wise saints. Leviticus xiv. thus shows the only way by which they could obtain salvation.

The priesthood given in connection with the law had broken down the first day, and entrance into the holiest, except once a year, for atonement, was forbidden. Leviticus xiii. 45, gives their true position by nature before God, and this Isaiah recognised when he told them (ch. i. 5), "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." As to himself he confessed (ch. vi. 5), "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips . . . for mine

eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." David took the same position in Psalm xxxii. 1, and Joshua the high priest, in Zech. iii. 4, was made to feel his need of cleansing and forgiveness. The Jews, alas! thought they were in God's favour because they were natural children of Abraham; but the Lord, in John viii. 44, told them the solemn but plain truth: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

In Leviticus xiv. we see a picture of what God will do for Israel in the future, when it has learned and confessed its helpless condition. And this is what God does now for every poor sinner who honestly takes the place of the leper before Him.

What is most extraordinary and calls for wondering worship and adoring admiration, is the fact that in Leviticus xiv. all the riches of grace which a worshipper could enjoy are poured out upon a man who had been in the most abject misery, even an object of abhorrence to his neighbours (see verse 18). It reminds one at once of the best robe, the ring and the shoes, in Luke xv., bestowed upon one who now heard from the father's own lips that he had been lost and dead. Boasting was precluded in both these cases, and therefore the Lord is free to open the flood-gates of His grace and let grace flow like a river.

Why is there so little deep welling-up of joy amongst us? Because seldom, in our days, is the depth to which we were sunk realised. We are all in danger of thinking, like Naaman, only of the place where the leprosy has shown itself *openly*, and of supposing that if the place is healed, then all is well. Naaman said, "Behold I thought, he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike (wave) his hand over the place and recover the leper" (2 Kings v.). Yet not that place only needed to be bathed in the Jordan; but the whole man needed to be

plunged into the river which typifies death. We find it hard to accept, for ourselves personally, that "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint"; and yet if we have not gone through the experience of Leviticus xiii. 45, calling out "Unclean, unclean," we cannot fully enjoy our high and holy privileges in Leviticus xiv.

Which of us can honestly go into our chamber, and, kneeling down before the Lord, say: "Lord, I do thank Thee, that Thou hast taught me, that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"? Such an one can then fully enjoy the consolation of those words: "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).

"Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds alive and clean" (Leviticus xiv. 4). "Nothing in my hand I bring," must be the language of the poor sinner; all is provided by others until he has learned the value of the death and resurrection of Christ, foreshadowed in the two birds; the one killed and his blood sprinkled from the feathers of the other, which had been dipped in it, seven times upon him that is to be cleansed. Cedar wood typifies that which is high and lofty in the nature of man; hyssop his lowliness and ignorance (which is no excuse for his sinning), and scarlet, official rank or glory. All has need of the blood. As regards the hyssop—sometimes one hears country people say: "Ah, the Lord will not require much from simple folk like us." But simple folk are, nevertheless, sinful folk and need the precious blood to cleanse them just as much as others.

In verse 8, the cleansed leper's responsibility commences. His clothes—his circumstances and surroundings—must be cleansed from all defilement by subjection to the Word of God. This has cost many—indeed, several are known to us at the present

time who are actually in such a case—their situation or a profitable business; or their social position, with family favour and the loss of hitherto cherished worldly ambitions. It is hard for an Oriental to sacrifice his beard of which he is so proud; but everything must go in which a trace of infection might lurk.

At the time of conversion one is often very zealous and ready to give up old habits of thought or action; but the enemy is waiting and watching, and, alas! many a one who has forgotten to wash again on the seventh day (verse 9) has been trapped by him. After the washing on the first day the leper, now cleansed, could come into the camp and be found among the people of God, but could not settle down in his tent to enjoy full rest. For this latter a further and more searching washing and shaving was necessary, for on the seventh day even the eyebrows are mentioned. After speaking on this chapter once, a young man said to me: "I was converted five years ago, but got back into the world; I had not 'shaved off the eyebrows' at the time of conversion; may the Lord give me grace to do so now."

Verse 10. "And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil and one log of oil." It is now the privilege of the cleansed man to bring something himself. The eighth day speaks to us of a new beginning, a new life or standing, and the gifts speak of that which makes us acceptable to God in the new standing. His first need is to know that all trespasses have been forgiven; and so the first lamb is offered as a trespass offering. Standing there before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where God dwelt, he has to learn that only *by blood* could the deeds of his hand be atoned for, the thoughts and

imaginations of his mind, and the course of his previous walk among men. Then the marvellous grace of God is shown, and the oil is now applied—a figure of the anointing and sealing with the Holy Ghost, “after that ye believed” (Eph. i. 13).

What riches of mercy and grace manifested to one who was so far away and so completely without hope till grace met him and healed him! Now he can see the sin-offering slain, which tells him that sin in the flesh has been condemned and put away and after that the burnt-offering which ascends from the altar as a sweet savour, showing how God Himself has been glorified in the sacrifice offered and in the salvation of the sinner.

Truly the moving history of the leper brings home to our hearts the truth that “where sin abounded grace did much more abound” (Rom. v. 20). The offerings all speak to us of Him who is the Lamb of God and who also said to a man *full* of leprosy: “I will; be thou clean.” Do we each realise that it was His touch alone which healed us?

T.W.B.

What Christ is to the Christian.

WE (Christians) have the full knowledge of accomplished redemption, we know that we are sitting in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. ii.). Our conscience is for ever purged (Heb. x.). God will remember our sins and iniquities no more. But the effect of this work is that we are entirely His, according to the love that is shown in the sacrifice that accomplished it.

Morally, therefore, Christ is the *all* of our souls. It is evident that if He loved us, if He gave Himself for us, *when in us there was no good thing*, it is in having absolutely done with ourselves that we have

life, happiness, and the knowledge of God. It is in Him alone that we find the source, the strength, and the perfection of this.

Now as to justification: this makes our position perfect. In *us* there is no good thing. We are accepted in the Beloved—perfectly accepted in His acceptance, our sins being entirely put away by His death. But, then, as to life, Jesus becomes the one object, the *all* of our souls. In Him alone the heart finds that which can be its object—in Him who has so loved us and given Himself for us—in Him who is entire perfection for the heart (see Song of Songs) . . .

The assembly—loved, redeemed, and belonging to Christ—having by the Spirit understood His perfections, having known Him in the work of His love, does not yet possess Him as she knows Him. She sighs for the day when she will see Him as He is. . . . We seek to apprehend (lay hold of) that for which we have been apprehended by Christ Jesus. We have an object that we do not yet fully possess, which alone can satisfy all our desires—an object whose affection we need to realise in our hearts, an end which He in grace pursues, by the testimony of His perfect love towards us, thereby cultivating our love to Him. . . .

Practically, what deep perfection of love was in that look which the Lord gave Peter when he had denied Him! What a moment was that when, without reproach, although instructing him, He testified His confidence in Peter by committing to him who had thus denied Him, the sheep and the lambs so dear to His heart, for whom He had just given His life!

Now this love of Christ's, in its superiority to evil—a superiority that proves it divine—reproduces itself as a new creation in the heart of every one

who receives its testimony, uniting him to the Lord who has so loved him.

Is the Lord anything else than this for us? No, my brethren, we learn His love; we learn in these exercises of heart to know Him Himself.

J.N.D.

Christ in Humiliation and in Glory.

“His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.—Isaiah lii. 14.”

“But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit.”—2 Cor. iii. 18 (new trans.).

BOTH these passages present to us the same blessed Person; the first in humiliation, the second in glory.

In the previous verse the prophet had spoken of His being exalted and extolled and very high; even kings shutting their mouths at Him as having nothing more to say; astonished that one so humbled should be so exalted. And as the result of His humiliation and His death upon the cross, He will sprinkle *many nations*, for the efficacy of His blood will not be limited to Israel, but will overflow even to the ends of the earth.

In our second passage this same Christ is seen; not in humiliation but in glory. His visage, once so marred upon the cross, is now radiant with all the glory of God. And there is no veil. Moses had to put a veil upon his face because the children of Israel could not look on the end of the old covenant done away in Christ. And this was when Moses came down the second time from the Mount Sinai, and when it was not a question of pure law, but of law with a measure of grace, for the Lord declared Himself to be “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.” Yet, under law, the people could not look upon Moses’ face.

But there is no veil on the face of the man Christ Jesus—the One who took His place in the glory *after* He had accomplished redemption upon the cross. This is the witness of God's perfect satisfaction with His finished work; and every ray of that glory as it shines in His face is the proof of our acceptance in Him.

We can gaze, by faith, upon the unveiled face of Jesus; and what effect has that upon the Christian in his path through this world? "We are changed," transformed, morally, from glory to glory. It is not the law which brings about this result; but, as we behold in that face, once more marred than any man, all the glory of God reflected, we are changed. Would not the contemplation of Christ thus presented, eclipse every object this world could present however seductive or attractive it might appear to be?

Fragment.—Christ Dwelling in our Hearts by Faith.—As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and hearts, being occupied with Him, will be effectually kept from being taken up with the vanity and sin around. And this, too, will be our strength against the sin and corruption within. Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him, is sin. But then it is not thinking upon my own sins and being occupied with my own vileness that will humble me, but thinking of the Lord Jesus and dwelling upon the excellencies in Him. It is well to be done with ourselves and to be taken up with Jesus. We are entitled to forget ourselves, we are entitled to forget our sins, we are entitled to forget all but Jesus. It is by looking unto Jesus that we can give up anything and can walk as obedient children. His love constrains us. Were it simply a command we should have no power to obey.

Lessons from the Lake of Galilee.

“LET us go over unto the other side”; this was the word of the Lord Himself to His disciples. But soon there arose a “great storm,” the waves beat into the ship and they were in jeopardy; but Jesus was calmly sleeping on a pillow, apparently indifferent as to their perilous position.

So it is with the church of God, and so it sometimes is with ourselves as individuals. The waves of adverse circumstances and trials surround us and appear as if they would engulf us. But could these poor, tried disciples perish when Jesus was with them? Impossible! The Lord allowed the storm as a test of faith, but only to show His own power to bring deliverance in the end.

Let us always remember that, at such a time, it is our privilege to know that, however dark or difficult the circumstances may appear, all must be well when He is with us.

And might not the Lord often say to us also, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” This is just where we lack; it is *want of faith*, want of implicit trust and confidence in Him no matter what the circumstances may be.

When the right moment came, just one word from Jesus was enough; a “great storm” was changed into a “great calm.” How many a saint of God has experienced long and painful trials; but, thank God, it is at these very times that it is the privilege of faith to say, “All must be well.” We know that the One who is with us is never unmindful of us, He knows every wave that beats into our frail bark, and in His own time He will surely bring deliverance and blessing. May we take courage and trust Him more simply and implicitly!

“It is a Light Thing.”

2 Kings xx. 10; 2 Kings iii. 18; Isaiah xlix. 6.

(Concluded from September.)

IN the first of the Scriptures which we have been considering we saw a saint claiming from God a *great* sign rather than one which he called “a light thing”; in the second we heard God Himself styling that “a light thing” which we should have considered a stupendous miracle; and in the Scripture now before us we hear God characterising a marvellous act of power and grace as “a light thing,” because He has in view something still greater.

The Messiah was sent to Israel by Jehovah, who had made His mouth “like a sharpened sword,” and hidden Him in the shadow of His hand, had made Him “a polished shaft,” and hidden Him in His quiver (Isaiah xlix. 2). But Israel would none of Him: “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” Again and again we see the sharp sword and the polished shaft flashing as He deals with Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, while for the poor repentant sinner, He is full of compassion and tenderness. His enemies felt the keen edge of the word, but “would not come to Him that they might have life,” and therefore the blessed “Servant of Jehovah” had to say, “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain”; though, in the perfect confidence of dependence upon His God and Father, He added, “yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with my God.”

Israel, as a nation, would not have their King, and so the kingdom could not then be set up, and as far as *that* was concerned, He *had* “laboured in vain.” But what a message of comfort comes to Him from His God! Though Israel was not gathered when Christ came to earth the first time, yet God

does not look upon His Son as One who has failed in His mission, but as One who (blessed be His Name!) has triumphed gloriously, finishing the work which He sent Him to do; as One from whose atoning sacrifice on the cross far greater blessing shall result than the gathering of Israel (though that, too, will take place in due time). The rejected Messiah will be "glorious in the eyes of Jehovah," and He who was "crucified in weakness" can say, "My God shall be my strength."

Oh, with what delight the Father's eyes rest upon that beloved Son whose mission to earth failed *outwardly*, and yet who accomplished all His will!

"And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel." That in which Messiah had apparently failed through the unbelief of His people is but "a light thing," to yet accomplish in the eyes of Jehovah, while the blessing resulting from the work which He finished on the cross is world-wide and eternal. Israel *shall* be gathered, it is true, and later on in the chapter we see how the Lord rejoices in the thought, but the Father's word of comfort to Him in the sorrow of His rejection is, "I will *also* give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the end of the earth."

We know how Paul and Barnabas quoted and applied that word, when preaching at Antioch, and how they, as obedient servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, saw in that *promise* to their Master a *command* to themselves to carry the gospel message to the despised Gentile (Acts xiii. 46, 47, 48).

And is not this a blessed encouragement and also an emphatic command to *us* to make known far and wide the gospel of God's grace?

He who once "laboured in vain" shall one day "see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied," and it will not be a *small* number of saved ones that will satisfy the wide and loving heart

of our blessed Redeemer. No! Israel will be restored, and their God "will be silent in His love," and "will joy over them with singing," but that is, as He tells us, "a light thing," compared with the salvation of millions of poor outcast Gentiles, now through the preaching of the gospel of His grace, and in a later day through the proclamation of "the gospel of the kingdom."

Oh! shall *we* not do all in our power, by word and deed, to make His glorious gospel known, and thus be, in a very real and deep sense, sharers in His joy and satisfaction when He "shall see of the travail of His soul"?

H.

Familiar Talks on Fundamental Truths—3.

Sanctification, What Is It?

PERHAPS no part of Christian truth has had more attention bestowed upon it of late years than that of sanctification or holiness. In taking up this subject we are still dealing with fundamental truth as it is not only absolutely essential to salvation, but as truly the result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, on behalf of all who believe, as is forgiveness and justification.

It is well to remember that the same word in the original language of scripture is translated holiness, and sanctification, and if we carefully examine all the passages in the New Testament where it is used, we shall find that in only two, or three at the most, does it refer to that growth of practical holiness in the soul and walk of the believer, which is generally spoken of as sanctification. In all the others it refers to that act of God by which He separates a soul unto Himself from evil, out of the world; and this, we may say, is the first or primary meaning of the word, namely, separation unto God.

In the first epistle of Peter, the apostle addresses the converted Jews to whom he is writing as, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." They had belonged to a nation separated from the other nations of the world by outward means, and marked off by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices. As Balaam said, when compelled by God to bless the people whom he had been hired to curse, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations . . . God brought them out of Egypt," etc. (Num. xxiii. 9 and 22). Thus Peter would be readily understood by these Jewish believers to whom he was writing, when by the Holy Spirit he speaks to them of that more blessed place that now belonged to them as sanctified to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, and to an obedience of another order from that of the law, even to the obedience of Christ.

An apt illustration of what sanctification means in this and kindred passages is given by another thus:—that the way in which God separates believers to Himself now, is as when a man hews stones out of a quarry. "The stone is hewn out of the quarry, and set apart, destined to be cut and fashioned in order to be placed in the appointed building." We see, consequently, that it is what God does, and refers to the very first stages of His work in us, whatever else may have to follow in the way of shaping and fitting for the destined end, here and hereafter.

So much has been said and written of late years as to "Holiness by Faith," the "Higher Life," "Full Sanctification," and similar phrases, that it is needful to look at all sides of this most important subject and to be led and guided by Scripture only. And it can only be properly understood if we keep distinct in our minds, the difference between that

act of grace which sanctifies or sets apart the believer to God, and the practical process which goes on in the soul after justification is known. It is altogether a mistake to limit sanctification to this latter *practical* aspect of it, viz., our growth in holiness, however desirable such growth may be, yet this is often done. But we must look into the Scriptures themselves, and let them help us.

Following up what we have said as to I Peter, we find, as a general fact in all the epistles, that all believers are addressed as saints, or sanctified ones, and never is the appellation used to distinguish a person or class of Christians as distinct from the rest. In the epistle to the Romans, for example, "to all that be in Rome called saints," or "saints by calling," is the opening address. In I Corinthians it is "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" and in the second epistle, "all the saints in the whole of Achaia." It need scarcely be said that in none of these Scriptures does it mean that *men* called them, or that they called themselves "saints," but they were saints or sanctified ones by the calling of God. So, in keeping with these texts, we read "the saints at Ephesus," "the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Philippi," and similar addresses in Colossians, Thessalonians, and other epistles.

Yet we venture to say that the majority of young Christians would be very much startled if asked the question, "Are you a saint?" And church history, and christian writings generally, reserve the name for some particularly holy persons distinguished by their piety in some form or other. But in none of the Scriptures we have been looking at is there any reference to the personal attainments of these believers, or, as we would say, their saintliness, but to their being called or set apart by God, to be in Christ, His people, His children, and apart from the world.

A very striking passage in connection with this subject is the 11th verse of I Corinthians vi., "And

such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Here we not only have sanctification put before justification, but the whole order of the passage clearly implies the action of the word of God upon the guilty and defiled Corinthians to cleanse from all impurity and defilement, and their separation from evil to all that is good and holy in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus we also, as they, are justified before God in virtue of the finished work of Christ, so that not a single question can be raised against us.

The other side of the question and the practical pursuit of holiness enjoined upon us in other Scriptures we shall have to consider in another article, if the Lord will.

T.R.

The Manner of Our Assembling Together.

"Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse" (1 Cor. xi. 17).

THE faithful apostle here directs the attention of the believers at Corinth to the manner of their assembling together. It was really shocking the wrong things that were done in their midst. He tells them what had come to his ears concerning the spirit of division that was there, and the way they were conducting themselves at the Lord's supper.

We must remember that these were souls converted right from heathenism. To-day the influences of Christianity have spread so much that we would not expect to find drunkenness at the Lord's supper. But, notwithstanding this, is there not a word needful for us to-day in this Scripture? If not, then to some extent at least, it is obsolete; but this we dare not believe. To do so would mean that we are left with nothing to guide us, nothing to govern

our path through these sorrowful and trying times, but our own imaginations.

Alas, that there is so little regard among professing Christians for the written Word. Just because it does not agree with their own thoughts or minister to their self-importance, men have no scruple to cut it out or explain it away. They say "Why should it say so and so?" Without faith to believe what God says and without understanding why it was written, plain portions are reasoned away, seemingly without any exercise of conscience. We need to be much exercised in a day like the present, which is characterised by so much reasoning and indifference, that we keep close to what is written. Therein is our only safeguard. Only thus are we preserved from the corrupting influences which surround us. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

But to return to our text. It would seem from the wording, that it would have been better for them not to come together at all than to come in the wrong spirit. They were not judging themselves as they were exhorted to do in the closing verses of the chapter; but the flesh in them was allowed to work when it should have been subdued; and evil was working in more ways than one, bringing sad dishonour upon the name of the Lord and hindering blessing.

May we, as saints of God, be exercised about the manner in which we are assembled together to-day. It is not only the place, but the manner; and oh, how this needs to be attended to!

Since the Lord has left us here, is it not, among other reasons, that we should "consider our ways"? He is exercising the hearts and consciences of many by His Spirit and His word concerning the manner and the spirit in which they have been and are assembled together. For if the right manner be

(Continued on page 169.)

lacking, there can be but one result. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

Oh, how apt we are to forget this, to the Lord's dishonour and our untold sorrow! How happy and wholesome to turn to what we all must admit has been a much-neglected portion, the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

And it is well for us to see that love is a thing that is to remain after the passing away of everything else.

We might well put to ourselves the question, How far, in all our actions, individually and collectively, have we been, and are we now, acting according to the mind of Christ? We are to let the word judge us now—that word which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and we are called upon to judge ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord.

Oh, may not the pride which is still in the human heart keep the people of God from confession of sin and of failure! How sad, too, that we should ever think of *our* reputation and status and self-pleasing, rather than of the good and blessing of His saints! For we are members of His body and, therefore, of one another, and all the members have need of each other. And it is only as they walk in self-judgment and in love that they can be helpers one of another. It is "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love" that we are to use diligence "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace."

F.E.H.

The Lord Jesus as the 'Praying One.

WE may learn a most important and practical lesson as we meditate upon the path of our Lord Jesus as the praying One, as recorded in the gospels. It is one of those touches from the pen of the Holy Spirit, through the inspired writers, which shows us a perfect man, always dependent upon God, and never taken out of the attitude of dependence and obedience, however great His ability to perform the most wonderful miracles—to raise the dead, to heal all manner of sickness, to feed a vast multitude with a few loaves and fishes, etc.

We find Him at one moment feeding more than five thousand people with five barley loaves and two fishes (Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46), and immediately afterwards constraining His disciples to go on board ship while He dismissed the crowds and went up into a mountain apart to pray. After this He walks on the storm-tost lake, causes the wind to cease at His will, and heals great multitudes of sick people who only touch the hem of His garment and are made perfectly whole.

His divine power and glory as Emmanuel, God with us, God manifested in flesh, in no wise took Him off the ground of complete dependence, which found its right and true expression in prayer. This was the true attitude for man to be found in, and Jesus was truly man.

But the ability to perform miracles, etc., were it given to one who was simply a man, even to an apostle, would need such an one to be much in the presence of God, so that he might be kept from the pride and boastfulness to which we are so liable (see the same tendency in 2 Cor. xii. 7). Indeed, the servant of God, if much used of the Lord, needs at that very moment to be specially kept by divine grace.

But in our Lord Jesus we see One who was always Himself—never in the least elated by the display of power, which was only used in so far as it was necessary as a testimony to the divine source of His ministry. All His miracles were done in the power of the Holy Spirit and in perfect conformity with the will of the Father who sent Him, and who (as John's gospel tells us) gave Him the works and the words to do and to speak.

The evangelist Luke, as is well known, presents the Lord especially as *the man Christ Jesus*. We find, therefore, much of the attitude of prayer characterising His path as set forth in that gospel. Chapter v. 16, gives us a remarkable illustration of what we have already endeavoured to point out. "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness *and prayed*." This verse 16, comes in between verse 15, where we find His fame going abroad and great multitudes coming to hear and to be healed, and verse 17, where we get His power present to heal in presence of many witnesses.

And if we read on in the chapter we shall find many more miracles and displays of power; yet, in the midst of all, He is found alone with God in prayer—even rising up a great while before day for that purpose and spending a whole night in prayer on another occasion. What an example for us!

Take, again, that wonderful scene in the garden of Gethsemane—the Lord is found in the attitude of prayer—prayer *before* the trial came, and still more earnest as the reality of it pressed in upon His soul (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii). He prayed three times that the cup might be removed (and it was the only one He did ask to have removed) but He bows in perfect submission to the Father's will.

And with what patience the Lord speaks to His sleeping disciples and almost excuses them! With what calm dignity, having committed all to the Father in prayer, He passes through every trial—

before the high priest, in Pilate's judgment hall, and upon the cross itself!

Oh that *we* might learn, deep down in our hearts and souls, those lessons which are shown forth in every step of the pathway of our Lord Jesus! How differently, then, we might meet the trials, as well as the temptations, which come across our way as we pass through this present evil world!

Lastly, in John's gospel, the way in which the Lord is presented as in the attitude of prayer has, we believe, a distinct character of its own. That gospel brings Him before us as a divine person and one with the Father: the eternal Word, God, and with God. Yet even here He loyally takes and never leaves the place of dependence and submission to the Father's will—the only right place for man.

The closing scenes of the Lord's life are not before us in at all the same way as in the other gospels, yet nothing can surpass the beauty of the touching expression of His divine and perfect love to His own in chapters xiii.-xvii. He is absorbed in thoughts about *them*—ministering as the Servant of their needs, making provision for them during His absence, consoling them with the promise of His coming again, and telling them of the Father's love and of the coming Comforter.

It is remarkable also that in these chapters a different word is used for "pray" (*erotao*), meaning, in this connection, "familiar entreaty." In chapter xiv. 16, Jesus says He would request the Father, who would give them another Comforter to abide with them for ever, taking His place when He would be gone. Then in chapter xvi, 26, He assures them that the Father Himself so dearly loved them that it was not necessary that He should request the Father for them. How blessed and encouraging to be the objects of such love!

In chapter xvii., the Lord's whole heart is poured out on behalf of His own—the mutual objects of

affection to both the Father and the Son. But His most earnest pleading is reserved for verse 24, where He uses the very strong word "I will" [or desire]. And what He desired was that they might be with Him, where He was; there to have the unspeakable privilege of beholding the display of *His* glory, in that scene of perfect light and love in heaven above, apart from every distracting element: a glory which He had with the Father before the world was. How great and infinite His grace!

F.G.B.

Communion the Basis of Christian Testimony.

Revelation iii. 20.

THE titles which the Lord Jesus takes in addressing the seven churches (Rev. ii., iii.) are like the reflection of what He has to blame, and sometimes to praise, in each of them. In fact, these titles are not titles of commendation, except twice—in the addresses to Smyrna and Philadelphia. I mean that in these two cases, the state of the assembly corresponds to the characters which the Lord takes in respect to them.

To Smyrna, He is "the first and the last, who was dead and is alive again." Here the assembly is encouraged to be faithful unto death amidst persecutions, in order to obtain the crown of life. To Philadelphia He is the Holy and the True, who has the key of David—all power, when the assembly has but little strength, yet has kept the word of the True One and has not denied the name of the Holy One.

In the other five addresses, and in quite a special manner in the last, the Lord's titles form the most absolute contrast with, and express the most definite judgment on, the moral state of each assembly.

We cannot hide from ourselves that as we advance towards the final apostasy, in the last stage of Christendom, represented by Laodicea, the *collective testimony* of the saints (so impressive at the beginning of the Acts when the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost had formed believers into one body on the earth) is lost more and more.

But it was precisely after the giving up of this initial testimony by the mixture of the church with the world, that the letters to these seven churches were written. Nevertheless a collective testimony is found again in Philadelphia; when Sardis, the church which came out at the Reformation, has nothing more than a name to live, but is dead.

Alas! Philadelphia, in its turn, has also lost this collective character, especially because it gave, so to speak, its name to a distinct period of the history of the responsible church; and we witness, even still further to-day, the state of "lukewarmness" of Laodicea which precedes the moment when it will be "spued out" of the Lord's mouth, as an object which provokes His disgust.

All testimony to Christ—for it is He alone who is the sole object of christian testimony—is completely absent from Laodicea; it is replaced by *the testimony which that church renders to herself*. What, in fact, does she say? "I am rich . . . and I have need of nothing." The exaltation of the old man, the merits of the old creation, which God would have nothing to do with after having proved it in every way since the Fall (except, indeed, to condemn it utterly, nailing it to the cross): these very things replace, in Laodicea, the One who is declared to be, in resurrection, "the beginning of the creation of God." This absolute condemnation of the old man, the need for a new birth—a new creation—are entirely ignored there.

In the midst of this complete shipwreck, Christ remains *alone* as "the faithful and true witness." You may search for a collective testimony in the midst of this radical abandonment of the truth, but you will not find even a trace of one. You may seek an *individual testimony*; you will find it in the person of the "faithful and true witness." Where do we find this Witness? At the door, outside. It is the only place which suits Him—the place which He has chosen.

Yes—but what an infinitely precious thing!—it is from there that He appeals to individual piety. He knocks at the door, He speaks. The sheep hears the voice of the Good Shepherd and opens to Him. He enters, He makes His abode with the one who receives Him. Yea, even more, He says, "I will sup with him and he with Me." These words are the expression of the most complete *individual communion* between Christ and the faithful one, and between the faithful one and Christ. They liken the isolated believer to the testimony of Philadelphia itself, whose character, in spite of its great weakness, is, above all, *communion* with the Holy and the True One. This communion makes the isolated saint in Laodicea *a witness* in his turn.

While regretting the happy times of old when, in the early church, all believers had communion with one another (1 John i. 3, 4), the believer to-day does not complain or lament. He finds, in supping with the Lord, a most precious communion—more intimate, perhaps, than that found in Philadelphia itself. He finds this even if he were entirely deprived of communion with the saints, which, thank God, is not the case, and will never be, so long as the Lord, at His coming, shall not have taken all His beloved ones to Himself, without one of them being missing.

H. R. (Vevey).

Priesthood and the Breaking of Bread.

I REGARD all pretence in any to priesthood, save that which can be attributed, and which in Scripture is attributed, to all saints, as the principle of the apostacy in its present form of development and the denial of Christianity. Judaism had priests, because the people could not themselves go directly to God when He revealed Himself; Christianity has none between God's people and Himself in their worship, because Christians are brought to God and have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. To set a priest to go for them, as one nearer to God, is to deny the effect of Christianity. Besides, priesthood has essentially to do with intercession, or sacrifice and offerings: and in the Lord's supper there is no sacrifice, nor is it intercession. The whole idea of priesthood on earth is to be rejected, therefore, as utterly contradictory both to Christianity and the act of breaking the bread.

J.N.D.

Worship and the Lord's Supper.

WHAT is worship? It has been often said to be the overflow of a heart too full to contain itself. Christian worship is especially the worship of the *Father* in spirit and in truth. The Lord's table is *par excellence* the occasion for worship. What folly it is to say that a hymn of praise is not suitable to begin such a meeting with. If the heart and thoughts are occupied with self, even religious self, we can well understand the difficulty; but let us leave self in every shape and form outside the door and come with a heart full of Christ and His wonderful grace and love, and we shall not need to be "worked up" to something. On the contrary, praise and worship must flow out to Him who is indeed the worthy One and to the Father who gave Him.

“ Yet not I.”

WHEN we are brought to Christ and we know Him as our Saviour and our Lord we are delivered from this present evil world. Christ has become our life and our object. The eternal life which every believer receives when he is born again is not derived from Adam but from the risen Christ. “I live,” says the Apostle, “yet not I; but Christ liveth in me.” That new life has a new object, even “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

What a deliverance this is from all that once governed us as men in the flesh! “I am crucified with Christ”—then, if so, I am done with the world—whether it be the religious world which loves to “make a fair show in the flesh,” or the ordinary world which shapes itself in such a way as to appeal to the varied tastes of the heart of man, and which is so seductive even to the true Christian.

“Christ liveth in me”—it is the *new* life, identified with Christ who is its spring and source, and in whom it was perfectly manifested in this world. Look at Him in all His grace, His love, His perfect devotedness to the Father—there is my life! Could anything touch the heart more deeply than “the Son of God, who *loved me and gave Himself for me?* Could any other object be more suited to mould and form the divine life in the believer?

These are not mere sentiments or theories, they are living truths contained in God’s Word. If Christ is my life and my object, how can I be making the pursuit of the passing vanities of the world my object also? “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” These are surely practical words, needed by every one of God’s people.

Joys and Sorrows in Shunem.

2 Kings iv.

“**A**ND when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers his father said, carry him to his mother and he died.” What a scene of earthly happiness! Harvest time, the bright sunshine, the busy reapers, and the fond parents’ only boy running at play among the sheaves. Yet how soon it was turned into gloom by the sudden and tragic death of the child! How little did the mother think that another reaper was nearing the field; and that too to cut down the youngest and fairest! All this is interwoven into the story of the little chamber they had prepared on the wall and other kindnesses which they had shown for years past to God’s prophet, Elisha.

Had not God given the boy? How, then, could He now take him away so quickly? But in His so acting we have a proof that every earthly blessing and joy, even though given by Himself, is subject to death; and, we may learn from the typical meaning of the whole chapter, that only that which God gives us in resurrection is really assured to us.

The agony of those hours to the mother must have been crushing; and to have the boy lying lifeless in her lap was a sore test to her faith. Satan often seeks to use trials like these in order to shake our faith, but grace can and does meet our need and directs our eyes heavenwards through all the tears. Thus was this mother helped. “She went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door,” for her husband should not know of their terrible loss so long as hope of help from God was possible. Her answer to his enquiry was the simple exclamation “Peace”: yet what surging feelings of hope and fear must have filled her breast!

Her urgent command to their servant was, "Drive and go forward" (v. 24), for she must first hasten with her grief to the man of God through whose word God at the first had given her the blessing of a son. How well it would be if all christian wives would likewise go with their sorrows and trials first to the risen Man, the Lord Jesus! Also, what a fine example, to husbands and wives especially, do we find here, of that thoughtful consideration for one another which should characterise us! Surely to cast all our care upon Him who careth for us, and to seek to spare each other, is another valuable lesson taught us here.

The man of God saw her afar off" (v. 25). This verse reminds us of the prodigal in Luke xv. who "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." This shows that, whether it be a repentant sinner returning to God, or a burdened heart seeking His help, He never lets us come the whole way, but sends or comes to meet us. It was the man of God who saw her first, and said to his servant Gehazi, "Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered: It is well" (*margin.* "Peace"). But she could not open her heart to a Gehazi.

When she reached the prophet she clung to his feet, "but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone" (v. 27). Here, again, we see the affinity of the Old Testament with the New, for in John xii. 7, when the same covetous unrenewed heart of an outwardly pious man would "trouble" the woman who had found her true place at the feet of Jesus, the gracious Lord said, "Let her alone." Religion in the flesh, as is clearly proved in these two cases, never can understand the intimacy of faith, whether that faith be accompanied with bitterness of soul or is absorbed in heartfelt worship.

At this, Elisha instructs his servant to "Gird up thy loins, . . . go, . . . lay my staff upon the face of the child" (v. 29). What a beautiful illustration of the salvation of a dead sinner we should have lost if the staff of the man of God had recalled the child to life! The staff, in Scripture, is mostly a sign of power, and, although the Lord was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power," it was not by power that sinners are saved, but by the "weakness" and death of the cross. The mother who, by faith, was to receive her "dead raised to life again" (see Heb. xi. 35), now takes the lead, and the mighty prophet follows her homeward.

Elisha, having first prayed, "went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands" (v. 34). However one may shrink from the thought of this contact of the living and the dead, it was infinitely more repugnant for the precious Saviour to be made sin, and to be charged with the sins of our eyes, of our mouth, of our hands, as He, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24). "And the flesh of the child waxed warm" (v. 35). The warmth emanated from the heart of the prophet of God. But whence comes the warmth of divine life and love in the heart of the saved sinner. From nothing less than the blessed Man who came down to "where we were," dead in trespasses and sins, and raised us up into life when He "was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. vi. 4). All warmth, all life, all love come to us from Him. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). Eternal praise be to His name!

"And the child sneezed seven times"—a perfect number. "But surely," says the sceptic, "such a detail could well be omitted!" But then, nothing is superfluous in the Word of God. The boy had lain cold in death and the struggle to restore him had

lasted long. This was the sevenfold proof of returning life. It is to be feared that, in these times of easy Gospel preaching, many of us have not at our conversion "sneezed seven times" as it were. That is, have not felt sufficiently how thoroughly cold, lost and dead towards God we were, and thus have never weighed properly in our hearts and minds what it cost the precious Saviour to rescue us. Repentance toward God should never be separated from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xx. 21).

Then, when the child was restored, the "great woman" "went in, and fell at Elisha's feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out." What? Not a word of thanks? Some sorrows and joys cannot be expressed in words. Her joy and thankfulness were seemingly of this order. Would that our own souls, like hers, were more deeply stirred! Then would our children and others receive blessing from the Lord.

T.W.B.

Hints on Hebrews xi.

(Concluded.)

THE hints on this chapter appearing in our August and October numbers summarised verses 1 to 22. They presented three groups which combined to illustrate the effect on the daily life of a believer of "living by faith." They also pointed out that verses 23 to 31 formed a fourth group and illustrated the effect of "living by faith" on a company of God's people collectively.

For it is very important to realise that Scripture contemplates not only that believers are responsible to live by faith as individuals, but that they also form a company which has a similar responsibility as a body. The size of the company is not material as far as Heb. xi. is concerned. It may

consist of only two as in verse 23, or many hundred thousand as in verse 30. In each case the act of faith was a collective one, and not taken by individuals acting independently one of another. The Passover was a striking instance of this. It was kept by households (see Exodus xii.) This distinction between what is individual and what is collective is frequently found in Scripture. As pointed out in the previous "hints" there are seven distinct points (j to p) mentioned in verses 23 to 31. Will you look at them again and observe how they can be applied to the present day?

The next group (v.) names six individuals, also "the prophets" and women (vv. 32 to 38), who lived by faith in times of failure and general departure from God. There was personal failure in the cases of Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthae, as well as national indifference and disobedience. Yet their faith triumphed remarkably over these things in spite, even, of weakness of character. The lives of all these men will repay studying from the point of view of the way they "lived by faith," especially so in these days when the masses of the so-called "christian" nations are growing more and more indifferent to the claims of Christ and to the Word of God. Their change of attitude towards the first day of the week during recent years is a striking example of this general declension. Professing Christians also have largely become "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2. Tim. iii. 4). Nevertheless it is still as possible to live by faith as in the days of Gideon and others.

Group vi. comprises you and me (chap. xii. 1). And we may well challenge ourselves as to what will be *our* "report" when the results which "living by faith" should produce in us are weighed by God. We have the cumulative examples of all those mentioned in chap. xi. While a "better hope" has been provided for us, we can hardly imagine that we shall have a better report than they. Would

that we were so living by faith that it could be recorded of us, "of whom the world was not worthy"! God help us to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience." But this brings us to the supreme example of living by faith, "the Author and Finisher of faith." He is the final stimulant for us, beyond which none remains.

So Group vii., if we may call it so, is Jesus Himself. If we look carefully into each of the great principles illustrated in the 23 examples of groups i. to v. we shall find that Jesus displayed in Himself all these traits in absolute perfection. Let us therefore *consider Him* lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. The enemy is busy nowadays: He asserts that modern conditions greatly modify and to a large extent nullify the life of faith for an individual, and still more so for a company of believers. But "the Word of the Lord endureth for ever," and as long as there are believers upon earth so long also will the lessons of Heb. xi. remain to stimulate their hearts and stir them to perseverance in the path trodden by so many godly men of old; and above all, in its perfection, by Jesus Himself.

J.C.K.

The Man Christ Jesus.

Philippians ii. 5-10.

IN these few verses we have delineated, in a condensed form, the lowliest yet the greatest Man that ever walked this earth, Christ Jesus our Lord. His greatness was manifested, not only in the mighty works He did, but also in His absolute submission to the Father's will.

The world in writing up its great men, uses high-sounding phraseology so as to make out a reputation that, in nine cases out of ten, exists only on paper. Not so the Holy Spirit. The truth requires no

embellishment, and thus the Spirit through the Apostle begins right at the top, when Christ Jesus was in the "form of God"; that is, in the position and status of Godhead glory, co-equal with the Father. But He "emptied Himself" and took the form of a bondservant—the position and status of service.

The angels were servants, but when the Son offered Himself, He undertook, voluntarily, a work that no angel, however great, could accomplish, for it was a question of redemption. And if man was to be redeemed—his sin atoned for and put away—this could only be by the shedding of blood, by the death of the Redeemer. Thus Christ was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, He was made in the likeness of men, and we read, "a body has Thou prepared Me." In this body the complete will of God was done, as set forth so blessedly in the Gospels. Christ could say what none others could, "I do always those things that please the Father."

Thus, being found in fashion as a man, He "humbled Himself," becoming obedient unto* death; and the Apostle adds, "even the death of the cross." Why this addition? Could He be more obedient than to death? The death of the cross was one of ignominy and shame, it was the death of a malefactor; and Christ's obedience was even to such a death! The Father's eye followed His every step with absolute complacency. His voice was heard proclaiming Jesus to be His beloved Son in whom was all His delight. He was ever in the full sunshine of the Father's favour.

"Well," someone might say, "it was very easy to be obedient under such circumstances, but would He be equally so if the circumstances were reversed? What if He were in a position where the eye of God could no longer look upon Him with complacency, or His voice be heard, though the holy Sufferer would

*The word "unto" means "as far as": His obedience could not go farther.

cry unto Him in accents of anguish? In the garden of Gethsemane an angel might strengthen Him, but here, on the cross, no angel dare intrude; He must be alone.

Would his obedience be perfect under conditions so awful? In the garden the enemy pressed upon His holy soul the cup He was about to drink upon the cross, but He took it from His Father's hand and no other. On the cross, when bearing sin in atonement, He was forsaken of God: who, being infinite in holiness, could not bear to look upon sin. There nothing could turn Christ aside, His obedience was perfect, even unto death itself—and such a death!

But, although we have touched upon the Lord's sufferings in atonement and His perfect obedience to the Father's will in it, *that* is not the way in which He is before us in Philippians ii. It is rather His voluntary humiliation on which the Apostle dwells, so as to produce the same features in them, as he says "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." And as we trace His pathway down, down to death, even the death of the cross, what can be more calculated to humble us than to dwell and meditate upon such complete self-abnegation and humble service in love?

Christ never was, and never will be, anything less than God blessed for ever, but He was really man—the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself—and we can look up to the throne above and see Him there—a man. And, having gone down voluntarily to the lowest place, God has exalted Him to the highest place and given Him a name which is above every name; for at the name of Jesus every name shall bow, of heavenly, earthly and even infernal beings.

And when we think of all that He is and of the glory He has won for God, for Himself and for us, we must not forget that He, the gracious Saviour, is personally greater than the glory He has won.

H.W. (Australia).

Church Reunion.

THE recent pamphlet by Lord Halifax entitled "Further considerations on behalf of Reunion," which has attracted considerable notice in the public press, calls for some remarks. The *Times* says of it that Lord H. is evidently quite sincere, but that many churchmen would not agree with it.

Now we do not doubt Lord H.'s sincerity, but sincerity is no proof that a man is right. The Hindu or Mohammedan devotee is thoroughly sincere, but that does not prove him right and the very fact of his sincerity makes him all the more zealous and earnest in his efforts to propagate a false religion. In this short article we cannot do more than briefly notice a few of the leading errors which underlie the position set forth in the pamphlet.

First, then, is the wrong conception of *the Church*—a false foundation on which the whole superstructure of the sacramental system rests. Let us briefly sum up this conception—(1) "By the act of Baptism we are made partakers of Christ, and at the same time receive incorporation into His Church." (2) "Its unity is realised by the Sacraments, Baptism, including Confirmation . . ." (3) "The Church is hierarchal in the persons of the Apostles and their successors . . ."

Clearly the writer of the pamphlet has no idea of the difference between the true Church—that which is *inward* and real—and the *outward* thing, the professing body of the baptised calling itself the Church. Again, there is no understanding of the essential truth of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus; viz, new birth. "Born of water and of the Spirit" has nothing to do with baptism, for christian baptism was not then instituted. Let us turn to the epistle of Peter for an explanation, "Being born

again . . . by the Word of God" (1 Peter i. 23). Water is the well-known figure of the Word of God, used by the Spirit of God, to bring about that great moral change called new birth, whereby a new life and new nature is communicated to the believer.

It is at once evident, therefore, that an unregenerate person has no part in the true Church, which is said to be "the body of Christ," who is the Head in heaven. In another aspect of it the Church is the "house of God," where He dwells by His Spirit (Eph. i. 23; ii. 20-22), and this building is composed only of "living stones" (1 Peter ii. 5). Baptism is not a sign of *life* but of *death* with Christ, "buried with Him by baptism into *death*."

When our Lord said to Peter, "On this rock I will build My Church," let us carefully note that *He* is the builder—I will build—and surely *He* does not build anything but what is genuine and real! No one, therefore, forms a part of the true Church unless quickened with divine life.

The consequence of confounding the professing body with the Church in its true sense is fatal, for it leads to attributing to the great mass who form Christendom those privileges and blessings of which Scripture speaks, but which belong *only* to true Christians and not to the professing body at all. Thus they are placed in an entirely false position.

Pages of the pamphlet are devoted to an effort to prove the primacy of S. Peter, *de jure divino* (of divine right); and from this, the position of the Pope as "living head" of the Church. Besides this, there is complete confusion between the "Church" and the "Kingdom of heaven." Now this latter is an expression taken from the book of Daniel (chap. iv. 17, 26), and it includes *all* who own Christ's authority, whether it be genuine believers or those who are Christians merely in name. It is therefore

a much wider expression than the "Church" of which our Lord speaks, and which is composed of members who, as one body, have a living link with the Head in heaven.

The keys of the Church were *not* given to Peter: the keys of the Kingdom of heaven were. There is a very marked difference between the two. Peter used those keys to admit both Jews and Gentiles, as we see in the early part of the Acts, by the preaching of the gospel and belief of the truth. The Church was *not* built upon Peter but upon Christ (1 Cor. iii. 11). That Peter had an honoured place we do not question, but the idea of "primacy," as set forth in the pamphlet, is altogether false. Lord H. does not say a word about Peter's denial of his Lord, nor of the fact that he had to be rebuked by Paul (Gal. ii.), nor of Christ's word to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto Me," etc. We do not refer to these things to discredit Peter for that beloved "Servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ," as he calls himself, was an honoured servant of his Master; but he was one of the most humble of men, and in neither of his epistles do we find the smallest trace of a claim to primacy, either *de jure divino* or anything else.

We shall only touch upon one other point in the pamphlet. In connection with the Eucharist, or, as Appendix D calls it, the Mass, the quotation from Bossuet argues that the Lord is really present under the species of bread and wine. The doctrine of the Roman Church is that the Mass is a *repeated* sacrifice, available for the living and the dead, offered daily.

Now this is a direct contradiction to the teaching of Hebrews ix. and x., which show that Christ has offered "one sacrifice for sins," never to be repeated; and that there "remaineth no more sacrifice for

sins.” In virtue of that “one offering” the believer has a “purged” conscience and a “perfect” standing before God: but of this Rome knows absolutely nothing whatever. It is impossible to honestly read and believe these two chapters, Hebrews ix. and x., and to maintain the doctrine of the Mass; for no honest and intelligent man could reconcile two opposites—a sacrifice repeated daily, and one sacrifice for sins never to be repeated. No sophistry or casuistry can evade the clear teaching of this Epistle, which brings out in such a marked way the completeness and efficacy of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross.

But devotion to a religious *system*—especially one which comes to us clothed with the prestige of antiquity and with a ceremonial which appeals so well to the natural, unregenerate man—has a particularly blinding power over the soul. It is not devotion to Christ and the truth but to a system. This accounts for the constant tendency to turn to it on the part of disappointed or unsatisfied souls who are looking for a refuge from the general confusion in Christendom. But they forget that the true resource is—not faith in the Church—but faith in God and His Word. What is particularly solemn is, the giving up of light and truth and going back to the darkness and superstition of the Middle Ages from which God delivered many at the Reformation.

F.G.B,

Mark xiii. 32.

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

SOME have inquired lately about this passage, as it has been misinterpreted and made a bad use of by Higher Critics and sceptics in order to support their false theories. They teach what is called the

“*Kenosis*” theory (see Phil. ii. 7), which we need not go into now, and they dare to say that Jesus did not know all things but shared the ignorance of His day.

But we cannot read the gospels aright without seeing the falsity of this view; for the truth of Christ’s omniscience is interwoven with the whole structure of these and indeed also of the whole New Testament. Amongst other passages we would draw the reader’s attention to the following:—John ii. 24, 25; vi. 64; xiii. 1, 3, 11; xviii. 4; Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25; Mark ii. 8; Luke v. 22; vi. 8; ix. 47; xi. 17.

It is, as we know, a fundamental truth that Christ was truly man as well as God; He voluntarily took the body prepared for Him, He was found in fashion as a man: *now* He sits, not yet upon His own throne, but upon the Father’s throne (Rev. iii. 21), waiting till His enemies be made His footstool.

When here, the time was not yet come for the Lord to take His power and kingdom, hence He says in the prayer in John xvii., “I demand concerning them (His disciples); I do not demand concerning the world” (New Trans.). The time would come when, according to Psalm ii., He would ask and get the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost part of the earth for His possession. To-day He is patiently waiting for the moment when it is the Father’s will that He should come, put down His enemies and take the Kingdom.

Then again, Christ, in His relation to the godly remnant of Israel, entered, in spirit, into the cry so often raised in the Psalms, “How long?”—how long would it be until they were delivered from their enemies and sorrows? (see Ps. vi. 3; xiii. 1, 2; xxxv. 17; lxxiv. 9, 10; lxxix. 5; lxxxix. 46; also Isa. lxiii.)

9). He waits for the moment when Jehovah will say, "Ask of Me . . ." (Ps. ii. 8); and as the waiting One, the true Servant and Prophet, He does not take the place of foreknowing when it is.

But we would remind the reader that such questions as this belong to the mystery of the Person of Jesus, the incarnate Son, as to which the door is foreclosed against all prying of man's mind, by the word, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whosoever the Son will reveal Him." As one has truly said, "He who from all eternity was one with the Father, become man, surpassed, in the deep mystery of His being, all knowledge save that of the Father Himself. The impossibility of knowing Him who had emptied Himself to become man, maintained the certainty, the reality, of His divinity, which this self-renunciation might have hidden from the eyes of unbelief. The incomprehensibility of a being in finite form revealed the infinite which was therein. His divinity was guaranteed to faith, against the effect of His humanity on the mind of man."

The following quotation is helpful:—

"I might notice, by the way, that in Psalm cx. there may be some explanation of the expression, 'of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . neither the Son.' The Son is sitting at the right hand of God and is looked at prophetically as waiting there, as Jehovah said unto Him, 'Sit Thou at My right hand, *until* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.' Therefore, in this sense the Son—as prophetic minister of revealed truth—and as such He spoke in Israel (see Heb. i.)—may be said not to know the day nor the hour; for, as Paul says in Hebrews x., He is 'from henceforth *expecting* till His enemies be made His footstool,' when they will be made ours also." (*Coll. Writ.* v. 484. J.N.D.).

Redemption—Resurrection—Restitution.

Away, oh! away, to the Home above,
 Upborne by the wings of Eternal Love!
 The cage it is broken—the bird is set free,
 And death? It is conquered, O Christ, by Thee!
 I'll sing what no angel or seraph can sing—
 The song of redemption through Jesus, the King.

No more of the weakness of age and decay,
 The labour and sorrow from day unto day,
 The failing of heart and the trembling of knees—
 Forever, forever delivered from these!
 I've done with mortality, done with all strife—
 And all that is mortal is swallowed of life!

Yet lay the worn body away with due care,
 For God's Holy Spirit hath sojournèd there;
 Nor think He despiseth that powerless clay;
 He'll guard it in safety till dawns the glad day
 When the voice of the Saviour shall summon His own,
 Presenting them faultless before His own throne.

Lord Jesus, our Saviour! bring quickly that hour
 When body and spirit, transformed by Thy power,
 With Thee in the glory triumphant shall reign,
 Delivered from weakness, corruption, and pain
 Redeemed by the wonderful life-giving tide
 Which flowed on the cross from Thy dear wounded side.

Then, mighty Restorer, what glory to see,
 This two-fold redemption accomplished by Thee!

—By Charité Lees de Cheney, July 17th, 1921,
 in her 81st year.