

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Volume XVIII

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Grace and Truth.

IT may truly be said in the words of the hymn :—
“Grace is the sweetest sound
That ever reached our ears;
When conscience charged and justice frowned,
'Twas grace removed our fears.”

And again,

“Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone
And well deserves our praise.”

It is, as we have often heard, God's free unmerited favour: it is His love in its activity.

Let us begin the year, then, with this word ringing in our ears—Grace! We needed it as poor sinners perishing in our sins, we need it every step of our path from the moment God took us up till now, and we shall need it right on to the end.

And we need grace, not only for ourselves but in our dealings with others; for, since God has dealt with us in grace, that is the way we should deal with our fellow-believers. Grace is not indifference to what is evil, on the contrary, the grace of God is holy grace; He never acts contrary to His nature and He is holy, as He says, “Be ye holy for I am holy.”

Let us consider for a moment those two remarkable verses, John i. 16, 17.

**“And of His fulness have all we received
and grace heaped upon grace:
For the law was given by Moses, but grace and
truth subsists* through Jesus Christ.”** (new trans.)

Moses was a faithful servant in God's house and he gave the law, which was God's righteous and holy demand: the people, utterly ignorant of what their own

* They began to exist *de facto* down here. The verb is singular, and grace and truth go together in the person of Christ. (Note new trans.)

hearts were, put themselves under it, saying three times over, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and be obedient." Alas! they broke it almost before they got it; such is man!

What a contrast to law we have in "grace and truth"! And mark, it is not truth and grace, but grace and truth. The grace comes first, for we could not have borne the truth—about God, about ourselves—if the grace had not prepared the way for it.

But in Christ we have both grace and truth combined. Never was there a true representation of them in the world until Christ came; but they were brought into being, they subsist, through Him: He was the perfection of both. Every need by which Christ was surrounded was but an occasion for the outflow of grace to all.

In Him we see God come down to the sinner in grace to fully meet the need of the heart; and not only so, but the cleansed sinner stands accepted in the presence of God in Him. If we want to see a practical illustration of what grace is, we have but to read the story of the prodigal in Luke xv.; there God finds His own delight in lavishing His grace upon the unworthy. And truly in Christ we see "Grace heaped upon grace"—no stint, no short measure.

And what as to "truth"? Who ever maintained and expressed the truth as Christ did? He was *the* truth. Pilate could idly ask the question, "What is truth?" and then yield to the clamour of the Lord's enemies and hand over to them the only One who ever stood for the truth in this world.

Dear reader, we are now about to enter upon another year, should God spare us. The day of grace is running to a close: who knows how soon the Lord may come? But His grace is sufficient for us all the way right on to the end. And, is it not the case to-day

that "truth is fallen in the street"? Modernism and a multitude of other 'isms would rob us of it; but the sheep who keeps close to the Good Shepherd and is familiar with *His* voice is in safety.

"Be Ye Therefore Ready."

THERE was no little excitement one morning in the large Government Office in which our daily life was cast, when the intelligence was passed around that "Poor U—— is dead!" He had been seized with a fit when preparing for his bath into which he fell, and was drowned.

U—— was a splendid specimen of a man, and in the right groove for good worldly prospects. He was somewhat of an athlete also; and (as he told a mutual acquaintance) "by no means a Sabbatarian."

Only two or three days previously, in conjunction with a fellow-believer (an official colleague), we had sent some gospel tracts throughout the building. To U——, we had sent one written by a Christian physician, entitled "The Two Alexanders." But, whether or not he had heeded the warning contained in it before the death-summons came to him we could never ascertain.

So great was the gloom cast over all by this sad event, that we felt compelled to write, print, and circulate, throughout the office, from the highest to lowest, a personal appeal, urging once more attention to the claims of the gospel of the grace of God.

People talk, and think, of a death-bed repentance, although no such promise has ever been given. And they live on from day to day, as if there were no eternity to enter, and no God to meet; or, at least, as if there were quite time enough yet to attend to eternal things. The whirl of the ballroom, the excitement of

the race-course, the company and jests of godless companions, the pursuit of pleasure in its thousand and one forms; or, it may be, the graver concerns of business cares, are all allowed to encourage the thought of "time enough yet"!

Meanwhile, the word of God is ever solemnly asking, by deaths, by wars, and by accidents of the most appalling kind,—"*What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" (Mark viii. 36). The "whole world," with all its gaieties, all its wealth, all its speculations, all its sorrows, all its religions, all its graveyards, all its mockery of sin, and questionings of God's truth—the possession, if it were possible of all these combined; and then, the icy hand of that grim guest that spoils everything here,—DEATH, "The King of Terrors," which will deliver you into the hands of JUDGMENT; and, which latter, in turn, will award what scripture speaks of as "Everlasting punishment."

Pray, *do not be deceived!* but, while the day of God's boundless grace is still lengthening out, receive as your own, the "faithful saying," which is, indeed, "worthy of all (of *your*) acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners*" (1 Tim. i. 15); and thus believe on Him (Christ Jesus), by whom, "ALL that believe ARE (now, this moment) justified from ALL things" (Acts xiii. 38-39).

N. L. N.

Given Glory.—Everything that Christ has, except and only His essential Godhead, is His people's—all the glory and blessedness is theirs. And very blessedly does the Holy Ghost enable those whom He teaches to have, in present apprehension, that *that* glory is there for them.

“Christ is All.”

(Col. iii. 11.)

MORE and more I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. He is not *the* object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party, or our experience—something besides Christ. We seem possessed with very much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount, when he said: “Let us make here *three* tabernacles.” The Father solemnly rebukes this. “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a *voice* out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save *Jesus only*” (Matt. xvii. 1-8).

Have you ever been in the “cloud,” dear brother? Have you ever heard the “voice”? Have you been on your “face”? Have you felt the “touch”? Then, have you heard another voice, “Arise”? Do your eyes see “no man, save *Jesus only*”? Many, perhaps, have reached the top of the mount; but few, very few, have been in the “cloud,” have heard the “voice,” have been on their “faces,” have risen to see “Jesus only.”

“*Christ is all*” (Col. iii. 11). Do we make Him this? Is it a question of my salvation? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts xvi. 31). Is it a question of relationship with God? “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26). Is it a question of experience? “For to me to live is *Christ*” (Phil. i. 21). Is it a question of service? “I can do all things *through Christ* which strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 13). Is it a question of my path? “*I am the way*” (John xiv. 6). Is it a question of

heaven or the place to which my path leads? He would define it as "where *I* am" (John xiv. 3).

Oh, let us know more of that rich blessedness which comes of making "*Christ all*," of seeing "*Jesus only*"! Our cry should be, "Oh, to know Him!" (Phil. iii. 10). In our selfishness we cry and beg for blessings. It is the Blesser we need HIMSELF; He is the joy of the Father's heart. Let us taste with Him the delight He takes in His Son. Christ is infinitely higher than doctrine or experience. Experience we shall have if we have Him; but only with *Him* can our hearts be ravished and raptured.

Why is it we are not changed more from "glory to glory"? The veil *has* been rent; the blood *has* been sprinkled; the Spirit *has* been given. The reason is we are occupied with ourselves and the work of the Spirit *in us* rather than with Christ *alone*. This is the weakness in the widespread holiness movement, so much of which is superficial. Let us look more in that unveiled face, from which streams the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (2 Cor. iii. and iv.). All else will pale and fade if we will but linger there.

Let me say here, the Spirit never occupies me with His work *in* me; and if I am thus occupied, I am experimentally out of the line in which the Spirit would lead. The word is, "He shall not speak from Himself. He shall glorify ME" (John xvi. 5-15). To go further, the work of Christ, wonderfully blessed as it is, can never of itself be the object of my *heart*. It gives my *conscience* peace, sweet peace; but only His PERSON can satisfy my heart. And oh, how His Person does! Ten thousand hallelujahs to Him!

The Father directs our attention to Him (Matt. xvii. 5). The Holy Ghost would occupy us with Him (Acts vii. 55, 56). The word of God testifies of Him (John v. 39). He is the object of faith; He is the object of love; He is the object of hope; and the faith, or love, or hope

that does not make Him *the* object is spurious and unreal. He is *all* for my path; He is *all* for my service; He is *all* for my worship; blessed, blessed, be His Name! He is not on the cross; He is not in the grave; He is on the throne. Wondrous fact, a *Man* in the glory of God, and that One my Saviour, my Priest, my Advocate; the One who died for me; the One who lives for me; the One who is coming for me; the Bridegroom of His Church.

It is not surprising that Peter should say, "Unto you therefore which believe *He is precious.*" The ungodly world, as well as the religious *world*, are equally bent upon shutting Him out. The former is "reserved unto fire," the latter He will spue out of His mouth (2 Peter iii.; Rev. iii.). Therefore keep clear from them both; if not clear, let us "go forth *unto Him* without the camp" (Heb. xiii. 13). He is enough, and it pleases His heart for us to make *everything* of Him.

May it be with us Christ, *Christ*, CHRIST. You cannot get a better portion or place than He gives. Your portion *here* will be "food and raiment," your place "*outside.*" Your portion *there* is "all spiritual blessings," your place "*in Him.*"

And now, dear brother, let every affection, every desire, every thought, and every aim be gathered to and centred in Him.

F. C. B.



Eternal Life.—"He that hath the Son *hath* life"; he has it *now*: there is no such thing as *shall*, as regards our possession of it. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life"; and is not the believer called upon, by these wonderful mercies, by this stupendous grace, to exhibit his possession of eternal life? He is.

Our Heavenly Blessings.

(Ephesians i.)

WE meet many christians, drawn away by the world, who are preoccupied with the evil that surrounds them, but who seldom think of judging it in themselves. They are constantly complaining about others. This is clearly a sign of a bad state of soul and an evident proof that the world has taken possession of their hearts. The Lord Jesus has become less the object of their hearts and they are too much occupied with the evil instead of with the good. Even pious souls are in danger of getting into this state.

The evil is very real, it is not the product of their imagination, for the whole world lies in the wicked one; but it is dangerous for these souls to be occupied with it. They do not understand that there is a way of escape from this evil, and they allow themselves to be brought under its power. Such was the case with righteous Lot who only had before him the sin of Sodom. Let us watch so as not to be overcome by preoccupation with evil, for we can escape from it by occupation with good.

This is the subject of our chapter. Souls who individually are occupied with the Lord Jesus in heaven and with all that He is made to them, rest on a solid foundation and are enabled to walk in a way which glorifies God. When the Holy Spirit occupies us, not with things that are passing on the earth, but with what is truly good, with a heavenly Christ and with the grace of God, we find in this knowledge the strength to bear testimony to Him.

We should carefully remark that this chapter speaks to us of our individual blessings. They do not exclude the collective blessings of the church (a most blessed subject in its place); but individual blessings have always more value for the heart than collective ones.

Take the Lord's supper for example. We have there a memorial of Christ and His sufferings. We partake of it in remembrance of Him. In breaking the bread and drinking the cup the soul of each believer, individually, enjoys the precious and infinite blessing which we find in remembering all the love of Christ.

There is another aspect of the supper which I will call its collective aspect: it is the public expression of the unity of the body of Christ; but this character, important as it is, has not, for the heart, the immense value of the remembrance of the Lord's death. I might be very much preoccupied with the Lord's table but perhaps never have, except in a very small measure, the feelings suitable to a Christ who died for me. God always begins in His word by presenting *individual* blessings to us.

In the epistle which is now before us, for example, it is not until we reach the end of the first chapter that we find what is collective. It tells us of the grace of God which has given us a place before Him in heaven. Heavenly and individual blessings are presented under three heads and their source is always *the will of God* (vv. 5, 9, 11). There is nothing here which comes from us, and we are responsible to walk in accordance with these blessings which we possess and which the will of God has given us.

We find here, then, three things which characterise the christian. The first is that, by His will, God in His grace sees us before Him in Christ. Our position is assured, it is not a future thing. I possess now, in Christ before God, a standing as perfect as that of Christ Himself. Such is my present position; it lacks nothing.

In the second place it speaks of the hope of His calling. When I consider my walk here below, I cannot say that I am holy and blameless before Him

in love, but nevertheless, individually, I am a child of God by adoption. God has communicated to me of His life and I can say, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon me that I should be called a child of God."

There is a third point which is of all importance. Not only does God give me a perfect standing and bring me into a perfect relationship, but He makes me His friend. He says: Shall I hide anything from my children who are mine by adoption? No! I will open to them all the secrets of my heart (ver. 9, 10). God also gives me the spirit of wisdom in order that I may understand His mysteries. He is going to put all things under Christ's feet, all things will belong to Him. He will be the centre of the universe. This is the secret of His heart, it is what He has in view for this Man, His beloved Son, who has been in the lowest place and who went to the cross. God has counselled to subject all things under His feet.

How many christians do not possess these secrets which He has communicated to us! They take their place before God as though they have not any right to this intimacy with Him, indeed they scarcely dare to call Him Father. What a loss is theirs!

But there is still a further blessing—I have been made a joint-heir with Christ. This title of heir I possess already, although I have not yet entered into the inheritance; it is a future blessing and one into which we shall enter when the Lord Jesus, as Man, shall have this inheritance in His own hands. We already have the earnest of it: the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What more do we need? only one thing and that is to be *with* Christ. In considering this, should we not be happy, in spite of all that is so calculated to depress and cast us down, in the world that surrounds us?

Therefore, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. iii.); and this brings us back to the first verse of this chapter, where Christ is viewed as seated at the right hand of God.

May God direct us into a *heavenly* christianity, that we may be a heavenly people! To become so practically, it suffices that we should be occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus. In fact, it is impossible that our souls should be in a bad state if our eyes are fixed on His blessed Person. But in order to enjoy collective blessings our hearts must be fixed individually on the blessings that we already possess in Christ. H.R.

God for Us.

(Romans viii. 31-39—A Dialogue.)

- B. How are the above verses connected with the previous part of the chapter?
- A. Here we have the climax of those wonderful privileges which God has bestowed upon His people. The apostle had just spoken of the chain of blessings which are ours through Christ — foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified. And he speaks as though they were all known *now*, though of course we are not yet "glorified"; but he takes in what is true in the counsels of God, and he does not break off any link from the chain.
- B. What is the reason for bringing forward the four or five challenges or questions that follow?
- A. It is in order to bring out very plainly the result of the great fact that GOD is for us. And here the Holy Spirit reasons from what *God is* and what He has done, to the blessings that He has made ours. Every creature no matter what it may be, every power in the universe, is subordinate to Him.

- B. Can you then give a brief outline of the results of God being for us; I know well that the natural thought of man's heart is that God is against him?
- A. Yes, we once thought so, but the christian has learned differently. It was one of the things instilled into man's mind at the Fall that God was against him. The apostle begins with the maximum, the greatest proof of all that God was for us; He did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all.
- B. Is it not sometimes the case that we are so accustomed to hearing these truths that we do not take in the magnitude of His grace as we might?
- A. Surely. Here was the One of whom the Father could say, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Though this was said of Him as Man on earth, yet it was always true, according to Wisdom's words, "I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. viii. 30). And this is the very One whom God did not spare!
- B. May we bring in here, as a figure, Abraham offering up his beloved son, Isaac.
- A. Yes, certainly; but we have to remember that all figures fall short of the divine reality. It is worthy of notice, in considering the words used by the angel to Abraham, "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son"—repeated twice in Gen. xxii. (ver. 12, 16); the word "withheld" in our A.V. is the same word which is used in the LXX., or Greek translation of the Old Testament, for "spared." God did not "spare" His own Son but delivered Him up for us all; and, this being the case, shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? What a measure and expression of His love!

- B. Referring to ver. 33 of our chapter, is it not the case that in the A.V. it would have been better if the link between the end of that verse and the beginning of ver. 34 had been kept before the reader?
- A. That is so, it runs thus, "Who shall bring an accusation against God's elect? It is God that justifieth." If anyone dare to bring an accusation against *God's* elect, they must settle that question with *God*. If He has elected certain persons, who dare lay a charge against them?

We are reminded of Zech. iii, where Joshua the high priest is seen standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. Joshua had no righteousness of his own, and "filthy garments" would not suit the holy presence of God. But God acts in His own sovereignty and orders these garments to be taken away and Joshua to be clothed in a change of raiment: He had the right to pluck a brand from the fire if He so wished, and he had "chosen" Jerusalem and Joshua according to His own will.

- B. It seems to throw new light on the subject when it is looked at from *God's* point of view.
- A. The great point here is that *God Himself* justifies. We find in chapter iii. the ground on which He can justify the ungodly, namely, by His grace, through faith, in virtue of the propitiatory work of the cross; not because of anything in us whatever. But what we have before us in chapter viii. is that *God* justifies.

We should also notice that the question here stated is a quotation from Isaiah l. 8, which applies to Christ. The transitions in that chapter in the prophet, from His place of glory as the One who could command all creation, to His place of humiliation, are an instance of the blending together of

those truths, as we so often find in the word of God.

He can speak of His being over all creation (vv. 2, 3), yet Jehovah had given Him the tongue of the instructed, so that He might know how to speak a word in season to the weary one. Thus He took the place of humiliation and subjection.

But the One who justified Him was near, who could contend with Him? Since God helped Him, who could condemn? Comparing, then, this quotation in Romans with what is said in the prophet, we learn that what is true of Christ is true of us, through grace.

- B. Our next challenge is, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again," etc.
- A. So Christ's death, resurrection, session at the right hand of God and His intercession for us is the full answer to all question of condemnation. It is not His death only, but all the others are the complete evidence of the glorious results of His work, for God's eternal glory and our blessing.
- B. And what as to the future — this is what often troubles people much?
- A. The future is divinely provided for; there is no separation. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Eight things are named which might be supposed to separate, but they cannot. In the last verse of our chapter there are ten things mentioned which cannot separate from the love of *God*, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The things which cannot separate from the love of *Christ* are more in connection with our path through this world and the trials which have to be met with in that path. The encouraging word given us here is that we are *more than* conquerors through

Him that loved us. It is not only victory but complete victory through Christ who has Himself gone down lower than all our sufferings.

And then the love of *God* in Christ is the love of One who is divine, supreme and unchangeable; and the strength and fulness of that love has been already shown in the gift of His Son.

- B. Will you briefly sum up the results of the fact that *God is for us*?
- A. (i) He has given His own Son. (ii) He has Himself justified us. (iii) The love of Christ was so strong that nothing can or could stop it, not even death itself. So we can go on and triumph in *God's* love, knowing that we are more than conquerors through what **He is and what He has done**. And let us add that all is due to sovereign and infinite grace.

Idols.

HAS it sometimes seemed strange to us to read in the closing words of that very deep and spiritual epistle, the first epistle of John, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"?

If we speak of idols, our minds naturally turn to objects of wood, stone or other material which the heathen worship. We see these in quantities in our museums, and we have felt it a somewhat sad, depressing thing to find that so many of our fellow-creatures are, or have been, ensnared by the worship of these things. It may be that we look upon these people with pity, and on the objects they worship with contempt, and no wonder!

But scripture shows us that idolatry has had a very large and awful place in the world's history. We read of it first after the flood, in the family of Terah the father of Abraham, "Terah the father of Abraham,

and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods" (Jos. xxiv. 2). After this God acted in a way up till then altogether unknown, in calling out one man, Abraham, to leave his country, kindred and father's house and walk in the path of faith and separation from the world, in dependence upon Him (Gen. xii. 1).

Going on to a later date in history we read, "Are there any among the vanities of the nations that can cause rain?" This is the lament of the prophet Jeremiah at a time when God's hand was laid upon his own nation because of their evil ways; and then, in contrast with the futility of idols he says, "Art not thou He, Jehovah, our God?" etc. Isaiah had to sorrow over the fact that, "the land is full of idols"; in fact idolatry was the great sin of Israel from the time when they set up the golden calf and, "changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass."

The setting up of this idol was, in principle, just what Christendom is doing to-day—trying to place the worship of false gods alongside the worship of Jehovah. They worship the wafer-god of Rome; the false gods of Ritualistic ceremonies, of lights, vestments, incense and a variety of other follies.

"To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah" was the proclamation that Aaron made, and they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." As Stephen says in his address, "They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven," etc. (Acts vii. 41, 42).

What was the cause of all this unfaithfulness? It was unbelief—the *heart* was not right; "in their *hearts* they turned back into Egypt." And just so it is now; the failure and wrong-doings begins *inside*, in the state of the *heart*, before it shows itself outside.

So we read in Psalm lxxviii, "They did flatter Him (*i.e.*, Jehovah) with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues. For their *heart* was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant." These are surely plain and solemn words. And of what use is all the paraphernalia of lip worship if the heart is not right with God? On the other hand the most simple utterance from a heart that loves Christ and is true and loyal to Him, is fragrant and well pleasing before God.

It is very awful to think how completely man fell under the power of Satan who contrived to make himself an object of worship under the form of idols (Deut. xxxii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. x. 20). Behind the idol, so to speak, there was the demon, "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not unto God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons" (1 Cor. x. 20).

In contrast with the table of demons, where the heathen feasts were carried on, was the Lord's table, where He was owned and worshipped. The Corinthians, or most of them, had once been idolaters, and the apostle warns them to have no communion whatever with idol worship or worshippers, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons."

This shows us also that we are responsible for that with which we have communion and are identified—a very important principle indeed. And there is no doubt that in the mixed state of things in the professing church as it is now, we need this exhortation as much, perhaps more, than ever.

It is a very remarkable fact in the history of Israel, that at the time of the Babylonish captivity, they were, for the time being at any rate, cured of the sin of idolatry. The evil spirit had gone out, leaving the house empty, swept and garnished. But, alas! a dead form-

ality had taken its place, and this was the state of things when the Lord appeared, about 600 years afterwards.

In the end, this evil spirit will return, with seven spirits more wicked still, and the last state will be worse than the first. This will be actually fulfilled in the days of the Antichrist, who will come in his own name, and will set himself up as the exclusive object of worship (Matt. xii. 43, 45; John v. 43; 2 Thess. ii. 4).

And, dear reader, do you think that *we*, of the twentieth century, have no need of these warnings? Indeed we have. Why should an epistle which contains such a blessed unfolding of the truth concerning the Person of Christ, eternal life, and other blessings, end with the words, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols"? The writer had just spoken of the true One, God's Son, Jesus Christ, in whom we are, and he ends with the exhortation, "Keep yourselves from idols."

All that is outside of Christ and what belongs to Him, is an idol. Do we not see idols every day? There is the idol of self, of money which attracts thousands, the idol of fame, of position in society, of pleasure, and many others.

There are little idols as well as great ones; and perhaps the little ones are what most of us have specially to guard against — those little prepossessions and objects which steal into the heart and displace Christ as our object. "Seek those things which are above have your mind on things above." How true it is, as the hymn says,

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me,
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee."

F. G. B.

Chosen and Accepted in Christ.

ARE your souls, I would ask, familiar with that grace of the Father in having chosen and accepted you in the Son of His love before the foundation of the world? Do you find in it the power that separates you from the world? I believe we are now in a very peculiar stage of its history, the powers of darkness letting loose a vortex of evil of every kind, and many a child of God will be caught in it, if not walking with God. Some, like Lot, may have to be dragged up out of Sodom.

Not that God will not keep His people, in one sense; but it is, not only that, He also wants them to have the experience of what His love is, in such largeness that it will keep their hearts fresh with heavenly streams, fresh in blessed and divine thoughts. They who know all the Father's divine love, have a fountain overflowing from heaven. Are you drinking of it?

Did it not all begin with Him? You know it did, in that He chose you in the Son of His love before the foundation of the world; and what joy it is to know that He wants to have you in the heavenly city: His love not satisfied save by your being associated with His Son in glory.

Oh, if you know what a portion is yours as one who is to be associated in heavenly glory with Christ, walk in the power of it and of the Father's delight in Him. He wants you to remember as you walk that He took you up before the foundation of the world, and He will not be satisfied, in the largeness of His love towards you, till you are in the divine glory with His Son. Oh! the freshness of joy your heart will have as the result of communion with Him in heaven!

G. V. W.

Service.—It is of *all importance* that our inner life should be kept up to the height of our outward activity; else we are near some spiritual fault.

For the New Year.

O GOD of grace, my Father,
I want Thee ever near,
To watch and guide and help me
Throughout the coming year.

Jesus, my Lord, my Saviour;
My Shepherd, Friend, and Guide!
O lead and guard and keep me,
Close to Thy trusted side.

I know not what's before me
As time rolls on apace;
But love like Thine's unchanging,
Till finished is my race.

Then fix my gaze, Lord Jesus,
By faith, upon Thy face,
And fill my soul with praises
For all Thy boundless grace.

New Birth and Faith.—It is quite clear that there must be faith in the word in order to be born again. That we are begotten, and born, by the word is plainly stated in scripture; and the word is received by faith. A word not believed has no effect at all.

Deity of Christ. — The more intimately we know scripture, the more simple and distinct is the truth that, though Son of man, Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Near Christ.—Being near Jesus for His own sake is the way of having His mind when anxious thoughts arise.

A Motto For This Month.

“I COUNT ALL THINGS BUT LOSS for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord (Phil. iii. 8).

“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 14).

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

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

Displaying the Banner.

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth” (Psalm lx. 4).

IN the epistle of James we read, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” and in the verse quoted above from Psalm lx. we have one of those gifts given to His saints. It is given to those who, through infinite grace, have been brought to know God as Father, and who desire to walk in conformity with His mind and will as expressed in His precious word.

Now a banner is a very different thing from a flag ; a person carrying a flag may usually manage it without difficulty, but a banner requires more skill and help.

Sometimes four persons are required to carry it, so that it may be displayed to the best advantage, and if it encounters adverse winds, those entrusted with its care must exercise wisdom and caution; they must walk together in harmony so that it may be easily seen by passers by.

The Lord has given a banner to His people to be displayed, and that banner is *love*. "He brought me into His banqueting house, and His banner over me was love" (Canticles ii. 4). Love to His dear saints who feel the burden and pressure of the present moment in the wilderness journey, and to lost and perishing souls around us.

How long and how earnestly have we gazed upon that wonderful sight, "The banner of His love"? The length of time and the earnestness of our gaze will certainly leave an impress upon our lives which will be displayed in both directions—to the children of God on the one hand, and to the lost and perishing on the other.

But perhaps our vision has become a little obscured and our interest in divine things is not so keen as formerly. It may be that our "first love" has waned, its bloom has faded, the seared and yellow leaf, caused by care and anxiety which have crept in and left their mark upon our spiritual vision, is manifest. But, thank God, the banner is just the same, the inscription upon it has not altered, there is no change in its dimensions, no alteration in its beauty; and if we do not feel its glow as formerly, we are in no way separated from the *source* from which that glow came—God's love to us in Christ (Rom. viii. 35, 39).

Now this banner is given for a definite object—that it may be displayed. Not shown merely (although it would involve that) but for display. To show an object would imply that the observer would give but a casual look at it, but to display it would bring it into greater

prominence before all. It would be seen in all its beauty and entirety, and would be brought before the full gaze of everyone.

Now there is One who has perfectly displayed this wonderful banner of God's love, and that One is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One who showed forth to perfection that wonderful banner mentioned in the Psalm, and none other has ever displayed it in all its perfection, loveliness, worth, beauty, and holiness as He has.

The climax of that full display, when it shone out in all its fulness, was at the cross; eternity will be required to unfold the blessed fruits of that display which has brought such glory to God and such infinite blessing to man.

And blessed results of that display are seen in the joy and peace which have been brought to countless myriads in glory; it will bring joy and blessing, too, in a day yet to come, to this sin-stained earth. What a "banqueting house" it is to be brought into, and what a banner to be brought under!

Now having seen the object of the display of this banner, we come to speak of the reason why it should be displayed: the Spirit of God gives us the answer—"Because of the truth." People say, "Why do you make such an ado about the Bible, it is not fashionable to talk about it except on Sunday, and even then only a little, because it is out of date, and there are so many inaccuracies in it that it cannot be relied upon."

Vain delusion! On the contrary, I read in this Psalm that it is displayed, "Because of the *truth*." This is a weighty reason for its display: the truth forms an integral part of the banner. The truth and the display go together, if you injure one, you attack the other, and in attacking the truth you injure both—the banner and the truth stand or fall together.

To-day, the banner in this favoured land of ours is being accommodated to the opinions and thoughts of men, a piece is cut off here and an inscription, which cannot be made good again, is erased there, another being substituted which harmonises with current opinion, or to suit men's changing ideas.

In fact, the chief aim of many exponents from the pulpit now is, so to disfigure the banner and obscure the writing thereon, that we only have a skeleton left after their work has been done. But, thank God, the simple believer has something far more solid under his feet than the shifting sand of human opinion. He has a "Thus saith the Lord" and an "It is written"; the former in the Old Testament and the latter in the New.

What a solid foundation for the child of God to rest upon! May we, who are still left here to display this wonderful banner, endeavour fearlessly to display it to all around until the moment when we shall see His face in glory! Until then we would sing:

"Lead on Almighty Lord,
Lead on to victory:
Encouraged by Thy blessèd word,
With joy we follow Thee.

We follow Thee, our Guide,
Who didst salvation bring:
We follow Thee, through grace supplied
From heaven's eternal spring;

Till of the prize possessed
We hear of war no more,
And oh, sweet thought, for ever rest
On yonder peaceful shore."

J. W. E. C.

The Anointing Oil.

Exodus xxx. 22-33.

WE find in these few verses the instructions for the composition of the holy anointing oil, with which the utensils of the holy place, and the priest himself, were anointed. No other person than the priest was permitted to make an oil like it, neither was it to be poured upon man's flesh; it belonged to the Lord, to the high priest, and to his sons.

Let us consider a little what these things signify. As always, in the Old Testament, they are presented to us as symbols, and they all refer, without exception we might say, to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

He has been anointed with this holy anointing oil and **He alone could be so as perfect man. At His baptism** by John the Baptist, He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and this was the case with Him only. This anointing was, in the sight of God, a precious anointing, a holy anointing oil, the sweet savour of which went up before Him.

The holy anointing oil which was to be poured upon Aaron's head, as we read in Psalm cxxxiii., was composed of sweet-smelling spices; they were perfumes of sweet odour before God by the fact that there was here below, in this world, a man who Himself drew out the affections of God's heart and the admiration of all heaven.

It was not only the high priest who was anointed in virtue of his personal dignity, but all the objects in the tabernacle were also anointed with the same oil. And why? Because every object in the tabernacle represented Christ; whether it was the covering of the tent, the ark and the mercy-seat, the golden altar, the candlestick, the table of show-bread, the vail, the brazen altar,—all these things without exception, and

even in their details, speak to us of Christ; all were sanctified to God.

But we find another thing, viz., that this holy anointing oil was poured out, not only upon the high priest (Levit. viii. 12), but also it was sprinkled upon the whole priestly family (Levit. viii. 30) and their garments. Thus we learn that there was a great difference between the anointing of the high priest and that of the sons of Aaron. These latter could not have it put upon them without blood being first shed; *i.e.*, in virtue of a work accomplished in their favour.

The anointing of the high priest was a thing apart, he needed not blood for himself because he was a figure of Christ. If we are to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, it is in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. We share the blessings which belong to Him: they are like this oil poured out on Aaron's head, that ran down to the skirts of his garments and filled the house of the Lord with its perfume. We are made kings and priests and made accepted in the Beloved.

This sweet odour, which went up before the Lord, is the same as has been applied to ourselves and which causes us to be perfectly well pleasing to God. Is it not precious to our hearts to think that we are anointed in the same manner as Christ? And when God smells this odour of a sweet savour which rises up before Him, it is, to Him, as that which arises from the head of our High Priest. Thus it is as to all that concerns our position; we are accepted before God in virtue of the work of Christ for us, and it is given to us to be always associated with Him in the presence of God.

H.R.

“Hold Fast Till I Come.”

“I lay upon you no other burden ; but what ye have,
hold fast till I come” (Rev. ii 24, 25).

NO christian with an exercised heart and conscience can regard the state of things in the church of God at the present day with anything but the greatest anxiety. Marks of decadence abound everywhere ; and amongst the assemblies of christians who have separated themselves from the various systems, to follow a path of worship and service more in accordance with scripture, what need there is for self-judgment and deep exercise lest the same signs of defection spread amongst them also.

Churches (to use the word in its general appellation) that once stood firmly for orthodoxy in doctrine, now openly accept, without apology, a position of neutrality — if not open consent — to the denial of the divine inspiration of the scriptures, and treat with indifference the claims of the truth of God as formerly understood and accepted.

The new Primate of the Church of England pleads for peace within its borders on the broad ground that there is room in the National Church for all three of the great parties now in open hostility—the Catholic, the Evangelical and the Liberal — without even an attempt to prove any correspondence between a Church so constituted, and the Church of God as found in the scriptures.

The word of God is no longer the final court of appeal. Recently a more advanced Modernist has gone so far as to say that, “belief in Hell has evaporated,” and that the time has long passed when “Hysterics was the hall-mark of religion, so that a *revival*, in the way that it was understood in old days of 50 or 100 years ago, is no longer likely or even possible.”

But we may well turn from these terrible examples of declension, to look to ourselves who still cling, through

grace, with undiminished faith, to the word of God and the presence on earth of the Spirit of God; and to consider afresh some of the words so expressly called in Revelation ii. and iii., "What the Spirit says to the churches."

The words at the head of this paper are what the Lord said to the church at Thyatira, notwithstanding its sad state; in which all the elements of Popery in their incipient form can be traced. To Philadelphia, where He finds so much that He can commend, He says, "I come quickly, hold fast what thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11, new trans.). But in Laodicea, there is, apparently, little or nothing left to hold fast; yet the Lord graciously appeals to "anyone" who hears His voice; and encourages the overcomer with offers of present communion and future glory.

To judge rightly of the present state of the professing church, we need to look at the first steps of decline as seen by the Lord in the church of Ephesus (Rev. ii.). He calls upon them to "Repent and do the first works." What are these works that have been so soon given up that the Lord threatens the removal of their candlestick? What has dimmed the light so seriously and so quickly?—we can learn this, in part at least, from His word, "I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." What the apostle commends in the young Thessalonian church gives us a sure key to this when he speaks of, "your work of *faith*, and labour of *love*, and patience of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. i. 3).

If such declension took place so early in the history of the church, what can we expect to-day after so long a lapse of time? And we do well to remember what the word itself has told us, so that we need not be surprised at the development of evil within the church, and in the world also.

But another reason prompts us to call attention to these things at the present time, that is the danger to assemblies of believers that have separated themselves from the general mass of christian profession, and in obedience to the instructions given in 2 Timothy ii. 21, desire to "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart."

Even suppose we have sought to do this, we cannot but be affected by the condition of the whole church, for we are members one of another, and of the same body with all members of Christ wherever they may be. Does it not become us, then, to consider, in all self-distrust and humility, what the "first works" are, and to take heed more and more to the exhortation to hold fast what we have? They are works done in the energy and freshness of "first love."

Thank God no defection of the church can alter the truth of God, and no circumstances can turn away the Lord's love from that church for which He "gave Himself." But signs of decline are not wanting, and how often do we hear the present spiritual condition of such companies of gathered saints compared with those that were before us in the path of separation from evil!

The partial recovery which the Lord speaks of in the church at Philadelphia points the way—it recalls the saints to the word of the Lord, and what is due to His name, who is the holy and the true One.

Without doubt the state of decline and lack of blessing are felt by many, but we need to be on our guard as to the remedies we adopt. In many quarters there prevails an almost pathetic belief in organisation and human arrangements, to compensate for the lack of spiritual power in ministry; and the cultivation of the social element of our nature to supply the lack of the true bonds of fellowship.

But all this is a long way from the "first works" of the Ephesian church, and a poor substitute for

spiritual unction, and the love of the Spirit. Yet one need not displace the other, for we are to "Let brotherly love continue," and to "Add to brotherly love, *Love.*"

How often have we heard the feeble state of an assembly apologised for by saying that there is much earnestness and interest in the gospel! Such interest is very good and we should be thankful for it wherever found; but to make it an evidence of a good spiritual state, instead of separation from the world, true worship, and devotedness to Christ, is certainly a mistake.

Thank God there is no lack on His part, "He giveth more grace." The greatest of the apostles, who said, "I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you," was the foremost in evangelistic work, with a heart that reached out to "the regions beyond."

May we, through grace supplied, take heed to the word given us through the same apostle, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." T.R.

Light, Life and Love.

Being brief Notes on John's 1st Epistle.

JOHNS epistles may be said to be replete with the setting forth of the graces and truths stated above: Light, Life, and Love. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who lay on His breast at supper, and being so near to Him, was just in the place to ask the momentous question, "Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?" (John xxi. 20).

Who amongst all the disciples was so full of grace and love as John? True, they were all slow to take in the full glory of the Lord's Person until the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost came upon them at Pentecost; yet we might perhaps say that Mary of Bethany—

full of love and affection as she was—John, and one or two others, entered more deeply into the spirit of the Saviour than most. Also, who was more full of burning zeal against anything that would detract from His glory or lower the truth of His Person than John?

No doubt John outlived most of the other disciples by perhaps 15 or 20 years; in God's mercy he was left to watch over the churches in those dark days which came very shortly after the departure of the other apostles from the scene. "If I will that he tarry till I come," said the Lord to Peter concerning John (John xxi. 22). The saying went abroad amongst the disciples that John should not die, yet Jesus did not say this, and they went too far in drawing the inference they did.

But, as someone has said, the words refer, though in a somewhat hidden way, to John's ministry especially, which goes on to the end of the dispensation, whatever else may pass away.

The great subject of John's epistle, then, is the Person of Christ, and life, eternal life, in Him; and as to the latter, what is true in Him is true in us also. These are precious and wonderful truths, which no lapse of time, no change of dispensation, no ruin of the church as a testimony for God on the earth, can possibly set aside or affect! Here we may profitably call attention to a quotation from the *Synopsis* of J.N.D.

"The epistle of John has a peculiar character. It is eternal life manifested in Jesus, and imparted to us—the life which was with the Father, and which is in the Son. It is in this life that believers enjoy the communion of the Father, that they are in relationship with the Father by the Spirit of adoption, and that they have fellowship with the Father and the Son. God's own character is that which tests it; because it proceeds from Himself."

If we have in the gospel of John the glory of Christ's Person as God; the Life, the Light, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father—the only One who could breathe the atmosphere of that bosom, so to speak, and who could open out its secrets to us; we have in the epistle the same Christ as the Word of Life, the very eternal life which was with the Father before He came into the world.

The very outset of the epistle gives us to see how close He came to us, although so unique and glorious in His own Person. He was here, seen with human eyes, contemplated, handled by those who have borne witness and announced to us the very same One who was "with the Father" in all the blessedness and intimacy of that relationship.

The gospel was written "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name"; the epistle was written to "you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

The gospel gives us that life as manifested in Christ, the epistle gives us the same life as communicated to us, believers, and to be manifested in us, as we read, "which thing is true in Him *and* in you" (chap. ii. 8), we being "made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4). In virtue of the possession of this new life and nature the believer is capacitated to understand the things of God, given by the Spirit in the inspired word, communicated by Him, and received by us by the Spirit also (1 Cor. ii.).

All that God is in love and grace has been manifested in Christ, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. There can be nothing added to Him; there can be no development—of which men speak so much today. They say, what you speak of was all very good for times when people believed whatever they were told,

but in these days of advanced science such things are entirely out of date. Vain and foolish pretension which springs from the pride of fallen man !

Nor can true Christianity derive anything from the ancient religions of the world, as some would have us believe ; Christ and Christianity stand absolutely alone : it must be so since He is a divine Person, truly God, of whom it could be said, "I am He (The Same) ; I the first, and I the last. Yea, My hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spread abroad the heavens : I called unto them, they stand up together" (Isaiah xlvi. 12, 13, new trans.).

The express purpose for which the apostle announced these things to us was that we should have fellowship with them (the apostles), and their fellowship was with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Blessed place into which even the youngest believer is brought through grace ! To have communion, that is common thoughts and feelings, with the Father and the Son ; what could be more blessed ?

And how can this be ? It is because we have the new life and nature, we are born of God, are children of God, and have received the Holy Ghost who is here to glorify Christ and to lead us into the true knowledge of Him. How sad the unbelief that would cast a cloud over the truth of eternal life, as some have done, making it out to be a mystical something, which is not possessed on earth and which has no application to heaven !

On the contrary, it is in virtue of the possession of that new life and nature that we can enjoy that communion with the Father and the Son to which we are privileged according to our chapter—unless we possess eternal life, we are still dead in trespasses and sins, and have no part either in or with Him.

The two essential names of God given us in our epistle are "God is light" and "God is love." The

light manifests everything and detects everything in us which is contrary to it; the love provides a propitiation for our sins, for in love the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

John gives a good many tests of the reality of the profession we make; his "If we say," which occurs several times, shows us where we are. He is most decided in the ground he takes, never allowing any mixture of truth and error; "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth."

Then he takes up the position in which the christian *is*, "If we walk in the light," etc. Every true christian does walk *in* the light; he may not walk *according* to the light, but that is another thing. We *were* in darkness, yea, darkness itself; but now we are in the light, and indeed "light in the Lord"; we are therefore responsible to walk according to the light.

And God has provided a way of restoration to communion with Him even if we have failed so to walk. For if we have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And in virtue of His advocacy, and the unchanging value of His blood; if we confess our sins, God our Father is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Such is the full and complete provision God has made for His children; He wants us to be happy, not merely in human happiness, but in that fulness of joy which is ours in the blessed relationship we are brought into. It is His desire that we should be in the continual sunshine of His love, and in unbroken communion with the Father and the Son, so that this joy may be our possession, not by fits and starts merely, but continually.

F. G. B.

The Doctrine of Christ—1.

THE “doctrine of Christ” is a matter of supreme interest and importance not only for Christianity but for revealed religion. This may be seen from the apostolic pronouncement in 2 John, 9-11. “Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God. He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son. If any one come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes in his wicked works.” (New trans.)

In a matter of grave importance, going as it does to the very roots of communion with the Father, and the Son, by the Spirit, we find definite teaching as to it by our Lord Himself, for He is the Teacher come from God. It was on the night of the betrayal, when brought before the high priest, that our Lord, in answer to the challenge by Caiaphas, uttered this profound truth of the “doctrine of Christ” in the most simple and yet forceful manner.

“Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mark xiv. 61, 62). Clearly, and emphatically, He avowed His personal dignity and destiny in these words, which, rightly understood, are found to be the essence of the true “doctrine of Christ.”

Some of the apostles, with other New Testament writers, were later on led by the Spirit to expound and apply the words of our Lord; but it is well to note that the essential truth upon every subject afterwards dealt with in the epistles was first stated by Christ Himself. Not without deepest significance is it that His Name is the “Word of God.”

Standing before the high priest our Lord not only declared the true "doctrine of Christ" which is the subject of this paper, but incidentally illustrated the principle of Eccles. iii. 7, "There is a time to keep silence; and there is a time to speak"; and we may profitably consider this in passing.

When the false accusations were made against Him and personal abuse heaped upon Him, our Lord, to the apparent surprise of the council, made no reply. He was leaving us an example as to our action under similar circumstances. No sense of the untruthfulness, malice or injustice served to stir Him to self-defence or self-justification. When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. As we think of Him standing in silence and meekness in the high priest's palace that night we are humbled by the amazing contrast between His attitude and ours towards personal injustice and abuse.

To the high priest's enquiry: "Answerest thou nothing?" He held His peace and answered nothing. As a sheep before her shearers is dumb so He opened not His mouth. May we have grace to learn from His silence that there is "a time to keep silence" to the glory of God. But there is also "a time to speak," and immediately that it is a question of bearing witness to the truth, our Lord's voice is heard speaking clearly, plainly, unmistakably and emphatically.

"Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him. Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Thus is the "doctrine of Christ" stated unequivocally by Christ Himself; and we would reverently hear Him upon this most weighty matter of His own personal dignity and destiny.

For a moment we would pause to learn of Him a very practical lesson from what, in comparison with the importance of the "doctrine of Christ," may appear but incidental to our Lord's declaration of it, namely the "time to speak" to the glory of God.

As His silence under false accusation and personal abuse is eloquent to such of His disciples as have ears to hear, so His courageous avowal of an unwelcome and unpopular truth speaks to us of that moral courage which becomes the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

From practical experience we shall probably have to confess, that few things are more difficult for us than to hold our peace when personally vilified, and to witness boldly for the truth in the presence of unsympathetic or hostile persons. Even to bow one's head in a crowded restaurant is sometimes felt to be somewhat of an ordeal calling for a measure of moral courage in the open acknowledgment of the Giver of all good. May we have grace to learn from our Divine Lord's example how to act both in keeping silence and in speaking boldly.

To return to our main theme of the "doctrine of Christ" as enunciated by Christ Himself, we find presented :

1. The question of the high priest, who fully recognised the meaning of the terms he used in addressing our Lord, namely "Christ," "Son of the Blessed."
2. The Person to whom the question was put is He who was known as Jesus of Nazareth—no question as to His identity arose in the minds of any of the council.
3. The explicitness of our Lord's answer.

With reference to the first of these, namely, the high priest's question, this was so worded as to leave no possible loop-hole of escape or evasion: Art Thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed? An earlier council of the chief priests and elders held over thirty years previously had shown that, in the official mind there was no doubt as to who the Christ would be, and as to where He would be born. Familiar scriptures as Isaiah ix. 6, 7; and Micah v. 2, to cite no others, confessedly admitted only of a Messianic interpretation and reference; we may infer therefore that when the striking question, and its more startling reply, fell upon the ears of the assembled council, nothing less than a special Divine relationship and a particular Divine appointment were implied and claimed by the terms "the Christ," "the Son of the Blessed."

Then with reference to the One to whom the question was addressed, and by whom it was answered without a moment's hesitation—He was known among them as a Man, Jesus of Nazareth by name and repute. Of this there can be no question for an earlier session of the same council held a short time previously had slightly referred to Galilee as the place of the origin of this despised Prophet (John vii. 52).

So it is a real man, with a human spirit that can rejoice, a human soul that can feel the emotions of sorrow, a human body that can be touched, seen and heard, who without hesitation affirms Himself to be the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, and the Son of man who is to sit upon the throne of power, and come in the clouds of heaven.

Finally, note the explicitness of our Lord's answer. "Art Thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." All that the high priest asked is

answered, and this not in a general sense merely, but with definite detail, to make His meaning impossible to misunderstand. The sequel shows that Caiaphas, the chief priests, the elders and the whole council clearly understood the claim made, for, rending his clothes, and crying blasphemy, he, and they all, adjudged Jesus of Nazareth to be guilty and worthy of death.

What, then, is "the doctrine of Christ" as enunciated by Christ Himself? It is that the true Christ is the Son of the Blessed, One subsisting in an unique relationship with God; also that He is the Son of man; One who, although His goings forth are from of old from the days of eternity, yet appeared in time as the babe of Bethlehem; dwelt here full of grace and truth and has gone back to the right hand of power, the throne of the universe, and will come in power and great glory and be seen of those before whom He stood in great humility in the days of His flesh. In so small a compass was so great a truth set out by the Lord Jesus; its exposition and application were left to the ministry of the Holy Spirit by others.

The Person of the Christ, then, is He who is at once the Son of the Blessed as none other; yet with equal truth also the Son of man; God and man in one glorious, gracious Person. So our Lord, in stating this "doctrine of Christ," affirmed both the personal dignity and destiny of Him whom men knew in the days of His flesh as Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, but whom His church now worships as the Christ of God.

If the Lord will, in subsequent articles, we propose to consider the exposition and application of the "doctrine of Christ" as presented by the apostles and other New Testament writers, but in this paper we have simply sought to show what Christ Himself said upon this vitally important subject.

W.G.T.

A Testimony.—Wherever christians, so far as I have seen, set up to be a testimony, they get full of themselves, and lose the sense that they are so, and fancy it is having much of *Christ*. A shining face never sees itself. The true heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone. The right thought is not to think of self at all, save as we have to judge it. You cannot think of being a testimony save of *your* being so, and that is thinking of self—and, as I have said before, it is what I have always seen to be the case.

Trust in God.—“In Jehovah put I my trust.” Trust in the Lord, who is above all, to whom nothing is unknown, whom nothing escapes, whose faithfulness is unchangeable, without whom **not a sparrow falls to the ground**, who, after all, orders everything, whatever man’s plans are, **who is our Father**. **Trust in Him is** the resource and peace-giving feeling of the righteous. This, in its nature, gives a perfect walk and calmness at all times; because circumstances do not govern the feelings, and the soul has no motive to lead it but the will of God, and can have boldness to do it when called on, through confidence in Him. It gives calmness, too, because God is trusted for every result.

Evil Days.—He who seeks to follow God’s ways will find himself often in evil days—days when the power of evil prevails and presses upon the spirit. What then marks faithfulness is, that the heart does not turn aside to an easier path or other comforts, but looks to God and His raising up the heart according to His word.

The Word of God.—The word of God is the communication of divine things to the understanding (rendered capable by the Spirit) of man; but we know in part, and the whole not being communicated as God knows it, as indeed it could not be, and ought not to be, we often lose it by attempting to put it into a frame.

“Part with Me.”

(John xiii. 1-8)

INFINITE wonders and glories are contained in the few and simple words of these verses. Quietly, impressively, they manifest their divine inspiration. They, with the gracious words which follow them, are a precious revelation of heavenly things. Jesus, the Son, speaks the words given to Him by the Father; the Holy Spirit presents them to us in their marvellous form and order.

Especially conspicuous in this gospel is the communion of the Father and the Son. They speak and work in unison. Jesus claims this in chapters viii., ix., and xii. The “verily” of this gospel is always doubled to convey a personal appeal, attested by the Father and the Son, for special attention to the twenty-five momentous utterances which they preface.

As set before us in John’s gospel, how lovely is the antitype of the communion of father and son in the supreme test of Abraham’s faith! So perfect is the communion, that Jesus calmly announces His departure out of the world to the Father. Such a contemplation as this would be unlawful for mere man, whereas He, the Lamb that God had provided Himself with, for a burnt offering, could say, “Therefore doth My Father love Me . . . this commandment have I received of My Father.” Gethsemane with its terrors is immediately impending; and before the day is over, the cross with its infinite depths of suffering, must be endured: yet Jesus, with divine assurance, comforts His disciples and demonstrates the continuance of His love to them after the cross when on the throne.

He reveals to them marvellous counsels of grace. Leaving the world and going to the Father involves an absolutely new order of things—a new dispensation.

He takes an entirely new position before God, which will give its character to His own whom He leaves behind in the world. Up to, and in, the previous chapter He had presented Himself in His titles and rights as Son of David and King of Israel. In that chapter we see how the leaders reject Him. He tells them they thus reject the light, departs and hides Himself from them (verses 35, 36). The veil is then laid judicially upon their hearts, their eyes being blinded according to the prophecy of Isaiah quoted in verse 40. They are left in darkness until the dawn of the millennial day.

But a few have accepted Him and are deeply attached to Him. These, from His place above, He confesses as "His own" and gives them the assurance of His love to the end. It is no longer a question of Israel and an earthly Messiah. Those who receive Him, who believe on His Name, are given the right to become the children of God, though this must be through His death and resurrection (xii. 24; xx. 17). This nearness to God as His children calls for a new service of His love. The special privilege of having part with Him where He has gone is given, and He, with untiring devotion, engages in His loving ministry of keeping them in the enjoyment of it.

"Part with Me." Blessed words, revealing His deep, abiding, matchless love! If verse 3 affords a Pisgah view of the full extent of the blessing, verses 21 to 26 of chapter xvii. shed celestial rays on its nature. To bring these wonders home to our hearts, the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, is sent by the Father and the Son to abide with us for ever.

Nineteen centuries elapse. That which professes to be the church has no room for a world-rejected Saviour and Lord. But if He be outside, He can still speak of His love. He stands at the door and knocks promising

any who will listen to His voice and open to Him, part with Him now and hereafter. How gracious are His words, "he shall sup with Me" and, "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as also I overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne" (Rev. iii. 20, 21).

Unspeakable is the grace which, having chosen and called us, keeps us clean and blesses us with the enjoyment of His personal love. The nearness of the beloved disciple who leaned upon His breast fitted him to be a vessel for the rich unfolding of His love. Our adorable Lord would have us each one, in like nearness, to learn what are His desires towards us, in communion with Himself.

In this revelation of heavenly things is included the "Father's house." And it is to us, believers of the present dispensation, that He opens up its many mansions. He gives us a pledge of His love, the assurance that He will come again and receive us to Himself. Nothing will satisfy His love but our happy settlement with Him in the Father's house.

May we, as recipients of His unceasing and marvelous grace, be submissive in His hand and responsive to His heart; so that, for His gratification, we may enter ever more fully into the unfathomable depths of His love.

A. J. H.



Where the mind is formed by the words of Christ, when they abide in one who lives in dependence on and confidence in Him—one thus abiding in Him, having Him in spirit, and his mind guided by Christ's word, His will is (so to speak), Christ's. He asks what He will and will come to pass (John xv. 7).

Fellowship with the Father and the Son

ALL sincere believers in the Lord Jesus understand to a greater or lesser degree what it is to rejoice in the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins (1 John ii. 12). Nothing can be simpler. But few seem to enter into the privilege that is theirs, as stated in 1 John i. 3-4, "that ye also may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Four things suggest themselves in this connection :
The Father's delight in His Son. How truly this is unfolded in the Gospels ! We read in Matt. xvii. 5 (new trans.) of the Father's voice from the bright overshadowing cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight . . ." ; or, as Isaiah xlii. 1, states it, "Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth." Ever dwelling in the Father's "bosom" (John i. 18), "the hiding-place of love," we can think of the Son as the One

". . . , on whom His love
 Ineffable doth rest" ;

for, "the bosom of the Father was an eternal habitation enjoyed by the Son in the ineffable delight of the Father." He was the fulfiller of all His purposes of blessing and glory ; and He laid the basis, in the work of the cross, for the Father to act in the fulness of His grace. Surely,

"The Father only, Thy blest Name
 Of Son, can comprehend."

The Son's delight in the Father. This is seen in the fact that the Father's glory was ever before Him. "I came down from heaven . . . to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38). "I love the Father ; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do . . ." And what was that commandment to which He

was obedient? Listen! "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x. 17-18).

Knowing that the Father seeketh worshippers (John iv. 23), He became as "the corn of wheat" that fell into the ground and died (John xii. 24); one glorious outcome being seen in the "much fruit" that resulted, a mighty host being procured of such as are, and will be throughout eternity, worshippers indeed.

On that cross, when He said, "It is finished," we read that, "He bowed His head and delivered up His spirit" (John xix. 28-30, new trans.). This has been referred to as the highest act of worship ever rendered to the Father,—a wondrous ascending offering indeed!

The delight of the Father and the Son in us. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God"! (1 John iii. 1). The Saviour prayed, "that the world may know that Thou hast . . . loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (John xvii. 23). And we sing sometimes,

"The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me."

And, "when He shall appear we shall be like Him"! (1 John iii. 2).

By His death and resurrection the blessed Son of God has brought us on to the same platform as Himself, as revealed in His resurrection message, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (John xx. 17). As the ascended One, He has given us the Holy Spirit, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6), thus leading us to use the same language He Himself used,—but, oh! in what different

circumstances ! Hark ! “And He said, Abba, Father . . . take away this cup from Me : nevertheless, not as I will, but what Thou wilt” (Mark xiv. 36). He is, and ever was, the “Beloved” One, in whom the Father has made us “accepted” (Eph. i. 6). He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He is our merciful and faithful High Priest. He is also, if any sin, our Advocate with the Father. He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep ; our Redeemer ; our Deliverer ; our All. Truly,

“ ’Tis His great delight to bless us ;
Oh, how He loves !”

The delight of our hearts is in the Father and the Son. Ephesians i. 3, well strikes our note of worship, viz., “Blessed be the God and Father . . . who hath blessed us . . . ” ; also Col. i. 12, “Giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” And 2 Cor. i. 3, “Blessed be God, ever the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies . . . who comforteth us in all our tribulation.”

“We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,
To Thee our all we owe ;
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes Him precious too !”

We will close by quoting the words of one of God’s most honoured servants. He says, “What can we have more than the Father and the Son ? What more perfect happiness than community of thoughts, feelings, joy, and communion with the Father and the Son ?”

“When I am delighting in Jesus,—His obedience, His love to His Father, to us, His single eye, and purely devoted heart, I have the same feelings, the same thoughts, as the Father Himself . . . Thus, I have communion with the Father.”

N.L.N.

The Doctrine of Christ—2.

Peter's Testimony.

THE testimony of the apostle Peter to the "doctrine of Christ" is specially interesting for two reasons :

1. Because Christ commended him at Caesarea Philippi for his confession : "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Now the confession of Jesus by Peter was in almost identical terms with the words used in the challenge of Caiaphas which we have already considered. Said Peter to our Lord : "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." In essentials the same expression as "The Christ the Son of the Blessed."
2. Peter is easily the most prominent of the early church leaders ; one who passed throughout all quarters visiting the saints ; one, too, to whom the responsibility of opening the Kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles was committed ; a writer also of inspired epistles to scattered strangers and suffering saints, his testimony therefore to the "doctrine of Christ" is particularly valuable.

Whether Peter actually overheard our Lord's avowal of divine Sonship and Christhood in the high priest's palace or not, there is no doubt he witnessed the sequel to it before his own denial and the Lord's "look," caused him to go out and weep bitterly.

What the true "doctrine of Christ" was, as understood by the apostles in the earliest days, we may safely conclude from Peter's preachings and teachings of which we have the record.

On the day of Pentecost, in the recorded portion of his great sermon, Peter makes emphatic reference to Jesus of Nazareth—a man—crucified, slain, raised again by God, made Lord and Christ, and then sitting at the right hand of power.

This "doctrine of Christ," in clearest outline, was delivered, in its plainest form, in Jerusalem to a great crowd, within two months of our Lord's affirmation of His personal dignity and destiny before Caiaphas. How the one occasion recalls the other so far as the doctrine or teaching is concerned!

Again, a little later in the temple court, Peter affirms: The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; the Holy One and the Just One; the Prince of Life; and affirms that, "Those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled"; and concludes by the striking reference to the Christ as "His Servant Jesus" (new trans.) Jesus of Nazareth—crucified—raised by God—the head stone though set at nought by the builders—with the exclusive saving Name.

Once again, before the very council and high priest in whose presence our Lord had made His own great affirmation on the night of the betrayal, Peter boldly states to unwilling hearers: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." How ominously this must have sounded in the ears of the high priest and the assembled council.

The last public recorded sermon of Peter is that delivered by him at Joppa where he announces the Lordship of Jesus—Jesus of Nazareth; the Saviourhood of Christ; the fact that He is the ordained Judge of all mankind.

With unwearied reiteration the Apostle Peter explains and applies what his Master had so emphatically affirmed before Caiaphas and the elders of the council, that He was "the Christ the Son of the Blessed," and that "the right hand of power and the coming in the

clouds of heaven” was that which belonged to His personal destiny.

Turning now to Peter’s written testimony, it is in his epistles that his “doctrine of Christ” is expounded and applied, in fullest detail. His epistles are full of clear teaching as to the blood of Christ, telling of the Man who died; of the resurrection of Christ, speaking of the Man who was raised again, that faith and hope might be in God; also of the appearing of Christ as the Man who will come with glory and honour. The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow are linked in his teaching with the precious blood of One fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, who is the suffering Saviour, and of the substitutionary Sacrifice. Prominent among the themes so dear to the Apostle is the eternal glory by Christ Jesus; and throughout all his teaching, oral or written, there is the same note consistently sounded of the Christ the Son of the Blessed, once crucified but now glorified at the right hand of power and coming in glory and honour.

To sum up, the apostle Peter’s “doctrine of Christ,” to use words of his own, is briefly comprehended as setting forth that “Jesus of Nazareth,” a Man, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is the Son of the living God, of whom the Father bore witness, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” That He is Saviour, Judge, the Prince of Life, the Holy One and the Just, for whose coming and appearing in glory and honour His people look. God and Man, one Person, the Christ of God.

All the worship, walk and witness of the scattered strangers and suffering saints centres around this Person, whom not having seen they love, and in whom believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. One practical lesson may be learned from the fact of His lordship, namely, the duty of obeying Him

and yielding our hearts truly to His sway. The believer is elect to the *obedience of Jesus Christ*. If we obey as He obeyed in the days of His flesh, then our "doctrine of Christ" will make the name of Christian neither a misnomer nor a merely nominal badge.

W.G.T.

Light, Life and Love—2.

Being brief Notes on John's 1st Epistle. Chap. ii. 2-11.

VERSE 2 of our chapter gives us the fact that Christ was the "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours alone, but also for the whole world." We must carefully distinguish between propitiation* and substitution; the former is the Godward aspect of the work of Christ and is world-wide in its aspect. The latter presents that view of the work of Christ which is true of *believers*; just as God's righteousness is "unto all," but "upon all" *them that believe*.

In virtue of that work of propitiation the evangelist is privileged to go out world-wide with the gospel; it is for every creature which is under heaven. But it is a serious mistake to tell a company of unconverted people that Christ is the *substitute* for all, or that He bore all their sins upon the cross, as is sometimes done. Of course *the believer* can truly say, "Thank God, my

* This long word "propitiation" may not be quite clear to some. It is only used twice in the New Testament, both times in our epistle, viz., here in chap. ii. 2, and in chap. iv. 10. But we have the verb which answers to it in Heb. ii. 17, "To make propitiation for the sins of the people"; and a similar word in Heb. ix. 5, where it is translated mercy-seat; also in Rom. iii. 25, "Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth a mercy-seat through faith in His blood." It was used for the covering or lid of the ark, where the high priest sprinkled the blood on the great day of atonement (Levit. xvi. 14, 15).

sins were all laid on Jesus on the cross, and in virtue of His blood shed they are gone." This is expressed in the words, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24).

As we have before remarked, John gives many tests of the profession we make; the little phrase, "he that saith" occurs three times in our present portion of this chapter. And he will have no half measures, because the object is, not to make allowance for our shortcomings, but to give us the truth as it is in itself.

"He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"; he is looking at what belongs to the new nature which the believer has as born of God. But the one who keeps His word, "In him verily is the love of God perfected." Obedience is the test of the reality of the profession we make.

The Lord Himself spoke of this in John xiv., "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me"; and again, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word"; and what added peculiar solemnity to it was, as He says, that the word "which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent Me." There is no path so happy as the path of simple obedience, it is the path in which the Lord Himself walked when here; truly He could say, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

But how are we to know what are His commandments and what is His word? It is given us in the scripture, the same which the Lord used when here in this world, that by which He lived, in the light of which He walked, and by which also He met all the wiles of the devil. "It is written" was enough for Him; it ought to be enough for us.

Again, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." It does not

say we ought to be what He was, for Christ was perfect, but the standard set before us is to walk as He walked. And how did Jesus walk? In the humble path of obedience, doing always the Father's will; He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

But perhaps you will say, "Oh, I never could attain to that!" No! not even John himself, or Paul, or Peter, ever did this perfectly; but that is the head-line set before us to copy; and the more we have our eye fixed upon Christ, the more we will walk accordingly.

Now in verse 7 we have a passage which may present a little difficulty to some, but, as has been remarked, if we are humble and dependent on God, difficulties in scripture become an inlet for further light for the soul.

John says that he does not write a new commandment to them but an old commandment, this old one was the word which they had heard from the beginning. Then again a new commandment he writes to them, "which thing is true in Him and in you." In 2nd John 5 we are told what the new commandment is, namely, "that we should love one another."

And why was it not new in 1 John ii. 7? Because the Lord Himself had spoken of it long before, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John xiii. 34; xv. 12, 17). It was new *when He gave it*, but when the epistle was written, it was "old."

And oh, what a character of love He sets before us, saying twice over that we should love one another "as I have loved you" and repeating the commandment several times when with His disciples on earth. His truly was "greater love," for He showed it not only to His friends but even to His enemies (Rom. v. 8).

The love which He commands us to show towards one another is a love which rises above all differences

of temperament, of nationality, of everything that might create alienation of heart. We are very prone to love those who agree with us about something which we consider important; but the love of which John speaks is based upon the possession of the new nature and belonging to the family of God, not on agreement about church questions or otherwise.

“True in Him *and* in you,” this might seem to us almost beyond our comprehension; but it is consequent on the same truth to which we have already referred; namely, because we have been born again and are made “partakers of the divine nature,” that is of a nature answering, morally, to God’s nature, and “God is love” as well as light. In Christ it was seen in all its perfection, in the believer it is seen but in part, being often hindered by the allowance of the flesh and fleshly motives. “The darkness is passing”; as each one *believes* he passes into the light; it is what is true of the christian since the death and resurrection of Christ, for the true light already shines.

But now comes the test, “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.” So again in chapter iv. 20, “If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar.” It is an absolute statement, as plain and strong as words could be. And who is my brother? The answer, which follows on at once is, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”; so that everyone that is born of God, everyone who is born again and has this new and divine nature, belongs to the family of God and is my brother.

Here is something for us to remember and to carry out in practice every day. It is true that our love to the brethren must be “love in the truth,” not merely the human idea of love. If I go on with another christian in a wrong course, this would not be love but

indifference to evil: it may appear to be love in the eyes of the world, but it is not the love spoken of by Peter when he says, "Add to . . . brotherly love, *love*." It must be in keeping with that wisdom which is "first pure, then peaceable," it must be love according to God's commandments. But even allowing for all this, when it comes to practice, how much we fail in showing love one to another, as members of the same family, as children of God and as indwelt by the same Holy Spirit!

F.G.B.

Suffer the Word of Exhortation.

BELOVED Brethren and Sisters in Christ,—The day of the apostasy is hastening on with rapid strides, and also the day in which the Lord shall come to snatch His own away. The present moment is of so solemn a character that I feel constrained to address you this word of exhortation. Godly men everywhere, who watch the signs of the times, see the moment approaching which shall terminate the present actings of grace.

The time has evidently arrived when one must speak plainly and decisively, and ask you where you are, and what you are about. You have by grace, which has shone brighter and brighter as it has approached its termination, been gathered out of the seething mass of idolatry and wickedness which now threatens Christendom and the world with an overthrow more awful than that of Sodom and Gomorrah of old; and the question is whether you are adequately impressed with the responsibility, as well as the blessedness, of the ground you are on, and walking like men and women whose eyes have been opened.

Believe me, there has never been in the world's history such a time as the present, and Satan is occupied with none as he is with you; and his occupation with you is the more to be feared because of the subtlety of his operations. His object is to withdraw your attention from Christ, while you suppose you are on safe ground and have nothing to fear. He would destroy you with the very truth itself. For mark the subtlety: you *are* on safe ground, but *only* while Christ is your all in all.

Here is where Satan is drawing some away. Interpose anything between your soul and Christ, and your Philadelphia becomes Laodicea; your safe ground is as unsafe as the rest of Christendom; your strength is gone from you, and you are become weak, like any ordinary mortal.

Some of you are young, recently converted, or brought to the right ways of the Lord, and you do not know the depths of Satan. But you are hereby solemnly warned of your peril; and if mischief overtake you, you cannot plead ignorance.

Again I say, Satan has his eye especially upon *you*, for the purpose of interposing the world in some form between your soul and Christ. He cares not how little, or in what form. If you knew but how little will answer his purpose, you would be alarmed. It is not by that which is gross or shameful; such is the *development*, not the *beginning* of evil. It is not by anything glaring that he seeks to ruin you, but in small and seemingly harmless trifles—trifles that would not shock nor offend any one as things go, and yet these constitute the deadly and insidious poison, destined to ruin your testimony and withdraw you from Christ.

Do you ask what are these alarming symptoms, and where are they seen?

The question does but show what is the character of the opiate at work. Brethren and Sisters, you are

being infected with the spirit of the world. Your dress, your manner, your talk, your lack of spirituality, betray it in every gathering. This is a dead weight, a restraint, a want of power, that reveals itself in the meetings as plainly as if your heart were visibly displayed and its thoughts publicly read. A form of godliness without power is beginning to be seen among you, as plainly as in Christendom generally. As surely as you tamper with the world, so surely will you drift away to its level.

This is the nature of things. It must be so. If you tamper with the world, the privileged place you occupy, instead of shielding you, will only expose you to greater condemnation. It must be Christ *or* the world. It cannot be—ought not to be—Christ *and* the world. God's grace in drawing you out of the world in your *ignorance* is one thing, but God will never permit you to prostitute His grace, and play fast and loose, when you have been separated from the world. Remember you take the place, and claim the privilege, of one whose eyes have been opened; and if on the one hand this is unspeakably blessed (and it is), on the other hand it is the most dreadful position in which a human being can be found. It is to be at the wedding feast without the wedding garment. It is to say, "Lord, Lord," while you do not the things that He bids. It is to say, "I go, sir," as he said who went not.

Beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak; and I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will bless Him for these few faithful words. Nothing can be more glorious than the position you are called to occupy in these closing days.

Saints have stood in the breach, have watched through weary days and nights these eighteen hundred years, and you only wait for the trumpet of victory to go in and take possession of the glorious inheritance.

Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours; and yet, forsooth, you are lowering your dignity to the level of the poor potsherd of the earth, who only wait for the rod of the Victor (and yours too) to be dashed to pieces. Oh, awake, then, from your lethargy; slumber no longer; put away your idols and false gods; wash your garments, and get you to Bethel, where you will find God to be better than ever you knew Him, even in your best days.

Lay aside your last bit of worldly dress; guard your speech, that if it be of Christ and His affairs, and not, as you know it now often is, of anything but Him. Let your prayers mingle with those of other saints at the prayer meetings; they never were more needed. Neglect no opportunity of gathering up instruction from that word which alone can keep us from the paths of the destroyer, and let your life be the evidence of the treasures you gather up at the lecture, or the reading meeting, or in secret with the Lord. If you want occupation, with a glorious reward from a beloved Master, ask that Master to set you to work for Him; you will never regret it, either in this world or in that which is to come.

Beloved, bear with me: I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. You belong to Christ, and Christ to you. Break not this holy union. Let not the betrothed one be unfaithful to her Bridegroom! Why should you be robbed and spoiled? And for what? Empty husks and bitter fruits, while you waste this little span of blessing! All the distinctions acquired here in the energy of the Spirit will but serve to enhance your beauty and render you more lovely in the eyes of Him who has espoused you to Himself.

Can you refuse Him His delights in you? Can you refuse Him the fruit of the travail of His soul, who once hung, a dying man, between two thieves on

Calvary, a spectacle to men and angels, and for *you*—you who have *forgotten* (for you cannot have *despised*) this devotedness for you. He could have taken the world without the cross, and left you out, but He would not; and now will you, having been enriched by those agonies and that blood, take the world into your tolerance and leave Him out? Impossible! Your pure mind did but need to be stirred up by way of remembrance.

Let us therefore take courage from this very moment. We have lately been offering up prayers, confessing the lack of piety and devotedness. May we not take this word as the answer of our ever-gracious faithful Lord, to arouse us—to re-awaken our drooping energies? And then the more quickly He comes the better. We shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

9.

This paper was published in the "Bible Treasury" for June, 1898, and somewhere else before then. It is needed as much now as it was thirty years ago, or even more.

The Apostasy.

THE truth of the gospel remains "in the last hour," as fresh to the end as at the beginning." In scripture it is entirely unimpaired by the practical ruin of the church and by the awful intimation which the apostle Paul gave comparatively early, that there is to be "the falling away" before the day of the Lord in judgment. This was made known in one of his earliest epistles, the second to the Thessalonians, the first to them being the earliest of all his epistles. The second was written not long after, perhaps within the same year; and there is predicted the awful climax of lawlessness, apostasy from the truth, and this not for Jews nor for heathen, but, sad to say, for Christendom.

The Jews had already apostatised when they gave up the Lord God of their fathers for idols, and crowned it with the rejection of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus. This we may call their apostasy, though they will proceed to greater enormity before the end. The heathen had been always in a state of apostasy from God from the time that they set up false gods.

But the awful end disclosed in the second epistle to the Thessalonians is that the apostasy is to fall on Christendom before the day of the Lord comes. And you have only to look at the daily papers, or the monthlies or the quarterlies of our time, and you will find evidence in the religious organs as much as in the worldly journals, that the apostasy is impending. They cannot hide, but betray the preparation for it.

“Higher criticism,” falsely so called, is the devil’s device to throw dust in people’s eyes about scripture. Where is the word of God left for faith? If scripture be denied to be the word of God, where is the church, the believer, or the lost sinner? Where is Christ the Lord, or God’s testimony to His grace and truth? No ground at all abides for faith. Make it an uncertain thing, the word of man (Elohists and Jehovists senior and junior, with redactors too!) really rather than the word of God, and you lose God’s saving love, grace, and controlling power which kept infirm and erring man from a single error, that there should not be a flaw in all scripture as originally given of Him.

This was what God intended; as it is what the apostle Paul pronounces authoritatively in his last epistle (2 Tim.). That, too, was the proper time for it. He says that not merely all scripture in a general way is given by inspiration of God, but “every scripture,” every part of the Bible, each part of the Old Testament, and each part of the New Testament, every bit of it is God-breathed. Blessed be God that so it is. Can God

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

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

W. K.

God's Gracious Blessing.

“**A**ND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee :

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee :

And be gracious unto thee :

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,

And give thee peace.

And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel.” God’s assembly is to be blessed and kept of Him, continually; it is ever to bask in the sunlight of His gracious countenance; its peace is to flow as a river; Jehovah’s name is to be called upon it; He is ever there to bless.

“All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive.” This supposes faith and intimacy, so to speak, with God. The heart is supposed to be in His interests, and then, if there is faith as a grain of mustard seed, a mountain goes.

Comfort.

WE have but to read such scriptures as John xiv.-xvii., to see how the Lord Jesus pours the oil of comfort into the hearts of His sorrowing disciples ere He left this world to go to the Father. We may say that four things come especially before us in these chapters—Christ would be absent, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would be present; and, added to this, there is the bright hope of His coming again, and the revelation of the *Father*.

Many of God's children need comfort now. Perhaps they always did; but most of us have heard of many such cases recently. There is One who never fails in His love and His priestly intercession for us on high; and who, having passed through this world with all its troubles and trials, is able to sympathise with us in it all.

Was He not moved with compassion on many occasions? Did He not raise the widow's son at the city gate of Nain and deliver him to his mother? Did He not groan and weep at the grave of Lazarus? What we want is *faith* to make these blessed truths our own, and to get from them the comfort it is God's will we should get.

"A little while" and we shall be *with* Him, clothed in bodies of glory like His own, seeing Him face to face, where no sorrow can ever enter. Meantime, cheered by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and animated by the knowledge of the Father's love, may we be helped through the trials of the way which still lies before us "till He come"!

"Comfort through all this vale of tears,
In blest profusion flows;
And glory of unnumbered years
Eternity bestows."

Letter from an Invalid.

[The following extracts are from a letter received from an invalid, who undergoes much bodily suffering. We give them because they show how the sustaining grace of God can succour those in trial, especially when cast wholly upon Him. As the writer says, we should never undervalue, in the slightest degree, occasions of meeting together for prayer, reading God's word, etc., but his remarks show how God can make meditation on that word to be the food of our souls, when dependent entirely upon Him.]

I AM an invalid, shut up to one room, one chair; in fact so far as activities go, I am unable to get out of this invalid chair day or night. A spinal disease renders my limbs quite powerless; also my arms, hands, and fingers are affected, which accounts for this peculiar writing. The Lord has given me many mercies, the chief of which is a good wife; she nurses me devotedly although far from strong herself. We would solicit your prayers on account of her health, that she may be maintained day by day.

The other day I was reading a book, and the remarks made concerning Readings and Addresses caused me to reflect a little on the way the Lord has led me. Once I was, so to speak, full of meetings (there are many like that to-day, I fear). I thought I knew a good deal, and so I did *about* the Lord; but when He shut me away from meetings, and up to Himself and to the word of God, then I found how little I knew *Him*.

Don't you think we need to have the word operate in our hearts, as Heb. iv. 12, 13, says? As we learn ourselves in this way, how it causes us to desire to be filled with Christ—how great He is, how altogether pre-eminent and worthy! He has taught me to say that my affliction, which shut me up to Himself and His word, has afforded me wealth beyond all earthly store (Ps. cxix. 71, 72).

One does not like to speak disparagingly of Reading Meetings or Addresses, but one feels that these may be sought after to the exclusion of just simply reading the word of God. One of the outstanding lessons one has been taught by being shut up to the scriptures has been, how much one knew about *doctrine*, yet how little one knew *Him*; also how much one knew of the scriptures, but how little they had searched one out.

The word is the sword of the Spirit, and what we need is just to simply read it, letting it search out the heart. It is a two-edged sword, and we need to let the Holy Spirit use His own sword (Heb. iv. 12, 13). If we come to the word in the spirit of reverential awe, as the writer of Ps. cxix. 161, did, we shall find the Spirit using it as Heb. iv. 12, 13, says.

This process is not pleasant; but if Christ is to become pre-eminent in our hearts, *we* must first of all be practically displaced; the word and the Holy Spirit operating as a two-edged sword. Thus Christ will be magnified, self will be displaced, and, like the writer of Ps. xlv, our hearts will be "bubbling over with a good matter"; we shall speak of the things which we have made touching the King. What an object for contemplation! What a theme to talk about!

The object of all God's ways and dealings with us is, "To do us good in our latter end" (Deut. viii. 16). God can use the time we are laid aside to discover to us some new gem of light, some new ray flooding our souls with new thoughts, new impressions, and His glory; or He may show us something of self that must go. Let us treasure and cultivate the habit of sitting before the Lord, in His presence. How the writer of Ps. cxix. loved and meditated upon God's word, speaking of it as "Thy word, Thy law, Thy statutes, Thy precepts, Thy testimonies"!

F.H.F.

“Too Much Wood.”

I WATCH an experienced gardener attending to his vines, and I notice with something akin to wonder how he goes over every branch removing leaf after leaf, and cutting out a branch here and there until quite a heap strews the floor. Expressing my surprise at such drastic treatment, the good man replies in one sentence which means much—“*Too much wood; I want grapes, not a big tree.*”

At once one's mind reverts to John xv. and the well-known words of our Lord Jesus: “I am the true vine and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” How much there is in this to ponder over and over; and what an evidence it is of the Father's care and the Father's desire for us His children!

Israel was God's vineyard, as is so plainly stated in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, and what a touching refrain we find there also, “What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?”

Israel yielded no fruit for God. The sad history of their answer to all the care and love bestowed upon them is given us in the parable of the Lord Jesus in the 20th chapter of Luke's gospel. The vineyard has therefore been taken away from the rebellious unfruitful nation and given to another nation—the godly remnant no doubt of the latter days—that will yield the fruit thereof in due season.

The church is never likened to a vineyard in scripture so far as we see, but fruit for God comes from another source, the Lord Jesus Himself, who is not called a vineyard, but as we have seen above—the true

vine; His disciples are the branches. He looks for fruit, desires it, and reminds us of the one essential condition: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." The question naturally occurs to us—How can we abide in Christ? What is the power for this abiding, of which the gain or loss is so definitely set before us? "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, *for without Me ye can do nothing.*"

Then comes the sad alternative which never fails to raise a question in many minds, a fruitless branch is taken away, rejected, as in the well-known action of the vine-dresser; for the vine is not cultivated for any other purpose than bearing grapes, and, failing that, it is only as a branch thrown into the fire to be burned (see Ezekiel xv.).

But another helpful word is added, that throws its light on the whole subject, for the Lord puts the matter again before us as if it lay in our power, and is our responsibility to abide in Him, and says, "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

And another word of great encouragement follows, "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." Or as it reads in the new translation (J.N.D.), "And ye shall become disciples of mine." As we ponder these gracious words we remark again the one condition, and also note the grades—no fruit, more fruit, much fruit; until the desire is awakened to know practically the power, or the secret, of the one condition, that we may abide in Christ.

Here surely the answer comes that the Holy Spirit is the power for this, as of all else that is really acceptable to God the Father. "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. 27).

We have sometimes observed in the path of a godly christian that everything appears to run smoothly, without much trouble or sorrow, and then things happen just the reverse way, and much occurs that calls for exercise and, maybe, deep distress. Why is this? May it not be the pruning of the branch with a view to more fruit?

In Hebrews xii. we find the same blessed God at work chastening us for our profit, "that we may be partakers of His holiness." "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth *every son* whom He receiveth" (Hebrews xii. 9). So we learn little by little the true import of the words so often quoted from another epistle, "And we know that *all things* work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. viii. 28). Let us then seek grace to abide in Christ.

The disciples themselves were, as we know, connected with Israel, but it had become "the degenerate plant of a strange vine to Jehovah," and God no longer looked for any fruit from it, so their connection with it was of no avail for God. Christ takes the place of this, and was, in contrast, the True Vine; connection with Him is the only means of fruit-bearing. Again He says in the 5th verse before quoted, "I AM THE VINE," dropping the word of comparison with Israel, there is no other vine, and to no other source does God look for fruit. What follows is simple and definite, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing."

Plain, practical words! May we lay them much to heart in a day of great pretension, and declining spiritual power. The kingdom of heaven has, in man's hand, taken the form of greatness, and has become a tree, "so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the

branches thereof." It is a solemn example of "too much wood." Fruit for God is only found in those who abide in Christ—they ask what they will and it is done for them, they are the true disciples of Christ, and they bear much fruit for the glory of God, His (and our) Father. T.R.

The Doctrine of Christ—3.

TO the elect lady of 2 John, and all others, the real content of his teaching as an apostle of the Lord is clearly shown in John's gospel and his first epistle. The gospel, he says, is written that "ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John xx. 31).

Two things of first importance as to the "doctrine of Christ" are here simply but sufficiently declared. The glory of the Lord's Person, and the grace that gives eternal life to *all* believers through His Name.

The glory of the Lord's Person is set out by the beloved disciple and constitutes the substance of what he believed and was divinely commissioned to teach. He is clearly conscious of this commission, for he says: "He that is of God heareth us."

Christ is presented in the apostle John's writings as the Word who was with God, and was God; the Eternal Life; the Word made flesh dwelling among men full of grace and truth; Jesus Christ the Son of God, the King of Israel; the Lamb of God who is the taker-away of the sin of the world. One who is from everlasting; God in His own Person yet distinct from the Father, being the only begotten Son who is ever in the bosom of the Father. The One promised, expected, arrived, come in flesh. Timeless as to His Person (John viii. 58), but also historical as coming into the world (Luke i. 35), and abiding eternally (Heb. i. 12). One

whose human nature is of God, having its origin from Him by His Spirit (Luke i. 35), who, naturally and necessarily, gives full meaning to the fullest Name by which the Eternal God had hitherto been revealed. The Name "I am" finds infinite expression as *He* speaks. I am *the Way*; I am *the Truth*; I am *the Life*; I am *the Light*; I am *the Bread of Life*; I am *the True Vine*; I am *the Good Shepherd*; I am *the Door*; I am *the Resurrection and the Life*; I am *the First and the Last*. Sometimes He leaves the Name in its mysterious Majesty: "Before Abraham was *I am*."

There is no doubt at all from this, as to what the apostle John taught and meant to be understood by his readers as the "doctrine of Christ."

"Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" demanded the high priest, to which he received the emphatic reply: "I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Here is *Christ's own teaching as to the doctrine of His dignity and destiny*. "Whom say ye that I am?" is Christ's word to Peter; and the answer falls promptly from the apostle's lips as revealed by the Father: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Here is *Peter's God-inspired confession of the "doctrine of Christ."* "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." This is what the apostle John in his gospel affirms, while, in his 1st epistle, he writes of a Person whom he had seen and handled, yet who was the Word of life; "that Eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us," he declares. In his epistle to the elect lady the same One is presented as being, together with the Father, the bestower of grace, mercy and peace, and as the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father. *Could language more clearly, plainly and forcibly express what the*

beloved disciple, and commissioned apostle of the Lord, meant by the "doctrine of Christ"?

The Lord Jesus Christ, at once God and Man in the mystery of His Person, who acts with God and for God; lived with men and acted for men. The highest title, the "Son of the Father"; unshared by men, inherent, eternal; as well as the humble designation, "the taker-away of the sin of the world"; both come from the pen of the apostle who leaned upon Christ's breast at the last supper and was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The highest truths as to the Person of Him who could be weary with His journey (so truly human was He); could weep at the grave of His friend Lazarus (so true were His human sympathies); could groan in spirit and be troubled; could be troubled in soul; yet could unhesitatingly speak of Himself in terms that made instructed, but unbelieving, Jews complain that He, "Jesus of Nazareth," said "that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God"—all these are part of St. John's "doctrine of Christ."

The very solemn words in which our Lord affirmed that the judgment of mankind had been exclusively committed to Him because He was the Son of man; the claim that to the Son of God (who was also the Son of man) must be paid the same divine honours as to the Father Himself (John v.); all appear in the same gospel which contains the account of His human weariness, sympathy and thirst.

He is truly presented in John's "doctrine of Christ," as another Evangelist states, as the Son whom no man knows with real knowledge save the Father (Matt. xi. 27).

Yet He is also "full of grace and truth," conversing with individuals of high and low degree; partaking of human hospitality and friendship; kindly and considerate yet never weak or uncertain; a true Man yet

conscious of ever being in the bosom of the Father, one with Him, speaking His words, doing His works, etc. Well might a recent writer exclaim: "The Church can never say 'O, come let us explain Him!' but must always cry:

'O, come let us adore Him!
Christ the Lord.' "

The elect lady, and every other elect soul having believed on Him and received eternal life through His Name, would be in no doubt as to the apostle John's "doctrine of Christ."

That the "doctrine of Christ," as taught by the apostle John, is intended to exercise a very practical effect upon the personal life of the believer is clear from both his gospel and his epistles.

The eternal life which is the present possession of every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has come by the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ the Sent One. By abiding in Him and walking even as He walked, this life is manifested, and the possessor of it grows in wisdom and spiritual stature by keeping Christ's words. His spiritual exercise is found in constantly loving the children of God according to the new commandment (John xiii. 34).

When this is the condition of the believer, his tastes are good; evil doctrine and bad company are refused and avoided; and he affirms with deep conviction: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Unknown by the world that knew *Him* not, the believer, happy in the present possession of eternal life, knows that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure (1 John iii. 2, 3).

W.G.T.

Light, Life and Love—3.

Being brief notes on John's first epistle. Chapter ii. 13-29.

AFTER verse 12 of our chapter the apostle changes the word for "children" until he comes to near the end of verse 27. In this intermediate portion the word used means really "babes," that is very young children. Thus we have the three distinctions—fathers, young men and babes.

What marked the father in Christ (that is one who had been some time on the christian path) was, that he had known Him that was from the beginning: this is repeated twice. It was Christ, the One of whom we read in the first few verses of the epistle. To know Him was the highest point reached in the christian path and experience.

The apostle Paul wrote in Phil. iii. 10, "that I may know Him." He knew Him first at his conversion on the road to Damascus; and yet, as an athlete pressing forward in the race towards the goal, that is towards complete conformity to Christ in glory, he could still say, "that I may know Him." Again, in Eph. i. 17, he prays that God the Father would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him. Of Christ it may truly be said that we can never get to the end of all that is to be known; and we may add, that His is a love that surpasses knowledge. No wonder, then, that the apostle should repeat the same words twice over when he speaks to the fathers, those most matured in the christian faith.

To the "young men" he says that they were strong and the word of God abode in them and they had overcome the wicked one. In his second word to them he warns them against the love of the world. The world is a system that adapts itself to every condition and every taste. It is made up of three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life.

So it was seen to be as far back as the Garden of Eden. Eve saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise; then, forgetting God's command, she eat of the fruit of it, and her husband also. It was a specious artifice of Satan, for it might be said, "What harm was there in eating of this fruit?" Simply this, that God had forbidden it. And the consequence was that they were driven out of the garden, and the results remain to this day.

The advance of science, and all the inventions that have resulted from it, have given immensely increased facilities for the supply of all that makes the world attractive to men, and women also; but it all passes away and it fails to satisfy the heart. Very largely it serves the devil's purpose to lead people down careless to destruction. Not that electrical and other inventions are wrong in themselves, but the mind is so pre-occupied with these things that people have little time or inclination to trouble themselves about their souls' eternal interests.

To the "little children" (or babes) he says that they had known the Father. How blessed for even the youngest in the truth to be able to look up by faith into the Father's face, so to speak, and say, "Abba, Father"! It is to enjoy the very relationship which the Lord Jesus knew so perfectly as a Man on earth.

The apostle's second address to the babes occupies about 10 verses; that is much more than we should have expected. To them he says, "It is the last hour." The word "hour" here means a *period* of time; as we might say, "The hour of tribulation"; that is the special period during which it lasts.

He finds it necessary to warn the babes against seducers or Antichrists, of whom even then there were many. They had been within the christian assembly, professedly at least, but they had gone out, that is, they had given up Christianity.

In chapter iv. 3, he speaks of the "spirit of Antichrist," which they had heard should come and was even then in the world. *The Antichrist will not appear until the church shall have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His coming for us.* John is not occupied with prophetic events at all, but with the moral (or perhaps we should say antichristian) *character* of the Antichrist.

In verse 20 he gives two marks which distinguish this person, (1) he denies that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah of Israel; this is the form Jewish unbelief takes; and, (2) he denies the Father and the Son, this is the way the divine Persons are revealed in Christianity, so that this we might call anti-christian unbelief.

From chapter iv. 3, we learn that this "spirit of error" does not confess "Jesus Christ come in flesh," whereas the Spirit of truth does confess Him as so come. The truth confessed here covers the whole truth of Christ's Person: His Deity and His humanity, as well as the union of both in one Person. But it must not be supposed that these evils are put forward in such a way as to be repulsive at the first; on the contrary, it is usual with a working of error that it seeks to come in stealthily and is excused and explained away by subtle means and reasoning.

But the spiritual man, who is dependent on God and His word, is able to distinguish between the work of the Spirit of God and the working of a spirit of error; this is a very important thing. To-day the working of Satan is continually on the increase; we find it not only in openly anti-christian systems, such as Christian Science, Millennial Dawnism and a multitude of new cults which are continually springing up, but even in quarters which were once highly esteemed and very sound and orthodox.

Not only is this the case, but it permeates Christendom largely, being worked into school and college class books, stories for the young, and a variety of books of all kinds. The pulpit, too, has been made a means of disseminating fundamental error in sermons and discourses. This is a very solemn state of things.

What, then, is the safeguard in the midst of all these workings of Satan? What is the word to the "babes"? It is this, "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning." It is the word of God abiding in us—not something which professes to be an advanced or new development in keeping with the latest discoveries of the age, but "that which ye have heard from the beginning."

Nor is it merely *intellectual* knowledge that can keep the soul; it is the "unction from the Holy One" (ver. 20), the "unction which ye have received of Him abideth in you" (ver. 27). The word of God, learnt in communion with God by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the heart and conscience, abiding in us, teaching us all things, so that we are not dependent on the teaching of men; valuable as that may be when it comes from God, but equally injurious when it is merely the human mind reasoning on the things of God.

Thus it is we abide in Him; and it is interesting to note that this little word "abide" occurs about twenty times in this epistle. This is the divine antidote to the specious working of the enemy to draw us away from Christ and the truth.

It is also worthy of remark the way in which verse 25 comes in here somewhat abruptly, "And this is the promise which *He* hath promised us, even eternal life." It is one of those absolute statements so often found in John's epistle. Is it not the case now, as in John's day, that there are those against whose teaching it is necessary to warn the babes in Christ, and indeed others also?

To obscure or deny what scripture so plainly and fully affirms, namely, that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son, and he that *hath* the Son *hath* this life, is a fatal error. We have it in Christ now, and the apostle desired that the saints should know they possessed it here and now (chap. v. 11-13). There is a permanence about this life, which never can change or pass away, and which never can be lost.

F.G.B.

The Fragrant Perfume.

(Exodus xxx. 34-38).

IN verse 34 of our chapter we find various sweet spices beaten small, to compose the incense which should be burned on the altar of incense and in the censer. It made the priest who offered it and the people whom he represented, well pleasing before God. This incense speaks to us, not only of the intercession, but also of the perfections of Christ.

In the second chapter of Leviticus, the oblations of the meal offerings (or cakes) had frankincense put upon them, a memorial of them being burnt upon the altar. This prefigured the humanity of Christ, offered in sacrifice for us on the cross. His perfection is expressed by the odour of the incense which went up before God; an incense which God declared belonged to Him—to Him alone and to no other.

As regards the typical teaching of the showbread, which was placed on the golden table before God, it represented, before Him, the people of Israel. When the loaves were set in order on the table, pure frankincense was put upon each row (Levit. xxiv. 7); this latter perfume speaks of God's delight in Christ as a perfect man here below, and we ourselves accepted in Him also

before God because He finds His good pleasure in Christ.

If we examine the part played by all the substances which compose (the anointing oil and) the incense throughout the word of God, we are struck with one thing—in the book of Canticles, which is, we might say, the garden of perfumes, they are all mentioned.

In chapter v. of that book, verses 10-16, we find first the description which the Shulamite gives of the king, of him who is called her well-beloved. She appreciates, not only the perfume of His Person, but the excellent perfumes of every word He utters, "His lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." Everything that proceeded from those lips was a perfume, both to God and to her who was attached to the king, to him whom she called her well-beloved.

Not only are His head and His hairs mentioned, but in Psalm xlv. His garments, representing, as they do always in the word, a witness to what He is—and here it is the king—"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and cassia." It was an excellent perfume which man was not allowed to smell. But when the king speaks of His well-beloved in the Canticles, He enumerates all the perfumes! not only those which constitute the holy oil, but also a number of others as well.

Is not this wonderful? We truly value Christ and we can say: We love Him, He knows it. But when He expresses His value for us, He clothes us with all perfections. He considers us as objects in which He takes His delight. If God said of Him, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"; the bride is the beloved of the Son. "How much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O, my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. A

garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse ; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed'' (Canticles iv. 10-12).

This is what she was for Him : a garden sealed, into which He alone had the right to enter, into which He does not allow any stranger to come. It is *His* garden, and in this garden He has put all the sweet perfumes of the whole world, in such a way that His heart can find its delights there.

Is it not a marvellous thing to think that though we appreciate so little the Person of our beloved Saviour, He, in virtue of the work which He has accomplished for us, and by which He has made us perfect before God, sees in us nothing but perfection, well-pleasing to His heart?

It is no question here of the church viewed as responsible in this world, but of what the value of *His* work in our favour is ; of what He has done for us and what He has made us to be for God. It is the same in the parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls. He finds one pearl of great price, and he sees such beauty in it that he sells all he has to buy it.

The Lord, when He saw us, gave up everything ; He died on the cross. He saw us beforehand such as we would be in virtue of His work ; even then when we were still in the darkness of death, in our lost and ruined state. He saw us such as He would have us to be, and if He had not left all, He would not have become possessed of this beautiful pearl—beautiful in *His* eyes.

But He alone is worthy of praise ; this was what Mary of Bethany understood so well, when pouring out upon His feet a perfume of pure spikenard. In the gospel of Mark, we are told that she anointed the Lord's *head*—the perfect servant ; and in the gospel of John, the *feet* of the Son of God. By faith she saw, in some measure at any rate, the beauty and perfection of that work which the Saviour was just about to accomplish,

and she came to render testimony to Him with pure spikenard of great price which represented all her fortune, and with which she anointed His feet.

She gave testimony to that work of which she but little understood the meaning then; but enough, however, to cause her to cast herself in worship at the feet of her Lord, before He accomplished it. He was worthy of it; He alone was worthy! In the gospel of Matthew, chapter ii., we see Him as a little child at Bethlehem, laid in a manger. Kings, wise men, men of eminence, came to Him (ver. 2). They brought gold, the symbol of divine righteousness, frankincense and myrrh; of the two substances which constitute the incense of the tabernacle and the holy anointing oil.

This little child in a cradle was worthy of these offerings. This was not only so when He appeared at the baptism of John, when the heavens were opened in contemplation of Him; but whilst He was still a little child, He was worthy of all that the world could offer of its most precious things.

When He reached the end of His career, in John xix. 39, and had accomplished the work of redemption, and entered into the place of death; God would not leave Him without a witness. An immense quantity of myrrh and aloes was brought to render testimony to the value of the work which He had accomplished: and He was with the rich in His death.

When He began His life's history, "all the frankincense" was for Him; and when He finished it, all was for Him still. And it is this which we need to keep carefully in our hearts—*what He is*, and what He is *for God*. May we enjoy it and understand continually more and more what *He is*, *He* who is our Saviour, and who is pleased to associate us with His perfections in the presence of God.

H. R.

Language Perverted ; Justice Defeated

WHEN Jesus was delivered by Pilate to be crucified, language was perverted and justice defeated. Three times Pilate had had to say, "I find no fault in Him. I will *therefore* chastise Him and let Him go." He could find no *fault*, but was ready to chastise Him to appease those who clamoured for His crucifixion. Thus was justice set at nought and language perverted.

Rome's proud motto was *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum* (let justice be done though the heavens should fall)—and Rome's well-established inflexible justice was well known and universally feared (see Acts xxii. 24 to 29 ; xxv. 10 to 12 and 21 ; xxvi. 32). But in the case of the Lord Jesus, justice was flung to the winds and wicked man had his way. And then they put Him into the grave, sealing the stone and setting a watch. And if poor lost man could have had his way still further, the Lord Jesus would still be in the grave and there would have been no salvation for any. "But God raised Him from the dead" (Acts xiii. 30). Thus God turned the worst acts of man's wickedness into the occasion of demonstrating His power and glory.

"Father, we, Thy children, bless Thee
 For Thy love on us bestowed,
 Source of blessing ! we confess Thee
 Now, our Father and our God.
 Wondrous was Thy love in giving
 Jesus for our sins to die !
 Wondrous was His grace in leaving,
 For our sakes, the heavens on high !"

F. W.

If you can make yourselves happy and comfortable in this world which has rejected Jesus, count not on His blessings.

Gleanings.

Trial.—Trial cannot in itself confer grace; but, under God's hand, it can break the will, and detect hidden and unsuspected evils; so that the new life is more fully and largely developed. God has a larger place in the heart, there is more intelligence in His ways, more lowly dependence, more consciousness that the world is nothing, more distrust of flesh and self.

* * *

The saint is more emptied of self and filled with the Lord. What is eternal and true, because divine, has a much larger place in the soul; what is false, is detected and set aside. There is more ripeness in our relationship with God. We dwell more in the eternal scenes into which He has brought our souls. We can look back, then, and see the love which has brought us through it all, and bless God with dependent thanksgiving for every trial. Such only purge away the dross, and confirm us in brighter, fuller, and clearer hope, and increase our knowledge of God—self being proportionately annulled.

* * *

He makes all things work together to the good of those who love Him. He weans in every way from this world that He may attach us to that One for whom He has created us anew. This is only a place we are passing through, where Christ was cast out, we pass through it, and bereft of all here, we have only to work for Him and glorify Him.

* * *

It is written that "the spiritual man discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no one." It is *then* the will of God, and a precious will, that we should only be able to discern His will according to our own spiritual state.

Peace With God.

IT was pointed out some time ago by one who was much blessed in the preaching of the gospel that the believer's peace with God and certainty of salvation depended—not on the work of the Holy Ghost *in* him, but on the work of Christ *for* him. And yet we need hardly insist on the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit *in* us; for He it is that makes us to know and enjoy every blessing we have.

When God said of old, "When I see the blood I will pass over you," He spoke of that which was *outside* their houses; He did not say, "When *you* see it, but when *I* see it." The blood of the lamb was put there for *His* eye to see.

"It is finished," said the Lord Jesus, just as He was about to drain the cup of justice to the last dark drop upon the cross. All has been done; justice has been satisfied, all God's righteous claims have been fully and entirely met, He has been glorified by that work.

Christ is risen and has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. When we look by faith entirely *outside* ourselves and rest on that finished work, the result must be a peace which knows no change and leaves no room for doubt or uncertainty.

The crowned and glorified Saviour is the proof and evidence to us that God has accepted the sacrifice offered up on Calvary, hence peace is our blessed and everlasting portion. The solid ground of the believer's peace is *God's* estimate of the finished work of Christ—and *He* knows its full value and extent. So we may truly sing:—

"My love is oftentimes low,
My joy still ebbs and flows;
But *peace* with Him remains the same,
No change Jehovah knows."

The One True "Nazarite."

A SWEET hymn, written about 1849, and entitled in those days, "A song for the wilderness," has in it the two following lines:—

"The Lord is Himself gone before;
He has marked out the path that we tread."

Turning to the book of Numbers we find, by coupling the sixth and the sixteenth chapters, two beautiful types of the Lord Jesus—those of Nazarite and Priest—both closely allied the one to the other, and bearing out the thought expressed in the two lines just quoted.

The book of Numbers furnishes valuable instruction concerning the journey of God's redeemed people through the wilderness. The sixth chapter affords an illustration, setting forth, as it does, one phase of the Lord's life here—the Nazarite's path. The word "Nazarite" is sometimes translated "*separate*." The characteristics of the *separated* one, his vow, and the circumstances attending the completion of it are all narrated with divine precision.

Five characteristics were to mark the whole-hearted and faithful devotion of the Nazarite. One, *positive*—"he is holy unto the Lord"; and four *negative*—no wine, no razor, no contact with the dead, and no uncleanness for the dead. Briefly stated, all this indicates for us that there is to be abstinence from mere earthly joys and impulses; no faltering in bearing "reproach" for God (1 Cor. iv. 10-13); absolute separation from the world (2 Cor. vi. 17); and no succumbing to earthly sorrow (e.g. Lev. x. 6).

May it be ours to remember, in this connection, the record that "all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father"; and that the Lord Himself declared of His own, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

Israel, as a company, started as a Nazarite, but failed immediately. There will, however, be opportunity for renewal in a day to come.

The Church, as alluded to in Acts ii., also as a company, started as a Nazarite; but before many years had elapsed the appeals in Revelation ii. and iii. reveal how quickly failure had set in. For the Church there will be *no* renewal.

But *although* Israel and the Church have both failed, God was not without *His reserve*. There was one true Nazarite (and, it may be said, there never was but one) in whom all the foregoing characteristics were faithfully reproduced. This we may gather from the statement that, "Such a High Priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26). He needed no renewal, for He knew no failure, but remained throughout His pathway, "the holy and the true," "the faithful and true Witness" (Rev. iii. 7, 14); the only One who could be the antitype of Him who "stood between the dead and the living" (Num. xvi. 48).

Before leaving this world, He had said to Peter, "*Follow thou Me*"; and that apostle wrote of Him as "leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21). The apostle John, who heard the words addressed to Peter, also wrote, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6).

Thus the Lord, having trod the Nazarite path, has called upon us to follow Him, and, in heaven, as our great High Priest, He is able to sympathise with, and to succour us in all our trials connected with that path—"the one which His footsteps have marked as His own."

A true Nazarite is (*even in these days*) *ever a blessing to God's people*. In the days of Israel's declension, God, in grace, had His Nazarites. Samson was one, though with a sad record, his career ending in blindness and loss of liberty. Samuel was another Nazarite, and, although not without failure, his history was a brighter one than Samson's. In the Church, notwithstanding

her failure, there have been those raised up from time to time as Nazarites unto God. It is instructive to notice, in regard to this, that at the end of Numbers vi. we get the result in blessing. How like John xvii. ! "Father, . . . I have glorified Thee upon the earth . . . keep through Thine own Name those that Thou hast given Me."

Oh, may we seek to be true, and not become like those Nazarites who, once whiter than snow, became blacker than coal (Lam. iv. 7-8).

But sad indeed it is where the Nazarite, blacker than coal, poses before men as whiter than snow !

N. L. N.

A Letter from a Dying Friend.

The writer of this letter was brought to Christ when very young ; but for many years he "backslided and wandered so far away from God that those who knew him intimately might well have doubted whether he really had received God's offer of pardon." Having passed through many troubles and proved the unsatisfying character of the husks of the far country, he was afterwards restored through the mercy and grace of God. He narrates the following incident :—

A GENTLEMAN in India was speaking to a lady who thought that God could not love her because of her continual failures. The lady had a native man-servant, a fine faithful fellow, whom she greatly valued. She also had a son, a naughty, troublesome child. The gentleman, wishing to show how foolish were her fears, said to her :—

"I suppose you love that servant of yours a great deal better than you love that child?"

"Indeed I do not," she replied, evidently offended at the question. "What do you mean by saying such a thing?"

"Well, madam," replied the gentleman, "seeing that your servant's conduct gives you much pleasure, and having heard you complain how unruly the child is,

would it not be natural for you to love the former more than the latter?"

The lady saw the point. Her child was her child, notwithstanding all his naughty ways; and that was why she loved him. Her servant, with all his exemplary conduct, stood in no such relationship.

And so, my dear friend, never allow yourself to be discouraged. The path is a difficult one, but sin has no longer dominion over you. Remember the oft-repeated apostolic injunction to "be sober," for this alone will save you from many a little backsliding and many an hour of regret. Don't forget, as an elderly lady told me in Taranaki, New Zealand, that if you ever enjoyed Christ's presence more than you do now, *you are* a backslider!

Remember, too, that a young man can cleanse his way by "taking heed" to—not merely by "reading"—what is written in God's word; and strive to be able to say with the Psalmist, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." You are Christ's, you cannot do the things that you would, for you are left here to represent Him; get therefore to know Him, for it is impossible to represent one we do not know.

You are *expected* to bring forth fruit. God Himself has said, "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Take heed, then, lest, being unfruitful, or even by your careless walk a hindrance to the Lord's work, God see fit to remove you. Try and live in the conscious power of an ungrieved Holy Spirit, so that if all goes wrong with you as regards earthly things, you will be able to say, "*Thou remainest,*" for—

"Only One is true; and as we turn
To His perfect love, at last we learn
How all the things on earth that used to seem
All our highest good, were but a dream,
And, although our cherished idols fall,
In finding Christ, we find our all."

One more word before I close my little letter to you : Should you be a backslider, or ever become one, remember God cannot lie, and He says in 2 Chron. xxx. 9, "The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him."

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee : the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee : the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

C.G.H.N.

The Doctrine of Christ—4

THE apostle Paul's "doctrine of Christ" was the result of the heavenly vision to which he was not disobedient (Acts xxvi. 19).

In his epistles this is set forth in fullest measure with detailed variety of application to those addressed. The many-sided evils which he had to confront and combat in his ministry were, in the wisdom of God, used by the Holy Spirit as a background against which the superlative glories of Christ's holy Person and work should be thrown into greater relief. Thus Judaism, and a kind of Judaic Christianity, heathen philosophy and various imposing forms of religious thought, together with Gnosticism—all of which the apostle Paul had to meet—served but to enhance the glory of the blessed Lord who is at once the end of the law to every one that believeth, the wisdom of God in the world which by wisdom knew not God, the real Lord of the unseen realm of spiritual beings, the One in whom all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form; and the image of the invisible God.

But for the purpose of this present article the simple narrative of Paul's conversion and early testimony to the Person of Christ affords ample material for a preliminary consideration of what he held and taught as to the "doctrine of Christ."

In the thrice-repeated story of what took place on the road to Damascus we find the revelation to him of an historical Person who fills the picture presented to us in the apostle's words. Selecting the following verses from these accounts, given us by Paul himself, we have a clearly outlined "doctrine of Christ," in perfect harmony with our Lord's own affirmation before Caiaphas, Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi, and John's teaching, all of which have been before us in earlier articles.

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem" (Acts xxvi. 9, 10).

"And I heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest" (Acts xxii. 7, 8).

"Whereupon . . . I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts xxvi. 19).

"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20).

"But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews . . . proving that this is very Christ" (Acts ix. 22).

Note carefully the emphatic terms employed here: *Jesus of Nazareth*; *the Lord*, whose appearance to the one-time persecutor is described by himself as having been a heavenly vision; the direct proclamation of the Christ by Paul, that *He is the Son of God*; and, finally, his insistence to the Damascus Jews that *Jesus of Nazareth is very Christ*.

1. Jesus of Nazareth—a Man and a city; a historical Person and place easily recognisable and identified.
2. Jesus of Nazareth, who is also the Lord of the heavenly vision, the Nazarene, appearing with commanding majesty and authority.
3. Jesus of Nazareth—the Son of God.
4. Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God—the very Christ.

It is a real Man who is the centre of the heavenly vision which so completely changed the conduct, character and conversation of Saul of Tarsus. "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest" is the astonishing reply to Saul's enquiry as to who was speaking from the glory-light. And (what does not appear in our ordinary version) the "I" is emphatic, thus the speaker distinctly and definitely avows His identity with the once crucified Man of Nazareth.

"This is Jesus of Nazareth," ran the title placed upon the cross in mockery; "I am Jesus of Nazareth," affirms the glorified Man in heaven to the one-time persecutor of His people. Rich clusters of refreshing truths are to be found in this narrative, where the risen Head of the Church intimates the union subsisting between Himself in heaven and His suffering people on earth; but these are not quite within the scope of the present article. The point is that from being the most bitter opposer of Jesus of Nazareth, Saul of Tarsus was completely changed and straightway preaches that He is the Son of God.

The scriptures with which his religious and intelligent mind, as an instructed Jew, was so richly furnished, but the meaning of which he had never grasped, were now clearly illuminated by the light of the heavenly vision. In Jesus of Nazareth, Saul now beheld not only a crucified Man, but the One in whom the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah found their fulfilment. This One, a glorified Man with commanding authority, was revealed in him as being none other than the Son of God. And the revelation of this truth produced such a revolution in Paul's soul that we find him straightway preaching that Jesus is the Son of God, also proving to the Jews at Damascus in the synagogues, from their own scriptures, that this same Jesus is very Christ.

Here we find ourselves again upon the solid rock of the true "doctrine of Christ," from which none of the

subsequent revelations granted to him ever moved the apostle. From first to last, in all his epistles and recorded preachings, the truth set forth by the apostle Paul is replete with the living avowal that Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord, the Son of God, the very Christ. How the gospel of God, Christian fellowship, Christian liberty, Christian service and obedience, Christ's headship over all, yea, and much more, are seen to be bound up with the "doctrine of Christ" as held and taught by the apostle to the Gentiles, we shall see, if the Lord will, later; but the Person of Christ is of necessity ever beyond our highest thought, as instructed by the Spirit through the word. We are exhorted to grow in grace and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. Here surely is a blessed occupation for eternity, for—

"The higher mysteries of Thy fame
 The creature's grasp transcend;
 The Father only, Thy blest Name
 Of Son can comprehend:
 Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
 That every knee to Thee should bow."

W.G.T.

The Church of God, and Churches.

SCRIPTURE reveals that the eternal purpose of God for the present age is to gather out from this world, which in rejecting His Son came under judgment and lies in the wicked one (1 John v. 19), a people for His Name (Acts xv. 14)—those who, believing the gospel of their salvation, are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise as the Lord's own, no longer of this world as He was not of it. But individual blessing, though of first concern to the soul, is not all that God has purposed for us either now or in the ages to come.

Before ever the gospel was preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," He had, by indwelling every disciple in the little company at Jerusalem, baptised them into one body with the risen and glorified Man, Christ Jesus; and subsequently believers were "added together" and "to the Lord." The lapse of centuries, with all the evil that has darkened them, has in no wise altered this foundation fact of Christianity—the fact of the unity of all believers as members of one body, the body of Christ. But has the truth always produced its practical effect in the Church of God, even with those who have professed faith in it? (See Eph. iv. 12-17.)

The Church or Assembly of God, the company gathered out from the world, Jew and Gentile, united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, is viewed under various symbols and from two distinct standpoints in scripture. As the Assembly which Christ is building (Matt. xvi. 18), composed of living stones only (1 Peter ii. 5), fitly framed together, it groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, a habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 21, 22), and is Christ's body, the complement of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i. 23).

But as the Assembly of which Paul, as a wise master-builder, laid the foundation and others builded thereon (1 Cor. iii. 10), set up on earth and committed to man in responsibility and for testimony, sad failure has resulted; as indeed it has to all that was ever committed to man. Christendom has not continued in God's goodness (Rom. xi. 22), and so has sealed her doom; for there is no remedy. Glorifying in her apostasy from the faith, she will be disowned by the Lord and judged as the harlot (Rev. iii. 16; xviii.) after the Assembly which is Christ's body, will have been already translated to heavenly glory as His bride (Eph. v. 25-27). Thus widely do the two views of the Assembly diverge, even from the earliest days.

For not only did men thus early build in much "wood,

hay and stubble," reducing the building to ruins, but, after the recovery of much individual truth at the Reformation, even godly men, with mistaken zeal, changed the whole design. Tired of that which professed to be *the* Catholic Church and strangely passing over the Church of God according to scripture, they began to build churches to their own designs, each self-governed and independent one of another. This new departure, the principle of congregationalism and the essence of Protestantism, has since become so general that, to-day, the one Assembly of God, set up on earth, is all but unknown to most christians, even as history; and "churches" abound to suit all tastes. In view of this anomalous condition, what is the path for those who mourn over it and turn to the Lord for guidance, **desiring to keep His word and not to deny His Name?** (Rev. iii. 8).

While we cannot look for a return of the bright days of primeval purity of the Assembly, we mistake the Lord's mind if we stand alone, forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as we see the day approaching, for in so doing we render much of the New Testament void of present application.

We err from the scriptures no less if we countenance, by our presence or membership, even the best church of *man's* building; and the common plea of owning all believers as members of an invisible church universal, does not free us from responsibility. For such invisibility was never God's purpose for the Assembly; what He purposed was a visible unity to maintain His testimony on the earth. That such an invisible church is all that remains is evidence of the total ruin which has come in, and should fill us with shame rather than self-complacency. Alas! too, that so many believers have likewise become invisible; while living unto themselves, their testimony for Christ has faded to merely owning the name of christian.

How thankful we should be that the Lord has fore-

seen and graciously provided for these days of "little strength" of a would-be-faithful few amidst widespread apostasy, for says He, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. xviii. 20).

But what unity is owned in our being together thus around Himself? That we are believers holding some truth in common, or who have separated from the corrupt or human systems around us? These may be uniting bonds, it is true, but they do not represent the only unity that scripture warrants for the ground of gathering together, namely, the unity of the Spirit—a unity which we are exhorted to maintain, with meekness, lowliness, etc. (Eph. iv. 3).

The Acts and epistles make it clear that, as members of the one body, dependent upon each other and the Lord, believers everywhere formed *one* Assembly of God. As the gospel spread far beyond Jerusalem, of necessity all could not meet together in one place, so that we read of the Assembly at Antioch, at Corinth, at Jerusalem, etc., even though all at Jerusalem would not meet in one building. More than one Assembly—and that God's Assembly—at one place is unknown to scripture.

In regions such as Judea, Galatia, etc., there were assemblies, each the local representation of the Assembly of God. The relation of these local assemblies to *the* Assembly can only be rightly understood by bearing in mind that there is one body and one Spirit, "for by one Spirit have we all been baptised into one body, and all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). This is the ground of the unity of that which was set up on earth, the Assembly of God; which was committed to man to maintain, the unity of the Spirit being the practical expression of the one body.

Thus the Assembly continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers, far beyond Jerusalem and after Pentecost.

The breaking of bread by the assembled saints, while showing the Lord's death (1 Cor. xi.), also set forth the unity of the Assembly at Corinth, with all that in every place called upon the name of the Lord; "the many" who are one bread and one body (1 Cor. x. 17).

Pastors and teachers were gifted members of the body, set in the Assembly, as apostles and prophets were for its foundation (Eph. iv. 11, 12; ii. 20), so that a teacher would exercise his gift for the edifying of the body of Christ in whatever local assembly he found himself; *a* teacher in *the* Assembly, not *the* teacher of *an* assembly.

The exercise of discipline was a local responsibility, evil being dealt with where it occurred; but such action was in view of the Assembly representatively (1 Cor. v.).

The Assembly is the pillar and ground of the truth, of which the local assembly becomes the local evidence (1 Tim. iii. 15, 16). The holiness that becomes God's house is imperative upon the Assembly in whatever locality, and regulates our behaviour in it; while if it is not maintained, *judgment must begin there in the removal of the candlestick of the unfaithful local assembly* (1 Peter iv. 17; Rev. ii. 5).

The fellowship of ministering to the saints in temporal things engaged the hearts of the assemblies of Macedonia far beyond their locality (2 Cor. viii.), though each assembly had its own responsibility in this matter also (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). Indeed only in the case of elders and deacons (elders appointed by apostles or their delegates, and deacons chosen by the saints, for the care of the local assembly and its charges) was the sphere limited to the local assembly.

In every other privilege and responsibility, in maintaining godly order and in testimony, the local assembly represents and acts locally for the whole and not independently of it. For can circumstances of distance and natural boundaries divide the body so as to make local assemblies independent? Rather do they give the

opportunity of manifesting the unity, and in this is the great contrast between the Assembly of God in scripture and that commonly so called to-day. Membership, not of a local assembly, but of the body of Christ, is the only membership known to scripture (1 Cor. xii. 18), the local assembly being spoken of as "Christ's body" (1 Cor. xii. 27)—(without the definite article)—such is the exactness of "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Alas! at the present day, the great majority of believers meet on other ground; the Church of God, as set up and constituted on the earth, has been set aside by man for his churches. Some may claim for their system a world-wide unity, others a national unity, others, again, that of a dissenting body united by the doctrines of its founder, while yet others own in practice no wider unity than that of the local assembly. This latter denial of scripture is an insidious evil by which the enemy is seeking to neutralise the recovery of the truth of the Assembly, and must call us all to watchfulness. For is not independence the child of the self-will which lies deep in our fallen nature, and early showed itself: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. iv. 9). It is the door to the easy path of man's innovations, and provides conveniently for a new beginning whenever evil enters, instead of the humiliating and difficult task of judging it scripturally.

The thought of a human confederation of assemblies is equally foreign to scripture and can only occur to those who, having given up the Assembly of God, habitually think of independent assemblies. One error ever breeds another in the human heart.

But while all christians will never disown their unities, the one body remains the ground of gathering for all who desire to keep Christ's word. And while none dare presume to repair the ruin and to restore the Assembly, or to gather as though there had been no failure, there remains the "unity of the Spirit" to be

maintained for all saints scripturally gathered. No such company could be rightly addressed as the Assembly at —, for many members of the body meet elsewhere and on other ground, some of whom could not be received because of defiling evil doctrine or practice in their midst; others are content with their human system and have no desire to own the truth of God.

It is thus an evidence of the broken and ruined state of the Assembly that there is, in practice, a fellowship necessarily narrower than the whole body, the fellowship of all saints gathered on scriptural ground. If we mourn over the sad failure of the Assembly of God, the indifference of saints to it and the vast maze of human fabrications called churches, let us remember that God is faithful, His word remains for our obedience and faith, Christ remains on high, the Head of the body, bestowing gifts and grace to every member, and the Holy Spirit remains on earth, dwelling in the gathered saints, to divide to every member severally as He will (1 Cor. xii.).

May we, mindful of the one hope of our calling, seek with all lowliness and meekness in ourselves, and with long suffering toward others, forbearing one another in love, give diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv. 1-3), that there may be some little answer on earth to the Lord's mind, even in the darkest days of apostasy. To own any other unity is to disown this unity, for there is but one body and one Spirit (verse 4).

H. H.

All our little sorrows and separations were but little drops by the way, to make us feel that we were not with Him. How well ordered all is! I ever long more to be in heaven with Him before the Father, though I desire to finish whatever He has for me to do. And if it keeps me awhile out for Him, then it is worth while.

Light, Life and Love—4.

Brief notes on John's 1st epistle
(Chapter iii. 1-6).

THE opening words of chapter iii. set before us our true position with no uncertain sound, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God." It is unfortunate that our excellent Authorised Version should have given "sons" instead of "children" here. Paul speaks of both "sons" and "children"; but in John it is always "children," because the great subject with John is the new nature, and "children" involves a *birth-tie*; "sons" is more our *position*.

It is not a matter of *attainment*, but when converted we are *born* into the family of God. It is what God, in His grace, has done for us; and the Holy Spirit is given also in order that we might know and enjoy this relationship. All depends upon God the Father, and the "manner of love" with which He has loved us. Our place, then, in the world is distinct and definite—it "knows us not, because it knew Him not."

How blessed, then, the position of the children of God! They are loved of the Father, even as Christ was loved (John xvii. 23); but unknown by the world which knew not Him. If we meditate on these truths and make them our own, what a power for our walk and life! With what joy they would fill the soul, even as we pass through this world which has rejected our beloved Lord and Saviour! Truly might the apostle say, "Of His fulness have all we received and grace upon grace." Faith accepts and believes what God says for our joy and comfort.

"Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be; but we know that, if He is manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." It is not merely when we get to heaven that this relationship of children will be true of us, but it is here and now. What we

shall be is something which has not yet been made manifest, but we know that if He is manifested, we shall be like Him (new trans.).

“If” here (as it should read) has not any uncertainty about it; it is like many other “ifs” in scripture—that which is certain because dependent upon what God is and what He has made to be true of us (see Col. iii. 1, etc.). “Like Him,” what a wonderful fruit of divine grace!

“Like Jesus in that place
Of love and light supreme;
Once Man of Sorrows, full of grace,
Heaven’s blest and endless theme.”

To this we might add Col. iii. 4, “When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory”; Romans viii. 29, “conformed to the image of His Son”; Phil. iii. 21, “Who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory, according to the working of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself” (new trans.).

Alas! how unlike we are to Him now! But *then*, we shall be perfectly like Him, conformed to His image, bearing the image of the heavenly One, seeing Him as He is, *with* Him in glory. No wonder that the apostle could say that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory to be revealed to us.

And what is the effect of this on the christian now? Every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure. This does not mean that the hope is in *us*, but it is “set upon Him” (Christ), who is the subject of the hope. Thus there are two things which should act upon the believer, (1) he has a new and divine life and nature, and (2) he has an object to form his life here.

The latter reminds us of what the Lord said in His prayer in John xvii. 19, “For their sakes I sanctify

Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” This He said in view of the fact that He was about to set Himself absolutely apart in the glory of God as the risen Man, to be both the object and the power for their sanctification here.

So that sanctification, so far from being produced by looking in at oneself, is brought about by occupation with an object outside ourselves—with Christ in glory—and it is as we look at Him by faith that we are “changed,” “transformed,” into moral conformity to Him now. This is the purifying effect *now* of the fact that we shall be perfectly like Him *then*.

Another thing to be observed here is the way in which Christ and God are brought together in this epistle, the apostle passing from one to the other almost without a pause. “The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not”—the “Him” refers to Christ, who, when manifested in this world, was unknown by it. Again, “If He is manifested,” the antecedent would be “God” (children of God, ver. 1), but “we shall be like Him” means like Christ; and in ver. 3, “Him” refers to Christ.

We have the same in chap. ii. 29, “born of Him” is “of God,” though what just preceded it refers to Christ; and in chap. v. 20, “even in His (God’s) Son Jesus Christ”—but what preceded says, We know the true One and we are in the true One (Christ). This, which would seem confusion to the mind of man, is an evidence of the divine wisdom which shows out the perfect unity and equality of the Persons: the result also of the fact given expression to by the Lord when He said, “I and My Father are one,” “All things that the Father hath are Mine,” and similar words, which testify to His true Deity and equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

How important that we should be well grounded in these truths in a day when the enemy loses no oppor-

tunity to detract from the glory of Christ, our beloved Lord and Saviour !

It is well known that ver. 4 of our chapter is better translated, "Every one that practises sin, practises also lawlessness ; and sin is lawlessness." It is not so much a question of "doing" an act, but of a *course* of acting ; and, besides, sin is not *confined* to "transgression of the law," because man sinned before the law was given and the Gentile was never put under law. Sin is self-will, it is man giving way to the desires of his fallen nature, doing what he himself likes to do without reference to God.

In Christ we see just the opposite to this ; "We know that He was manifested to take away our sins ; and in Him is no sin." He could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" ; "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" ; and this was shown out in the fact that His words and His works were those which the Father had given Him to speak and to do. Wonderful and blessed Saviour—may we know more of the spirit and ways which Thou didst manifest in all Thy life and walk here !

"To take away our sins" involved His perfect obedience even unto death, for nothing else could possibly effect the cleansing we required, except His precious and atoning blood. And had there been the slightest trace of sin in Him, His sacrifice on the cross could not have met the claims of a holy God. Hence, "In Him is no sin" : it is an absolute statement which admits of no doubt or denial.

Thus the truth is affirmed by three witnesses, "In Him is no sin" (John) ; "He did no sin" (Peter) ; "He knew no sin" (Paul).

And, finally, it is added, "Whosoever abides in Him does not sin ; whosoever sins has not seen Him or known Him (ver. 6). Could anything be stated in more definite and absolute words? John is looking at what

belongs to and characterises the new and divine nature we have received at new birth ; he is not making excuses for our shortcomings and failures. It has been said that the attributing to a *person*, what is true only of a nature, runs all through John. These absolute statements, showing us what things are *in themselves*, are very valuable to us.

F.G.B.

Gleanings.

Taught of God. "They shall all be taught of God." Nothing teaches like the word of God, sought out and searched in holy subjection, and received as a new-born babe.

* * *

The Son of God. The Lord Jesus was Son in His divine nature from all eternity ; but as man, too, He was Son ; and also as risen from the dead. And by His death and resurrection, He brings us in before God and His Father, having the same position as Himself, as far as to be sons, absolutely without sin in our new nature, and freed from condemnation before God because the old nature is already judged.

* * *

Sons. God might have angels before Him as servants ; it was His will to have sons.

* * *

Christ dwelling in the heart. "That Christ," says the apostle, "may dwell in your hearts." Thus He, who fills all things with His glory, fills the heart Himself, with a love more powerful than all the glory of which He is the centre. He is the strength which enables us in peace and love to contemplate all that He has done, the wisdom of His ways, and the universal glory of which He is the centre.

She Came to Jesus : Have You ?

TWO things were seen at the Cross of Calvary, namely, man's hatred towards God and God's love towards man.

Man's long career of sin against God rose to its height at that cross. But at the same cross God's love rose higher than man's sin; for "Where sin abounded," God's matchless grace did "much more abound."

In his contempt, man pierced the side of the Redeemer; but it was met by the blood!

"The very spear that pierced His side
Drew forth the blood to save!"

The writer likes to tell of the conversion of the first person who, long years ago, first spoke to him, in a direct way, of the Saviour.

She was a christian lady residing in the West End of London, and had been "a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God." Her dear daughter was the first in her family to claim the Lord Jesus definitely as her Saviour and Lord, and was then the means of leading her brother to Him. But what about her mother? Ah, she remained as adamant against all the entreaties of her daughter, insisting on invitations to the world's festivities—balls, parties and scenes of pleasure—being accepted as usual for both her daughter and herself.

God, however, had His eye on this poor worldling, this lady of fashion, and before long she succumbed to a very serious illness, at which the physicians shook their heads. And then, during a night season, the "still small voice" of the Holy Spirit was heard; and she came to realise that, *in God's sight*, she was a lost sinner.

What a hard lesson this often is to learn!

But "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." And so He did in this case, for He met

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and answered to the felt soul-need of this now anxious lady.

How did He do it?

A leaflet containing a well-known hymn was lying on the table near her bed. In weariness of spirit, she stretched forth her hand and took it and read its words over and over again, for they gripped her—those beautiful words :—

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

In result, she did come to Him, believing He spoke what was true when He said that “*Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.*”

She came to Jesus; and it was not long before she could, with rejoicing, continue the words of that sweet hymn, and say, from the depth of her heart :—

“Just as I am—Thy love, I own,
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!”

Dear reader, how is it with you?

* * * *

“As for God, His way is perfect” (Ps. xviii. 30). How well suited is this precious assurance to those of God’s people who may be passing through trying circumstances! It has often been quoted as if it signified that our “circumstances” constitute God’s way. This is a serious mistake; for it frequently happens that the circumstances in which God’s people find themselves arise from their own waywardness, as was so often the case with Israel.

God may *allow* such circumstances; but the point is that, although He may not see fit to change them (Dan. iii. 17), He has a “way” *through* them; and that way

is a perfect way; because, for us to-day, that way is Christ.

“Our whole Resource along the road,
Nothing but Christ—the Christ of God.”

A brief glance at Matthew xiv. will illustrate our meaning.

The extinguishing of that “burning and shining light,” John the Baptist (John v. 35), by the Edomite Herod, must have brought home to the disciples what dangers beset their path (Mark x. 32), as followers of Him (John xi. 16), to whom the Baptist had borne such definite witness (John v. 33-36). But we read that, after they had taken up John’s body and buried it, “they went and told Jesus.” Thus finding their resource in Him.

Now, through these circumstances of danger, God had a perfect way, for we find that Christ brought them “apart into a desert place” (Mark vi. 31). The retirement of Jesus apart into the desert place served another purpose also; for it was a further testimony against the apostate nation.

Surely, the circumstances were very adverse, in which these dear men found themselves. But they were in the desert place with Jesus—*alone with Him*; and the value of this was one of the lessons He would have them learn; where they could prove the greatness of His wisdom, His power, and His love (verse 37); for we read that, into this “desert place” a great multitude followed them; and, when He saw them, He “was moved with compassion towards them.” It was the compassion of God expressed in a human heart; for, “He healed their sick”; and He fed them, so that they did all eat, and were filled (verse 42, and Ps. cxxxii. 15); after which He Himself “sent away the people” (verse 45). Their dismissal made them feel that *that* position of difficulty was over; for such, indeed, it was, in order to bring in new conditions, as Peter walking

with his Lord and Master upon the water set forth.

How truly, we see, God had a "way" through these difficult circumstances; and that Christ was that way—*God's Resource*.

The murder of God's servant told of Satan's hostility; whereas the desert place reminded of the ruin he had effected since the days of Eden, when all was "very good" and fair.

But there was a further lesson to be learnt. "The Prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2) now manifested further hostility by raising a storm with a "contrary" wind to frustrate the Lord's purpose. But this only served to show the Lord's power to again close up one position and open another. And He still enables His saints, through the storms of life, to come into association with Himself (verses 48-49). This was the case with the martyr Stephen (Acts vii.). He learnt, in that terrible storm of persecution, how near he was to Christ in glory, Who, so to speak, "stretched forth His hand," and received his spirit (Acts vii. 59-60); thus closing up one position at Stephen's death, only to open up another in the call of Saul of Tarsus (Acts ix.).

Truly, whatever the circumstances, "as for God, His way is perfect" through them all; for that way is Christ.

N.L.N.

It Was Necessary—It Must Be.

I*T was necessary* that Christ, who knew no sin, should be made sin for us; that He should undergo the judgment of God on the accursed tree in our place. But why all the sufferings endured by Him before the cross? The Lord explains to His disciples, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" These things were all announced, even in their smallest details, by Moses and the prophets.

The Lord had His sufferings ever before Him, He had not shunned any of them. He had ever before Him the word of God, and the will of God — marvellous dependence, perfect submission! And at the moment of delivering up His spirit, knowing that all things were now accomplished, when no more remained but to drink of the vinegar, in order that the scripture might be completely fulfilled, He drinks it; then can pronounce this word, infinite in its consequences: "It is finished."

He had accomplished the will of God, He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do, He had glorified Him on the earth as the well-beloved Son in whom God had found His good pleasure, as the One whose delight was to do the Father's will. He had done it at the cost of all the untold sufferings which He had passed through.

But why were there so many sufferings—the blows, the spitting, the crown of thorns? *It must be.* "The Son of man *must* suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain" (Luke ix. 22). "Nevertheless I *must* walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke xiii. 33).

It must be that the sinful nation should put the top-stone to its sin by nailing to the cross the Son of God come in grace into its midst. *It must be* that the state in which that nation was, and was described by the prophet, should be fully manifested. "Ah, 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" (Isa. i. 4). Such were the people whom God had blessed, elected, set apart to Himself and loved.

But the Gentile nations also, the world, in full agreement with the Jews, had allied themselves with them

so as to take part in their crime. The Lord said, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death" (Luke xviii. 31-33); "Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ" (Acts iv. 25, 26).

It must be that the history of man should end in the complete and terrible manifestation of his sin and enmity against God in causing His Son to undergo the cruellest sufferings, the deepest scorn and the dreadful agony of the cross. This is the dark side of this "It must be," what the heart of man is—what we are; but, God be praised! there is also the other side full of light, what God is—*love*! "The Son of man *must* be lifted up," etc. And this in order that God might show, in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us, to bestow upon us His love, to pour it into our hearts and Himself to rest in His love; "*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?*"

M. K.

He Must Increase.

John iii. 30.

"**H**E must increase." How His own redeemed ones exult in the thought! The declaration is based on the divine counsels for the glory of Christ. John the Baptist, by the Spirit, glimpsed into that glory. His three homely words focus rays which project into a past eternity ere Time began and pierce the future to when

Time shall be no more. Slowly as it seems to us, patiently but surely, the divine counsels are being fulfilled. The divine plan is being worked out by the accomplishment, step by step, of every detail of the prophetic sketch.

An endless, a boundless story is being rehearsed. All parts of scripture furnish their quota of testimony to His Person and work, His sufferings and glory (John v. 39; Luke xxiv. 25-27). The inspired writings reveal Him before creation finding His delights with the sons of men on this earth. They foretell His entry upon a wide sphere of blessing and glory as Son of man. They declare that all things are to be gathered together in Him, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; that in all things He is to have the pre-eminence; that He is to fill all things. From them, the apostle writing to the Hebrews, culls his rich material for the "ascending tributes to His glory" which precede His sitting as man upon the throne of God waiting till His foes be made His footstool. Then will He be displayed as "King of kings and Lord of lords" with lordship over all things. Lord of life and death, holding the keys of death and hades, Lord of glory, Lord of hosts, Lord of all, to be confessed as such to the glory of God the Father. His Name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

But ch. ii. of Philippians, which with a few vivid strokes depicts the whole of His marvellous pathway, traces it through humiliation, suffering and death. How lovely is the episode of the watchnight shepherds enfolded in brightness from the Fount of light, enthralled by angelic announcement of a Saviour born, enraptured by the praises of a multitude of the heavenly host! Yet the lowliest of birthplaces was indicated; and in that Babe born in a manger, the unjealous heavenly worshippers were learning to connect glory to God in the highest with His good pleasure in men.

“Good tidings of great joy” were they, indeed, that were brought by the heavenly messengers; but they testified to the deep necessities of men as sinners. The Saviour must be One, who, as Man, could establish that glory of God which had been outraged by them, even in respect of their sins and shortcomings. This was the immeasurable responsibility before God that must rest on the undertaker of man’s cause. The Surety must suffer for His suretyship. “The Son of man *must* be lifted up” if God’s love to the world is to be gratified in consistency with His righteousness, His majesty.

A full atonement, an accomplished redemption which glorified God in every attribute of His nature, results from the Son’s devotedness; and God will glorify Him in return. The *must* of devotedness finds its answer in the *musts* of the divine counsels for His exaltation and glory. “He must increase.” “He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” He must have equal honours with the Father. When the deliverance of creation is complete and its joy full, the universal ascription of “blessing and honour and glory and power” will associate “the Lamb” with “Him that sitteth upon the throne.”

Of the increase of His government there is to be no end. Yet is there another kind of increase ordained for Him. God would have many sons brought to glory. He has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, to be co-heirs with Him. This could only be effectuated by the Lord’s death and resurrection. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.” For the full result of the increase, His own are waiting in communion with “the patience of Christ.” With “long patience” the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth. In the fourth chapter the Lord is sitting alone on Sychar’s well giving the water

of life to one thirsty soul. Nevertheless, He sees fields "white already to harvest."

John the Baptist, who had borne blessed witness to Jesus makes the jealousy of his own disciples the occasion for a further remarkable testimony. For himself, after being a burning and shining lamp in the darkness, he can rejoice in eclipse by the effulgence of that Light which coming into the world lighteth every man. One can hardly forbear the wish that he had at once surrendered his service to, and remained at the feet of, his glorious Lord whose shoelatchets he had confessed he had been unworthy to unloose. He continued, however, to herald to the end in his faithfulness even unto death (Matt. xvii. 12). Now, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this Nazarite, despite his severe training away from home delights, sweetly predicates the Lord's joy in that which, far surpassing outward glory, would meet the deepest desires of His heart. "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom," he says. Favoured beyond all the prophets that had preceded him, John could speak of himself as the friend of the Bridegroom whose joy was complete in being near Him and hearing His voice.

If we go on to the fifth chapter we find the hour had begun when the dead hear His voice and live. He is calling them out from the spiritually dead to form His bride. These have His special esteem. He loves and cherishes them. He brings them into such near association with Himself that they can sing:—

"One spirit with the Lord ;
 Jesus, the glorified,
 Esteems the Church for which He bled
 His body and His bride."

They thus form that increase which brings the greatest satisfaction to their loved and adored Saviour and Lord. How precious the privilege; unspeakable the grace that bestows it!

A.J.H.

Life, Light and Love—5.

Brief notes on John's 1st epistle
(Chapter iii. 7-24).

THERE are two things that characterise every one who is born of God, according to verses 7-10 of this chapter—righteousness and loving one's brethren. Both these flow from possessing the new nature. On the other hand, practising sin is the evidence of being of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning, that is, from the moment of his fall, when he was manifested as devil.

This is quite in keeping with John's way of speaking. He makes no half measures, we are either "children of God" or "children of the devil" (verse 10). In scripture, the world is opposed to the Father, the devil to Christ, and the flesh to the Spirit. From the days of Cain there were the two families in the world; the family of Cain, who was of the wicked one, filled with envy and hatred of his brethren, as the Jews were of the Lord (1 Thess. ii. 15), and the family of Abel, who is called "righteous Abel" (Matt. xxiii. 35).

Cain had no divine life, no new nature; he had not the intelligence in the things of God which faith gives. He offered a sacrifice of the fruits of the earth which God had cursed, he came to God on the ground of works, and he was angry because God had not respect to his offering. Envy led him to kill his brother: what an evidence of man's state, that the first man born into this world should have been a murderer!

Abel had the intelligence given by faith and God accepted his offering; he brought the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof; that is, he approached God on the ground of sacrifice. Thus he acknowledged that he was a sinner and he was justified in virtue of the death of another; God bore witness of his gifts (Heb. xi. 4) and, though dead for so many years, he still speaks. His works were righteous.

Thus the two classes of men stand in marked contrast to this day. There is the unregenerate man, who is characterised by "practising sin"; and there is the man who is born of God, and who "practises righteousness"—John is looking at what characterises the nature, he is not looking at how far failure may mark either class.

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." The Lord Himself had said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you . . . they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father . . . they hated Me without a cause." The perfect revelation of grace and truth in the Father and the Son only drew out the hatred of the world, especially of the religious world, if we may so call it. But the christian must take care that he does not bring upon himself the hatred of the world on account of his own ways and doings : to be hated on account of loyalty to Christ and separation from the world is quite another thing.

"*We* know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The Lord had used this same strong form of the word in John v. 24, for passing right out of one condition into another. *There* it is in connection with the fact that the one who hears His word and believes Him who sent Him, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life : he stands before God exempted from judgment altogether. This is a most positive declaration, introduced with a solemn Verily, Verily . . . Then, in the epistle, we have the well-known words applied to *christian* knowledge, "We know." Love of the brethren is an evidence of the possession of the divine nature. This takes us out of the idea of sectarian or party considerations; loving the brethren means loving *all* who are born of God.

In fact John put the matter exceedingly strongly, because he says that he who does not love the brethren

is a murderer and has not eternal life abiding in him—he abides in death. Then, he proceeds, “Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us” (new trans.). Our translators put in the words “of God” in italic print: but it is another instance of what we have already spoken of, namely, the way in which John brings together both God and Christ; for undoubtedly the love was the love of *God*, but *Christ* it was who laid down His life for us.

What greater example of divine love could we have than this? And, he adds immediately, “We *ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Here the word “ought” comes in very properly, but you could not say that God “ought” to love, or that Christ “ought” to lay down His life; it was an act of pure grace towards those who did not deserve it; and it is the “new commandment,” of which the Lord spoke to His disciples in John xiii. 34.

But John goes into the *practical* side of the matter when he speaks of a brother who has need; and he asks, if one who has this world’s goods, shuts up his bowels of compassion towards such; how dwells the love of God in him? James, in his very practical epistle, urges the same upon us (chap. ii. 22, 23). Alas! how easy it is to say sympathetic *words*, yet not to express our love in those *acts* which show the reality of what we say.

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments . . . And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him.” There are many promises given to him who keeps His commandments: the path of obedience is the happy path, and it is the one in which the Lord walked perfectly. This we find very markedly in the gospel, “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love”; “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John xv. 14); “If ye love Me

keep My commandments" (xiv. 15); "And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him" (1 John iii. 24).

These truths go down to the very deepest roots of the christian faith, and yet they are expressed in simple words, plain to be understood by him who walks in obedience and dependence on God. This is the only way to please Him and to profit by the truths He teaches in His word. Those we have been looking at show how vitally false is the denial or weakening of the fact that all believers have eternal life, and are "made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4), for these facts underlie the whole teaching of John's epistle.

F. G. B.

God is Light—God is Love.

THESE are the two essentials of the Godhead, the Divine is apprehended in this dual character. In His eternal Being He dwells in unapproachable light which no one hath seen nor can see. It would appear that angels, who veil their faces in His presence, first saw Him in the person of the young Child of Bethlehem (Compare 1 Tim. iii. 16; vi. 16). But it has pleased this immortal, eternal Being to make Himself known to men, for man in His eternal purpose is the object of His counsel. This we find even in the creation of man (Gen. i. 26). Now in the working out of His full counsel concerning man (angels do not seem to be the object of counsel) it was essential that God, in the person of the Son, should become man. God consequently forbade any image to be made of Himself before the incarnation of the Son. We would pause here to say that Adam, representatively, was made in the "image of God," but Christ in manhood is revealed as the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (Col. i. 15). This could not be said of Adam; he was

but the figure of Him that was to come (Rom. v. 14). God, then, has taken manhood in the person of the Son, in order first to discover Himself to man, secondly to make Himself known in the two essentials of His being, light and love, that man, who was in darkness, and sin, might be recovered back to God according to His wisdom, who finds His delights with the sons of men. May we say with reverence this is one of His "witty inventions" (Prov. viii. 12; Eph. i. 7, 8)?

God, having thus made Himself manifest in flesh in the person of the Son, we may say relatively (John i. 18), it is of essential importance that, in having to do with Christ, we should be conscious of being in the light, while also having to do with Him who is love. These two essentials of the Godhead operate together. At this point may we invite the reader's attention to our Lord's dealings with Nicodemus in the opening of John iii.? Here on the very threshold we get the light in its operative power, acting to reach the conscience and heart of man in his ruined estate through sin. The object selected is of importance to note. It is not a grossly degraded sinner, but one who has been educated in the just claims of the law, and an instructor of others, a rabbi of no mean type, hence we may say he is an object lesson of God's judgment of man generally. He came to Jesus by night. May this have been the result of a natural fear of damage to a reputation in having to do with one so rejected and despised? We only suggest this, but it has been a hindrance to many and a check to true discipleship with a rejected Christ. But to pursue our subject. Does it not seem that the time selected for this interview with the Lord, whatever the cause, was singularly appropriate? Here is light and darkness in immediate contact. The lesson taught and, what appears in the issue, learned, though perhaps feebly, is the most important in a soul's history in having to do with God. It is an elementary stage that, if

rightly learned, leads to a progress that richly endows the heart in a fuller knowledge of God, and to discover that God can so deal with me, and in all this dealing show Himself on my side as a God of love, is an encouragement indeed to let Him so handle me.

What then is the lesson of the light? "Jesus answered and said unto him (Nicodemus), Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except any one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God" (new trans. J.N.D.). The word "see" in this quotation, and the reply only confirms the true state of the darkness that compassed the mind of the one addressed. Are there not many such in the religious circles of our day? There must be an awakening in the depth of the soul of this searching proposition of the Lord, to a man so refined and religiously cultivated. What is it to be born anew? It is to have a new beginning of life and that from God—a new spiritual life and that by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the word, born of water and of the Spirit. The summing up of this proposition by the Son of God, the Light, is, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Hence we learn that God as light, in this elementary dealing with such as Nicodemus, shows His utter condemnation of man generally, and like Belshazzar of old, man is weighed in the balances and found wanting. If Nicodemus expressed his surprise with "How can these things be?" the Lord is equally expressive in declaring to him, "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?"* Thus we find that the light, in its operative result upon the one who has to do with God manifest in the flesh, is discovered as a moral ruin through darkness and sin, but at the same time this paves the way for God to make Himself known as Love. This part of the subject will be reserved for another paper, D.V.

H.L.

* Nicodemus ought to have known from the Scriptures themselves what the Lord referred to (see Ezekiel xxxvi. 25-27).

The Doctrine of Christ—5.

IN the Epistles of the Apostle Paul the several aspects of the doctrine of Christ are presented, each in strict keeping with the special truth under immediate consideration. That to the Romans is in clearest connection with the *gospel of God*; and we accordingly find the true Deity and the real Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ duly set out in orderly sequence in what is the fundamental treatise of christianity upon how a man can be just with God.

The introductory verses, chapter i. 1-4, present the holy Person of our divine Lord as Jesus Christ—God's Son—David's seed—Jesus Christ our Lord—Son of God; while chapter ii. 16, speaks of Jesus Christ the **Judge of the secrets of men**; and chapter ix. 5, reminds us that Christ is "over all, God blessed for ever." In **chapter x. 9, the very terms of salvation embody the definite confession of the Saviour as Jesus the Lord.**

Indeed, the whole of this epistle is based upon, and so closely interwoven with, the same doctrine of Christ which we found in our Lord's own words before the High Priest, in Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi, and in the general teaching of the beloved disciple that nothing short of a careful exposition of the Epistle to the Romans could adequately suggest the fulness of the presentation of it here.

We may, however, find food for devout thought and cause for adoring praise in thinking upon the doctrine of Christ as taught in a few selected references, such as chapter i. 1-4; ii. 16; ix. 5; x. 9.

First, it is Jesus Christ of the seed of David, according to the flesh, One of whose ancestry there is no doubt. This fact is more important than some hasty readers of the New Testament imagine, else why is it that the New Testament opens and practically closes with such pointed references to it? The first chapter

of Matthew begins with it in its opening verse, and the last chapter of Revelation does not close until the remarkable words are recorded: "*I Jesus . . . I am the root and offspring of David.*"

The apostle opens this Roman letter by direct reference to One who is at least the Son and Heir of an historical king; One, too, to whom holy writings have significantly directed the attention of such of mankind as have read them. Yet the language used to describe this One as "made of the seed of David" or "come of David's seed" (J.N.D.'s trans.) may be literally rendered: "He came to be," or "He became," thus strongly implying that He who ever eternally *is*, did by the doorway of becoming, enter into time, as "David's son," while yet ever remaining, as Psalm cx. puts it, "David's Lord." The human name of Jesus and the official title of Christ are joined as the proper designation, according to the flesh, of One who was "marked out Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead."

"Resurrection was the proof; but he who had eyes to see, saw that He who came in flesh, justified in the Spirit even when here, the same Spirit which was quickening power in resurrection" (J.N.D. note new trans. Romans i. 4).

In this epistle the righteousness of God, and the glad tidings of God, whether for the individual or for Israel, depends upon One who is certainly an historical person with a clearly marked ancestry, and at the same time is designated Son of God by incontestable proofs. While this was seen in His own resurrection power in the days of His flesh, yet the clearest affirmation of who He was in His own proper Person was demonstrated when God raised Him from the dead. "Crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. xiii. 4).

The style and order of the introductory verses will

well repay attention. One scholarly writer says : "Now lastly, in the Greek of the sentence, as if pausing for a solemn entrance, comes in the whole of the blessed Name; even *Jesus Christ our Lord* *Jesus* the human Name; *Christ* the Messianic title, *our Lord* the term of royalty and loyalty which binds us to Him, and Him to us. Let those four words be ours for ever. If everything else in ruins fades from the memory, let this remain, 'the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.' " *Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In our second reference let us consider Him as the Judge of the secrets of men, for the apostle affirms that at the Day of Judgment the Judge will be this same Jesus Christ. Who is able to judge the secrets of men save He to whom all hearts are open and all desires known? And to whom does this power belong? "I, Jehovah, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. xvii. 10).

To be the Judge of the secrets of men, then, Jesus Christ must be "the Man that is My fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts," the One once smitten as the Good Shepherd (Zech. xiii. 7).

To such as read the "holy scriptures" referred to in chapters i. and ii. it will be apparent that both Deity and humanity are found in the Person of Jesus Christ of the seed of David according to the flesh, declared Son of God with power by resurrection of the dead; the appointed Judge of the secrets of men.

But the clearest and fullest statement as to the Person of Christ occurs in chapter ix., where the apostle, speaking of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh naming their undeniable privileges and advantages as a race, adds "of whom, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (verse 5).

Here is One spoken of as having natural descent

through a specially marked line of ancestors and yet as being also God over all, as one scholarly translator renders it : The Christ, He who is over all things, God blessed to all eternity.

Several things arrest our attention here. First, it is Jesus who is the Christ ; and to St. Paul, in Acts ix. 22, Jesus was "very Christ." Secondly, we are arrested by this further statement : He, Jesus the Christ is over all. To the affirmation of His real Deity there has since the Incarnation been joined the confession of His true humanity, and thus He is God and man in one blessed person—the Christ.

Finally, He is *blessed* for ever ; and the careful consideration of the term "blessed" will help the worshipping heart. Whenever a mere man is spoken of in scripture as being "blessed" the word has always the significance of what we commonly mean by "happy" or "fortunate." In this epistle, to travel no further, chapter iv. gives the blessedness of the forgiven soul, of the one to whom the Lord will not impute sin (verse 8). The blessedness here predicated is the happiness and the eternal good fortune of such a man, and such a condition. Wherever "blessedness" is ascribed to God, however, as "Blessed be the Lord" in the Old Testament, or "Blessed be the God and Father" in the New Testament, the meaning invariably is let Him "be praised, and thanked." To "bless" the Lord is to praise Him because of who He is, and to thank Him for what He has done, and does. Hence in the reference to Christ as over all God blessed for ever, there is presented to our poor finite minds a glorious Person whom to all eternity is worthy to be praised for His excellent greatness, and thanked for His everlasting kindness. Being who He is, and having done what He has, He is worthy of everlasting praise and thanksgiving—over all God, blessed for evermore.

Our final reference, that in chapter x., shows that

the very terms of our salvation are embodied in the confession of *Jesus as Lord*. "Believe in thine heart" and "confess with thy mouth" is the order; and the belief that is not accompanied by absolute surrender to the claims of Christ as Lord is valueless. He is the Lord of our life as well as the God of our salvation, if we are the true children of God by faith in Him. Our Lord Himself said that calling Him Lord is not the same thing as doing what He commands. Be it ours to love Him, not in word, but in deed and in truth, so that love and loyalty may express themselves in surrender and selfless service to Him and those who are His own. Thus shall it be manifest that the doctrine of Christ is no mere theory held by us, but the power of our worship, witness and work as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

W.G.T.

If you have got into a position in which you are mixed up with these dwellers on the earth, upon whom the hour of temptation is coming (Rev. iii. 10), you must be dealt with to be delivered from that on which that dreadful hour is coming when we know our heavenly character, it makes us strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, instead of dwelling here and seeking our portion here.

* * *

If one lives daily as waiting for the Lord from heaven, there will be no planning for the future, no laying up for the morrow. Such a man will learn more and more, as other truths will open round this central one, and he will be kept in the truth. What is the use of teaching me that the Lord may come to-morrow, if I am going on living as though He were not coming for a hundred years? . . . if Christ is precious to me, I shall be waiting for Him with affection.

The Home-Call of the Editor.

THE passing away of our beloved brother, Mr. Francis George Burkitt, on May 23rd last, after a brief illness came as a shock to many readers of *Words of Help*, and those who knew him best will miss him most. Born in Tallaght, Co. Dublin, on the 25th July, 1854, the son of the late Dr. R. J. Burkitt, he spent most of his days in and around Dublin till he and his only sister moved, for reasons of health, to St. Leonards-on-Sea in 1923.

The greatest influence on his life was that of his godly mother. In everything he took up, thoroughness marked him from early days. It was not surprising, therefore, to find him in 1894 (at the time the writer first knew him) the head of the counting house of one of the largest businesses in Ireland, and in charge of a very large staff of clerks. Had he not taken up this work as a career he would undoubtedly have gained distinction as a mechanical engineer, as his interesting book, printed many years ago, on engineering and mathematics abundantly testifies.

Few would have judged that behind his reserved and retiring disposition was spiritual energy and strength of character much beyond the average. He was brought to the knowledge of Christ as his Saviour while quite young; and from the beginning showed deep interest in the things of God. His keen mind found delight in the study of the Scriptures. It was this, coupled with a workable knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, that accounted very largely for the power, authoritativeness, even-balance, and simplicity of his ministry, both oral and written. But what marked him most of all was devotedness to the Lord, love for His people, loyalty to the word of God, with a clarity of mind and warmth of heart which lifted him out of the ruts and influences of mere tradition which have ruined

so many. He laboured to be simple and free from affectation in both life and speech. Modernism and especially speculations as to the Holy Person of Christ, he held in utter contempt, as might be expected from one who could write *Hymns of Grace and Glory** which he issued just before he was called home. This made him take pleasure in the company of all those who made much of Christ, and those who gathered simply to His name, however few or feeble they might be. It also led him to work for the Lord while yet a young man, a work he kept up to the end. He was never happier than when visiting believers or distributing gospel tracts to unbelievers. He would think nothing of journeys of forty or even eighty miles a day, which he constantly took on his bicycle, all over Ireland, to visit isolated ones. He was the most indefatigable labourer in this obscure service I ever knew. It made those of us who at times shared it with him ashamed of our service. Open-air preaching he entered into with zest. Often he might be seen standing alone among a hostile crowd of farmers and others, on some market place, sounding out the gospel in clear ringing notes, the result of which "the day" alone will reveal.

He had a ready pen and not a few of his tracts and booklets have had a wide circulation, especially his *Notes on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. His papers on *Eternal Life*, on *New Birth* (both written to meet current heresies), and *The Day of Atonement*, to mention only a few, are specially helpful. Yet the work by which he will be best remembered will be as editor of *Words of Help* which he started, after much prayer and exercise, in 1911, the title of which was suggested by his devoted sister who encouraged him in every way, and who went to be with the Lord in

* *Hymns of Grace and Glory*, by F. G. Burkitt, price 9d. from our publisher.

1927. *Words of Help* may be said to be the reflex of his mind and heart, an effort at giving tangible effect to the *only* things he thought worth living for, and in which he was ever grateful for the help and fellowship of others. It seeks to present the whole truth of God, free from any party bias or sectarianism, yet in a way calculated to help the simplest souls everywhere. Large numbers have found peace and joy through its pages, especially at the time of the war, and these will be his joy and crown of rejoicing at the coming of the Lord.

The funeral took place at Hastings Cemetery on May 28th, attended by a goodly number of brethren and sisters who had come from a distance to commit his body to the Lord's keeping until He returns.

O Lord, be pleased to raise up many others amongst us likeminded to fill his place! In conclusion, we bespeak earnest prayer for the future of the magazine.

W. M. R.

Who is This ?

(Luke ix. 9.)

IT is a joy to every true believer to know that every word of the sacred Scriptures is from God (I Cor. ii. 13); and is designed to set forth His mind concerning the One whom He "delighteth to honour" (Esther vi. 6).

The manner of the Spirit of God, in the gospel by Luke, is to bring together various incidents regardless of their chronological order, for the purpose of emphasizing some particular truth or truths; and it is thus He appears to be engaged throughout the ninth chapter of this gospel, in answering the significant question uttered by a guilty king, the murderer of John the Baptist, God's great witness in the world at the time (v. 9)—

"Who is this?"

Notice, for instance, how strikingly the Lord Jesus is presented to us in v. 11 as **THE HEALER**. Mark the tenderness of the words, "He *received* them, and *spoke* unto them . . . and *healed* them." Is it not the same old story many of us have so often sung, that—

"His love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end."

Then, look again at v. 16 and v. 17, where we see Him as **THE SATISFIER**, feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes (Ps. cxxxii. 15). His disciples had urged, "Send the multitude away; . . . but He said unto them, give ye them to eat." In this transaction we see Him "looking up to heaven,"—**VERY MAN**—and break bread and give to His disciples,—**VERY GOD**. He has been referred to in this connection as "the Master of the feast"; and such, indeed, He was, for "they did eat, and were *all filled*." Another illustration this, surely, of the fact that His love, like His power, "knows neither measure nor end."

We pass from the contemplation of these glories to v. 18, where He is before us as **THE DEPENDENT ONE**, in a world that "knew Him not": "He was alone praying." "Who is this?" Some had said John the Baptist; others said Elias; but, "Who *is* this?" Peter answering, said, "The Christ of God." Yes, He was God's **ANOINTED ONE**; and then He at once speaks of Himself as "**THE SON OF MAN**," who must suffer, be rejected, slain, and raised the third day (Ps. viii. 4; lxxx. 17; Dan vii. 13; John v. 27).

This "Son of man," who came to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10), is also seen (ch. ix. 23) presenting Himself as **THE WAY** for all the "found" ones. His people here, pointing out our path, our only path, if we would comply with His injunction, "Follow thou Me" (John xxi. 22).

And now, a wonderful spectacle opens up to us in vv. 27 to 36. For a brief moment, we behold Him as "THE GLORIFIED ONE," though still the dependent One ("as He prayed," v. 29). This gospel shows Him to us traversing this scene, "about His Father's business," from the manger to the holy mount; ascending "in righteousness that 'high mountain,' which was the sign and seal from God that He had reached, by perfect obedience on earth, the highest place out of heaven." Note that well,—“the highest place *out* of heaven.” As THE PERFECT MAN, He alone could truly say, "I always do those things that please the Father" (John viii. 29); and, in His own right, could thus receive *God's answer* to the question, "Who is this?"—viz:—"This is MY BELOVED SON; hear Him,"—THE REVEALER of the Father, THE DECLARER of God (John i. 18).

Moses had failed (Num. xx. 10, 12), and Elijah had failed (1 Kings xix. 3). Moses, in a moment of weakness had spoken to the Lord of his own wished-for decease (Num. xi. 15); and Elijah likewise (1 Kings xix. 4). But God's PERFECT SERVANT, who had never failed, and could have returned, in His own right, to the glory whence He came (John vi. 62), conversed, in all the dignity of heaven's beloved One, "of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem," offering Himself, "without spot," "to God," "for us" (Heb. ix. 14; Eph. v. 2; Exodus xxi. 5).

"When the voice was past, Jesus was found alone" (v. 36), THE WORTHY ONE. God gives Christ the glory; and, before Him all must disappear, for all men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

Saviour! Thou alone art worthy
Ceaseless praises to receive!

He had been "tasting the joys of His own land," but now "*coming down*" from that scene of glory (v. 37),

THE HUMBLER ONE, every step of the journey bears witness to Him, giving its answer to our question, as He pursues His way to Calvary. Hence, in vv. 42, 43, He again manifests Himself as THE HEALER, and, likewise, as THE ALMIGHTY ONE, in the presence of faithlessness and defilement—THE SPOILER of the strong man's house (Matt. xii. 29); for He rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed its victim; and (once more, "His love is as great as His power") "delivered it" to its sorrowing parent (see Mark ix. 24); DIVINE SYMPATHISER!

Thus, His glories shine forth in rapid succession. In v. 22, as in v. 44, the shadow of the cross seemed to darken His path, indicating that He is to be THE SLAIN ONE. In v. 47, He appears as THE MEEK AND LOWLY ONE (Matt. xi. 29), "for He took a child . . . and said, whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me." In v. 50, He is seen as THE MERCIFUL ONE, claiming as His own those whom His disciples would cast out (see 3 John). In v. 51, He is viewed as HEAVEN'S RECEIVED ONE, and is also as THE OBEDIENT ONE (Psalm xl. 7, 8; Heb. x. 7, 8), with His face "steadfastly set" "to go to Jerusalem" (to accomplish "His decease," v. 31). In v. 53, He is characterised, for the moment, as EARTH'S REJECTED ONE. In v. 56, His glory as THE SAVIOUR breaks forth upon us; "for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." In v. 58, He is clearly THE HOMELESS ONE, THE STRANGER HERE.

And, may it not be suggested (though, surely, the half has not been told!) that the final answer in this chapter to the question,

"Who is this?"

is to be found in v. 61? for, in respect of each and all of us He can be nothing less than

THE PRE-EMINENT ONE,

who claims our whole allegiance, and admits of no such conditions as, "Lord, I will follow Thee, *but*"

O Lord, 'tis joy to look above
 And see Thee on the throne;
 To search *the heights and depths* of love
 Which Thou to us hast shown;
 To look beyond the long dark night,
 And hail the coming day,
 When Thou to all Thy saints in light
 Thy glories shalt display.

N. L. N.

The Lord's Table.

THE state of the church at Corinth was serious. Various disorders in doctrine and practice had crept in. Party feeling ran high in the assembly. And, amongst other vagaries, apparently not a few of the saints were publicly dishonouring the name of the Lord and virtually threatening to wreck the testimony of the church by open participation with idol-worshippers at their feasts. The apostle therefore, in 1 Cor. x. 14-22, deals with the question of the Christian's relation to outside observances of a professedly religious nature.

The apostle begins by warmly exhorting the saints to "flee from idolatry," adding in that almost deferential manner which he so well knew how to blend with the dignity of an inspired apostle, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

Proceeding then to contrast Christian and heathen feasts, Paul refers first of all to that part of the Lord's Supper, which, though not the first in order of observance, was the fuller of grave and solemn associations. "The cup of blessing which we bless" (in contrast

with the cup poured out as a libation to the heathen gods), "is it not the communion of the *blood* of Christ?" How then could such a cup (of grief rather than of joy) be a mere matter of form to them, when it was thus significant of the closest identification with the Christ, and that, too, in connection with the exceedingly solemn moment of laying down His life on their behalf?

Therefore, to degrade this cup of such profound and sacred meaning to the level of a heathen ceremony by partaking of both was and must be fraught with the most serious consequences to their own spiritual state as well as to the public testimony against idols by the church of God in Corinth. In fact, the attempt by any to do so showed an entire misapprehension of the true character of both acts. Neither the solemnity of the one nor the profanity of the other could be before the minds of such persons; else why should they seek to equalize the cups by drinking of both? For, as the apostle emphatically states, "Ye cannot (*i.e.*, with due appreciation) drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons."

And if the cup of blessing was thus significant, the bread or loaf did not lack hallowed import. It signified nothing short of fellowship with the body of the Christ, while at the same time it set forth the intimate unity of His saints on earth, for which reason perhaps it is mentioned in the second place. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of the Christ? Because we [being] many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf."

Thus, however numerous the saints, their spiritual unity was acknowledged and expressed by partaking of the one loaf. The unity was at once inclusive and exclusive; the church of God was included, Jews and

Gentiles were excluded. The act of communion in breaking bread testified that the brethren at Corinth, and indeed "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2), were unified by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13), and were, thereby of necessity, separated alike from Jews and Gentiles. What therefore could be greater inconsistency than to own this unity in the breaking of bread, and to disown the same by feasting in idol temples?

It was in vain for the Corinthians to argue with a show of superior wisdom that, since idols were nonentities, to sit at their feasts was a matter of indifference to those who knew this, and could be the source of no possible harm to anybody. True, these indecorous deities were destitute of even human power, much less of divine; and the apostle implied nothing to the contrary (verse 19). But if they saw that the idols themselves were mere lifeless puppets, he would not have them overlook or ignore those who pulled the strings. Did not the very scriptures that affirmed the nothingness of all heathen worship affirm also that the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to demons and not to God (ver. 20; Deut. xxxii. 17). Moreover, the law expressly forbade eating of the idol-sacrifice (Exod. xxxiv. 15).

Satan, the prince of cheats, and his impish subordinates held the benighted souls of heathendom fast in the delusions of idol-worship; and should saints of God who had been enlightened be parties to such works of darkness by so much even as their presence? It was this unholy association of light and darkness that troubled the apostle. "I would not," says he, "that ye should have fellowship with demons." So much is this point of evil association insisted upon that he does not mention as a deterrent the nameless excesses that so often attended the heathen orgies, demoralising even

to the spectators. He unmasks the terribly evil principle underlying the feasts, which was equally true whether the procedure was moral or immoral. He pressed the fact that, if the Lord presided at one table, demons presided at the other. And saints of God could not be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of demons (ver. 21).

If such irregularity of conduct were permissible, where was the Lord's glory? Where were the exclusive claims of His holy person? Where were the love and loyalty of His saints? Did they wish to provoke the Lord to jealousy by such flagrant contempt for the honour of His name? Were they mightier than the Lord? Did they expect to act in this manner with impunity?

The term, "the Lord's table," used by the Spirit of God in connection with this subject (ver. 21) is highly expressive of sanctity and authority as well as privilege. For by this title we are reminded, not of the memorials of the Lord's death, nor of that which is memorised thereby but of the person of the Lord Himself, not so much of what is *on* the table as of Him Who is *at* the table, not so much of the feast as of the Host. It is the table of the LORD. His presence and presidency stamps a divine and peculiarly holy character upon the observance, despite its otherwise apparently barren simplicity. The Lord is there, and His name and person sanctify the whole.

This phrase, "the table of the Lord," is not altogether unknown in the Old Testament. In Ezek. xli. 22; xliv. 16, Jehovah speaks of the altar of incense as the table which is before Him, Who dwelt in the most holy place between the cherubim. Evidently this is to enforce the holiness of that table, being in the sanctuary in His immediate presence, and also bearing upon it the offerings made to His name. And in

Malachi, the phrase is again used, and even more strikingly, in connection with the holiness of the altar. Jehovah there expostulates with the priests who offered polluted bread upon His altar and profaned His name, saying the table of Jehovah was contemptible (Mal. i. 7-12). It was the fact that the altar was before Jehovah and was called by His name which made their desecration of it so terrible. Neither was there any excuse for ignorance of what offerings were acceptable to the Lord; for His word of old had plainly forbidden them to offer in sacrifice the blind, the lame, or the sick (Lev. xxii. 22). This word, however, they had deliberately disobeyed (Mal. i. 8). What they would have been ashamed to bring to the governor, they brought to Jehovah. What was this but the most inexcusable levity in sacred things? It was dishonouring His table. It was despising His name. And therefore the burden of the word of the Lord was against Israel.

Similarly, we find that the Spirit of God writing to the Corinthians, uses this phrase* to invest the simple supper with a dignity and sanctity they were in danger of overlooking altogether. When the holy character of the feast of remembrance was impugned, and that blessed institution lowered to the level of an idol feast, the saints were at once reminded that the table was the

* This use in no sense affords one tittle of evidence in favour of the foolish fancy that the Lord's supper is a sacrifice, or His table an altar. As had been said centuries ago the Lord's supper is a banquet, not a sacrifice; it is celebrated on a table, not on an altar. The Levitical altars of incense and burnt-offering were referred to in a typical way by the prophets for a particular purpose, as has been seen. Besides, Israelitish altars are plainly distinguished in our chapter from the Christian breaking of bread: "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. x. 18). Indeed, to suppose that the Lord's table implies a Christian altar is to assume that Christianity is but a form of development of Judaism—an assumption which it is the especial purpose of the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Colossians to demolish.

LORD'S table. Its divine claims upon them were revived and pressed, showing that the retrogression at Corinth was owing to a want of consideration of what was due to the name of the Lord in connection with His supper.

It may be profitable here briefly to distinguish the term employed in ch. xi. 20, "the Lord's supper," from the one before us, "the Lord's table." There will be no need to refer here to the variation between them in the original. While the same precious memorial is the subject of both passages, it must, at the same time, be admitted by all who believe in the inspiration of the word that there can be no distinction made in scripture without there being a real difference. The "Lord's supper" must, therefore, be of necessity, the phrase most in harmony with the subject of the Holy Spirit in chapter xi., just as the "Lord's table" is most appropriate in chapter x.

The themes of these two portions are by no means difficult to distinguish. Even a cursory examination shows that in ch. xi. 20-34, internal matters, while in ch. x. 14-33, external relationships, are discussed. The error of the Corinthian saints corrected in ch. xi. was as to the manner of eating the feast, but in ch. x. as to the character of the fellowship involved in the breaking of bread. The contrast in ch. xi. is between the Lord's supper and their own (vers. 20, 21), and in ch. x. between the Lord's table and that of demons. Eating unworthily in ch. xi. is followed by the chastening of the Lord, while in ch. x. unholy associations resulted in a ruined testimony before a heathen world. In ch. xi. we have no word of the unity of the body which is pressed so strongly in ch. x. 16, 17, but rather a concentrated enumeration of those affecting circumstances which speak so eloquently to the heart of the believer,—the Lord's request on earth, reiterated from the glory to Paul, His betrayal, His last wish, His death, His

coming again. All these are shown to be associated with the Lord's *supper*, when pressing the solemn side of it, but are not mentioned in connection with the *table*, the responsible side. †

The Corinthians, however (xi. 17-22) had allowed a social meal, the agapee or love-feast, to efface all these touching reminders from the Lord's supper; and, by allowing pride and envy to work amongst them, had made it a supper of their own, and not the Lord's. In fact, they were eating and drinking unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body, but displacing His death by petty notions of dignity and self-esteem. On this account the apostle called them to self-examination and self-judgment that these affronts to the Lord might not continue.

The above short consideration of these two terms in their context (which is the only reliable criterion of any interpretation of scripture) shows a warranty, it is believed, for the following two conclusions:—(1) that fellowship with the Lord's table and with what is opposed to His name cannot co-exist, being mutually destructive; and (2) that the Lord's supper cannot be eaten without a spiritual apprehension of what the emblems convey. Moreover, both right fellowship and correct behaviour are essential to a proper and godly participation in this incomparable ordinance, according to apostolic rule.

This being so, the important point to be weighed is not the possibility of having either without the other, but rather the necessity of having both, in order that this divine institution may be maintained in all its pristine sweetness and sanctity. Therefore, without entering into the question whether one can eat the Lord's

† Hence the suitability of the term in the disciplinary phrase, "having left, or withdrawn from, the Lord's table."

supper and yet not be at the Lord's table, or on the other hand be at the Lord's table and yet not eat the Lord's supper — neither of which can be a desirable position,—let it rather be pressed upon each saint to judge, in the holy light of the word of God, his own heart and his own association in reference to this ordinance.

How grievous to call that the Lord's table which is based on man's will, and not on God's! Can it be right to attempt to shield an express denial of His word by the sacredness of His name, thus making the Lord nominally untrue to His own cause? If the presidency of the Lord is supplanted by that of a man, however grave and pious, if the agency of the Holy Spirit in the assembly (1 Cor. xii. 11) be forbidden save in one stereotyped direction, if godly men who cannot say shibboleth, if traitors to the Lord are allowed to mingle with the true, if, in short, the plain truths of scripture are disowned in a given assembly, are the Lord's representatives on earth justified in describing such a fellowship as the Lord's table?‡ While allowing fully for individual faith and piety, and also for the difficulties due to the divided state of the church, it is surely a contradiction in terms to say that a congregation of persons not maintaining the honour of the Lord's name is nevertheless sitting at His table. Are you, my reader, at the Lord's table? God's word, and not your own judgment, can alone be the basis of a true answer.

And, on the other hand, to partake of the emblems, when the person of the Lord is crowded out of the vision of the soul, is not to eat the Lord's supper. And surely every saint knows by experience what little

‡ The indiscriminate application of the phrase, "table of demons," to sectarian assemblies in general arises from crass ignorance savouring of bigotry and malice. There is not a shadow of foundation in scripture for such an assertion. In 1 Cor. x., its reference is to idol-feasts, and to them alone.

things, intruding at that holy season, are sufficient to shatter the precious memories of His love at Calvary. There are many possible hindrances. Not to speak of a gaudy and aesthetic ritual, an unintelligent legalism, or a cold formal indifferentism, the slovenly soul may easily be overcome by vague wanderings in spiritual subjects, by vagrant thoughts on trivial matters, or by even worse employment of the heart, so that all sense of the sweet solemnity of the occasion will be utterly lost.

Shame upon us that our affections should be so sluggish and disloyal! How deadened we must be if the remembrance of His woe for us fails to revive within us an earnest review of His grace! May the apostle's exhortation be ever before the saints of God: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. xi. 28).

W. J. H.

The Doctrine of Christ—6.

IN the Epistles to the Corinthians "the doctrine of Christ" is presented specially in connection with the Apostle's teaching as to Christian fellowship. To the Romans, as we saw in the article last month, it was the "gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. i. 3). To the Corinthian saints it is "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 9). In both cases the words "HIS SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD" recall our hearts to the holy Person of Christ, apart from Whom, and from what He has done, there is neither gospel of God nor fellowship of saints. We need firmly to lay hold upon the fact that it is Christ who matters supremely alike for God in His grace and for man in his need. We note,

too, how carefully the Spirit of God, Who is able to instruct us as to the truth of Christ's Person, speaks through the Apostle in these two epistles: "His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord"; "the Lord of Glory"; the Crucified; the One who though He was rich yet for your sakes became poor; the equal bestower with the Father and the Holy Spirit of the Christian benediction of grace, love and communion (1 Cor. i. 9; i. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 9; xiii. 14).

He is the same One to whom Peter bore witness both by his confession at Caesarea Philippi and his ministry oral and written; of whom John and Paul, as we have also seen likewise testified as to His true Deity and real Humanity; "His Son"—the Son of God in solitary, unique dignity as the **Only Begotten of the Father**—"His Son Jesus"; Jesus—who was crucified, whom men had known as Jesus the Nazarene; the One who as man had lived and died among men; He whom men had seen, and heard, and touched; "His Son Jesus Christ," the anointed of Jehovah in Whom all the promises of God are "Yea and Amen unto the glory of God" (2 Cor. i. 20); "the Hope of Israel" (Jer. xiv. 8); "the Desire of all nations" (Hag. ii. 7); "His Son Jesus Christ **OUR LORD**"; "made both Lord and Christ"; "Our Lord"—the One whose Person commands the loving loyalty of each believing heart that recognizes Him as being in His inherent right the Lord of Glory; the One who was rich, yet for our sakes descended to the abject poverty of the cross of shame and suffering. Shall we not love Him who has so loved us, with a love that withholds nothing of time, strength, money or service? If He is not worthy of this, who is?

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment," said the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh; "and the

second is like, namely this, Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark xii. 30-31).

We do no violence to the thought of "love" here if for purposes of illustration we use the ordinary word "care for," for one cannot love a person one does not care for; whom one does not consider and think of constantly; and real love always expresses itself in service which goes to the point of sacrifice. The affections, the understanding, the interests, all exercised in the fullest vigour, play their part in wholehearted love and devotion. It was thus He loved us, blessed be His Name! And it is thus we are to show our love to Him by loving those who are His. The fellowship of "the Church of God at Corinth with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord" is spoken of under the figure of the human body; and so intimate is it in character that "one spirit" describes it. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). "Ye are the body of Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 27).

These references from our epistles indicate the divine quality of true Christian fellowship; it is what God has wrought; no one baptizes himself, it has to be done for him; while drinking of course is so purely personal an activity that none can perform it for another. It is "the body of Christ" into which all believers have been baptized, it is "the Spirit of Christ," who is the Spirit of God proceeding from the Father and the Son, of which all believers have been made, or given, to drink. Hence when concluding his epistle to the Corinthians (addressed, let us always also remember to "all that in every place call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ") the Apostle by the Spirit writes: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

These epistles which open with the "fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord," close with "the communion, or fellowship, of the Holy Spirit"; the whole body of them being occupied with practical teaching as to the reality of Christian fellowship based upon the "doctrine of Christ" running throughout.

It is in the personal "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," that we learn the beauty of God's grace and the reality of God's love. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. . . . And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love" (1 Jno. iv. 9, 16). In the Person and work of "His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" we behold the beauty of the Lord; the light of His holy, gracious and blessed character having been fully revealed thereby. "The love of God" as the source and fountain of all our blessing is seen "for God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). What a thrill of awe and gratitude fills the believing soul when these familiar words are first apprehended by it; yet alas, how quickly we get used to reading or hearing them without being stirred by them. But blessed be God, since the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the sole channel of blessing, the only Mediator, and the exclusive way to the Father, from themselves has proceeded the Holy Spirit who is the effectual communicator of the things of God to the hearts of men. He, Lord and also Giver of life, is the spring and support of fellowship in all the members of Christ's body. He it is who makes real to our spirits what is eternally real. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, both in every way transcending human thought are made blessedly real and effective in the believing heart and in the believing company through the communion of the Holy Spirit. The love of Christ, the love of the

Father, the love of the Spirit is the love of God Himself, and "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Yet while we give thanks unto the Father, and worship by the Spirit, our hearts are always and ever directed by the Father and the Spirit to the Person and work of the blessed Lord Jesus Himself. He is all God's delight, and all our salvation; and to our hearts the Father says: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 5); and the Spirit whispers in the deepest recesses of our conscious being: "He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Ps. xlv. 11). So we sing and say:—

Eternal Word, eternal Son,
 The Father's constant joy,
 What Thou hast done and what Thou art
 Shall all our tongues employ;
 Our life, our Lord, we Thee adore,
 Worthy art Thou for evermore.

Thy Church praises Thee, O Lord, for ever and ever;
 her glorious Lord and Head.

W.G.T.

We are to be kept moment by moment in a state of dependence, yet reckoning on the constant grace and help of God It is not enough for victory that in the battle we have ranged ourselves on the Lord's side. The tendency of the flesh, whether in praying or preaching or anything else, is to get out of dependence on God. We may be saying true things in prayer or in testimony; but, if we are not realizing our dependence on the Lord, we shall not have *His* strength in the battle; and He must make us learn our dependence on Him through weakness and failure and defeat, because we have refused to learn it in the joy and confidence of communion with Himself.

J.N.D.

A Song of Praise.

O LOVE of Jesus, so profound !
Unmeasured depths in Thee are found,
So far beyond our praise :
Love that has tasted death for us,
In suffering on the cruel cross,
To Thee our song we raise.

O grace ineffable, divine !
Which doth e'en now our hearts entwine,
And fill our souls with joy.
Feeble our praises now may be,
But when Thy face above we see,
We'll praise without alloy.

O Saviour haste that happy day,
Our hearts in unison would say,
"Lord, take Thy waiting bride."
Leave once again Thy Father's throne,
Descend in glory for Thine own,
And call us to Thy side.

Then, then our joys shall be complete,
When bowed in worship at Thy feet,
In radiant courts above.
Glory of glories it shall be,
Unmingled praise to give to Thee,
And *fully* know Thy love.

And yet e'en here 'tis ours to taste
Of Eshcol's grapes, as on we haste,
Or through the desert roam.
With longing hearts we still would press
Towards heaven and God's own glorious rest,
Our blest, eternal home.

By the late F. G. BURKITT.

“Jesus, the very thought of Thee.”

IT was at the close of one of those delightfully calm summer evenings, when the sun, slowly burying itself in its purple and ruddy setting, and the cheery voices of happy children at their games, lent an air of joyousness and peace to all around, that the writer was resting for a few moments' meditation, in one of the pretty fields of a London suburb.

Whilst absorbed in thoughts on the contrast in present surroundings to the strife abroad, where the cruel war was doing its deadly work, an elderly and venerable looking gentleman of charming manner approached and, entering into conversation, soon led up to a theme of mutual interest, which was none other than “JESUS, and His love.”

Just before parting he referred to a touching incident connected with one of his visits to a poor, old woman in a London infirmary. Seeing she was fast approaching the end of her earthly life, he spoke to her once more of the Saviour. Presently, in reply, she threw up her wasted, bony arms; and, clasping together her thin hands, said, with as much earnestness and emphasis as her feeble voice would allow:—

“JESUS, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills the breast;
But, sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.”

Then, her arms dropped on the bed, and her confident spirit quitted the frail body and passed up to rest in the reality of the Saviour's presence—“absent from the body, present with the Lord”; there to await, with Him, the moment when “spirit, soul, and body” shall be reunited on the glorious morning of “the first resurrection.”

How does "the very thought" of Jesus affect the reader of these lines? Is He your Saviour? Can you say by faith, "*He* was wounded for *my* transgressions; *He* was bruised for *mine* iniquities; the chastisement of *my* peace was upon *Him*; and with *His* stripes *I* am healed"? (Is. liii. 5).

If not, be persuaded to consider the matter *now*, for time is on the wing; and, our days do indeed pass "swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job vii. 6). Soon, oh, how soon, all opportunity for receiving the Saviour as your own will have passed away for ever! and He, who may be your Saviour *now*, will then take His seat upon "The Great White Throne" as your Judge (Acts xvii. 30-31; Rev. xx. 11).

Not long ago, we read of an incident that occurred in France during the war, when two thousand men had paraded at one of our great base camps previous to going 'up the line.' The inspection was complete, and in a few minutes the order 'quick march' to the railway station would be given. Just at that moment, when all stood at 'attention,' fully equipped, a voice began to sing:—

JESUS, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast."

And, like a wave of melody, the song passed from rank to rank, until every man seemed to be singing. The hymn was sung right through to the last verse, the officers meantime looking on in silence.

Once again, my reader, permit the question,—how is it with you?

N.L.N.

The believer's safeguard is a single eye, if the heart seeks God alone, the most subtle snare is discovered.

Our Lord's Testimony to the Bible.

IN this short paper we desire briefly to draw the reader's attention to the testimony given by the Lord and His apostles to the scripture, more especially in the Gospel of John.

When Jesus had purged the temple, at the beginning of His ministry, in chap. ii., the disciples remembered the written words taken from Ps. lxxix. 9, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up." This is from the Psalm that speaks of His sufferings at the hands of wicked men because of His wholehearted zeal for Jehovah.

In the same chapter, when He spoke of the temple of His body, they remembered, after He rose from the dead, that He spoke these things to them, and they believed the scripture *and* the word that Jesus had said.

The written word and the spoken word are often brought together, and here it is to be remarked that the "scripture" is put even before the word of the Lord. The same thing is to be noticed in chapter v. 46, 47, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his *writings*, how shall ye believe My *words*?"

Does it not strongly remind us of what Moses said in Deut. xviii. 15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken"?

In this sceptical age the writings of Moses are attacked by Higher Critics, Modernists and others: how absolutely unlike the attitude taken towards them by the Son of God Himself; He, on the contrary, places those writings in front of His own words. It was not that Moses' writings were of more value surely; but because what was *written* had a more important place than what was *spoken*.

Let people find what difficulties, or imaginary difficulties, they may; no sincere christian can doubt for one moment that the words of the Son of God are of unimpeachable truth and paramount importance; and He has fully put His seal upon the *written* words of scripture—which word itself means “the writings.”

Do we not remember that He met and overcame Satan at the temptation in the wilderness entirely from the written word? “It is written” was enough for the Son of God, and it should be enough for us. But it was the written word used with divine skill—just the right word in the right place and at the right time. With us, this involves *dependence* upon God and *faith* in His word.

“Search the scriptures” says the Lord, “they are they which testify of Me.” Do we not often rightly affirm that Christ was the subject of the Old Testament as well as of the New? and it was the Old that the Lord referred to here. It adds to the wonder of the book to see that, like a golden thread woven through the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, Christ Himself is the subject all through.

Let us hear the affirmation from the Lord’s own lips, “The scripture cannot be broken” (John x. 35), and He was then referring to the Old Testament. The Jews of His day believed in the authority and certainty of these writings; although, alas! they did not believe on Him of whom they spoke. But because they did profess to believe in the scriptures, He could appeal to these as the admitted standard of truth.

These very Jews had the honour and responsibility of being those to whom the oracles of God were committed; but, like many to-day who profess belief in the Bible, they knew not, as a personal Saviour, Him of whom the Bible so abundantly testifies.

We find from chapter xiii. onward, seven places where it is stated that such and such things were done, *that the scripture might be fulfilled*. This is particularly remarkable in chap. xix., at the solemn hour of the cross. His coat must not be rent because the prophetic utterance of Ps. xxii. must be fulfilled, "They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots."

Again, what was written in Ps. lxix. 21, must be, and He cried: "I thirst"; even at such a moment as this, no word could fail, all was done, every prophetic utterance pointing to His death was fulfilled, and now Jesus says, "It is finished", and delivers up His spirit. Thus He lays down His life as a voluntary act, according to John x. 18. Oh, how much is in these two words—as they are in the original language—"I thirst" and "It is finished"! (John xix. 28, 30).

After the Lord's death, two more scriptures must be fulfilled. "A bone of Him shall not be broken": this was accomplished by the fact that Jesus, being the willing Victim, had already "delivered up His spirit," as we have said; and, lastly, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (John xix. 36-7).

And so there is a day coming, according to the prophet Zechariah, when this also shall be fulfilled. In that day the hard-heartedness of the Jews shall be broken down and the spirit of grace and supplication will be poured upon them from above, leading them to the deepest grief and the most poignant sorrow of heart (Zech. xii. 10) for having crucified their own Messiah.

We cannot now linger over the Lord's own mark of approval set upon the scriptures of the Old Testament when in His risen condition, at the end of the Gospel of Luke; but it is most remarkable and emphatic. He expounded to His disciples, *out of the scriptures* —

Moses, the prophets and the Psalms—the things concerning Himself. He might have taught them much, using His own divine knowledge; but He did not, but used the written word—that word which is available for us; and even more so now that the Holy Spirit has come.

Let us then, in these evil days, cling closely to the written word of God, both Old and New, making it our prayerful study, feeding upon it, finding Christ in it, and using it for our guidance in every time of need.

F. G. B.

God is Light—God is Love.

IN our last article* we left the Lord Jesus, the incarnate Word—Light, and Nicodemus, who, in his replies to the Lord's searching statement "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again," at a point which discovered not only the moral ruin of man as a sinner before God, and the darkness that naturally accompanies this statement, but likewise the important fact that the new birth is the result of God's sovereign act by the Spirit through the word—water being the symbol used in scripture for God's word (John iii. 8). The apostle Peter clearly shows us this in his first Epistle, ch. i. 23-5. "Being born again, not of corruptible 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 falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." The above is quoted in

* See June No., page 113.

full, because we learn here by the Holy Spirit's own witness with that of the Son of God, the Light, that it is impossible for anyone to see, or to enter the Kingdom of God apart from the new birth. In passing, let us notice the remark of the Lord Jesus which opens the door for the blessed unfolding that "God is love": "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? (v. 12).

Thus darkness and unbelief are brought out as kindred conditions in man in the presence of God. "God is Light." This clears the ground for the bringing out of what was in the mind of the Lord to further unfold in this important audience in which we learn how love, the love of God, could meet man's lost and ruined estate, not at the expense of truth and righteousness, but in full conformity with these and with Him who is both light and love. It is introduced by the Lord Jesus in announcing Himself as Son of man, a title anticipated for Him by the Holy Spirit in Psalm viii. 4. The first man, Adam, was not the son of man; this title was reserved for the Son of God (Heb. i. 5). But who is this Son of man? There is a mystery attached to His person that none knows but the Father (Matt. xi. 27) and yet faith can grasp the revelation the Father gives concerning Him, and confess "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). It is well for us to keep this in view in considering our further remarks.

Let us note, too, that the Son of man who came down from heaven at the same time could speak of Himself as being *in* heaven (John iii. 13). The divine and the human are concentrated in the mystery of His person. But let us enquire, what came He down from heaven for? We will listen to His own words: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (*vv.* 13-14). Here we have the great purpose of His coming as the Son of God revealed; His own lips have declared it. The second '*must*' of the chapter applies to Him. Both '*musts*' are imperative, the first concerns man as his only way of access to the Kingdom of God, the second the Son of man come down from heaven to do the work whereby only blessing could come to man. Let us bear in mind that He is the Second Man, the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. xv. 47).

This is the starting point of the new work God had in view in His wonderful triumph over sin, death, and Satan's power. He entrusted this great commission to His only begotten Son, as Son of man, and so we hear Him saying, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). This work He speaks of to His Father as finished in ch. xvii. 4, and declared it to be so, when the work being finally accomplished on the cross, He bowed His head in death and said "It is finished." The tragedy of this scene (ch. xix.) is lusted by the triumph of the love that could take to paradise that very day the spirit of a degraded malefactor, who trusted Him in such a supreme extremity; the earliest trophy of this victory of love (Lu. xxiii. 43). Do we need a greater demonstration than this that "God is love"? Thus the door of heaven is opened to the sinner that trusts such a love, and the life is given that fits him to be there. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (*vv.* 16-18).

We close these few remarks by quoting the testimony of the disciple whom Jesus loved, John the Apostle: "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 5, 6, 7). Thus God Who is light testifies to the value He sets on the blood. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins." He (Christ) is our life; He is also the propitiation for our sins. Now, finally, we read: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." "We *love*, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 9, 10, 16, 19). Thus we find in this wonderful revelation of God in Christ, that "God is light," and "God is love."

H. L.

The Lord must be known intimately in order to be able to walk in a way worthy of Him; and it is thus that we grow in the knowledge of God's will.

* * *

The eye of God rests upon even the least spark of faithfulness in the midst of evil; there is not one throb of the heart that beats true to Himself, in the midst of abounding iniquity, that passes unheeded by Him.

Perfect Love.

THE more perfect *love* is, the more entirely and without distraction will it regard its object; and this will give it at different times a very different bearing, because its ways will be determined by the condition and need of its object. Its ways therefore at times may appear harsh and decisive, as when the Lord rebuked Peter in Matt. xvi., or when He reproved the two disciples in Lu. xxiv. But this is only because love is perfect, and therefore is undistractedly considering its object.

Imperfect love will show itself otherwise—more attractively at times, but far, far intrinsically less true, because imperfect love will not in this way unmixedly consider its object, but *itself*; it will be set upon *enjoying* its object rather than *servicing* it; and this will give it a more considerate and tender bearing at times, and get for itself great credit; while perfect love has all the while forgotten itself and its enjoyments, and ordered its course and its actings in more undistracted concern and desire to have another blessed and profited.

Where do we see the perfect love, but in Jesus, in God? A mother has it not, but will at times *enjoy* her child, but the Lord Jesus had it. He considered His disciples when He was with them; He ordered His way with them to *their* profit, and not merely to His own gratification. He will gratify Himself with them in that coming age when He need no longer care for them as in a place of instruction and discipline. He will then have no occasion, in the exercise of perfect love, to consider only *their* profit; for their profit will have been brought to its accomplishment in that place of their Lord's delight in them.

J.G.B.

The Christian's Addition Table.

(2 Peter i. 5-7).

HAVING given what would comfort and refresh the hearts of the believers, the apostle turns to the subject of their practical state, and says, "Besides this, giving all diligence, add* to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge" (v. 5).

"Virtue" is that energy and courage of soul that knows how to refuse, as well as to choose; like Moses, who "*refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; *choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. xi. 24, 25).

He knew how easy it was to get slothful, and so he exhorts them to give all diligence in thus adding.

He says, you have the faith that connects you with God, and you believe in what as yet you do not see, but now you must add "virtue," that courage which knows how to say "No" to the thousand things that come up day by day, and to press on unswervingly in the pathway that is set before us.

Then you may find a person who has this energy, but who is a little rough, and so he says, there is something else needed, lest this roughness turn to rashness, therefore add to virtue "knowledge" of God, of the mind and ways of God, and of what suits God; for mere knowledge puffs up, but this is the knowledge that humbles.

A man who knows God well cannot know Him without being in His company; and a person who is near to God is tender in his ways, though there may be energy in him to follow on. We need grace from the Lord to add this.

* Or, "*have* in your faith," etc., and so on in each case, like the rows of petals of a flower. The centre of all is divine love.

“And to knowledge temperance” (v. 6). Not the mere external restraint, but the cultivation of the inward mastery of the soul day by day, governing ourselves, keeping ourselves in order; we cannot keep anyone else. “Temperance” is that quiet gravity of spirit that is equable in every circumstance; like Christ, never upset by anything or anyone that came along.

“And to temperance patience.” “Temperance” will keep me from saying or doing a thing that will wound you, and “patience” will keep me from being upset by anything that you may do to wound me. “Temperance” is active, “patience” is passive.

If you have not “knowledge,” you will not know how to meet the mind of God. If you have not “temperance” you will be sure to do something that will hurt someone else. And if you have not “patience” you will be upset by what someone else may be doing to you.

“And to patience godliness,” God-likeness. Walking through this scene, and possessing the divine nature, see that you illustrate it, exemplify it.

Show me a man’s company, and I will show you what sort of a man he is; and if you are keeping company with God you will be a godly person, for we all resemble what we are occupied with. It comes out in a thousand blessed details, too, every day.

Then in this, the Christian’s addition table, we have “brotherly kindness” and “charity” (love), two things that may seem alike but are different (v. 7).

Brotherly kindness is a thing that might be merely human, and might degenerate and fade away; brotherly kindness might only love the lovable sort of people, might be partial; but when I come to “charity,” it is impartial and unfailing, it is divine “love.”

“Charity never fails.” In 1 Cor. xiii. there are eight things it does not do, and eight things it does do, and

it never breaks down. It is the very thing our souls need as we go through a scene where everything is against us.

Supposing a person repulsed me, and considered my love interference; "brotherly kindness" only might say, I will not go to him again; but "charity" is a divine thing, and says, "I think of the blessing and good of the object, and of the glory of God in connection with that object."

"Charity" is not the love that makes light of evil, but the love that seeks the real good of its object.

We have a guide by which we may learn if we really love the children of God. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2). If you love the Father you love His children. If we love Himself we love His people likewise, and we seek each other's blessing; but always desiring to meet His mind. You act as one who comes directly out from God, dependent on Him, and obedient to Him, and goes in grace to a person, no matter what his state may be.

The Lord help us to profit by His word, and to seek to add these things to our faith, for there are many beautiful consequences of so doing. If there be not this blessed adding, there is going back, for there is no such thing as standing still; if we are not progressing, we are retrograding. "Unto every one that hath, shall be given . . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. xxv. 29).

If there be not the desire to press on, to go on with the Lord, what is there? There is only a returning to the things from which the Lord called us out in days gone by. The Lord give us to have diligence of heart in thus adding to our "faith," and progressing in the "knowledge" of Himself. From the frequency with

which the apostle alludes to the eight things mentioned in verses 5, 6, and 7, it would seem almost impossible to overrate their importance. He brings out the effect of having these things, and the result of not having them.

THE END OF EVERY DEALING OF GOD WITH OUR SOULS IS TO MAKE US KNOW CHRIST BETTER. If a person goes on with these three verses, you find about that person the savour of Christ. The apostle felt that everything was nothing that did not lead a person to a deeper knowledge of Christ. That which puts us nearer to Christ has this effect; we feel how unlike Christ we are; and also it allures us from the world, so that we are more fit morally to pass through the world.

Many a saint of God feels, I am fit for heaven, but not fit for earth, because I am not sufficiently with the Lord to be equal to the occasions that arise as I pass through this scene. We feel our impotence and folly, feel how we have broken down as witnesses for Christ. It is only as Christ becomes better known that there is a fitness to pass through this scene. J.N.D.

The Doctrine of Christ—7.

THE “doctrine of Christ” held and taught by the Apostle Paul is again and very strikingly set out in the introductory verses of his epistle to the Galatians. “Paul, apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father Who raised Him out from the dead. . . . Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, that gave Himself for our sins.” It has been pertinently remarked: “Had not the Apostle regarded Jesus Christ as one with the Father in the Godhead, he never could have

written this.” So in the forefront of his teaching in this epistle we find the Deity of Jesus Christ our Lord not exactly stated but so strongly implied as to leave no doubt as to what the Apostle held and taught as to it. Then the significant phrase used of his conversion “when it pleased God to reveal His Son in me” is surely best understood from his own words in 2 Cor. iv. 6: “For God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” After the blaze of heavenly glory which shone on the Damascus road he learned that he, the Jew, saved by that crucified Christ Whom he had been prosecuting, was to be the herald of mercy to those furthest away from God among the nations. This at least one would gather to be the plain meaning of Galatians i. 16. As we carefully ponder the way in which the Blessed Lord is presented to us in this epistle **we shall find ourselves again led on in adoring contemplation of the One Who as Jesus of Nazareth in the days of His flesh affirmed Himself to be the Christ the Son of the Blessed, and He to whom all the affairs of mankind for salvation or judgment were committed. Let us notice the simple orderly succession here.**

(1) The same historical facts stated here as elsewhere in the New Testament as lying at the basis of Christianity, and of any true “doctrine of Christ,” are Jesus Christ—crucified—raised by God the Father;

(2) Jesus Christ crucified is “the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me” (ch. ii. 20). Thrice, too, in this short letter the words “His Son” occur; and, apart from anything connected with our Lord’s voluntary humiliation, or any glories conferred upon Him as Son of man, He is carefully presented everywhere in the New Testament scriptures as what He was, is, and ever remains, “the Son of God,” “His Son”;

(3) Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, His Son, is our Lord Jesus Christ;

(4) Jesus Christ, crucified, yet risen again, His Son our Lord, is the "Redeemer" for "Christ hath redeemed us" (ch. iii. 13).

It cannot be wearisome to the Christian reader thus to reiterate the titles of the Lord Jesus. Indeed the Spirit of God by the pen of inspiration seems (if we may reverently say so) to use divine ingenuity in setting out the varied beauties and glories attaching to our Lord's Person and work, so that we may both "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18). Hence we read here of the grace of Christ, the gospel of Christ, the servant of Christ, the revelation of Jesus Christ, justification through faith of Christ, the liberty wherewith **Christ has made us free, the law of Christ, and the cross of Christ**, in order that the supremacy of His Person and the sufficiency of His work may be vividly presented to our adoring souls. But the distinctive message of the epistle to the Galatians in connection with the "doctrine of Christ" is the freedom obtained for believers by Christ at so awful a cost to Himself: "The liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (ch. v. 1); "The cross of our Lord Jesus by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (ch. vi. 14).

The same emphasis which in Romans we noted was laid upon the gospel of God in connection with the "doctrine of Christ," and in Corinthians upon the fellowship of His Son to which we are called as believers, is here markedly upon the liberty of the believer, the freedom from Jewish rites and the ceremonial law which Christ has purchased and bestowed.

A verse from Acts xv. 1, and another from the fifth chapter of our epistle set the sharply defined issues at

stake before the reader, and shows how the apostolic "doctrine of Christ" as stated in Galatians bears upon them.

"And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, *Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved*" (Acts xv. 1).

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that *if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*" (Gal. v. 2).

With startling abruptness, but with crystal clearness, the Christ of the apostolic doctrine here is declared to be everything or nothing in the momentous matter of salvation.

Our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is thus shown to be "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth"; and the Apostle's "doctrine of Christ" constantly, consistently and emphatically asserts the supremacy of His Person and the sufficiency of His work. He has no peers, and no competitors; but stands alone and supreme as the only begotten of the Father, and the sole Saviour of mankind.

In this, Peter the Apostle of the Circumcision, in his writings fully and unreservedly confirms his beloved brother Paul to whom was committed the Apostolate of the Uncircumcision.

He writes: "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18, 19); and again of the Person of Christ, he says: "We were eye witnesses of His majesty, for He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter i. 16, 17). In the great matter of the "doctrine of Christ" the apostolic testimony is unanimous as to the dignity and worth of His

Person and work. It may be of interest to mention what a modern Jewish scholar with the veil of unbelief still upon his heart has written: "Jewish writers (he says) distinguish between the teaching of Jesus and Christianity. The latter is regarded as the work of Paul the Jew is drawn to the conclusion that the divorce between the two religions could not have been consummated without the abrogation of the ceremonial law which was the work of Paul." [Judaism—Ephraim Levine, p. 31.] It was the work of Christ, not the work of Paul, which made men free from the irksome bondage of ceremonial rites and observances. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii. 13, 14). This blessing is ours; all praise to Him by Whose shameful death it was won. Our true glory is in that cross of our Lord Jesus Christ which brings our old life to a close, and separates us for ever from the world. Crucified with Him, yet living by faith of Him, may our hearts ever overflow with love to Him, the Son of God Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

W.G.T.

When my soul is filled with Christ, I have no heart nor eye for the trash of this world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be a question with you, "What harm is there in this or that?" but rather "Am I doing this for Christ?"

* * *

A single eye, seeking nothing but Christ, is the secret of certainty and firmness of walk, having the secret of the Lord with you.

Extract from a Letter.

WE should receive from the Lord's hand what He sees good to send us. With Him there are no difficulties, and by His Spirit He gives us grace sufficient to bear our trials. When troubles increase we should do as David at Ziklag, and encourage ourselves in the Lord our God (1 Sam. xxx. 6). After having behaved with much forbearance and grace towards King Saul (ch. xxvi.), David, through lack of faith, (ch. xxvii. 1) got into a false position. So it is often with us, perhaps after a time of blessing in which we have clearly seen the Lord's hand acting on our behalf. Thus it was, too, with Elijah the prophet after the triumph at Carmel; at the threats of Jezebel he fled, thinking death was before him (1 Kings, xix. 2-4). How like David! Directly we allow circumstances to control us, our eyes are turned away from the Lord, our faith fails, and we sink, like Peter. The more trying our circumstances, and the more we discover our own weakness, the more should we look to the Lord, for He can do what to us is impossible. It is in such extremities that we can only say "Arise, O God, plead *Thine own cause*" (Ps. lxxiv. 22) and "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work" (Ps. cxix. 126). It is well for us to remember that *the cause* is not our own, but GOD'S. The Lord will surely take care of those that are His. He loves them and will never forget them. But we all have our lessons to learn. . . . May the Lord in His grace encourage us to have our minds fixed on His coming again, and, with girded loins and lamps burning, be like men who wait for Him.

Translation from French of W.J.L.

Happy is he who keeps by His side to learn how one ought to walk to enjoy communion with Him, pleasing Him every day more and more.

Words of Comfort.

CHRISTIAN! turn thee oft to Jesus,
Who thy sins on Calvary bore;
Richest grace and love are flowing
From His ever boundless store.
Taste, O taste afresh, His fulness,
Let it satisfy thy heart,
This will banish care and dulness,
Perfect rest and peace impart.

Why should lingering doubts distress thee?
Why those fears within thy breast?
Lo! the mighty Victor's risen,
And in Him, how richly blest!
Sin atoned for, Satan vanquished,
Every enemy laid low,
Thine it is to share His vict'ry,
Thine His keeping power to know.

Art thou fearful of the future?
Thou shalt have His Shepherd care,
Power almighty, grace unfailing;
In thy sorrow He will share,
And His priestly intercession,
Fragrant in those courts above,
Will sustain thy every footstep—
Witness of His *perfect* love.

By the late F. G. BURKITT.

God does more in us than we for Him; and what we do is only for Him just in so far as it is He Himself who works it in us.

The Lord's Reply to a Prophet's Question.

(Luke vii.)

THE Lord, in His reply to a lawyer's quibble (Luke x.), pictures in the parable of the good Samaritan His marvellous grace in its activities until His coming again. In answering John the Baptist's question He demonstrates its sufficiency for meeting all needs and the winning of hearts.

The prophet, in prison for his faithful and fearless testimony to King Herod, sends two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art thou He that should come? or look we for another?" (v. 19).

Jesus refers them to what they had seen and heard, concluding with the beautifully significant words: "To the poor the gospel is preached," but adding the delicate rebuke, "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (v. 23).

To the poor the gospel is preached! Such was the crowning proof Jesus gave to John that He was the One who should come, the One of whom the prophets had spoken, the hope of Israel (Jer. xiv. 8), the desire of all nations (Hag. ii. 7).

John was tested by the lowliness of Jesus, His rejection and abstention from earthly rule which had left him prisoner to a Roman tetrarch. Yet the simple recital of what the Baptist's disciples had seen and heard testified to a mission of surpassing sweetness, so far beyond the conceptions of men that the pomp and pageantry of earthly sway would scarce have accorded with it. Majesty, indeed, was there, but such as befitted the manger rather than the throne. Power was present, too, but to heal rather than to harm, to save rather than to destroy, to forgive sins and not to judge them.

The Lord's brief account of His work speaks to us of sympathy and succour in every phase of suffering, the binding up the broken heart with good news from heaven. And His exquisite miniature is set for us in a grouping of confirmatory incidents unparalleled for moral loveliness.

What a message for this greatest of men—more than a prophet—whose greatness consisted in his relation to the One of Whom he testified! John had himself spoken plain words to Pharisees and rebuked a king. Sent of God to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus, he had borne a testimony to His glory of extraordinary fulness and richness—that He was Son of God, would bear away the sin of the world and baptize with the Holy Ghost; that He was the true Light that would lighten everyone, the advent of which he had rejoiced in, but before which he must decrease, eclipsed by its brightness as it went on unto the perfect day. Now he learns from Jesus Himself, the subject of all this testimony, that leaving the government of this world alone, He was continuing in a lowly, if lovely, path, concerning Himself with the poor in preaching the gospel to them, and blessed would he be who was not offended in Him.

Great is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in flesh—God come so nigh to us in Jesus!

Infinitely worthy of our readers' earnest attention is this Preacher of the gospel to the poor. His lowly path was necessitated by our deep needs, and this gives for each downward step a corresponding height of moral glory. It was the riches of His grace that brought Him into this poor dark world, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). Personally none is so glorious as He. By His fingers He garnished the heavens, clothed the earth with beauty and appointed bounds to the sea, so that "though the waves thereof toss them-

selves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it" (Jer. v. 22). "By Him all things consist" (Col. i. 17). He, the brightness of God's glory, having stooped to become Man, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). Soon, on this earth, He will be "exalted and extolled and be very high" (Is. lii. 13). "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Ps. lxxii. 11). All judgment is committed to Him (John v. 22), but this is reserved for a future day.

Alas! how many were offended in Him. The enquiry from the wise men of the East found the chief priests and scribes at Jerusalem unready for the reception of their Messiah (Matt. ii. 3). Although they knew from the scripture that He must be born in Bethlehem, they made no effort to go there. Nor did they raise a finger to hinder Herod from the attempt on His life by the shameful massacre of the innocents there, though at other times so ready to take the lead in insurrection. Some thirty years later the enquiry of John the Baptist reveals their state and that of the people generally; for instead of preparing the way of the Lord, he is in prison. But the Lord Jesus bears a blessed testimony to him.

The Baptist's experience may have, in measure, prepared him for this message from the Lord. Although of a priestly family, he had surrendered the advantages of that position, called, indeed, to a far higher service. He had stood aloof from all, but with intense fervour had called all to repentance. The Pharisee might thank God he was not as the publican, but John had made no difference between them. Who, then, had responded to his appeal? Not the Pharisee, not the priest, not the elder nor the scribe; but the poor, the humble, even the despised publican. For we read, "The people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John" (v. 29).

To these the gospel was now being preached. If any reader enquire, What is this gospel? and further, as to the poor to whom it is being preached? Most blessedly is the answer given in the later verses of this chapter.

Biblical terms do not always lend themselves to precise limitations and definitions; infinite depths lie beneath their surface. There are many kinds of poverty, and the poor of this scripture cannot be confined to the penurious class. But while in its widest application the term excludes none, for all are poor towards God, it applies perhaps specially to the poor in spirit or those who have become aware of their spiritual destitution.

Such an one was the poor publican, as we speak of him, who, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner' " (Luke xviii. 13). The woman in the city, too, was a sinner (v. 37). She could procure an alabaster box of ointment but she was destitute of character. She was poor indeed and knew it; but she had begun to be rich. She was rich in her object; she was rich in her discovery. The leper of the fifth chapter had discovered the plenitude of His power; she had discovered *more*—the fulness of His grace. She, a known sinner, counted on Him not to turn her away, and she was not mistaken. He allowed her the priceless privilege of an intimate personal service.

Nor did he stop here. Her faith was large, the answer was overwhelming in divine bounteousness. Did her sins abound, His grace should superabound; He would vindicate her. He would pour into her ear words of grace—the fulness of the glad tidings of forgiveness, salvation and peace as they had not been told hitherto, though it were at all cost to Himself. He would have to bear her sins in His own body on the tree; He would

have to refrain from saving Himself that He might save others; He would have to make peace by the blood of His cross; but He would not withhold the words—freely they came and freely the life-blood flowed for her, as for every sinner who looks to Him. Oh, the glory of His grace!

He is the same to-day, waiting to speak to weary ones, who will take their place with “the poor,” the sweet and precious words, “Thy sins are forgiven! . . . thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

A. J. H.

Extract from a Letter.

GOD is for us. If we learn by tribulation to walk humbly with God, and in the active exercise of christian love towards one another, keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, the trying lessons of the wilderness will bear precious fruit for us. We shall soon see the Lord *as Saviour* at His coming . . . It is our joy to contemplate what Christ *is*, to delight in Him, and to be occupied with that which is *good* (Phil. iv. 4-9). In this way we are kept from evil . . . I do not think it is according to God's mind for us to ask counsel of the Church. Wisdom cometh from *above* (James iii. 17). When David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds and every leader of Israel, he put the ark on a new cart (I Chron. xiii. 7), like the Philistines. They all neglected to search what the Lord had directed in His word. Later on, when they remembered what God had said, they had to acknowledge that they had “sought Him not after the due order” (I Chron. xv. 13). The truth had to be brought out, and then *when the Spirit of God acted, all were in agreement*. And thus it is always.

Translation from the French of W. J. L.

Good Things to Come.

(Isaiah xlix.)

THE great outline of the New Testament is anticipated both in patriarchal narratives and prophetic revelations.*

In Genesis, which is the book of the patriarchs, we travel from Matt. i. to Rev. xxii.; that is, from the opening of the New Testament to its close.

We have the incarnation and birth of Christ in the first promise, the promise of "the seed of the woman," in chapter iii., and in that promise too we have the death and resurrection of that Seed of the woman. "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," involves or conveys these wondrous, blessed facts.

We have the Church in Eve.

We have the heavenly calling in Enoch, and the restored earth in Noah.

We have Israel reprobated or cast off for a time, and then received again in Joseph and his brethren.

We have the gathering together of heavenly and earthly things, as in the days of the kingdom, in the two families of Joseph in Egypt; that which he had as from the Gentiles, his near kindred, and that which he had by birth or in the flesh, his Jewish, Abrahamic kindred.

Thus we gather up, as in fragments, all the materials of the New Testament in the Book of Genesis. And this is wondrous food of faith, for it tells us how He with whom we have to do knows the end from the beginning. But if this one patriarchal book by its narratives furnishes all this to us, so this one chapter from the prophets does the same.

* There are still things "new and old," as we read in Matt. xiii. The forms of the kingdom of heaven, anticipated by the Lord in that chapter, are among the "new" things.

It opens as with the first chapter of Matthew. The Speaker, God's servant, Messiah, the Christ of God, who is Jesus of Nazareth, announces that He was called by His name before He was born. And so it was; for it was said to Joseph in that chapter, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus" (v. 21).

Messiah there shows Himself to us in His ministry as One that is as a drawn sword in the hand, and as a polished arrow in the quiver. And in certain features of it these symbols strikingly illustrate that ministry; for as with a drawn sword the Lord was ever exposing all that was around Him, laying bare the springs and principles of human nature. The axe was at the root of the trees (Luke iii. 9). And He also again and again gave warning of a judgment to come; but He did not execute it. He judged everything *morally*, but nothing *retributively*. He refused to judge, saying that He had come to save. And thus He was as a shaft or arrow hid in a quiver, while He was as a sword drawn in the hand (v. 2). He would stoop down to write on the ground as though He heard not the accuser (John viii. 6), and yet He would say, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 33).

But there was another feature in His ministry. As man was thus exposed by it, God was glorified by it. It was the witness of God among men. He who saw Jesus saw the Father. God committed the glorifying of His name to Jesus; so that now, if we are enlightened with the knowledge of the glory of God, we have found it in the face of Jesus Christ. Here He Himself announces this, through His servant the prophet (v. 3).

This ministry, however, as far as Israel was concerned, ended in present failure; Israel was not gathered. "Ye would not," is the Lord's word to them at the end of it, after telling them again and again

that He would have gathered them as a hen her chickens (Matt. xxiii. 37). This was so in the New Testament history of the Lord's ministry, and in Isaiah's anticipation of that ministry here.

But Messiah's work, if refused and disappointed by Israel, was accepted of God. Jesus was raised from the dead; and His resurrection, among other things, was the justification of all that He had said and done. The voice from heaven when He was beginning His ministry sealed Him then; the resurrection at the close of it seals Him and His work now.

And this He here foretells by His prophet, saying, "My judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God" (v. 4). And then, being thus accepted for His work's sake, and raised from the dead, He is crowned with glory in heaven, and seated in possession of all power. This is the ascended Christ, as before we had the risen Christ; and His glory and strength as ascended He anticipates here (v. 5). Upon this, the present age of the Gentiles is foretold; the mercy which is now visiting, in the gospel, all the ends of the earth. This verse is cited to that effect by the apostle to the Gentiles in his preaching in Acts xiii. 47.

The kingdom, or millennial age, is next announced. In the verse that follows, Messiah is seen as seated in the dignities of "the world to come," His own world. His title to be there, "King of kings," is found in His precious sufferings, or in His rejection by men when He first came among them. Others, however, became connected with the kingdom, as well as He; as these verses also tell us. But they do so on another title altogether; because the acceptable time or the day of salvation had visited them.*

* The early part, but that only, of v. 8 is cited by the apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 2; and there is great accuracy in this. The early part of that verse expresses grace *generally*; the latter part expresses *grace to Israel*: it was only grace in *its general application to sinners* that the apostle was teaching in 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Israel are accordingly represented by this prophecy as prisoners now released, or like those who once sat in darkness now called out into the light. And heaven and earth are summoned to rejoice in this millennial day here anticipated. And I may add, that in the course of this rich and animated prophecy, the things in Rev. vii. are announced, the gathering from all parts of the earth, and the feeding of them at the fountains of water (vv. 7-13).

Wondrous all this is, accurate and beautiful. Surely I am warranted in saying that in this one chapter of Isaiah (nay, in thirteen verses of it) we are carried through the New Testament. We have the birth, ministry, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord, His rejection at His first advent by the Jews and the world, the present age of mercy to the ends of the earth, and the coming millennial kingdom.

Fully do I grant we have not here the Church as the body of Christ. This was the hidden mystery revealed through the apostle Paul. Still we have this age of mercy to the Gentiles, as we have seen.

At v. 14, Zion is heard complaining. She had not once been named in the progress of this wonderful prophecy, and now she complains that she was forgotten and forsaken. Messiah had been surely remembered, the secrets of grace and glory had been announced, the millennial joy of heaven and earth celebrated, and Israel itself gladdened with hope and promise; but she, Jerusalem, had been passed by. "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me," she says (v. 14).

The Lord answers her grief in words of fervent affection. He tells her at once that it was impossible she could be forgotten.

And we may say, "Surely so." Jerusalem had "a gift and calling" of God, as well as Israel. Israel was Jehovah's *people*; Jerusalem was Jehovah's *city*. His

sanctuary and His palace were in her ; she was the seat of His government and the place of His worship. The Lord loved the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Ps. lxxxvii. 2). Jerusalem was as the family mansion where, at stated seasons, the children, settled through the land in their different inheritances, had to come and keep holy-day. All this was so, and all this constituted "a gift and calling," which we know is never repented of (Rom. xi. 29). It was therefore impossible that she should be forgotten.

And having thus pledged to her the constancy of His remembrance of her, the Lord then, in the closing verses of this chapter, goes on to tell her of her coming blessedness and dignities ; and gives her good reason to know that her *millennial beauty* and honour will far exceed her *Solomon* distinctions, that she shall be greater and more excellent in the day of Messiah than ever she had been in the days of any of the sons of Jesse. Kings and queens of the earth shall wait on her. She should deck herself with ornaments, as a bride doth. And the Lord promises that He will fill her with her children, and empty her of her destroyers ; and then rescue all that belongs to her out of the hand of her oppressors.

He speaks this very fervently, and in the style of many other scriptures in the Psalms and Prophets which address themselves to Zion. And among other things, He promises her that she shall stand lost in wonder and amazement at her own condition in those coming days, as one that scarcely knows herself, so excellent and blessed will she be. Her heart, as another scripture has it, "shall fear, and be enlarged" at the sight of her prosperity and honour (Isa. lx. 5).

What a state for the grace of God to bring the heart into ! How He satiates the soul with fatness ! The queen of Sheba tasted this when there was no more spirit in her, and when she said the half had not been

told her. The disciples experienced it in their way and measure, when their hearts burned within them under the words of the Stranger who had joined them on the road (Luke xxiv. 32). The sinner knows it at times, when he is introduced to the grace that saves him; as when the poor Samaritan left her water-pot behind her, forgetting everything but her new-found treasure in Christ (John iv. 29); or as when the woman of the city spent, in company with her tears and her kisses, the treasure of her house on the person of her loved and worshipful Redeemer (Luke vii.).

Thus *it has been*, beloved, and thus *it will be*. Would that we knew that *it is so*, from our own joys in the Lord!

J.G.B.

Our Cares.

“TAKE heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with . . . the cares of this life,” said the Lord (Luke xxi. 34). How much, alas! have these cares a place in our thoughts; they weigh upon our hearts, and hinder our being occupied with the Lord. The cares we give ourselves produce nothing, and change nothing; they bring us no quietness, no rest; they fret the heart; they trouble us. “Which of you by carefulness can add to his growth one cubit?” (Matt. vi. 27, N.T.), again says the Lord. Cares are in reality but lack of faith; in our difficulties they often lead us to seek the help of man; they cause us to let our own wills become active by making us leave the pathway of faith, the only ground of blessing. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God” (Ps. xlii. 11). To hope in God, to wait upon Him, is that which gives peace and tranquillity of heart. “Thou wilt keep him in *perfect* peace, whose mind is

stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee" (Is. xxvi. 3). "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Is. xxx. 15). "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jer. xvii. 7). "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Ps. xxxvii. 7).

Are we entirely free from cares when we go to the meetings of God's people? How well we know what little things will spoil our worship and prevent our full enjoyment of the presence of the Lord. Even in the service which we have the privilege of doing for Him, they are often a hindrance. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke x. 41, 42). How blessed it is to have the heart entirely free to sit at the feet of the Lord, and to have our thoughts occupied only with Him. What tranquillity this gives us, even in our darkest days, when we can say with the Psalmist on rising: "My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up" (Ps. v. 3). Look up for what? The answer to our prayer. He is our refuge, our strength, our help: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. xlvi. 1). The absence of all care and anxiety produces peace and joy. The apostle Paul in exhorting the Philippians to rejoice, tells them to be careful for nothing. How could they rejoice while full of care? Nothing should trouble them, and if anything did so, if there was any burden on their heart, they were to cast it upon God. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation (gentleness, N.T.) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand (or near, N.T.). Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which

passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 4-7).

Have we not all found in trouble and trial great comfort in just kneeling down and putting everything into the hands of God; and have we not then experienced that peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, the source of all peace and joy?

If we go back on the past, how much time has been lost on care and worry about the morrow! "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34).

How much we lack faith, that faith which Abraham had. What an example he is for us, when God asked back his son, the object of his love, in whom rested all the promises! Calmly, without a trace of anxiety, without a shadow of care, he obeyed and offered him, saying, "The Lord will provide." Scripture brings before us the great cloud of witnesses who gave a testimony by faith; it bids us lay aside our burdens to be free to run the race set before us, with eyes fixed on Jesus. The apostle Peter also exhorts us to cast all our care on God, Who careth for us, and he adds the condition in which we should be for this: being subject to one another, being clothed with humility, and humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. v. 5-7).

May we realise what David says in Ps. lxxii. : "Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh my salvation. He *only* is my rock and my salvation. He is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved . . . My soul, *wait thou only* upon God; for my expectation is from Him"—Him, God our Father, Who has saved us, Who loves us, Who knows everything we need, Who makes all things to work together for good to

them that love Him, and Who declares that even the very hairs of our head are all numbered (Matt. x. 30). This will mean peace and joy for us, and we shall be able, with happy and joyful hearts, to go on our way in calm peace and quietness.

M. K.

The Doctrine of Christ—8.

IT is in the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians that we find the "doctrine of Christ" set out in perhaps the fullest measure and highest form of any of the Apostle Paul's writings. Of this the circumstances are explanatory, as this group of assemblies seems to have been specially troubled by teachers seeking to introduce what is known as Colossian heresy. This was practically Gnosticism, the religion of the "all-knowing" and "the all-wise," blended with a smattering of a kind of liberal Judaism.

Superior knowledge of God and higher pretensions to sanctity were claims made by these teachers, and then, as now, there were doubtless many believers whose devotion exceeded their knowledge, and who were impressed by the new teaching, and felt the attractiveness of fresh ideas.

The value of the new notions then, as now, depended greatly upon their mystical character which promised something beyond the common salvation and the ordinary teaching for the general company of believers.

Thus from very early days speculations as to the Person of Christ were accompanied by mystical gropings after spiritual powers, and seem even to have exercised a subtle and amazing attractiveness for unestablished souls. The restlessness of the human mind, and the pride of the human heart, which is reluctant to acknowledge mistakes, but on the contrary often

seeks to justify what is wrong, must be taken into account. God, however, acting upon His gracious principle of bringing good out of evil used this very outbreak of Christ-dishonouring teachings for the unfolding by the inspired Apostle of a clear and comprehensive statement, so far as our human minds can conceive it, of the true "doctrine of Christ."

Thereby the "all-knowing" and "all-wise" Gnostic teachers are shown not to have possessed even sufficient knowledge to have been aware of how little they really knew. The Lord's Person, the Lord's Passion and the Lord's Position form a threefold cord, unbreakable, which binds the "doctrine of Christ" in these three shorter epistles of the Apostle Paul.

As to our Lord's Person, in that to the Ephesians, as in the other epistles, He is presented first as the equal Bestower of grace and peace to the saints with God the Father. This established His inherent Deity, and is quickly followed by His real Humanity, being presented as the Redeemer Whose blood has been shed, *the Risen Man, the Head of all things, the Reconciler or Daysman*, partaking of that nature which can with perfect right lay hold upon the Throne of God and in perfect grace lay hold upon man and the affairs of humanity.

In chapter iii. it is stated that God created all things by Jesus Christ. The connection of the Name by which men knew Him on earth with the cherished title of Christ or Messiah, and the affirmation that God created all things by Jesus Christ is most significant. In chapter iv., and indeed throughout, He is the Lord, the Son of God, while in the next chapter He is the One Who has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, and He is also the Head of the Church.

Turning to the epistle to the Philippians we find ourselves among the very heights and depths of the "doctrine of Christ."

The highest revelation as to the Person, Passion and Position of our Lord Jesus Christ is here set out in a few words by the pen of inspiration. "Being in the form of God," the One Supreme, Self-existing, Self-sufficient Being, He took upon Him the form of a man, of a servant, of a slave, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. At one end of the statement is the blaze of majestic glory and unsullied light of Deity, at the other is seen the form of a man, shrouded in darkness, crucified in weakness, His visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, dying in shame and ignominy.

Between these extremes we find the Self-emptying Mind of our Lord Jesus Christ Who though He was rich yet for your sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich (2 Cor. viii. 9).

On the same night in which He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus showed by His action the place He had taken when coming into the world. Jesus knowing that "He was come from God and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel and girded Himself" (Jno. xiii. 3, 4). So at His most holy Incarnation our Divine Lord had laid aside the garments, the habit of His eternal glory, and girded Himself with the Servant's form; in all lowliness and humility becoming the Servant of all from the Father upon the Throne to the meanest wretch upon earth, even going down to the death of the cross.

Then taking His garments again, our Lord sat down amongst the disciples, still to comfort, cheer and serve them to the very end with words of everlasting kindness and assurance (Jno. xiii.-xvi.). So in like manner having Himself overcome the power of death, He has now ascended where He was before, and resumed "the glory," the state which befits the Eternal Son, though still a man glorified at the right hand of God. So He

still serves His own, though after another fashion, not by His death but by His life. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

In Philippians ii. 9-11, the exaltation of our Lord Jesus is stated in words which make the believer's heart overflow with holy joy, while the mouth gladly sings:—

Father, Thy holy Name we bless,
And gladly hail Thy just decree
That every tongue shall soon confess
Jesus the Lord of all to be;
But, oh, Thy grace has taught us now
Before that Lord the knee to bow.

It is in this epistle, too, that we have the most comprehensive title of our Lord, "The Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (iii. 20).

It is as Saviour we first have to do with Him when as poor lost sinners we are awakened to our deep need; it is as Saviour we have to do with Him daily all through our earthly pilgrimage, for we are saved by His life (Rom. v. 10) and because He lives we live also (John xiv. 19); it is as Saviour we look for Him to come and save us, not from the penalty of our sins, for this He did on the cross, but from the power and presence of sin, when He comes and changes our vile bodies and fashions them like unto His glorious body and conducts us into the Father's house. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11).

Turning now in conclusion to the epistle to the Colossians we find statements definitely calculated to overthrow the spurious teaching that would lead to abnormal developments in doctrine and practice among the saints.

The suggestion that a select few have the higher gift of wisdom while simple faith is good enough for the rest is refuted by the Apostle's "warning every man

in *all* wisdom; that we may present *every* man *perfect* in Christ Jesus," and that by his statement that in the mystery are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (i. 28; ii. 3). The tendency to an ascetical, mystical aloofness from life, and the indulgence of a dreamy, unpractical mood, is sharply rebuked by the exhortations throughout based upon the Lordship of Christ. Everything is to be "in the Lord," "to the Lord," "for the Lord." The references to our Lord are definite and dogmatic in this epistle beyond all. He is "His dear Son"—Who has a kingdom; the Redeemer; the Image of the invisible God; the Firstborn of all creation; Creator and Sustainer of all things in every sphere of being; Head of the church; the beginning; the Firstborn from the dead; Pre-eminent in all things; the Reconciler; all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily; the Victor; the Head; the Lord Christ; the Lord Jesus.

Indeed, the resources of human language as a means of conveying concrete ideas intelligently seem to be exhausted in the effort to state how great a One the Lord Jesus Christ is. The phrases and terms employed are simple and suggestive, but the subject-matter is sublime; and once again the Spirit leads from man's attempted explanation to profound adoration. The words of a great Christian scholar may be used to sum up the apostolic "doctrine of Christ" in these epistles. He says: "Against the philosophy of successive evolutions from the Divine nature, angelic mediators forming the successive links in the chain which binds the finite to the Infinite, he sets the doctrine of the one Eternal Son; the Word of God begotten before the worlds . . . Correspondingly, the apostle Paul represents the mediatorial function of Christ as twofold: it is exercised in the natural creation. In both these spheres His initiative is absolute; His control is universal; His action is complete. By His agency the worlds were created and

sustained. He is at once the beginning and the end of the material universe: 'All things have been created by Him and for Him.' Nor is His office in the spiritual world less complete. In the church, as in the universe, He is sole, absolute, supreme; the primary source from which all life proceeds and the ultimate arbiter in whom all feuds are reconciled.

"On the one hand, in relation to Deity, He is the visible image of the invisible God. He is not only the chief manifestation of the Divine nature: He is the Godhead manifested. In Him resides the totality of the Divine power and attributes . . . The entire light is concentrated in Him. He asserts the eternal being and absolute sovereignty of Christ . . . When again he speaks of the true gospel first taught to the Colossians as the doctrine of the Christ, even Jesus the Lord, his language might seem to be directed against the tendency to separate the heavenly Christ from the earthly Jesus, as though the connection were only transient. When lastly he dwells on the work of reconciliation, as wrought through the blood of Christ's cross, 'in the body of His flesh through death,' we may perhaps infer that he already discerned a disposition to put aside Christ's passion as a stumbling-block in the way of philosophical religion: Thus regarded, the apostle's language gains force and point."

This witness is true, and the need for a careful consideration of the apostolic doctrine of Christ is as pressing as ever, for in our own day men have arisen teaching doctrines as spurious and subtly attractive as those which occasioned the writing of these three epistles. Who He is, what He has done, and where He now is, affords matter for constant meditation, thanksgiving and worship. Thus and only thus shall we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever.

W.G.T.

The Crowned Christ.

“Then said I, Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God.”
“We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour.”
(Heb. x. 7, and ii. 9.)

“**O** GOD, I come to do Thy will,
Thy counsel and Thy word fulfil,
'Tis written thus of Me” :

Obedient unto death He came,
The willing Victim, to proclaim
The love that set us free.

One sacrifice, and one alone,
Could for our sin and guilt atone,
God's justice satisfy.

But now the mighty work is done,
He triumphs, who the victory won—
Behold Him crowned on high.

E'en death could not the Victor hold,
His sacrifice, of worth untold,
God's glory had secured :
And glory claims the Saviour thus,
Who drank the bitter cup for us
And all God's wrath endured.

Upward we gaze with raptured eyes
And see Him then ascend the skies,
His rightful place to claim.
'Tis He who sits upon the throne,
With joy His peerless name we own
And loud His praise proclaim.

Hasten, O Lord, that blissful day,
Thou shalt have universal sway
The wide creation o'er.
The tempter then can ne'er beguile ;
The earth repose beneath Thy smile
And sin defile no more.

*By the late F. G. BURKITT.
From “Hymns of Grace and Glory.”*

Granny's Mistake.

AN old woman sat in her cottage stitching. The room was scrupulously clean, and there was an appearance of comfort about the surroundings, but her face wore a troubled, anxious look.

A neighbour who happened to look in as she was passing by, noticed her anxiety, and enquired the cause of it.

“When I was quite a little girl,” she said, “I learnt that hymn—

‘ ’Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His, or am I not?’

and that is the very thing that troubles me now. Do I really love Him? I often ask myself the question, and I would give anything to be quite sure that I did.”

“Maybe you argue backwards,” said her neighbour, “wouldn’t it be far better to leave off thinking about *your* love and just thank the dear Saviour for *His* love to you?”

“I never doubt that,” said the old woman warmly; “of course I know He loves me, look how I’ve been cared for all my life. Hasn’t He fed and clothed me all these years, and kept me in good health till my old age? But that doesn’t seem to bring me comfort nohow.”

Her neighbour looked at her thoughtfully; she was only a plain country woman herself, but she saw wherein lay the old lady’s mistake.

“Granny,” she said, after a bit, “the Book tells us that God ‘clothes’ the lilies and the grass, but it never says He loves them. It tells us, too, that God ‘feeds’ the ravens and ‘cares’ for the sparrows, but that is never given as a proof that He loves them. You have

been looking in the wrong place for His love. You must never measure God's heart by His mercies. The proof of His love was that He gave His Son to die for you. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. In *this* was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him' (1 Jno. iv. 9-10). One of the Lord's servants so truly said: 'Lord, when we want to know what true love is, we can only turn to Thee, and to Thy cross.' Our love to Him is but a natural consequence of this. 'We love Him because He first loved us.' It is—

'By the one chief Treasure
Thy bosom freely gave,
Thine own pure love we measure,
Thy willing mind to save.' "

E. R. M.

The Son of Man.

THE Son of man was a title which the Lord Jesus loved to give Himself—a title of great importance to us. It appears to me that the Son of man is, according to the word of God, the Heir of all that the counsel of God destined for man as his portion in glory, all that God would bestow on man according to those counsels. (See Dan. vii. 13, 14; Ps. viii. 5, 6; lxxx. 17; and Prov. viii. 30, 31).

But in order to be the Heir of all that God has destined for man, He must be a man. The Son of man was truly of the race of man—precious and comforting truth!—born of a woman, really and truly a man, and, partaking of flesh and blood, "made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 14, 17).

In this character He was to suffer, and be rejected; that He might inherit all things in a wholly new estate,

raised and glorified. He was to die and to rise again, the inheritance being defiled, and man being in rebellion—His co-heirs as guilty as the rest.

But He was then to be the servant, the great prophet, though the Son of David, and the Son of man, and therefore truly a man on the earth, born under the law, born of a woman, of the seed of David, heir to the rights of David's family, heir to the destinies of man according to the purpose and the counsels of God.

But in order to this He must glorify God according to the position man was in as fallen, in his responsibility; He must meet that responsibility so as to glorify God there, but while here bearing a prophet's testimony—the faithful witness.

Who was to be all this? Was it only an official glory which the Old Testament had said a man was to inherit? The condition of men, manifested under the law, and without law, proved the impossibility of making them partakers of the blessing of God as they were. The rejection of Christ was the crowning proof of this condition. And, in fact, man needed above all to be himself reconciled to God, apart from all dispensation and special government of an earthly people.

Man had sinned, and redemption was necessary, for the glory of God and the salvation of men. Who could accomplish it? Man needed it himself. An angel had to keep and fill his own place, and could do no more; he could not be a saviour. And who among men could be the heir of all things, and have all the works of God put under his dominion, according to the word?

It was the Son of God Who should inherit them; it was their Creator Who should possess them. He then, Who was to be the Servant, the Son of David, the Son of man, the Redeemer, was the Son of God—God the Creator.

J.N.D.

The Two Natures.

DO the Scriptures countenance the idea, that Christian conflict is between *the old life and the new*? Certainly not! The conflict is between *the old life and the Spirit*. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." It is not, "The old life against the new, and the new against the old." The new life would be but a feeble antagonist to the old, as may be seen in Romans vii. 14-24, where we have the experience of this life without any mention of the Spirit, and without any knowledge of that accomplished redemption on which the gift of the Spirit depends. The apostle states in plainest terms, "That our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. vi. 6, R.V.). It is perfectly plain, then, that *in God's sight, and now to faith, our old nature came to its end on the cross*. We know, of course, as a matter of painful experience, that the old nature we have still exists, and is no feeble thing. And, further, if it be not constantly watched and judged, it will prove a source of ceaseless trouble, both to ourselves and others. But when, through our unwatchfulness, it does rise up, it is met in conflict, not by the new life, but by the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the Christian.

Practical Christianity may be said to consist of two things: 1. In nourishing the new life through occupation with Christ; 2. In judging the old, on which God has put the sentence of death in the most awfully-solemn manner, in the cross. But some may ask, "How are we to watch against its risings and judge it?" The apostle answers, "This I say then, *Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*" We have no power against nature but in the Holy Spirit, and in the assurance, by faith, that the flesh is a crucified thing in God's mind, and done with for ever.

It was *on the cross* that our old man was crucified; there it was nailed to the tree, and made a full end of; we have to believe this, and walk in the power and liberty which faith gives.

Hast thou entered, my soul, into the right understanding of this foundation-truth — this peace-giving truth to the troubled soul? Know, then, for thy perfect rest and comfort, that from the moment we have life through faith in Christ, the whole of our corrupt nature is spoken of and treated in Scripture as a dead thing. “Ye are dead,” is the emphatic word of Scripture, but that is not all, thank God, “and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. iii. 3). How safe! how secure! “with Christ in God.” Could our old nature, or anything that belongs to it, be hidden there? Ah, no; all that is gone before God—gone for ever; all that is Christ’s remains—remains in all its changeless perfection in the best place in all heaven. By the cross we get rid of that which is ours—in resurrection we are put in possession of that which is Christ’s. Not a particle of the old creation shall ever be found in the new.

The apostle gives us a full statement of this blessed truth, as in his own case. “I am crucified with Christ,” he says, “nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. ii. 20). Here he speaks of himself, in one point of view, as dead; and in another, as alive. How can this be understood? By faith only. He speaks of two “I’s;” the old “I,” or self as crucified. The new “I,” is his new life—Christ in him. The first, he treats as dead, and for ever done with; the second, as his only life now. “Christ liveth in me.” The practical effect of this truth, when believed, is immense. *Self, wretched self*, which is the end and object of the natural man, in all he is, is gone—gone, I mean, to faith. Christ enters and takes the place of *self*. “For me to live is Christ” (Phil. i. 21)—is to have Christ,

not self, for my end and object. Christ, not self, is the spring now. We know, of course, that Paul had his natural life here below—the life he ever had as a man, but the life in which he lived, was a wholly *new* one—Christ in him. “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.”

All this is as true now, in principle, of every Christian, as it was of the apostle, though it may not be so brightly manifested. There must first be faith in the truth, then a life answering to the strength which that faith gives. However, it is plainly written, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. v. 24). Not, observe, *are* crucifying it, but *have* crucified it. But of whom is this great truth stated? Of highly advanced Christians? No, simply of “they that are Christ’s.” It is as true of the babe, as of the young man, or the father in Christ. What was it that needed crucifying on the cross? Something that belonged to Christ, or to me? It was the old and great “I,” that needed to be slain—nailed to the tree, and that was done in Christ, for ever blessed be His name. Oh! to believe it—to keep self where the cross has put it—to walk in the liberty and power of the Holy Spirit, and be only, and always occupied, with the risen and glorified Christ. A.M.

The Spirit in the Church.

THE doctrine of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church is one of the great truths which distinguish the present dispensation (1 Cor. xii.). The denial of it, either actually in word, or virtually in deed, is one of the features of the apostasy which is taking place all around us in Christendom. But we must not only accept the *doctrine* of the Holy Spirit’s

indwelling in the Church, but remember that as a *fact* He is present to be owned and honoured in the assemblies of the saints.

This is something we are liable to let slip, to lose the sense of it in our souls and to act as if it were otherwise. And from this our weakness and, frequently, our disorders spring. Faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly to guide, and to act through those gathered together in expressing their worship and meeting their need in seasonable ministry, is that alone which gives liberty for the existence of the common priesthood of believers in worship, and the various gifts for ministry bestowed by the Lord for the edification of His people.

With a full acknowledgment that there are true children of God in all the denominations, and with every desire to keep a heart open to all who belong to Christ wherever found, I must confess that I could have no fellowship with any body of Christians, or system of Church government, in which the presence of the Holy Ghost is practically denied in worship by human arrangements.

There may be, and is, much of human weakness and experience of failure in the working out of the Divine principle among those who have separated from these systems of men in order that they may be where the Spirit's guidance is owned; much to humble them before God, because of the frowardness of the flesh in some taking undue advantage of a liberty which ought only to be exercised by those whom the Spirit qualifies to use it; but these failures awaken in me no desire to return to those systems in which a humanly appointed and official class make such failure impossible. Better to have all sorts of disorder, so as to bring out our true condition before God, than to have this repressed by an individual usurping the place of the Spirit in the Church.

The presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly means much more than that the meeting is not to be ordered by human arrangement. HE must order it. Whoever takes part, does so because the Spirit assigns it to him. Whether the giving out of a hymn, the reading of a Scripture, or leading in thanksgiving, all should be under the Spirit's guidance. The existence of an opportunity to take part is no warrant for doing so. A period of silence is not a call for some one to give out a hymn or pray, for the sake of something being done. Such periods of silent waiting upon God are often very blessed; each heart is engaged with Himself, and to break such a silence for the sake of doing something, or to end the wonder of those onlookers who do not understand such pauses, would be an interruption which all spiritual minds should feel.

WM. T.

Faith and its Trials.

“NOW faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. xi. 1, N.T.). It has been the case in all ages that men of faith and men who witnessed for God, have had to pursue an uphill road. It was so with the worthies mentioned in Hebrews xi., who had to *persevere*, whatever the difficulties and trials might have been. It was so with David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and all along the line until the Lord Himself appeared.

But there are times in the history of God's people when the enemy seems to put forth a peculiar power, therefore we are told to “withstand *in the evil day*, and having done all, to stand.” And in order to stand in the conflict, we must have on the *whole* armour of God, not one part missing (Eph. vi. 11).

We may notice that times when God is bringing to light again truths long lost to the church, are generally times of special conflict. Thus the Reformation period,

when the truths of justification by faith and the authority of scripture were being recovered, after the dead formalism of the Middle Ages, was a time of particular trial of faith. How many godly and devoted men and women then were thrown into prison and suffered at the stake!

Again, those who were used of God at the early part of the last century to bring to light again the truth of the church of God, the coming of the Lord, the complete gospel, including the believer's full acceptance in Christ, had their troubles and trials.

In our own day, too, faith has its trials, not so much in outward persecution—though there is this in some countries—but in the state of God's people themselves, and the many subtle snares by which the enemy seeks to undermine, weaken and scatter the saints.

But it is amidst these very circumstances that faith is specially called into exercise. A soldier was never intended to repose on a feather-bed all his life: he has battles to fight, difficulties to overcome, where endurance and courage are called for (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4). The christian soldier, however, does not use carnal weapons in his warfare (2 Cor. x. 4; Eph. vi. 12), but contends in the strength of the Lord, and with the watchword, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13).

Another test in the conflict of faith is, that what *looks like* success is often with the enemies of the truth. We may take as an illustration of this in our own days, the history of the Church of England. Within the last seven decades especially, the steady advance of Ritualism on the one hand, and Modernism on the other, have been most marked; while those who have been seeking to maintain the truths given at the Reformation have found their path more and more narrow and difficult.

Now this is an illustration of what is so often found,

that increase of numbers and apparent success, is no evidence of God's approval. And here it is that faith in God and guidance from His word is specially called for, because the multitude is influenced and carried away by what seems prosperous.

The same thing holds good, not only within the organized churches of Christendom, but amongst those who own no centre but Christ and no gathering-point but His name. In every crisis and difficulty we must be guided by God and His word, in a spirit of humble dependence and with a single eye for His glory.

A striking illustration of how appearances may deceive us may be found in Deut. xiii. If a dreamer or a prophet were to arise amongst the people and give a sign or a wonder (even if that sign or wonder came to pass) which would lead them away from God and be contrary to His word; they were not to hearken to that prophet. "The Lord your God *proveth* you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Here there was every *apparent* evidence that the prophet had God's approval; but the test was, whether they would cleave to the word of the Lord and obey *Him alone*; and God allowed that test for their good.

We may often be encouraged by the faith of those who, in a day of apostasy and deadness amongst the professing people of God, were true and devoted witnesses for Him. Their faith shone all the more brightly because of the prevailing darkness around.

It was at such a time that our Lord was born into this world. What a beautiful picture of the remnant who were guided and governed by faith we have in Luke ii. The nation of Israel was in an unbelieving and hardened state; and yet we find the aged Simeon and Anna rising above it all. Their hearts were not occupied with the evil or overcome by it; on the contrary, they laid hold of the promises of God by faith

and longed for the coming of the Messiah. And they were not disappointed.

Of Simeon we are told that he was "just and devout"—a vessel suited, in God's hand, to announce the fact that the One Who was the special object of God's thoughts had appeared. It was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that before his death he should see the Lord's Christ. Then he was guided by the Holy Ghost to come into the temple just at the right moment; and he took up in his arms the child Jesus, and blessed God, and from his lips flowed out that beautiful note of worship that follows.

Anna, again, was an instance of a soul wholly engaged with God and His interests. She likewise shared that blessed intimacy with the thoughts of God which, at the moment, centred in Him with Whom all heaven was engaged. And she gave thanks and spake of Him to those who, like herself, looked for redemption in Israel.

These ones found in God Himself and His Christ, EVERYTHING. Thus spiritual intelligence in the things of God was with the remnant; whilst the majority, the religious teachers—scribes, pharisees, etc.—were full of unbelief, pride and hardness of heart.

It has been said that, "Common grace will do when the church itself is in its place, but *uncommon* grace is needed to sustain the faithful when the church is not keeping its place. . . . Of course we at all times need the sustaining grace of God, we cannot get on without it, as everyone knows; I need it, you need it, we all need it; but when that which bears the name of the church of God is nigh unto cursing, is about to be spued out of the Lord's mouth, then a double measure and peculiar character of grace is needed to sustain the faithful ones in the narrow and often lonely path in which they will be called to walk."

If evil has come into the professing church, then, "the wise man feareth and departeth from evil" (Prov.

xiv. 16); but if it cannot be purged out and leavens the whole, then he whose object it is to walk aright before God "departeth from evil," even if, in doing so, he "maketh himself a prey" (Isaiah lix. 15). F.G.B.

The Doctrine of Christ—9.

IN the Jewish synagogue at Thessalonica the Apostle Paul for three Sabbath days reasoned out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that "this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ" (Acts xvii. 3). This bold but carefully reasoned statement as to the "doctrine of Christ" caused much conflict of opinion in the city: the resultant upheaval and disturbance of the peace being accounted for to the local magistrates because: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, saying there is another king, one Jesus."

The expulsion of the Apostle and some of his companions from Thessalonica led to his writing them two epistles which, while dealing with their then passing spiritual needs, were yet designed by God the Holy Spirit for the permanent benefit of the whole church.

In these earliest of christian epistles for the first time historically there is a written statement of the "doctrine of Christ."

Nothing could be simpler than this means chosen of God to convey His truth—an epistle, a letter: nothing more sublime than the truth conveyed by this simple means.

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle addresses these letters, stating, expanding and developing the

same teaching he had given orally during his stay in their city.

These believers, quite possibly, may never subsequently have seen any other portion of the New Testament; but in these two epistles, these Apostolic letters, they possessed what would furnish them with the true knowledge of God.

Here is taught how to walk worthy of God; the position and present attitude of His people in the world; how to increase and abound in love one toward another; how to walk honestly toward them that are without; how to comfort one another in times of bereavement; how to regard those who are over them in the Lord; how to endure persecution; how to hold fast the teaching received; how to wait for the Son of God from heaven; how to maintain godly walk in separation from evil on earth; in short, how to please God.

Is it possible that some, more favoured than these Thessalonian believers in having the whole New Testament in their hands, have not yet learned all this?

The delightful manner in which the "doctrine of Christ" is set out in these earliest of christian writings is refreshing. With simple directness the Person of the Lord is presented here, His Name and full title appearing with such frequency that sometimes in one sentence both are twice repeated. Nine times, too, we find Him named here with God the Father as being equally joined in the special purpose or object stated. The church of the Thessalonians is in God the Father *and* in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace are bestowed upon her by God the Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ. Her faith, love, and hope are in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father. God Himself our Father *and* our Lord Jesus Christ guide the path of the Apostle and his companions. Thus the essential Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is tacitly

assumed throughout. The Divine Sonship and Messiahship which our Lord affirmed of Himself before Caiaphas was plainly taught to these Thessalonian believers: "*This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ*"; "*Ye 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, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come*"; "*The Jews who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets*"; "*His Kingdom and glory*"; "*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels [angels of His might].*"

The Christ of God presented to the reader in these earliest epistles of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, is unmistakably the same Person with the same claims as He Who stood bound before Caiaphas, the high priest, in the days of His flesh: "*Jesus*"—"the Lord Jesus"—the Man Who died; the Man raised again; the Man gone into heaven; "His Son," that is, *the Son of the living and true God*; Jesus the Lord; the Lord Jesus to be revealed from heaven with the angels of *His* might; another king, one Jesus; so the inspired pen-portrait of our Lord is drawn by the Spirit through the Apostle: Jesus, the Son of the living God, with the angels of His might — this Jesus whom I preach is the Christ.

"Again the high priest asked Him: Art Thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said: I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 61-2).

Oh! that to us may be granted to read with anointed eyes, as though for the first time, the familiar pages of these epistles, so that the Lord may direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ (2 Thess. iii. 5).

May our consideration of the "doctrine of Christ"

lead us to love and serve the Blessed Lord better while with ever deepening adoration we bow at the feet of Him in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour.

W.G.T.

Man's Boasted Progress.

IN this day in which men boast of their progress, their pride rises up more and more against the revelation which God has given of Himself in His word, and indeed against God Who has given it. We find this around us daily. For this reason it is well to be established in the truth revealed in this word of God, our only safeguard in these perilous times.

We are certainly not opposed to true science which is very useful in its proper domain, but to science "falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi. 20), against which scripture puts us on our guard, and which always subjects God and His word to human judgment, thus making man the judge of God's revelation. Man indeed is no longer such as he was created, he is fallen and far from God (Eccl. vii. 29). He is unable to have right thoughts about God, the universe, the state of the soul after death, etc., unless he turns to God in repentance and receives the revelation which He has given us in the scriptures.

How puny is all human effort in comparison with God's vast and marvellous universe! We can well say: "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Ps. xxxix. 5). "Laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity" (Ps. lxii. 9). Man's life is short and uncertain "even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away" (James iv. 14).

But the pride of man will increase more and more, and will rise up even higher in a day to come. In

Rev. xiii. 13-15, we read that Antichrist will do great wonders, and make fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceive them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, even causing the image of the beast to speak.

Man will then become a mere puppet in the hands of Satan. How terrible that pride should lead man so far as to be in actual rebellion against God, his Creator.

Oh, that men would be wise and take a humble place before the Almighty God, giving heed to His word: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble (James iv. 6). How great is He before Whom the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance (Is. xl. 15). Though He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy and Who dwells in the high and holy place, yet He condescends in His wondrous grace to dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, and to look to that man who trembles at His word (Is. lvii. 15, lxvi. 2). "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of" (Is. ii. 22). x.

THUS SAITH THE LORD: LET NOT THE WISE MAN GLORY IN HIS WISDOM, NEITHER LET THE MIGHTY MAN GLORY IN HIS MIGHT, LET NOT THE RICH MAN GLORY IN HIS RICHES; BUT LET HIM THAT GLORIETH GLORY IN THIS: THAT HE UNDERSTANDETH, AND KNOWETH ME, THAT I AM THE LORD, WHICH EXERCISE LOVINGKINDNESS, JUDGMENT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE EARTH; FOR IN THESE THINGS DO I DELIGHT, SAITH THE LORD (JER. ix. 23, 24).

Refining.

AT a meeting of some believers the subject under consideration was that passage in Malachi iii. 2, 3 : "For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," in which the fullers' soap and the refiner represent the sanctifying grace of Christ. Every word in scripture is important, and the question was asked why it says that the refiner "sits."

One present, desirous of knowing how the work was carried out, went to a silversmith and asked him the question : "Do you sit while the process of refining is in progress?" "Certainly," he replied, "I must sit and fix my eyes on the crucible, for if the time necessary for the refining were to pass, the silver would be spoiled." Does not this give us to understand the beauty and the force of these words : "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver"? The Lord often finds it necessary to put His own through trial, but He is always near them, regarding constantly His refining work, His wisdom and His love being ever engaged with the objects of His care.

But there was something further : as the above-mentioned person was leaving the silversmith, he called him back to say that he had forgotten to mention that his work was not completed until he could see his own face reflected in the silver. Is not this a fine picture of the Lord Who, when He sees His own image reflected by His own, puts an end to the work of purifying.

Someone has rightly said : "If you are a child of God, you will not be exempted from the discipline of the family. The voice which speaks may seem severe, but the hand which strikes is gentle. The furnace may be heated seven times (Dan. iii. 19), but the refiner sits by. His object is not to consume, but to purify." Be assured that all His dealings with us bear the imprint

of His love. The saint on earth can say, while casting a look of faith and confidence on Him Who allows the trials: "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Ps. cxix. 75).

Believer, look back upon your deepest trials and tell me: Were they useless? They might have led thee into a Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 9) or into the furnace, but it was in order to show to thee One "like the Son of God" (Dan. iii. 25). When was thy God ever so very near to thee, and thou so near to Him as when in the furnace of fire? The sweet spices of the perfume were beaten (Ex. xxx. 36) as was also the gold of the candlestick (Ex. xxv. 31). In the trials through which thou passest, thou hast an opportunity to glorify thy God, which even the angels do not possess.

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

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for having been tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James i. 12).

M.E.

GOD IS FAITHFUL, WHO WILL NOT SUFFER YOU TO BE TEMPTED ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE; BUT WILL WITH THE TEMPTATION ALSO MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT (1 COR. x. 13).

Heart and Conscience.

THE whip and the scourge may be righteous; but there is no winning the heart of man with these. Nor is it righteousness that reigns among the saints of God, but GRACE through righteousness unto eternal life (Rom. v. 21). Alas! how many sins that might have been washed away (John xiii.) have been retained! How many brethren alienated for all time, who might have been won back to God and to us, because we have hammered at the conscience merely with the heart ungained—with the heart, I may say, almost unsought! We have not overcome evil, because we have not overcome it with good. We have taken readily the judge's chair and have got back judgment; but the Master's lowly work we have little done.

But how little yet do we understand that mere righteous dealing—absolutely righteous as it may be—will not work the restoration of souls, that judgment, however temperate and true, will not touch and soften and subdue hearts to receive instruction, which by the very facts of the case, are shown not to be in their true place before God. Man is not all conscience; and conscience reached with the heart away will do what it did with the first sinner among men—drive him out among the trees of the garden to escape the unwelcome voice.

J.N.D.

Blessed as is always and everywhere the energy of the new nature, it is in the assembly of God that it finds its largest and deepest exercise, so far as we are concerned. Nowhere else is it demanded so continually, and in such varied forms. *Without* love souls therein make speedy and utter shipwreck; *with* it the sorest trials turn into the happiest testimony to the grace of Christ.

W.K.

“Come.”

“I Jesus . . . : I am . . . the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say ‘Come.’” (Rev. xxii: 16, 17.)

HOW sweet to hear Thy well-known voice
Speak forth that peerless name,
“Jesus”!—It makes us to rejoice,
For Thou art still the same.

The Bright and Morning Star art Thou,
The harbinger of day,
Blest solace to the heart e’en now
Along life’s chequered way.

Throughout the long and dreary night
The bride her vigil keeps,
Still watching for the morning light :
The world in darkness sleeps.

We long to see Thy glory shine
As, by the Spirit given,
We learn whilst here Thy love divine,
Known to the full in heaven.

O Saviour ! come, we cry as one,
The bride, the Spirit, say :
Complete in us the work begun,
And change our night to day.

Thy face we shall behold with joy
In heaven’s unclouded light,
Thy praise our constant sweet employ
Through days without a night.

Then “Come,” O Lord, once more we cry,
Fulfil Thy promise given ;
No distance then, to Thee brought nigh,
This, this indeed, is heaven.

By the late F. G. BURKITT.
From “Hymns of Grace and Glory,”

“The Lord Has Called Me To-night !”

MANY miles up the great valley of the Nile stands a large village, called Mellawi. Like most of the Egyptian cities and villages, there are heaps of ruins to be seen as you approach it, affording evidence that many generations have lived and passed away on this spot; and, when the rubbish became so great in one place that they could no longer level it down for human habitation, they withdrew to some place near by, and continued to build. But, to me, the most interesting spot in the village, as it now stands, is a small room, where the gospel has been preached, with clearness and power, for some years past, and which has proved, I doubt not, to be the birth-place of a good many souls. Those who have come under the power of the truth generally meet together every night for praise and prayer, and there is opportunity, for any who can, to minister the word.

One evening, when they were thus assembled, the preacher was led to take as his text: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. lv. 6, 7). He pressed immediate repentance upon the impenitent, and the present acceptance of Christ for salvation. He unfolded the greatness of God’s love and mercy, and His willingness to accept the vilest sinner at once, if he would only look to Christ.

At the close of the meeting all arose to disperse, but an ill-visaged stranger was observed remaining in his seat. Some approached him, and began to speak with him. His only reply to them was: “*The Lord has called me to-night! The Lord has called me to-night!*” After further inquiry, it appeared that he was a young man belonging to a troupe of vile characters roaming about from village to village to sing and dance, and

cater to the basest lusts of human nature. He was of christian origin, but a wicked life of sin had long kept him at a distance from all who had any fear of God before their eyes. Hence, he had become an outcast and a vagabond; and, humanly speaking, he deserved to be treated as a moral leper. His troupe had reached this village, and he chanced to be passing this gospel room just as the people were going in, and it occurred to him that he would just go in awhile and see what they were doing. But the God of all grace and compassion had His eye set in mercy upon the vile outcast. The words of truth reached his conscience and heart, and, after the address, he remained, as it were, spell-bound, in his seat. After talking with him, it seemed evident that a work of God had taken place in his soul. Without question or hesitation, he abandoned his lewd companions, and during the few weeks he remained among those who had been God's messengers to him, he gave ample proof that the Lord had actually called him that night.

But he who sows to the flesh must, in God's wise and holy government, reap corruption. His former life of sin had not failed to fill his body with the seeds of disease, which began to make rapid progress, and, in a short time, brought him to the grave. But he fell asleep in Jesus. Oh, blessed, blessed sleep!

About the same time there occurred another remarkable case in the same village. It was the case of a poor man who was literally a leper. He, too, was called effectually by the word of grace. He lingered on for some time, while the poor body was decaying and dropping to pieces, but was so happy in his soul that he was a wonder to those who visited him. And it is said that his last days were almost ecstatic, for his soul was filled with a sense of Christ's presence and love. Death had not a single terror for him. He knew that the blood of Christ had cleansed him perfectly, and that he was whiter than snow. All the Christians of the town were astonished that such a man could have such an experience as that. All their holy men and famous

monks, from St. Anthony down to the present, after years of painful penances and conflicts with demons, could never venture to affirm that they were as sure of going to Christ as if they were already there. And no wonder, for a vile mixture of works and faith never yet set a soul free and gave it a foretaste of heavenly blessedness. Well, the poor leper, saved by grace and filled with glory anticipatively, bore his testimony, and passed away to Christ. His body, too, rests in hope, for it will, ere long, be raised, glorious, incorruptible, and powerful. This, also, is a precious part of the blessed hope, given us through grace. We know that God will raise, or transform, these vile bodies, and give them a form and fashion like to Christ's own body in glory (Phil. iii. 21).

I believe that there are innumerable bodies of God's saints resting in that valley of the Nile, all precious to Him, and waiting for the long expected morning of resurrection. The learned and curious of this world ransack the ancient tombs to find the mummied remains of the old heathen, but God cares for the bodies of those who are sleeping in Jesus.

B. F. P.

God's Desires For Us.

(Notes of an Address at the London Conference. Mark viii. 22-33; ix. 1-9; Col. i. 9-10.)

THE apostle Paul was a chosen vessel of the Lord to carry the glad tidings to the nations. We belong to the nations in contrast with the people of Israel. The apostle Paul was very diligent in going to many places and preaching Christ, Whom he had seen in the glory, but there were some places he had never visited. Colosse was one of these places, and he speaks of the saints there, of those in Laodicea and of "as many as have not seen my face in the flesh" (Col. ii. 1). He had "great conflict" not only for those at Colosse but for all that "have not seen my face." In the first place no doubt, he had in his mind those living in that day, but the teaching of the epistle is not limited

to them, and in an especial manner it ought to be interesting to each and every one of us.

We are amongst those who have never seen the apostle's face, and in the verses I have read he is giving us an insight into what was moving his heart. He tells us that his great desire for you and for me, and his prayer to God, is that we might be filled with the full knowledge of God's will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, in order that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. My thought is to bring out what is the special character of this will of God, with which the apostle desires us to be filled. We get this brought out in a very remarkable manner in the passage I have read in Mark's gospel, and is the education of the soul by the Holy Spirit in the knowledge of God's will, in the knowledge of that which God desires for every one of us. And what more do you want, what more could you wish? It is a wonderful story. Let us go through it briefly, beginning with the man who was blind.

The first thing we learn is that in order that we might be brought into the knowledge of God's will, we have to be brought to the Lord Jesus Christ. For all the will of God, beloved brethren, centres upon that one Person, in Whom is all God's delight; and He wants us to have our hearts so filled with the delight of God's own heart in that one Person, that He may reign supreme in our hearts' affections. Then, as the apostle declares, the practical result will be that we shall seek to be found walking worthy of the Lord. Oh, to bring the soul that is blind, who has no spiritual conception, no acknowledgment that there is a God even, to bring him into this place where we are, into communion with God in that which is the delight of His heart—His blessed Son!

This blind man, if left to himself, would have gone on in blindness and ignorance of joy and bliss, but through grace he learns God's mind. The only way in which you and I can know it, and in which we can be brought into this blessed standing, is as blind sinners.

You will remember that the apostle declares that the Lord in the glory appeared to him and told him that He was sending him out to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind (Acts xxvi. 17, 18), to enable them to see an object before them, a Person, and that the One in Whom was God's delight. The gospel we hear preached nowadays is often concerned simply and solely with the need of men as sinners, and seems to be confined to telling the way of escape from the judgment due to sin. It is quite right and perfectly true that the gospel tells us how we can be saved from the wrath of God, but to be filled with the knowledge of God's desire for us is also needful so that we may find our delight in that One in Whom is all His delight—the Christ of God.

This blind man is brought to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus, one with God the Father in that which is the Father's desire, takes him by the hand. It was the movement that expressed to that blind man His love and compassion for him in the sad condition in which he was found. Without going into full details, we read that He spits on his eyes and the eyes of the blind man are opened. Divine power has come to open the eyes of the blind. Everyone of you can give your testimony that there came a moment in your lifetime when you were brought into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be in different ways, through different people, perhaps it was the preaching of Christ by some servant of His, perhaps by the reading of the word of God, but there was a moment when you came into personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way by which the eyes of the blind can be opened.

The Lord then asked the blind man if he saw anything; and the blind man gives a remarkable answer. For the first time in his history he looks around him, and the Lord Jesus Who has opened his eyes is standing before him. In reply to the question: "Seest thou anything?" the blind man says: "I see men." Not, "I see You," but "I see men walking about like trees." He is impressed with the scene of activity in which he

finds himself, with the walk of the men that he sees around him. You know that a tree in scripture is the type of human greatness, and he says, "I see men walking about in all their pride, in all their self-glorification, like trees." This is not the object for which the Lord Jesus had opened his eyes; the work was not completed by His first touch. The Lord therefore put His hands upon him and made him look up; then he saw everything distinctly. He was fully restored, and saw everything clearly.

Let me put it to you, my friends, as I put it to myself. You have had your eyes opened, you have come to the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Who met you in all your deep need. Apart from Him yours was a hopeless case, and now that you have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, what is before your eyes that have been opened? Is it that One Who has done such great things for you? Is He your life? or are you impressed chiefly with the things of men, with the greatness of men and human pride? Are you impressed, I may even ask, with the religious leaders and guides of men? That is not the reason for which the Lord Jesus has opened your eyes. There were those in Corinth who had men before them, believers who had party leaders before them, saying: "I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas"; they had *men* before them. Yes, we are in danger even in our religious life of having men before us, teachers, guides whom we follow without question; but the Lord Jesus has not opened our eyes for this. It was the will of God, when your eyes were opened, that you should be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

The Lord Jesus now gives us the explanation of His purpose in opening men's eyes. The work that puts men only before my soul as its object is not a finished work in my soul. The Lord puts this question to His disciples: "Whom do men say that I am?" The only value, the only standard by which you may think of the teacher or guide of the believer in the Lord is: What

does he think of Christ? Do not be occupied with men's opinions, nor men's guidance, nor follow after men. Whatever their attainments may be, whatever their enlightened knowledge, if the Lord Jesus has but little place in their thoughts, though they do not entirely set Him aside and treat Him as a nonentity, they can come to no right conclusion as to Who He is. Some will say one thing, and some another. There is no certainty nor unanimity among them, for there is no real desire in their hearts to know the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who He is.

The Lord therefore asks His disciples "Whom say ye that I am?" And Peter declared "Thou art the Christ." He had learned this much. The official position, the official character of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the thoughts of God that Christ as a man in this world was to occupy, and will yet occupy, had been revealed to him. But the will of God for us is to know not merely the official position and character as destined by God for Christ, but to make us know His personal position and personal relationship to God: He is the Son of the living God. The Lord Jesus however charges His disciples that they should not tell others that He was the Christ. He was going to lead them into the knowledge of that place of suffering He was to take as the Son of Man, and also of the glory that was to be His afterwards, a place entirely outside and apart from this whole creation scene down here on this earth.

In order that they might have their souls' attention taken up with Himself in all the glories of His own person, He led Peter, James and John into a mountain, and was transfigured before them. We read that Moses and Elias appeared, and in another gospel it says that they spoke concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem (Lu. ix. 31). There the disciples saw the outward glory and majesty of the Lord in connection with the kingdom of God come in power. Peter is so entranced with the sight before him and feels himself in such a place of bliss and joy

and happiness, that he wishes to erect three tabernacles and abide there. But that scene was to pass away, all the kingdom-glories connected with Christ according to God's thoughts, were not to be yet. Though the vision of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to be set up upon this earth, and the blessedness for this world was going to pass away, the *personal* glory of the Lord Jesus Christ abides. Moses and Elijah disappear, but something more wonderful was contemplated by these three disciples. They saw the glory-cloud. That which in olden time was the symbol of the visible presence of Jehovah was lighting up the scene, and, as I believe the meaning of the scripture to be, Peter, James and John were allowed to enter the glory-cloud, from which the voice was heard, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him."

Yes, He the Lord Jesus Christ, will reign as King upon His holy hill of Zion (Ps. ii. 6). He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth (Ps. lxxii. 8). And great will be the glory that will be manifestly connected with Him in the kingdom of God upon earth. But this glory that shed its light upon the disciples from the cloud and this voice that they heard within the glory-cloud were far more blessed and wonderful. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedest Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24). This glory is connected with His Person. It is what He is in Himself, and they were allowed to behold Him in that glory, and to hear the Father's testimony to the complacency with which He looked upon His beloved Son.

Oh, my brethren, this is what God the Father is saying to us still—"Hear Him," with all that He can reveal to you. No one hath seen God at any time, but the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father hath declared Him, revealing all the Father's heart. All God's desires are centred upon that one Person and we then read that when the disciples opened their eyes

they beheld no one but "Jesus only." What a statement, what a change! The man who had had his eyes opened, with that same glorious Person standing near, said, "I am looking at men, for I see them as trees walking" But Peter, James and John had now no eyes for any one, nor for anything else. They saw but One—"Jesus only," and they heard God's wondrous declaration as to Who that One is to the Father's heart.

This is what the Apostle desires for us who have never seen his face, that we might be filled with the knowledge of God's will and that we might be entranced with the beauty and glory of our blessed Lord and Saviour, not so much with what He is to us, blessed as it is to be occupied with this, but with the revelation of what He is to His own Father: "My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Let us hear Him Who has declared the Father to us, Who has declared all the treasures of the place from which He has come. He is the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. Of Him it is said, that they saw no one but "Jesus only." And they came down from the mountain.

We have had happy times here together, and our hearts have been refreshed by fellowship with each other and the ministry of the word of the Lord Jesus to us. The great majority of us will be returning to our various homes to walk in the various pathways marked out for us by God in His wisdom, goodness and grace. The path may be a very lonely one and our lives may seem very drab in their colour, simple lives, nothing great in the eyes of men, but let us remember that the disciples saw no man but "Jesus only with them." They saw the One of Whom they had heard the testimony rendered from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son," and as we read in the second Epistle of Peter "In whom I am well pleased" (i. 17). He is with you in every circumstance, whether in the home-life, the business life or whatever your pathway

may be. The One in Whom is all God's delight is with you.

This was true of Peter. He never forgot that scene on the Mount of Transfiguration, and here in his second epistle we read those remarkable words in which he refers to the things of which he was an eyewitness (2nd ep. 13-18). Out of all Peter's experiences when with the Lord and after the Lord was gone back to the glory, of all the experiences of his long life he singles out this one incident when he was with Christ on the mountain and was allowed to be an eyewitness of His majesty and glory. But even this glory is not the supreme point in his soul. What he treasures in his heart is that there he heard the voice from the excellent glory: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased," as he says, "When we were with Him in the holy mount."

In the gospel of Mark we read, "As they came down from the mountain." We have moments perhaps when to our great enjoyment we are in spirit brought back to that scene on the Mount of Transfiguration, and are permitted as it were to hear God's voice, testifying to the delight He has found in His Son. And when we descend the mountain and come into times of difficulty and trial and danger in our pathway, we find that One, Jesus, still with us. Let the consciousness of this be present with every one of us as we are now about to depart and go our various ways as appointed by God. Let us keep the Lord Jesus Christ in our soul's enjoyment, feasting upon all that He is to His blessed Father—as His beloved Son. It was this that the Lord in His prayer to His Father desired for us, "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John xvii. 26). Let it be the earnest desire of each of our hearts to find what that Lord and Saviour is to the Father, as His beloved Son. And let us see to it that nothing in the world—social, political, commercial, or even religious—may divert our hearts' affections from Him. As the apostle John, who, equally with Peter, was with Him on the holy mount,

warns: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15).

Then surely the result will be that, filled with the full knowledge of His will, we shall endeavour to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. O.H.

The Doctrine of Christ—10.

IN the pastoral and personal epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon where the Apostle Paul specially addresses some closely associated with himself in the Lord's service there is an exceptionally clear outline of his general teaching respecting the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We may, in passing, briefly review what is common to all his epistles which has been already considered by us in these papers: namely, the frequent mention of the Name and titles of our Lord in the general salutations and benedictions with the careful conjunction of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as being equally and jointly the bestowers of grace, mercy and peace.

The special teaching given and emphasized in these later epistles is arresting from its freshness and force. First, we note in 1 Timothy ii. 5-6, that the sole mediator between God and man, is "the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all"; then in chapter iii. 16, that "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world, received up into glory"; again, in chapter vi. 13, "Christ Jesus Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," and Whose appearing as our Lord Jesus Christ is to be shown in His times connected with "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (vv. 15, 16).

Further, in 2 Timothy, Christ Jesus is declared to be the One in Whom God's gracious purpose and grace towards us centred before creation; "but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ Who hath annulled death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel (i. 10, N.T.); and this One none other than "Jesus Christ of the seed of David . . . raised from the dead" (ii. 8).

Then, in Titus, all sound doctrines and good practices spring from the grace of God bringing salvation; but the objective and dynamic is found in "that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us" (ii. 13, 14, N.T.). Here indeed are truths as to His blessed Person, both fresh and forcible. In Philemon, which is an even more intimate personal letter, the Apostle writes not so much of the "doctrine of Christ" as of the practical exercise of Christian love and fellowship, and the references therein to our Lord bespeak the writer's deepest devotedness to that holy Person Who is to him at once Saviour and Lord, with all the full implications of His title, as the Lord Jesus Christ. None knew better all that was explicit and implicit in that title than the Apostle. His early days as a believer and subsequent experiences specially fitted him for apprehending what he never wearied of affirming that Jesus Christ is the LORD. When this has been truly grasped and embraced, nothing fuller nor deeper of Him can be known "for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). We shall, however, in the measure that our hearts are affected by this truth seek to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Food for faith, and fuel for flame of personal devotion are abundantly furnished by these scriptures, for the Holy Spirit, Who led the Apostle to write in the intimacy of affectionate association these personal letters of instruction, exhortation and encouragement, in His wisdom gave them also that permanent character belonging to all inspired

scripture, suiting them at all times to instruct, correct or reprove the reader.

In such intimate communications one looks for the frankest expression of the writer's deepest convictions and belief, and rarely does the Apostle Paul speak or write more convincingly upon the "doctrine of Christ" than in his pastoral and personal epistles. These definite, dogmatic declarations of fundamental doctrines as to Christ are of first importance to him and to his fellow-servants and to the saints everywhere. The "doctrine of Christ" held, taught, and enjoyed by himself is the apostolic teaching everywhere in scripture. Hence in these latest of his writings, we find ourselves again moving in the familiar society and atmosphere of the great disclosures, confessions, affirmations and revelations of the whole body of New Testament writers. There is no need to attempt to produce a harmony amongst the writers : it exists, as with absolute agreement they affirm and declare that Jesus Christ, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and was raised again from the dead : that He is the *Man* Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all : that He was *God* manifest in the flesh : that to Him belongs a glorious appearing and a heavenly kingdom : that though He moved amongst men in lowly grace and humility yet in His inherent personal character He is the only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords : that He is therefore both divine and human, God and Man, the Lord Christ. Much more, but nothing less is the true confession as to the "doctrine of Christ," and thus does the Person of our Divine Lord pass before our eyes as we read these short pastoral personal epistles of the Apostle.

Inextricably woven into the texture of his thought ; firmly and deeply embedded in his affections ; springing with a delightful spontaneity from his deepest heart, is the sense of worshipful adoration of "our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto

Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14). May something of the same passionate devotion for our Blessed Lord take possession of both reader and writer as the Holy Spirit graciously and lovingly takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us in the holy written word of God. W.G.T.

Falling Away.

THE passage in Hebrews vi. 4-6, forms a part, and doubtless a needed part, of God's word, and it behoves us to understand and ponder the warning it contains.

It is connected with the close of chapter v., in which the apostle upbraids the Hebrew professing Christians with their dulness of hearing, in that, when they ought to have been teachers, it was needful that someone should again teach them the first principles of the oracles of God.

He exhorts them, therefore, to leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," or, as in the margin, "the word of the beginning of Christ." These expressions denote the glimmerings of truth as to Christ, contained in the doctrines and shadows of the bygone dispensation. In these the Hebrews had been reared from infancy, not knowing their import till visited by the full light of the gospel, here called "perfection."

The special danger to which these Hebrews were exposed was that of receding from the ground where the full light of the gospel had placed them, and of relapsing into Judaism, which at best did but contain "the word of the beginning of Christ." The principles enumerated in verses 1 and 2 all formed a part of Judaism, and do not embrace one feature of Christianity as distinct from Judaism. The word "baptisms" is in the plural, and refers, not to Christian baptism, but to Jewish washings. They were not by relapsing into Judaism to lay again these principles as a foundation, but, leaving these, were to "go on to perfection," the

full revelation of God in Christ, as made known in the gospel. "And this will we do," says the apostle, "if God permit."

To understand the next verses we have not only to remember thus the context, but must also bear in mind that these Hebrews were not all necessarily true converts, because for a time they had appeared and professed to be such. There might be among them those who, when put to the trial, showed they had never really known the grace of Christ, or heartily embraced His gospel.

They might be outwardly enlightened, as surely all are who are favoured with the full light of the gospel as compared with the darkness of heathenism, or the glimmering light of Judaism. They might have had their affections stirred, and tasted of the heavenly gift and of the good word of God. The stony-ground hearers, in the parable of the Sower, had some such "tastes," seeing that they heard the word, and anon *with joy* received it. Yet had they no root in themselves, but in time of temptation fell away.

They might still further be either witnesses, subjects, or possessors of these miraculous powers so common in apostolic times, being made partakers of the Holy Ghost and of the powers of the world to come. Judas wrought miracles as well as the other eleven apostles. There will be many to say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" The reply to such will not be, "I *once* knew you, but you fell away." No! "Then will I profess unto them, I *never* knew you: depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

The falling away then here treated of is not any of those ordinary falls from which Scripture and experience alike show the grace of Christ to be sufficient to restore us, but a total apostasy from Christ, and return to Judaism. It is such an apostasy, moreover, on the part of those who, in addition to the ordinary privileges of professing Christians, had the gospel of Christ con-

firmed to them by miracles of which they themselves were witnesses or performers.

Evidently any one apostatizing under those circumstances would have to account for these miracles; and the way in which they were accounted for in early times by those who could not deny the facts, was by attributing them to magic or the power of Satan. Now, this would render the apostasy in question *virtually*, if not *formally*, the sin against the Holy Ghost. It consisted in attributing to Satan the miracles which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (Mark iii. 30).

This sin it is impossible to commit now that the miraculous powers of the Spirit have ceased to be manifested. How nearly any may approach to committing it, it is impossible to define. Every tendency to turn away from Christ points in that direction; and hence the solemn need to guard against all such tendencies. But the sin itself, of such apostasy as is here supposed, could only be committed in those days; and any who then committed it had never really passed from death unto life.

Having discharged his duty in warning thus against apostasy from Christ, the apostle instantly turns to the better hopes he had of most, if not all, to whom he wrote. "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." He comforts himself as to them by recalling to mind, not their gifts or miraculous powers or knowledge, but the proofs they had given of their faith and of their love to the saints. W.o.T.

"BEING CONFIDENT OF THIS VERY THING, THAT HE WHICH HATH BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU, WILL PERFORM IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST" (Phil. i. 6).

Assembling Ourselves Together.

IT is quite certain that those who are whole-hearted for Christ desire to be in His company. They instinctively wend their way to the spot where He is known to be. Is there such a spot on earth? Yes, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20).

No one who is truly conscious of the greatness and excellency of His person, and of the blessedness of communion with Him, would willingly be absent from that favoured place. A neglected Lord's Table, and a neglected prayer-meeting, speak aloud of the Laodicean state of the heart towards Him. We read that of old "They continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). Alas that there should be such a lack of this continuing stedfastly now!

Does not the Lord say to the Father, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. ii. 12), and can we suppose that He fails to notice whether we are there or not, to join in the song He leads?

In the coming day of review before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10), how shall we take the disclosure that self-indulgence, a little unfavourable weather, or a tiff with a brother or sister in Christ, has outweighed with us all the mighty motives for a loving response to His wish, "This do in remembrance of Me"? (Luke xxii. 19).

It is deeply humbling to think that any who have tasted the Lord's love can take advantage of not having to work on the Lord's day to spend its morning hours in bed, and that others can excuse their absence from its meetings on the ground of visiting, or receiving visits from friends. Priceless opportunities of gratifying the heart of the Lord, and of showing our attachment to Him in the scene of His rejection are thus wasted and lost.

It is mere mockery to repeat "Come, Lord Jesus," and use glowing expressions of desire to be with Him in glory, if, by our absence from His assembly, we betray our indifference to His presence here.

Beloved, it is high time to awake out of sleep (Rom. xiii. 11; Ephes. v. 14). May we take to heart the solemn and impressive exhortation of the word, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. x. 25).

Closely connected with the foregoing is the question of *time*. Where is our reverence for the Lord, or our sense of His grace, where our responsive love, if we come with lagging steps, five, ten or fifteen minutes after He has taken His place in the midst of His own?

It was easy in the freshness of first love to come early to the place where He manifests Himself in such a peculiarly blessed way. Has He become less precious? The moments we may thus spend together with Him on earth are swiftly passing away. Let us not willingly lose one of them.

It is touching to remember that no thought of all the sufferings that awaited Him, of Himself presently becoming the true passover, "sacrificed for us," delayed the Lord's appearing at His last paschal feast. "When *the hour was come*, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him (Luke xxii. 14).

Oh, for a holy eagerness to be where He is!

R.

"As Oracles of God."

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"
(1 Peter iv. 11).

ONE is quite right in thinking that the apostle's word goes far beyond speaking according to the Scriptures, for a man might say nothing but what was scriptural, and not speak "as [the] oracles of God." The passage implies that one should only speak when one has the certainty of uttering what one believes to

be the mind of God for the occasion. If there is not this confidence, one ought to be silent. It may be an artless message, possibly like that of Peter and John, displaying the speaker to be humanly ignorant and unlearned, and yet just the mind of God, suitable to the present need. This is to speak "as oracles of God." Another might speak a word true in itself, but applicable to wholly different circumstances, warning where comfort was needed, instruction where the Spirit was rather calling out communion, or *vice versa*. To speak thus is not to speak as oracles of God.

Of course, there is the other and equally imperative obligation on the part of those who hear, of examining all by the word of God.—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. v. 21). R.

Extract from a Letter.

THE love of the Lord and His faithful care of us shine out above all the vicissitudes of the wilderness and turn trials into fresh occasions of being brought nearer to Him and of enjoying His intercession and deep sympathy. He allowed Lazarus to die in order that His prayer addressed to the Father in a loud voice might be heard by those around his grave, and then that the answer might be seen at the moment when the all-powerful voice of the Son of God caused to come forth from the tomb him for whom they wept; but the tears of the Lord had first been mingled with those of Mary! What grace was His! and what an entrance this gives us into the communion of which John speaks in his first epistle (i. 3) "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The Father's will was made known fully in the work of the Son, and the love ineffable which flows from it is ours throughout eternity.

Translation from the French of W.J.L.

Our Hope.

“ Christ Jesus, our hope ” (1 Tim. i. 1).

HOPE of my heart, Thou Christ of God,
H’Tis in the path that Thou has trod,
Across this desert waste;
That every grace divine I see,
Each in its perfect place in Thee,
And there my soul can rest.

But now I look above the sky
And see by faith’s transpiercing eye
Thy glory on the throne;
Waiting in patience now Thou art,
Until Thine own shall have their part
And fully know as known.

So here I wait for Thy return—
Blest hope which makes my heart to burn
Whilst still on earth I roam.
O Saviour!—source of every good,
Through Thee I am brought nigh to God,
And wait my destined home.

What myriads there shall sing Thy praise,
As to the Lamb their songs they raise,
On glory’s cloudless shore!
In Thee their joy shall be complete,
When bowed in worship at Thy feet,
Their path of suffering o’er.

There, too, the Father’s grace is known,
Rich, sovereign, free—’tis all His own—
In radiant courts above.
Its outflow there no limit knows,
Where all is calm and sweet repose—
The *fulness* of His love.

By the late F. G. BURKITT.
From *Hymns of Grace and Glory*.

Watchman, what of the Night?

ANOTHER year of the long-suffering of God is now well-nigh come to a close. "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come" (Is. xxi, 11, 12).

Let us, as invited by the watchman, inquire a little of the night, the coming morning and the dark night that will follow, and *return* to the Lord, if a backslider; or, if not yet one of His, respond to the gracious invitation, "*Come*"!

Another year is closing—a measured portion of "the night"—the long, dark night of man's rejection of Christ. How awful is the fact that this world has rejected and killed God's Son, and still rejects Him! Satan, the great enemy of God and man, is the god of this world; and nowhere does he in the present day display more enmity against Christ than in the professing church. How rapidly infidelity is increasing in it everywhere! The deity of the Lord Jesus is denied, His resurrection, His miracles, the inspiration of the scriptures—in fact, all the cardinal truths of Christianity are called in question, even by those in the highest places. On the other hand we find the grossest idolatry in that which calls itself the Church. Is it not the night getting darker and darker, ripening for the terrible judgments surely and swiftly coming?

And what is the state of the world around? Violence, lawlessness and dishonesty rapidly increasing; and, what is worse, there seems to be no sense of shame or repentance. Indeed the long night of man's rejection of Christ grows darker and darker!

But "*the morning cometh*"—

Oh, happy morn! the Lord will come
And take His waiting people home,

Beyond the reach of care :

O morn too bright for mortal eyes,

When all the ransomed saints shall rise,

And wing their way to yonder skies,

Called up with Christ to reign.

This coming morning will be our new year of years, our morn of morns—our entire future, our every desire, our hope, our joy. Oh, bride of the Lamb, awake, the morning breaks; let every child of God awake. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. xiii. 12). Is it not high time to awake out of sleep?

Fellow-Christians, are we longing for the morning that cometh? Does the thought thrill our hearts that we are going soon to see and be like our risen Lord? Is not He, Who loved the church and gave Himself for it, waiting for that moment when He shall present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. v. 25-27). May the Lord's last words from the glory cheer our hearts: "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20).

"The morning cometh"; but what says the watchman of that which follows this bright and blessed morning?

"And also the night."

Sad and dark has been the history of this long night of man's rejection of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; but what will be that period of darkness on earth when the church shall have been taken to be with the Lord on high? God has revealed to us what will be the portion of those

who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved: "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 10-12). He will utterly reject false boasting Christendom and throw it off as a testimony, for He has said: "I will spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. iii. 16).

Peace will then be taken from the earth; men will kill one another, there will be famine and pestilence (Rev. vi.), the most terrible judgments will fall upon the circumstances, and then upon the persons of men (Rev. viii., ix.); Satan will then lead man in open hostility against God; the Roman empire in its fearful Satanic form will re-appear, and men will worship the image which will be set up (Rev. xiii.). The great whore of apostate Christendom will appear in all her abominations until the infidel kingdoms rise up and destroy her (Rev. xvii.). This terrible night will be brought to a close by the personal coming to the earth of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the living nations, and to set up His glorious kingdom (Rev. xix., xx.). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. i. 7-9).

May the reader take warning if he has not yet believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *come* to Him *now* while it is still the day of grace, for "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3).

Let us each one then take heed to the words of the watchman, and if we should close this year on earth, may our motto be—"The morning cometh."

Seeing Jesus.

“**S**IR, we would see Jesus,” so said certain Greeks who came up to worship at the feast, to one of the disciples, Philip (John xii. 21). These were not some of those Jews who had been scattered in the various countries, and who are also sometimes called Greeks* ; they were Gentiles.

Doubtless they had heard of the miracles done by the Lord, and perhaps also of His ministry, and it may be that they had a need of soul to be met which caused them to desire to see Him. In any case their desire to “see Jesus” was a good and right one.

But the coming up of these Gentiles, just at that moment, brought before the Lord’s mind the future day when He, the king, should reign in righteousness, when Jerusalem would be the centre of His kingdom on earth, and when it would be said to her, “Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Is. lx. 1).

The Lord’s answer to His disciples on that occasion is most significant, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

What a simple and familiar illustration it was ! In the spring time the farmer drops his grain of wheat into the ground, which has been already harrowed and prepared. It dies, and from it springs up the stem, bearing upon it the many grains. But it *must die* first before there can be any fruit-bearing.

The Lord’s death was ever present before Him during His life on earth. It formed the subject of His conversation with Moses and Elias on that memorable occasion on the mount of transfiguration. “They spake

* Or Hellenists, as in Acts vi. 1 ; ix. 29

of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lu. ix. 31). He told His disciples on several occasions that He was going up to Jerusalem there to suffer and to die; and when Peter, with apparently kindly feeling, said to Him, "Pity Thyself, Lord, this shall not be unto Thee," the Lord treats it as the voice of Satan (Matt. xvi. 23).

Whether it be the salvation of any sinner, or the blessings of the millennial kingdom, these could not be except on the ground of the atonement made by the death of the Lord Jesus. Hence before even one grain of wheat could be stored in the granary of God, He, *the* grain of wheat, must fall into the ground *and die*. He might have remained alone in His own perfection, He might have even gone back to heaven from the mount of transfiguration, so far as the perfection of His own person was concerned; but to associate others with Himself and bear "much fruit," Jesus must die first.

Here the Lord speaks of His death. Looking at it from that blessed and wonderful point of view set forth in the burnt offering, He says, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." It was His death to be sure, but His death looked at as that in and by which He brought everlasting glory to God, vindicating every attribute of His nature as a God of holiness and truth; glorifying Him, and glorifying Himself in the absolute perfection and sweet savour of the work He was about to accomplish on the cross (see also John xiii. 31, 32).

How evil then and how wicked are the modernist doctrines, which deny the value of Christ's bloodshedding as that by which alone sins can be forgiven and the believer justified before God! They are the direct working of Satan, intended to subvert the truth of the gospel.

We now turn to Hebrews ii. 9, "But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Psalm ii. had shown Him to us as the Messiah to be set as King in Zion when the time comes. We know He was rejected by His own people; but this only opened the way for a wider glory whereby He is set, as Son of man, over *all* the works of God's hands, as we read in Ps. viii. which is quoted in Heb. ii.

We do not yet see the accomplishment of the whole of this latter Psalm, but a part of it has been already fulfilled in that He has been already crowned with glory and honour in heaven. This is a guarantee of the fulfilment of the whole, when the time arrives. In the meantime we see by faith Jesus crowned.

And if He "tasted death for every thing" (see N.T.) as He did, it was "by the grace of God." So far as His own person is concerned, death had no claim upon Him; He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father"—glory claimed Him. So that not only had Christ authority to lay down His life and to take it again, but death could not hold Him Who was the Prince of life.

"We see Jesus, crowned," what a comforting truth: it settles every question, removes every lingering doubt, and the believer can look up and see Him Who is the pledge of his every blessing, *before* the day of His manifestation comes.

Lastly, let us turn to our future prospect. "We know that, when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). "We know," the word signifies inward conscious knowledge, true christian knowledge. When He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, what a wonderful truth it is!

“Like Jesus in that place
Of light and love supreme;
Once Man of sorrows, full of grace,
Heaven’s blest and endless theme.”

If “we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. xv. 49); predestinated to be “conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. viii. 29); “our body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto His body of glory” (Phil. iii. 21), such is the believer’s destiny.

There, in a body of glory suited to heaven, we shall behold the glories of the Lamb—glories which, constituted as we now are in these poor mortal and corruptible bodies, we could not behold (1 Cor. xv. 50). We shall see Him *as He is*, not as He was down here, but as He is above.

And this is a purifying hope: if we know that we are to be perfectly like Him then, it should be our aim to be like Him down here. What a motive for a godly walk!

F. G. B.

Separation from Evil.

SINCE we are in a world which lieth in wickedness and carry about with us a sinful nature, it is evident that while we are here on earth there will always be the necessity for *separation* from evil if we desire to be well pleasing to God. This being so, it is most important that our separation should come from the right motive; that is to say, as a consequence of our relationship to God. This great governing principle is given to us in 1 Peter i. 16, quoted from Lev. xi. 44, 45, where we find twice repeated (also ch. xix. 2) and enjoined on Israel, who had been brought to God by redemption, “Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Similarly they were commanded to put outside the camp every leper (Num. v. 2, 3). Why? Because

leprosy is a type of sin, and because Jehovah dwelt in the midst of the camp. Their separation from evil and all defilement was the result of their relationship to God. This principle is so important that it will be well to trace it through scripture.

Abram seems to be the first instance of separation in response to the call of God. Enoch no doubt lived a life of separation from evil, since he walked with God, but that is not the side that is emphasized for us in his case. With *Abram* the first great fact in his history is *separation*. "Get thee *out*" (Gen. xii. 1), and this, as is explained to us in Acts vii. 2, was a consequence of the appearing to him of the God of glory. This involved separation from all that was not of God. He failed doubtless in going down into Egypt (type of the world); but his communion and worship were restored when he got back to Bethel (the house of God) (Gen. xiii. 3, 4).

Joseph, the object of his father's special love, was hated of his brethren. Cast out by them, God cared for him and made him later to be their deliverer (Gen. xlv. 5-7). He received his father's blessing as one who was *separate* from his brethren (Gen. xlix. 26). He is also spoken of in a similar way in the blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 16).

Then there came a day when the Israelites fell into the sin of idolatry. They had been redeemed by blood and delivered by the direct intervention of God on their behalf, but alas! how soon and how easily they slipped back into the ways of Egypt. Probably, it was not intended by Aaron, in making the golden calf, to set aside the worship of Jehovah (Ex. xxxii. 3-5), but he yielded to the people, and thus disobeyed the commandment of the Lord (Ex. xx. 3-5). What was the remedy? Vindication of the honour of Jehovah by the sons of Levi at the most painful cost to themselves (Ex. xxxii.

26-29), and the pitching of the tent of meeting* *without the camp* (Ex. xxxiii. 7), so that every one who sought the Lord went outside to it. Moses, by his faithfulness and intercession on behalf of the people, secured for them that inestimable blessing: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (v. 14). And Moses does not fail to emphasize the importance of this, for he says: "So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are on the face of the earth" (v. 16).

Here, surely, we get to the heart of our subject—the presence of the Holy God in the midst of His people, characterising them as separate from the world around.

We have, however, to wait until Israel had crossed the Jordan and were in the land, surrounded by enemies which they were called upon to dispossess, before we get the very important announcement that the whole company was held (a) *guilty*, because of sin committed by one in their midst, and (b) *responsible* to deal with it as soon as it was made known to them.

This comes before us with startling distinctness in Joshua vii. 11, 12, where Jehovah tells Joshua that the reason that the people had fled before their enemies was that "*Israel had sinned,*" and that His presence with them was conditional on their destroying the accursed thing from among them. Thus had to take place that solemn scene in the valley of Achor, when "*all Israel*" stoned with stones the one who had brought trouble upon the people of the Lord (vv. 24, 25).

From this we learn an important point, very often overlooked, that sin is not confined to the one who actually commits it, but that those who continue in association with him are also held guilty, until they have cleared themselves of it. In the 2nd epistle of

* This was a tent, not the Tabernacle which had not then been erected.

John we read that the one who did not bring the doctrine of Christ was not to be received into a saint's house, nor even to be greeted "for he that greeteth him is a *partaker of his evil deeds*" (vv. 10, 11).

It is this principle that the Apostle Paul applies to the Church at Corinth in dealing with the evil which had arisen there; only that the responsibility at Corinth was so much greater than that of the Israelites in that their relationship to God was so much nearer. They were no longer an earthly people redeemed out of Egypt, and God dwelling in their midst, though behind the veil. The Apostle tells the Corinthians: "Ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (ch. iii. 16). So he exhorts them to purge out the old leaven, for, says he, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. . . . Therefore put away from *among yourselves* that wicked person" (vv. 6, 7, 13).

It is not the intention in this paper to go over ground already well covered by others, but simply to bring into prominence the true ground of separation from evil, viz., what is due to the holy Name of the One to Whom we are gathered, and the holiness of the One Whose temple the church is. If we keep this in mind we shall be saved from dreading or seeking to avoid any action which may be called for, and if this involves the severance of fellowship for a time with children of God, we shall be comforted by knowing that, in keeping His commandments, we are acting in true love towards God and our brethren (1 John v. 2).

But while we speak of separation, our hearts yearn that every cause for separation among the children of God might be removed, and that the divisions, which are so contrary to the mind of Christ, might cease (1 Cor. i. 9, 10). If, however, we earnestly desire unity, what unity should this be? None other than the unity of the Spirit, and this excludes all that is

contrary to holiness and truth. In 2 Tim. ii. 19, we read: "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity," and in v. 22 we are told: "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, *with* them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Thus we see not only what we are to be separate from, but also the circle of those with whom we should associate.

Sweet and comforting it is for us to remember that the God Who enjoins holiness on all those who come nigh unto Him, desires restoration rather than discipline (Gal. vi. 1). It is the One "Who loves us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood," Who rebuked so strongly the Church at Pergamos (Rev. ii. 12-16) because they sheltered those who held false doctrine. Let us call to mind the words of the Lord Jesus: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me (John xiv. 21).

Love and obedience go together, and so the Apostle says: "Let all your things be done with love" (1 Cor. xvi. 14).
J. M. W.

The Doctrine of Christ.—II.

IN none of the New Testament books do we find the "doctrine of Christ" more clearly taught than in the epistle to the Hebrews. Here, in a series of vivid contrasts, the essential Deity and real Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ are strikingly set forth.

He is the Son, the Creator, the Upholder of all things by the word of His own power, and yet a Person "Who in the days of His flesh having offered up both supplications and entreaties to Him Who was able to save Him *out of* death, with strong crying and tears (and having been heard because of His piety); though He were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 7, 8. New Trans.).

The suffering One, Who is to abide for ever; the Man Whom angels are commanded to worship; the Same Whose years fail not, though elements melt, and heavens and earth be moved, and the world in its present phase pass away and be discarded like an old vesture; He is Jesus Christ, the Man of Nazareth, yet the Same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever (ch. xiii. 8).

Again and again throughout this epistle the divine names of Son, Lord, God, the Same, are applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet one unique feature distinguishing it from other epistles is the eightfold repetition of our Lord's human Name of *Jesus* without prefix or affix. This arrests the reader, for in other epistles our Lord is referred to as the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus, some title being usually attached to His personal name.

Here, however, is a chain of remarkable references linked together by the Name without any title:

"We see *Jesus* crowned with glory and honour (ii. 9).

"We have a great high priest *Jesus* the Son of God" (iv. 14).

"The forerunner is for us entered, even *Jesus*" (vi. 20).

"*Jesus* the Surety of a better covenant" (vii. 22).

"Boldness to enter in the holiest by the blood of *Jesus*" (x. 19).

"*Jesus* the author and finisher of faith" (xii. 2).

"*Jesus* the Mediator of the new covenant" (xii. 24).

"*Jesus* suffered without the gate" (xiii. 12).

It is of greatest significance and comfort that the Name of the exalted Lord appears in this interesting sequence, for the crowned One is *JESUS* our Saviour Who tasted death for every thing (ii. 9. N.T.). And the Son of God, though passed through the heavens (iv. 14. N.T.), is still *Jesus* Who by His understanding

sympathy encourages His tried and tempted people to approach boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and all seasonable help on their pilgrimage homewards. The Forerunner Who has entered in for us is the same *Jesus* Who had said: "I go to prepare a place for you"; and also to our adoring gaze is presented *Jesus* the Surety Who for our sakes was smitten beneath the rod of divine justice, having in love and grace taken our place, thereby securing endless glory to God and eternal blessing for His people.

Jesus, too, it is Who by His blood has opened the new and living way whereby we draw near to God as purged and acceptable worshippers; His blood, that is His atoning death, having alike magnified God's holiness and grace, while meeting our deep need as ungodly sinners.

Jesus the Leader and Exemplar of faith is the Man Who lived by faith, laboured in faith, loved in faith; the true believer Who trusted in God fully and to the very end. Even when made sin and forsaken of God on account of the place He had voluntarily taken for God's glory and man's salvation on the cross, His faithful steadfast holy heart could still cry: "My God." The patriarch Job could avow: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). Such was the experience of our blessed Saviour, and so He crowned a life of perfect obedience by a death of entire devotedness. Hence *Jesus* is the Leader and Exemplar of faith, having lived it perfectly to the very end. *Jesus* is the Mediator, the true Jacob's ladder by which all blessings descend from the Giver of all good, and all praises, aspirations and confessions ascend acceptably to God. *Jesus* the Mediator is the true Joseph by Whom all the royal bounty is dispensed to needy souls; He is the true Saviour of the world, the Son sent by the Father for this purpose; He is the One Who having removed all His people's guilt for ever from before the holy eye of

God now brings them into that perfect joy and peace which were ever His and have now been won for them by His death and resurrection, that they may enjoy them for ever with Him.

The "doctrine of Christ" in this epistle sets the Lord Jesus Christ forth as very God and truly Man in one Person; as One Who though Man is to be worshipped by angels; as Jesus Christ, the Same (that is, Jehovah) yesterday, and to-day, and forever. He, Whose yesterday stretches back from the empty tomb right back beyond all time into the vastness of eternity; Whose "to-day" runs on from the resurrection morning through all the day of grace right onward throughout the acceptable year of the Lord; Whose "forever" begins with His second advent, and Whose dominion is everlasting.

Time and space forbid dealing with the "doctrine of Christ" as found in the epistles of James and Jude, but in closing this series of articles we may briefly observe that in *JAMES*, the Lord Jesus Christ is designated the Lord of glory, the Coming One and the Judge. This sufficiently indicates what the Holy Spirit would have the readers of that epistle think of Christ. In *JUDE*, the pointed references to the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ; to the Lord coming with ten thousands of His saints in power and glory; to the only wise God our Saviour, leave no room for doubt as to Whom the writer refers as God, Lord, Saviour, Jesus Christ. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is everywhere and always to the truth of Christ's holy Person as being always God, then becoming man, "born of a woman," and finally and eternally remaining God and man one Christ, the Christ of God. With reverence of spirit and readiness of heart therefore let us join in the inspired ascription with which Jude closes his letter: "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." W.G.T.

Extracts from Letters.

WE are advancing towards the end of our journey, when we shall find ourselves in the presence of the Lord Jesus. I have been much enjoying Psalm xvi. as the expression of the life of the Lord Jesus here on earth. How little do we know what it is to be directed and kept by God, not through the trials and difficulties of life, we understand somewhat of that, but in the *secret spring and activity of the soul*. We readily walk as guided by our intelligence and sense of duty, often doing that which is good by a sort of confidence in our own convictions, and by a human energy, no doubt well directed, but which is not the direct result of the operation of the Holy Spirit. With the Lord all was perfect; the display of the power of God was for Him, because as the Father had given Him commandment, even so He did, and He even desired that the world might know that He loved the Father (John xiv. 31). May our hearts also be thus exercised before God.

Translation from the French of W.J.L.

In the ordinary matters of this life, as to circumstances, etc., faith's path is *not to choose*, but to give oneself quietly over to God's ordering for us. . . . In spiritual things, the contrary holds good: *God expects us to choose* what is most excellent in the path which He graciously opens up to us (Eph. v. 15-17).

W.J.L.

How little we know of the discipline, which the Lord in His tender mercy provides for us in the way, in order that our souls may be kept in a healthful condition, fit for passing on *His* messages whatever they may be.

W.J.L.

Our Hope.—2.

SOME on creation's glories dwell,
 And find their happiness to tell
 The great Creator's power ;
 Him by Whose word the heavens were made,
 And earth's foundations, too, were laid ;
 Upheld from hour to hour.

And some give forth a sweeter strain,
 Repeating o'er the blest refrain,
 They tell redeeming love ;
 The glories of the Lamb Who gave
 His life e'en sinners lost to save,
 They celebrate above.

But hark ! I hear the chorus swell,
 As all unite in one to tell
 Redemption's glorious theme. [forth,
 Praise, praise from thousand tongues break
 Sounding abroad His matchless worth,
 Whose glories fill the scene.

And list !—the echo still is this,
 Throughout the universe of bliss—
 Responsive notes of praise ;
 Far, far beyond creation's bounds,
 Still linger on those sweetest sounds,
 Heaven's blissful, endless lays.

O Lord ! such musings whilst still here,
 Bring to my soul both rest and cheer ;
 For all the glory's Thine.
 And if I still am called to taste
 The sorrows of this desert place,
 I know that Thou art *mine*.

By the late F. G. BURKITT,
 From "Hymns of Grace and Glory."