

# WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE  
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

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## A Word for the New Year.

"Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, let My people go that they may serve Me" (Ex. ix. 1).

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months : it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Ex. xii. 1, 2).

**T**O many, it may be to most of us, every new year brings its reflections on the past, and hopeful expectations for the future. This is good if properly regulated in our minds, but the condition of the heart is the chief thing. It is well for us, who know God as our God, to remember that He has forethought a path of separation from the Egypt of this world for His people, whom He has called out of it for Himself, to be a heavenly people (Heb. iii. 1). It was once a house of bondage to them, and they were under a tyranny more desperate than that of Pharoah of old,—the prince and god of the very world we are in, amid its seductions and snares.

These are reflections which become us surely as those who have reached another stage on life's journey, and passed another milestone in the wilderness way ; and if our reflections are used to stimulate our hearts to greater watchfulness amid the elements which surround us in the daily path, they will serve a good purpose. There may be regrets, for who does not have them? The writer well remembers a dear servant of the Lord, who has laid down his tools to go to his well-earned rest, now for upwards of forty years, saying, "If a child going to school, intent upon learning his lessons preparatory to his examination, falls down on the road, he will not lie there to weep over his misfortune, but will straightway get up and hasten to attain his purpose." He might subsequently reflect, and be watchful to avoid further disaster, but the purpose of his life would not be hampered by his reflections, but rather produce more energy to go on. "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13, 14) is

a salutary watchword for us all at the dawn of another year.

There may be a good deal of doing, but the very activity of service may, unwittingly, detach our hearts from the great objective our gracious Master has in view. "Thus saith the Lord God," to the enemy, "Let My people go that they may serve Me." If our hearts are under the power of this dictum, Egypt will be left, not merely as a house of bondage, but, so to speak, a place of abode. Abraham had no altars or tents in Egypt, nor have we. If God is to be rightly served, the preparatory stage is a "three days' journey," not, indeed, for the christian, to the foot of Sinai, but to "the place called Calvary."

The world to-day is just as much against Christ as when they crucified Him; and let us remember, too, that it was not the people only, but their religious leaders that instigated them to cry out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Many of the professed leaders of our day are on the path of crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame (Heb. vi. 6). "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. xvi. 18). May the Lord preserve us all, young and old, from these apostatising snares. Social intercourses are good, but if they lead us into associations, even of a religious kind, that have not the rejected Christ as their object and centre, we shall be exposed to the poisonous teaching of such leaders, to the damaging of our souls; and, what is more serious still, the dishonouring of our Lord. These moral locusts, who only bite men, are shaping their army to-day for the final stage (Rev. ix.), and the cry of the Lord is, "Come out of her (this corrupt Babylon), My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. xviii. 4).

Songs of consecration may be sung in our meetings, but God looks for consecration in our lives, and He

loves stability and purpose in those who profess His name, but these cannot be carried out without separation from what He has pronounced upon as corrupt. To compromise is to be lukewarm, and this is nauseous to Christ, who says, "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. iii. 15, 16). Solemn words these, not only for the degenerate Church, which has "left her first love," but for us all.

The new year is with us, and God's "beginning," as in the first movement, is kept fresh in the record of His word. Let us reflect upon it. He gave His people a good start, and manifested His power on their behalf and His presence to guide. So also as to His Church, but what do we find now? "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" (ver. 20). Are we prepared to repent, and do the first works? If so, this will indeed be a happy and spiritually prosperous new year, and, what is more, He will have His rightful place among those He loves, in spite of the backsliding we have to deplore. And they, too—how soon it may be!—will have their place *with* Him in glory.

H. L.

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Pastor is a rare gift. A pastor must be like a doctor; he must know the right food, and the right medicine, and the right diagnosis, and all the pharmacopœia, and must know how to apply it too. In one sense it is a rare gift and very precious.

Pastor and teacher are distinct things, but they are in Greek (and indeed in English) joined. They are connected, but not absolutely one, because a pastor includes in a certain sense the other; whereas a teacher has nothing to do with the office of pastor, so as to care for souls, etc. They are under one article in Eph. iv. 11.

## Cretians.

**“One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars” (Tit. i. 12).**

**W**HEN one considers the excellent tenderness, the unflinching courtesy, and the delicacy of feeling manifested in the apostle Paul’s writings, one must recognise that nothing but stern necessity would lead him to speak so plainly of a national fault. I heard a remarkable confirmation of this necessity lately. Brother K. went to a large seaport town to buy goods a short time ago, and while standing together with several men of like business, one said suddenly to another in a tone of astonishment and indignation: “Why, what an awful liar you are!” being evidently astonished that anyone should give utterance to such palpable untruths. Brother K. remembered that the man addressed was from the island of Crete, and said, “Excuse me, I do not want to be rude, but that is a very remarkable confirmation of what the Bible says of the Cretians,” and quoted the above text. “It is not true,” said the Cretian, “there is no such assertion in the Bible, and we are as truthful as other people.”

How solemn it is that men should be so callous as to the danger of lying. Few, indeed, remember that death and all the misery in this world came through a lie in the Garden of Eden. And few, indeed, consider that “whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” shall be shut out of God’s holy city (Rev. xxii. 15), and has, alas, a terrible eternity before him (Rev. xxi. 8). Last evening a dear old lady said to me after the Gospel meeting, “Ah, that was a good old-fashioned sermon, telling people of their sins and of their urgent need of salvation. Our minister, when I was young, used to preach like that, but we mostly hear nothing searching, but only soothing words now.” Alas! that the sterner truths of the Gospel should be old-fashioned, for without repentance there is no salvation.

What marvellous grace must have wrought in the heart of these Cretians to make even of the servants



(slaves) among them men who could "show all good fidelity" and "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit. ii. 10). What is the explanation of this wonderful change in men? The apostle gives it in the next verse: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." Who brought the grace? The blessed Lord Himself. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). Truth had to tell the Cretian that he was a liar; grace won his heart, and induced him to give up lying and to show "all good fidelity."

I once visited an old brother in Athens, and he related to me his conversion. He said he was a poor man getting his living by selling chestnuts from door to door. One day a lady, in buying some of him, said: "You should not tell so many lies in selling your chestnuts; it is sinning against God. I used to tell lies before I believed on the Lord Jesus, but now I love Him and speak the truth." He said: "Oh, I am not so bad as the others; I do give a good half-pound of chestnuts for a pound, and the others do not give nearly so much, and I have always loved God." "Well," said the lady, "if you will come on Sunday afternoon to the preaching of the Gospel in S—— Street, you can hear about the gracious Saviour who has made me so happy." "Yes, I will go if you take me," said he, "but I will not go alone."

This was a trial for the lady's faith, for the way to the meeting led through the most frequented part of the city, and her companion was poorly-clad; but she stood the test bravely, and brought him. After the meeting he was so pleased that he said to brother P., "Now come with me to the Café and have a glass of wine." "No," said brother P.; "you come with us to the house of Mr. D. and have a cup of coffee, and you will hear more about the Lord Jesus, and how you can be saved." The Lord blessed His word, and years of a faithful christian walk have proved the work of grace in this man's soul to be genuine.

In verse 12 of this chapter we see that the grace which saves us also teaches us, or takes us into the school of grace. The first thing it teaches us is a negative, just as the whole book of Psalms commences with a negative admonition. We must first cease to do evil ere we can learn to do good. Grace teaches us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

"I do struggle against my evil propensities and am often successful for a long time," a young christian told me; but we must not struggle with sin, but thoroughly deny it, and look to the Lord Jesus for help (Rom. vii. 25). An old brother said that if you see a sweep coming fresh from his work and go and embrace him, you get sooty too; but if you quarrel and struggle with him, you get sooty also. Thus one must not struggle with inward sin or temptation, but deny it *in toto*.

How simple the words sound: "Live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"; and yet they convey our whole duty as long as life lasts down here. Soberly is my duty to myself; righteously is my duty to my neighbour; and godly is my duty Godward. They all go together and depend upon one another. If I earn fifty shillings a week and spend fifty-one, I do not live soberly or in self-restraint, and the consequence is that I make debts and cannot pay my neighbour, or live righteously towards him, and I also disregard God's claims.

Now that same grace that brought us salvation in the past, and has made us scholars of grace in the present, has also made glorious provision for our future. In verse 13 we read: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." It always seems to me that there are two things here; firstly the coming of the Lord for His own, as in 1 Thess iv. 16; and, secondly, the manifestation, as in Col. iii 4. What a triumph of grace will that manifestation be!

T. W. B.

## The Power of Grace.

IT has been often both said and felt that nothing is more difficult to describe than the grace of God. Even if we accept the usual definition of it—the free unmerited favour of God toward man—we feel this falls far short in setting forth its unlimited scope and application.

The word itself is rarely found in the Old Testament, and then only in the sense of favour : not at all in the first two gospels ; and rarely in Luke, where it is applied to the childhood of the Lord Jesus : “And the grace of God was *upon* Him” (Luke ii. 40).

John’s gospel has grace as one of the themes in its grand opening chapter. “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John i. 14). Here then we see in it the blessed person of the Son of God, our Saviour who ever dwelt in the bosom of the Father. Not only was “grace” *upon* Him, as a man upon the earth, but *in* Him, in all its fulness. There, too, not to be contemplated only, or even adored, but to be communicated. It was there for man, poor, ruined, guilty, sinful man, so that it can be said, “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace” (John i. 16).

This being so, how appropriate it is to find it combined, as here, with truth. If it is to be demonstrated by Christ that grace reigns, it is through righteousness (not at the expense, or suspension of truth), but “through righteousness unto eternal life.” (Rom. v. 21).

Turning now to the Acts, we find various effects of this communicated blessing, so that it can be said concerning those “which had believed through grace” (Acts xviii. 27), that “great grace was upon them all” (Acts iv. 33).

When we look at this aspect of our subject, we must feel that definitions are defective. There is much more in God’s grace than that which meets our need as

sinners under judgment, dreading eternal consequences. Those who were recipients of the blessing are now employed in its communication to others: we read of their "testifying of the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24).

In this verse we meet for the first time the comprehensive expression, "the glad tidings of the grace of God." It sets forth what the glad tidings are. How the power and blessedness of grace filled the heart of the aged apostle when, on his final leave-taking of the Ephesian elders, he commended them to God and "the word of His grace"! With what intense earnestness and watchful care he had guarded it from the assaults of the enemy, and from the "whittling down" of faithless disciples.

But we must turn to the epistle to the Romans for the fullest development of this precious theme, as well as the survey of its manifold operations. If it is a question of justification, we are "justified freely by His (God's) grace" (Rom. iii. 24). And being justified on the principle of faith (not works), we have "peace with God, and access, by faith, into the grace wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2). So then God's grace is the measure of our standing before Him as well as the means by which we are brought into it, and another step lands us in the glory of God, which we already rejoice in the hope of, here and now.

But there is often a question with professing christians as to the supply of grace for the way, and a tendency, alas! to think of something to supplement the divine provision given us in Christ. Certain preachers of the advanced school say that the presentation of the gospel in the past was too much limited to future matters, such as death, judgment, eternity, etc. The demand of the present day is for a gospel dealing with "social implications," whatever that may mean.

Now this is exactly where grace prevails, we think, and one scripture in the epistle to Titus comes to mind as meeting every such requirement, "For the grace of

God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity," etc. (Titus ii. 11-14 R.V.).

We are not at all inclined to yield that questions of social betterment are to be compared with the need of salvation from sin and its consequences, or that improved housing conditions and environment are on a par with how we stand with God, and where we shall spend eternity. What an evidence of bewitchment is here! But we say without hesitation that to get a man right with God is the best way of putting him right in every relation of life, and his environment will soon give evidence of the power of grace working in his soul.

What does the above passage fail to cover when it says that grace not only brings salvation to all, but teaches us to live *soberly*? That is in self-restraint free from excess in all points. And *righteously* surely touches my relationship to my neighbours in all things. Sixteen ounces to the pound, 36 inches to the yard, a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, and, if an employee, the best service I can give for the salary I am paid. Then, thirdly, the claims of God come in—for what does it mean to live *godly*, or *godlily*, but that the claims of God have also a place, and the first place, in every-day life and purpose.

The fact is that what the law never did and never could produce, because of the material it had to work upon, grace has produced, because it works not by what it finds (in us), but in what it brings. It does help us to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 4). And the Holy Spirit is the gift of God through grace, as is also

justification, peace, holiness and all the other blessings made ours through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well is it written—

“Eternity, Infinity, alone of grace the limits are.” What power has produced “The Noble Army of Martyrs”? For nearly 2,000 years the gospel of law-keeping has been mistakenly presented as the way to produce in man love to God and to his neighbour, but it is unable to supply the power to do so. Grace alone can give this, and there is no limit to the supply; there is no need that it cannot adequately meet. What else has made men willing to face privation, danger, and even death itself for others—for the heathen in darkness beyond description and under the power of Satan in every imaginable form?

In the words of holy writ we say, “time would fail us to tell” the triumphs of grace. Do we need help by the way? The throne of God is a throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16). Our redemption and forgiveness are according to the riches of His grace (Eph. i. 7), and “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Eph. i. 6).

“Of grace then let us sing,  
A joyful wondrous theme;  
Who grace has brought, shall glory bring,  
And we shall reign with Him.”

T.R.

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After all the self-denial of Christ for me, is there to be none from me for Him? When He says, “I bought you with My own blood, I charged Myself with all your guilt,” am I never to say, “Anything that is not for the glory of Christ I will renounce”? G.V.W.

## Creation.

**I**N these days when the book of Genesis is the object of attack by infidel reasoners, it is of much importance that we should be well grounded in the truth, so as not to be influenced by the seductive theories that are abroad. The following notes will, we trust, be helpful to this end.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It was not a “formless earth,” but “the heavens” (where at no time do we read of disorder) “and the earth.” But even as to “the earth,” which was subject to change, disorder was not its original state; “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; He is God; that formeth the earth and made it; He established it, He created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited” (Isa. xlv. 18).

We must carefully separate between verse 1 and verse 2, “And the earth was (or became) waste and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” There is between these two verses an interval in which there is ample room for all the vast periods which geologists claim as necessary for the formation of strata, etc.

Thus we read “The earth was (or became) waste and empty”—a confused state, as different from the order of primary creation referred to in verse 1, as from the earth of Adam and his sons of which we read later on. What brought about the catastrophe or state of confusion we know not, nor is it a subject of revelation.

“In the beginning God created” etc.—here the word “God” is Elohim, which has the peculiarity of being a plural substantive with a singular verb. Christ alone cleared up the enigma, which is still dark to unbelievers who see not in Christ the “true Light.”

“Created”—though the word admits of calling into existence out of actual material, as in verses 21 and 27, it is never used of any other maker than God. But

“God created the heavens and the earth” where nothing of the kind existed previously—they were created out of nothing. Yet man, in his pride, of old as also now, when he knew God, glorified Him not as God, and his foolish heart was darkened; thus he became the slave of his lusts and passions and invented theories, such as the modern one of “evolution,” evolved out of his own depraved mind, dishonouring both to God and to himself.

The “six days” are not long ages, as some good men have supposed, but are really within the compass of literal evenings and mornings and their immediate connections with Adam, and the preparation of the world for man.

Then, as to the preparation of the world for man; this is introduced with a marked and designed separateness from the previous creation of animals, even of those made on the same day. It is no longer, “Let there be” or “Let the earth bring forth,” but “Let us make men in our image, after our likeness.” Not a word about *kinds* of men, for there was but one. How far from the brute at length evolving man!—a theory suggested by Satan to brutalise the race.

The word “image” signifies that which *represents*, and to man only was it given to represent God here below; angels had not such a place. Man was also “after His (God’s) likeness,” without evil and upright. And even when, through sin, the likeness existed no more, he still remained His image: however inadequate to represent God aright, he was still responsible to represent Him. Christ, the Incarnate Son, is styled, “Image of the invisible God”; His not being called “likeness” only confirms the truth, for if so entitled, it would deny His Deity—He is God, instead of being only like God.

And not only was man an unprecedented creature, but he had a place in God’s mind altogether peculiar, not merely in time on earth, but for eternity. And so



man was created, "male and female," a single pair, and even so, formed as none other ever was, that man might be differentiated from every creature on the earth or in heaven. This is a momentous truth, for when Christ came in due time, He did not take angelic nature but became a Man.

Observe the accuracy with which Scripture uses the words "created" and "made." "In six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is" (Exod. xx. 11). It is not said "created" but "made." This was the right phrase for the work of the *six days*, however well "creating" is said of parts within the work (Gen. i. 21, 27). It was not the *original* production, as in verse 1, but a special construction by the divine will and power *with man in view*—the furnishing and preparing of the earth for man.

It is well to notice this as so many commentators speak of the world being "created" in six days instead of "made"; but in the inspired word we find exact agreement with the remarkable verse that closes the account in Genesis ii. 3; which combines, yet distinguishes the two—"All His work which Elohim created to make."

How admirable, then the wisdom which is shown in God's account of creation; which, in its very simplicity as well as its accuracy, bears the stamp of His inspiration.\*

\*Note.—The above remarks are, for the most part, taken from a book entitled, "In the Beginning," by W.K.

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1 Cor. xii. 8: "For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit."

This verse seems to me to define the sphere of the pastor and of the teacher.

## “Every Scripture.”

“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” (2 Timothy iii. 16, 17).

LET us note that the term used here is not simply “the Word,” but “Scripture.” This fact sets completely aside the rationalistic subtlety that the Word is *contained* in the Scriptures, and that it is the Word and not the Scriptures which is inspired. Now in the Word itself this term “Scripture,” or “the Scriptures,” has the same value, the same sense, the same power, the same divine inspiration as the other term, “the Word.”

In 2 Peter iii. 16, the Scriptures are viewed as the full revelation which we have in the New Testament.

In verse 16 of our chapter, the apostle commences by establishing the divine inspiration of *every Scripture*—and we have seen what meaning is ascribed to this word “Scripture” in the Word of God itself. The apostle does not here enter upon the use of the inspired Scripture in bringing divine light into the soul, or to convince of sin, or to make salvation known to lost sinners—he brings out the supreme and absolute resource which Scripture gives to the “man of God,” at a time when the assembly, the house of God, is in ruins. He does so in order that the man of God may be completely furnished for every good work, and may glorify God in his walk.

From this passage, then, we learn that there is not a single part of Scripture which is not useful. This being so, let us inquire, What is it useful for? (1) To teach; that is, to establish the doctrine in the mind of him to whom that Word is applied. (2) To convict; that is, to speak to and reach the conscience, so that the believer may have a firm basis for his relationship with God. (3) To correct; the Scripture exercises an educative discipline, as is manifested in such a striking way in the book of Proverbs. (4) To instruct in righteousness.

We find again here what is the great subject of Proverbs, namely, to enable us to know and follow a path from which sin is shut out, a walk safeguarded from what is false and characterised by practical righteousness here below.

In the 17th verse we find the results of the instruction given in the Scriptures for the man of God, that is, for the believer who is called to represent God in this world. These results are that he may be fully furnished for every good work. But before applying them to others, he must apply to himself the teaching of the Word; this is a truth vital to the existence of his ministry. Without this individual application, no effect can be produced. The Word forms us so that we may be a model and the living presentation of its results when we are called to make use of it in our ministry.

Such is our great and effective resource in these perilous times; and let us mark well that it is with it that this epistle, properly speaking, closes. The last chapter develops still further the forms of evil amongst those who should have helped the apostle, the exhortations to Timothy to maintain himself, a faithful witness to the truth; also the way in which the apostle views the end of his own testimony. But he no longer speaks to us of our resources, since he had so fully set forth that which is a complete and final resource (the Scriptures) in verses 16, 17, of our chapter. H.R.



We were in Christ before the foundation of the world, and shall be in Him when the heavens and earth shall have passed away; what can touch this eternal union? "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."

G. V. W.

## The Son of Man as Servant.

**T**HE Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). The account of His life of service ends here, and these words impress an indelible character on this blessed life, showing us solemnly, and in a manner as touching as it is powerful, what ought to be the character of our own—to serve in love, and, as far as this world is concerned, to be content to be nothing, while following in the footsteps of our precious Saviour.

Oh, that His own may learn this lesson, in which the flesh could have no part whatever, but which gives us the joy of finding ourselves following Jesus; where, purified from selfishness, our eyes may contemplate the beauty of that which is heavenly, and where we may enjoy the brightness of God's face; where, in a word, the life of Jesus in us enjoys that which belongs peculiarly to Himself.

J.N.D.

## What Time Is It?

**A** WATCH will not go without a mainspring. It may be ever so well made otherwise, it may be beautifully adorned outwardly, but without a spring it will not tell us the time.

Fellow christian! Have you and I the true spring of christian progress in our practical daily life and conduct? Is our life and walk such as to indicate clearly to those around us what the true time (spiritually) is? "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." And the fourth watch of the night it was that Jesus came to His disciples on the storm-tossed lake and spoke those encouraging words, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." Soon He is coming for us; meanwhile, let us see to it that the spring which moves the whole mechanism is in good working order—in other words, that Christ is, for us, the sole and undivided object of the heart.

## Seven Promises.

WE have a striking proof of God's goodness and mercy to His people in the sixth chapter of Exodus, where He gives seven promises, or "I wills," in the short compass of three verses. But first He tells them that He was mindful of their present sufferings under their taskmasters, saying, "I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel. . . . I have remembered My covenant." Every groan had reached His omniscient ear, and the covenant that He had made with the fathers was ever in His memory.

Then follows the Lord's seven promises, which we may well apply, in principle, to ourselves.

(1) "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." Let us remember that this, as all else, flows from His heart of love. And truly this is just what we ourselves begin with—deliverance from the burden of our sins through Christ our mighty Saviour and Deliverer.

(2) "I will rid you out of their bondage"; yes, thank God He has delivered us from the bondage of Satan, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Blessed change!

(3) "I will redeem you"; as those purchased with the precious blood of Christ, we belong to Him—we are His: spirit, soul and body. His to serve and live for Him.

(4) "I will take you to Me for a people." As we read in Exodus xix., quoted by Peter, we are a "peculiar people"—a people for a possession: and that unconditionally, as Peter tells us.

(5) "I will be to you a God." This was a privilege granted to no other nation; but, alas! how soon they forgot it and failed in fidelity to Him, turning to idolatry. May we not here recall the last words of John's first epistle, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"? Thus it was necessary to remind even

christians of the danger of those many counter-attractions which so easily slip into the heart and take the place Christ should have as our only and undivided object.

(6) "I will bring you into the land." Has He not given us a rich inheritance and one which never can be exhausted—blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ? What could surpass this?

(7) "I will give it you for a heritage." It needs some spiritual energy to make our own of it practically, and this was just where Israel failed and where we do too. We need to "possess our possessions," to plant our foot down on the land by faith, to dispossess our enemies. But let us be in earnest and God is with us.

And finally, as if to crown all, He adds: "I am Jehovah." Here it is not merely "I will," but "I am." It is what He is in Himself; Jehovah, the unchanging One. Of Him it is testified, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it, or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

How blessed to gather up these reassuring words from His word! "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent"; "the God that cannot lie"; "the God of truth." It is just as though He stepped down to our poor measures and our unbelieving hearts, to assure us of His unfailing and unchanging love and grace and faithfulness to all His promises. May we trust Him better and more every day!



God dwelt in the midst of His people Israel, and Israel must be judged according to what becomes God's presence. *Our privileges are the measure of our responsibility.*

## The Touches of Our Lord.

THE blessed God, the Supreme, the Eternal One, has made the fall of man the occasion for the display of what He is in Himself. Man's sin could not be overlooked, for God is light; His truth, justice, and holiness must be maintained. But God is love and love demanded the sinner's reconciliation, the removal of the mistrust brought into his heart by Satan's lie. Light could not give way, but love "never faileth" and "endureth all things." Hence, the "Son of His love" became man to take up man's cause, to suffer for the sins of the unjust to bring them to God, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In a pathway of lowly grandeur He most blessedly showed how "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." While presenting man in beauteous perfection to God, He was the personification of God's loving kindness to man, until, on the cross, God's love was revealed in all its fulness in perfect harmony with all His attributes.

The exquisite grace and tenderness of its manifestation on the way to the cross is seen especially in the touches of our Lord.

A touch, on occasion, is more expressive than words. A gracious emotion may be conveyed by it with greater delicacy and even greater fulness than can be attained by word of mouth. And fine shades of personality may be communicated by it of which vocal utterance is incapable. Thus the divine record of the Saviour's touches is of absorbing interest. He was the only Man who trod this earth, of absolute purity of heart and ways—"in whom was no sin," "who did no sin." His words were ever spoken, His works ever done, in communion with His Father. God was speaking to us in His Son so that the power, wisdom, holiness, and love displayed were superior to human limitations.

How thrilling is the thought of a touch from so glorious a Person! At the beginning of His ministry

Jesus had personally met Satan and gained the victory under every disadvantage of circumstance. None, therefore, could hinder His gracious actings in this world, of which that mighty potentate had become the god and prince.

The first gracious touch of healing recorded is of Peter's wife's mother. "He touched her hand and the fever left her." How sweetly significant that it was in the humble home of a fisherman! Then quickly followed the sick of divers diseases, including, doubtless, the repulsive scrofulous diseases of the East. They were brought to Him at the setting of the sun—the time of least distress, between the heat of the sun's fierce rays and the repose of night which often increases the activities of the disease. He might have simply spoken the word which, as the centurion recognised, no disease could resist. But, in fulfilment of the great prophecy, "Himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses," He would bring divine sympathy home to their hearts by coming into immediate contact with them and laying His hands on "every one of them."

This was verified in the leper, who, persuaded of His power only, came to Jesus with an "if Thou wilt," to get the immediate response of His touch and His "I will," which at once cleansed him from his leprosy. How conspicuously was it verified again in the widow of Nain whose only son was being carried to his burial. Jesus had compassion, touched the bier, and restored the son alive to his mother. And in the case of Jairus' daughter whom death had also claimed, Jesus "took her by the hand." In all these cases it was impossible that He could incur defilement. The disease must of necessity flee from the Great Physician. Death and Hades, too, must yield up their prey at His command. But how beautiful was the touch that so tenderly conveyed His boundless sympathy and compassion.

It was equally manifest in other cases of healing. In the case of one who was deaf and dumb. He put



His fingers in his ears and touched his tongue (Mark vii.); the son with the deaf and dumb spirit, He took by the hand and lifted up (Mark ix.); on the woman who was bowed together He laid His hands. Of the blind, He touched the eyes of the two in Matt. ix; took by the hand and led another (Mark viii.); anointed the eyes of the one born blind (John ix.); had compassion on Bartimeus and another, and touched their eyes (Matt. xx.). Even Malchus, one of the band of His murderers, whose ear Peter cut off, was a witness to His "pitifulness and tender mercy," for Jesus "touched his ear and healed him."

A lovely display of His graciousness is seen in the different circumstances of the very little children whom the disciples would have driven off as too insignificant for notice. The blessed Lord, who in infinite grace, had gone through the experience of being a little child "took the little ones up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them."

And what perfection is manifest in His varying touches of His disciples!—the saving touch to sinking Peter; the strengthening, reassuring touch to the chosen three after the transfiguration; the serving touch of the feet-washing that typified His present service for His own to give them a part where He is.

These various expressions of His tender grace compel us to repeat with exultation, "He hath done all things well."

We may conclude this meditation with the wondrous manifestation of light and love when our Lord confounded the accusers of the adulteress. He "stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground"; but when they pressed the requirements of the law against her, He, the holy One, who had written the ten commands, focussed their light so directly on the accusers that they had to slink away from His presence. Not so the accused, who discovered His grace and answers Him with respect, "No man, sir." She, indeed, was

allowed to go in peace with the peace-giving assurance from His lips, "Neither do I condemn thee."

Everlasting glory be to Jesus the Son of God for stooping so low to write, as it were, in the dust of death that "where sin abounded, grace has overabounded, in order that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life" !

A. J. H.

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## Resurrection.

"**H**E (Jesus) is not here, for He is risen as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. xxviii. 6). Such is the testimony of the angel at Jesus' empty tomb. Resurrection is the putting forth of God's miraculous, supernatural power over death. He holds the sovereignty of life. The Egyptian magicians were confounded when God brought life out of the dust of the earth, and said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God" (Exod. viii. 18-19). But life out of death such as the believer has is a miracle of grace as well as of power, and the agent by which it is secured is man, "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 21). It is thus given to Christ to accomplish the latter, while the first man, Adam, was the exponent of the former.

Christ risen takes His place as the last Adam, the Victor over death, hence, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (ver. 22). This looks on and forms the pledge of Christ's full triumph over death for all the redeemed. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (ver. 20). The act of gathering in the firstfruits as the earnest of the harvest, aptly illustrates the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits here spoken of. "And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and many of the bodies of

the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after His resurrection and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matt. xxvii. 51, 52, 53).

Those who deny the miracle of resurrection will find themselves in deeper confusion than the Egyptian magicians, and if any such should read this paper we would remind them of what the Spirit said by Paul concerning certain modernists of his day, "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men as their's also was" (2 Tim. iii. 8, 9). Those wolves in sheep's clothing, of which the Lord exhorts us to beware, are the dupes of Satan, and missionaries of his instigations, to subvert, and destroy, if possible, the vital, fundamental facts of revelation given of God in His sacred Book. We warn the reader, and young believers especially, not to listen to their overtures. The subversion of the truth of resurrection is one of their major objects—one among many. These are of the Hymenæus and Philetus type, who, as to this truth went astray, their theory being that the resurrection had taken place already, and it was a tacit denial of the truth which God gives on this important subject. Paul adds, in his warning note, "And their word shall eat as a canker" (gangrene, margin). We are certainly in the gangrene age in this our day.

Resurrection, then, is the vital heritage of the saints that sleep the sleep of death, and is assured to them by the resurrection of Christ the firstfruits. It is the resurrection of the body, and not a kind of spiritual metamorphosis as some would teach, and if any should ask, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" God's answer is, "Fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. . . . But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him." Again,

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (the body) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor. xv. 35-44). Can anything be more simple? Yet, because it is of God, how profound! All is plain to faith, but disputations belong to unbelief.

Again, it is a resurrection from among the dead. The disciples did not at first understand this phase of the subject in which the Lord spoke of His own resurrection (Mark ix. 10), and there are many to-day in like difficulty. In John v. 28, 29, the Lord divided the subject under two heads, involving two classes, “They that have done good (fruit of His grace in them) to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil (for men will be judged by their works) unto the resurrection of damnation or judgment.

In comparing this division with Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6, it is seen that there are at least a thousand years between the two resurrections. All the redeemed will share the blessedness and triumph of the first resurrection. God has made this plain in the passage cited in Revelation, and He says, “against such the second death hath no power.” But do we now, beloved fellow-believers, live in the power and hope of it? Paul strikes a note that we may well emulate when he says, “that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of (or from among) the dead” (Phil. iii. 10, 11).

Again, “Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus (see John vi. 40, especially last clause) and shall present us with you” (2 Cor. iv. 14). What an assurance! What a blessed hope! But Paul found it necessary to warn, as well as

instruct, the saints, because of the enemy's tactics through the emissaries he sends forth, deceivers and deceived, hence his words, "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ (2 Cor. xi. 3, New trans.).

The Lord, when confronted by the Jews who demanded His authority for cleansing the temple, said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But He spake of the temple of His body" (compare John ii. 20, 21; x. 17, 18). Let us note the blessed result of this testimony to resurrection from His own lips. "When, therefore, He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John ii. 22). The Scripture and the word which Jesus said are all-sufficient to confirm our faith in the blessed, fundamental truth of the resurrection from the dead.

H. L.

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## Christendom.

**If Christ were to come what would He find there ?**

**T**HANK God he would find, even after so long a bodily absence, a people still confessing His name, owning the Word of God and preaching the gospel of His grace. Were there ever so many confessing Christ as now? Were the Scriptures ever spread abroad so widely as now? Was there ever so much sacred literature printed; so many tracts distributed as at the present time? I trow not.

But while thankfully recognising all these good things and many others, yet, after all, where is the professing church, as a whole, to-day? The answer is—practically in the state of Laodicea; that is, lukewarm or indifferent (Rev. iii. 14, 17). And a great part of it is fast becoming Galatian in its character; with a

Judaized form of Christianity, observing days, times, etc. (Gal. i. 6-9; iv. 10). It is turning back to that which decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away (Heb. viii. 13).

The Lord's searching eye would also discover the leavening work of the "woman" spoken of in Matthew xiii. 33, in the pretentious garb of "Modernism" with its cankerous doctrines, spreading the leaven of evil everywhere, and surely paving the way for the coming apostasy. And last, but not least, He would find the church—once a chaste virgin—now joined to the world; as witnessed by the prevailing love of dress, of money and of pleasure. There are also other things done in secret, of which it is a shame even to speak; but they would not escape His notice.

And what shall I say more?—for the time would fail me to speak of the many and deplorable divisions which have rent the church to pieces and destroyed its corporate testimony. An attempt is being made, in Canada and to a lesser degree elsewhere, to heal the breach by building and attending "Union churches"; but the distinctively sectarian names (Oh, how cherished!) are individually retained.

Moreover, God has never healed (collectively) divisions amongst His people; He lets them reap what they have sown by actions contrary to His Word (1 Cor. i. 10). This union, at present, is not characterised by any desire for fellowship with Christ in His rejection, or by any "going forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13). All this of which we have spoken would surely touch His heart were He now to appear on the scene.

But Christ, when He comes to reign, will not come to Christendom as it now is; for there shall first come "a falling away," and the Antichrist, the "man of sin," will be here (2 Thess. ii. 3). At the close of the church period "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout," to call all who are His, either from the

grave or from the earth, to meet Him *in the air* (1 Thess. iv. 14-17). And that rapture may take place at any moment. Let us, then, be ready.

At His appearing *to reign*, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 4). "That day" is near, as the signs of the times—political, commercial and domestic, most surely portend. It is a theory put forward by some that as the world was made\* in six days (Exod. xx. 11), and on the seventh day God rested, and each of these days means, in figures, 1,000 years (as alluded to in 2 Peter iii. 8), there would remain from 1926 only about 75 years more to complete the 6,000 years before the last 1,000 years, namely, the coming millennial rest. But dates of this kind are very uncertain material to build upon. If, however, this were so, all the events mentioned in Revelation, from chapter iv. onward, would fall into these remaining 75 years.

But "We know neither the day nor the hour." The church is not directed to wait for the fulfilment of any dates or events but for Christ Himself. After "that blessed hope" (the coming again of our Lord Jesus) is realised, things will head up rapidly towards the judgments which will be executed by Him on the world. And "Judgment must begin at the house of God." The *Lord is bearing with Christendom at the present time*; but since it is manifest that "they receive not the truth, in the love of it, that they might be saved, God will send them strong delusion, that they might believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11). Judgment will come upon them unexpectedly.

The union of the church with the world will yet develop into "The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev xvii. 5); and in chapter xviii. we find the kings of the earth and the merchants lamenting over their loss, the overthrow of Babylon, whilst the

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\* "Made" here refers to the ordering and fashioning of the world as an abode for man: see our January number. (Ed.)

heavens and the saints rejoice. Such will be the terrible end of apostate Christendom. Then, after this, we find the presentation of the bride, the true church, to Christ; arrayed in fine linen clean and white, a beauty which He Himself has put upon her.

Finally, let us ask, If Christ were to come during the year 1926, to call His people to meet Him in the air, how would He find our readers? Would it be, saved by grace through the blood of Jesus, or would it be unsaved and still refusing to believe God's testimony concerning His Son? Reader, would He find *you* in an attitude of waiting and watching for Him, or immersed in the pursuits of the social world? Would He find you in fellowship with Himself, *outside* the camp of Judaized Christianity; or in the camp, owning the various sects of Christendom? May each one of us so answer as before Him, that, at His coming, we may be found of Him without spot and blameless.

J. R.

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## A Great Deliverance.

“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver” (2 Cor. i. 9. 10).

WITH what an infinite depth of wisdom God presents to us great truths in abstract form. Here we get to the kernel at once; it is meat prepared for immediate use, stripped of the shell of formality, and is without any garnishing whatever. It is a plain statement of facts which engages the heart at once with God, the Giver of all good.

We have here a three-fold aspect of a great transaction, a mighty deliverance, past, present and future.

With what wisdom the beloved apostle, taught by the Spirit of God, gives force to his statement when he says, “*God* which raiseth the dead.” We are introduced at once into the presence of a power that knows



no weakness, an ability that knows no inability, and One who spake the world into existence and hung it upon nothing (Job xxvi. 7), sustaining it there by the word of His power. We are in the presence of the power of the God, "who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans iv. 17).

Does it not make our hearts leap with joy in the knowledge that *God* is the Author of this great deliverance?

The Thessalonian saints had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

Let us bow our hearts in worship and praise, beloved fellow-christians, "giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated (us) into the kingdom of the Son of His love; in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. i. 12-14, new trans.). Thank God, He *hath* delivered us, through faith in the saving power of the blood of Christ Jesus our Redeemer.

Now that He hath delivered us from so great a death, does He cast us adrift in a changeable world to be buffeted and harassed by cares and doubts? No, blessed be His name! "He doth deliver." This is present grace. He has made ample provision for our needs (not our greeds, surely) in that unchangeable priesthood of Christ. "*He is able* also to save (*sozo*—to keep sound) them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. vii. 24, 25; ix. 24).

Hear His own blessed words, "And for their sakes

I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19). It is only as we are abiding in Him and His words abiding in us that we will be in the true spiritual condition to call upon Him in the hour of need, for then will our will be merged in His; but, thank God, in spite of all our failure, He delivers. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life," that is, His risen life at the right hand of God. (Romans v. 10). "He doth deliver," praise His Name!

How long does this delivering grace continue? "I thank my God . . . being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until Jesus Christ's day," or, until we are with the Lord in glory (Phil. i. 3, 6). We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son (Romans viii. 29), and "faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." God has secured it all for us in Christ, "in whom we trust He will yet deliver."

It has been said that the Christian's life is one of degrees—good, better, best. It is *good* to know your sins are forgiven through faith in the blood of Christ. "To depart and be with Christ is very far *better*"; but to be "alive and remain" until the coming of the Lord, to be caught up to meet Him in the air; this must be *best*; but, thank God, no matter what the sorrows and trials of the way, the *worst* is past—"We are passed from death unto life."

There is nothing negative here, all is positive, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea."

Let us place our feet firmly upon these promises, beloved. Let us hold that fast which we have, in the hope of His soon coming, "that no man take our crown."

R. W. K.

## The Lord of Life.

**L**ORD of Life and King of Glory!  
Help Thy way-worn pilgrims here,  
Teach Thy saints to learn the story  
Of Thy succour ever near.

Death's dark portals Thou hast entered,  
Drained the cup that justice gave,  
Now in Thee all power is centred,  
Power which triumphed o'er the grave.

Saviour!—risen and victorious,  
Still thine eyes and looks of love,  
From that home, so bright, so glorious,  
Rest upon us from above.

And we wait for Thine appearing  
When Thy glory we shall share;  
Day of joy, which still is nearing,  
Thy blest image then to bear.

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## Hold Fast the Truth.

**O**NLY God is competent to pronounce on creation, on what He has made or what He will yet do. Philosophy can make but a vain effort to account for all that is around us by what is seen or what appears; for it knows nothing as it ought to know.

Hence the believer finds not the slightest difficulty. He may not be able perhaps to meet objections. That is another matter, and by no means of such consequence as many suppose. The great point, my brethren, is to hold fast the truth. It is all well, and a desirable service of love, if a christian can happily and with God-given wisdom meet the difficulties of others; but hold you the truth yourselves. Such is the power and

simplicity of faith. Adversaries may no doubt try to embarrass you; if they will let them do so. Do not be troubled if you cannot answer their questions and dispose of their cavils; you may regret it in charity for injured or misled souls. But, after all, it is the positive truth of God which it is the all-important business to hold, and this God has put in the heart of the simplest child who believes in Jesus.

W. K.

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## The Heavenly Stranger.

“The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.”

**F**AREWELL, ye fleeting joys of earth!  
 We've seen the Saviour's face,  
 Beheld Him with the eye of faith,  
 And know His love and grace.

Forth from the Father's loving breast,  
 To bear our sin and shame,  
 To face a cold, unfeeling world,  
 The heavenly Stranger came.

This earth to Him, the Lord of all,  
 No kindly welcome gave;  
 In Judah's land, the Saviour found  
 No shelter but a grave.

The cross was His; and oh! 'tis ours  
 Its weight on earth to bear,  
 And glory in the thought that He  
 Was once a sufferer there.

SIR E. DENNY.

## The Father Revealed in the Son.

**D**O we enter sufficiently into the wonderful truths which Christianity brings to us—truths far beyond what anyone could have thought of before Christ came? If, for example, we think of the fact that the Father has been made known in the Son of His love—how far such a truth surpasses all that man could have ever conceived!

Of this truth the apostle John was the special and appointed witness, and the unfolding of it commences in the first chapter of his gospel. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” It was not now God coming as the Jehovah of the Old Testament—seasonable and good as that revelation was in its place—but the One who ever occupied that peculiar place of intimacy and nearness, Jesus Christ, whose glory was that of an only-begotten with a father—*He* it was who came to make Him known to us.

He did not come in the majesty and display of glory such as was seen at Sinai; no lightnings, thunders, or voice of words, marked His presence; but as the truly lowly One, a real man amongst men, “full of grace and truth.” And yet there was, for those who had eyes to see it, a *moral* glory in Him which could not be hid. Remark that *grace* comes first, for we could not have borne the *truth* without it, “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”; it is grace heaped upon grace: no limit, no stint.

Now no one has ever seen God; He dwells in His own unseeable majesty; but the only-begotten Son, who *is* in the bosom of the Father, *He* has declared Him. Who could have been so suited to make God known, to disclose the secrets of that bosom, as the One who dwelt there through all eternity? And Jesus

has declared Him. Though absolutely apart from sin and sinners in every respect, how close He has come into the midst of men, taking a tabernacle and dwelling amongst us!

We have only to read through the gospel of John to see how perfectly the Father was manifested in the Son in every step of His pathway, in every word and act of His life. This surely ought to beget within us the fullest confidence, to win our hearts and attach them to Himself and to the Father who sent Him.

So also in John's epistle—and the more we meditate on these truths, the more we shall see the force of those words with which it opens—words which present to us the One whom the apostles had heard, seen with their eyes, contemplated and handled; so that *we* too might contemplate Him with the eye of faith, as they did with their natural eyes, and enjoy the same fellowship which they also did, "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ . . . that your joy may be full."

Here is indeed a spring and source of joy which nothing that can arise in the church or in the world can possibly dry up.

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### "Self"—Its Danger.

**I**T has been stated again and again by others, and rightly so, that the biggest thing in the world is *self*; largely intruding, as it so often does, even into the service of the Lord's people for Himself. As to this, it matters not what form of exaltation *self* may assume, *it must always be at the expense of the claims of God.*

God has, therefore, seen it necessary, in all ages, from Adam downwards, to take note of this fact, whenever and wherever displayed.

How full of instruction, in this respect, for every child of God, is the beautiful scene upon the Mount of Transfiguration! It carries us back, in thought, to two remarkable instances of self-exaltation, or self-consciousness, which occurred in the lives of those two honoured servants of Jehovah, Moses and Elijah; and the consequent action of God in regard thereto.

The first instance, we find recorded in Numbers xx., where, in verse 10, it will be seen that Moses, when about to act in God's name, by procuring water for the thirsty hosts of Israel, betrayed, in an unguarded moment, by the use of one little word, "*we*," his forgetfulness of the claims of Jehovah. "And he (Moses) said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?"

God took note of this; and Moses was directed to appoint his successor (Deut. iii., 23-28): "Charge *Joshua*, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for *he* shall go over before this people; and *he* shall cause them to inherit the land."

"Joshua"! significant name! for it means "Saviour," and type of Jesus, thus pointing Moses onward, surely, to Him of whom we read in Mark ix., "They saw *no man any more, save Jesus only*"!

The next instance occurs in 1 Kings xix. 10-14. Elijah had just acted in Jehovah's name, securing an answer clear and loud from the "God that answereth by fire." At the threat, however, of a wicked woman, his faith failed him; and, full of himself, he fled.

Hitherto, remark, he had gone hither and thither only at the command of the Lord; but now, alas! he goes his own way, without any command of the Lord, leaving his proper sphere of testimony far behind. Hence, we find that by one word,—that little word "*I*"—he in his turn betrayed his forgetfulness of Jehovah's claims. "*I* have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts . . . and *I, even I only*, am left"!

God took note of this fact, likewise; and Elijah also, was instructed to appoint a successor, whose name was *Elisha*, the meaning of which is "Salvation of God." "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-Meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room."

"Elisha"! significant name and type! pointing Elijah onward, surely, to Him of whom John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but *I* must decrease."

And is it not wonderful, also, to note that on the Mount of Transfiguration, both Moses and Elijah found themselves in the presence of Him to whom their respective successors, Joshua and Elisha, in type, both pointed?

It is not a little remarkable that the river Jordan largely characterised the commencement of the ministry of both Joshua and Elisha, as well as that of their great Antitype, the Lord Jesus; and it was, moreover, upon His coming up from those waters, that the heavens were opened unto Him and He was greeted with a salutation similar, in character, to that which afterwards came to Him "from the excellent glory," when, "in the holy mount," the latter salutation had, however, the significant addition thereto, "*Hear Him*" (Luke ix. 35; Matt. xvii. 5), as an answer to the thoughtless exclamation of Peter—full, too, as that exclamation was of the elements of self—"Let us make," etc. (Luke ix. 33; Matt. xvii. 4).

Surely, it behoves every saint of God, especially in this day of activity and unrest, to have a conscience fully exercised as regards this most serious subject: for it may be laid down as an axiom in divine things that, *in proportion as "self's" importance and "self's" doings are before the believer's mind as motive power for action, by so much must Christ, of necessity, be displaced.*

We see this very fully developed in Revelation iii. 17, 18, 20. Laodicea was full of *self*—rich, and



increased with goods, and in need of nothing,—not even in need of Christ, who, alas! no longer “in the midst” (Matt. xviii. 20), is seen standing, knocking at the door *outside* of that which professes His Name; and saying, “If any man hear *My* voice,” etc. This appeal is not a gospel appeal, but Christ’s appeal to a lukewarm church.

Dear fellow-believer, beware of “*we*,” “*I*,” “*us*” and “*our*”; and “*have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the Name which is above every name*” (Phil. ii. 5-10, R.V.).

N. L. N.

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## Sacrifice and Offering.

THESE two words are of constant occurrence in Scripture; sometimes together and sometimes separately. In the beginning, after God had sent the first man out of the Garden of Eden on account of his sin, the two men, Cain and Abel, come forward approaching God, each with an offering in his hand. Cain brought the fruit of the ground, while Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and their fat. And it is recorded that the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and his offering He had not respect. Abel, by his offering, acknowledged that he was in a place of death on account of sin, while there was no such acknowledgment on the part of Cain. Abel put death, the death of a victim, between himself and God, but there was no death in Cain’s offering. On

the contrary, Cain's offering, although it may have cost him much labour, was only the fruit of the ground which the Lord God had cursed.

The comment made by the Holy Ghost on the actions of these two men is given in Hebrews xi. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh." From this we learn that a man in coming to God must come in the right way and with the right kind of offering. Man is a sinner, and he must not come to God as if he were not a sinner; but the wonderful thing is that God Himself provides the needed offering. We see this in Abraham's answer to Isaac in Genesis xxii. "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." We see it again in the case of the passover lamb which God provided for His people when He was about to execute judgment upon the land of Egypt. And so it is in the Gospel which is now preached. God has provided the Lamb in the person of His own Son. "He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "He has set Him forth a propitiation through faith in His blood." We are "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

These Scriptures speak of the sacrifice which God has provided for the sinner who owns he is such and submits to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We therefore approach God in His name, pleading the excellency of the sacrifice which He accomplished on the cross. In that sacrifice we had no part whatever, except our sins which made it necessary. He did it all alone. As we read in Ephesians v. 2, "Christ loved us and gave Himself for us an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

It is very plain from these and other Scriptures that we can do nothing to save ourselves. We are not only

sinners and ungodly, but we are also without strength, and can only come to God with the sacrifice which He has provided, even Christ crucified. That is true, and always true for the sinner. But the believer who is saved can present to God acceptable offerings, and is exhorted to do so. In the last chapter of Hebrews we read: "By Him therefore (that is, by the Lord Jesus) let us offer the *sacrifice of praise* to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." And then in the next verse: "But to *do good* and to *communicate* forget not; for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased." Two kinds of sacrifice are here mentioned: one of praise—praise to God continually; and the other of doing good and distributing one's substance to others. "It is good to sing praise unto our God," says the Psalmist, "for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." And the apostle Peter speaks of our showing forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Knowing the wonderful grace that God has shown to us, we offer to Him praise and thanksgiving with willing lips; and we also show grace to others by distributing to their needs.

Romans xii. tells us of another sacrifice which we can offer to God. There we read, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Having received such mercies as those set forth in the earlier chapters of the Epistle and summed up in verses 29 to 30 of chapter viii., it is only reasonable that we should present ourselves to God and serve Him in an acceptable manner. And how can we do so but by walking before Him in holiness and separation from evil in our ways, our words and our thoughts? Let us then present our bodies a living, holy and acceptable sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable (or intelligent) service.

G.K.

## The Cross and its Results.

**“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who has been made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord” (1 Cor. i. 30. 31, New Trans.).**

**I**N this passage we find a wonderful summary of Christian position and blessing, which it will be profitable to consider. In the expression “of Him” (God) is stated the origin of all the blessings we have. He is the blessed Source from whence they come; “in Christ Jesus” expresses their character and security; and “who is made,” etc., shows the measure and means of their enjoyment. Nor are the blessings separated from the persons who receive them: “ye” is emphatic in the original—those Corinthians, notwithstanding their sad practical state, were “of God, in Christ Jesus.” What a powerful motive for christian character and conduct!

It is always instructive carefully to consider the setting of a scripture. We find this wonderful verse in a passage in which the apostle is showing the incompatibility of the gospel with man’s philosophy and religion. These exist now just as much as in those days, viz., Rationalism and Ritualism; but neither the rationalist nor the ritualist really has the true God. The one leaves God out of his schemes, or makes Him subject to man’s mind: the other just as effectually excludes Him by bringing in ordinances and self-righteousness. Neither admit the true bearing of “the cross.” To the one it is sheer folly; to the other, an offence or stumbling-block.

The Lord of glory on a cross!—here is the end, as before God, of man’s history. If there is now to be good and blessing, it must be “of God.” We all acknowledge this *in words*, but how far has it been inwrought in the faith of our souls?

And if “of God,” all must be also, “in Christ Jesus.” A verse in the fifteenth chapter of this epistle (ver. 23) helps us as to the meaning of this latter, “For as *in*

*Adam* all die, even so *in Christ* shall all be made alive." Adam was the head of a fallen race, and we all derive our life, as men, from him. But the believer is not in Adam but in Christ (in Christ risen). He derives his life from the victorious Christ, and being in Christ, he is beyond condemnation (Rom viii. 1). He is in an entirely new standing before God; he belongs to a new creation, in which "Christ is all and in all."

We have in our passage four things which Christ is said to be made unto us:—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. May we not connect each of these four with Christ in a different way? "Wisdom," with Christ crucified; "righteousness," with Christ risen; "sanctification," with Christ in glory; and "redemption," with Christ as coming again? Oh, what a deliverance from self-occupation and efforts of self-improvement, to know Him thus!

The Corinthians were making much of man's wisdom, but in *the cross* of Christ God has written "folly" on the wisdom of this world, for nothing so levels all human pretensions as the cross. What can man boast of there? He had no part in it except the sins that brought Christ there. But to those that are "called," Christ (crucified) is both the power and the wisdom of God.

The cross is the absolute demonstration of *God's* wisdom. In the cross He has, as it were, concentrated His divine resources and His redeeming power. The highest archangel could not possibly have conceived how God could be just and yet save a sinful race; but in the cross God's righteousness, holiness, and truth are declared and perfectly harmonised with His love and grace.

"God could not pass the sinner by,  
His sin demands that he must die,  
But in the cross of Christ we see  
How God can save yet righteous be."

Calvary was the victory of God. And He would have us, not once only, but continually to appropriate Christ thus (John vi. 56); for if the cross is the saving power of God, this power in our lives will always work, by the Spirit, to lead us to apprehend the cross by faith and in our experience. How long it takes us to learn this! How often we wish to *feel* the power of God in us! But when we are weak (the cross), then are we strong (in Christ). The cross is *God's* principle of working (see also Gal. vi. 14, etc.).

Next we have "righteousness," which is reckoned to the one who believes on God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. God intervened and showed His acceptance of the work of Calvary by raising from the dead the One who was delivered for our offences, and now in Christ risen we have the pledge and measure of our righteousness before God; "in Him we are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39, new trans.). And it is by faith that it might be by grace, for no other principle of blessing would do justice to Christ's work, or meet our desperate need. What a deliverance from looking within for evidences of our acceptance with God, is found in the risen Christ! We rest implicitly on *God's estimate*, declared in resurrection, of the finished work of the cross.

"Oh, the peace for ever flowing,  
From *God's thoughts* of His own Son!"

But we need also "sanctification." Sanctification before God is by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter i. 2), and by the work of Christ once for all (Heb. x. 10). We need also a present, practical, progressive sanctification; for grace does not set aside any of the claims of God's holy character; rather does it bring them to pass in us. How many are endeavouring to realise sanctification by self-cultivation, efforts and struggles, etc.? It is not thus that it is to be known, for *Christ* has been made unto us "sanctification."

In John xvii. 19, the Lord said in prayer to the Father, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Was He not always the holy or sanctified One? Surely He was. On earth He manifested all the moral glory of God in every step of His path. What then is meant by, "I sanctify Myself"? Just this: that He was about to set Himself apart in the glory of God, that the faith and love of His own, being directed to Him (not to themselves), He might be not only the pattern for His people's sanctification, but their living Object, absorbing their affections and ever drawing forth their adoration. Is He this to you, dear Christian friend?

Again, in 2 Cor. iii. 18, we find the same principle. "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" (new trans.). No veil is on the face of Jesus, as on the face of Moses. Gazing on that face—occupied with Him by faith, we are changed, and only thus. Thus we shall be kept looking up and pressing on to "perfection," which must be nothing less for us than being conformed to Him in glory. It should be an axiom with us that the new life we have is never occupied with itself; and the Spirit would ever engage us with Christ\*, who thus, in a real and blessed way, becomes our sanctification. Would we rather have a sanctified self (if such were possible) or a glorified Christ? Searching question for us all!

But this conformity cannot *fully* be brought to pass until *He* comes again, who is also made unto us "redemption." Evidently here it is *full* redemption; the consummation of the work of grace in the redemption of our body. For even these bodies will be changed and made like His body of glory. "When

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\*The only exception is, when we have sinned; He then works to lead us to confession and restoration.

He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." At the present time it is a *moral* change; then it shall be an *actual* change into His likeness. What a goal is before us!

Let us adore the God of all grace and seek to appropriate, by a simpler faith and a more earnest purpose, what Christ has been made to us--"Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption"; and, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

*Notes of an address by A. J. A.*

## Deliverance.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 24).

WHEN the soul rests by simple faith on the finished work of Christ, who has glorified God by His death and is now seated at His right hand, we get complete forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We are no longer "in the flesh" but "in the Spirit"; we have a new standing before God--no longer in Adam, but in Christ where there is "no condemnation."

But the old nature, the flesh, is still in us and it is unimprovable; this is one of the first lessons the believer has to learn. God does not propose to mend or improve it; He gives a new nature, a new life, and a new object.

Deliverance is by death: not literal death of course, but having died with Christ. Scripture shows not only that Christ died *for* me, but that I died *with* Him. The former was typified by the Red Sea, the latter by the Jordan. We are said to be "dead to sin," "our old man has been crucified with Him that the body of sin (i. e., sin in its totality) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The whole power and authority of "sin" is broken or annulled, and we have changed masters, we are no longer the slaves of sin.



“He that is dead is justified from sin,” he has done with it altogether in the account of God and in the reckoning of faith.

And here it is that the practical results of what we have just spoken of come in; “*Reckon* ye also yourselves to be dead to sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Sin is not to reign in our mortal bodies, nor are we to yield our members as instruments to it (Rom. vi.). Then also we have become “dead to the law.” Law applied to man in the flesh, but the believer has died out of that condition, and he can now say, “When we *were* in the *flesh*.” “Therefore we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held” (Rom. vii.).

Further, we are said to be dead to the world, “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the elements of the world,” etc. Again, “Ye are dead” (Col. ii. 20; iii. 3). Thus the Christian gets deliverance from bondage to the ordinances which religious men would impose upon him; and, after all, they are only “the elements of the world.” In addition to this, he has practically to “put to death” his “members which are on the earth”—evil things they are.

One verse in Galations sums up the truth in a very complete way, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 19). As for the old “I”—the old self—it is gone in the Cross of Christ; but the new man—“Yet not I”—lives and moves. This new life has a new object, the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. What object could more deeply touch the heart than this?

Let us remember that the Christian has not only a new life, but a new object and a new power. It is not enough to know that I have died with Christ, and thus

got freedom from the bondage in which I was held. Besides this, I need an object before my heart and spiritual power to carry me onward. Now Christ is the object to sustain our faith, to engage our affections, to draw the heart after Himself, and to form the life and character of the believer here.

In Rom. viii. we have the new power. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life and liberty, not of bondage as under the law, and He dwells in the believer. He acts in the new nature, and through Him we "mortify the deeds of the body," our privilege being to be "led" by the Spirit.

The Spirit is the "Spirit of sonship," and He puts into the heart and mouth of the believer (the "sons") the cry "Abba, Father." For God's purpose is that we should not only be *in* the relationship, but have the blessed *consciousness* of it in our souls.

Thus "Deliverance"—as many of us have been accustomed to call it—is a great and blessed reality. And it is not merely a *negative* thing, but is connected with the truth of the new life and nature, the new object, the new power—all these and much more are ours in virtue of the place which God, in His infinite grace, has brought us into. Let us realise our portion better in our daily walk and life.

F. G. B.

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## The Christian and Politics.

**T**HERE are two currents in human affairs on which the great mass of mankind unconsciously float. Both these end in perdition. The one will finish in the destruction which awaits the "mother of harlots" at the hands of the beast and the ten confederate kings (Rev. xvii. 14); the other by the destruction which

awaits these last enemies of Christ themselves (Rev. xix. 11-21).

The child of God has nothing to do with either the one or the other of these currents. His place is to live for Christ, to confess Christ, to work for Christ, to wait for Christ, to suffer with Christ; and, should that be necessary, to die for Christ; assured that, before the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole habitable world arrives, Christ will have come to take His saints to meet Him in the air. Thus, when the last conflict comes, the saints will have no other part in it but that of belonging to the glorious cortege of Christ, when He comes to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God Almighty.

What a solemn light all this casts on what Scripture calls the "course of this world"! Many people imagine that the fourth, or Roman Empire, having become nominally christian, has, for that reason, undergone an essential change, and that, consequently, it is their duty as christians to take an interest and a part in politics, and to be occupied with political affairs. This is a complete mistake. Ancient Babylon set up the worship of Bel and Nebo; the Persian monarchs favoured and upheld the most subtle idolatries of the East; Greece and Rome bowed down to Jupiter and his army of inferior deities. Some time afterwards, in the days of Constantine, Rome abandoned those false gods and adopted a religion which was a mixture of paganism, Judaism and Christianity; but the character of Gentile power remains the same, as regards this, all through.

Modern nations may have been put more directly under christian influence, and the mixture of "iron and clay," as it is worked out in different countries, may have given, or rather *has given*, to christians of all classes, the opportunity of mixing themselves up in world politics in a measure which was impossible to attain of old; but, may the Lord's people not allow themselves to be misled by it!

The fact that the whore sits upon the beast has in no way changed the nature of the latter, which remains none the less the beast. The scriptures show us that, under the eighth satanic head, with its ten confederate kings, this beast will cast off the whore, and that they will "*agree together*" to "make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her utterly with fire."

Is it a christian's place to identify himself with an order of things which is going on to such a result? Assuredly not. His citizenship is in heaven. His place, as a stranger on earth, is to yield a full and willing submission to the powers that be, in everything in which submission can be given without unfaithfulness to Christ. If this cannot be done, his place is to suffer and to bear it patiently. It is also his privilege to pray for them.

But, as regards the exercise of the authority of this world or taking part in the politics of the world—What has a christian to do with these things any more than Christ Himself had? The end of all the politics of the Gentiles, national or international, progressive or retrograde, is the conflict of the great day of God the Almighty. May the Lord keep His people from every current which leads to such a gulf. The saints will, without any doubt, be present on that day, but it will be as going forth out of heaven in the train of the mighty Conqueror (Rev. xix. 14). He is our portion, His coming in the air is our hope, and when He shall appear we shall appear with Him in glory.

May the Lord enlighten our understanding with the light of His prophetic word: may He give us such a tender conscience that we may, faithfully and as in His presence, examine all our ways and find out how far we can be associated with, or give support to, even in their first buddings, any of the forms or characters of evil on which the judgment of God is about to fall.

W. T.

## Jesus—Our Ever-Present Saviour.

VERY sweet and practical was the suggestion made by one who has long since departed to be with Christ, that the words of the Lord Jesus, recorded in Matthew xxviii. 20, "Lo, I am with you always," read as though He were *always* saying to His people, "I am with you *now*."

The same dear child of God reminded us that to *realise* is simply to *believe* and *remember*. Christians often pray they may "realise" this or that; whereas, all that is needed is, to truly *believe*, and *not forget*; to believe and remember hour by hour, moment by moment, that He is ever saying to us, "I am with you *NOW*."

Love delights to possess, and to associate itself with, its object. So it is with the Lord. I look on either side of me, and lo! "Thou art *with me*"; I look ahead, "He *leadeth me*"; I look up, "I am thy *shield*, and thine exceeding great reward"; I look behind and see "goodness and mercy *following me* all the days of my life" (covering over all my many footprints of failure); I look down, and behold, "*underneath* are the everlasting arms." Look where I will, I find "The eternal God is thy *refuge*"; "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

His is love, 'tis love unbounded,  
Without measure, without end!

There is an interesting and immensely instructive incident briefly recorded in Matthew xvii., where we find an expression used by the Lord Himself, which has frequently proved a source of great comfort to His people. The words are, "Me *and thee*."

Look at the circumstances. The Lord Jesus uttered these words to Peter upon the occasion of the collection of tribute (the half-shekel).

This was a capitation tax, paid to the temple at Jerusalem by every grown Jew; a tax, it seems, they had undertaken to pay on their return from captivity; and the payment had gone on ever since.

“Does your Master pay the half-shekel?” “Is He a true Jew?” “Oh, yes,” says zealous, unthinking Peter.

Now notice; when Peter was come into the house, the Lord had a word to say to him, the *first* word; for we read, He “spake first to him,” addressing him, not as “Peter,” but as “Simon” (comp. Matt. xvi. 18, and John i. 42).

The Lord proposed a question which, not only revealed the fact of His knowledge of all that had transpired outside the house, His omniscience, His divine mind (Matt. xvii. 25); but also showed what a poor conception Peter had of the ways of God, and how soon he had, apparently, forgotten his recent confession (Ch. xvi. 16), “Thou art . . . *the Son* of the living God,” as well as the heavenly attestation to this fact, on the holy mount (xvii. 5) “This is my beloved *Son*.”

The question the Lord asked was this: “What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, from strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free” (R.V.).

Gracious condescension! The Lord puts Peter (we say it with reverence) into the same place with Himself, —the son’s place (v. 26); thus saying, as it were, “You and I, Peter, are not ‘strangers,’ but ‘sons’ of the great King of the Temple, and therefore need not, each of us, pay the half-shekel.”

Proceeding still further, to confirm this association, He adds, “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them,”—lest “*we*,” you and I, Peter, the “*sons*”—“go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish

that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee." (v. 27.)

Thus He manifested His omniscience and His omnipotence; His glories as Creator, and (may we not add?) as Redeemer.

"Thou shalt find a shekel"; one half-shekel for Himself, and one for Peter; exactly the amount required!

O wonderful Master! didst Thou say, "Give unto them for Me and thee"? Is it thus Thou didst link Thyself with the poor of the flock? What condescending love! What an association! What a companionship!

Now, a glance at verses 22 and 23 of this chapter, will reveal the fact that this incident is preceded by a reference, on the Lord's part, to His rejection, His death, and His resurrection. Without these, there could have been no "Me *and* thee" for us (Eph. ii. 6); and we must still have remained "strangers and foreigners" (Eph. ii. 19); for, association with Him flows from His death and resurrection; as we learn from John's gospel, ch. xx. 17. "I ascend unto *My* Father *and* *your* Father." So that, not only may we rejoice in the love of Christ, but we are brought into the *inner circle*, the circle of the Father's own love; for the Lord has told us that, "the Father Himself loveth you"!

Oh, may it be ours ever to *believe* and *remember*, and *never to forget*; and so shall we always *realise* these glorious and wonderful facts. Well may we sing:

Yea, in the fulness of His grace,  
 God put me in the *children's place*,  
 Where I may gaze upon His face,  
 O Lamb of God, in Thee!

N. L. N.

## Ten Reasons for believing the Bible to be the Word of God.

1. *Because*, once we admit that there is a God, whose handiwork in creation we see around and above us, it is not likely that He would leave Himself without a revelation of His Being and His will towards His creature, man.

2. *Because*, while no one but God can rightly reveal God, the Bible reveals what He is in a way perfectly in keeping with a divinely-given revelation of a gracious and beneficent Creator—it makes Him known both as light and love. In this way it carries its own credentials to the humble mind, as says the proverb, “All the words of My mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing forward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge” (Prov. viii. 8).

3. *Because* the Bible shows what man is, not in a superficial way but down to the very roots of his being, as no other book has ever done or could do.

4. *Because* the Bible, whilst it shows what man's place is as a responsible creature—and one who, when tested in Eden, fell and sinned against God—reveals, at the same time, God's own perfect provision for man's need through Christ—and that in a way which never could have been conceived by any other but God Himself.

5. *Because* the whole structure of the Bible, in its earliest chapters as well as throughout its contents, shows a prescience, a foreknowledge of future events, which would be impossible to a merely human writer, however wise or intelligent he might be.

6. *Because* those prophetic predictions given in the Bible concerning Christ, the true Messiah of Israel—predictions which abound throughout the Old Testament—also concerning the nations and their place in



the government of God, and the events of past ages; have all had their fulfilment, so far as the time for it has arrived. This is what someone has called a "perpetual miracle."

7. *Because* there is a unity of design and purpose manifest throughout the whole book, which is an indisputable proof of its being the work of one Author—God, by His Spirit—one presiding mind; however numerous the writers may have been, or however varied their circumstances or calling in life.

8. *Because* the Bible has in it a vitality, a life, which no human composition has ever had. It is "living" and "powerful" like the living Word (Christ). It penetrates down to the deepest and most hidden recesses of the human soul, searches the heart; exposes, not only the *acts*, but the *thoughts* of the heart, and shows up everything in the light as it really is. Thus there is both life and light in the word itself.

9. *Because* of the way in which it has stood against the attacks of infidel reason and the bitter hatred of its enemies, from the days of Celsus in the second century to the present moment. Sometimes these attacks have been from false friends, sometimes from open enemies, always from Satan. But whilst the "assured results" of the investigations of scientific men in times past, have now nearly all been discarded for newer theories, the Bible remains in its own unscathed and pristine simplicity, unharmed by infidel attacks; and all efforts to get rid of it have failed.

10. *Because* it circles round one common centre. That centre is the Person of Christ, the Son of God; and its scope takes in the whole of the purposes and counsels of God. Consequently it gives what nothing else can give—rest to the conscience of him who believes the gospel it teaches, peace to the soul of the troubled one, a satisfying object for the heart in the risen and glorified Christ whom it declares.

Its gospel can revolutionise a man's whole life and outlook, can change the thief into an honest man, the drunkard into a sober person—can transform a home which is a veritable hell on earth into one which is a foretaste of heaven on earth. What else can do this but the gospel that the Bible declares? And as to what lies on "the other side."—What other book can "gild the bed of death with light," or give to the one who believes, the comforting assurance that, to step out of things seen and temporal, is to step into the very presence of Christ Himself, which is "very far better"?

And not only so, but no other book can illuminate the future with the bright and cheering hope of the rising of the "bright and morning star" for which the Christian waits. The Bible does all this and much more.

Is it not evident then that the Bible *must be and is* a revelation of and from God; perfectly adapted to the needs of man, whosever he may be and wheresoever he may be found?

Cowper has said of Voltaire, the noted French infidel,  
 "Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,  
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store;  
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—  
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew."

F. G. B.

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## Revelation and Inspiration.

**I**N the Scriptures we have both "revelation" and "inspiration" brought before us in a marked degree. They are not the same thing, and need to be distinguished; though for the Christian to-day there is no "revelation" apart from the "inspiration" we have of it in the Scriptures of truth; whatever may be the claims of various men and women made from time

to time, to some special revelation. The same held good in the days of the apostle John (1 John iv. 1, 2).

Hence, in the Scriptures, "revelation" and "inspiration" are correlative, the former having been anterior to the latter. They are also "interdependent"; and both, "revelation" and "inspiration," are of God.

The cross of Christ became the dividing line between "the wisdom of the world" and "the wisdom of God." As we read in 1 Cor. i. 18, the preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness; but, to us who are saved, it is the power of God. The power and wisdom of God are demonstrated in the preaching of the cross. The unbelieving Jews and the Greek philosophers find their confusion here; and the conclusions of the "oppositions of science, falsely so called," are likewise dismissed. Yes, dismissed, by what men, in their darkness, are pleased to account "the foolishness of God," which "foolishness," however, is wiser than men; for, "He knoweth vain men. He seeth wickedness also; will He not consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man is born like a wild ass's colt" (Job xi. 11, 12). "Wherefore, He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James iv. 6).

"Revelation," in the Scriptures, has respect to the revealing of truth. For instance, the declaration in Eden as to the coming Seed of the woman, etc., was a "revelation." The promise to Abraham as to future blessing through his seed, was a "revelation." That the Lord would come in judgment, was a "revelation" to "Enoch, the seventh from Adam" (Jude). But it was not until centuries after these as well as other "revelations," had been made, that Moses and others were chosen of God, as fit vessels to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, to place those "revelations" on record. Thus, we find that "inspiration" has respect to giving out, or rather, to placing on record, those divine revela-

tions in the form, and even "words," in which God would have them expressed.

There was a "revelation" of God's mind and purposes, therefore, before there was an "inspiration," but sometimes both "revelation" and "inspiration" occurred simultaneously. God, in His infinite mind and way, reveals; but it is always to men chosen by Himself; and these, though finite beings, received the "revelation" as "inspiration."

Cannot God operate on *finite* minds? Cannot He who gave men their minds and their first language, give a *verbal* "revelation" suited to man's capacity and understanding? Surely He can. And while men, whose link with the eternal Creator has been broken by sin, are wearing out their brains in order to discover the origin and destiny of all things—how the world and how man upon it, came into being—God, by "revelation," has made known all that is necessary, and "faith" understands what reason dismisses (Heb. xi. 3).

But God does not give that which is holy unto the dogs, nor does He cast His pearls before the swine. He calls, prepares, and sanctifies the vessel for His purpose; whether it be a king (as Solomon, or David), or a herdsman (as Amos); for He works "to confound the wise," and "brings to nought the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor. i. 19). The whole argument of the Spirit of God by the apostle in that important chapter (and in chap. ii.) is to show up the folly of the carnal mind, even in a believer, in trafficking with spiritual things; for they are only apprehended by spiritual means. Why? "That no flesh should glory in His presence" (chap. i. 29).

Again, with regard to prophecy we read, "For the prophecy came not of old by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). This establishes the fact that both the "revelation" and "inspiration" were ex-

clusively of God. To challenge, therefore, the human authorship of the scriptures, working under God's directing power, is to challenge the authority of God; for the men chosen for the purpose were conscious, when they were so doing, that they were writing "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13).

An important example of the foregoing statement is found in the apostle's own case in the same epistle, chap. vii., where he is giving his own judgment on a matter, as well as the Lord's commands. In ver. 6, he says, "But I speak this (i.e. what precedes) by permission, and not by commandment." Then in ver. 10, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord." He means, that the Lord Jesus Himself decided this matter when on earth (Matt. v. 32; xix. 3-9). When, again, he used other language, "to the rest speak I, not the Lord" (ver. 12), "I have no commandment of the Lord" (ver. 25); he only acknowledges the Lord Himself had said nothing on the subject. But he adds, "Yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful."

In thus forming his judgment he has the consciousness of the Spirit's help; for he says, "and I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (ver. 40). Thus the apostle was drawing a distinction between a positive command of God and his own judgment, guided, no doubt, by the Spirit. But all that is stated is recorded in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. There can be no ideas without "words." If the Holy Spirit did not give the "words," it would have been possible for man, when left to his natural powers, to employ language which would not have conveyed His idea. There must be an inspired *text*, if there is to be a "revelation."

All this surely is enough to convey to any subject mind the fact that God has committed His word to chosen vessels, definitely, by revelation and inspiration

in such a way as to confirm the faith of those who receive it, and also His righteous judgment upon those who add to or take from it (Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

The prophets of old had likewise this same consciousness referred to above as we have remarked (1 Peter i. 9, 12). But Peter gives also a solemn warning to us all. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies . . . And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter ii. 1, 2). John likewise refers to these anti-Christian teachers and writes to the "little children" in the family of God, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John ii. 20, 27). Again (chap. iv. 1), "Beloved believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." These spirits can alone be tested by accepting, in simple faith, the Bible as a whole, as a direct verbal revelation and inspiration from God through instruments chosen of Him.

So convinced is the apostle cited above of this that he further says, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. . . . We (the apostles) are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (chap. iv. 6). It is a mercy that God has anticipated the "Higher Criticism" of the age in which we live, in the warnings, as well as the instructions, of His word.

H. L.

## The Present Ministry of Christ in the Assembly.

(Matt. xviii., 20 ; Psalm xxii., 22; Hebrews ii, 11, 12.)

**C**LERISY and ministry are not necessarily synonymous terms. The former is, practically, the priesthood of the Old Testament, in virtue of which one person draws near to God on behalf of others : the latter (ministry) is a commission *from* God, given in order to serve others in divine things.

Owing to age and infirmity the writer cannot now attend the usual meetings of God's people ; but, of late, he has much enjoyed the fact of the Lord's presence "in the midst" of two or three gathered to His name (Matt. xviii. 20).

And for what purpose is He present "in the midst"? Is it not in order that He may be remembered ; and if remembered, surely also to be invoked and adored? But is this all? Truly it is not ; for He is also the Servant, or Minister, of His people's necessities ; and, by means of the word read or spoken, through such as are present in the power of the Spirit, He often, in this way, meets His people's needs.

Yet even this is not all ! There is a beautiful thought presented to us in Psalm xxii. 22, which is quoted in Hebrews ii. 12, viz., "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren ; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee."

What a deep interest the Psalmist must have felt as he meditated upon what he had written in that verse, when the Spirit revealed to him that he was not, in this, ministering so much to Old Testament saints, but "unto us," as is plainly taught in 1 Peter i. 10-12, where we read, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things . . ."

And what was the Name declared? Surely it was the name of "Father," as the "Son" Himself says in John

xvii. 26, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and *will* declare it"; and further, in John xx. 17, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and and to My God and your God."

In that first appearance of the Lord Jesus to His assembled disciples after His resurrection, He fulfilled His promise to reveal to us more of His Father (and ours); and, doubtless, He continues to do so even now, by His Spirit and His word, when "in the midst" of His gathered saints. How blessed to know, on His authority, that His Father is ours also; and to know, too, that He Himself is "not ashamed to call us brethren" (Heb. ii. 10, 11). Precious relationship!

But this does not warrant us in calling Him "Brother" or "Elder Brother." Nowhere throughout the pages of divine inspiration does the Holy Spirit sanction such a liberty. We have ever to bear in mind *Who* He is, in His own essential Being; the One in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; and thus render to Him the honour that is His due.

And further, there is something besides relationship referred to in Psalm xxii. 22 and in Hebrews ii. 12. We read that He says, "In the midst of the assembly will *I sing* praise unto Thee."

How little do we think and feel, when giving out a hymn of praise to the Father, that the Lord Jesus Himself is present to lead the praises of His people. This is truly a wondrous fact! It is a sweet foretaste of that moment when, in the day of His displayed glory, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied"; as, in that day, He shall present His loved church unto Himself, just such as He would have it to be, "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Blessed result of His present ministry in "sanctifying and cleansing it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 25-27)!



What grace to permit us to be assured, even now, when gathered to His name, with Himself "in the midst," that the Father hears the melody of the praises presented through Him! Thus our "sacrifice of praise" will be acceptable to God through His beloved One.

"Our Father, we would worship  
 In Jesu's holy name;  
 For He, whate'er our changes,  
 For ever is the same:  
 Through Him our childlike praises  
 As incense sweet will be;  
 The songs Thy Spirit raises  
 Can ne'er want melody."

It is remarkable that the Greek word for "shall agree" in Matthew xviii. 19, literally means, shall be symphonious (harmonious). It is therefore of the first importance for us to be filled with Spirit and in mutual harmony, in order to be in unison with the Lord Jesus who is "in the midst." The effect will be *power in the meeting*. It is not enough to hold correct church principles, and to be on the "right ground" as we say; there is more needed than this if we are to render true worship "in Jesu's holy name."

At the dedication of Solomon's temple, the ark (symbol of Jehovah's presence) was in its place (2 Chron. v. 7), and all due order was observed; but not until the 120 trumpeters and the singers were *in unison*—were as "one, to make one sound"—was "the power of His glory" manifested. So it was with the 120 on the day of Pentecost, when "they were all with one accord, in one place" (Acts i. 15; ii. 1). And, in measure, so will it be likewise with us, if we are pliable in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

J. R.

## “Nothing to Eat.”

(Matthew xv, 32.)

**A**S in the days of old when the blessed Lord looked upon the multitudes that had followed Him for three days and knew of their great need of food and met and supplied that need, so in the present day the impoverished state of souls in Christendom must grieve His loving heart. “Give ye them to eat” found no response from those whose faith should have risen above all conditions and circumstances, in the presence of One who was ready and willing to honour the faith of the feeblest of His creatures.

As one looks around on the fields “white already to harvest” and realises how scantily-equipped with truth are those who are gifted by the Lord of the harvest to proclaim the truth of His word, it is certainly discouraging. There is no doubt that we are very near to the close of the present interval. The pulpits of Christendom are filled for the most part with men whose ignorance of scripture is lamentable and subjects without any reference to scripture are made to do duty as sermons to interest, and sad to say often to amuse, the listeners.

For those whose desire is to be faithful to the Lord in these last dark days, it should be the aim to carry out the scriptural injunction to “earnestly contend for the faith, once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). There is a famine in the land! Not a famine of bread but of the word of God. This leads our thoughts back to that scripture in Amos viii. 11, 12, when warning of a similar famine was given by Jehovah to the nation of Israel, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread . . . but of hearing the words of the Lord.” Surely that took place and has continued to the present day as far as that nation is concerned.

The Lord in His prayer, John xvii. 14, says "I have given them Thy *word*," the Father's word, also in verse 8, "the *words*," to bring them into communion with the Father.

There can be no spiritual progress unless we are feeding upon the blessed word of truth. The lack of the study of scripture is seen in the host of starvelings to be met everywhere in Christendom.

The writer can remember well that in Protestant churches sixty years ago, whenever a scripture was referred to, one could hear the rustling of the leaves of Bibles as the hearers turned to the portion referred to. In the present day one rarely ever sees a Bible in some of the meetings.

May we be able to say with the Psalmist, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm cxix. 11).

The habit of reading the word is important, but it should be with prayer that we may have our understanding enlightened by the help of the Holy Spirit. It is only by diligent study of the word that the beauties contained in it shine out. "The diligent soul shall be made fat" (Proverbs xiii. 4).

We cannot read the word of God as we do a newspaper or any other book. To really profit by the study of it we must be conscious that we are in the presence of One who is speaking to us, that we are not alone. The very sense of the divine presence will give us a calmness of spirit and an attentive ear. In this way we get the *sense* of the word.

In Nehemiah viii. we read that the people presented a united front to hear Ezra, the priest, read out of the book of the law of Moses and certain ones named in verse 7, with the Levites, caused the people to understand the law. "So they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly *and gave the sense* and caused them to understand the reading."

So with us in the present day when we have profited by what we read we are able to impart to others what we have received. Those who are gifted by the Lord of the harvest to preach the word, either in evangelising or teaching (Ephesians iv. 11), and who study it in the way indicated, are able to impart what they receive in an acceptable way to their hearers. Knowledge is not necessarily a gift, for many are blessed with a deep knowledge of the word, but are not able to impart that knowledge to others. One may not be so well furnished in scripture as others, but may be gifted by the Lord to impart what he knows in a manner profitable to his hearers.

In the present day it is all important in those who take a lead in preaching or teaching, that such should be thoroughly acquainted with the truth so as to be able to meet and combat the views of the Higher Critics of the modern school.

In the three synoptical gospels the expression made use of by our blessed Lord "Give ye them to eat" is recorded for us. A similar desire is on His heart to-day as He regards the dearth of the sound and profitable ministry of the word among the starving millions around. It is a great responsibility for those who are gifted, to see they do not neglect their gift. The blessed Lord, in feeding the multitude, demonstrated His divine liberality, and, in His request that the fragments be gathered up, His divine frugality.

J. P., *Montreal.*

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Nearness to Christ would keep us from sectarianism, the most natural weed of the human heart. Sectarianism is getting an interest in a little circle round ourselves.

J. N. D.

## “Be Strong.”

“**T**HOU therefore, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. ii. 1). How encouraging these words of the aged apostle Paul to his child in the faith, Timothy! They were written just shortly before his martyrdom.

Whatever our circumstances may be, or the special difficulties or dangers of the times in which we live, God’s resources are all-sufficient.

To start with—He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, and the gifts and calling of God are not subject to repentance: He never goes back on His word.

Besides this, Christ’s love to His church never fails. In the past, in His love, He gave Himself for it. In the present, in the same love, He sanctifies and cleanses with the washing of water by the word; and in the future, in the same love also, He will present His church to Himself, glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

His is indeed a love superior to all failure on our part. He may have to chasten and even rebuke, but it is in love and for our good.

“Be strong in the *grace*,” etc. Here is a resource to rely upon, and what a blessed word *grace* is! It is God’s free favour, His love in activity. The word *grace* is allied to the word “rejoice” and to “thanksgiving.” A thankful and rejoicing spirit may, and should, be ours, in spite of difficulties and discouragements.

So it was with the returned captives in the days of Nehemiah; that good man exhorted them to be of good courage, saying, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” And the apostle Peter, in view even of the complete dissolution of all things, tells us to, “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

## Words of Cheer.

**S**URROUNDED by sickness, sorrows and troubles as we are, how blessed to "look off unto Jesus", the author and finisher of faith; the One who, having trodden the path of faith before us, is set down at the right hand of the throne of God!

His grace is sufficient to meet us in our every need. He is now in the presence of God "for us"—and may the full import of these two little words take hold of our hearts and bow them in a worshipping sense of His love! His priesthood, carried on in the glory of God, is unfailing and unchanging, for He is ever living to make intercession for us.

But the various ways in which our Lord Jesus is active on our behalf are such, that no words can express them fully. Having perfectly glorified God about the question of sin by His atoning work upon the cross, He is now the *risen* Saviour, and all power is given unto Him. Soon He will exercise His power in raising from the dead all His beloved ones, who will be associated with Him in His glorious reign over this world; and then will be seen the display of the exceeding riches of God's grace, before wondering hosts, throughout an endless eternity.

As we have said, Christ is our High Priest in heaven there to meet our needs and to help and sustain us in going through the wilderness. He is also our Advocate with the Father, to restore us to communion if we have failed. What a loving, as well as a mighty and blessed Saviour!—One who is "over all, God blessed for ever. Amen", as well as "the man, Christ Jesus."

In the Lord's parting words to His disciples, as given us in Matthew xxviii. 20, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world", He encourages His own by the fact that He is always with us, and it is ours to walk in simple dependence on Him. His is a power that knows no weakness, an energy that never

tires, always active on behalf of His own. This power is vested in the Son of God, our Redeemer; and being truly man, He has Himself gone the path before us. This is a truth which takes hold of the heart, and which keeps the soul calm under every circumstance which we may have to pass through.

Thus "all the days", and every day, He is with His own; the great "I AM", the Lord of life and glory, the omnipotent One; yet the humble, lowly One who could say, "I am meek and lowly of heart": and in following Him we find rest for our souls.

This present age is about to close in judgment on the world; but for those who belong to Christ, His church—when He comes He will take them to the Father's house above. Then the bride will be presented to Him, glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish.

R. W. K. (*Précis*)

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## "Borrow not a few."

2 Kings iv. 3-4.

**I**S not the incident narrated in this scripture a striking illustration of the unlimited grace of our God and Father, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? And, on the other hand, does it not prove the truth of the statement of the Psalmist, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

The deceased husband of this widow, we are told, "feared the Lord", and this fact moved the prophet to action on behalf of this woman in her distress. "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours", said he to her; "borrow not a few." There was to be no stint to the gracious provision that was to meet the need of the poor widow. And does not this teach all who love the Lord Jesus Christ to count always upon the grace that never fails? Surely it does.

The empty vessels were filled. And we may say that it is only vessels that are empty that can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Emptied of self, worldliness, and everything connected with our natural life which is not of God—as the apostle John states so clearly “He that loveth His life shall lose it; and he that *hateth his life* in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour” (Ch. xii. 25. 26).

Observe carefully how these verses follow the Lord’s statement about the corn of wheat, that beautiful exemplification of His precious death and of the fruit that that death produces. It is as *this* fruit that we hate this natural life and have power to serve and follow Him. It can only be through death—having died with Him—that these things are true of us.

Oh, dear reader, may we always be filled with the Holy Spirit, otherwise any *service* or attempt to *follow* is only nugatory. “The oil stayed”—there were no more empty vessels to be procured. Vessels there were, no doubt, in that neighbourhood, but not in the condition needed.

“Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest” (verse 7). There was ample to pay the debt and to preserve the life of her children and herself also. What is the great hindrance to growth in Christ and progress in our spiritual life? The writer, after an experience of over half a century, is confident that the chief cause of decline is the neglect of the study of the holy scriptures, as well as private prayer. We cannot read the Bible as we do another book. If we would become men of God, we must give attendance to reading (1 Tim. iv. 13). All Christians are children of God, but to be a man of God (1 Tim. vi. 11), we must follow after “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”, as the apostle



Paul enjoined his son Timothy when addressing him as a "man of God."

Yes, it is a most profitable occupation, the close study of the word, with prayer. Every sentence in some parts of the word need careful and patient meditation. The writer has recently spent more than a month over one chapter in the Lord's own ministry, before it has opened up to his spiritual vision. Many read the Bible as a duty and get very little, but it is better to read it as a duty than not read it at all.

It is said that a lifelong friend of President Abraham Lincoln, who was invited with him to spend a night at a soldier's home, saw him sitting near a window intently reading the Bible. He said to Lincoln, "I am glad to see you so profitably engaged." "Yes", replied Lincoln, "I am profitably engaged." "Well", said the friend, "if you have recovered from scepticism, I am sorry to say I have not." Placing his hand upon the shoulder of his friend, Lincoln said, "You are wrong; take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier man."

Grace does what the law cannot do. The law condemns *acts*, but it does not judge the *nature* of the man—grace does this. "What the law could not do . . . . God sending His own Son (grace) . . . condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3).

J.P. (Montreal)

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## Balaam and Spiritism.

**B**ALAAM is one of the three representative men mentioned in the epistle of Jude—Cain, Balaam and Core. This epistle has specially in view the closing period of the present age.

Balaam was a false prophet, a soothsayer or diviner (Joshua xiii. 22), whom Balak, king of Moab, hired to

curse Israel, so that he might gain the victory over them.

The history shows us that God gave Balaam sufficient warning as to his perverse ways; in the end, however, He allowed him to go with the king's messengers, in order to show that, whatever the *actual* state of His people might be; yet they were *His*, and no divination or effort of the enemy could change His purposes towards them. So we find that the money-loving prophet, under the compelling power of God, was obliged to give utterance to a fourfold prophecy, which is one of the finest settings forth of what God's people are to Him which we have in the Bible.

Balaam's heart was set on money and reward, he loved "the wages of unrighteousness", and the same thing is true of many to-day. If the false religions that we see around us were sifted out, it would be found that money is at the bottom of nine-tenths of them.

But God is stronger than man, and, as we read in Deut. xxiii. 5, He says of His people, "The Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord loved thee." Note, He does not say it was because of anything good in them; but it was His sovereign grace. Balak then says to Balaam, "I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." Here he assumes the tone of one who did believe in the true God, though he was a heathen; but the fact was that Balaam lost his reward because God would not allow him to act as he desired and as Satan was urging him on to act.

We may remark that the demons who possessed people in New Testament times, subordinated the whole mind, will, and conscience, to their control: the *person* became but a passive instrument in their hands. So it was with "Legion" (Mark v.; Luke viii.) and others; the demon or demons spoke through the one possessed. And we are told that Christ "suffered not the demons

to speak, because they knew Him" (Mark i. 34; Luke iv. 41). Note here, it was the demons who would have spoken, had they been permitted to do so. There can be no doubt that, in Spiritism, mediums become the mouthpiece or instrument of satanic spirits, who speak through them.

In Numbers xxiii. 15, we find Balaam saying to Balak, "Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet . . . yonder." Our translators put in the words "the Lord" in italic print, but they should be left out. The passage does not say whom he was going to meet, but he was wont to meet an evil spirit, a demon; but "The Lord met Balaam and put a word in his mouth"; this is how the curse was turned into a blessing. What we have just said as to his meeting with a demon is confirmed in chapter xxiv. 1, "He went not as at other times to seek enchantments." This he had been in the habit of doing.

The testimony of scripture as to the activity of evil spirits is so constant, even from the earliest times, that no intelligent reader could doubt it. So the law says, "They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring" (Levit. xvii. 7); "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God" (Deut. xxxii. 17). And Paul says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons" (1 Cor. x. 20). The testimony of the Psalmist is, "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons" (Ps. cvi. 37).

Demons were behind the idols which the heathen worshipped, and the Jews also had largely fallen into idolatry; thus Satan made himself an object of worship instead of God.

It is nothing but a delusion to suppose that men can have to do with the spirits of the departed. Those who have died rejecting Christ are, to use a scripture phrase,

“in prison” awaiting judgment: those who have died in Christ are, “absent from the body and present with the Lord” (2 Cor. v. 8), awaiting the moment when the body shall be raised and they shall “bear the image of the heavenly” (Christ).

But the spirits of neither the one nor the other are in the keeping of men; to be brought up (if the delusion were true) at the beck and call of a medium! No!—but it is satanic spirits, demons, who personate the dead and impose upon the living. These Spiritists, working in a field where God has so strongly forbidden them, become the victims of a power superior to their own—a power whose object it is to deceive men and dishonour God.

The reader is requested to read carefully what God has said on the subject of necromancy (consulting the dead), dealing with familiar spirits and other similar evils, in Deut. xviii. 10-12; Levit. xix. 31; Levit. xx. 6, 27; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6; Isa. viii. 19, etc.

The case of Samuel and Saul in 1 Samuel xxviii. is a solemn but instructive one, and it may well serve as a warning against having anything whatever to do with Spiritism.

King Saul, in his better days at the beginning of his reign, had put away out of the land those who had familiar spirits. Now, at the end, when he sees himself pressed by a powerful enemy, the Philistines, and God does not answer him, he turns to the very thing he had once judged to be wicked.

God allows it, in this case, that Samuel should be brought up, so that the godless king might hear, from his mouth, his awful doom. But the very fact that the witch was so astonished and afraid when Samuel appeared, shows that what she expected to meet was the evil spirit with whom she usually had to do. She had herself no power whatever to bring up the real Samuel; that is quite evident. And so evil was Saul's

conduct in the eyes of God, that it is stated in 1 Chron. x. 13, that one of the causes of his death was, because he consulted one that had a familiar spirit instead of turning to his God.

Spiritism sometimes presents itself in a plausible light as a supporter of Christianity, assuming to prove survival after death, and even the resurrection of Christ. But God does not accept testimony from such a source, flatly contrary to His word as it is. Our Lord, when on earth, would not accept testimony from demons, and neither should we. Thank God we have better witness; we depend on that which is *certain*, and we say, "*Thy word is truth.*"

But Christendom, which is every day becoming more and more apostatised from the truth, will be allowed of God to fall into the snare of the enemy. Just as when men, in the past, did not think well to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a mind void of understanding, and so they fell into heathenism (Rom. 1). Israel also, turning aside to idolatry, God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, etc. (Acts vii.). And Christendom, which has had so much light!—because they would not receive the truth in the love of it, *God* will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie (2 Thess. ii). Solemn and awful end!

And it must be honestly said that not the least of these "lies" is to be found in such systems as Spiritism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and a number of other delusions which foreshadow the close of the dispensation. But the simple Christian is kept by the grace of God; he has a heavenly Saviour who is a satisfying object for the heart, and a coming Saviour as the blessed goal of all his hopes. —————

F. G. B.

Elijah had to learn that God had still seven thousand souls who had not bowed the knee to Baal, although Elijah had not been able to discover them. Oh! when will the heart of man, even in thought, rise to the height of God's grace and patience?

## The Place and the Name.

**G**OD told His earthly people Israel that there would be a *place* in the promised land where He would record His *Name*. The first mention of it is in connection with the altar (Exod. xx. 24), on which the children of Israel were to offer their burnt offerings and peace offerings, and it is frequently spoken of in Deuteronomy, the book which contains the statutes and judgments which they were to observe when they came to dwell in the land. Thus Deut. xii. 5-7 says, "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek and thither thou shalt come; and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices . . . and there ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee."

The Lord first recorded His Name at Shiloh. This we learn from Joshua xviii. 1, and Jer. vii. 12. The latter Scripture says: "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."

Shiloh was in the inheritance of Ephraim, and there the children of Israel set up the tabernacle when the land was subdued before them; but we learn from Psalm lxxviii. that the Lord "refused the tabernacle of Joseph and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which He loved."

Similar language is used in 1 Kings viii. and 2 Chron. vi. when Solomon dedicated the temple to the Name of the Lord; and in 2 Kings xxi. 7, we are told that the Lord had said to David and to Solomon, his son, that "In this house and in Jerusalem which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put My name for ever." Hence the great wickedness on king Manasseh's part

in making a graven image and setting it in the house where the Lord had put His Name. Hence, too, the iniquity of the people as described in the 7th chapter of Jeremiah, "Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely and burn incense unto Baal and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My Name and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" The Lord shows His displeasure at their ways and says, "Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh."

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus acknowledges the temple at Jerusalem as the temple of God.

Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the temple built by king Solomon, but as we learn from Ezra vi., it was rebuilt by the Jews who returned from Babylon, and it (or, the one built by Herod) remained standing for the Lord Himself to come to it and to purge it. In Matthew xxi. 12 we read, "And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves. And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Not only does the Lord purge the temple; He does wonderful works in it and He receives homage in it, although not from the chief priests and scribes. "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto Him, Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babies and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?"

In the 24th of Matthew, when the disciples show the Lord the buildings of the temple, He tells them, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." In spite of His wonderful works, the nation, through its leaders, had rejected Him, the Lord of the temple, and He pronounces utter destruction upon the house and the mountain where He had put His Name. What then is God going to do? Is there to be no place where His Name can be recorded and where He can be worshipped? Yes, He has provided a place and that is, according to the Lord's words in the 18th of Matthew, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." This is not confined to any one land or any one nation, or any type of building; it is open to all who (according to 1 Cor. i. 2) in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is now the place of worship for all believers, that is, those who "are sanctified in Christ Jesus." This henceforth is the blessed place where all those who worship God in spirit and in truth can, in the character of a holy priesthood, offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

G.K.

## The Gifts of God's Grace.

How to make them our own.

**T**HE pride of the "deceitful and desperately wicked heart" of man is a great hindrance to both sinner and saint in taking their respective and proper place before a holy and faithful God. It is only when the inmost recesses of the heart are laid bare and open by the "living and powerful" word of God, that we are brought to humble ourselves in the searching eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Then it is that we are in a state of soul to appreciate and appropriate the gifts of His grace.

We find in scripture many instances where the gracious thoughts of God towards His people are made



manifest in giving them "an expected end." David had brought down the anger of God upon Israel when he listened to Satan's suggestion and said to Joab, "Go, number Israel," etc. (2 Sam. xxiv.; 1 Chron. xxi.). It was only when the hand of God was upon him in discipline, and with a smitten heart, that he was brought into a state of soul where he could be forgiven and restored.

David first took his place in confession, and then stood at the fireless altar, with a substitutionary sacrifice, as if to see what God would do with him. It was a solemn scene, and the question at issue was: Will the fire of God's judgment upon sin fall on the offender or the substitute." It was a critical moment; the crisis came when He who was Himself "a consuming fire" answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering (1 Chron. xxi. 26).

With what heart-felt thankfulness must the king have watched his substitute being consumed to ashes, and he himself and his people spared! Thus the Lord was intreated for the land and the plague was stayed from Israel, while the destroying angel sheathed his sword. And David appropriated both—his place as an offender, and the mercy of God to him through his substitute on the altar.

How this instance reminds us of the cross of Christ! The Jews were responsible for His crucifixion and challenged Him to come down from the cross. There the question, which had such momentous issues was: Will a holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look upon iniquity, summarily destroy the guilty murderers by the fire of His wrath from heaven? Or will He give up His own Son as the Substitute to bear their sins in His own body on the tree?

In His great love and superabounding grace He did the latter, and thus over-ruled what was the climax of

man's sin, turning it into the ground of redemption. It was only a few days later that some 3,000 of these very people, on hearing Peter preach the gospel, were "pricked in their heart", took their place as guilty sinners before God, and were saved by grace. Yes, saved, on the ground of the vicarious sufferings of Him whom they had so recently crucified, but whom God raised from among the dead, as His receipt in full to believers, showing that their debt of sin has now been *fully paid*.

Another most interesting case of appropriation is that of the woman of Canaan (Matt. xv.). She was a Gentile and the Christ to whom she appealed was great David's greater Son, now rejected as King of the Jews. In presenting her troubles to Him and pleading for mercy, she at first took the place of Jewish privilege, addressing Him as Son of David—a place to which, at that time, *she had no claim*; consequently Jesus made no reply. But soon she owned Him as Lord and appealed to Him for help.

Yet, even then, she must still come down and *own* that she had no claim at all, casting herself upon the sovereign grace which dwelt in His heart; for it was not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. Then it was that the faith to which all things are possible shone out so brightly—she says, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She appropriates the place assigned to her—that of a dog.

Blessed Lord!—whose infinite wisdom and gracious words brought a soul to such a point of contrition. Thus her petition for mercy was granted without any sacrifice of His rights as Son of David. Jesus says, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

There is yet another case that brings out the very pith and marrow of the truth of appropriation: I refer

to the crippled son of Jonathan—Mephibosheth. When King David sat on the throne he did not forget his promise to Jonathan as to showing the “kindness of the Lord” (1 Sam. xx. 11-17) to him. So David inquired, “Is there yet any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?” The “kindness of God”—what does that mean? Nothing less than the free grace of God to one who has no claim to it; for he was given a place as one of the king’s sons at the royal table.

Surely this was a foretaste of millennial joy, as in Canticles ii. 3, 4. Such grace touched Mephibosheth’s heart when he said, “What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?” This was true lowness indeed; comparing himself to a *dead dog*; i.e. not only unfit to receive “children’s bread”, or to “eat of the crumbs”; but fit only to be cast out.

Thus when Mephibosheth humbled himself, taking the lowest place, the “kindness of God” at once raised him to a high one, even to the enjoyment of fellowship with the king at his table. The time came, however, when he could no longer do so, for David had to flee for his life when the rebellion of Absalom broke out. At that time we find him denying himself many things which he would naturally have liked to enjoy, when David was driven from his home, rejected, cursed by some and hated by others. On David’s return he expressed much sorrow for not having been able to identify himself with the king in the hour of his trial.

There are, respectively, four words that characterise the foregoing four examples of appropriation, viz., substitution, mercy, forgiveness, and grace. As to “mercy”, it may be remarked that, however much an unsaved person, when dying, may cry to God through fear of judgment, and say, “Lord, have mercy on my soul”; he cannot expect to obtain it, unless, in repentance toward God and faith towards our Lord

Jesus Christ, he takes the place of having *no claim to it whatever*. All blessing must come on the ground of sovereign grace.

When such an one comes to Christ in the way the hymn puts it :—

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

then, and only then, he receives full forgiveness of sins through faith in a dead and risen Saviour.

J. R.

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## A Vain Search.

**C**OULD Satan, now, his wily task begin  
To scan earth’s history for the blackest sin,  
Explore its wide domain, search high and low,  
Both in the present and the long ago ;  
*That sin would ne’er be found*, too black to be  
Cleansed by the blood of Christ eternally.

(1 John i. 7.)

Could he yet further scan the lengthy roll  
Of past and present, for the blackest soul,  
Recount its history and sinful ways,  
Tell of its wanderings in evil days ;  
*That soul would ne’er be found*, too bad to be  
God’s “*whosoever*” for eternity.

(John iii. 16.)

N. L. N.

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Nature makes us impatient with circumstances, because we do not sufficiently realise God, and draws us into situations where it is impossible to glorify Him . . . Faith acts on God’s behalf, and reveals Him in the midst of circumstances, instead of being governed by them.

## What is a Christian?

**A** CHRISTIAN (in the true meaning of that word) is one who is born again and has eternal life. Christ is his Saviour, his life, his righteousness and his object. He has the cross behind him and the glory before him. Heaven is his home and he is pressing on in the energy of faith, assured that the goal of all his hopes is to be with Christ in the Father's house above.

But here in this world he is put to the test; here it is that his faithfulness to his Lord and Saviour has to be proved.

These thoughts have been suggested by a letter from a correspondent who says that, in going from place to place, he has found a good deal of worldliness amongst young believers.

If this be so indeed it is serious, for worldliness is fatal to spiritual power and blessing amongst God's people. And yet how easily the world, in some shape or other, slips into the heart and dulls the brightness of our heavenly aspirations. After all, what a passing and unsatisfying thing it is at the best!

To the young, just beginning life, it bids with all its resources. Sometimes it offers apparently harmless amusements, but which lead into associations where Christ is not owned and honoured.

The apostle John has summed up the world under three heads—"the lust of the flesh," what is more especially within oneself; "the lust of the eye," that which attracts us from outside; and "the vain glory of life," a snare in which those who would like to make a name in the world are caught.

The safeguard against all this is the word of God abiding in us. That word brings before us Christ—it appeals to the heart with all the winning power of His grace. He says to us, in effect, "I love you, I died to save you, I purchased you with My blood that you might be wholly Mine—spirit, soul and body."

In every step of our path let us ask the question, Who is going to win the day, is it Christ or the world? This would not lead us into legality. It is not hard bondage—no, it is perfect liberty. It is the appeal of grace, of love, so well expressed in the lines:—

“ ’Tis the treasure I’ve found in His love  
That has made me a pilgrim below,  
And ’tis there, when I reach Him above,  
As I’m known, all His fulness I’ll know.”

Twice over in the prayer in John xvii. the Lord says of His own, “They are not of the world.” No: they have an infinitely better portion—present and future.

And surely if any regrets or sorrows could arise as we look back over life from the coming glory—from the judgment seat of Christ—it would be, that we were so often caught in the passing vanities of this passing world, and so little devoted to the One who is our all.

May we all, old and young, make a more decided stand for Christ in this present evil world! *Now* is our opportunity; faithfulness in a hostile scene will not be called for in heaven.

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## A Negro’s Witness for his Lord.

(A Word for Young Christians.)

**S**OME years ago a friend of mine was taking a long railway journey through Canada. In the same compartment of the long “vestibule carriage” was a young mother with her baby. During the journey two young men came and stood at a window near the place where they were seated and began talking to each other in the vilest language. At last their blasphemies against the Lord Jesus Christ became so horrible that the poor young mother in an agony said to my friend: “Oh, I don’t know how to bear it!”

My christian friend was also feeling it keenly, and by and bye she rose and went to the place a little distance off where was stationed the negro conductor whose duty it was to care for the passengers and keep things in order.

In reply to her complaint he asked: "Are they using violence—knocking anybody about?" No, Mrs. B. could not say that they were.

"Then I can do nothing," he said; "speech is free, and I have not the power to interfere."

Sadly my friend returned to her seat; her appeal seemed to have been made in vain, for the rules of the Railway Company apparently gave the conductor no authority to act in such a case. But in a few moments the negro, a tall, handsome fellow, came and stood in the doorway at the end of the carriage. The young men were still going on with their profane talk, and after listening awhile, the black man spoke out, very quietly, but loudly enough to be heard by all.

"If anyone wishes to name my dear Lord Jesus," he said, "let them do it with respect. Let us sing to His praise." And then he began to sing:

"Jesus! the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills the breast."

My friend, with the young mother and other passengers joined in, and the two young men slunk away abashed, while the praise of that holy name which they had blasphemed resounded through the carriage.

Is the lot of any of us cast among the ungodly, and are we, like the patriarch of old, "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," in the home, the office, or the workshop? If so, has not the story of the negro conductor a voice for us? Lot, alas! though "vexed" by what he saw and heard around him from day to day, appears to have raised no testimony against it; indeed he had only himself to blame for being found in such surroundings.

But some of us have been placed where we are by the providence of God, and in such a case, we *can* and *should* bear witness to Him whose we are, and whom we serve. "It is very difficult," you say. No doubt it is difficult, but not impossible, for "*with God all things are possible.*"

Perhaps you say, "I try to witness for the Lord by leading a good life, but I should never dare to speak up for Him when I hear His name blasphemed, or unclean language used." Certainly the testimony of our lives is most important, and without it any amount of talking will be worse than useless, but we read much also in the Word of God about the testimony of our lips (see Ps. xl. 9; cxix. 13, 46, 171, 172; Rom. x. 9, 10; Eph. v. 11, etc.), and is it not cowardly to shrink from speaking a word for our blessed Lord in the presence of His enemies?

Wisdom is needed, no doubt, as to *when* and *how* to speak, but our God is able and willing to give the needed wisdom (Prov. xvi. 1; James i. 5). Did He not give it to the negro conductor? Not allowed by the rules of the Railway Company to interfere with the two blasphemers, what God-given tact he showed in the way in which he put a stop to their blasphemies without addressing a word to them personally, and called for a song of praise from those who were ready to stand on the Lord's side in the face of the enemy!

And the God who gave both wisdom and courage to that dear black servant of His, is ready to give them to all who stand in need of them. It may be wiser not to say *much* when we hear our Master's enemies speaking against Him, but just one little word which shows that we range ourselves on His side may have wonderful and lasting results. "My dear Lord Jesus," said the negro conductor, and those few words probably did far more than a long discourse would have done.

Oh! let us seek grace to own our beloved Lord and



Master among His foes with that personal little word "My," and we may be the means of bringing some of those very foes to take their place with us on His side. We shall never do it by a cowardly silence.

C. H. V. P.

## Christ is All.

SOME time ago our attention was drawn to two large cards, one at each end of a drawing-room mantelpiece, bearing respectively the words, "Rabbi" and "Rabboni." In the course of some conversation the explanation given left the impression that "Rabbi" signified "My Master," and "Rabboni" "My supreme Master."

This appeared, subsequently, to be confirmed by an observation we noted from elsewhere, to the effect that among the Jews there were three titles, viz., "Rab," a Hebrew title meaning a great one, and applied in Jewish schools to acknowledged teachers and masters; "Rabbi," my master, being more emphatic, marked a higher dignity, the comparative degree, so to speak; "Rabboni," the most honourable of all the appellations, was the highest title, the superlative degree, and applied to but seven persons, all of whom were pre-eminent in the Rabbinical school.

If this be so, what a light it sheds on John xx. 16! Mary Magdalene "loved much," for she had experienced much blessing from the Master, He having cast out seven demons from her. Yet, to her grief, she beheld her Benefactor brutally nailed to a cross of wood. Standing by that cross of agony and shame (chap. xix. 25), she had heard His tender words to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (xix. 27); she had also beheld the indignities heaped upon His sacred head, and the cruel spear thrust into His side. His expiring cry had fallen upon her listening ear; and, watching His body being taken down, and laid in the tomb of

the rich, beneath a hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes, she knew He was really dead.

Knowing this, her loving hands prepared spices and ointments wherewith to anoint His body, and returning for this purpose on the "first day of the week, early, when it was yet dark," she saw, to her dismay, "the stone taken away from the sepulchre"; and the first thought of her distressed heart was, "They have taken away the Lord (afterwards she said, "My Lord," chapter xx. 13, . . . and we know not where they have laid Him." It was thus, with tear-filled eyes, and her vision blurred by sorrow, that she "saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus"; but when He said unto her, "Mary!" ah, then she knew Him, for "He calls His own sheep by name," and "they know His voice." "She turned herself," and there, before her astonished gaze, stood the very One who had really died, and been really buried, but was now "risen indeed."

Was it any wonder that, out of the fulness of her heart, as she looked upon Him, triumphant over death, with the wound-prints still fresh, the highest title should have risen to her lips, and caused her to exclaim, "Rabboni!" my great, my superlative Master!

The sepulchre was no more needed, and the ointments were useless; for, in the presence of the One through whom life and incorruptibility were brought to light, those words were fulfilled before her eyes, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption."

What radiant joy must have shone in her face, drying up all her tears, as, bearing the risen Master's message, "she came and told the disciples, she had seen the Lord!"

It was the sight of the risen One, vouchsafed to the martyr Stephen, that enabled him to "fall asleep" witnessing faithfully to the end; for he "saw the glory

of God, and Jesus." The apostle Paul, likewise, in the midst of his afflictions, could write, "The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me." And it was the tried and harassed assembly in Smyrna, as persecution thickened around, that the Lord sustained by filling their view with the presentation of Himself as "the first and the last, which became dead and lives" (Rev. ii. 8).

"We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii.), and "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii.). Resplendent with heavenly lustre as "the Bright and Morning Star" in the dark sky of this poor world, His voice may still be heard from the glory, "Surely, I come quickly!" Oh, are our hearts so beating true to Him, that He is able to recognise by our manner of life that we are of the company whose loving response is thus recorded: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"?

N. L. N.

## "The Sentence of Death."

(2 Corinthians i. 9.)

**T**O the believer in Christ who lives up to his profession, the above expression will be held as his aim, and his endeavour will be to live up to it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Death must be written upon everything so that Christ only may be seen.

It should be observed that the occasion on which the apostle made use of the expression was when he was describing to the Corinthians what he went through at Ephesus and how he had then despaired even of his life when the town clerk dismissed the assembly. The account in the Acts of the Apostles does not go into the particulars of this persecution. The apostle states, in reference to these afflictions, that "we had the *sentence of death in ourselves* that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raiseth the dead." He held himself to be dead already, and this led him to count upon the God of resurrection.

If it is our aim to live as Christians according to the word of God, we should be “always bearing about in the body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body” (2 Cor. iv. 10).

The sentence of death was written upon the apostle as to *everything in this world*. In the epistle to the Colossians we read that Paul states as follows, “I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh,” etc. (Colossians i. 24). The Lord had suffered and Paul was suffering for the sake of the saints in that circle marked out for him by God. If I cannot say “for to me to live is Christ,” as my *object*, my eye is not single.

If self is not crucified, it cannot be so. We must not make terms by saying “spare a little of nature.” As another has said, “This world is a terrible house to live in, but an excellent school to learn in.” There should be no more link between me and the world than there was in the cross of Christ. Oh! dear reader, how is it with us? Could we say with the apostle Paul, in service for the Lord, in which he had so suffered in Ephesus, “We had the *sentence of death* in ourselves”? No doubt the occasion for the use of the expression by Paul was a very special one, but the principle has an application to all true believers in Christ. He could say “for to me to live is Christ, to die is gain.” We learn from all these expressions even if we do not live up to them.

Death was working in that great man as he said, “So then death worketh in us, but life in you” (2 Cor. iv. 12). Death was working in him, and so nothing but Christ’s life worked out in them. Death and life are looked at morally in this verse.

It is sad to note how few believers know deliverance by experience. It has been truly said that we do not get *association with Christ* in type at the Red Sea

because the "rod" which is a type of *judgment* is there. At Jordan we get the "ark" which is a type of *Christ* and here we get our association with Him. At the Red Sea we look back on the waters of judgment on the enemy and see, in figure, the death of Christ *for* us. At Jordan we see our death *with* Him. We are taken out of our old Adam standing and introduced into another and new life on the other side of death, as being dead and risen with Christ.

Here we are seen as dead to the world and to sin. the power of resurrection life takes all strength from Satan. But if death has become our shelter, causing us to die unto all that would give Satan an advantage over us, what can he do? Can he tempt one who is dead, or overcome one who, having died, is alive again? If this be true, it is also necessary to realise it *practically*. "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God . . . therefore mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness," etc. This is what Gilgal means; "mortify" is active power. It rests on the power of that which is already true to faith.

At Montreal, Canada, on the 24th of October, 1924, four bandits were executed for the murder of a bank messenger. The writer refers to this sad incident to illustate what he wishes to convey in this paper. These men were convicted on 23rd June of that year and remained under *sentence of death* until the date of execution. During the interim, they regarded the things of everyday occurrence with the utmost indifference. Their only hope while yet living was the possibility of a commutation of their sentence, even if only imprisonment for life.

The apostle Paul and Timothy, while enduring bitter persecution at Ephesus despaired even of their lives. The sentence of death was as a shadow over them con-

tinually, but they were not trusting in themselves but in God.

It is blessed to know that if Christ died for all, it proved all to be dead; and that He died for all, in order that those who live should no longer live unto themselves but to Him who died for them and rose again. In this connection it may be said that we live in a new order of things, in a new creation, of which Christ is the Head. Therefore if anyone is in Christ he belongs to this new creation, old things have passed away and all things are become new.

While all this is blessedly true, we must not remain identified with the world but turn our back upon all worldly associations while we are in the world. It is not a question of coming out of the world itself where we meet our responsibilities, but coming out from among the worldly. True wisdom is to separate ourselves from all associations that tend to separate our hearts from Christ. It has been said of the clinging orchid in South Africa, that it is so sensitive that it will draw away from a rotten tree and fall to earth.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit,” for by so doing we shall avoid the snares and pitfalls set for our feet by Satan. Sensitiveness as to sin should be our aim. When the writer was in Washington recently he was told that a lady employee in the Bank Note Department was so expert that she could tell a counterfeit note by the touch, and whenever such a note passed through her hands she would shiver. Be this as it may, what a lesson to all of us who are believers to shrink from anything that would lead our hearts out of communion with Christ! We should never deliberate between right and wrong, but unhesitatingly take the path of faithfulness to Christ.

J.P. Montreal.

## The Judgment Seat of Christ.

“ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad ” (2 Cor. v. 10.)

“ For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. . . . And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man ” (John v. 22-27.)

**I**N these scriptures we have the witness of the Spirit through the apostle, and the witness of the Son Himself—an adequate divine witness, surely!—that there is to be “The judgment seat of Christ.” He who once stood at man’s tribunal, falsely accused, falsely condemned by a heathen judge who sought to please the popular will, urged on, too, by their religious leaders, is the One appointed of God to be the Judge of all.

But in order to understand the matter aright we must discriminate as to the manner and the time of its execution. When Paul wrote the epistle to the Corinthians, he had in view the fact that some of that assembly were prejudging him and even questioning his apostleship (1 Cor. iv. 3-5 ; ix. 1, 2). Hence in our citation from 2 Cor. v., he places himself with the “all” who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Now this makes it clear that the saints, the redeemed, are to be manifested before that tribunal. We all have our responsibilities as to our life and service here. And when God takes judgment in hand, He does so on the ground of what a man *does*, and even what he *says*, hence we read, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Again, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”

Truly God is no respecter of persons. What the apostle says is solemnly true for each, “Be not deceived ; God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man

soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

All this is written to believers as an admonition for their conduct, and it reminds us that we shall have to do with Christ at His judgment seat, about the things done in the body, whether good or bad. The good will be rewarded (Heb. vi. 10), and the bad, even in a saint, shall be burned up as worthless (1 Cor. iii. 15). And, we may add here, we shall be thankful that it is so; also, as a result, our communion with the Lord will be unmarred.

At the same time it is serious to look at these things in the light of divine revelation. The question of *guilt*, as responsible sinners, was settled once for all in such a way as to meet every righteous claim of God against us. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," and when we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead, we have the assurance that we are saved. The judicial question as to our sins, therefore, will not be raised.

Thus faith fully recognises God's justice, whilst adoring His grace. The judgment seat, then, will manifest God's justice in acting in righteousness and in grace; and in the perfect light of that day the redeemed will have a true retrospect of "the deeds done in the body" and see everything in a true light. Then the word of the Lord will be fulfilled, "I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

But, besides this, there are two other aspects of the judgment seat to be considered. In 1 Peter iv. we read, "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; wherein they



think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick (the living) and the dead.”

We get here the two phases of judgment entrusted to Christ subsequent to the judgment to which we have already drawn attention concerning the redeemed. When He comes in displayed glory He will take up the judgment of the living, of which we read in 2 Thess. i. 6-9, and Matt. xxv. 31-46. This brings us to His reign of righteousness and peace as the true Melchisedec. At the close of the millennial reign, Satan will be loosed out of his prison for a little season and will gather the nations together against the saints, then will be the closing judgment on the living nations (Rev. xx. 7-9).

After this, will be the dissolution of all things, which is so graphically described in 2 Peter iii. 7-10; and finally, the dead small and great are seen arraigned before the great white throne, in that solemn assize committed to the Son of man. We are not told *where* this throne is set, but heaven and earth will have fled from before the face of Him who sits upon it (Rev. xx. 11-15).

We may observe that in this judgment, as in all others, the deeds done in the body form the basis of it—in other words, it is according to works. No good works, *according to God's estimate*, will be found in the records of the wicked dead. For the believer, it will be otherwise, and yet even these are the works which follow *faith*. It is not at all a question of works meritorious for salvation; *that* is exclusively on the ground of grace, through faith.

In closing, we would ask our readers to carefully read and compare the scriptures referred to on this important subject. Let us remind ourselves that we have our responsibilities towards *men*, as the apostle says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we

persuade men." Seeing what a solemn thing judgment is, we are responsible to warn men while there is yet time.

And, on the other hand, there is the call, on our part, for separation from a world which is about to be dissolved, before the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The practical bearing of this Peter brings out when he says, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." This is a word for us all.

H. L.

### The Magnitude of the Cross.

"**T**HERE is nothing like the cross": so it has been well said, and so it must be. When we think *Who* the One was that hung there, it could not be otherwise. There "Jehovah's fellow" was smitten by "Jehovah's sword" (Zech. xiii. 7). There the Son of God gave Himself for our sins. The cross is the centre of two eternities, it was ever foreseen in the divine mind. Long before the world was, the Son, the eternal Word, undertook to do the will of God in the body prepared for Him.

The cross is the great public demonstration, before the whole universe, of the character of God as a God of righteousness, holiness and truth. He could not pass over sin, even when Christ, the holy One, became, in divine love, the Sinbearer.

It was also the manifestation, to all the heavenly intelligences, as well as to men—if indeed they had eyes to see it—of the infinite love of God. God *SO* loved the world that He gave, and gave none less than His only begotten Son.

The cross was the demonstration of the perfect love of Christ, of His willingness to suffer all, even unto death—and such a death! How perfect also was the

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unity of mind and purpose between the Father and the Son concerning this great redemption work! It was shadowed forth (feebly, it is true) in the attitude of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis xxii., of whom it is said twice over, "they went both of them together."

The cross was the greatest proof of the perfect obedience of the Son to the Father's will. When anticipating that dreadful cup of judgment which He was about to drink upon the cross, he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

Obedience and submission to the Father's will found their complete fulfilment in Christ, who was the true meal offering, of which the "memorial" was submitted to the greatest test of all, by fire upon the altar; but which produced nothing but a sweet savour to God (Levit. ii. 2).

The cross was the end of the long trial of man which had lasted 4,000 years or so. Surely if there was anything good in man as such, it would come out when the beloved Son went about as a man on earth, showing forth grace, love and compassion. Yet He was despised and rejected of men, treated with scorn, contempt and hatred, and given a malefactor's cross at the end. What a commentary on the history of fallen man! What a spectacle for men, angels and even devils to behold! His testimony was, "They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," and again, "They hated Me without a cause."

But in the cross we see also God's wonderful plan to solve the great sin question, and in such a way as would meet all the sinner's need and all the requirements of His own glory:—

"God could not pass the sinner by,  
His sin demands that he must die;  
But in the cross of Christ we see  
How God can save, yet righteous be."

The whole load was taken by Jesus, our blessed Substitute, and all was atoned for perfectly. In virtue of the cross God's love flows out like a mighty river, and yet His righteousness is in no way set aside, but rather vindicated and magnified. This brings the most profound peace and rest to the believer's soul.

But the cross of Christ has not only separated between us and our sins, but between us and the world. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

Whether we take the godless world, with its music halls, its theatres, its races and all the rest; or the more refined and select world, with all its specious snares; the cross stands between us and it. Or even if we take the religious world—that which boasts of its ancient traditions, its rituals, its ornate services and such like—in a word *all* that goes to make up "a fair show in the flesh"—all this is a practical denial of the complete efficacy and value of the death of Christ.

The Christ the Christian has as his Saviour and his object is He "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He needs neither philosophy on the one hand nor ritualism on the other, in order to meet his soul's need. He has *all* in Christ. The cross has closed this world as the sphere of his life's interests and pursuits; but it has opened up a better world, of which Christ is the sun, the centre, and the attractive object.

But the practical question for each of us is, "What has the cross of Christ done for *me*—what place has it in my daily life and walk; and how far is the One that hung there the object of my heart's affections and desires?"

F. G. B.

## “The Coming of the Lord.”

**I**S it not the case that we need to remind ourselves constantly of this blessed truth, not merely as a doctrine, but as a great reality—a fact? It is surely a cheering hope, and one which lifts the soul above the passing things of this world and its allurements, and enables us to enter better into our proper heavenly portion.

It helps also to cheer the Christian on his way, to comfort in the hour of trial, and to attach the heart more definitely to the *One* who is coming.

Many true believers have much trouble to meet with at the present time. Some are out of work through no fault of their own and cannot get work; let us remember them at the throne of grace, and may the word of James v. 7, be a comfort to all such, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.”

Others suffer in their health; but what a joy to know that when He comes this poor “body of our humiliation” will be changed into conformity to His body of glory!

But what, above all, makes this truth precious is that then we shall see the One who loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, face to face. Then, too, the day of *His* patience shall have come to an end. “The patience of Jesus Christ”! With what long patience He Himself has waited for the moment when He shall come and receive us unto Himself.

The Lord knew well how to comfort His sorrowing disciples when He was going away, saying to them, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” What is all the world compared with this? He said it was but “a little while” till He should come, and Hebrews x. 37, says, “a very little while.” May this “blessed hope” be more real to us every day.

## Fellowship and Advocacy.

LIFE was in Christ and it is ours in virtue of His death and resurrection when we believe the gospel. The apostles had seen, heard, contemplated and handled Him who was truly "That eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." This they have declared to us that we might have fellowship with them, and truly their fellowship was with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ—and all this was written that our joy may be full.

These truths are apprehended by faith so that, as "born-again" ones, we might have a nature which should answer, morally, to God's nature which is holy. "God is light," and we are set in the light and are responsible to walk according to the light, thus having fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

So also we read in John iii., "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." If this is true with us, the conscience will be right before God, and the soul, emptied of self and of the world, will, through that confidence towards God, produce that which pleases God and answers to His nature—love. This is, we may truly say, the fruit of the Spirit of God in this scene, first of all towards my brother, and then towards a poor, perishing world under the dominion and power of the evil one.

The very fact of our having an epistle of this kind proves that, although we are children of God, the evil nature is still there and must be guarded against. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Sin has been condemned in the flesh, but the flesh is there still and may assert itself if one is not watchful.

But the normal result of godly exercise of soul for the child of God, if he does fall into error, is to confess our

sins, for God our Father has made every provision for us in the advocacy of Christ. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He is there in the presence of God for us on a righteous basis, the all-cleansing power of His own precious blood and Himself the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

Every sin has been atoned for as far as God is concerned, and there is propitiatory virtue in the blood of Christ, according to the mind and purpose of God, so that our blessed Advocate is entitled to hold up holy hands on our behalf, when we get under a godly exercise of conscience in the presence of God concerning our sins. And God is "faithful and just"—faithful to the work of His Son and righteous in doing it—to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The child of God has no licence to sin, but, blessed be His name! He has made full provision for us if we do. . . .

*From notes of meetings at Philadelphia.*

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## Eternal Life.

**E**TERNAL Life is not merely a *condition* of life, though this aspect may apply to the believer, just as the stream gets its supply from the source. But we have to bear in mind that the source is *Christ Himself*. He is, personally, "the Eternal Life." To mystify this fact by speculations may land a soul into many difficulties, and ultimately, through the device of Satan (2 Cor. xi. 3), on to the rocks of rationalism and infidelity.

In this connection we would invite attention to a scripture in 1 John i. 1, 2, 3, which is contained in one

complete sentence: "That (pointing to Christ) which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon (contemplated), and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

With this scripture we would link another, by the same apostle, from his gospel, ch. i. 14, viz.: "And the Word was made (became) flesh, and dwelt among us."

A comparison of these two scriptures leads us to see that the apostle, in writing them, had before his mind the adorable *Person* with whom he had companioned, by whom he was loved, and whom he loved.

It is the remark of another, that "The Epistle of John, that is to say, his first epistle, shows us the life that comes from God by Jesus Christ. . . . Now, this life is so precious, manifested as it is in the Person of Jesus, that the epistle now before us has, in this respect, quite a peculiar charm. When I, too, turn my eyes to Jesus, when I contemplate all His obedience, His purity, His grace, His tenderness, His patience, His devotedness, His holiness, His love, His entire freedom from all self-seeking, I can say, that is *my* life . . . How I bless God for it! What rest to my soul! What pure joy to my heart! At the same time, Jesus Himself is the object of my affections; and all my affections are formed on that holy Object." Again, "the Person, then, of the Son, the Eternal Life manifested in the flesh, is our subject in this Epistle."—(Synopsis J.N.D.)

With reference to the mystery of the *Person* of the Son of God, we read in Matthew xi. 27, "No man



knoweth the Son but the Father." To Him, alone, is known the blessed combination of His humanity and Deity. To the heart of the believer, however, is revealed the fact that the One who took flesh and blood, to accomplish the counsels of grace, is, indeed, the Son of the living God, the Word become flesh, "*that Eternal Life.*"

Apart from Him, who alone could say, "I am . . . the life," and, "I and my Father are one," there is no life; even as it is written, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that *hath not* the Son of God *hath not life.*"

From 1 John v. 11, we further learn that *God* is the Giver of eternal life; for there we read, "And this is the record, that *God* hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." When commencing this article, reference was made to a *condition* of life. Our meaning had reference to what that life is, as manifested in the believer. It is the life that is in God's Son, as risen and ascended, that is given to the believer, to be in him *as a present possession.*

We would close with the words of the one from whom we have already quoted. He says. "Finally, the Lord Jesus was 'that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.' If, therefore, we want to see the practical exhibition of eternal life, we find the perfect manifestation of it in Him, who was the obedient and dependent One. Thus He is not only our Object as the exalted One, but, as the lowly One, He is our pattern; and, if the Spirit engages our hearts with Him in glory, it is that 'the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in us down here.'" (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11).

H. L.

## Moses in the School of God—I.

**A**N interesting feature of the Old Testament portion of God's word is the insight it gives us of God's ways with man, and His interest in individuals as well as in peoples and nations.

"Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him?" (Job xxxvi. 22).

Amongst all the records of such dealings none is more remarkable than the history of God's ways with Moses, and perhaps none more full of instruction for us and His people at all times. May He graciously grant us to gather some help by our meditations, for to know God must necessarily be the highest possible blessing conferred upon man in this life, and this is what the believer receives in the gift of eternal life. Not only life everlasting, but to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent (John xvii. 3). The Apostle Paul prays for the Colossians, "That ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will" . . . "and growing by the true knowledge of God." Blessed contrast to philosophy and the modern "isms" that profess to seek the knowledge of God, but fruitlessly, because apart from His only begotten Son, who hath declared Him (John i. 18).

With the early history of Moses it is not our province here to deal. Every Bible reader is familiar with the details that charmed us in our childhood, of the miraculous preservation of the goodly child adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, and so was introduced into the palace of the king of Egypt. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel; and seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian; for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand

would deliver them, but they understood not" (Acts vii. 22, 25).

This striking summary given by Stephen is the only key we have to the history of the first forty years of the life of Moses; and his first interview with God, as far as we know, was at the burning bush, at the foot of the mountain which was the scene of the greatest events in the history of Israel.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb" (Ex. iii. 1).

For forty years Moses had been a shepherd in the vicinity of this mountain, and a more remarkable fact could scarcely be found in the history of any people than this, that the greatest law-giver the world has ever seen should spend so important a part of his life in the remote wilds of the Arabian deserts tending sheep.

We notice, too, in passing, that the man who, in Psalm xc., is led by the Spirit of God to say, "The days of our years are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow"—this man was not called to his life work until he was eighty years old, and his brother Aaron eighty-three.

Worldly wisdom might regard this second term as thrown away in obscurity, but none but God can tell how much this third forty years tended to the making of Moses to be the meekest man in all the earth, and fitted him for the herculean task of "leading Israel like a flock." Nothing is told us in Exodus of the exercises of Moses' heart throughout his long stay in the desert, but how great the change from the impetuous man of forty is this matured man who now pleads again and again to be let off from the work God had designed for him.

On the other hand, how unlike the choice of men is the selection by God of this man for the most onerous

position conceivable. Who but God would choose the meekest man in all the earth for the leader of such a people? Probably the forty years of shepherding sheep was a better school than Pharaoh's palace for the following forty years of patient and wise dealing with a rebellious people, with all the petty jealousies, family squabbles, and innumerable difficulties, to say nothing of the greater questions relative to their position before God, that would arise during the prolonged wanderings of Israel in that great and terrible wilderness, which was to see the death of all but two of their number. That day will declare it, "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear," and award the "crown of glory that fadeth not away" to all those who in their day shall "shepherd the flock of God" (1 Peter v. 2. R.V.).

Are we not in danger in our day of under-valuing the exercise of the gift of shepherd and bishop (over-seer) in the eyes of the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, and seeking the more prominent gifts that bring us "to the front" in the eyes of men? "Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing; of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath" (Luke xii. 43, 44).

Arrested by the sight of the bush burning yet not consumed, "Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. iii. 3-5). "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (v. 6).

There are only two occasions where we read of the Lord calling upon a servant to put off his shoes from

his feet—here at the burning bush, and when the successor of Moses, Joshua, was by Jericho and “lifted up his eyes and looked,” and beheld the “Captain of the Lord’s host, with his sword drawn in his hand.” Each occasion is preliminary to a great deliverance, and both have special features which mark them as nothing less than the presence of the Lord Himself.

Space forbids our quoting the whole scripture account of the deeply interesting converse between God and His servant, Moses. The Lord said, “I have seen their affliction.” “I know their sorrows.” “I am come down to deliver.” “Come now therefore and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people out of Egypt.” Can there be room for hesitation and doubt after such words as these? “And Moses said unto God, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

And God said, “Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee, when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.”

But this fails to assure Moses, so in answer to his request God seeks to reassure him by the revelation of an additional name for Himself, “*I am*,” and pledges, as it were, His title as the Jehovah God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob to the due fulfilment of His purpose. Moses still hesitates—pleads that the people will not believe that God has spoken to him, and in wondrous patience God seeks to still further strengthen His timid servant by signs and miracles of power. He will deliver Israel by no other hand than that of this doubting, trembling servant. If we might use a worldly expression, God knew His man, and however many others may be at His call, He has chosen Moses, and will use him spite of himself.

T.R.

## The Word of God—The Scriptures.

ARE THEY VALUED OR NEGLECTED ?

“ Sanctify them by Thy Truth : Thy Word is Truth ” (John xvii. 17).

WHEN God speaks to man, what is uttered is His Word. Whether what was spoken was not recorded until long afterwards matters not. Whether His messages to men were given through Patriarchs or Prophets, or Apostles, or through special vessels of grace raised up by Him, like Joseph, or Moses, or Job, or Nehemiah, or even by one into whose mouth he had to put a bridle, like Balaam—in every case the divine message is the Truth and is binding upon men.

Those revelations, and messages, and warnings are for our blessing and happy are they who receive and cherish them. The record of the reception of God's Word by men, and the use made of it, or the abuse of it, affords us the means of deciding upon their moral condition at any period in the world's history.

Israel was a standing testimony to the world of the existence of a God of infinite power and grace, as the beautiful quotation from a Greek poet by Paul in Acts xvii. 28 declares. And as another heathen witness, at an earlier stage of Israel's history, in Joshua ii. 9 and 10, said, “ And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. *For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egpyt.* ”

Let us take also as an example what is said of the godly Josiah in 2 Chron. xxxiv.-xxxv.

This child of eight years of age ascended the throne of David, and, instructed of God, commenced immediately to undo the wicked work of his father Manasseh. It is written of him, he “ walked in the ways of David, his father, and declined neither to the right hand or the left. ” He broke down the idolatrous

altars, cut down the groves and idols and ground them to powder. He then set about repairing the temple, and in the course of what was connected with this, came upon the book of the law, which was the cause of his humbling himself before God (ch. xxxiv. 27), rendering his garments and weeping, and of inquiring of Jehovah concerning the words which were written, and the warnings pronounced upon a backsliding and idolatrous people.

Then in the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah kept a passover unto Jehovah in Jerusalem, and it is said of this feast, "And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet" (ch. xxxv. 18).

Now, beloved reader, mark what follows: "After all this, . . . . Necho, king of Egypt, came up to fight against Charchemish by the Euphrates and Josiah went out against him." The Egyptian king expostulated in vain. Josiah, the Scripture says, was warned, "But he hearkened not unto the words of Necho, *from the mouth of God,*" and passed on, and perished!

Beloved reader, does not God speak to us in such a scripture as this, in these days of declension, and of self-will, of the danger of neglecting and disobeying His Word?

Ought we not, each one, to ask himself what are my habits in regard to the reading of and meditation on the Word? Can we expect the Lord will find His pleasure in us if we put anything before this precious privilege of communion with Him? Do we permit anything to encroach upon the season of reading, meditation and prayer which should mark the character of the worshipper of God?

When Israel was passing through the wilderness, the manna came down on the ground in the morning, and they opened their tent doors to gather up the food. There was no going about trampling on that precious gift of God, no work, until the manna was

brought in to be placed on the table for hungry men, women and children.

The Psalmist could say (Ps. xvi.), "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand. I shall not be moved." Can we? Or, can we make our own the word in Psalm cxix. 164, "Seven time a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments": if we could say, as in verse 162, "I rejoice at Thy word as one that findeth great spoil," then indeed we could be worshippers all the day long. Ah, the Lord wants our hearts. He looks for an affection and confidence like that described in Psalm xviii. 1-2, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength," and in the power of this we can go on to say as in verse 30, "As for God, His way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him."

On the other hand, let us not think we can go on our way without the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, and prosper. The taking off of the armour and laying aside of the sword is the sure sign that love has grown cold and declension has set it. Awake, beloved reader: the Lord is looking for a testimony to His grace to-day. "Ye are my witnesses," He says. He expects whole-hearted service, as the outpouring of a heart on fire with His love. We have seen what came upon Josiah for disobedience. The promise of his early years, the worshipping attitude of his middle age, alas, how soon all was clouded over, so that he was obliged to pass under the rod of discipline and removal from the place of privilege and testimony.

In view of the supreme importance of studying the word of God, and holding fast to it in reverence and obedience, the writer would close this short article by calling the reader's attention to Proverbs vi. 20-22: "My son, keep thy father's commandment. . . When thou goest, it shall lead thee: when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."

H.B.W., *New York.*



## Three Requests and Five Thanksgivings.

(Colossians i. 9-19).

THE apostle Paul had just received from that "dear fellow-servant and faithful minister of Christ," Epaphras, the report of the Colossians' "love in the Spirit" when he wrote his epistle to them. In it he says he does not cease to pray and to desire for those believers, certain blessings which he saw they needed.

They were going on well at the time, they had not yet been led astray, but there was the danger that they might be, hence his pleading with God for them. We may divide his prayer into three requests:—

(1) "That ye might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." How are we to know God's will? One thing needed for this is, to be near Him in heart and soul. A child who is constantly with its father and whose one desire is to please him, will very soon acquire a knowledge of his mind and will—he will know just what his father would like. So there must be a walking in communion with God and with the Spirit ungrieved, if there is to be the knowledge of His will. This is the way to have wisdom and spiritual understanding in the things of God.

(2) "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing by the full knowledge of God." In Thessalonians it is "walking worthy of *God* who had called us to His kingdom and glory." Those saints, for whom Paul had such earnest desire, had been brought near to God in the midst of much affliction, and they could be addressed as "in God the Father"—in the blessedness of that relationship—an address most suited to young converts such as they were.

In Ephesians, it is "walking worthy of the vocation (or calling)." This is quite in keeping with that

epistle, which brings out the heavenly hopes and calling of the church so fully. But in Colossians, it is "worthy of the Lord," for the great object of the Spirit in that epistle was to keep before them the fullness of the Head, the glory of the Lord Jesus, who was their life and their Saviour.

From this flowed fruitfulness and increase in the full knowledge of God. Is it not so, that our progress in the Christian course and our fruitfulness must flow from nearness to the Lord—from recognising His claims over us, spirit, soul and body? It is as the branch abides in the vine that it bears fruit—and "abiding" speaks to us of nearness, of communion.

(3) The apostle's third request was that they might be "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power." As we read over these desires for the saints we can only say, How wonderfully Paul rose to the height of God's thought about His people, and how short and poor even our best thoughts and desires about them are to-day! This strength was not derived from human resources—it was not due to great learning or to prowess; as Paul himself says, "when I am weak, then am I strong." Nor was it in order to the doing of great exploits which would call forth the admiration of men; it was, "unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

"Patience and longsuffering"!—much might be said on these words. Patience (or endurance)—Was not this what marked our Lord Himself? We sometimes sing,

"O Patient, spotless One!  
Our hearts in meekness train,  
To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,  
That we may rest obtain."

The Lord Jesus passed through every trial in perfect calm, because always in communion with the Father. Thus we have "patience" as regards our-

selves and "longsuffering" in our dealings with others. The "joyfulness," too, was to be seen in Him who, though the "Man of sorrows," found His joy in doing the Father's will, and of whom it could be said, even at a trying moment of His life, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said," etc. Rejoicing in the Lord always is indeed a mark of a soul going forward on the Christian path, happy in the sense of God's love and grace.

Next we have five things Paul gives thanks for; and we would ask the reader specially to note that they are the *present possession* of all believers.

(1) "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." He does not here speak of *growth*, as he does in his prayer; on the contrary, he gives thanks that they were already made fit for that inheritance where the light of God shines on all.

The babe in Christ, who was born again but yesterday, is as fit for that inheritance as the most mature saint who has been fifty years on the road, in virtue of what Christ is and what He has done. There is progress in growth, but not in meetness.

(2) "And hath delivered us from the power of darkness." Here is another "hath"; we have got from under Satan's rule and authority altogether.

(3) "And hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." This is our third step, and what a change it is! There is a kingdom called—not merely the kingdom of Christ, true as that is—but called by the endearing title, "the Son of God's love." It is to that kingdom we belong.

(4) "In whom we have redemption"; note here again it is a present thing, we *have* redemption. We are bought with a price, delivered and set free, and we belong to the One who has delivered us.

(5) "The forgiveness of sins"—not one unsettled question remains for the believer. His sins are gone,

absolutely and entirely; and he can give thanks for the five blessings which grace has made his.

Then the apostle holds up before them the glory of the Person of Jesus, not only as Head of creation as the Creator of all, but Head of His body the church, in resurrection, being the firstborn from the dead. Every glory centres in Him, all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him, and in Him we are complete.

How well calculated such a revelation of the various glories of Christ was to deliver the Colossian saints from those dangers to which they were exposed—philosophy and the speculations of the human mind on the one hand, and the traditions and ordinances of men on the other. How needed and how soul-sustaining for us!

F.G.B.

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## Hindrances to Progress.

If the affections are kept vigorous and pure on the object of God, then the truth is seen in its real beauty and brightness; whereas if the affections are weak, or wandering after false objects, we may have all the truth in the Bible before us, but it makes little or no impression. This we see in the unconverted man fully; but the very same thing that ends in the ruin of the unconverted, operates, if allowed, and in the degree it is allowed, to the hindrance and injury of those born of God.

W.K.

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Why should His people, then, be sad?  
None have such reason to be glad  
As those redeemed to God:  
Jesus, the mighty Saviour lives,  
To them eternal life He gives,  
The purchase of His blood,

## “Arise, Go Up to Bethel.”

**I**T was after many vicissitudes in Jacob's history had passed, that the word of God came to him saying, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.”

He had just experienced the bitterness of a lapse from the path of faith, at Shechem (Gen. xxxiv.)—a path in which he had not walked in at all in the same sense as Abraham had done. Now God calls him to make a fresh start, to get back to the beginning, to the place where he had learnt of God at the first—to Bethel, the house of God.

The past had been a history of human failure, of planning and expediency instead of walking in the light, on the one hand; but of God's grace and forbearance, on the other. This surely teaches us that if we have got away from God, if we have “left our first love,” there must be the getting back to the point of departure from Him. “Arise, go up to Bethel” was the word of God to Jacob; and “Repent and do the first works” is the word of the Lord to us.

The moment this call comes to Jacob to go up to Bethel, the “house of God,” he becomes conscious of things in his own household which were unsuitable to God—“strange gods” which were found there. It is useless to speak of returning to God after we have been made conscious of failure, unless there is a right moral state in our walk and associations—a state in keeping with God's holiness. This is true both individually and collectively.

It was so with Israel when the ark of God was taken by the Philistines; Samuel says to them, “Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth,” etc. (1 Sam. vii. 3). They would have liked to have had the *power* necessary for deliverance from their enemies, but they were very

slow to get into the place and condition which God could own and acknowledge.

And we may well apply the lesson to ourselves. We would all like to see power manifested in our preaching, and large and prosperous meetings, but are we prepared to "put away the strange gods," to walk in the path of true separation from the world and from every thing which is out of keeping with the character of God and which grieves the Spirit of God and hinders His work?

"Let us search and try our own ways, and turn again to the Lord," but let us not forget the first part of this sentence in insisting on the second part. Let us "Arise, go up to Bethel," but let us not forget about the "strange gods." Let us "Repent," but let us not forget to "do the first works." Practical godliness and consistency is much needed to-day.

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## A Divided Heart.

**W**HAT touching appeals the prophet Jeremiah makes to Israel in spite of the fact that they were constantly backsliding from the Lord and turning aside to other gods. He says, "Turn, O backsliding children . . . for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion," etc. (Jer. iii. 14).

God's mercies to them had been great; bearing them upon eagles' wings and bringing them to Himself, tabernacling with them in the wilderness, leading them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, until He had brought them into the promised land.

But they made affinity with the nations around, giving themselves over to idolatry, for they had a divided heart. And yet God pleaded with them, saying, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love

of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

They were wedded to Jehovah and His mercy was ever towards them if they would but turn to Him with the whole heart. It was His purpose to gather the godly ones to Himself, even if it were only "one of a city and two of a family," and He would bring them to Zion; thus He would fulfil His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, magnifying His grace in doing so.

Have these things no voice for us, to whom it is written, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. x. 11)? Is there not to be found to-day a godly remnant which is a counterpart of that of old? Such a remnant will be marked by "turning to God from idols," by "keeping ourselves from idols"—from anything that would distract the heart from Christ or come in between us and Him.

Moreover, God is not satisfied with a divided heart. Hosea says, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty." A divided heart is just the exact opposite of "the whole heart," and if the heart is divided between Christ and the world, this too will be a sure way of leading to a divided state amongst the people of God themselves.

Let us look at the issue squarely, beloved; let us ask, Is our heart divided between Christ and other objects? If it is, we cannot expect spiritual blessing. But if there is true contrition and open confession, God will surely respond. He would not only restore those of Judah who returned to Him with the whole heart, but He would bring them to Zion, the place of triumphant grace, and provide for them all that they needed.

And we who believe the gospel *now* are in a place of far greater responsibility than Israel of old; we are the objects of a far greater redemption through Christ,

we have a place of privilege far beyond theirs, being blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.

No wonder that, when contemplating the wonderful truths brought out in the earlier part of the epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul could say in chapter xii., "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Who can tell but that the dearth of spiritual progress amongst us, in our ministry and our meetings, and the little testimony for God in our households, may be due in large measure to this very thing—a divided heart?

Let us cry to God for grace that we may turn to Him with our *whole heart*. He has made every provision in Christ for our need, and if we have failed, He will restore the soul to full communion with Himself and with the One in whom His own heart finds its delight—our Lord Jesus.

R. W. K.

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## Moses in the School of God.—2.

"AND Moses answered and said, But behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee" (Exod. iv. 1). Still hesitating, still thinking of the people he has to go amongst, instead of the One who is sending him, God patiently instructs him further, and the humble instrument that for many years had helped in the control of Jethro's sheep becomes the rod of God's power. The miracles that follow are not only evidences of superhuman power, but no doubt have a hidden meaning of the deepest import.

And God said, "What is that in thine hand? And Moses said, a rod." And God said "Cast it on the



ground." Moses did so, and it became a serpent from which he fled. Bidden by God to take it by the tail, Moses put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. A significant lesson that although power might appear to be in the hand of the serpent who could use Pharaoh or others to do his will, in seeking to frustrate the purpose of God, all power is really in the hand of the great "I AM" who had pledged His word to deliver Israel.

A second sign follows, evidently teaching the impotence of man who is corrupted by sin in the flesh, and powerless to remedy its evil, but here also God can meet the need and cleanse the leper by this great provision in the shed blood of the Lamb. The third sign, turning the water from the river into blood, again emphasises the power of God who alone can bring life out of death. The river of Egypt was indispensable to its existence, and if this becomes death instead of a source of life, to whom can they turn but to that Jehovah God who thus points onward to that time when He shall bring again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the everlasting covenant, "A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel."

The history of Israel is the history of man in principle, and God is showing out thus early by the burning bush and these subsequent miracles the only way by which a holy and righteous God can walk in the midst of a disobedient and gainsaying people without their being consumed.

Whether evil manifests itself in the power of Satan, the corruption of the flesh in man, or the dominion of death as the result of the reign of sin, God can and has met all its power in the person and work of Christ, and grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

But neither promise nor signs suffice to hearten Moses for his task, and in answer to his further plea

of slowness of speech, which had not been improved even by this divine intercourse, God grants him the help of his brother Aaron for spokesman, and henceforth the two brothers are linked together as we read, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Ps. lxxvii. 20). This is however, a doubtful gain, for before very long we find that he has to intercede for the life of Aaron, whom God in His anger would have slain for his sad part in the worship of the golden calf (Deut. ix. 20). How conspicuously Moses stands out as the great type of the blessed Saviour "who ever liveth to make intercession for us," His people, so often found failing and faithless.

But the purpose of God must stand. Has He not said, "I will bring them out" and "bring them in"? And so in grace He says to His reluctant servants, "Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee. When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." A word that was fulfilled in the rearing of the tabernacle later on.

Happy would be the task of going through the whole of the intercourse between the Lord and Moses, so full is it of instruction in the ways of God, a fruitful study at all times. But we must go on now to the memorable scenes connected with the sin of Israel and the intercession of Moses after their grave lapse into idolatry. How explain such a fall on the part of a people so recently trembling at the voice of Jehovah out of the mount, or the apparent readiness of Aaron and the other leaders to fall in with their evil desires. Our business for the present is with the interview between God and "His chosen" servant, who "stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath lest He should destroy them (Ps. cvi. 23).

It is difficult to comment on such a scene without transcribing the whole of the scripture narrative to our

pages. The measure in which Moses entered into the gravity of the occasion is seen by his casting the two tables of the law out of his hands and shattering them (R.V.). This he evidently did as his own act. How take the written law of God into the midst of a people who had already broken its first and greatest commandment?

After the solemn scene of chastisement carried out by the sons of Levi, he appeals to Israel in the memorable words, "Ye have sinned a great sin, and now will I go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written."

How beautiful this pleading is from the man whom God offers to make the father of a great nation in place of Israel, is almost unnecessary to remark. In the words of another "Moses takes the place of mediator, and true to his love for the people as God's people, and to the glory of God in them, with a self-denial which cared only for this glory, sacrificing every thought of self, intercedes in that magnificent pleading which appeals to what that glory necessitates, and to the unconditional promises made to the fathers. And Jehovah repented. The character of Moses shines in all its beauty here, and is remarkable among those which the Holy Ghost has taken pleasure in delineating, according to the precious grace of God who loves to describe the exploits of His people, and the fruit they have borne, though He Himself is the source of them."

The mediation of Moses availed so far as regards government, and God commands him to lead the people to the place of which He had spoken, and His angel should go before him, but He Himself will not go in the midst of them, seeing they are stiffnecked, lest He

should destroy them by the way. Moses here enters into the mind of God, and what is due to the presence of God in a most wonderful way, and prepares a place to pitch the tabernacle outside the camp afar off. Out of "the ordered place" though this was, it becomes the meeting place between God and whosoever would seek Him.

Here God reveals Himself to His servant in a manner beyond anything that He had done before, "And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exod. xxxiii. 11). The way God speaks of this intercourse in Numbers xii. 8, is deeply interesting, where He vindicates His servant against the reproaches of Aaron and Miriam, and gives Moses the special appellation "Moses My servant."

He now receives from the Lord instructions to prepare two tables (tablets) like unto the first which had been prepared by God Himself, and which he (Moses) had broken in his righteous indignation. But we must reserve our further comments for the next issue.

T. R.

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## New Birth and Eternal Life.

**T**O be born again is to be born of God. To be born of God is to receive a new spiritual nature and life, which puts the one so born into relationship with God.

In the New Testament new birth is the result of receiving Christ by faith, hence it is written, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own (the Jews in their national relationship) received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power (title) to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which

were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 10-13).

Thus Christ is presented objectively to man to be believed on and received. To suggest that a man must be born again in order to receive Him, is to suggest an unscriptural proposition. Man's responsibility is to accept Christ as He has been presented in the word of God. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"—dwelt among men. To receive Him by faith is to be admitted into the family of God, and that as a present thing. This is definite and conclusive, and founded on the testimony of God by the Spirit through chosen vessels.

John the Baptist was the first herald of this testimony to Christ. He was sent from God to bear witness of the Light\* that all through him might believe (verses 6, 7). John, the writer of the gospel, bears additional witness concerning those who believe on His name, and, as already stated, the other apostles are in the consensus of witness (chap. xvii. 20).

We repeat, to be born again is to be born into a new beginning of life, and that life is divine life in those who are thus born; it may be in its infantile stage, so to speak, but it is there, and is distinguished from the flesh, the sinful state in which man is naturally born. Adam begat a son in his own likeness (Gen. v. 3).

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The new birth, spiritual birth, is produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word, "born of water and of the Spirit"† and is a new beginning of life in the soul.

So again Peter, "Being born again, not of corruptible

\*Verse 4 is a reciprocal proposition, the two statements are co-extensive.

†It is sovereign, and even mysterious, in action, like the wind (John iii. 8).

seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter i. 23, 25).

But, though life is given in the new birth, we do well to distinguish between the new birth, and what the Lord afterwards sets forth concerning eternal life. To Nicodemus He expressed surprise that he, a teacher of Israel, did not understand that which was elementary and initiative as a necessity for seeing or entering the kingdom of God. It was a moral necessity, a spiritual condition required for that kingdom. His own scriptures ought to have enlightened him upon it (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 27; xxxvii. 14). In this he evidenced that not even the religious mind of man can grasp the things of God unless taught of the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Having exposed to him his unbelief in relation to earthly things, the Lord advances to a higher plane of revelation. He prefaces this by saying, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John iii. 12). He then introduces the subject of eternal life. This subject, as He propounds it, is not found in Old Testament prophetic revelation. The two places in which it is there mentioned have reference to the future kingdom (compare Ps. cxxxiii. 3; Dan. xii. 2; see also Rom. xi. 15).

In this revelation given in John iii., the mystery of His glorious Person is brought into view. His own words confirm this, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (ver. 13). The Son of God came down from heaven to be the Son of man,

but He who thus took flesh and blood could likewise say "Who *is* in heaven" (see also chap. vi. 62). This brings us to an immensely important fact: What came He down from heaven for? To be lifted up on the cross—"there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5)—"that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Thus the way of life is opened up through His death. There is no other way. He said to the Jews who disputed with Him, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 53, 54). There is no enigma in this save to unbelief. Faith recognises it in its true application (ver. 63). Blood and water flowed from the side of a dead Christ. The manna from heaven, the blood of the paschal lamb, and the smiting of the rock at Horeb, had their typical interpretation in Him who came down from heaven to be lifted up on the cross—in His death.

The rod of God was lifted up in judgment upon Christ who stood in our room and stead. The blood and the water flowed in response to the soldier's spear—of this John bare record that we might believe. The Holy Spirit conveys to us the witness God has given concerning this, for our assurance and peace (see 1 John v. 8-13). One more closing quotation—concerning His sheep Christ has said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10). This was due both to the glory of His Person and the efficacy of His work—it is the life of the risen Christ given to us.

H. L.

## “The Coming of the Lord.”

**A**S there is much confusion in the minds as well as in the writings of some christians on this subject, it is well for us to understand clearly what is the truth as taught in Scripture.

Some think that various events must be fulfilled before the Lord comes—the Jews must go back to their land, the signs and portents spoken of in the Lord’s discourse on Mount Olivet, as given us in the first three gospels, must take place—so they allege. And if all these solemn things must needs be, How can we feel happy at the thought of His coming? So they argue.

We shall see as we proceed that these and other mistaken views completely neutralise the proper hopes of the church, and they are most damaging to those who are misled by them.

One of the chief causes of these mistaken ideas is, not understanding the true place and calling of the church of God as a *heavenly* thing: once *that* is seen all becomes plain.

What is the church according to scripture? It is a body formed on earth, united by the Holy Spirit to the glorified Head in heaven (1 Cor. xii. 13; Eph. i. 22, 23; Col. i. 18). It is plain, therefore, that the church did not begin until Pentecost—till *after* Christ took His place on high. The Head must be in heaven before the body could be formed on earth. The Old Testament saints, however blessed their position, did not form part of the church of God; nor will the millennial saints in a future day.

We have, consequently, two different orders of things in God’s dealings with men—Israel as a people whose hopes and calling are earthly and whose blessings are in the land, the store, the barn, etc.; and the church, whose blessings are *heavenly* as being united to a



heavenly Christ, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3).

Now there are two acts or parts in the coming of the Lord—His coming *for* His saints to take them to Himself, and His coming afterwards *with* them in judgment on the world. The "Coming of the Lord" and the "Day of the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 15, and v. 2) are entirely different events. To confound these is to lose sight of the proper and distinctive character of the church of God on the one hand, and to misapply much of the prophetic scripture on the subject of Israel's future restoration, on the other.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words" says the apostle Paul after he had explained to the Thessalonian believers how the Lord would come and raise the dead and change the living, all being "caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." What comfort would it have been to them to look for the great signs and portents which will precede the Lord's public appearing in glory? But it was truly comforting to know that their loved ones who had fallen asleep in Jesus would come again with Him when He came in glory, having been first raised or changed as the case might be, at His coming.

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" says the same apostle (1 Cor. xv. 51). It was no mystery that the Messiah would come in glory, put down His enemies and establish His millennial reign, the Old Testament prophets had spoken of this; but it *was* a mystery that all believers would not sleep (i.e., die), all would be changed in a moment and clothed with bodies like His own. This had never been revealed before.

Such is the christian's proper hope. He is looking for Christ to come and take him *out of* the world to Himself.

And so, we are not waiting for the fulfilment of signs (these have their place when it is a question of the Jews) but for a *Person* who is coming; the same Jesus who died for us, who loves us, who lives for us in heaven—He it is who is coming again. And if this truth of the second advent becomes detached from the *Person* who is coming, it may become a mere theory, a dry doctrine, held in the intellect but not having a particle of power in our practical life and walk.

Hence the Lord, when just leaving His disciples, comforted them with the word, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” How personal this is!—nor does He say a word about looking for any signs or events, but for Himself.

His coming *for* us will be no more seen by the unconverted world than was His departure when He led His disciples out from Jerusalem and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Luke xxiv. 50-53; Acts i. 9). The rapture, as we sometimes call His coming *for* His saints, is quite a distinct thing; it is not at all the same as His public appearing in glory and in judgment.

How suitably both are presented in the last chapter of the Old Testament, and of the New! In the former, Christ is seen as the Sun of Righteousness about to arise with healing in His wings, bringing in the “Day” of millennial blessing for this sin-cursed earth. In the last chapter of the New, He is seen as the bright and Morning Star *before* the “Day” comes.

It is said that in eastern countries the morning star shines out with particular brilliancy, illuminating the whole sky, during the darkness of the night, and just before the dawn of day. What a beautiful figure! This present time is the night, morally, of Christ’s absence and rejection by the world; but *our* hope is the rising of the Morning Star.

The man who is fast asleep in bed does not see it or care about it; it is the watcher who sees that star arise. It is the *heavenly* hope of the church, *before* the "Day" of millennial blessing dawns, and the unconverted world has nothing to do with it.

When Jesus thus presents Himself as the bright and Morning Star, the affections of the church are at once awakened; and the Holy Spirit, who had created those affections, joins in with the bride, the church, in the suited invitation, "Come." But it is not the glories of heaven which the church longs for: it is Himself.

"The bride eyes not her garment,  
 But her dear bridegroom's face;  
 I will not gaze at glory,  
 But on my King of Grace—  
 Not at the crown He giveth,  
 But on His piercèd hand:  
 The Lamb is all the glory  
 Of Immanuel's land."

Now all these blessed truths and relationships are clouded over and obscured by the mistaken ideas which rob the church of her peculiar place; and blend together Jewish and christian hopes in a way destructive of both. Nor is the false notion that it is only the "waiting ones" that will be caught up to meet the Lord when He comes any better than the other errors to which we have referred.

No: Christ will not leave any part of His body, His bride, here when He comes. Besides, all is dependent on *His* grace and *His* ability to effectuate that wonderful "change in a moment," and not on our worthiness or attainments in any way. Thank God it is so!

F.G.B.

## The Morning Watch.

"He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear as the instructed."

**A**T early dawn before the world doth waken,  
When the sweet matins of the birds begin;  
'Tis then my soul, with sweetest rapture taken,  
The Sanctuary of God would enter in.

O blessed Lord, Thy precious blood hath cleansed me  
From every stain of sin and guilt and shame,  
And now, as Thine, my longing heart is seeking  
To keep my tryst with Thee, in Thy blest Name.

How sweet the morning watch to those who listen,  
That tenderest voice—those accents well we've  
known;

And how our eyes with contrite tears did glisten  
As He to us His hands, His feet, hath shown.

Then, in that hour, His gracious invitation—  
"Commune with Me—thine inmost thoughts lay  
bare"—

Ah! who can fathom such sweet consolation—  
Blest solace in our cares and trials here?

And so, refreshing streams of living waters  
Flow forth from His own peerless, holy Word,  
And heavenly dew lies on the heavenly manna,  
To give us strength to glorify our Lord.

O child of God, while yet the birds are singing,  
Arise and spend the hour with Him alone,  
You, too, will find your heart with anthems ringing  
E'en ere the daily toil has yet begun.

And He, too, waits!—Shall we continue sleeping?  
His wakeful heart is wooing us in love;  
Then, ah! may we our tryst with Him be keeping,  
Until we praise Him worthily above.

V. A. H.

## Evangelizing.

“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts viii. 4).

**W**E never can be in sympathy with the thoughts and purposes of God unless our hearts go out in earnest desire for the salvation of souls. God’s love goes out to all, without distinction, whoever or wherever they may be. He is the Saviour God, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

To be out of touch with His thoughts in His world-wide offer of salvation is to become narrow, contracted and self-centred.

Those who were scattered in those early days of which our verse speaks, went everywhere evangelizing. We are not told that any of them had the special gift of an evangelist, but they went far and wide, carrying the blessed message of salvation, and God was with them. They had tasted of the love of God, they had found in Christ a Saviour and a Friend, and the only effect of the persecution then taking place was to send them abroad as messengers of the good news to others.

Would to God that the number of such were increased in our days! The prevailing indifference and the spirit of unbelief abroad in these countries is no sufficient reason why our hands should hang down and our efforts for the conversion of souls around us should fail.

On the contrary, this very fact is a call for more earnest and believing prayer and more dependence on the Lord for guidance, but it should not dry up the well-spring of divine love in the heart of the Christian, or the desire for the blessing of souls perishing around.

There are many ways of carrying the gospel—by preaching indoors and out of doors, by a word spoken to the individual here or there, by books or tracts distributed from door to door in the towns and villages.

The need is great, the time is short, let us not lose heart in well-doing, for we shall surely reap if we faint not.

## The Training of Children.

**T**HIS is a subject of the deepest importance in these last days, especially in view of the evil doctrines and influences that are abroad. It is to be feared that it is sometimes the case that parents do not realise the importance of the training of their children at all as they should.

Though most of us who have experience in these matters must feel that we have made our mistakes in the past, yet we have had our encouragements also, and we desire to help and encourage others.

It is remarkable that, in the New Testament, it is the father that is exhorted as to the training of the children, and we cannot do better than to quote the pointed words given us in Ephesians vi. 4, and Colossians iii. 21 :—

“And ye fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.”

“Fathers, do not vex your children, to the end that they be not disheartened.” (New trans.)

The father being the head of the house, the apostle places him under responsibility for the upbringing of the children. They were to be nurtured in those blessed truths which grace has made ours. So it was with Timothy who, from a child, had known the holy scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation.

Here let us quote the words of one well instructed in the word of God :—“Children are to be obedient; fathers, gentle, in order that the children’s affections may not be estranged from them, and that they may not be induced to seek that happiness in the world which they ought to find in the sanctuary of the domestic circle, which God has formed as a safeguard for those who are growing up in weakness; the precious *home* (if Christ is acknowledged) of kind affections, in which

the heart is trained in the ties which God Himself has formed.”

Thus, when there is no provocation, but every effort to win the young mind, the hearts of the children are turned to the fathers in this happy circle which God has formed. The father's place is to bring them up for the Lord, and as the Lord would have them to be. And who can doubt that the example of the parents in daily life has an immense influence over the children? When the parents walk before God in true godliness and uprightness, seeking what is for the glory of Christ for their children; this carries more weight than any mere words without the practical life behind them.

Christianity takes up all these relationships of life on a heavenly level; on the ground of the new creation to which the Christian belongs. But then we have to seek grace to carry them out in practice as those who are ourselves governed by these heavenly hopes and expectations.

Has it not sometimes been the case, as someone has remarked, that people who have given up the world for themselves, seek it for their children? Do we place the claims of Christ *first* in this as in other things? Or do we look for a high place in the world for our children; while at the same time we would, of course, wish them to be christians also?

But I have not said anything as to the mother's place in the training of the child and in the home influence. Everyone knows that the mother's influence is immense. She is constantly with the children, especially in their early years; her affections entwine around them and she has unique opportunities of instilling into their youthful minds that reverence for the word of God of which we read in the case of Timothy's mother and grandmother, and which is so sadly lacking to-day.

And if the parents are united and it is their one and sole desire that the children should be converted and

witness for Christ, they can surely count on God to hear and answer their prayers.

A gospel preacher was once addressing a crowd in a Manchester street. When the meeting was over, one man in particular remained behind. When spoken to he said, "I am an unbeliever, but I would not mock at what you say as some do. My mother was a true christian," and he then spoke at some length as to his mother's godliness and christian life. That man listened whilst he was pleaded with and reasoned with about his soul, and we may surely hope that the grace of God laid hold upon him either then or since. But he had never lost the deep impression made upon him by his mother's godly life.

J.P., *Montreal.*

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### Moses in the School of God.—3.

**I**N preparing the second "pair of tables" to go up into the mount the second time, Moses rises to the occasion (if we may so say) in the most beautiful manner, and pleads for the presence of God to go with the people. He asks, "Show me now *Thy way*"—the way of God. Not only *a way*, by angelic power for this people, but "God's way." Jehovah promises His presence and His rest to Moses, but that does not satisfy the heart of the great mediator, and he pleads, "Carry *us* not up hence," unless as Thy people we have found grace, "I and Thy people." This request is also granted by God, and now Moses desires for himself to see the glory of Jehovah, but that cannot be seen by mortal eyes, and in wondrous grace God permits His servant to see all that may be seen of His personal glory. Exceptional privilege this no doubt was, and beautiful it is to see how Moses bears it. At a later day, on another mount within the confines of the promised land, Moses sees, in a supernatural body, the



glory of the Son of man, and discourses with Him, unveiled (in words as yet unrevealed) of that momentous death which He, the One to whom all the glory of God belongs, "should accomplish at Jerusalem."

This second forty days spent in the mount with God presents another marked feature besides the supernatural power which sustained Moses for such a period, in which he neither ate nor drank. When he came down from the mount the skin of his face shone with the reflection of the glory in which he had been. "And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him . . . But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the vail off until he came out. And he came out and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded . . . And Moses put the vail upon his face again until he went in to speak with Him" (God) (Ex. xxxiv. 30-35).

The way in which this remarkable incident is spoken of in 2 Corinthians, third chapter, is deeply interesting and instructive. "But if the ministry of death, in letters graven in stones, began with glory, so that the children of Israel could not fix their eyes on the face of Moses, on account of the glory of his face, (a glory) which is annulled, how shall not rather the ministry of the Spirit subsist in glory? For if the ministry of condemnation be glory, much rather the ministry of righteousness abounds in glory" (2 Cor. iii. 7-9, N.T.). The whole chapter is a blessed contrast of the highest privileges of the old dispensation of law, with the present ministry of a glorified Christ, and the transforming power of the Christian's privilege to look up to the glory where He is.

The well-known incident of the smiting of the rock to give the people water, recorded in Exodus xvii., is familiar enough to my readers to need no further comment than to call attention to the word of the Lord,

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

But the difference between this and the smiting of the rock in the desert of Zin demands more than a passing notice, because of its effect upon the service and life of the great leader. The people at Zin reproached their leaders so grievously that “Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces : and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them” (Numbers xx. 6). But alas ! here the meekest man in all the earth broke down, and incurred the displeasure of God by his hasty reproaches of the people, much as they deserved all he said of them. Moses’ own words about this scene and its consequences, as recorded in Deuteronomy iii. 23-26, are all we need to say about it, “I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me ; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto Me of this matter.”

How gracious this is, how like the way in which one man may speak to another ; and yet what a reminder of who and what the God is with whom we have to do. Well might we heed the word, “Let us have grace whereby we may serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

“In the desert God will teach thee  
 What the God that thou hast found,  
 Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,  
 All His grace shall there abound.”

It is not our purpose in these reflections to consider the character of Moses as drawn by the unerring hand of the Spirit of God, although this might yield much instruction to any servant of God, but rather God’s

dealing with him as illustrating the word in Psalm ciii. 7, "He made known His ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel."

Sometimes we are led to say with David, "And I will delight myself in Thy commandments which I have loved . . . And I will meditate in Thy statutes" (Ps. cxix. 47, 48). While at other times we can only bow our heads and say, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. xi. 33).

Before we leave Horeb, we might remember also that in its precincts the encounter with Amalek was fought, with its beautiful lesson of the value of intercession in the uplifted hands of Moses, giving victory to Israel by their mute appeal to Jehovah: a striking type of the blessed Saviour, who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Both Moses and Elijah, honoured servants of God as they were, appear to have failed in patience—a virtue in which we all feel ourselves so lacking to-day, despite all the exhortations to it in the New Testament. The word itself (patience) is not found in the Old Testament, while it may be said to be prominent in all the exhortations of the New. We find in the fifteenth chapter of Romans, verse 5, the striking expression, "The God of patience," and the exhortation is as important as the name is remarkable. If Paul the apostle is driven to speak of himself and his work, he says, "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God in much patience," etc. (2 Cor. vi. 4). And in speaking of the signs of apostleship he puts "patience" before "wonders and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. xii. 12). How many sorrows in the church, and in our individual paths, might have been avoided, had we listened to James, and "Let patience have her perfect work." May the Lord grant us grace to keep the word of His patience while waiting for His coming again.

T. R.

## Justification of Life.

“Therefore as by the offence of one (one offence, attributed to Adam), judgment came upon (towards) all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (one righteousness, attributed to Christ), the free gift came upon (towards) all men unto justification of life” (Rom. v. 18).

THE words in parenthesis in the above quotation have been inserted in order to make clear what is set forth by the apostle in this parenthetical part of our chapter, from verse 13 to 17. The new section of the epistle, from which these verses are taken, commences at verse 12.

Two persons are brought before us, Adam and Christ. The first was, through his disobedience to a divine command, the means of bringing sin and its consequences into the world (Gen. iii.). Death, as the judgment of God, was the result of that act, “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

In due time, however, Christ came into the world, the incarnate Son of God, the seed of the woman, God’s provided Substitute for man who would otherwise have been irretrievably lost under sin’s condemnation, according to the righteous judgment of God. Hence it is written, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. ix. 27). Thus the believer is assured that “Christ died for our *sins* according to the scriptures,” so that God has been satisfied, yea glorified, by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

So also with regard to *sin*,\* “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 21). The ground, therefore, on which condemnation must have reached us has been cleared for the believer, and

\* We trust that the reader understands the difference between *sin*, the root; and *sins*, the acts, or fruits.

that too in a way in keeping with the righteousness of God, through His acceptance of Christ's one act of obedience unto death—the death of the cross.

Death, the last enemy to be destroyed, and Satan who held the power of death, have been annulled through the atoning work and victory of our blessed Substitute the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. i. 18).

We may here inquire, What, then, is justification of life? One well taught in the truth has said, "It is that justification which we have as being alive in Christ; that is, it goes beyond mere forgiveness of sins as in the old man, which is put away. It is the clearance of all imputation which we have as alive in Christ . . . Not merely are the old sins cleared away negatively, but we are in the new place by a work of Christ which God has fully owned. He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do, and was in virtue of it in a new place as Man in life. Life (in us) and justification went together."

Thus, as to the believer, he is living in a new life, to God. This could never have been the case in the old Adam state under the law. The law did indeed promise long life on the earth to the man who kept it, but eternal life in Christ is a new life, lived to God. This life is now set forth in a risen Christ; it is the life of God in man.

It was shown out in Christ, in its perfection, in His path of humiliation in this world, in doing His Father's will (John v. 26). He is now that same eternal life, as risen and in glory. It is the believer's place and responsibility to live out this life in the power of the Holy Spirit—in fact he has no other life (spiritually). But Christ who is this life as the second Man, the last Adam, is Himself a life-giving spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45): His Deity is thus maintained in His humanity.

We may here draw the reader's attention to John xx. 21, 22, "Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace

be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit becomes thus, through this inbreathing, the power of this life; "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening (life-giving) spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45).

If we compare this quotation with Genesis ii. 7, we shall see its true significance and application. And further Paul, in the triumph of this truth, declares, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

To be in Christ in this new power of life is to be emancipated from the power and dominion of sin and death. But this life is associated with righteousness, hence it is called "justification of life." It supposes that the penalty of sin has been met by an atoning work and a righteous substitute, and this according to the demands of divine justice. Thus also Peter declares, speaking of this same truth, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18). In virtue of this once suffering for sins by Christ, this just One, and in all the value and efficacy of that work as God estimates it, the believer is assured that His sins have been atoned for and put away in a manner in perfect keeping with the righteousness of God.

And not only so, but the believer now lives in newness of life in Christ risen. He thus "lives unto righteousness." So also we read, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness," etc. (1 Peter ii. 24). The "living unto righteousness," therefore, is the result, for the believer, of the death and resurrection of Christ who now lives in the power of an endless life.

May the fruits of this new life abound in us in our daily walk, by the power of the Holy Spirit. H.L.

## God's Faithfulness to His Word.

*As shown in the Book of Ezra.*

**T**HE seventy years' captivity of which Jeremiah had spoken had passed away, when the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to favour the return of the remnant of the Jews to their own land. How different things were now from the days of Solomon, when the people dwelt in a kingdom extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, under their own king, in peace and prosperity!

The sad history of the kings, even those of the house of David, was relieved only here and there by men of godliness and faith, such as Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. But, for the most part, the kings themselves were leaders in evil and idolatry, and the people might well be described by the prophet as being a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."

Now, God had come in in mercy and brought back this feeble remnant from Babylon. Is there not an analogy between this and what we find in the history of the church of God? If we look back over the long night of the middle ages, what darkness and departure from God marked the professing church! After this God brought to light much long-lost truth at the time of the Reformation; and in His great mercy He gave still further light in the revival of truth in the early part of the last century.

But, to return to our subject, we find much that was good about this remnant at the first, feeble as it was and contemptible in the eyes of men. They commenced by setting up the altar of God in the still unwallled city of Jerusalem, trusting Him for protection. Their faith counted on God not on an arm of flesh; and they were

most particular in being guided by the word of God, "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God." They also gave liberally to the work of God according to their ability.

Besides this, they put away from the priesthood, as being polluted, those who could not trace their genealogical register, and the governor said to them that they must await another day to exercise the priesthood, when a priest would arise with Urim and Thummim (see also Neh. vii. 64, 65). This scrupulous care was not needed in the days of old, when the priesthood was known and established, but it was needed now. All this confusion and weakness was the consequence of the sins of their forefathers and their own.

And yet we cannot but believe that the faith of this remnant, called into exercise all the more because of the ruined state of things, was more precious before God than all the magnificent display of the days of Solomon, when it was easy to float with the stream with little to put faith to the test. Those palmy days had passed away; there was no fire descending from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering, no priest with Urim and Thummim, no Shechinah of glory, nothing in the way of outward display, but weakness and failure marked everything.

But this remnant was guided simply by the word of God; they acted upon it so far as that was possible in the broken state of things, and they did not pretend to what they had not competence for.

Surely this has a deep meaning for us at the present time. God is always faithful to His word, always to be counted on by faith, but He will not own or accredit a pretension to a position which is out of keeping with the ruined condition in which the church of God is now found. The same principles are true at all times; but not to recognise the broken state of the church, is to put



ourselves outside His help and to forfeit His approval, without which all is useless.

Soon a test arose for the remnant from the outside. The adversaries of Judah said, "Let us build with you," and they advanced the most plausible reasons for doing so. The question, however, was, Is Israel to be a separated people, or are they to receive help and countenance from the nations around? To this question the leaders of the Jews gave a most decided "No." "Ye have nothing to do to build with us," they said; and thus the enemy's snare was set in vain.

The next thing the enemy did was to raise up opposition from the Persian rulers, under whose sway the sins of the people had placed them. How often we fail in standing up against a *continued* test of faith; And this was just the case here. They ceased to build for a considerable time. But God in His mercy raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who stirred them up to fresh energy so that eventually the work was finished, and great blessing and joy was the result.

But soon we find that the enemy was busy *within* as well as *without*. The faithful Ezra, who had come down from Jerusalem to see after the welfare of the remnant, was deeply moved when he found that the people, the priests, and the Levites, had not separated themselves from the people of the land, but had fallen into their ways and had intermarried with them.

The effect of this on Ezra was to bring him to his knees in deep and heartfelt confession of the sins of the nation, right along from their beginning, as we see in chapter ix., taking his own share in it all.

Through his exhortation there was a getting back to the word of God, to the giving of God His true place in their midst, and to separation from the evil by which they were defiled. There were also many who "trembled at the words of the God of Israel," on whose heart and conscience His word had a deep effect, and

who judged themselves in the light of it. These Ezra encouraged "to be of good courage" and act faithfully on the testimony of the written word in putting away their foreign wives.

Surely these things have a deep significance for us and are written for our profit. We need to take the lessons home to ourselves as we look abroad on the ruined and divided state of the church of God and the failure of those to whom God has given a little reviving in these last days. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word," this is the true spirit which God can own. But let us not be discouraged but trust in God's faithfulness and count on Him as our unfailing resource.

F.G.B.

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## The Second Epistle of John.

**T**HIS is a very short epistle, but although short, it is full of weighty instruction for every child of God. It speaks of truth, of love and of doctrine. It contains words of encouragement, words of beseeching and words of warning. It is addressed to a christian lady and her children by an aged apostle who calls himself "the elder." He "loves them in the truth" and he associates with himself "all they that have known the truth, for the truth's sake which dwelleth in us and shall be with us for ever." The truth is that by which God is revealed and made known. The Lord Himself, the living Word, is the truth; the written Word is also the truth; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is the Spirit of truth. But it is one thing to *know* the truth and another thing to *walk* in it. Hence in the 4th verse the apostle uses these words of encouragement, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking

in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.” In the 3rd Epistle the same apostle says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

Then “the elder,” the aged apostle, reminds the lady of the commandment given by the Lord to His disciples in the beginning, that they should love one another. It is recorded thus in the Gospel of John, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” In this matter the apostle uses words of beseeching and he explains that love is characterised by obedience, “And this is love, that we walk after His commandments.”

In verse 4 we have “walking in truth”; in verse 6 “walking according to His commandments,” and in the same verse “walking in love.” These three things should characterise the believer in all his ways.

Then comes a word of warning against the many deceivers who have entered into the world. These deceivers are like the many false prophets spoken of in chapter 4 of the 1st Epistle. They do not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh, that is, they deny His humanity (see New Trans.). As to His divinity, this is clearly stated in verse 3 of the 2nd Epistle where the Lord Jesus Christ is called the Son of the Father. It is necessary to confess both; “Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God” (1 John iv. 2). “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God” (1 John iv. 15).

Here in the second Epistle the doctrine of Christ is specially connected with His humanity, with His coming in the flesh, and it is in this doctrine that the believer has to abide. He who goes forward\* with the object

\* In verse 9 we should read, “Whosoever goeth forward,” instead of, “Whosoever transgresseth.”

of introducing something new and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, is without God, but he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son.

Moreover, if anyone does not bring this doctrine with him, he is guilty not only of wrong teaching, but also of evil deeds. Hence the lady is warned against having any association with him; she is not to receive him into her house and not even to offer him the usual parting salutation which one person gives to another. To have friendly relations with him is to make oneself a partaker of his evil deeds. This severe warning shows the abhorrence with which the Spirit of God views untruth concerning the Person of Christ, and is an admonition to which every child of God would do well to take heed.

G. K.

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Give me a *perfect* heart, O Lord,  
 An *undivided* aim,  
 And *purified* by Thy blest word  
*Unchanging* e'er the same.

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Teach me, O God, to fix mine eyes  
 On Christ, the spotless Lamb,  
 So shall I love Thy precious will,  
 And glorify His name.

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To refuse to be subject to the whole word of God is to refuse to be subject to Christ. You cannot separate the incarnate Word from the written inspired word. To do so is lawlessness.

## Emmanuel—God with Us.

“AND they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. i. 23). Here our souls can rest, here is a resource which never fails, a spring which never dries up, a stay in every time of trouble. The virgin’s Son, the child born, whose name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,” the rightful heir of the throne of David. Such was the One who came in lowly grace into this world in which we live.

His name was called Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour, for He would save His people from their sins, as well as from their enemies.

What a wonderful fact—*God with us!* If we look back over the long history of man from Adam down to the present time, what do we find? Failure in every position in which he was placed. Tried in various ways, it was always the same story—departure from God, selfishness and sin.

But in Jesus we see all perfection : perfection in obedience to the Father’s will and word, in dependence on Him, in love to the Father and love to His own. What a Saviour! Is there one trial in our personal history or in connection with the church of God, in which we cannot find a sympathising High Priest and intercessor in Jesus? Not one.

And if we connect the opening chapter of Matthew with the close of that gospel, how comforting it is! Emmanuel, God with us, is the same One who says in the last verse, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.”

Blessed companionship! Infinite grace that could come so close to us and make us His special care! “I am with you,” it is Jesus Himself: the very same Saviour that wept at the grave of Lazarus, that

snatched the son of the widow of Nain from the jaws of death, and restored him to his mother, that had compassion on the leper and said, "I will, be thou clean," that said to Mary at the sepulchre, "Mary," causing light and joy to break into her soul, that said to the disciples on the storm-tossed lake, "It is I, be not afraid," and to John in Patmos, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living One"—*this* is the One who has pledged Himself to be with us right on to the end."

F. G. B.

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## "The Grace that is in Christ Jesus."

(2. Tim. II. 1.)

**W**HAT a refreshing subject for weary way-worn pilgrims! May it be so for us, as we seek, in the Scriptures, to learn something more about it, or rather about Him in whom this grace is found, and from whom alone it is to be had.

If we look up a Greek-English lexicon we find that the word "grace" is the English equivalent for *Karis*, which is derived from the verb *Kairo*, to *rejoice*, and from which comes *Kara*, *joy*. So that *grace* and *joy* are very evidently linked together, and we may certainly say that the supply of grace fills the heart with joy. This is encouraging, for a joyful Christian is a fruitful Christian, and one who is in a position to help others, reminding us, as it does, of the tree described in Ps. i., "whose leaf also shall not wither."

We are further encouraged in our enquiry by the emphasis that the veteran warrior, Paul the Apostle, and the prisoner of Jesus Christ, gives to this subject in his letter to the young soldier Timothy. He is anxious that he should conduct himself as a good sol-

dier; that he should purge himself from what was to dishonour, and that he should be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. But before all this he exhorts Timothy to "be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." It is like the good general who, before engaging the enemy, takes care that his soldiers are supplied with all they need, and that the communications with his source of supply are maintained without interruption.

Evidently, the great thing we learn from our text is that this supply is in a *Person*, namely, the glorified Man, Christ Jesus, and it is interesting to see how the other writers in the New Testament confirm this. The Apostle John in ver. 17 of the 1st chapter of his gospel, tells us that, whereas the law was *given* by Moses, grace *came* by Jesus Christ. That is, that it subsists in His Person, and this conforms to the plan of Christianity; that all our blessings are *in Him*, and that we have nothing apart from Him. And so if we turn to Peter's second epistle, his closing exhortation is "Grow in grace," but immediately he adds, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," because the one cannot be enjoyed without the other, and the knowledge of the Person is the great thing to be desired and to which he continually recurs (see ch. i, 2, 3, 8 and iii. 18).

Let us note well this, to which we have had the three-fold testimony, that the supply to meet every need is in a Person, and that, consequently, if we are not to be lacking—"barren and unfruitful"—we must be on terms of intimacy with that Person, or in the words of our dear Lord Himself, we must be "abiding in Him." It is not, surely, that His love depends upon our conduct, but upon our conduct depends very much the manifestation of that love.

Our Lord could appeal to His disciples in those last hours of His intercourse with them before His death,

“When I sent you without purse . . . lacked ye anything?” and they promptly answered, “Nothing.” So it must always be for those who go forth as sent of Him. But in view of His departure, He said to His disciples, “I will pray the Father and He shall give you *another* Comforter” (John xiv. 16), and again “I will come to you” (ver. 18); and in ch. xvi. 7, He even says, “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you.”

Thus it would appear that according to the testimony of the blessed One who, “having loved His own which were in the world, loved them unto the end,” we are not less cared for because the Son of man has ascended up where He was before. For indeed “the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.”

The means of communication, then, between our souls and our absent Lord is the Holy Spirit, as to which we learn much in the epistle to the Ephesians. Our Lord had said of the Spirit (John xiv. 17), “He abides with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you” (new trans.). This, in its realisation, is the subject of the apostle’s prayer in Eph. iii. 17, where he asks that the Ephesians may be “strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man, that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts,” etc. Here we get the Holy Spirit strengthening our hearts to hold this wondrous treasure—Christ. Surely if this be true of us, and in us, we shall be “strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.” We shall be able to count upon Him for all that we need, and for all that He would have us to do. Our language—the expression of our heart’s experience—will be, “I know *whom* I have believed,” and we shall be able to say to others, out of a full heart, “My God shall abundantly supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (new trans.).

J. M. W.



## Christ the Power and Wisdom of God.

**I**N the eternal counsels of the Godhead before the world was, everything centres in the Person of Christ. These counsels, as we read in Proverbs viii., John i., etc., had man in view; "My delights were with the *sons of men*," again, "the life was the light of *men*." It is evident, therefore, that the question, "What think ye of Christ?" is a crucial question for all; everything turns on the answer we give to it.

Now there is in Christendom, in these times, an increasing tendency to depreciate the Person and work of Christ. This depreciation is not merely a modern innovation, whether in relation to His eternal Sonship or His incarnation in time; it began and was spread abroad even in the apostle's day.

But it is well for the children of God now that God allowed such things to be brought out in those early times, so that we might have the teaching of the inspired word concerning them, and may be on our guard against those wily agents of the enemy who, as of old (Gen. iii. 1), would beguile simple souls from the truth.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me," said the Lord. This is still the Shepherd's assuring word to the feeblest lamb of the flock; but we must give heed to "what is written," as the only voice to be regarded as His.

God's revelation, therefore, concerning Christ and His work on the cross, is the greatest and most wonderful revelation that has been given to men; and we may say also that it is the centre and the substance of the voice of prophecy (Luke xxiv. 27); woe be to the man who, in the pride of his heart, rejecting what is written, would dare, by his carnal reasoning, to subvert these two great pillars of Christianity, Christ and His work!

The Lord warns those who would lay falltraps or

stumbling-blocks to trip up the "little child" who believes on Him; "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6). The apostle John also has said, concerning the seducers of his day, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even so now are there many antichrists" (1 John ii. 18).

The spread of many heresies against Christ, such as those which deny His true Deity or His perfect and spotless humanity, is an assault on the foundation of the christian faith: it is not only antichristian, but it paves the way for *the* Antichrist. The propagandists of John's day had left the christian assembly, spreading their evil doctrines broadcast (compare 1 John ii. 19; iv. 1, 5); those of our day remain (nominally) within the church.

Such are those who teach the "New Theology," which is a tacit denial of God's revelation concerning *the Person and work of Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, the One in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

But we need not occupy ourselves with the particular errors which false teachers put forward, these teachers are what the Lord described as wolves in sheep's clothing; we do well to avoid them; "From such turn away." To occupy ourselves with evil teaching defiles and it is a bad example to others and a way whereby we may be seduced ourselves, as Peter says, "Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Peter iii. 17).

God has given us safeguards against these evils both in the Old and New Testaments—for there were false prophets amongst the people of old—see the warnings in Isaiah viii. 11-20, etc. John, in his second epistle, gives a definite warning to a Christian lady, against

even receiving into her house or bidding God's speed to anyone who did not bring the doctrine of Christ; anyone who received such was a "partaker of his evil deeds." Moreover it is invariably the case that false doctrine and evil deeds go together; such is the contaminating effect of the doctrine. We need courage and decision, if such should come across our path, to turn away from them: to make terms with what is against Christ is to be disloyal to Him.

But to return to our subject; both power and wisdom are attributes of the Godhead, and they were perfectly expressed and demonstrated in Christ. He took the humble place in this world, though He were God manifested in flesh. His words and His works declared both His power and wisdom; but He always acted as the sent One of the Father, hence He could draw attention to both of these as proof that the Father was in Him. And so perfectly did He manifest the Father here that He could say, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 8, 11; xvi. 22, 24).

But this glorious Person did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved; hence he that believeth on the Son is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already: a solemn alternative this for all who reject Him—His words and His works!

Again, this blessed Person took manhood in order that God might be revealed—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Thus, in manhood, as the Word made flesh, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature (all creation) and in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All things were created by Him and for Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made (John i. 3, Col. i. 15-17; ii. 9).

Now this blessed Christ, the Son of the Father, is the centre of all God's counsels, whether in creation

or in grace, and He it is who carries them out. For this latter He went to the cross, being rejected by the world, in order to accomplish the work of redemption. The first man, Adam, had by his sin brought ruin unto himself and his race, having acted in disobedience to the command of his Creator.

Christ, by His death upon the cross, met God's holy claims in respect of sin, and the sins of all who believe the testimony of God's word. To the philosophic mind, the preaching of the cross was foolishness; to the Jew it was a stumbling-block, and so it is now, but unto us who are called it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

We would commend to the reader the careful consideration of 1 Cor. i. 18-29; it is God's wisdom in contrast with the vain and empty reasonings and the proud pretensions of the mind of fallen man. What puts everything to the test, as we said at the beginning, is Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. H.L.

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## “Take Heed to the Ministry.”

(Colossians iv. 17.)

**I**N these last days it becomes increasingly necessary that the message the Apostle Paul sent in his epistle to the Colossians, to be delivered to Archippus, should be seriously weighed by all who minister the word, whether in the gospel to unbelievers or in teaching to the children of God. The apostle wrote as follows:—  
“ . . . And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, to the end that thou fulfil it.”

The possession of a gift of ministry from Christ, the Head of the church, whether evangelist, pastor, or teacher, involves a responsibility to Him who gave it which cannot be too seriously regarded. The servant

of the Lord must be Christ's freeman, he must not be subservient to others in the work of the ministry when it is a question of the truth. Service in the ministry of the word calls for a *holy, separate, and unblameable* walk in the one who is gifted to minister.

In an experience of over fifty years the writer has, on several occasions, observed in some who had decided gift as well as good knowledge of scripture, an unfortunate spirit of levity and lightness in delivery which may have amused some of his hearers, but which was a positive and painful source of sorrow to others. Such should take heed to 1 Thess. ii. 10, where the apostle Paul reminds the Thessalonian converts of his behaviour among them when he preached to them the gospel of God, "Ye are witnesses," he wrote, "and God also, how *holily* and justly and *unblameably* we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

The aim and object of all true service should be the glory of God, combined with a desire for blessing to those to whom the servant ministers. The apostle Paul did not seek to please men; had he done so he would have been the servant of men and not the servant of Christ (Galatians i. 10).

In Christendom, sad to relate, the object is more often the gathering together of large companies of people whose tastes and wishes must be catered for in what is ministered, otherwise the one who ministers will not be upheld. Thus the servant becomes the servant of men, and, if truly called of the Lord, his ministry is hampered by financial considerations, thus destroying his usefulness as the Lord's servant.

If put in a place of service by God, it is to *Him* the servant should look, and his aim should be to fully trust in Him, and not in man. Good had servants before the apostles appeared, and He has them now that they are no longer here. As another has said—In the measure or extent that the servant is occupied with Christ

before God, so will he walk according to the pattern of the true servant; and the more perfectly will he exhibit the character of the heavenly man.

What a faithful follower of Christ Paul was! It is beautiful to see the sympathy of his heart and his forgetfulness of self: he lost sight altogether of his apostleship, if it may be so said, in the delight he had in getting upon common ground with the people of God. To the Corinthians and Galatians he could speak of himself as "an *apostle* of Jesus Christ," but to the Philippians he says "the *servant*." It delighted Paul to get the people with himself in a place above the world's temptations.

What we see in this is, a desire to cultivate a spirit of fellowship with all those who are in heart servants of Christ, and to rise above the little marks that distinguish them in either station or gift. And again, it is not the appointing to office that can make servants; it is fellowship with Him who calls to service, and also puts one in the path and gives the power. There is something much deeper involved in being a servant of the Lord than anything that could be conveyed by being appointed to the office of Bishop, Deacon, or Elder, as the case may be. All real power in service flows from the Holy Spirit, who ministers through the servant according to the gift He has conferred (1 Cor. xii. 11).

J.P., *Montreal.*

## Elijah on Mount Horeb.

**N**EARLY 600 years pass away without any reference to Mount Horeb in Scripture, and profane history also is silent as to any notable visit to the scene of so many solemn events. Probably the manner in which God manifested His presence there would deter any Israelite from approaching such an awe-inspiring spot, until the silence of centuries is broken by the visit of the prophet Elijah, who is led by some mysterious

power to seek its solitudes in the hour of his disappointment and grief.

Fresh from his great triumph on Mount Carmel, where standing alone he defied the powers of idolatry, and ordered the slaughter of 450 prophets of Baal, he breaks down under the threats of Jezebel, and apparently forgetting the wonderful answer of God by fire from heaven only a day or so before turns his back on the people and the place, to seek relief for his wounded spirit in solitude and death. What led him to Horeb we are not told, perhaps the majesty of the law in the way it was given suited the mood of his mind, but he went first to Beersheba, and leaving his servant there, went a day's journey into the wilderness, and, laying himself down under a juniper tree, requested that he might die.

But the God of Elijah intervenes. The Lord God who heard his cry, and answered to the prayer of His servant in such a signal way two or three days before, now sends an angel to minister to his bodily needs, and he is aroused by the voice of the angel to "Arise and eat." Sullenly he partakes of the food, and sullenly lays himself down again, to be aroused the second time by a similar request with the touching addition, "Because the journey is too great for thee." No hint is given of where the journey led, or its duration, but "Elijah arose and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." Some 300 miles or more the solitary man must have walked, nursing his wounded spirit and smarting under the sense of being the only one left, until he arrives at the scene crowded with so many associations that corresponded with his present frame of mind, and he retired into a cave "and lodged there."

"And behold the word of Jehovah came to him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?" He

pours out his plaint, which tells only too plainly that he was thinking of himself, and too deeply occupied with the sins of Israel to remember the patience and mercy of God towards them, so markedly contrasting with his own complaints. Commanded by the voice to go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord, God passed by in a strong wind that rent the mountain and broke the rocks in pieces; after the wind an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but God was not in any of these manifestations of power, but in a still small voice that made the prophet cover his face in the presence of God. Again the voice asks the same pertinent question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" and again the angry heart of the prophet pours out his bitter complaint against Israel.

God now takes him at his word, accepts the resignation of his office, as it were, yet entrusts his servant with most important commissions to anoint two kings (for sorrowful consequences as to Israel eventually), then his own successor, and lastly a proof that God Himself saw in Israel what the prophet had not been able to find, the voice says—"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

We cannot think of Elijah's forty days' journey to Horeb without recalling the forty days which Moses spent with God on this same mount; or of that like period of time which the Lord Jesus spent in the wilderness in conflict with Satan as the enemy of God and man. But the marked contrasts, and the precious lessons these might teach us, we must pass over now. Just as we saw with Moses at Meribah, who was so evidently unprepared for such a wonderful exhibition of grace, sovereign grace, from Jehovah, who would meet the need of His murmuring people without a reproach; so with Elijah, his faith does not rise to the



height of Jehovah's grace and patience, who is always full of mercy and goodness to His people. His word to Moses might equally apply in both cases perhaps, "Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Numbers xx. 12).

How incomparably superior to even the best of His servants is God in His mercy and grace. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. lv. 9).

Although Elijah's public ministry did not cease with the commissions entrusted to him in Horeb, he does not appear again in such a remarkable manner as on Carmel; neither does God allow him to finish his course in obscurity, but in a manner granted to no other servant of God, he was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. Moses also was granted the exceptional honour of being buried by the Lord Himself, and "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Both were destined to be raised in a later day to appear on another mount, in supernatural bodies,—representative men of the law and the prophets distinctly, and they converse with the glorified Son of man respecting His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Honoured servants both they no doubt were, but like a worthy successor who came in New Testament days in the spirit and power of Elias, of whom the Lord said "This is Elias if ye can receive it," they both fade away in comparison with the greatest of all servants, who in this as well as all other offices that He assumed, must have the pre-eminence. How lovely is the spirit of the great forerunner, John the Baptist, when he said "He must increase, but I must decrease."

When we think of our Lord Jesus saying "I am



among you as one that serveth," and taking that place described by Isaiah, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary; He wakeneth morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (Is. l. 4, R.V.), we cannot but bow our hearts in wonder, love, and praise.

But no human words can surpass the simplicity and beauty of that well-known passage of holy writ, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 6-11).

May this short study of some of the ways of God in the education of His servants increase in our souls the sense of the greatness of the wisdom, love and power, displayed in His dealings with men, and bow our hearts in worship as we repeat, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33-36). T.R.

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## Sowing and Reaping.

**W**E like to think and speak of the grace of God in saving on the principle of faith alone, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His blood, and of the precious

living Advocacy of Christ to restore us to communion when we sin after we become God's children, but there is another thing we should think about, and that is the sorrow we may bring upon ourselves, the reproach we may bring upon the Lord's name, and the loss of reward by and by, if we do not walk with the Lord. We would not question for a moment the eternal security of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose life is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3), but sin in a believer's life should not be a light matter with him, for it is not a light matter with God.

There are times when believers do not yield to the loving Advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and persist in a course that is by no means in agreement with the word of God, but is plainly according to the flesh. Alas ! how much we have all done just to please ourselves, and not to please the Lord ! We have thought of our own comforts and interests and not of the Lord and His interests. The solemn words in Gal. vi. 7, 8, stand out prominently before all. "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Some have mistakenly thought that it was only the unconverted who could sow to the flesh, but if they would just think of it a little while, they would see that it is a word for all. It would do them good to let their lives be searched, and then they would see how much they have been sowing to the flesh. It might be that they have been having sorrow upon sorrow, and they did not know why. Their joy in the Lord has abated, and they have never stopped to ascertain the cause . .

There can be no going on with the Lord without giving up, without self-denial. That was the path of Jesus. He "pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3), but He always did those things that pleased the Father

(John viii. 29). It was His meat to do the will of Him who sent Him (John iv. 34). He would not minister to His bodily needs even, apart from the will of the Father. Oh, we can minister to the flesh in so many, many ways!

But we must distinguish between the body and the flesh, or carnal nature. It is not wrong to feed the body, though we may feed the body wrongly, when we give way to gluttony and the like; then it is the flesh. We take it, that in every thing we do, we are either sowing to the flesh or sowing to the Spirit. This makes it intensely practical for us as believers, and it is what we need to remember.

And if we think that sowing to the flesh is merely the committal of flagrant sins, then we are greatly mistaken. A christian allows his heart to get set on earthly things, he becomes taken up with the furnishings of his home, he seeks wealth, he takes his comfort in things of this life, he prides himself on his car, his possessions, or his business. He consoles himself that all these things are allowable, and so he remains in them in his energies and affections. What is he doing but "sowing to the flesh," and what shall he reap but "corruption"? He will lose his reward, though saved by the grace of God.

And how much may be done in the way of service in the name of the Lord that is only of the flesh, and will all be burnt up in that day! The big meetings held, the great numbers added, churches built, etc., etc., what will it all be in that day when "the fire shall try every man's work of what *sort* it is"? There is no doubt but that there will be many disappointments then. Many will even profess to have done much in His name who never knew Him. Then let us be searched by the Lord, and our ways threshed *now*, that we may be given to find out that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit; that we may walk in close communion with the Lord and He with us, and thus His name be glorified in us. F.E.H.

## The Good Shepherd.

**T**HERE have been many shepherds, some of them good, some bad, but there is only one who could say, "I am *the* Good Shepherd." In every way He has proved His competence to be this. Being a divine Person and able to say, "I and My Father are one," He alone had the right to lay down His life as a voluntary act, and to take it again; also to lay it down for the sheep. And yet Jesus was truly Man, and He loves His sheep with all the tenderness which dwells in a truly human heart; He loved them even to the giving up of His life for them.

Blessed Saviour! In His sheltering care the sheep are safe and by His leading they follow in right paths. The path may be sometimes a trying one; many a true witness has even given his life rather than deny His Lord; but it is the path of light, of that joy which flows from communion with the Father and the Son, and of acceptable service also.

How comforting to know that the Good Shepherd *goes before* the sheep, so that if there is a difficulty in the way, He meets it. We who live in this country do not get a true idea of the figure here used; we see the sheep driven along the road, sometimes roughly used, and generally kept in order by a dog. But such was not the way in Palestine in Bible times; the shepherd did not drive, but lead the sheep—he went before them. We get a beautiful expression of shepherd care in Isaiah xl. 11, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

Three things are said of the true sheep of Christ—they hear His voice, they know His voice and they follow Him. Let us look at these words. First the sheep *hear* His voice—it is the hearing of faith, that

which brings eternal life to the soul. Then they *know* His voice. If we are much in the company of anyone, how familiar the voice becomes to the ear: a strange voice, which might simulate the true one, is detected at once. Hence the great value of holy familiarity with the voice of the Good Shepherd; and we hear that voice in His word.

We have not to be occupied with all the voices which fall upon our ears, but if we *know* the true one, we are at once able to detect what is the voice of a stranger. In this way the simple soul, which is true to Christ, is preserved. Such an one might not be able to analyse a false doctrine when presented, it may be clothed in a specious form of words; but at least they would know that it was *not* the Good Shepherd's voice.

Lastly, they *follow* Him. How simple and yet how much is involved in it! In following Him we are always safe, the heart is fixed on a right object, and the steps are directed in paths of peace and righteousness. May such be the experience of the sheep of Christ in this evil day.

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## The Birth of Jesus.

**O**NCE more the "Birth ever blessed" of our adorable Lord will shortly be celebrated by Christendom, but how? Will the indifference and irreverence which characterised its institution in the early centuries, and resulted in its mistiming and the linking it with a pagan feast, be absent from this year's commemoration? We fear not, though, doubtless, it will be otherwise with many true hearts.

Alas! that so many of us fail to realise as we should the profound importance of the Nativity. "Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1. 15, N.T.). What can transcend in wonder the Son of

God, Eternal, the Creator and Upholder of all things, stooping to man's estate in order "to seek and to save that which was lost"?

Nor was it as one exalted, enjoying all earthly good. Born in a manger, His pathway through this world was a lowly, if a lovely one, until it culminated at the cross in suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. But, "when He had made purification of sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Oh, to apprehend more fully the unspeakable grace of His immeasurable condescension!

Gently, as the fall of the refreshing dew, was His advent into this scene of sinful humanity. It was unaccompanied by royal proclamation or universal rejoicing. Men were indifferent or "troubled." The religious leaders of the Jews were too callous to go to Bethlehem, only fourteen miles away, with the Magi, to join with them in rendering homage. But *there* was born of the Virgin a Babe, unique for holiness and moral loveliness beyond the concepts of men. If the world were careless, all heaven was moved. If men were silent, angels were jubilant. Gabriel announces to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, "glad tidings of great joy"—of a "Saviour," born this day, "which is Christ the Lord." Then a multitude of the heavenly host praise in that sweet strain which has come down to us, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men."

Seven hundred years previously, the marvellous prophecy had been given, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.) These glowing words and the gospel narrative of their fulfilment, in all the charm of its captivating simplicity and transparent truthfulness, will once again fall

upon the ears of millions in Christendom. Will they convey to them a beautiful sentiment merely, or will they challenge conscience and heart with the supreme question which God has for each and everyone to-day, "What think ye of Christ?" How much depends upon the answer.

This year is a very serious one. Events have been crowding one upon another, all converging to a crisis. The end of the dispensation approaches. The fulfilment of Daniel's great vision of the image is nearing completion. The Gentile government is in rapid decline. The gold and silver stages have passed. The iron and clay stage is reaching to the toes. Preparation for the advent of the "lawless one" is well advanced. Confederacies are reaching alarming proportions. Violence is increasing. Restraints are weakening. Appalling is the failure of the professing church. Leavened by bad doctrine and choked by worlding tares, it can only bemoan its own helplessness in view of the onrush of evil.

But Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday and to-day, and for ever." His love to His own is quenchless and fathomless. To loyal hearts, therefore, this year's recall of the sweet, ever fresh though endless story of the Nativity, should have a special voice calling them to rally round their beloved Lord. And it should bring home to their hearts with peculiar force His promise of inestimable comfort, given on the eve of His crucifixion, that He would come again to take them to the Father's house, there to abide with Him.

At the close of His last gracious revelation to the church, He thrice repeats the words, "I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20).

Before the deepening darkness reaches its climax for the world, the blessedness, the triumph and the glory of the rapture will burst upon the saints.

A. J. H.



## The Coming of the Lord.

**T**HE return of the Lord from heaven accompanied by all His saints and His angels to reign over the earth is the great subject to which the prophets so often recur. Majesty and divine power will signalise this coming. It is quite clear that, in order to be able to accompany the Lord at the time of His glorious return, the saints must have been previously taken up to be with Him.

The passage which explains in detail this taking up of the saints, as preceding their return *with* the Lord, is 1 Thess. iv. 15-17. The Lord will then come Himself unexpectedly and without the display of His glory. He will come to meet His redeemed ones in the air. The assembling shout, the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, will only be heard by His own—the world is not in question here. The sleeping saints will be raised, the living will be changed, and all will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

He will descend from heaven; we shall ascend from the earth to meet Him, and thus shall we be for ever with the Lord. The place of meeting, *the air*, is mentioned only once in the scriptures. It is no doubt important to know *where* this meeting will be, but the essential point for the heart which is attached to Jesus is, to know *who* it is we meet. This divine order is precious for us to bear in mind, it was a special revelation made to the apostle, who, in speaking of it, expresses himself thus: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord."

Take any one of the numerous passages which speak of the glory of the second coming of Christ, and compare with it what is said here; the difference between His coming in the air *for* His own, and His coming *with* them is at once apparent. And be it noted that

this distinction between His coming in the air for His people (1 Thess. iv. 17) and His presence on the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4-5) is the key to many difficulties. This last event is bound up with the entire plan of prophecy; but the first is a personal matter between the Lord and His own, and entirely apart from the subjects of which prophecy treats. Our hope is independent of circumstances. There is not a single passage in the Old Testament which speaks of the coming of Christ *for* the saints; they are all in connection with His appearing *with* them in glory.

— *From the French.*

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## Pastoral Care.

**T**HE Chief Shepherd, after His resurrection, gave Peter a commission to feed His sheep—"shepherd my sheep," "feed my lambs," "feed my sheep" said He. It was three times repeated in order to show the importance of the ministry of a shepherd, which can only be exercised in love. He also put the question three times, "Lovest thou Me?"; love to Him and to the sheep whom He has purchased at the cost of His own blood.

Peter understood the importance of this command; his epistles bear the impress of it; he exhorts the elders to "feed the flock of God which is among you" and to watch over them. The enemy was there, prowling about around the sheep, seeking whom he might devour.

The apostle Paul exhorts the elders at Ephesus to watch over the flock; he said to them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with the blood of His own (Son)." He knew that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in not sparing the flock and that men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.

What God requires from the shepherds is illustrated in a striking manner in the reproaches which He addresses by the mouth of Ezekiel to those in Israel, "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought back again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezek. xxxiv. 2-4).

There were in Israel sheep that were weak and feeble, sick and wounded ones, some that were worn out; and there were negligent shepherds. Such was the state of the flock in Israel: Is it not also the case with the flock of God to-day?

Peter addresses his epistle to the scattered saints who had much to suffer for the Lord. They were persecuted and in danger of becoming weary; whilst in our case it is granted to us to be able to lead a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and honesty. The authorities protect us and allow us to meet together around the Lord and His word.

The world looks upon us with indifference as being one of the numerous sects of Christendom; there is neither violence nor hatred on their part as of old. But let us watch and be sober; our adversary the devil, in his ceaseless activity, uses new artifices and ones suitable to the circumstances in which we are, but he ever pursues his end which is always to get us away from the Lord. Now, he does this in a subtle manner, by apparent kindness, in order to draw us into the world—it may be the religious world—and to induce us to join in union with it.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the

flock," said the apostle Paul—*all* the flock—the feeble ones, the young, those who would have but little strength to resist, whether it be the temptations that the world offers or perverse doctrines—to take heed to the sick ones who have lost their strength by living in surroundings which are injurious to them; to the wounded, stricken in heart by trials and afflictions; to the scattered ones who are unable to assemble together and are perhaps being drawn towards the world; to those who are lost. Do not treat them with hardness and severity, but with the gentleness and love of Him who has given His life for them.

If the number of these wounded sheep is large, let us be humbled about it! Have they not lacked pastoral care, sympathy, exhortation, and encouragement? If we are not called to exercise the gift of pastoral grace, which is not given to everyone, we have all, nevertheless, a service of love to fulfil. Let us take the apostle Paul as our example and pray for all the assemblies with that solicitude which detained him at the throne of grace every day.

"Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day" (Heb. iii. 13); "Consider one another to provoke to love and to good works" (Heb. x. 24); "Wherefore encourage one another, and build up each one the other, even as also ye do" (1 Thess. v. 11).

A visit, a simple word from the scriptures, living and powerful as they are, may strengthen, help, establish and lead one of these sheep back into the good way, and so save it. Let us seize the opportunity and not let it pass: "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!" "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

And let us watch and pray, imitating the Lord whose love went out to all in seeking after the poor and the weak, with that grace which we too should employ seeing that we ourselves are the objects of it. M.K.

## The Church and the World.

THE above is the heading of an article on the proceedings of the Church Congress held at Southport in October, which appeared in the Press. From it we take the following sentence: "It would, perhaps, be permissible to say that the authority until recently claimed for the written word is now claimed in equal measure for the collective experience of religious persons."

Looking at the matter from the true Christian's standpoint, this is an avowal that the authority of God, as contained in the holy scriptures, is now replaced by the authority and the opinions of men. But we who put our entire faith and confidence in the Bible—and increasingly so as we discover its wonderful symmetry and suitability to every phase and circumstance of life—we who firmly believe it to be the inspired word of God, reverse this proposition and say, "Let *God* be true, but every man a liar."

Man, in his pride and self-sufficiency, misled and dazzled by the pretentious claims of science, grows more and more determined to disregard God's claims, His authority, and the authority of His word. We have no quarrel with science in its own place and sphere; but what has science to do with the moral state of a man's soul, with his responsibility to God, with the facts of Christianity and Christ as a Saviour, with the absolute necessity for the new birth before a man can see or enter the kingdom of God?

Are men any better or more God-fearing now that they have wireless telegraphs, broadcasting, moving pictures and many other modern discoveries of science? Not one bit better as to their moral state: rather worse. It would be as impossible to improve or change the condition of man as a sinner and fallen, by all the inventions of science put together, as it would be to

change the Ethiopian's skin or remove the leopard's spots.

Moreover, the great essential truths of Christianity stand, and will stand, after the dust of scientific men has been laid to rest beneath the earth from which it was taken. Well may we say with Bildad in Job viii., "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon the earth are a shadow"; or with the Psalmist, "Thou turnest man to destruction; Thou sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (Ps. xc. 2, 3).

There is nothing more distasteful to the great men of the world than the truth of the lost and ruined condition of fallen man; but there is nothing to which scripture bears more uniform testimony. Its consequences are manifest and are witnessed to every day in the shortness and uncertainty of life. Besides this, every man has, if he would only admit it, an inner consciousness that there is a God to whom he must one day render an account.

The Christian—we mean the true Christian who has bowed to the sentence of God's word and received Christ as his Saviour—is not walking in darkness, stumbling through the wastes of human unbelief and falling into the pitfalls set for him by the great enemy of souls; on the contrary, he walks in the light of God's revelation contained in His word, which carries, for his soul, its own conviction and peace-giving assurance.

There was a time when the light did not shine in at all the brilliancy it now does in Christianity. Before Christ came there was no *full* revelation of God; though there was sufficient to place man under responsibility; and it is true that men of faith, such as Enoch, Abraham and many others, enjoyed blessed communion with Him in their day.

But when Christ came the *full* light shone out, "the

life was the light of men"; but so great was the moral darkness that it was not dispelled by the light—an anomaly in nature—"the darkness comprehended it not." *Now* God has been manifested, He is no longer hidden behind a veil so to speak: the whole truth is out, both as to man's moral condition, and as to God's character as a God of infinite holiness as well as infinite love and grace. God has been fully manifested in Christ.

Let us note it well: human progress in science adds nothing to the great foundation truths of the gospel; nor does human deterioration detract from them. They rest on the solid basis of the Person of Christ; He who *was* "in the beginning"—God, and with God, yet a distinct Person of the holy Trinity (John i. 1, 2). All the vast creation we see, so exact in its detail and so vast in its extent, owes its origin to Him; it was created "by Him and for Him." Man, in His febrile activity, has laboured hard to sound its depths and measure its heights; only to discover that he knows very little indeed compared to what is to be known.

Again, if we consider the Person of Christ, from the moment of His manifestation in flesh, "that which was from the beginning"; here we come to that which is perfect, and that in which there is no development, no progress. How could there be any development in a divine person, in God manifested in flesh? or in the truth founded on Him and to which He bore witness? It is impossible.

But, although a Man, in all the truth and reality of manhood, no one could sound the unsounded depth of the Person of Christ; no one could fully know the Son, but the Father only (Matt. xi. 27). And yet there is in Christ and His accomplished work, that which fully meets the need of an awakened conscience, and of the heart too. He was a perfect witness for God here: all the moral qualities of God's nature in love, grace, holi-

ness, etc., were shown forth in Jesus as He passed through this world.

But, to return to the notes on this Congress; nothing strikes one more than the extent to which Modernism and unbelief have undermined the simple faith of those who once professed the truth; and how the desire to keep abreast of the times and to be up to date in the most sceptical notions of the day, has deprived these dignitaries, who undertake to guide others, of any spiritual insight into scripture truths.

Meantime, it is the duty and privilege of all true Christians to be true and loyal to their absent Lord. For this they must stand apart from this present evil world, they must look to Him for grace not to surrender one iota of the truth of God, they must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. This can only be done in an humble spirit of dependence on God and His word. May He enable His beloved people to stand, and withstand in an evil day, till He come!

F. G. B.

## “I Live; Yet Not I.”

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 19-21).

**I**N complete contrast with the ministry of the law, Paul describes to us his own ministry and the treasures which he found in it for himself. Two things distinguish the christian—(1) an entirely new life, and (2) the possession of the Holy Spirit (chap. iii.). Let us look a little into the first of these.

Remark that everything here is *personal*: it is not a question of abstract principles, but of things which have been lived out and realised by the apostle. “I through the law am dead to the law,” says he, “that I might live unto God.” Paul had to do with Christ



*after* His resurrection; he had learned there that the law condemned him absolutely. He, a righteous man according to the law, had rejected Christ come in grace. The law therefore condemned him to death. This sentence had been executed, but not on himself: if this were not so he would have been eternally lost. It had been executed upon another, on Christ. This was the secret of his deliverance.

Having exercised its office, which was to kill Paul, but in the person of another, it could do nothing more to him henceforth. A man who has been put to death has nothing more to do with the law which executed him. He is set free from *the law* by death. In the same way he is set free *from sin*, by death, since death is the absolute and definitive condemnation of it. In a word, it is by death that he is set free, as we find is the case later on as to *the flesh* (Gal. v. 24), and to *the world* (Gal. vi. 14).

An entirely new man has come into existence thereby. By the judgment that He has borne and undergone in my place, Christ has done with all these things, and He has done with them *for me*. Now He no longer lives in connection with these things, but has left them aside in death; I therefore have done with them also. He lives to God, but it is in order that I too may live to God (Rom. vi. 10, 11).

Thus a resurrection-life has begun for me. This life has God for its object—the question here is especially as to the law. The law has put Christ to death so to speak, for it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (chap. iii. 13). It is perfectly true that the law found nothing in Him to condemn—no cause whatever for a curse—it found nothing but absolute perfection; but there was the one simple fact, apart from any other cause, that the curse was pronounced by the Word on one who occupied this place on the accursed tree (Deut. xxi. 23).

Now it is there that He has taken our place in all its horror. All those things which gave occasion to the curse pronounced against us, have been borne by *Him* in grace when He made them His own. The law has not omitted anything; it has enumerated all of them. "I through the law am dead," but dead, "to *the law*." It could do nothing more to me, any more than it could do nothing more to Christ. "*Through* the law I am dead *to* the law"; I have therefore death behind me; but why? "that I might live unto God."

Blessed fact! He who took my place has died. Where is my place then? in His death. But Christ is no longer in death. Where is He? risen and in glory. He lives to God. It is the same with me, I live to God whilst waiting to occupy the same place as Christ—for I am still on earth—but dead as regards my old life, and living by a new life, by a resurrection-life. This life is in me: *Christ living in me*. Henceforth my life can never be separated from His.

This life is not to be apprehended by sight and sense, it is seen in *its effects*. It is an entirely new life; and it has an entirely new spring of action—it is *by faith*. It is a life of faith; linked up with the Son of God and no longer with the first Adam. It is a life of love—of no less a love than that which led Him to give Himself a sacrifice for me.

In dying *through* the law, I am dead *to* the law. In living *by faith* it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. No doubt I live in the flesh, and shall do so as long as I am in this world, for the flesh is not dead, but I can hold myself for dead to the flesh, as also I hold myself for dead to the law, for the flesh is no longer the motive spring of my life.

It is through love that I have learned to know the Son of God, who gave Himself for me. What else could have caused Him to do this but love? He died in my place: He is the Victim who bore on the cross

all my condition, all my misdeeds and their infinite consequences in the curse which was attached to them; yea all that is summed up in the word "He was made sin."

Truly, in speaking thus, Paul does not set aside the grace of God. Is it not that which has obtained righteousness for us? (Rom. iii. 22); if it were the law which had obtained it, Christ would have died in vain. The law could not obtain righteousness for us; but the one who, on the ground of *faith*, has received life, lives *to God*. He no longer lives for *self*, but "Christ liveth in me." He is in me the source of life, of communion, of divine joy, of holy affections, of life and strength. As to my conduct in the world, I live by the faith of the Son of God who *loved me* and *gave Himself* for me. What a motive and spring of life I find in Him!

H.R.

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## "Surely, I Come Quickly."

**T**HE soul that is formed on Christ's coming cannot be satisfied without Him. "Surely, I come quickly"—oh, it is the sweetness of that "I" presented there that so touches the heart! "I come," not "I stand at the door knocking," but the Lord speaks of His coming for His bride. Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only object before our hearts"?

We have here not alone, "I am the bright and morning star," but "I come," presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness of what He is. Have not some of us known Him for years, and have we not found the attractiveness of His beauty deepening in our souls? What is all we have learned of Him here when compared with the thought of beholding Himself, looking on His face, seeing the One who died for us, the One that loved and watched over us from

infancy—oh, with what tender gentleness watched over us!

“Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” An important thing comes out here; that not only should we have communion with His mind in all that meets us in the wilderness, but there is another sort of communion to be enjoyed—communion responsive to the desire of His heart, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” The effect of the bright light shining down has been, that we have found earth would not do for our future course, and we know, because we have it revealed, that He means to come and take us to heaven. This thought has given joy in persecution.

But what is the thought of being in heaven compared with the thought of His coming to take us there? At times our hearts are drooping, and we are “hardly bested”; but what is anything we have to pass through here, if one has the consciousness of being able to respond to Him, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”? Thou dost desire, Lord, to take up Thy people, and most blessed it will be to be up there; but ah! it is *Thyself my soul craves for*. Is the desire of the Lord Jesus to come, which is put forth here, burning in my heart? If I know He desires to come, am I able to say “Even so, come”? It is really having communion with that heart of His, whose every thought is the Father’s will, and who has been waiting eighteen hundred years and more to come, and take up the people given by the Father—He the Bridegroom, they the bride.

G. V. W.