

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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To our Readers.

THE title of this new monthly—"The Faith and the Flock"—sufficiently indicates its character and scope. No one conversant with current events can doubt the great and growing need there is to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" and also to keep clearly before the minds of all believers that in spite of names and parties, state churches and the various denominations, there is after all only "one flock." Our object, then, stated very briefly, is to address ourselves to this company, and in doing so endeavour to the utmost of our ability, and as God shall enable, to carry out the exhortation to build one another up in our most holy faith. If you are in sympathy with this object may we solicit for this Magazine a wide circulation?

In case any into whose hands this first number may come may not have seen the subjoined circular, it may be of interest to insert it in further explanation of our purpose.

"THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK."

A NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

The above is the title of a new Monthly Magazine, the first number of which is (D.V.) to appear in October. *It is to be entirely unsectarian in character, and not the organ of any party.* Its object is to strengthen the children of God in their faith, edify the members of the Body of Christ, and emphasise all that binds believers together. Such expressions as "builed together," "compacted," "fitly framed together," "knit together," upon which so much stress is laid in Scripture, we shall endeavour always to keep before us and insist upon what will contribute to this end. Indeed, one of the main objects sought is that believers may use more "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The truth as to the Church of God will fill a foremost place, not regarded from any exclusive point of view, but that which embraces all the children of God—the one flock and the one body. By this is not meant that we shall countenance all that the children of God may be connected with. Our standpoint will be the Scriptures; a broader platform than this we do not desire, while a narrower can only mean shrinking ultimately into a party, and putting a false restraint upon that love which is of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit. We wish "The Faith and The Flock" to be a help to all, young and old, the beginner as well as the one more advanced—to be interesting, arousing, edifying, comforting, always aiming at one thing: to build one another up in our most holy faith, and leading us to be more faithful to the Word of Christ.

It is felt that as the days grow darker, the bright and blessed hope of the Lord's coming and Kingdom ought to fill a larger place in our minds and hearts; and to awaken and foster a true longing for this will ever, under Divine guidance, be our aim. With this, of course, is closely linked the subject of Prophecy, which we hope will not be overlooked.

Indeed, believing as we do that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that there is a danger of having preferences for certain lines of truth, and of falling into ruts and grooves, we shall endeavour to allow no department of truth to be neglected.

Such being our aim, we trust we can ask your help and count upon your prayers.

Yours in His service,

(Signed) RUSSELL ELLIOTT, *Editor*,

34, Cliff Road, Hyde Park, Leeds.

Will our readers take note of the following :—

Publishers—S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO., 8 and 9, Paternoster Row,
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Orders for the Magazine to be sent to the Publishers direct or through any Bookseller.

In order to make the Magazine known, it would greatly help if those who accord their support to this effort would order a number of copies for free distribution at once.

In taking up the responsibility of conducting a new Magazine, we sincerely ask the prayers and co-operation of the Lord's people. It will be the aim of those who are taking the initiative in this matter to make the periodical as generally useful as possible. There would appear to be abundant room for a new monthly devoted mainly to gospel literature calculated to feed the flock of God, and not governed by party spirit, or restricted by a narrow outlook. A servant of the Lord, much used in his time, and now gone to his rest, said once, "When I sit down to write I have always the whole church before me." It is the church which Christ loved, and gave Himself for, we need to think of to-day.

As regards the contents of the Magazine, we shall endeavour not to neglect the three general lines of ministry—edification, exhortation and comfort. Especially shall we seek, as the Lord may enable us, not to neglect the last. Never were the saints of God more perplexed, or more tried and harassed than to-day, and they need comfort. Then there is the need of the warning note. The Apostle could say he ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. Not less necessary is such care at present. Error stalks about in the garb of truth. Every imaginable fallacy pretends to find support from Scripture. Every conceivable heresy shelters itself under the name of Christian. As opportunity and occasion serve we trust there will be found those who, through the pages of this Magazine, will in a right spirit seek to expose these lies of the evil one.

Then, further, there will be an earnest effort to promote true unity amongst the people of God. That those who are agreed on all fundamentals, who are one in their acknowledgment of Christ and their love to Him, whose aims are practically identical, should keep apart from one another and never express their fellowship outwardly, has become a serious obstacle to any true testimony for God, a hindrance to believers themselves, and nothing short of a scandal to the world, and to many a one seeking the truth.

While we trust by the grace of God to stand against every form of error, at the same time there are diversities which have to be recognised. And is it not necessary to distinguish between the real substance of a thing, and mere outward form? Due place will therefore be given, we trust, to what is lovely and of good report; and emphasis laid rather upon what vitally unites the children of God than upon what separates. Is it not incumbent upon believers to-day to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit" and what more necessary to this than "the *bond* of peace?" That great word "peace" formed the legacy the Lord left His own. It was the first word Hé uttered when He came into their midst after His resurrection. How often, alas! it has been forgotten in the history of the church since.

In conclusion, the Editor would say how thankful he will be for any helpful suggestion, and for help of any kind. The success of this undertaking does not depend upon one merely, but upon many. "The smallest contribution thankfully received." It is not always length that is required, but good things packed in a small compass. Any thoughts that may come to you, jot these down and send them on, writing on one side of the paper only. Also any notes of lectures or addresses; copies of letters that might do for general reading, or extracts from such; or a letter addressed to the Editor; and even poetry, if it is the genuine article. In reading a book, or paper, or whatever it may be, if you would cut out anything suggestive, or make a copy, and send it, all such service would be greatly appreciated. The unconverted and the anxious will not be forgotten, while papers calculated to establish souls in the grace of God will be specially welcome.

We cannot send forth this first number without giving utterance to the word which above all others needs to be spoken at this time, and spoken to everyone, no matter where. What the Church needs to-day are consecrated lives. Zeal, devotedness, self-sacrifice are the need of the hour. The church as a whole is lukewarm. Is it any wonder the aims and ideals of the average Christian are not very high? In some quarters ritualism and outward observances are accepted as a substitute for vigorous spiritual life. The energy of others seems to evaporate in enterprises of a social character, and in political strife. While in a third direction we see believers contending about matters of no importance, and leaving the crying

needs of mankind to take care of themselves. Would that under the blessing of God this Magazine might be used to some extent to promote and foster true piety, and genuine holiness. The development of this is ever set before us in the Scriptures, and pressed upon our attention wherever we turn. It lies at the back of everything else. Without it our worship and our service lack all their pungency, and the whole round of our Christian life becomes flavorless. If we regard the professing church as a whole to-day there is no lack of schemes. Of organisation there is enough and to spare. It threatens to throttle the little life we have left. Of forms and ceremonies and the general shell of things there is sufficient. Nor in some directions is there any deficiency as far as acquaintance with the mere letter of Scripture goes ; but it is not seldom knowledge without power, and upon which at times is nurtured the narrowest bigotry. But of true liberty, which never stoops to licence ; of separation from the world and worldly religion, which never breeds censoriousness ; of devout and daily communion with God, that never loses practical touch with human life and human need—in one word, of singleness of eye that seeks only what will please God, and a heart wholly satisfied with nothing beyond His approval—how little. Do we not all need more of this ? Shall we not pray for it ?

We are so anxious that our readers should judge of everything that appears in this Magazine without prejudice, and more, that the Scriptures should be the one and only test by which everything is tried, that it has been decided to omit from articles all names and initials. We are not aware that believers suffer any loss because, for instance, the epistle to the Hebrews does not bear the name of any writer. Nor are the Psalms of less authority, or less comfort, because the authors of some of them are unknown. These Psalms, and the epistle to the Hebrews, speak for themselves. They need no name to accredit them. Nor do the other inspired writings, though doubtless in certain cases it is well to have the authorship established. So with regard to articles meant for the edification of the Flock of God to-day. If they are full of power and truth, and speak to heart and conscience, this will be better than any names. Instead of man being honoured the great Head of the Church will be adored for what He has given.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

PSALM XXIII.

WE are not surprised that this beautiful pilgrim psalm has been repeated by Jews from time immemorial when they sit down to meat, nor that it has been termed "the nightingale among the Psalms." Jehovah richly gives; He ever wisely guides; He restores the fainting soul; He strews the pathway of His own with abundant tokens of His grace, but the grand and distinguishing comfort of the psalm is not in all these, but in what *Jehovah is in Himself*. Each of the redeemed and journeying host can say, "He is mine and I am His." We love divine groupings; now here is one. Jesus as "the good Shepherd" (John x. 11) lays down His life for His sheep, and that is the burden of Psalm xxii. Christ as "the great Shepherd" (Heb. xiii. 20), in resurrection and strength, guides the pilgrim host through the wilderness, and that is the happy subject of Psalm xxiii. Christ is "the chief Shepherd" (1 Peter v. 4) in the glory, and in that light we may surely read Psalm xxiv. He is "good" in death, "great" in resurrection, and "chief" in glory.

Jehovah is the Shepherd of our psalm. Jehovah is for *me*. Jehovah in the eternity of His Being, in the greatness and glory of what He is—*my* Shepherd. Jehovah who is ever on the throne of universal sovereignty is *thy* Shepherd. Now Christ takes up the cause of His redeemed (John x.), and in His once pierced hands we see the "rod" and the "staff" which never wax weak, and we sing all along the path—

"In Christ's own love abiding, no change my heart need fear,
I'm safe in such confiding, for nothing changes *there*;
The storm may rage around me, my heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me, and can I be afraid?"

In commencing their pilgrim path, the Lord's redeemed will find a gracious cure for all restlessness of spirit in the knowledge of God, not simply what He gives and does, but what He *is*; not His favours alone enjoyed by the soul, but Himself known, loved and trusted. We start from the Cross where our *sins* were judged; we end with the kingdom where God's *glory* is our assured portion; now we tread the path in which God's *grace* is our strength all along the way.

“**Jehovah is my Shepherd**” is an intensely interesting and personal thought. It is faith’s appropriation of God for the individual wants of the soul. Have *you* appropriated God and all that He is for yourself? “Jehovah my Shepherd” is a statement which covers all the journey, meets all the need, triumphs over every hostile power, and answers every difficulty. He knows the duties of a shepherd, and He knows too the ways of the sheep. Are they defenceless? He is strong to defend. Do they need correction? His hand of love applies the rod. Do they want support? His staff sustains. Do they require guidance? He leads them in paths of righteousness. Do they need pasture? His green fields and still waters both feed and gladden. Do they need light and help in the valley? He has hung up the lamps of eternal love all along the path, which never go out. The light ever burns, and He is with thee, thy travelling companion all the way through. Deep and quiet, therefore, is the language of faith, “I shall not want.” How can I? How could I with such a caretaker and provider as God?

“**I shall not want.**” All need is here anticipated—guidance, light, correction, strength, consolation, repose, food, abundance, and all that a defenceless saint needs in his path from the cross to the kingdom wrapped up in this blessed sentence of but four words. Right bold is the language of faith, “*I shall not want.*” Need I fear sickness or old age? O saint, encircled in the arms of almighty strength, and shielded in the bosom of infinite love, reject every worldly-wise maxim, and from underneath His wing, where thou art sheltered and covered, say, “*I shall not want.*” The soul that confides in Jehovah can with quiet confidence reply, “I shall not want.” Jehovah is the Divine provider for soul and body. Which is better off? The soul that trusts *man* or *God*?

“**He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.**” May God Himself expound this precious word to our hearts! Does He lead the flock to green pastures? Yes, but that is not the thought here. You do not lie down to feed, but to rest. He first serves the needy soul, then “*maketh*” him to lie down, because he is satisfied. Has God written that word *satisfaction* on your heart? There is a present satisfaction in His infinite goodness and will, and there is a future satisfaction “when I awake with His likeness” (Psalm xvii. 15). “He maketh me to lie down,” for He knows our restlessness

and the strength and activity of nature. Has the moment come in your spiritual history—that supreme and never-to-be-forgotten moment—when you have said, “Lord, it is enough” ? The blood of Christ has set you down in God’s most holy presence, not as a beggar but as a *worshipper*. Here, it is not *standing*, for that speaks of service ; nor *walking*, for that tells of journeying ; nor *sitting*, to learn ; but you *lie down* happy and contented ; it is the figure of calm, quiet, full repose.

“**He leadeth me beside the still waters.**” He leads the flock beside still waters, or waters of quietness, for it is the joy of the Shepherd to conduct the troubled hearts of His own into peaceful scenes of communion. *There* the flock under the watchful eye, and guided by the skilful hand of the Shepherd, are led along the banks of that river where neither wave nor ripple disturb the ransomed of the Lord. Yet a little while and the banks of the river of life, with its abundance of ever-summer fruit, will be trod by the unwearied feet of the flock : “they shall walk with *Me* in white, for they are worthy.” The Lord ever keeps the good and best wine to the end. This, then, is heaven’s eternal joy, that no thought of personal unworthiness as now, shall ever break in upon the soul, while we walk and talk with the everlasting Companion of our joys and glories.

“**He restoreth my soul.**” Jesus is at once the pattern sheep and Shepherd as well. He knew restoration from soul trouble—a trouble which had the cross as its great burden (John xii. 27). “He restoreth my soul.” *When* ? When the heart is broken ; when the trials of the Church oppress ; when the failure of loved and honoured brethren—spiritual guides—have led in the van of deep and growing dishonour to thy Lord ; when health, wealth, and comforts are claimed by the Lord that loves thee, and the pressure of His hand is felt, *then* the Lord restores the fainting spirit. God gives a voice to the exercises of the human heart thus oppressed, and, supposing that God has forsaken it, “What sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel ? My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God,” as if *He* could forget His beloved, or be indifferent to their exercises and troubles ; as if *His* eye slumbered, or *His* arm had grown weak, or *His* love grown cold ! “Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth

not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint: and to them that have no might He increaseth strength" (Isaiah xl. 27-31). *How* does He restore the soul? Look at the Master calmly sleeping amidst His troubled disciples. Some devoted heart has noted the weary look of Him who came to rest our souls, and a willing hand has provided a pillow in the hinder part of the vessel removed as far as possible from the bustle and noise (Mark iv. 38). *There* He slept, while the storm without was answered by the storm within the breasts of His own. Terrified, His disciples awoke the Master. "Carest Thou not that we perish?" Surely the storm that would have sunk *them* would have sunk *Him*, for He and they were together. But that were impossible, so *before* He lifted His head from His pillow and hushed the winds and waves, He calmed the fears and distress of His own, saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? *Then* He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea" (Matt. viii. 26). He would have His beloved in His own peace in the midst of the world's storms. Ah! what opportunities we miss in not taking our part in the circumstances of Christ. Why did not the disciples gather round the pillow and gaze and adore as they beheld His face? The Galilean sea is a witness to the omnipotent strength and tender love combined, of our Lord, Shepherd, and Master.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His own Name's sake." Here the paths of practical righteousness are entered upon by the ransomed of the Lord. A conscience "purged" for God, made permanently fit for His presence, you can never forfeit. But the practical maintenance of a "good" conscience for God and man, maintained by self-judgment and communion, with an uncondemning heart, are priceless verities in these days of high doctrine and low walk. The righteousness of every-day life, in all its relations, in all its circumstances, in the home circle, in the world, in the Church, and in the workshop, is the crying need of the day. But does God conduct His pilgrim host in paths of righteousness to distinguish them—to mark off as a people of power in the world? Nay, but for "His own Name's sake" God has connected His Name and glory with the walk of His people, and if they prove indifferent to His glory, and cease to walk worthy of His Name *He* knows how to vindicate His blessed truth and testimony. The Name of Christ is dear to the heart of God.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” Now we enter the valley of the shadow of death, not surely an unknown or untrodden path, for faith can discern the footprints of the Man of Sorrows all along the way. It was no shadow to Him. It is not “the article of death” that is here meant, but the whole path of the pilgrim-sons of God, from the cross (Psalm xxii.) to the glory (Psalm xxiv.). Deliverance out of the shadow of death is as sure for us as for Israel of old (Psalm cvii. 14), and light too shall yet burst upon us in full-orbed splendour (Isa. ix. 2). Why termed “the *shadow* of death”? Because wherever there is a “shadow” there must be “light.” Ah, yes; we are living and walking between the lights of grace and glory, the path of exercise, tears, disappointment, and practical death to the flesh lying between. But does the “valley” not suppose mountains? Yes, and we will climb them by and by. The land of glory is stretching out before us, and its beauties and grandeurs are about to burst upon our gaze, then, O then our souls will triumph! Nor is it, “I walk *in* the valley,” but “I walk *through*” it, for the end is as sure as the beginning, and He means us to reach the glory and light at the end. “The crown and kingdom are in view.” The light of the cross and the light of the glory floods the valley.

Besides, “**I will fear no evil.**” Right bold is the language of faith. We do not hear the pilgrim saying, “There are no evils,” for Satan has filled the valley with them, but he says, “I will *fear* no evil, for Thou art with me.”

Here the Psalm divides. The pilgrim has been speaking *of* Jehovah, now he speaks *to* Jehovah. He turns from others to Him. Surely this is another advance in our spiritual history! When Jehovah *alone* becomes the portion of the soul, the lamps of love light up the valley, and God is by my side, and the crested wave becomes as a sapphire pavement beneath my feet. No saint ever failed *because* He was weak, but because he did not realise that he was weak, for then God is clung to. His love becomes the confidence of the soul, and His encircling arm our strength. “Thy rod and Thy staff *they* comfort me.” The “rod” to correct and the “staff” to sustain. We are as thankful that decline of heart is arrested, and wandering feet reclaimed, as that the staff is in His hand to uphold, and which never waxes weak. Our failures are corrected, and our weaknesses sustained by His love and power.

“Thou *preparest* a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” There is no hurry with God. Our enemies are the enemies of the Lord. Marshal the *difficulties* of the wilderness. *Christ's love* in its depth and tenderness will enable the pilgrim host to triumph over all. Let all creature-*powers* gather round the defenceless host, *God's love* in its infinite breadth and strength, is the banner borne aloft by the pilgrim band (Rom. viii. 35-39). But whether in presence of wilderness-difficulty, or enemy, it is all the same to Jehovah, Who calmly dresses a table for His beloved. Deep, rich and varied are the experiences of the saint seated at Jehovah's table; there he is encircled by arms that never weary, is pressed to the only heart where no reproach is ever found. But grace upon grace is given.

“Thou *anointest* my head with oil.” Jehovah anoints the head of each guest with the holy oil—the Spirit's unction and power. Priestly nearness to God, and kingly dignity for God, are thus *presently* conferred upon every member of the blood-purchased flock; “*hath* made us kings and priests unto God and His Father” (Rev. i. 6). But the story of wilderness grace is not yet told out. Jehovah has Himself prepared and spread a table in the wilderness, and that in presence of every hostile power, then He bids me worship and reign, and now the heart, big with matter (Psalm xlv. 1), utters itself.

“*My cup runneth over.*” Christ's cup of *wrath* was full, and He drained the last dregs. Your cup of *goodness* is full, ever full, and always overflowing, but you will never, no never proclaim it *empty*. Why this overflowing grace? Beloved, God has given us the means to be generous, to be royal givers. You may draw upon the treasury of heaven to any extent. You may fill up blank cheques to any amount. Let the need of others be your care, and when you give do it as an imitator (follower) of God (Eph. v. 1). “Give and it shall be given you.”

My cup “*runneth over.*” What is this? Abundance? Nay more. Will we term it by the word *redundance*? We will be eternal heritors of His glory up *there*; we are daily pensioners of His goodness down *here*. He gives the Holy Ghost for our own souls' enjoyment (John iv. 14), and He gives the Spirit also for abundant testimony to others (vii. 38). It is the *one* gift of the Spirit, whether for ourselves or for others.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” Now we are getting to the end of the valley. We entered it with the certainty of Jehovah’s shepherd-care, and we leave it with even firmer tread and brightening hope. “Surely” is the pilgrim’s stamp upon the remaining days of his pilgrimage; it affirms the certainty of love for every wilderness-hour and moment of need; the Lord in like manner, stamps the certainty of His speedy return from heaven, saying, *“Surely I come quickly,” His last word from heaven* (Rev. xxii. 20). We are counting the mile-stones as we pass on. The last one is almost in sight.

“Beyond the smiling and the weeping,
We shall be *soon*.”

There is a double river of blessing tracking every step of the journeying host. From the cross to the throne the goodness of Jehovah covers the need of the desert, and the mercy of Jehovah meets the failure of the wilderness. Will the river ever cease to flow? No, it *shall* follow me “*all the days of my life*”—the dark days as well as the bright days. Now comes the fitting sequel, the triumphant conclusion to the path of faith, to the life of experience.

“I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Highest kind and character of Jewish blessing is to dwell for ever in *Jehovah’s* house; but for us the *Father’s* home is reserved, and for us the Father’s Son of love will come and receive us “unto Himself” (John xiv.). He will not *lodge* us in those heavenly mansions for a time, but we will *dwell* for ever—yea, “*for ever with the Lord.*”

Fellow-pilgrim, the Shepherd is with thee, goodness and mercy followeth thee, the house and kingdom are before thee, the Spirit’s holy unction resteth on thee, the overflowing cup of Divine goodness is thine, and the victory full and final is most sure. Hallelujah!

A system which makes belonging to “us” a more important thing than having the Spirit, has substituted another unity for the “unity of the Spirit,” and has become sectarian.

“Is Christ not great enough to unite His people? . . . In proportion as we allow other things to separate and divide, we are committing the terrible and mischievous mistake of making those things more important than Christ.”

UNITY.

TO contemplate what has always been the divine intention in respect of God's people ever since He had a people and a corporate testimony in this world, must be of interest to every devout and intelligent mind. Undoubtedly this intention is expressed in the one word—Unity. Thus Elijah on Carmel took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes, even though the kingdom was divided. And Paul before Agrippa utters these remarkable words, "Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come."

Various reasons may account for this. Unity is the result of the free exercise of the highest qualities. At the same time it means that one will, and one purpose dominate the whole. It therefore secures a testimony to some commanding idea. It also ensures harmony and co-operation in spite of diversity; while, on the other hand, it prevents scattering and disintegration. But amongst all these reasons there stands out prominently above them one other. It is that of the unity of the Godhead. God's people must be one—one manifestly—for God is one. Thus the declaration to Israel was—and it became the foundation of their special testimony—"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is *one* Lord." This thought becomes not less prominent in connection with later revelations. The Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians says, "now a mediator is not of one, but God is one." There is essential oneness in all His operations. Again, "now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 4-6). Our Lord constantly insisted upon the same truth: "I and My Father are One." "All mine are Thine and Thine are Mine." "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Yes, there is trinity in unity, and unity in trinity.

It need not surprise us, therefore, to meet even in the Old Testament such a statement as the following: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Nor cause us any astonishment that its value is compared to the precious

ointment with which Aaron was anointed, and to the dew of Hermon. Such references bring home to us how desirable is unity. God Himself calls attention to it. He holds it up to us that we may understand how fully it meets His own wishes, and that it may become as good and pleasant in our eyes as it is in His. It is *good*, because, where unity exists the will cannot be at work, no one is seeking his own advantage at the cost of others, nor pressing his own views unduly. In one word there is subjection to one another, and to the Lord. It is *pleasant* for unity is far removed from strife and bitterness, and from that biting and devouring one another which ends in being consumed one of another.

Moreover it characterises in the most blessed way all who are under its influence; being compared to the "precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." The whole man had a savour imparted to him. All came under one influence. His thoughts, his looks, his lowliest acts, all told the same tale. Such is unity. It touches with a magnetic hand everything within its reach, and brings everything under its beneficent sway. But the comparison does not stop here. Not only has unity a savour all its own—all penetrating and pervading—but it enriches and refreshes all who come within its scope. "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for *there* the Lord commanded the blessing, "even life for evermore." In eastern countries they need the dew far more than we do here, and they estimate its worth accordingly. How noiselessly it falls. Its coming never gives anyone a headache or a heartache, never makes us conscious of nerves, never awoke anyone from sleep. How unobtrusive! No one hears its descent. It conveys its benediction to the earth in the silence of the night, when it cannot be seen. It lies in the bosom of the tender grass, reflecting for awhile a glory not its own, and then departs as silently as it came, leaving everything it has touched refreshed and beautified. And unity is like the dew—the dew of Hermon and of the mountains of Zion. Is it any wonder, can it cause us any surprise, that "*there* the Lord commanded the blessing?" Can we expect anything else than blessing where there is such a state. It is impossible to lay too much emphasis upon the word "there."

And what is the blessing ?

LIFE FOR EVERMORE !

Who would not like to live for ever where such unity prevails ? Who would care to live for a day where the opposite obtains ? Blessing, then, and that of the highest character, is associated with unity. How important unity becomes even in this light. And how solemn the contrast. Want of unity means absence of blessing !

It is remarkable how conspicuous the thought of unity is in the gospel by John. We can understand the prominence John gives to it when we remember one of his special subjects is life. Unity is the result of life, as uniformity is of cold formalism and conventionality.

In chapter x., v. 16 of this gospel we read : " And other sheep I have which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear thy voice, and there shall be *one flock and one Shepherd.*" Then again, Chapter xi. 51, 52, " That Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also He should *gather together in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad." Again, chap. xii. 32, " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Here three times repeated we have the thought of unity brought before us. In every case it is connected with Christ's death. Indeed as far as these passages are concerned, it was the supreme object of His death. He will " bring " ; He will " gather " ; He will " draw." But He must first die. Does not this fact add an additional importance to unity ? If our blessed Lord died for this end, are we to seek to defeat that end, or ought it to be our one aim to promote it ? Is that for which He felt it worth while to lay down His life, to be of so little importance to us that we may be even hindering its manifestation ? He came into the world to secure it at all cost. **Can we so despise it as to care not whether it exists to-day or no ?**

Someone, perhaps, will reply—" but the unity, as to any outward manifestation of it, is hopelessly gone." But our responsibility has not. No one—at least, no intelligent Christian, expects the outward unity of Christendom, as a whole, to be brought about. And in its present state no good would result could such a thing be accomplished. But the exhortation, " endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," still remains in force. We shall

have occasion doubtless to refer to this later ; let us now look, briefly, at the three passages in John's gospel referred to, in order, if possible, to learn something more of the importance of unity, and the principles which will enable us to give it practical effect.

Before doing this it might be mentioned that there are three instances in the Old Testament of scattering. All the work of the enemy and the result of sin, but all divinely met by what has just been quoted from the New Testament. The first was in connection with the garden of Eden. God evidently had an appointed centre there, for not only was a garden planted in a very central part of the earth, but in the midst of the garden was placed the tree of life. Man sinned and was driven out—there was scattering. And the reason given for this is, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever." How blessedly this is met in what is unfolded in John x. There, from the Lord's own lips, we learn His mission into the world. "I am come," He says, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Where is that life to be found? In that which takes the place of the tree of life of the lost paradise—in the one Shepherd. Do not all the flock find it there? Yes. "There shall be one flock, one Shepherd." It is this which makes unity possible. Not merely that there is said to be one flock. That is not enough. If our eyes are simply on the flock, unity, true unity, will never be secured. And this is about as far as many go in their thoughts of unity. It indeed gives us a title to think of unity, and to insist on it. But in itself it is insufficient to secure it. Our eyes must be on the

ONE SHEPHERD.

"One flock, one Shepherd." And if the eyes of every sheep in the flock were truly upon the Shepherd to-day, occupied with His greatness, and His goodness, there would again to-day be some expression of unity. The very abundant life enjoyed in Him would overflow all barriers. Occupied with Him, realising that there is only *one* Shepherd, we could not keep apart.

The second occurrence of scattering is mentioned in Gen. xi. It happened in connection with the building of the tower of Babel. We read, "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, behold, the people is *one*, and they have all one language ; and this they begin to do,

and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they imagined to do. So the Lord *scattered them abroad* from thence upon the face of all the earth." Here we find unity. "The people is one." But God is left out, and a divine principle is to be adapted to mere human ends. "Let us make us a name." God was not to be their centre, nor God's Name their bond. And so they are scattered. But if "the life more abundantly" of John x., with all that the one flock finds in the one Shepherd is the answer to the scattering from Eden (the same chapter affording, too, we doubt not, an answer to the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the wonderful words, "Am known of mine as the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep") so an answer is to be found in John xii. to this second world-wide scattering, "I," said our Lord, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

What a contrast is presented here. The building of the city and tower was to make a name for man, and furnish a sphere which he would fill with his glory. The One who is worthy to draw all to Himself says in the presence of all the glory that was then greeting Him, that the path to it was one of shame and suffering—He must disappear. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone." While instead of seeking anything for Himself—not even escape from suffering—He says, "What shall I say. Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name." Here then at last is One proved worthy to be the centre of all things, and the one universal gathering point. All will speak one language again, for every tongue will be employed in extolling Him, in Whom all will be made one.

One other fact comes to light in connection with this, viz., "the judgment of this world," and the Prince of it being cast out. The world is founded upon the evil principles which came to light in the fall of man, and the building of Babel—disobedience, and self-will, and independence of God—the effort to get on without Him. In Christ and His cross we see the opposite of all this. There we have absolute submission to the will of God, though the path of that will for the time meant shame and untold suffering; while God's glory is His one and only concern; and this at all cost to Himself. Here, surely, we learn something further in regard to

unity. The world and its ways must be excluded. It is because the world has been let in that discord and divisions abound. The question is, what is *drawing* us? If we are all being drawn one way, we must eventually find ourselves together. Here, as in John x., it is a question of finding in one Person all for all. Has He drawing power enough to-day? To this interrogatory there is, everybody will freely admit, only one answer. Then all we have to do is to allow that drawing power to have its effect. What is there like the cross and Him Who hung there? It is this that makes its appeal—"I, if I be *lifted up* from the earth will draw all men unto Me." Only let that potent spell be felt, and the rest is easy. **Drawn to Him we must be drawn to one another.**

But above all things we have need to remember that the world we are to renounce is first of all in our own hearts, and unless it is overcome there it is really overcome nowhere. There is a proneness with us all to renounce an external world while still giving place to one that is within. Yet our Lord teaches us that the world within is as bad, if not worse, than that without (Mark iii. 21, 23). And the whole secret of the matter is that it is what is allowed and fostered there that makes any manifestation of unity impossible. The pride—the ill-will—the envy—the jealousy, all of which so easily spring up in the heart are just the things that find their utter condemnation in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, Who had the right to seek everything for Himself sought nothing. The very moment when all were seeking Him, "behold, the world is gone after Him," said the Pharisees, is precisely the moment when He says, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground"—disappear from view altogether—"and die"—be brought to nothing. And unless we should lose the moral bearing of all this, He adds for our instruction, "he that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, *let him follow Me.*" Christ and His cross rightly understood mean the end of self, and where self is extinguished unity will be easy.

THE THIRD INSTANCE OF SCATTERING

will be found in II. Kings xvii. 20-23, and refers to Israel. "And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight. . . . So was Israel carried away out of their own land

to Assyria unto this day." This has been consummated in the rejection of the entire nation since ; the wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. But God is not defeated, or even baffled. If Israel broke down morally, and proved unworthy of the testimony committed to them, God will raise up another seed. This is the Holy Spirit's gloss upon the prediction of Caiaphas, (" that Jesus should die for that nation ") " and not for that nation only, but that also He should *gather together in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad." In Chapter x. believers are spoken of under the figure of sheep. With which is associated deliverance from the foe, oversight, and food. In Chapter xii., as we have just been seeing, we have a wider scope, and the universal kingdom of the Son of Man comes into view. For Christ will draw " all "—not merely Jews—unto Him. It is the time when God will gather together *in one* all things in Christ. Here it is " children of God " which carries with it more the thought of character and kindred.

What, then, is the force of " gather together in one ? " Does not part of the meaning at all events stand revealed in the expression " the children of God." This seems to stand in contrast with God's ways and dealings in the past. He had taken up a nation. He had dealt with them in an external manner, bringing them into an outward place of privilege, blessing them with the good things of this life, and temporal advantages, accompanied with visible manifestations of His favour in the bestowal of prosperity and power. But all this failed to change the *flesh*. In fact the flesh turned all this mercy and goodness to wrong account, and those who were the objects of it actually caused God's Name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. So instead of unity—the twelve tribes instantly serving God night and day, and united by the bond of a common hope—scattering ensued. God would change all this. Christ " should die for that *nation*, and not for that nation only, but that He should gather together in one *the children of God* that were scattered abroad."

If we mark the change from " nation " to " children of God " we possess the secret that makes plain the meaning of the passage. The nation, as such, will eventually be brought into blessing, and on the ground of that same death to which we owe everything. But in the meantime it is not so much a question of what is outward, as the inward (though there is the outward even in the

Church, yet of a different character to Israel's portion), for God is now taking up those He can call His children, in whom He has wrought, and who are said to be born of Him. The double mark of this is kindred and character. It might almost be said that John's first epistle is built up upon these two ideas. And herein lies the possibility of oneness. We all stand in one and the same relationship to God. And this not by being placed merely in an outward order of privilege—though as we have said there is that—but by birth, by nature. And that nature expresses itself in one way—love. And where there is love—divine love—there may be diversity, but there will always be unity. And let us note well that this is the very thing Christ died to secure. He did not die merely to make us children of God. But He died to gather together *in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad. He died that we might represent one character to the world. Where and how is this oneness realised? *Simply in the exercise of those affections proper to the life and relationship we possess as children of God.* Where love has sway unity is assured.

These three passages, then, which we have been considering, all testify with one voice to unity—and a unity which is a divine answer to all the scattering of the ages. Viewed in this light how unspeakably horrible is all fresh scattering, and fresh division. All such work is the effect of sin, and the activity of the flesh.

Nor is it only that Christ *died* to secure unity. He *prayed* for it. How much it must have been upon His heart that three times He can mention it in His prayer to the Father, as recorded in Chapter xvii. of this same gospel. In v. 11 it is for the Apostles, that they may be one. In v. 21 for all believers, including ourselves in the present day, that we may be one. In v. 22 again, in regard to the whole Church, in future glory. This takes in the past, the present, and the future. So that in no period can unity be dispensed with. Alas, it is in the present that failure is so conspicuous. The apostolic unity was never broken. The future unity in glory will never be broken. What as to now? How much hinges upon it—"That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." We have only one question to ask, and may every reader answer it to Christ. If He *died* for it, if He *prayed* for it, if the world's belief in Him depends upon it, can unity be a matter of small moment to those who are His?

(To be continued.)

A WORD IN SEASON.

[I]T is important to recognise in the fullest and widest sense the unity of the Church of God. That all Christians are divinely constituted members one of another—each necessary to each, and each to all. The divided state of Christendom tends to obscure this great truth, and those who believe themselves most surely taught of God to stand apart from divisions are tempted to forget, on the one hand that they are necessary to all their brethren, and, on the other, that all their brethren are necessary to them.

To practise the principles of unity in the midst of division calls for deep exercise of heart as to how we may show *the same care* towards every member of the body of Christ that we may meet.

At the same time each is responsible, according to the light he has, to purge himself from vessels to dishonour, and sinful associations, and to “follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. ii. 22). To strengthen those who are in this way endeavouring to keep the Spirit’s unity, and to encourage them to follow the Lord with purpose of heart in a path of reproach should be our constant endeavour.

There is a policy which says, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace at all; and a treatment which surface-heals a very deep and ugly wound. It is the policy of ignoring the actual state of Christendom, and carefully avoiding any reference to the character and cause of the differences amongst Christians.

We prefer to deal with matters exactly as they are, ignoring nothing, yet believing that, through the tangled maze of ecclesiastical confusion around us, there is still a path in which the true-hearted believer may walk, and please God. A path entirely apart from every human system or arrangement, and marked out in the Holy Scriptures alone.

The principle of denominationalism is to associate those of similar views, and consequently to separate those so associated from all who are not of the same way of thinking. The party walls which keep the members *in*, necessarily keep *out* all who are not members and therefore the ministry which, if God-given, is for the good of all the elect, becomes available only to the select few who have found their way inside the enclosure.

The press offers one advantage which we may not have appreciated at its true worth hitherto. By its means we can avail ourselves even of the ministry of those "members" from whose preaching we may be excluded by their associations. Necessary they are to us in any case, and where they give no written ministry we may have to suffer the want of their service, but when their ministry is available apart from their associations, we receive it as being in truth what God has given for the edifying of the church, even though it may have been first appropriated for the building of a party. We take it as fundamental that what a man has received *from God* he has received, in principle, for the whole church, and for no section of it.

If any of the "thoughts" which made Pascal's life beautiful, and his name a household word amongst Christians, were inwrought in his soul by the Holy Spirit we may read them with thankfulness and profit—but we certainly would not have entered a Romish Church to hear them uttered.

If, on the other hand, we should refuse written ministry on one point, merely because the teacher is uninstructed on another, we are saying in effect, "I have no need of thee," and to that extent failing to maintain the Spirit's unity. At the same time we cannot expect from anyone the teaching that his position denies. Pascal may give us a true thought of God's love, and a thought that we may not find in the writings of others, but we do not look to him for teaching on church government. And we do see at times where a Christian has little truth, or perhaps but one deep, true thought of God that the whole life so centres on that truth—so searches into it and explores its greatness—that the disciple becomes a master and a model, in that particular, for the teaching of future generations.

And this may be the secret why the lives of many, who seem never to have grasped the scope and meaning of Scripture teaching as a whole, so often shame us by their faithful practice of its parts.

Could we say to the martyrs, faithful unto death, and animated by a whole-hearted devotion to Christ, "We have no need of you," because they were not clear on prophecy?

The question came up once when the enlargement of a hymn-book was discussed. Would it not be wrong, wrong in principle, to use hymns written for and printed by a sect, and that, of all sects, the most exclusive? Laying aside considerations of copyright, &c., it was explained that the error lay rather in the property of the whole church being appropriated by a party; and that all who belonged to the Church of God might feel the greatest freedom in using what God had given for its edification. And the same principle which applies to poetry will also apply to prose.

We may find in many unsuspected ways the subtle principle of sectarianism at work; and those who have refused it in one form, at no small cost to themselves, need to watch lest it should assail them in another.

Those who separate themselves from other Christians, to associate only with such as hold their views, say virtually that of all the rest they have no need, but if we retaliate by openly or tacitly denying that *we need them*, we commit the very same error.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN.

THE Head of the Salvation Army has recently issued a manifesto to his followers on the subject of "Woman." Somehow, this subject continues to be one of the uppermost of the day. It is certainly one of the most important. It has many phases. Long ago it was said by someone that woman was a rock upon which men either anchor, or split. We do not, however, intend to treat it from this point of view now. All we can do is to enquire, what is her true position?

In the above manifesto a good deal is said as to woman's equality with man. With much that is said on this head, and also with a good deal more, we cordially agree. At the same time, we think that the discussion of equality or inequality raises a distinctly false issue.

In heathen lands no doubt woman occupies a very inferior position to man. It is to Christianity we owe the elevation of woman to her rightful position. Where the light of Christianity has not penetrated, there she is degraded, and the consequences are

disastious to both sexes. Even in China, with all its ancient literature, and love of learning, woman is certainly not on an equality with man. When a boy is born, he is thought immensely more of than a girl. The other day, a missionary was telling some people that one of the names a Chinaman gives his wife means "inside," because she spends most of her time indoors, and has very little liberty to go abroad. Her home is, to some extent, also, her prison. He went on to relate how, on one occasion, he was itinerating, and came with his wife to the house of a native Christian where he was to stay. They had a time of prayer together, and the host prayed for his visitors. "Lord," he said, "bless the one Thou hast sent here to preach to us, and bless also his *inside*." The missionary went on to say he thought it was a very good name for a wife, for the inside of us was the best side. This certainly implies equality, if not something more.

All this ought to be freely conceded, but it is not, after all, the point, and, as we have said, raises a false issue. The real point is, at least in Christendom, not should there be equality, but this being granted, does it follow as a consequence that *woman holds exactly the same position, with the same responsibilities and privileges, the same pursuits and occupations, as man*. Knowing the practices of the Salvation Army, we are bound to infer that its leader in his manifesto implies that she does. In view, too, of the widespread agitation going on in connection with the Suffragette movement, it would seem that many others think the same. We, however, do not. We believe that they are intended to occupy *different* spheres. And, though no hard and fast lines may separate those spheres, and that they may here and there cross each other, or to use another figure, that they may occasionally overlap, yet they are distinct, and it will be found that generally speaking, the man is as specially fitted for his sphere as the woman is for hers. Where there is an exception to this it is only the exception that proves the rule. This we believe to be the all important point in the question before us, and not so much the equality or inequality of the sexes, though under certain circumstances, and in particular countries, the latter may be of importance likewise.

Is a woman then intended to occupy the same sphere, or in other words, fill the same position, as a man? Let us consider some of the arguments used in the affirmative.

The other day, at a seaside resort, we suddenly came upon a lady addressing a crowd upon the subject of votes for women. "I was asked by a man the other day," she was saying, "why we wanted the vote. 'What do you want it for?' he said. I replied in Scotch fashion by asking another question. 'What do you want it for? We want it for the very same reasons that you do.'" Now this reasoning implies not only that woman is on an equality with man, which no more ought to be discussed than whether the moon is on an equality with the sun—but that man and woman are, in every respect, to fill the same position. But will the argument stand? Women want votes for the same reasons that men do, therefore, they ought to have them. Where would this reasoning lead us? Some women would like to appear in male attire. It is done in certain places, and on certain occasions. Should we like to see all women thus dressed? Yet there is not the slightest reason why they should not if the argument of the suffragette is to hold. We turn round and say, "why do you wish to dress thus?" and are immediately met with the answer, "for the same reason that you do?" Who does not see the absurdity of the argument when presented in this light? It is built upon the supposition that because men and women are equal, therefore they are to be the same. Yet when this argument is put to a very simple test, it breaks down.

But before we show from Scripture the place God has given to the man and the woman respectively, it may, perhaps, further help if it is made still more plain that equality of position does not mean identity of position. Let us imagine two partners in a business. One at the head of the counting house, managing all the financial part; the other attending to the purchase and sale of goods. Would it not be evident that they were on an equality, and yet, that they moved in different spheres. There is no need to discuss the relative importance of those spheres. It is as essential to the prosperity of a business that the reliability of customers should be ascertained and their accounts collected, and to know at the end of the half-year what the profit or loss is, as it is to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. Both these partners work together, and work for one end. But they move in different spheres, and each is specially adapted for his own department. Nor can we conceive that good would result by both doing the same work, or by changing places. It is not

otherwise with man and woman. They are intended to occupy different spheres. They are constituted to this very end, and only disaster can be the final result, however much appearances at first might seem against it, when this order is disturbed.

The case might be illustrated likewise from the heavenly bodies. The sun and moon do not occupy the same position, or fill the same sphere. Nor is there any question here of inequality. The moon in her place and path is as necessary as the sun. We should not care for the one, or the other, to have all its own way. Each reigns supreme in its own appointed orbit. The queen of the night is as beautiful, and as useful in her way, as the king of day. To some extent, too, she appropriately indicates the true position of woman. She does not attempt to outshine the sun, much less supplant him, but she reflects his glory. How exquisitely fitting in this connection are the words of the Apostle Paul: "the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." Yet both are necessary to each other; even as the sun to the moon, and the moon to the sun. As the same Apostle goes on to state. "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; *but all things of God.*"

"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman.
Though she bends him, she obeys him;
Though she draws him, yet she follows;
Useless each without the other."

"But all things of God," says the Apostle in words just quoted. And herein lies the secret of the whole matter. A secret closely and inseparably allied with the happiness and well-being of both man and woman. There is a divine order in these things, much as we may lose sight of it; an order which cannot be subverted without grievous harm. This is why we write upon the subject, not to discuss any political question, but to call attention to the fact that both will suffer loss if either men or women move from their appointed sphere. This is what Satan is ever attempting. If he can only get the woman to lead, he knows he will have man even more completely under his power. This was his policy in the Garden of Eden. It has been his policy ever since. His object is to frustrate the divine intent.

And what was the divine intent in forming woman? Has she any place specially assigned her of God? She has. It is often said that in the Bible we get the essential truth of a thing, its leading, and most striking characteristic, in connection with the earliest reference to it. We shall find this to be the case here. In Gen. ii. 18 we read: "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him." This was the divine plan as regards woman. She was to be first of all the *companion*; and then the *helpmeet* of man. How much is involved in these two features. To be properly his companion, she must be his equal. She must be able to understand his wishes, share his thoughts, join in his highest aspirations, enter into and encourage his truest and noblest longings. This is brought out in the most striking way in the narrative. As if to emphasise this very thought of companionship, we are told that "*out of the ground* the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air: and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them *but for Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him.*" Not one could be his companion for they did not share his being. Adam was still alone. He was lord of all, for he gave names to all, but not one was his equal. But now: "and the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man." How simple and beautiful. God made her *from* the man, *for* the man, and Himself brought her *to* the man. Adam at once recognises her equality, and her fitness for companionship. "This is now bone of my bone," he exclaims, "and flesh of my flesh." And then follows the declaration that gives sanctity to marriage, forming a basis upon which rests the most ancient of all institutions: "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." While, at the same time, polygamy stands for ever condemned.

"One flesh;" yet, each has a place the other cannot usurp without damage to both, and dishonour to God. It is important to see that Adam was definitely constituted LORD before ever Eve became his companion. Eve was to be his helpmeet in that place. But she was not to usurp it, or think that she could exercise lordship as well, or be in every way the same as her lord. She is only

truly a helpmeet while she retains her proper position. Satan beguiled her out of it in the garden, and ruin and degradation were the consequence. He aimed at the man through the woman, and at God through both ; and he ever seeks to do so.

How then, does a wife become a real helpmeet to her husband ? By subjection. Thus the Apostle Paul : " Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression " (1 Tim. ii. 11-14). And again, " wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church therefore as the Church is subjected unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." " Husbands, love your wives." In this divinely given compact of oneness each plays a part. On the husband's part, love ; on the wife's, subjection. Thus the Apostle Peter : " Likewise ye wives be in *subjection* to your own husbands," and then goes on to describe the attire and behaviour suitable to this. Closing with " for after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in *subjection* unto their own husbands ; even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."

It might well be asked how the behaviour of certain in the world, to-day, answers to the spirit pourtrayed here. What a contrast to it all is that clamorous, defiant, rebellious spirit that contends in the rudest and most unwomanly way for its rights. It may be said that many of these are not wives, and that it is no question as between husband and wife. They may not be *wives*, but they are still *women*, and they have forgotten their place.

Has woman, then, nothing to do beside wait upon man, and attend to the household ? What, it may be asked, about that vast and ever increasing number who have none dependent upon them for these things, or if they have, can afford to delegate most of it to others ? The answer is there are plenty of spheres of labour and service for woman where she need not necessarily intrude upon man's sphere. We will just mention, in closing, four instances, all taken from the Gospel by St. John, where women played a splendid part, and rendered most valuable service.

The first is in connection with the water being turned into wine at the marriage in Cana. This was due in one sense entirely to the inspiration and faith of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It was not done directly by her power, but it was done indirectly by her spiritual instinct. Mary had faith to expect the exhibition of His power, and though that faith was tested it stood firm. When she said, "they have no wine," she was met with the seeming rebuke, "woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." But in spite of this she said to the servants, "whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Christ responded to her faith.

Next, we have the woman of Samaria (Chap. iv.). After her interview with the Lord, "she went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city and came unto Him." What objection is there to a woman telling even men what Christ has done for her. But there is a right and a wrong way of doing it. This may be quite distinct from teaching in the Church, which the Apostle forbids.

Further, it is a woman who anoints the feet of Jesus (Chap. xii.). This was done publicly, and what a service it was. Lastly, in Chapter xx., we have another woman used by Christ in His service. Used to carry one of the most glorious messages to His disciples that ever fell from His lips.

With these four instances before us we are by no means disposed to restrict the sphere open to woman. All we wish to show is that it is not necessarily co-extensive with man's, and that there is great danger in the present day of thinking that it is. Her equality with man is undoubted, but it does not follow that her position and responsibilities are the same.

Every Christian is responsible to apply the whole truth of God :
Primarily, to himself.

Secondly, to the circles nearest him—his household and those with whom he meets in the Church locally.

Thirdly, to the whole Church of God.

So acting he will never be a *sectarian*.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



THE SPIDER IN KINGS' PALACES.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

I would like **The Faith and the Flock** to be of some help to you, and I also want to interest you in it. I feel that the needs of young people are great, and it is my belief that they appreciate a little notice, and are not backward in responding to proffered help. It is my intention, therefore, to devote some part of this Magazine to your special benefit month by month. It may generally be a letter, but, perhaps, sometimes an article. The young people I have before me are not the very young, but those who have reached their teens, who are beginning to feel the need of sympathy and guidance, and upon whom life is dawning with all its powers, problems, and possibilities.

Yesterday morning as I was turning over the pages of my Bible my eye was arrested by a verse in Proverbs of which the above heading forms part. It is the 28th verse of Chapter xxx., and runs as follows: "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in Kings' palaces." I was very much struck by the place the spider reached, and how she reached it.

You do not need to be reminded that lessons have been learned from spiders before to-day. You all remember the story of Robert Bruce, and how he was encouraged to make another effort by seeing a spider succeed in climbing a wall after repeated failures.

Few of us are perhaps attracted by spiders. We either kill them, or get out of their way whenever they come near us. I was watching one the other day and the thought came to me—to think that God cares for such an ugly creature as that. He must have a large loving heart. It gave me a new thought of God. His interest and care embrace every kind of creature. What a testimony, too, to God's skill and power, for the spider does some

wonderful things. Is it not marvellous the way in which it can spin a web from its own body? It may teach us then about God's love and mercy, first of all, and how when we were repulsive to Him through sin, and hiding away in dark places, He caused the light to shine, and thought of our need. "He loved us notwithstanding all."

But I want to say a few words about the "hands"—"the spider taketh hold with her hands." It is in this way she comes to be in Kings' palaces.

It is a most important lesson we have here. It seems to teach us that one great secret of success—and it applies to the spiritual life as well as to the natural—is to take a firm grip of things. "She taketh *hold* with her hands." An individual who merely touches this and touches that with, as it were, only the points of his fingers, will never make much headway. We need to be like one of David's mighty men by whom the Lord wrought a great victory. "He arose, and smote the Philistines," we read, "until his hand was weary, and *his hand clave unto the sword.*" He held it with such a grip. A man who grips in that way means victory. There is a proneness, sometimes, to take up with new enterprises, and then drop them again. And at the end of the days nothing is accomplished.

If a thing is good, and worth having, hold it tightly. If the *truth* comes within your reach take hold of it. And when once you are persuaded it is the truth, do not easily let it go. Some people hold their beliefs so lightly that they keep nothing, they allow them to slip away. Hold firmly to the atonement; to the deity of Christ; to the inspiration of the Scriptures; to the punishment of sin; to the promises of God; to the value and efficacy of prayer. People everywhere are holding these things with a slack hand to-day, do you take a firmer grip of them.

Hold to the work God may have given you to do for Him. And if you have not any at present to do, see if there is not any within reach you can take hold of. And some of you that may be doing work already see if you cannot strengthen your hold upon it, and grasp a little more. Do not easily relax your grasp. You will be tested, you will grow weary, but remember "the spider

taketh hold with her hands." It may be that occasionally a young man, or young woman, may discover that he, or she has taken hold of the wrong kind of work ; it does not suit their capacity or inclination. See that it is not merely disinclination for work that is actuating you, and then, if needs be, drop it for some other kind.

Once more, take hold of your *duties* in life. They may possibly be obscure, unnoticed, everyday sort of duties, but whether in business or at home, in the office or at school, at play or at work, let your mind and hand have a grip upon everything you do.

If this is the method you adopt, the highest is before you. "The spider taketh hold with her hands, *and is in Kings' palaces.*"

Yours,

THE EDITOR.

THE CHURCH.

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

—Eph. iii. 10.

Only "*by the Church*" is witnessed
 What the "wisdom" of our God ;
 By the Church—and by it only—
 Can His mind be understood.
 Heaven itself, with all its wonders,
 Fails to wholly set it forth,
 Not created worlds stupendous,
 Not the beauteous, teeming earth.
 Here, the scene is all perfection,
 'Tis the thought of God alone ;
 "*By the Church,*" to powers in glory,
 Is this wisdom fully known.
 What an object ! What conception !
 Founded in redemption's plan—
 Highest, holiest, blest formation,
 Not of angels, but of man !
 Man debased ! Can love eternal
 Bring poor man so near to God ?
 Yes, by righteousness transcendent,
 Yes, by Jesus' cleansing blood.
 Angels view the Church, adoring,
 Object of unuttered love—
 Christ's possession, first in glory
 Wonder of the heavens above !

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

The following is an extract from a letter recently received. It was called forth by the announcement of this Magazine, and is, therefore, of general interest: "Would you kindly let me know if you believe in the judicial atonement and expiatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ; in His Deity, and spotless humanity free from any connection with our fallen nature; also if you believe in the conscious existence in heavenly glory of the spirits of believers departed this life; and the conscious existence and eternal punishment of the lost? You will, I have no doubt, understand why I ask these questions, as there are many nowadays who profess to believe the scriptures, and yet deny the doctrines I have mentioned."

In order that our readers may be in no doubt as to the views we hold on these all important points, we append our reply to the above letter.

1. We believe in the judicial atonement and expiatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this not only because the Bible distinctly affirms it, but because we feel our need of it. Sin deserves punishment. If someone did not bear the punishment instead of us, then we must bear it for ever. "It is the **blood** that maketh an atonement for the soul." "Without shedding of **blood** there is no remission." Why? Because life was forfeited through sin, and "the blood of it is for the life thereof." A spotless life was given in place of the guilty one.

"No, not the love without the blood,
That were to me no love at all."

2. We believe in the Deity of Christ. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." When was He rich as a man? Creation is attributed to Him. He is said to "uphold all things." It emphatically declares "He was God." The whole fabric of the Bible would drop to pieces if His Deity is denied.

3. Equally do we believe in His spotless humanity. "That **holy thing** which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The Holy Spirit descended and remained on Him. "Who did no sin." "Who knew no sin." "In Him was no sin." "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" All this excludes any thought of connection with our fallen nature, though He came in "the likeness of flesh of sin." But He had to be *made* sin. A term that never could have been appropriately used of any of us, or of Him, had He been like us.

4. We believe "in the conscious existence in heavenly glory of the spirits of believers departed this life." In no other way can we understand such expressions as "the spirits of just men made perfect," "to depart and to be with Christ which is far better," "absent from the body . . . present with the Lord."

5. And lastly, we believe in the conscious existence, and eternal punishment of the lost. Scripture reveals nothing else. To say that death is extinction is to abuse language, and pervert the use Scripture makes of the term. To say that the punishment is limited in duration is to assume to be wiser than what is revealed; beside setting aside, or casting a slur upon the atoning death of Christ. If a certain duration of punishment is sufficient, then

either the atonement was not necessary, or it was not enough. "These shall go away into *eternal* punishment." The same word is used here as for *eternal* life (see Matt. xxv. 46). If you shorten the one you must shorten the other. *In this case* the wicked will come out of hell regardless of atonement; while that atonement cannot keep the saved in heaven. The wicked are said to "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," and then is added the significant words, "*which is the second death.*"

We do not make the above statement as formulating any creed, but we feel our readers are entitled to know our belief regarding such vital matters.

We shall be glad to receive questions from any of our readers relating to the Scriptures and the Christian Life, and will endeavour to answer them as far as space and expediency will allow.

We hope from time to time to add new features to our Magazine as the various wants of our readers come before us. It must be remembered, however, that after all our space is only limited.

Encouraging letters have already been received in regard to our first number. May we again ask that all who are interested and believe the Magazine to be helpful, will do their utmost to bring it under the notice of those it might help. The price—one penny—is ridiculously low, and it needs a considerable circulation to cover even the bare cost of production. There are those who are doing their best to provide the matter, will others do their part—equally important—in putting it into the hands of their friends?

Oh! how blessed that there is a scene where cares, sorrows, and sufferings never intrude, and to which we have access even now. It is in this way the spirit is sustained, and enabled to triumph in, and over all. Heaven is begun for us. Jesus is not here, His life is taken from the earth, but by this we are not losers, we are gainers. "WITH HIM IN GOD." What words! Yet such is the sphere of the Christian's life. Dead as regards this world sphere, alive to that other sphere that Jesus fills; where all is life, and peace, and joy, just because He does fill it.

“SHADOWS.”

“No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”—John i., 18.

IT is only those who live in heaven who can declare God on earth.

How was it that our Lord declared God on earth ? It was because He was at the time in the bosom of the Father. “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven* (John iii., 13). Not the son of man in Nazareth or in Galilee, but “in heaven” ; and no one that does not live in heaven can declare God on earth.

I used to think that the earth was a place of preparation for heaven, and that we became more and more heavenly until at last we reached heaven ; but I now find we have to come from heaven, and while our feet are upon earth, our heart and soul and spirit have to live in the presence of God where He is.

On the road to Exeter a man was travelling in a carrier’s cart, and the carrier was a Christian and turned to him and said, “My friend, are you going to heaven ?” And the friend looked at him and said, “I live there.” “Poor fellow !” said the carrier, “he must be deaf.” So he shouted a little louder, “Are you going to heaven ?” “I live there,” said the man. “No,” said the carrier, “not are you going to Exeter, but heaven.” “I live there,” replied the man. “Oh !” he said, “it is a hopeless case, he is stone deaf.”

Dear friend, take that home. Oh ! that God may open our hearts by the Scriptures to understand this one truth, that the man who would be for God on earth must live in heaven.

In Psalm xcii. 13, we read “Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.”

The courts are the outer sphere ; the house of the Lord is His temple. But you say, I thought it was the other way about, that those who flourished well in the courts might eventually get into the house of the Lord, into heaven, into His presence. No ! it is those who live in heaven that flourish in the courts. God turns all our thoughts upside-down, and if we have a thought of our own about spiritual things, we may be pretty sure it is wrong, and if we turn it the other way about it is much more likely to be right.

It is not a working up in this life to get *to* heaven by stepping stones, but we step *from* heaven down to this world. Those that are planted in the house of the Lord flourish where all can see in the outer courts of our God ; they come from within, outwards ; and do not go from without, inwards.

Psalm xci. 1 : " He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Here again it is the other way about. It is not if I live under the shadow of the Almighty and make Him my God, I shall eventually reach the secret place of the Most High. No ! turn all pre-conceived thoughts upside-down and you will probably get them right. " My thoughts are not your thoughts," saith the Lord. Heaven is the only stepping stone for efficient service on this earth. It is those that dwell in the secret place of the Most High that can lodge (abide) for rest and shelter beneath the shadow of the Almighty down here. No shadows are wanted in heaven but on earth, and the secret places of the Most High are in the glory where He is.

Now from this position when it is understood and enjoyed, we get two things :—(1) Strength, and (2) Likeness.

Strength.—Isaiah xl. 28 says " Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of his understanding." It is important to grasp what God really is ; the God to whom we have been brought through Jesus Christ ; to realise His majesty, glory, wisdom and power, and all for us, so that He might be our strength ; for " He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might He increaseth strength " (Isaiah xl. 29). But how does He do it ? Not by making them stronger. It goes on to say (verse 30), " Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail," pointing out that natural strength is of no use, for the youths faint and the young men utterly fall. How are we then to get that new strength ? The last verse unlocks the secret :—" They that wait upon the Lord shall change their ability (power) ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah xl. 31). That is to say they have an ability they had not before ; it is a new sort of ability. Young men can run, youths can walk, but neither can fly nor ever have flown.

There is to be an utter change of ability, a miraculous power, on this wise. "They that wait upon the Lord shall change their ability."

Then they shall mount up with wings as eagles. What is the result? They shall not know weariness nor faintness again, when once they have mounted up with wings; because as Exodus xix. 4 shews, those that fly with eagles' wings, fly straight to God. They that wait on the Lord enter the secret places of the Most High and dwell there, and whenever they walk or run they are not faint nor weary, nor can be.

This is a miracle, and I will tell you of a man upon whom it was wrought. Caleb did not start walking his 40 years across the desert until he had been in Hebron and possessed it in his own soul, and then he came out and walked 40 years, and did not get weary nor tired. Everybody else except Caleb and Joshua got tired and left their bones in the wilderness; but Caleb was as young at the end as at the beginning, because he started with Canaan. It is a great mistake with Christians that they are going to heaven instead of coming from it.

We are seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; our ability is changed; we are taken on wings of faith and rise into the presence of God, and there is our home; and we do not leave that home when we stand at the street corners preaching; our souls are in heaven while we are speaking, and we cannot be tired and cannot be faint and cannot be weary; God has said it and shall it not be so?

Likeness.—A peculiar thing about our Lord Jesus Christ is that no one can see Him without being like Him. Not only is He beauteous but He beautifies; not only glorious but He glorifies; not living only but He infuses new life. If we see Him as we do now with our spiritual eyes, we become like Him spiritually, and when our bodily eyes see Him face to face, we shall be like Him physically. We cannot see Him without being like Him. "We with unveiled face reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord are transformed." We reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord, and as we reflect it we are changed from glory to glory as by the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 18). You cannot reflect the glory of the Lord unless you are in the presence of the Lord. "Therefore

seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not" (2 Cor. iv. 1). This is the New Testament confirmation of what Isaiah xl. tells us ; we cannot faint.

We are changed from glory to glory, from character to character. Are we changed ? Are we being transformed ? I do not say this with a view to looking at oneself, because I believe it is largely unconscious. But are we reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord ? It is impossible for a mirror to reflect anything at which it is not looking. What is it we are to behold ? The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and the change is consequent upon the mirror being steadily set in one direction. That is what I mean by living in heaven ; always face to face in the soul with my heavenly Father and my precious Saviour, and as I am, my character imperceptibly changes and always changes in an upward direction and always in the likeness of Christ.

This likeness is characterised by several things, but amongst them two of importance. Let us take them from the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. When she came to see Solomon, the glory of Solomon was reflected in her heart and two things happened : firstly she had "*no more spirit*," and secondly there were "*no such spices*" as came forth from her.

There is all the difference between a man of spirit and a spiritual man. When there is no more spirit, there is that beautiful result, no such spices, which come from the heart which has no more spirit because it is filled with Christ.

What is the good of all the doctrines if there is no likeness to Christ ? Think of the condition to reflect ! You must be face to face with your Lord, face to face over the word of God, face to face in prayer, face to face as you walk about the streets ; in fact, ever and always living in His bosom, even as our Lord, speaking reverently, lived in the bosom of His Father while He was enduring much contradiction of sinners against Himself. So shall we be like Him.

In Psalm xci. we read : " He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty." But further he himself will become the shadow of the Almighty.

Bezaleel, the son of Uri (which means light), the son of Hur (which means liberty), became the " shadow of the Almighty "

(Exodus xxxi. 2, 3). He is also the first man in the Word of God said to be filled with the spirit of God, and that is the first characteristic of the man who is the shadow of the Almighty.

“ I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” Yes, you will work fast enough if you become a shadow of the Almighty and filled with the spirit.

Can a man be a shadow ? “ A man shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land ” (Isaiah xxxii. 2), and I will show you a man who was a shadow.

Acts v. 15 : “ They brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.”

A man must live in heaven if he is to declare God on earth, and if he does, two things arise ; He gets a strength not his own, he learns to fly, and the result is he cannot faint and cannot be weary, and he will not leave his bones in the wilderness because he will go right through. The next thing is likeness ; he changes imperceptibly from day to day, month to month, year to year, into the likeness of his beloved Lord. The man who began by dwelling in the secret places of the Most High and lodging under the shadow of the Almighty ends by becoming himself a blessed shadow to weary souls.

Where did Peter get his shadow ? From the sun. There is only one thing to do if you want to have a shadow, and that is to live in the sun. If you want to have a shadow that shall be a blessing to everyone on whom it falls, and shall heal the sick and raise the dead in trespasses and sins, you have only to walk in the sun and the shadow will make itself ; and if you are in touch with God, walking in His presence, everyone who touches you, touches God.

The mind casts a shadow just as the body, for good or for evil, on everyone that passes by. If you go into a room where there are people, those people will never be the same again, unconsciously you have influenced them by your spirit. What we *are* is infinitely more powerful than what we do.

Let me not be misunderstood as casting the least slight on work. God forbid ! the idea is so absurd that I need hardly allude to it ; but my subject is the transformation of the man himself by the

power of the presence of God and by living there, that he cannot move about without blessing everyone that passes by, although he may never hear of the blessing. Live in heaven and you will declare God wherever you go.

Ah! I ought to know something about it, who have lived for one week in the shadow of a man who lived in the presence of God. It was when I was young; I was a Christian and had been converted for some time, and I was staying with a friend for a holiday in a wild part of Ireland; he never spoke one word to me about God or Christ specially, but I watched him and I saw a man enjoying God; I saw a man whose religion was his unfailing delight. He never spoke to me, but he transformed me. The shadow of that dear man fell on me, and that one week settled me. Perhaps you have felt the shadow of a servant of God falling upon you from the presence of God.

But here let me warn you; do not sit down under some servant of God with great delight, and forget the supreme joy you are missing by not being under the direct shadow of the Almighty, or better still living in the sunshine and reflecting his glories wherever you go.

Just think of the beauty of this subject and the pathos of it! How many shadowless Christians there are who do no good (and no evil) because they have no unconscious influence. You cannot do good to your fellow men unless you live in heaven. You cannot declare the glory of God upon earth unless you live in it in your soul in heaven.

Can there be anything simpler than walking in the sun? to walk in Christ's glory and like a mirror, as you take it in, you are being changed to His likeness. I wonder if we are lovely Christians so that those who come under our shadow cannot help but love us? "The common people heard Him gladly," and I am sure if we are beautiful, beauty will tell. But some Christians are very ugly because they are living on earth away from God, nourishing, nay, starving on controversies instead of having the wonderful privilege of living where Christ is, away in His presence enjoying every moment they live the Fatherhood of God and the presence of Christ. These two things coming into your soul as a powerful reality, that you cannot forget you are the Father's child and the purchase of Christ's sacrifice, are not only a blessing in your own soul, but a blessing to everyone around you.

Then comes work. God forbid that there should not be active work as well as living; but my theme to-night is the wonderful fact of the presence of God in changing our very characters so that not only can we abide under the shadow of the Almighty, but we become the shadow ourselves, so that people cannot enter that shadow without blessing to their souls. 1154

"WITS' END CORNER."

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
 Christian, with troubled brow?
 Are you thinking of what is before you,
 And all you are bearing now?
 Does all the world seem against you,
 And you in the battle alone?
 Remember—at Wits' End Corner,
 Is just where God's power is shown.

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
 Blinded with wearying pain,
 Feeling you cannot endure it,
 You cannot bear the strain,
 Bruised through the constant suffering,
 Dizzy, and dazed, and numb?
 Remember—to "Wits' End Corner"
 Is where Jesus loves to come!

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
 Your work before you spread,
 All lying begun, unfinished,
 And pressing on heart and head,
 Longing for strength to do it,
 Stretching out trembling hands?
 Remember—at "Wits' End Corner"
 The Burden Bearer stands.

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner,"
 Yearning for those you love,
 Longing and praying and watching,
 Pleading their cause above,
 Trying to lead them to Jesus,
 Wond'ring if you've been true?
 He whispers, at "Wits' End Corner,"
 "I'll win them, as I won you!"

Are you standing at "Wits' End Corner?"
 Then you're just in the very spot,
 To learn the wondrous resources,
 Of Him Who faileth not!
 No doubt to a brighter Pathway
 Your footsteps will soon be moved,
 But only at "Wit's End Corner"
 Is "the God Who is able" proved!

UNITY (*continued*).

II.

WE have already considered three important passages in the Gospel by John which speak of the unity of God's people as that which Christ died to secure. We have also referred to Chap. xvii., where we find He prayed for it.

But it is not merely the special petition on behalf of unity that we have in this prayer, but incidentally the basis of it is set forth. Eternal life is spoken of. The Lord asks to be glorified expressly to give it. Here then, we have the first element of unity—**the possession of a common life**. Next, we get the manifestation of the Father's Name, which may be said to be the atmosphere of eternal life. The first thought gives us the *essence* of unity, and the Father's Name becomes the bond of it. Lastly, we have separation and holiness connected with the title "Holy Father," associated with which is the first mention of unity (v. 11). Followed by separation from the world and true sanctification (v. 14-19). These form *the practical conditions* of unity. If then we have the *essence, the bond,* and the practical conditions* of unity we possess all that is *essential*. Thus the three great primary elements of unity are (1) a common life; (2) the revelation of the Father's Name; (3) Holiness.

Passing for a moment from the Gospel of John to the epistles, we shall find that scripture testimony as to the subject before us is not confined to the former. The epistle to the Ephesians, where as we all know the truth as to the Church is uniquely unfolded, is full of it. Chapter ii. furnishes us with four *one* things upon which is grounded the exhortation in Chapter iv. to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit.

1. The middle wall of partition has been broken down so that Jew and Gentile are made one.† 2. In Christ they have become one new man, *i.e.*, they have one character, Christ's, or to use the

* I do not deny that dealing with the subject from other aspects, we might say Christ is the bond, or even the Holy Spirit, or the testimony, but viewed from the standpoint of children, the Father's Name is the bond.

† If a wall between the kitchen and parlour were broken down, and the two rooms thrown into one, it would be neither kitchen nor parlour, and might further cease to be either by being transformed into a drawing-room. So in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

illustration as at foot—the drawing-room character. 3. One body. The closest and most inter-dependent relationship known. Each member of the human body being necessary to all the rest. So that the Jew could not consider himself independent of the Gentile, nor the Gentile of the Jew. The cross having ended all differences, an entirely new formation has been brought about—one body. 4. Access by one spirit unto the Father.

Now is not the unity of the Spirit we are exhorted to keep based upon the foregoing results of the cross? Does He link Himself with anything that was at the other side of the cross? If this be true, is it not easy to see the character of that unity, and how it is to be kept? When I acknowledge that all believers are one before God; when I judge the old man and seek to walk according to the new, putting on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, etc.; when I acknowledge only the one body, and refuse all that tends to sectarianism and cutting off; and when I seek, with all who have the Spirit, the Father's face, then I am endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.* And this I have to do with all believers *as such*, or it is not the unity of the Spirit, but that of a party. And, further, this unity is not preserved by strife and division, but in the uniting bond of peace. It is not the unity of a human organisation, or some form of church government, nor some special fellowship held together by special views. Such a unity will invariably go to pieces on the one hand, or prove a hindrance to the truth on the other. The universal mistake has been the attempt to construct a unity instead of owning that, of which, the Holy Spirit is the author. To attempt to inscribe in a book those who are alone gathered to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and say that is the extent of the unity we are to keep, is a pure delusion. It cannot be done. No book can decide the limits of the unity of the Spirit. To attempt to compile such a book is really as vain as to attempt to weigh the amount of good in the world and express it in cwts., qrs., lbs., and ozs.

The unity of the Spirit is not a question of meetings, it is a question of state. The Apostle (in Chap. iv.) distinctly connects it with our walk, which is to be in all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love. It is almost inconceivable the way this has been lost sight of, and the whole

* We only have to recognise and give practical place to what *exists* in virtue of the cross. It is not a question of forming a party on certain lines.

thing made to turn upon belonging to certain meetings. Unless I acknowledge every meeting whose existence does not deny any fundamental truth, or Church order, I am refusing to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The same principle applies to each individual believer. Unless I accord to each his full place and privilege—always admitting the disqualifications which *scripture* lays down—it is not the unity of the Spirit which is before me, but predilections of my own.

Before passing from the subject of unity as set forth in the Apostle Paul's epistle under review, let us see how he carries us one step further. After unfolding that unity in ever widening circles :—(1) One body, one Spirit . . . one hope . . (2) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (3) One God and Father of all—he brings us, as it were, to the climax—*the unity of the faith* (v. 13). This, in conjunction with the knowledge of the Son of God, is the ultimate goal of all ministry. To this end the gifts are given. As the members of the body of Christ are built up all move in this direction. “Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.” The difference between this unity, and the unity of the Spirit appears to be, that, while the latter is independent of ministry and growth, being founded upon the work of Christ and the presence of the Holy Ghost, the former is what we arrive at as the effect of ministry, and of growth resulting therefrom. But in any case does it not impress us more than ever with the fact with which we started, that God's great thought for His people is unity. And how blessed to discover that this unity is not merely a question of the acceptance of certain dogmas, nor of balancing truths as to their relative importance, but connects itself with the knowledge of the Son of God—the One in whom all God's thoughts for man find at once their expression and fulfilment.

Again, we are brought to the same point—to a **PERSON**. It is not merely a question of the one flock, but of **the one Shepherd** ; not merely of the one body, but of one **Person** to Whom all are related, and Who is great enough to bind us all together. It is here alone we find a platform wide enough to secure anything like unity amongst those who seek to walk with God in these last days. We may talk about the “one body” and the “one flock” until we can talk no longer, and we shall never get one bit nearer obtaining

any visible manifestation of either, because the moment we approach one another we should begin to think that unity consisted in everybody agreeing with us. But if instead of our eyes being upon the "one body" and the "one flock"—which, alas! to our perverted gaze often means ourselves—they were upon the "**one Shepherd**" and the **Son of God**, how different would all be.

IN A CERTAIN CONTINENTAL TOWN,

we have been told, there is a bridge with various representations of Christ carved upon it. He is depicted in every stage of life from the cradle to the cross. The idea is that people of different walks in life and different stations may be led to see that Christ can satisfy everyone.

The mother, for instance, passing with her babe would learn that Christ was once a babe borne by His mother. The scholar would see Him in another form, perhaps in the midst of the doctors hearing them and asking them questions. The working man would stop before the representation of the carpenter. The teacher before Christ teaching the multitude. And so on. This is only an illustration. But, however imperfect, does it not convey to us a profound lesson? While we approach Christ from different points of view, with different capacities, and different training, yet in one and the same Person we all meet, and find Him altogether sufficient whatever may be our stage of advancement.

Now, to press the truth of the above illustration a little further. While there would be the greatest diversity amongst those who thus stood before these different representations of Christ, would there not at the same time be unity? Yes, unless they were foolish enough to contend with one another because each had had a different view. But although each had seen differently, each in reality had seen the same, for had they not all seen one Person? And as each was drawn to Him would they not be drawn to one another? And the scholar could tell of what he had found, and the teacher the same, and so the mother and the working man. All had approached from a different standpoint, all had had a different view, and yet, essentially, all had seen the same. The moral of all this is obvious enough. We are at different standpoints and varying stages of growth, and our perception is often different. Are these to keep us apart when after all we are

ONE IN "HIM!"

Whatever may be thought of the above illustration, at least there can be no question as to this that Christ did when here draw to Himself, and even into the innermost circle of His followers, men who held the most opposite views. Amongst the band nearest to Him there were Simon the Zealot, and Matthew the Publican. The one, naturally, hated the Roman yoke with an unquenchable hatred, the other had enlisted under it, and collected the taxes of the conqueror. Yet in the presence of Christ these things became of minor importance, if they were not altogether forgotten. It may be argued that Levi had given up his tax-gathering. Possibly, but who made him do it? Christ, and not Simon the Zealot. Nor do we hear anything of Simon's zeal in the old direction. Both had found a new centre of attraction, and a new object, and under its commanding influence their energies and zeal henceforth flowed in the same channel. In the service of one Master they found their sweet content.

Is it not equally possible, that, if we and others were only within sufficient range of the same blessed influence, things would drop off from us which others deplore, and equally from them what we deplore. And our perspective of all truth would become more accurate.

(To be continued.)

"FOR OTHERS' SAKE."

For others' sake, to make life sweet—
 Though thorns may pierce your weary feet—
 For others' sake to walk each day
 As if joy helped you all the way—
 For other's sake to be quite brave,
 Though in the heart may be a grave—
 Herein, I think, is love.

For others' sake—this brought to earth
 The benediction of Christ's birth—
 For others' sake to suffer all
 That into human life could fall—
 For others' sake the crimson tide—
 For others He was crucified—
 Herein indeed, is love.

“THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD.”

PROV. XIII., 15.

SURELY to-day, as of old, the Spirit sometimes says “join thyself to this chariot.” This was a little how we felt the other day during a country walk. At a certain point in the road we overtook a man who we felt sure would speak to us as we passed, and to whom somehow we were drawn. He was one of that unmistakable class—the unemployed. To our surprise, he did not ask for money, he asked for work. Could we direct him to any farm where there would be some harvesting to do?

We were thus led into conversation, and by degrees he disclosed his history. He began at the end and told of his most recent experiences, his wanderings from one district to another in search of employment. “Ah!” he said, “people don’t want workmen now like they used, everything is done by machinery.” He remembered the time when his father and he reckoned to earn ten to fourteen shillings a day each, every day while harvest lasted. “Then,” he said, “you could reckon to save something, beside getting a new suit of clothes out of it, now you can’t make enough to get even a new pair of boots.”

It certainly looked a long day since he had earned a new suit of clothes. Yet he did not seem one of the altogether abandoned class. “Did you notice that large house at the corner we passed just now,” he said, “my sister used to be in service there, and I remember going to see her, many years ago now, when I was dressed very differently to this. Her master was Portugese Consul, the mistress a Spanish lady. When she married they gave her a very handsome present.”

What a change had come over the man since then. “How was it?” we ventured to ask. It was a sad tale. He had once been in good circumstances for a man of his station. He was employed at the docks, at a large seaport town, and had “as comfortable a berth as man could wish,” as he put it, earning two pounds a week regularly. But after eighteen months of married life, his wife died. Then came a change. He gave way to drink,

and drank and drank until he lost his situation, and his all, everything was sold up. He appeared never to have recovered himself, but to have wandered about the country getting chance jobs where he could. We enquired about the sister he had mentioned. Could not she help? His only reply was that she had a large family, and he had not seen her for years. He was practically alone in the world, without help, and almost, if not quite, without heart or hope.

It was an opportunity to speak of Christ, and we did so. What an encouragement to the servant it is that there is a gospel for the poor, one that is suited to man when he has reached the very bottom of misery and hopelessness. And what a testimony also to the gospel. No situation, no distress can place man beyond its offers. To this man it came with as distinct a message as to anyone else. He had thrown away his opportunities, but the gospel offered fresh ones. He had sunk, but he could be raised beyond anything this world could give.

Had not Christ been sent into this world for his benefit—in order that he might be saved. Was not God unspeakably good. Had He not given of His best? Would the man cast all this back in God's face? Would he cast back in our face the little help we had given? No! He wouldn't think of doing that. Then what would he do with what God offered? It meant virtually doing this, or accepting it. What would he do? This was what was pressed upon him. It was no question merely of God being a judge, or of His demands. It was a question of having to do with God as a **Saviour**. "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" What can man do with such a message? *Believe it.* "**The way of transgressors is hard**"; but the way to heaven is paved with the love of God.

"Moses," an old writer says, "thought the name 'brethren' sufficient to reconcile his two struggling Hebrews" (Acts vii. 26). "Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another? *But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away . . . then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian.*"

“ THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH.”

HERE God *owns*, perhaps *claims* in **grace** the Church even in Corinthian conditions, as **Church of God**. They are “men sanctified in Christ Jesus,” though evidently God is not sanctified *in them*. The saints here are as to their manifested Christ Life, only babes, though they ought to have been in fuller growth. This fact remembered in looking at Chap. xii., shows us the scope and amplitude of the Church as the Body of Christ. All those sanctified in Christ with all who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, be they babes or otherwise as to the manifested life, are members of the **One** Body of which He is Head. We need to be recalled to the knowledge of this. To remember this will help us to cherish love to all, notwithstanding Corinthian conditions.

The whole course of outward living here—the **walk**—is carnal (Chap. iii.). It is not in the energy of the Holy Spirit, but in that of the flesh.

This must be taken as a key to the character of this Epistle as distinguished from other Epistles, *e.g.*, to the Thessalonians, Philippians, etc. Thus many things in the Epistles to the Corinthians, otherwise obscure and apparently contradictory, will be made clear. Since rules laid down here by the Spirit, exhortations given and statements made, are to be interpreted as applicable to Christians in the Corinthian, carnal, babe condition of life. This is very important, as it will thus be seen that the instructions by the Holy Spirit to Assemblies, or Churches of God, such as Corinth (Chap. xi., 16) may as a consequence be different to those given under more spiritual conditions.

The sad manifestations in Chap. i., 12, and v. 4, are, nevertheless mixed up with much for which Paul in the Spirit can thank God (i., 4). Oh! the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and oh! the patient tender ways of our Lord and of the Holy Comforter. Brethren, thus too do we, who think we are spiritual, need to show our spirituality.

There is utterance and knowledge. Moreover, God had sealed their acceptance of the testimony by an impartation among them of all the gifts for “they came behind in none of these.” It is

of *these* Corinthian disciples also that the statement is made "that they are *waiting for the apocalypsis*" of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost assures such, through the Apostle, that "the Lord shall confirm them to the end, *blameless in the day* of our Lord Jesus Christ," though his confidence in this respect is *not* because of what is seen in the walk, but, because of "the **Faithfulness of God.**" Here again surely we may well pause and review *our* usual mode of dealing with one another and with all saints. What blessed confidence there is here in **God and His Grace.** We may **not** always see much in the saints of God to encourage us and to beget confidence of their growth, and endurance, and ultimate blameless presentation. Shall we turn aside from them? Shall we give them up? Shall we isolate ourselves into more spiritual circles? Nay, for this were sectarianism of the worst kind, and we should soon be in one of the lowest depths of carnal Corinthianism.

Yet alas! has not something like this been the sin of many of us even in our fancied superiority as to our knowledge of the truth of the one Body?

The words "waiting for the apocalypsis of our Lord Jesus Christ" is at first sight perplexing. The solution is the meaning of the words "**waiting for.**" It does not necessarily convey the idea that these Corinthian Christians are consciously in a watching expectant attitude towards our Lord's return. It is *this* rather, God's assured purpose reserved for them in what they are to receive at the revelation of Jesus Christ—a something apart from and quite out of present things. This thought does not necessarily imply their present appreciation of it. Indeed in the Epistles to the Corinthians, except for that marvellous brightness of Chap. xv., which in the love of God is given to meet the gloom of abounding sickness and death, the **blessed hope** is little to the front. Yet even so, these carnally living Christians are "*waiting for*" assuredly reserved in God's great purpose for all that is to be brought yet to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are often saddened to find how comparatively few of God's children seem to be in the true heart attitude of a lively and glad expectation of our Lord's return, and all that it implies. Well, it is saddening; nevertheless, while speaking the truth in love and praying for a fuller growth in the knowledge of God, let us beware lest even in our heart's feelings we should become cold towards those members of our

Lord's Body who, whatever their present attitude of soul towards such things may be, are just, because *they are His*, as truly reserved for the grace that is to be brought to us in that day, as those of us who by grace have in a fuller enlightenment of the Spirit, had much revealed to us of which they as yet are ignorant. They have received the Holy Spirit "even as we," and He is "the earnest of the *fulness* of the *purchased possession*, to the praise of His Glory."

Let this be the answer to those who believe in a partial rapture ; but let it be given in tender love to such, for we are all members one of another, being members of Christ.

We cannot quite get away from dealing with the meaning of this word "*waiting*" in this place. May we not have attached a somewhat misleading idea to the word? In 1 Thessalonians, i. 10, another Greek word is used, and yet both have very much the same meaning. Both words imply not so much that the Church of God as a whole, whether in its early, or later history, was intelligently and consciously watching for the Lord's return, as, that, for the whole Church, God's revealed purpose was ever *this*, that the portion of the inheritance designed for her, was reserved until the apocalypse. All true members of Christ are waiting, conscious or unconscious, of it. Only by, and at the return from Heaven of the Lord Jesus, shall they receive the things of which the Holy Spirit of God now in each, and among all is **the earnest**.

A Scotch phrase gives the fuller meaning of the word: it is to "*bide back for*" implying not only a something reserved, but as in Thessalonians, where the verb is active, a holding oneself back from other things with a view to that which is reserved. Beloved, we are all a reserved people for a reserved purpose. This is part of the Gospel declared to us, and the purpose of God for all is sure, and in His faithfulness sealed to all the members of the Body of Christ.

Intelligently and practically to enter by faith into the knowledge of this truth as expressed by the word in the Corinthian Epistle, will be for us to enter into fellowship with our God so as practically to "*bide back*" for that which is reserved. This is our sanctification—our separation. Thus it is that "he that holdeth this hope purifieth himself even as He is pure." So also it becomes increasingly the more necessary that we who do intelligently enter into the "*waiting*" purpose of God for His own

should make it known. Thessalonian believers turned to God from their idols not only that they might serve Him *now*, but to abide here in discipline and trouble, and aloofness from all that would make this present world a pleasant experience, content to wait for **the inheritance**, be the time of waiting long or short, till the Son of God should come back from Heaven. In Corinthians the confirming is **to the end**, *i.e.*, to the full end of God's waiting time, when they are to be without fail *at the apocalypsis*, and *throughout* the **Day of the Lord** Jesus, blameless. This word blameless is *ανεγκλητος*, literally "*not called up*," and by implication to judgment. In other words not called to the bar to be judged when the world is judged.

So too, in 2 Thessalonians i., "to you who are now troubled **rest** with us when the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed*," &c. This also at the apocalypsis; and then again an answer is given to members of Christ not fully instructed in the Word, and who think the saints of God or any portion of them, must needs go through the tribulation. The carnally conditioned Corinthians just because safe in Christ, this including also all who in every place "call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours" (verse 2 and Acts ii. 21), are exempt from the *apocalyptic* judgments. Blessed grace and certainty of **grace** to the end.

(*To be continued.*)

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

"I cannot help feeling in all this God is making a way for His people who wish to be free to serve Him without looseness, yet in true liberty. We cannot expect great things, or great leaders—it will, I think, be more after the cave Adullam character, those in "distress," and "bitter of soul"—but Christ, the true David, everything to them. More and more do I feel led to that; it must be Christ Himself, and not this thing, or that thing. *Have we not been putting so many things about which we have found room to differ, in place of the one thing about which we are all agreed?* Would it not be a fresh revival to us all if we were like the disciples who saw no man any more save Jesus only with themselves; and, as one has lately said, would get off the judgment seat, and be more at the mercy seat?"

LEARNING IN SORROW.

“How quickly one learns in sorrow. The Lord steps in beside me in the furnace and makes it possible to walk therein—there is a “needs be” for everything—oh! to learn our lessons well, and to glorify Him in the fires. I am learning more and more that nothing down here can satisfy, or give lasting happiness; and though so weak and sleepless, I am never depressed. God has graciously delivered me from all that—pure grace—all the praise be His—every attack leaves me weaker in body, but I realize He lifts me above my circumstances and gives me a fuller and more lasting manifestation of His presence, and my heart just overflows with praise. His way is in the sanctuary, yes, and it is “in the sea,” but He has set bounds, and if He is with us there it has to own His power.”

LAODICEA : OR WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO-DAY.

THE root of the mischief that we all deplore is, I feel very deeply, the same failure as that upon which the Lord put his finger in the very earliest stage of the Church's history—“Thou hast left thy first love.” I do not mean love as a sentiment, but love as a motive. We do not hear now so much even of the first as we used to do a few years ago, but as to the last it seems to be almost lost, at any rate if we are to judge by current expressions.

In the writings of the Apostles love to Christ, as a sentiment, was not absent, but love as a motive dominates. The man who said, “The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord—” was the one who said, “Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home, or absent, to be well pleasing unto Him.”

In the present spiritual movement, with which my whole soul goes out in sympathy, I am earnestly desirous that the saints should be governed by that motive which reigned supreme in Paul's soul. In order to obtain the fullest blessing to ourselves, and to meet the full measure of approval from the Lord it is not enough that we should deliver ourselves from those ecclesiastical evils—sectarianism, spiritual rancour, Diotrephesianism, and the like, because we know how wrong they are, and condemn them for their intrinsic badness,

or even because we perceive mentally that they are contrary to the teaching of Scripture, but it must be because we recognise that they are contrary to the living, present Word of Christ. And we eagerly embrace the opportunity to do a thing which He is now in the power of His Spirit, through His Word, instructing us to do.

If we love Him we want to express to Him our love. We want to bestow on Him tokens of the affections He has won to Himself by His unparalleled sacrifices on our behalf, and His matchless daily kindness. He is now so high that we can give Him nothing in the same way as when He was here ; still we are not to be deprived of the joy that would be ours in ministering to Him if He still needed it. He has indicated a service He is open to receive, and by which He sets great store, and one which we may give or withhold at our pleasure, " If a man love me he will keep My words—."

It is not every day that the opportunity comes in our way to express in acts our keeping of His word, and we shall greatly lose if we let such an occasion slip.

First of all, no doubt, our consciences have to be awakened to the evils of the various systems we have been linked in with, and to prevent us after that forming a worse system than all, and so long as we remain in a position of disobedience, conscious or unconscious, love to Christ as a motive will have not much effect upon us, because the light has ceased to affect us. The first thing is to " cease to do evil." We must free ourselves from complicity with those ecclesiastical usages which we have learned are condemned by the Word of Christ, and get back into the way of obedience. And none need this to-day more than those who imagined themselves free from them. This is indeed essential, but we must beware of taking credit to ourselves because we have done so, and resting in it as if it were a good in itself. After all it is only

LIKE A MAN WHO ON A JOURNEY

has lost his way. He spends time and energy in getting back to where he went wrong, and though he may be glad enough to be on the right road again, he does not count that he has made any advance on his journey. So with us, if by the grace of God our feet are set on the right road ecclesiastically, so far as light is given us, we have now, leaving the things that are behind, to go forward and learn " How we ought to walk and please God." The special guide for us, I believe, is found in the Epistle to Laodicea. An attentive

study of the seven epistles, comparing them with the known history of the Church, can lead, I think, to no other conclusion than that we have reached the period when that particular writing becomes especially applicable. The symptoms of the condition of the Laodicean Church are apparent around and with us. The cooling off of the affections of the saints towards Christ, indicated by indifference as to obedience to the word of Scripture. This indifference, it is, by which the contrast between Laodicea and Philadelphia is so strongly accentuated. With us as with them, this symptom is masked by the most correct and respectable exterior, which, as in their judgment, so in ours, leaves little to be desired spiritually. But Christ declares He is wholly dissatisfied with this state of things. Mental grasp of truth—a correct ecclesiastical position—a posture of separation—love for souls—gospel successes—all good and excellent things as they are, count for nothing with Him if ardent love to Himself does not lie at the root of all our actions. Not a sentimental love which evaporates in sweet hymns, and happy feelings when we meet together, but a love which seeks out in His Word a knowledge of His will, and when it has discovered some expression of it, finds a delight in *doing* it. A love that is not content to say Lord! Lord! but insists on *doing* the things that He says.

It is most instructive to us, any of us whose consciences are aroused, to recognise our collective spiritual condition, to attend to the way Christ deals with a state where gross and definite evil is absent, but where spiritual self-content prevails, and the fervent desire to live and please Him is replaced by a languid indifference. A disposition to let alone, and be let alone, and as they say, "To go on with the Lord," whatever that convenient phrase may mean.

The first thing the Lord does is to break up the crust of their self-esteem by telling them the only merit they have in His eyes is their love and gratitude to Himself; if that is not active they are a poor and contemptible lot. The things they fancy a credit to them are in His estimation mere rubbish, and in the eyes of those who judge from a divine standpoint.

The first thing He points out to them is how they may recover His esteem, "That thou mayest be rich." For those who have fallen into spiritual lethargy the cure is a renewal of energy, but the energy must be directed towards one object only. "Buy," He

exhorts them ; He does not offer to give them, but He says, " Buy of ME." He demands activity of soul towards Himself. He, who is the only source of help for saints, He demands an earnest purpose of heart to obtain at His hands those things that make saints well-pleasing to Him.

There are three things He counsels them to buy—GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE, WHITE RAIMENT, AND EYE SALVE. Now these are three things that will cause them to satisfy Him. They are not matters of doctrine, or standing, or anything of that kind, but are practical things that saints can have, or not have, without prejudice to their saintship. They are connected with being well pleasing to Christ. The first I make no doubt is faith. As we all well know that lies at the root of all acceptability to God. Without it, it is impossible to please Him, " for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Now we are a great deal too liable to restrict our idea of faith to calling upon God in time of trouble, and trusting Him for His help, or trusting Him to give us the petitions we may have to ask of Him. But this is another kind of faith ; it is Enoch's faith, and indeed the faith of the Lord Jesus Himself, a faith that recognises that it is always in the presence of God, and that governs itself always with the idea of pleasing Him. " I do always those things which please Him " is Jesus' perfect expression of it, and we must remember that with Him it was no mere pious sentiment such as is common with us (wretched hypocrites that we are) but He actually did it, and all the time too.

It is this faith " that works by love " that the Lord calls upon us to get from Him. We cannot rear it ourselves, we know it is the gift of God, and if we are to have it we must earnestly seek it from Christ. It is the absence of faith that makes the Lord so much an abstraction to us, an idea, a verbal expression, and not a real living person who is interested in us constantly, and to whom we have actual responsibilities, and who is concerned in all our doings.

Thus much is toward God and is the spring of all good conduct. Next comes our conduct itself in its aspect towards men and earthly things. The Scripture leaves us in no doubt as to

WHAT "WHITE RAIMENT" MEANS,

" the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." Now this is not just and upright actions only, and refraining from evil indulgencies, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world—

general correctness of moral walk, though unquestionably those things are included in it.

But it also means, I am quite sure, "brotherly love and love," and especially looks at *giving*. Christ says (Matt. vi. 1) "Do not your righteousness before men," meaning almsgiving (see J.N.D. note). He could not mean good conduct, for that He meant to be seen of men. In II. Cor. ix. 9, it is most marked: "He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor, his *righteousness* endureth for ever." Again in Luke xi. 39-41, He reproaches the Pharisees with an outward demeanour of holy separation while "within" they were putting together privately all they could, by fair means or foul, and He tells them to reverse the process and give away from "within" instead of piling up. The entire aim of Western civilisation is to accumulate, we are all after it naturally. But God is against that thing.

Without doubt a saint is bound to provide for his own, if he does not he is worse than an unbeliever. He must be careful "to be just before he is generous," and must see to it that he does not give away that which righteously belongs to other people. If he is in business he must not endanger the claims of his creditors, and as a private man he must not forget II. Cor. xii. 14, "The parents ought to lay up for the children." Further, God has given us richly all things to enjoy, and He prospers us and blesses the work of our hands. But when all is said and done anyone who understands Luke xvi., will be at no loss to know what is the mind of God as to our relation to earthly goods. (In this connection note I. John iii. 17). So then "giving as God hath prospered him" is a great part of "white raiment." But the spiritual power to do this and to do it rightly, and the disposition, and the ability, and the judgment as to the measure, are to be sought and obtained from Christ.

When Christ advises "Eyesalve," we have only to look back to his own teaching and read Luke xi. 33-36, to learn what is His recipe for the cure of moral blindness. Unless our moral perception is cleansed we can see nothing, and, though we may be quite unconscious of it, our whole body is full of darkness, we are quite blind both as to our own condition and as to the will of Christ for us. He pointed out to that Galilean crowd that there He stood the Divine Lamp lighted to give light to all; but the lighting of the individual soul was the spiritual perception of Himself and His word ("the eyes of the understanding") if that was simple, and no sinister influence

came in to becloud it, the light of God shone in and the whole body was full of light, and in proportion to the clarity of the perception so the body, that is to say, the whole being, and its surroundings will be wholly full of light, the bright shining of the light of God illuminating everything—me and all my environment. On the other hand, if we allow secondary considerations to influence us and confuse our moral perceptions, it is just the same as putting a bushel measure over a lighted lamp, it is not that the light is not there, but our perception of it is nil. Now the clearing of our spiritual perception can only be had from Christ. He must do it for us by the power of His Spirit, we cannot do it for ourselves; “*buy of Me,*” He says, “Eyesalve to anoint thine eyes that thou mayest see.”

He then speaks to them with the utmost kindness, saying in effect, if your love to me has cooled off, mine for you has not; the strong language I use is because of my unchanged affection; I want you to be in all things that which I can approve. “Be zealous therefore and alter (repent).”

I believe we ought to attach the greatest importance to that expression, “*BUY of Me.*” It is meant to convey that we have gone too far to be recovered without an effort and sacrifice on our part, but He does not send us away somewhere else to obtain that with which to win back our way into His good graces, He says “*buy of ME,*” and if He leaves the place of one who gives, and takes that of a seller, we know He will not be exacting in the price, nevertheless, He will not have any languid desires. He *will* awaken earnestness of purpose to please Him, else we shall not get that sense of His approval that we wish for. But if we do respond and are divinely alarmed by His severe aspect and potent words, and zeal to regain His smile awakes in our souls, He will open a wide embrace to receive us again into His favour, and offers to go out of His way to give us the sweetest consoling sense of His exceeding, unvarying love, “I will come in to Him and sup with Him, and he with Me,” and He promises the highest future reward that even God can give. God Himself can give no greater reward than that which He bestows on His faithful Son, and Christ promises *that* to the overcomer.

But everything depends upon the revival of that ardent affection towards Him that makes us *want* to keep His word. If that is absent and cannot be restored nothing more remains but decline and further decline.

“MAN OF GOD.”

I. KINGS, XIII., I.

IMMEDIATELY after the apostasy and corruption which followed King Solomon's reign, and in bright contrast to the many priests and false worship of Jeroboam, we read the simple sentence, “and behold there came a man of God.”

It is important to notice that, like prophetic ministry, the expression “man of God” supposes the breakdown of the corporate thing, only coming upon the scene because of dispensational failure.

There are many points of resemblance between the church* and the world.

Both are loved with divine love, and both ultimately become abhorrent to Jesus Christ (John iii. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 17; Rev. iii. 16; 2 Thess 18). One, because of apostasy, becomes an object of judgment and is spued out of the mouth of Christ. The other, when the sands in the hour-glass of grace have run out, is destroyed with fire from heaven.

Both the world and the Church believe in confederacies or “combines.”

The trend of things to-day is towards communism. The individual is of small account. The will of the people is to rule. In commercial life the employee is valued who blends his whole life in the success of the concern which engages him. In assembly life the servant is valued who is prepared to build up the cause.

To this end the labourer is highly esteemed who possesses the blind eye, and deaf ear; or, should he unfortunately have lost his visual powers to such an extent that he cannot distinguish between things that differ, and puts black for white, and white for black, he will find a sphere; for the modern Jeroboam will appoint him.

A state of things in the Church similar to the last days of Israel's history seems to have been before the mind of the apostle, when, in 1 Timothy vi. 11, for the first time he uses the expression “man of God.” The exhortation here, and in 2 Timothy ii., iii., iv., taken with the voice to the individual of Revelation iii. 20, seems to show that the situation becomes very individual, and that in a general state of corruption each one must pay attention to the exhortation, “take heed to thyself.”

A consideration of the history of such centres of gathering and power, as Bethel, Gilgal, and Shiloh, might well humble and warn those who have ears to hear.

* The church is here spoken of in only one aspect.

But if that which bears His Holy Name becomes corrupt and forsaken by Him God is unchanged.

Faith still hears His voice.

The same sweet, low call that brought peace and joy to our once weary and sin-laden heart, saying, "Come unto ME . . . and I will give you rest."

CLOSE OF A LECTURE MANY YEARS AGO.

. . . . Life is not all—there is such a thing as being the habitation of God through the Spirit. This is the full fruit of Redemption, and holiness comes in. If any man believes in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature—he belongs no longer to the old creation, but becomes the first fruits of the new. I am not my own, but bought with a price—consecrated to God. Are you going to sin with bodies that are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Let me ask you how do you treat this Guest? How much do you think of Him each day? If you had the Queen in your house you would think of nothing else. And there is God dwelling in you, and how often do you think of it? If doing *His will* in the commonest things of every-day life, this is thinking of it. I must walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing—keep the temple pure. Though not so palpably His dwelling as the temple of Israel, it is more *really so*. Do you believe that the Holy Ghost is come down as the Comforter? If so where is He, if not in your bodies? And what sort of temples are they? The Spirit comes as the Witness, that the blood of Christ has perfectly cleansed the sinner; and exhortations to us are founded on the presence of the Spirit. Do you believe in Redemption? Are you redeemed? If you are what has Christ done for you thereby? Left you in Egypt? The Lord gives us to know the truth of Redemption, and that the place we hold on the earth through it is to be the temple of God, both as individuals and collectively.

Did you ever notice that there is only one person in the Bible to whom by the Holy Ghost worldly prosperity is wished. That is Gaius (3 John 2). The Lord knew if he had it, he would use it rightly. It is very striking! Gaius did not love this present evil world. Demas did, and left Paul for it. What a contrast!

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS, AND ITS LESSONS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

All of us, doubtless, young and old, have been interested in what has recently taken place under the above title. This year unusual importance attached to it on account of its being held in London; and this importance was enhanced by the fact that it was proposed to have a public procession of the "host," a thing which had not been done since the reign of Queen Mary. And this was described as our Lord's public return to England. However, as you all know, it was at the last moment stopped.

But that such a proceeding was intended to be carried out and only at the last moment prevented, is full of significance, and conveys some salutary lessons, as well as warnings. I thought I ought to seize the opportunity to point out what some of these are.

I do this the more readily because this matter specially concerns the young. There is, no doubt, a deliberate attempt being made by Rome to capture England. Other countries have grown weary of her corruptions, and her bondage, and she is attempting to fasten upon our shores, and regain her old influence.

First of all, what is the meaning of "Eucharistic Congress"? The members of the Church of Rome assemble in a certain place to give prominence to the special teaching concerning the Eucharist, or, as we term it, the Lord's Supper. So far, we may all learn from this a valuable lesson. How much have you, my young friends, thought of this matter? You have been born in a Christian land, and been brought up, perhaps, all of you, under Christian training, but possibly some of you have never seriously enquired what this special rite means, much less partaken of it.

The Lord's Supper is known by various names—the Eucharist, the Sacrament, and the Communion. All these terms convey to us something of its meaning. The Lord's Supper is the simplest

and the most significant. It is His Supper because He instituted it; and it is in remembrance of Him. In that upper room, on the night of His betrayal, He took the bread and the wine, and told His disciples to partake of these things in *remembrance* of Him. This is the form in which the Apostle Paul gives it, and he tells us he had received it of the Lord; and also Luke in his gospel, who you remember was much with the Apostle, uses precisely the same words. But in addition to the thought of remembrance, there is that of *thanksgiving*; and this is the idea conveyed by the term *eucharist*. The Lord, Himself, in instituting it "gave thanks." The Apostle Paul, in writing about it to the Corinthians, uses these words, "the cup of blessing which we bless" ("give thanks for," or "speak well of"). The word used to express what our Lord did is this very word *eucharist*. So the Lord's Supper is a *eucharist* in that sense, for it is an occasion of praise and thanksgiving.

The term *sacrament*, too, may be not inaptly applied to this same feast. The Roman Catholics speak of seven sacraments, of which this is one. The others are Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The term *sacrament* is derived from the oath of allegiance taken by the Roman soldiers. Now the partaking of the Supper implies allegiance to our absent Lord. The Apostle Paul specially emphasizes the fact that it was "the same night in which He was *betrayed*" Christ took the bread. There was one amongst that little band of followers who had turned traitor. It is the faithful ones who eat of the supper. Thus it becomes from that point of view a sacrament.

There is further closely bound up with this ordinance the idea of communion, and with many Christians it still goes by this name. Again we turn for our authority for this to I Cor. x. There we read (v. 17) "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." While in the previous verse we get the very word *communion* twice repeated.

Thus, you see, my dear young friends, there are these various meanings attaching to this supper which the Lord instituted. It is a remembrance; an occasion of thanksgiving; a time when, as it were, we renew and express our allegiance; and a season when we enjoy the deepest, truest communion with one another and with Christ, and God.

You will say to me, then, if this is true it must have been a very good thing to have had this Congress in London, and for people to have been reminded of all this. Very good indeed for them if they were reminded of it; and very good indeed for you if it serves to remind you of it, that you may never neglect it. But we fear the people who were present at the Congress were reminded of something quite different. Something that is not in the Bible at all. Something that thousands upon thousands have forfeited their lives in protesting against.

Listen to these words conveyed to the people in a letter from the Pope: "The Divine Eucharist should be loved, *worshipped* (italics mine) and partaken of more and more among the Christian people. It is indeed from the *Eucharist* as from its source that the spirit of the supernatural life is diffused over the whole body of the Church. . . . Again we *venerate the Eucharist* not only as the greatest of the sacraments, but as that which is truly the chief act of divine *worship*" (mark it is the thing itself that is worshipped) "and essential to religion, namely, *a sacrifice*. In the Eucharist that self-same sacrifice offered once upon the cross is renewed in a bloodless manner, and uninterruptedly, throughout the world."

Such is the teaching of Rome. "They worship and serve the creature more than the Creator." Her doctrines are unchanged, and if she only had the upper hand to-day, we should soon prove to our cost, that her ways were unchanged. The warning we were speaking about at the beginning lies here, that many are "losing" their sense of Rome's true character and are indifferent to her encroachments; they would let her regain her liberty, and in doing so will, if not careful, lose their own.

A gentleman said to me the other day that if he knew anyone inclining Romeward he would not argue with him, but he would invite him to go for a trip to Spain, and there see Rome in its true colours as she really is, and he added "if that didn't cure him of his desire, nothing would."

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." Let us pray earnestly that the light may not grow dim in England.

Your affectionate Friend,

THE EDITOR.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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EDITORIALS.

LETTERS of encouragement continue to reach us, and so far, we have much cause for thanksgiving. Will our readers take note that the first number (Oct.) is still on sale. We draw special attention to the third article on "Unity" in the present issue, as we wish to receive expressions of opinion upon it. It deals with one of the most pressing and important questions of the hour. May we solicit for it a careful and prayerful perusal. And after doing so, any brief remarks you may be led to send us will be welcomed.

The world is full of unrest. All eyes are turned to the east, awaiting developments. Fresh causes of anxiety seem to arise daily. At home the suffragette movement carries on its campaign in a manner which sets law and order at defiance. It is surely a sign of the times when woman leads in the van of lawlessness.

The day following the one on which she intruded herself for the first time on the House of Commons and made a speech, we were reading in the ordinary course Zech. v. Part of verses 6 to 8 read "And I said, what is it? And he said, this is an ephah that goeth forth . . . and this is a *woman* that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said *this is wickedness.*" It can never lead to anything else when woman steps out of her appointed sphere. What need there is for prayer when the forces that make for evil are so energetic. What is needed most of all is a great revival. True godliness is at a low ebb, generally, though there are conspicuous examples to the contrary. Almost everyone complains of lack of spiritual power. Servants of God are saying they never found it so hard to preach, and results were never so small. Deadness and indifference largely prevail. Now is the time to seek God's face in *believing* prayer. It is just fifty years since the last extensive revival. Many are expecting God to visit us again. Shall we not pray, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?"—"O Lord, revive Thy work." How better could the closing days of another year be spent?

GOD—how incomprehensible! The mind staggers as it seeks to comprehend His being; reason seems to withdraw from the attempt utterly baffled, while a bewildered sense of unfathomed mystery takes possession of us. To reason, everything, even God, Himself, must have been made by someone. One—always existent, having all power, dependent upon no one, never having had a beginning, and never to have an end, is to the human mind unthinkable. Ought not this to teach us our limitations, and that we are but children of a larger growth. And, further, that God never made us capable of comprehending Him. This is where atheism and agnosticism miss the mark. We were made to know God, to worship Him, and to trust Him. These things are possible, and our happiness lies in the acceptance of this situation, and the realisation of it. Why beat our brains against a problem they were never made to solve?

"We comprehend Him not, yet earth and heaven tell
God sits as sovereign on the throne, and ruleth all things well."

THE FLOCK.

“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”
(John x., 16).

THE Latin Version of the New Testament, commonly known as the Vulgate, is occasionally marred by intentional mis-translations, designed to cover or support errors prevalent in the Church of the Fathers. And the verse above quoted is one of the extremely rare instances in which an error of this type is reproduced in our noble “Authorised Version.”

There is no question here of “various readings”; nor is there any ambiguity in the terms which our Lord employed. The word “fold” in the last clause of the verse is a sheer misrendering. It has no affinity whatever with the word used in the first clause. The one is *aulē*, the other *poimnē*. *Aulē* means a courtyard, enclosure, sheepfold; *poimnē*, a flock. In verse 1 the Lord speaks of “the *aulē* of the sheep”; in verse 16 He refers to Gentiles who are “not of this *aulē*,” and He adds “there shall be one *poimnē* and one *poimēn*.”* No knowledge of Greek is needed to enable us to grasp the significance of these words.

The error which this perversion of the Lord’s words was intended to cover is thus stated by Dr. Hatch of Oxford in his “Bampton Lectures” :—

“In the years of transition from the ancient to the modern world, when all civilized society seemed to be disintegrated, the confederation of the Christian Churches was not only the most powerful, but the *only* powerful organization in the civilized world. . . . This confederation, and no other, was the “City of God”; this, and no other, was the “Body of Christ”; this, and no other, was the “Holy Catholic Church.” †

And an apt comment on this is supplied by the following sentence from Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity* :—

“For lack of diligent observing the difference between the Church of God mystical and visible, the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed.”

This failure to distinguish between the Church which Christ is building—the vital unity of His body—and the Church as an organised society upon earth, is a fundamental error of the

* *Poimnē* occurs also in Matt. xxvi., 31; Luke ii., 8, and I. Cor., 7; and *poimēn* in twelve other passages, including Eph. iv., 11, where alone it is rendered “Pastors.”

† This is not the writer’s view. It is a statement of the false teaching of the “Primitive Church.

“Christian religion.” It is systematised in Rome, but in varying degrees it leavens every Protestant denomination, and, I may add, every “assembly.” And it may be traced to the root error embodied in the Vulgate Version of John x. 16.

The Lord’s language is clear. In contrast with Judaism, the Church of this dispensation was to be a “flock.” Indeed, the very word *ekkllesia* (Church) implies this. But the religion of Christendom gives to the word a meaning which is foreign not only to Scripture, but to the Greek language of that time. Everywhere and always it connotes a company of people, and it would never stand for a *fold* to contain them,* or even for a disciplinary authority to control them.

In 1 Cor. i. 2, the Church of God at Corinth is defined to be the “Saints” in Corinth. But that venerable dictum of the Fathers, that “outside the church there is no salvation” did not mean that salvation was only for the people of God, but that the church was the fold within which alone salvation could be found. Sinners were, therefore, “brought into the Church” in order to be saved. Hence arose, doubtless, the perversion of Acts ii. 47 which the Revised Version correctly gives—“The Lord daily added together those who were being saved.”

Let no one suppose that this is merely an academic question. For the exaltation of “the Church” disparages Christ. And naturally so; for with a perfect sheepfold the functions of the shepherd become of secondary importance. “Christ as a person was forgotten” is Dr. Harnack’s statement of the effect of this error in the “Primitive Church.” And in the Romish system, where it has reached its full development, “the Church” is everything, and the Lord Jesus Christ is practically of no account. Protestantism on the other hand gives Him the *first* place. But this leaves room for a subordinate homage rendered to the Church. And the Lord will not accept such a divided homage. He is not the alpha but the alpha and the omega—not the *first*, but **all in all**.

The Jew had a religion; the Christian has Christ. In every part of it that divine religion spoke of Him, and pointed forward to His coming. It was the only divine religion the world has ever

* I. Tim. iii. 15, is no exception to this. The word there is *oikos*, not *oikia*. The same word occurs in verses 3, 5 and 12; and in II. Tim., i. 16, and iv., 19; in all which passages it means *household*.

known, and when He came its purpose was fulfilled. "Religion" was for the time of His people's childhood, and we who are of full age are done with it for ever. For Christianity is not a religion, but a revelation and a faith. And the only *true* "Christian religion" is (in contrast with religion in the former and legitimate meaning of the word) the daily life of the disciple (Jas. i. 27).

We need constantly to study such passages as Col. ii. The Colossians were Gentiles, and their danger was, not going after Jewish ordinances, but putting Christian ordinances in the place formerly held by the Jewish—setting up a religion, in fact. As Archbishop Whately has pointed out, the errors of Rome have their roots in human nature, and we all need to be on our guard against this special error. There is much in Scripture about the vital unity of the body of Christ, but of the outward "visible Church," the New Testament says little save in the way of reproof and warning. There is far more about it in many a twenty minutes' sermon, or a twenty-page tract, than in the whole of the Epistles. In very truth the "Church" and the "sacraments" have been the bane of Christianity. This influence corrupted the theology of the "Fathers," it hindered the work of the "Reformers," and it has marred every effort to return to the principles and practices of Apostolic times.

THE PEERLESS MAN.

THE PATTERN OF OUR PLACE AND PATH.

LUKE III., 21 AND 22; LUKE IV., 1-13.

THIS was the first time that there was a man on earth upon whom the heavens could be opened, and for the simple reason that there never was a man here before in whom God could absolutely delight. You may look in vain through the whole of the Old Testament to find the heavens opened, except in Ezekiel, and then it is only in a vision, but in reality they were never opened before. What do the opened heavens mean? That there was a MAN here who was in perfect acceptance in the Glory of God, and whom that very glory could salute and delight in.

But there is more, the Holy Ghost comes and seals Him. Christ was never baptized by the Holy Ghost because there was nothing in Him to be put out of sight. *Burial* is the idea in Christian baptism, it puts out of sight. Now Jews and Gentiles are baptized by one Spirit into one body. The baptism of the Holy Ghost buries both Gentile enmity and Jewish pride, and then unites the two into one body. But in the Lord Jesus Christ there is nothing to be buried ; it is a misnomer and a mistake to speak of Him as being baptized by the Holy Ghost, though He was both sealed and anointed by the Spirit of God. John vi. 27 says : " Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you ; for *him hath God the Father sealed.*"

The idea of sealing is appropriation ; that it is mine, it has my stamp, it bears my seal and belongs to me. Think of that blessed MAN being wholly, absolutely and altogether for God ; the Father seals Him ; and it is the Father's voice which speaks and says, " This is My beloved Son in whom I have found my delight." The three things here which belong to Christ inherently—His personal rights—are now shared in, because of His accomplished work, by all who believe in His name :—

- (1) The opened heavens ;
- (2) The descending Spirit ;
- (3) The Father owning Him as the beloved Son.

If the heavens were opened upon Christ because of His own personal perfections, they are now opened to you and me, not because of anything in us, but in virtue of His accomplished work, if Christ is accepted, we are accepted in Him, the Beloved. But in order to this latter, He must go to death and judgment and end our whole fleshly status for ever, and in rising again give us His place as man, in the favour of God. All this is prefigured by the Lord Jesus going down into Jordan's waters and coming up again. I know that as the Messiah He identified Himself with the Jewish remnant in baptism, " for," as He said to John, " so it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness " ; but going down into Jordan's waters and emerging from them became the type of His own death and resurrection, and on that ground alone you and I are accepted in the Beloved. Is Christ in unclouded favour in the

highest heaven? So are you in Him. His place before the Father is the measure and pattern of your own. His nearness your nearness, His Father our Father, His God our God. Oh! beloved friends, let us get into the altitude of John xvii; His Father is our Father; not now "our Father which art in heaven" or "heavenly Father," but set in all the blessed intimacy of His own love, and light, and favour before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who has sent forth the spirit of *His Son* into our hearts whereby we cry "Father." In John xvii. you will find it is "Holy Father," "Righteous Father," and "Father." When there speaking of the keeping of His own, He says, "Holy Father"; when of the world, it is "Righteous Father"; and when He speaks for Himself, it is "Father." We must take time to consider our place of unspeakable blessedness with the Father, through grace, on the ground of accomplished redemption. What was true of that blessed MAN who essentially and practically embodied all perfections becomes the place and portion of all His "brethren." You have the Holy Ghost; you are a Son before the Father; the heavens are open to you, and all this upon the ground that He has gone down to death and risen again.

Let us look a little nearer. God has sent forth the spirit of *His Son* into our hearts whereby we cry "Father." We are *sealed*; we are *anointed* by the Holy Ghost; we have the *witness* of the Holy Ghost; we have the *earnest* of the Holy Ghost, and by one Spirit we are all *baptized* into one body.

No individual as such was ever baptized by the Holy Ghost; it is a collective operation, and you cannot have a "fresh baptism," but you might desire a fresh "filling," which is another idea. We might be filled with the Holy Ghost to-day and not to-morrow, but to be "filled" is not the same as being "indwelt."

There is a great contrast between Luke iii. and Luke iv. In Luke iii. there is the unclouded light of heaven and the Father's love, and the sealing with the Holy Ghost. What warmth, what sunshine, what infinite blessedness is shining forth through these opened skies. Open, dear friends, every avenue of your being to admit its bright beams until your whole soul is permeated with it.

When I was in San Francisco, an old gentleman, who had previously lived in the Eastern States, told me it was an imperative

necessity that he should get a sun-bath as often as he could in the mornings, in order to withstand the cold "trade-winds" which usually swept through the city in the afternoons. The heat of the former made him proof against the latter. Thus it is that Luke iii., with glory shining, the voice saluting, and the Spirit descending, precedes Chapter iv., where we have Satan, forty days' temptation, and the wilderness. In the earlier scene our blessed Lord becomes the pattern of our place before the Father and afterwards the pattern of our pathway in the wilderness in the presence of the enemy and his subtle wiles!

There is no more wonderful sight upon this earth than to witness the Lord Jesus Christ in contact with the Devil in the wilderness. Let some of the higher critics say how "the temptation" came to be written, Luke did not see it, and Matthew did not see it, then how do we get it? Your "inner consciousness" will not do. How do we then get the record of the temptation? God saw it. He witnessed that marvellous combat between light and darkness, between Christ and Satan.

"Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing; and when they were ended, He afterward hungered." Now is the enemy's opportunity, and he says, "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." The Father had called Him "My beloved Son," and the devil says "If thou be the Son of God." The Blessed One in effect replies, I am not here to command, but to obey; "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

Three things came out in the temptation:—(1) Dependence upon God, (2) Devotedness to God, (3) Confidence in God. Forty days is the full term of probation; after He has been tempted forty days of the devil and is hungry, the devil had an assailable point, but *not* a vulnerable one.

Would you not turn your stone into bread if you could? I have tried many a time. What does it mean? Ameliorating your circumstances, changing them, making them more comfortable, just turning your hard stone into soft bread. Relieving yourself. Many a man has gone to America to make money, and has made shipwreck. What do we mean by "getting on"? Turning our stones into bread. Would you change your circumstances if you could?

What did that Blessed One do? Did He, like Adam, help Himself? No; He says "I wait for God." Would you like to be "better off," would you not like things more agreeable, more suitable? Is there someone who is so diagonal, so angular, who always crosses you? Would you not like to alter that? There has been—One—a MAN upon this earth, the delight of the heart of God, who never would move a finger to change one single circumstance without it were His will.

How that dependent MAN baffled the devil! He says "I will wait for God, I depend on Him, and I will not help myself." Then the devil tries the world, and shows Him everything. *How* could he show the Lord Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world in a moment of time? I do not know *how*, but I know he did. O beloved friends! the devil can give you a great deal, and the most awful thing that I know of, and I will say it, is, that *everyone has his price*, excepting the one to whom Christ is everything. The devil says, I cannot fetch Him with £1,000, but I could with £10,000; I cannot do it with riches, but I will make him a popular man.

"All the *Kingdoms* of the world and the *glory* of them I will give Thee" said the Tempter, and the Blessed One chooses two other things. "Thou shalt *worship* the Lord thy God, and **HIM ONLY** shalt thou *serve*." If I had the voice of ten thousand, I should emphasize those words "HIM ONLY." That is devotedness.

Do not let us make any mistake; unless it is "Him only" we have our price. Some Christians say "Oh, I should never think of doing so and so; I could never dream of doing it." Well! put your hand into your bosom and see what will happen; you will bring it out leprous. Moses did not put his hand into Aaron's pocket; everybody could see he was robbing him if he did. No, he put it into his own bosom. The heart is the seat of the disease, the hand is but its agent. What we are is a great deal worse than anything we ever did. But the sinless, dependent, devoted man of heaven's pleasure retorts "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and **HIM ONLY** shalt thou serve." Everything else, and everybody else, are crowded out. God is His all.

Now comes the last and most subtle attack of all. Most of us know that Luke in his gospel presents things in a moral way,

his order is moral, not chronological. Matthew puts the temptation in the order of its occurrence ; but in Luke the order is different, the pinnacle of the Temple comes last ; it is religious elevation. The devil has tried the natural, and then the worldly, and now the most insidious shaft, his last must, if possible, win the day.

“ If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence ; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee : and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.” He quotes scripture, but does not quote correctly. What is the answer ? “ Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” I do not need to put God to the test ; I know and trust Him absolutely ; I know He will take care of me. The enemy is worsted at every point : the victory is complete.

The most subtle temptation for us is the pinnacle of the Temple ; to be a big brother. Oh ! no, we never say so. You may not want the world, but you can turn the saints of God into your world ; when your ear is keenly listening for their approval, and you are aspiring for the highest place, your position is most perilous. Do you know what has ruined more servants of God than anything else ? Love of pre-eminence—the pinnacle of the Temple ; Christians will put you up and then they will put you down. I do not wish to create a smile in any light way, but I think I must tell you what C. H. M. wrote to me long ago : “ Beware of the people who would *lionize* you ; for they are sure to *donkeyize* you.” Let me say it to myself and every servant of God ; there is no more dangerous position than to be accredited with gift, ability, success and the like ; and to secretly feed upon the appreciation of others, though, of course, you do not say so, but it lurks there. To love to be at the top, is the surest way to the bottom.

Gaze at that wonderful MAN that says to the devil, “ Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Scripture is called in to do duty in the enemy’s service and that Psalm which applies to the Messiah, is appealed to with a subtle omission. But the Lord returns again to that master weapon, “ It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Would you put anybody to the test whom you knew perfectly well ? Would you try one whose heart you knew to its very bottom ; and that is what the Lord means ;

I shall not put God to the test ; I know Him so well, and am absolutely in His hands. Dependence upon, devotedness to, and confidence in God have cleared the field. A man has conquered, in the power of these three graces, the mightiest of foes.

Remember we are never free of the onslaughts of our wily foe. If the natural fails, he can try the worldly, and when overcome there, would use even any spiritual gift, or ability, to puff you up in order to cast you down. We are only safe as we take the path of our victorious Lord, live by the word, serve Him only, and trust Him wholly.

“THE POSITION OF WOMAN” (*see Oct.*)

One of our readers writes :—

Twenty years ago, as a bachelor and ignorant of spiritual truth, I wrote about women and against their public agitation. My views are more confirmed now in the light of God's truth than through natural reasoning. It was true to me then as it is now, that “In past times, women were content to be loved, but now they want to reverse the order of things by entering the arena of the world's struggles and placing themselves on an equal footing with men. The sexes were never intended to be put in a position of rivalry with each other, but rather in full partnership and association.”

The poet Tennyson gave much thought to the subject, and is of the same opinion. In one place he says :—

“For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse. Could we make her as the man
Sweet love were slain.”

But the want of wisdom of Israel's women was more severely denounced by the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel's time (and it sounds a note of warning to English women now), “Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister, pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”

“While place we seek, or place we shun
The soul finds happiness in none.
But with my God to guide my way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.”

“The only adequate expression of trust is obedience.”

WORDS OF PEACE.

IT is presumed that all who read the following are saved people—eternally saved. There should not be any doubt about this, for God's word has fallen upon our ears and entered our hearts, arresting and casting out all fear, when He said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus xii. 13). Here we find two things most precious: the *blood* applied for our *safety*; and the *word* of God given for our *assurance*. Nothing could be more simple, nothing more precious. Undoubtedly if you had opened the door of one of the houses of these people, you would have seen two classes, as we see, alas, two types of Christians to-day. One would be free from all anxiety and dread—perfectly happy; the other filled with doubt and uncertainty, not being fully assured.

Did the fear of the one or the happiness of the other affect their salvation? In nowise. All were equally saved, but all were not equally happy. By faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; not peace with ourselves, not a comfortable feeling within that all may turn out right by and by; if my salvation was affected by my feelings, then there would be a change every day. Then undoubtedly the people who say they can be saved to-day and lost to-morrow would speak the truth. But blessed be God this peace has a basis outside the shifting sands of my poor heart and changeful nature. It is based on the immovable and imperishable rock Christ Jesus and the blood He shed. How solid and sure! What a place God has given me, a poor sinner! What a rock for my feet! What a pillow for my weary head to rest upon! Write the words round about it—"It is finished" until the warm rays of grace from the cross and the throne wrap themselves round and round you, thawing your poor frozen heart and soul.

No, there can be no improvement in your title to heaven. Read these words over, and over, and over again until they seize your very being. "Giving thanks to the Father who *hath made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12).

Again let me say there can be no improvement in your title to heaven; neither the place that Christ occupies at the Father's right hand, nor the descent of the Holy Spirit adds a whit to the value of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, when He shed His blood for poor, lost, guilty sinners.

How precious it is to gaze on a little child who was saved only last night, it may be in some poor mission hall in a back slun., and

think, that this one is not more or less secure than the chiefest of the apostles. What a tribute to the grace and love of our God! Hallelujah!

Having said so much, it may be helpful to some to give a brief outline of the epistle to the Romans. It is allowed that the epistle to the Thessalonians is the first chronologically; but the epistle to the Romans is the first in the order in which the truth is learnt; establishing the soul in the knowledge of its relationship with God. In this lies its importance.

1st Chapter to 8th, doctrinal; 9th to 11th Chapter, dispensational; 12th Chapter to the end, practical exhortations flowing from the two previous sections. The doctrinal part may be divided into two sections. The first is from Chapter i. to Chapter v. 11; the second is from Chapter v. 12 to the end of Chapter viii. Chapter i. to Chapter v. 11 occupies me with my sins, my actions; and God comes out consistent with His own nature, in righteousness, justifying me "freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"; and leaving me perfectly happy by the words:—"We joy in God" (v. 11).

From here to the end of Chapter viii. it is not our *sins*, but our *state*; which is unmendably bad, and we have the death of Christ brought forward to meet that state. So we get the *blood* of Christ for our *sins*, and the *death* of Christ for our *state*, or evil nature. I want *forgiveness* for my *sins*, but I don't want forgiveness for my *nature*; what I want for my *state* is *deliverance*, which is effected by death, the death of Christ. The root (sin) and the fruit (sins) have been entirely dealt with. *Now* we can join in the strains of the sweet music of Chapter viii. 1. *When?* After God has brought to light all that we are and shown us how it has been dealt with on the cross, and placed us in Christ far beyond condemnation.

Is there any doubt connected with Christ? No; for He has been raised from the dead. Can condemnation overtake Him? No, for He has borne God's awful judgment against sin. Can there be any question of sin against Him? No, for He has been made sin, and God has dealt with our sins at the cross; and He is in heaven because the question of sins has been settled. And we in Him! What a position. If there is nothing against Christ, there is nothing against the believer.

May God produce in each of us worshipping hearts as we meditate thus on the unfolding of the riches of His grace.

UNITY (*continued*).

III.

It may now be helpful to turn to certain scriptures which deal with believers in their relation one to another, and in their corporate capacity. For it is only as we understand how we ought to act one toward another that any outward expression of unity can be secured.

MATTHEW XVIII.

Difficulties have often arisen because certain well known texts have been selected from a chapter and taken quite away from their context. This is misleading in two ways. First—A certain verse cannot be rightly understood except in its setting. Second—This process leads to a neglect of other important parts of the subject. That is, by bringing a favourite verse too much into the foreground, the others upon which it really depends are shifted too much into the background, so that one part receives too much attention and another too little.

This applies in a very marked degree to the chapter about to be considered. Verses 18-20 have been given the first place. Verses 15-17 the next. And these have been looked at quite apart from what goes before, and what follows. The reason of this is not far to seek. Human nature delights to be "dressed in a little brief authority." The consequence has been that the very verses seized upon have been precisely those which seem to invest believers with this authority, and give the Church an ecclesiastical status. Verses 17 and 18 clothe the church with great dignity and importance. It is a fine thing to be the last court of appeal, and to bind on earth what shall be bound in heaven. Yes, very fine. But disastrous except under certain conditions. But did not Christ, Himself, impart this authority? Yes. But He did more. He clearly states the moral condition required in those who were to exercise it, and the absence of which would render the other not only worthless, but positively mischievous. Rome presents a living picture of the one without the other. She claims all the authority, she presents none of the conditions. And what is true of Rome may easily be true elsewhere.

What are the conditions? At the beginning of the chapter the disciples came to Jesus with a question. Who is the greatest

in the Kingdom of Heaven? "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" (v. 1-4). That is the first thing required of those who seek to carry out verses 17 and 18. Each one must become as a little child and humble himself. Otherwise the place of administration will puff him up, and pervert his judgment. A little child is above all things simple, unaffected, sincere. It harbours no illwill, or resentment. To attempt to administrate where these qualities are lacking is to do infinitely more harm than good.

Next, what we are to look for in others is a childlike spirit, and all who bear that mark are to be received in Christ's name. In receiving such, we receive Him. It is not intelligence, but childlikeness. Then comes an awful warning against stumbling one such. We are neither to stumble others, or allow ourselves to be stumbled, for the Lord intimates there will be stumbling blocks, but the man who causes them has a woe pronounced upon him.

Following upon this comes another principle of great moment. The wandering sheep is not to be forgotten and left to perish. More care is to be bestowed upon such than upon all the rest. Recovery is to be the one object. Then v. 15, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, *thou hast gained thy brother.*" The supreme object of the visit is to *gain thy brother.* And lastly, in answer to Peter's enquiry, "how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" The Lord answers, "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." To emphasise which fact the Lord relates the parable of the forgiven, but unforgiving, servant.

Here, then, we have the setting of vv. 17, 18 and 20. The chapter gives us the key to enable us to decide all claims to be gathered to the name of Christ, and of exercising discipline in His name which shall be bound in heaven. A childlike spirit which neither looks for evil nor expects it. The willingness to receive a little child that comes in Christ's name, however ignorant. The removal of all stumbling blocks, and where they exist, taking full

account of them. Recovery the object, and not cutting off. An intense desire to gain one who has failed. And, finally, a spirit of forgiveness, so unquenchable, that there is scarcely a limit to be put to it. These are the things that must characterise those who seek to administer in Christ's name or claim to be gathered to it. In default of which all such claims are as pretentious as the man in the street claiming that he ought to be Prime Minister and govern this country, because he is an Englishman, and pays his taxes, when he possesses none of the qualifications for the post.

The question may here be raised—"but, supposing a number of Christians meeting in a certain locality come to a decision about a matter, how is that decision to be regarded by Christians elsewhere?" If it is a purely local matter about which those on the spot are best capable of judging, it should be accepted. But even in such a case, if in coming to a decision the principles laid down throughout Matt. xviii., or any of them, have been violated, the judgment of course does not stand. An individual naturally would be very slow to set his judgment against that of a number of others, and would not do so without the clearest evidence.

But a further question arises. Does Matt. xviii. teach that any assembly may take up a matter *not local*, and come to a decision on behalf of all other assemblies? *It does not.* No such thought enters into the passage. It is entirely local. The case supposed is one between two brothers. And can anyone suppose that should the necessity arise for telling the matter to the church, that the universal church is meant? Was every local difficulty to be published broadcast? It evidently refers only to the local assembly. And equally evident is it that cases of discipline are here restricted to their narrowest limits; "let him be unto *thee* as an heathen man and a publican."

As to the relation of assemblies to each other, *each assembly is responsible to the Lord as Head of the Church*, and not one to the other. There is no hint anywhere in scripture of one assembly binding another. When questions arise which are not purely local, questions that affect all the assemblies, *and the basis of their fellowship*, they have always been settled hitherto by a council of responsible persons. Neither scripture nor history furnishes any support for the method adopted within the last few years of a local assembly deciding for all. There is no suggestion even of such a

thing in scripture. It is contrary to all the traditions of the Church of God. Moreover, it is manifestly unfair, opens the door to all sorts of difficulties, has led to endless confusion, and trouble, and often to division. The principles of scripture, if they are to be any guide to us, lead in precisely the opposite direction. When Benjamin sinned, as recorded at the end of Judges, it was not one tribe, say the nearest, that took the matter up. We read: "Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-Sheba" (Judges xxi.). The evidence as to guilt was publicly heard. And then it was said, "behold, ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel" (v. 7). The whole proceedings are most instructive and helpful, and although at that time there was no King in Israel, nor even a judge, as far as we can learn, they were not left without guidance. When we turn to the New Testament we find substantially the same method of procedure, (see Acts xv.). But this has been fully dealt with elsewhere.*

It is when we go beyond scripture, drawing deductions of our own, that because so and so, therefore so and so, that we get into trouble and difficulty. Would it not be well for us to abide by what Matt. xviii. really teaches, and not seek to carry its instruction further, or introduce what is not there. May the writer submit the following considerations to the judgment of others?

1. In view of the Church's failure in responsibility and administration, we ought to be exceedingly careful how we seek to carry out its administration, as set forth in Matt. xviii. 15-20.

2. That we ought to take the chapter as a whole. That the *mere claim* to be acting in the Lord's name, or being gathered to that name is not sufficient, unless the conduct and condition described both before and after, are also true of those who make the claim. The absence of such being rather a denial of Christ's name than a gathering to it, or acting in it.

3. Each meeting can settle local matters only, and not decide questions of fellowship affecting the whole Church, or act in any way for the whole.

4. Each meeting as regards local matters is responsible to the Lord alone, and not to any other meeting.

* See "The Gates of Jerusalem."

5. If meetings do not arrive at a uniform judgment, either as between themselves, or in their own midst, this in itself is no cause for division, but for further waiting upon the Lord. If agreement still is not reached, and the matter is one that vitally affects Christian fellowship as a whole, then the method of Judges xx. and Acts xv. should be resorted to.

6. If the matter cannot thus be settled, and is one of notorious sin, or fundamental error, then division becomes not only a necessity, but a positive duty from which there is no escape.

MARK IX., 33-42.

Our meditation upon Matt. xviii. has already shown us what will tend to unity—the childlike mind; the desire to bring the wanderer back; consideration for the least and lowliest; the effort to gain our brother; and that forgiving spirit which is not exhausted until seventy times seven. The Scripture we are now to consider will further help us. In some respects it is a parallel passage to Matt. xviii. In both the question is raised as to who is greatest, and in both the Lord calls attention to a child. There is this difference, however. In Matthew the disciples approach the Lord with the question, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” In Mark it is a matter of dispute among themselves by the way. So little are they occupied with what engaged the Lord, for He had once again referred to his being delivered into the hands of men and killed, that they can provoke such a dispute. How it tells us what is in our own hearts. And here lies the chief reason that unity is not more manifest among the people of God. *We are prone to think of ourselves instead of the good of all.* Christ is too faithful not to disclose this incipient evil. The dispute had grown so warm that His attention had been attracted by it. And He saw that unless the mistaken views, the ignorance, and the pride that gave rise to it were checked, all sorts of mischief would follow. Let us notice with the attention it deserves how the Master meets this flaw in His disciples.

They are apparently silenced by His very question. “They held their peace.” The first thing He does is to sit down. If they are clamouring for a high place, He will take a low one. He then instructs them that “if any man *desire* to be first” he can only reach it by being “last of all and servant of all.” He then takes a child and sets him in the midst of them. In the midst. What

an object lesson for those big grown men! Then, further, in order that they may learn the value of that little one to Him, we read, "when He had taken him in His arms." He would have that little child as near to Him as possible, and He would have His followers learn that the way to be near to Him was to become little. Their aspiration after greatness put them at a distance; the way to Him—to His arms, and His heart—to all the support He could give, and all the love He could bestow was by becoming self-emptied.

And now with that child in His arms what has He to say to them? "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." Have we not here an immense principle as to reception. While in the distracted and divided state of the Church some are asking, whom shall we receive? have we not here a divine, and all-sufficient answer? Given as it is with all clearness and distinctness, and coming as it does from Christ Himself, need we hesitate to obey? The answer is twofold—

1. RECEIVE ALL WHO COME IN CHRIST'S NAME.

2. RECEIVE ALL WHO COME IN CHILDLIKE SIMPLICITY.

For, "whosoever shall receive one of such *children in My Name*, receiveth Me." Here is a test which meets every requirement. To go beyond this, to require some intelligence as to matters not fundamental which have separated believers, or the acceptance of some ecclesiastical position, or certain views of doctrines not vital, before there can be any reception whatever, and to reject them on that account means, if language means anything, that in rejecting them we reject Christ.

We are told to be wise concerning that which is good and simple concerning evil. Is not this injunction sometimes reversed? And we seek to be wise concerning that which is evil, and require that others should be too. Is this receiving a child "in My Name," as our Lord enjoins us? The very essence of childlikeness is simplicity. A child very often does not know evil when it meets it. And it is all the more pure, and not the less pure, on that account.

The one test we need to apply then to those who come to us is this one of *simplicity*. And the ease with which this quality

can generally be detected makes it the most efficient test possible. We require no other except of course that they come "in My Name."

The question is often raised as to those who ask to be received to break bread, once, as Christians—but where will he, or she, be next Lord's Day? Can such a person be allowed to go to and fro? Here again simplicity must be the deciding factor. Many persons would never wish to go to and fro for long. But that is not the real point, of course. Let them do it as long as they can with simplicity. When that goes, they must either go, or come altogether. But let there be no making them feel they are being forced to a decision, or hurried within a sort of enclosure against their will. No making them feel that they are not welcome. How long did we take to come to a decision? Some of us months, and even years. And how did God deal with us during that time? Did we not enjoy the smiles of His face? Was it all hard looks and refusals, and severe censures until we had taken the step? Not at all. Nor must it be with us. People take long to abandon what they have been trained in *and taught to believe is right*. The best and surest way to help them is to let them participate in what is right. Receiving them as little children in Christ's Name.

Is there anything more impressive in the whole range of Christ's teaching than this use He makes of the child; both here and in Matt. xviii.? "Except ye be converted and become as *little children*." "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this *little child*." "Whoso shall receive one such *little child* in My Name receiveth Me." In such words are conveyed to us the profoundest lessons we are ever called upon to learn. Do they not rebuke all that, generally, is most characteristic of us—pride, pretension, and self-importance. Should any of us, of ourselves, ever have thought of setting a child before us, and sitting down in front of that picture of simplicity to learn our deepest lessons? How it reverses all our preconceived ideas! What a lifelong lesson it is! And as we listen to the solemn, searching words of our Lord and Teacher, are they not enough to make us fall down on our faces before Him, and ask that in His grace He would give us to desire this very simplicity so acceptable in His sight, and to seek it until in some degree we become possessed of it?

Nor can we leave this subject without laying special emphasis upon what is involved in the reception of one of such children in Christ's Name. It is nothing less than to receive Him : and in addition, the Father Who sent Him. What blessedness is here. Ought it not in the first place to make us long to be such children so that any who receive us may be receiving Christ, and the Father Who sent Him ; and in the next, that we should be on the look out for such children to receive, in case they should pass us unrecognised, or alas ! even be refused ?

The Lord having taught His disciples the great lesson of simplicity, and rebuked their mistake, finds occasion, in

THE ATTITUDE ASSUMED BY JOHN

toward one who followed not with them, to expose another form of the subtle working of the flesh. " John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not **us** : and we forbad him, because he followeth not **us**. But Jesus said, forbid him not : for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me."

Whether this incident followed immediately upon the other we cannot tell, but it follows in moral sequence, and we may be thankful it is so recorded in the narrative. In the first instance—the dispute as to who should be greatest—we have the "**I**." In this we have the "**us**." The "**I**" and the "**us**." What a prevailing mental disease. If we are not occupied with the one we are in danger of getting occupied with the other, or we may be occupied with both. What little words, yet what mischief they have caused. They can only boast three letters between them, yet, they are answerable for more sorrow and calamity in the Church than almost anything else. A blight rests wherever they are uppermost. We have considered the way in which the Lord met the prominence given to the "**I**," let us see how He deals with the "**us**."

The fact is both the "**I**" and the "**us**" shut out Christ, or at best give Him only a secondary place. For if I am anxious about my own place I am not giving Christ His. Nor am I, if I am occupied with the company I am with, or, in other words, thinking, if not saying, "we are the people." The latter is only the collective "**I**" after all. In order to meet the first, the Lord

sets a child before the disciples. In this case He sets Himself before John. "There is no man which shall do a miracle **in My Name**, that can lightly speak evil of **Me**." And again, "for whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink **in My Name**, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you he shall not lose his reward." In all this we see that John was making the "us" more important than Christ. Twice over he repeats the words, "he followeth not *us*." The Lord lays the emphasis just the other way about. The stress with John is on the "us," with his Master it is on the words "**in My Name**," and "**Me**." "There is no man which shall do a miracle in *My Name*, that can lightly speak evil of *Me*."

Which of us cannot see all the moral difference in the world between these two points of view? Between the "I" and the "us" on the one hand; and "in My Name," and "Me" on the other. May we not pause, and ask, which point of view is ours? Is it Christ's standpoint, or the disciples'? *The re-adjustment of this matter would settle nearly all the difficulties as to fellowship existing in the Church of God to-day!* If we are right as to the "I," and right as to the "us," little more remains to be done. And the passage we are considering indicates how this can be accomplished. Taking the place of a child will remove the "I": feeling the force of "in My Name," and "Me," will displace the "us." It is after all simply a question of giving Christ His true place.

It is surely significant that four times over in five verses the expression concerning Christ's Name should occur. "In My Name" three times. "In Thy Name" once. It reveals the fact that when John admitted that the one casting out devils was doing it in Christ's Name that was the all-important thing. This settles at once what is to be our attitude towards others. Are they meeting in Christ's Name? Are they serving in Christ's Name? If this scripture teaches anything it teaches how utterly wrong it is to make the being of "us," or "following with us" the primary requisite.

Nor must we try and explain away the bearing of the passage. Some refuse to recognise others as coming in Christ's Name, or serving in it because such people do not hold the same views as

themselves upon certain matters. But that kind of argument is wanting altogether in the example before us. Not even John, much less the Lord, assumed that the man was not really doing the miracle in Christ's Name because of his want of identification with them. Nor does Christ even say "command Him to come at once amongst us." No! He takes a larger, and more liberal view, one far less likely to cause friction, and says, "**He that is not against us is on our part.**"

The Lord gives us two marks by which to test the genuineness of a servant, and in a wider sense of a Christian. "There is no man" He says, "which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me." The first test is, does a man make use of the Name of Christ for the benefit of others. Second—Does he speak well of Christ? And the very way the Lord puts it—"can lightly speak evil of Me,"—shows how ready He is to acknowledge the most meagre evidence of truth and sincerity. Then the Lord adds "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink *in My Name*, because ye belong *to Christ*, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." How delicately, yet how faithfully the Lord handles the mistakes of John. He had made everything of the "us." The Lord says, as it were, it is not the "us," but "because ye belong to Christ." And yet John was right up to a certain point, and the Lord surely meant to encourage him for He virtually says, if anyone does the least for *you*, for MY SAKE, he shall be rewarded.

This passage, then, teaches us above all to make nothing of ourselves—whether individually, or collectively—but everything of Christ. It is not a question, *first of all*, of what company a person is, or of bringing some pass-word; but a question of character and of Christ. Is he marked by the simplicity of a child—does he come in Christ's Name—does he speak well of Christ—in short, does he belong to Christ? What a firm platform of breadth, and yet of truth is here laid for us by our Lord Himself—a platform with scope enough for the heart to be enlarged, for the affections to have full play, and for Christ to receive the place of honour. "In My Name" meets everything. Any counterfeit would soon be detected as was the case in Acts xix. 13-17.

(To be concluded.)

“THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH” (*continued*).

II.

In our last paper, we found that true members of the Body of Christ may be in very low carnal conditions of walk ; nevertheless that, even under such circumstances, God owns and claims them as in and of the Body. We also found that whole Churches, as at Corinth, might be in such conditions, and notwithstanding this designated “ Church of God.” To remember this will always help us in dealing with others, whether as individual Christians or Churches.

It is, however, most humbling to look into the Holy Spirit’s faithful description and dealing with those carnal conditions ; and as we see how similar to the description given is the state of multitudes of true Christians to-day, it is difficult to abide in hope and love. To do so needs abundant faith in the unchangeable faithfulness of God, and grace to live in His love towards all. It may further help us, in looking a little closer into these conditions, to note the attitude of the Holy Spirit in dealing with such Christians. It is one of earnest *beseechings*, and His plea is the **Name** of Jesus.

There is a world of teaching to us in this plaintive tenderness on the part of the Holy Spirit as He pleads the **Name** of our precious Lord as the reason why there should be no divisions among His people. How dear that Blessed One and how dear His name to the Holy Ghost. Were the Spirit to have His way with us, all divisions would become hateful and painful to us, for the dear Lord whose name we are bearing and representing before the world. Alas ! how the Spirit has been and is still grieved thus—yet mark how tender His way of curing and healing. In this too, *we* must, if in the Spirit, learn how to deal with erring saints in their dividing ways. We must ever remember that if any of us are spiritual, we can deal with those who are faulty only in the spirit of meekness, our words and our very manner ought to be “beseeching,” rather than superior and dictatorial.

As we have already seen, the first **mark** of the Corinthian unspirituality is found in the many and multiplying divisions, and these are manifest mostly in what they “say” (Chap. i. v. 12) :—The Spirit beseecheth that they should “all speak the **same**

thing." In verse 12, the contrast is between the "all" and the "every": the "all" is of the Spirit, the "every" as separate from the whole, is "their cure" and of the flesh. Likewise the Holy Ghost conditions *sameness* in speaking, sameness in mind, sameness in judgment.

The word translated "the same," is alike in all three places. It is "autos," which means literally "*himself*," or itself. Without any undue stretch, this may be taken to mean that to speak the same things can only be as we have **Him** in mind and judgment. If every one would but subject himself to the **Living Word**, willing to have His mind and judgment revealed to faith in the *written* word, *all* would necessarily be of the *same* mind and judgment. To, and in all it would be "**Autos.**" But when the *every* brings in, without due subjection to the Lord, his own things, then verily the ALL becomes an impossibility. The "every," whoever and wherever he may be, will have a following, hence endless sects; only the "autos" can make the "all," and *that* only just as each is truly, and in love, subject to Him.

Let it be here said that what is often called being subject to the word is not enough. A great many "everybodies" are always more or less studying the Written Word with the idea that they are following it and are subject to it, while all the time they may be in the light only of their own carnal intellectualism, till by many interpretations the Bible itself becomes a polyglot jargon of schism. The only remedy is that all the saints of God, and every one of them in particular, shall consent to become subject to the Living Word Himself (autos): thus only can "*same*" mind, judgment, and speaking become possible, even as to the meaning of Scripture. Were the whole Church, yea, were any assembly of true believers, in studying God's word to agree honestly and unreservedly to subject each one himself, to the Lord Jesus alone, the Lord by His Holy Spirit would undoubtedly bring such into this blessed "**Sameness.**"

It is also worthy of note that in His choice of words the Holy Ghost is manifest in those translated here "speak" and "say." In both, the original word is "lego," with which the **Logos** is connected. Our word *legislation* also. It is the word of *authority*, and in the mind of God could refer here only to the dicta of our Lord. Hence the folly and sin of "a multitude of teachers" (James iii. 1); and

of the "sayings" of leaders of sects in Corinth. Assuming authoritative function when only the "one Master" is, or can be, right.

Some light is by all this thrown on the exhortations of Chap. xiv. The conditions *there* is that the assembly of "men and women" had not even been gathered by the Holy Ghost as in Matthew xviii. 20, or as by command of the Spirit in 1 Cor. v. 4 (which is type surely of a very spiritual assembly), but had, in conformity to the usual fleshly Corinthian style, just "come together into one place"—the only oneness (that of place) alas! for even *there* divisions were manifest, though the purpose in coming together was to "eat the Lord's Supper."

Can we wonder that in the Holy Spirit's description of such a scene the word "*lego*" is *never once used*—that used for the speaking is the ordinary everyday universal word for the talk, talk, talk among men generally, and it is used in this description *twenty-two times*; it is the lip of the flesh. To meet the weak and carnal baby condition of such assemblies, the very prophets may have to speak in like language. "I could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." It is a company of saints indeed, but carnally living and carnally walking saints—"men and women," and the women can be spoken of by the Holy Spirit only as "*your women*." The Holy Spirit is in the background.

No wonder that in such conditions the women "*must keep silence*." Naturally they could only be the jealous partisans of their husbands or other male friends, or favourite teachers. No wonder that such talk as was heard *then* could only bring shame on all. Yet alas! the female partisans of many assemblies have done more than can be measured, even while in letter obeying the law binding such carnality, to increase schism and disorder by their total want of true obedience to the Spirit of the principle, and by influence exerted over *their men*. Such have succeeded most wondrously in ruling the affairs of assemblies to the great increase of bitterness, contention, disorder and division, though never permitted to speak in the assembly itself.

Brethren, the way to remedy all this, is not merely by a rigid perpetuation of the letter of a law, and the seemly ordering of a number of fleshly conditioned saints whose conduct, at its best, is

like that of unruly babies in a nursery. What is needed is that the Holy Spirit of God shall be permitted to have His way, in altering such conditions subjecting all things to the due order of God's Word. On our part, then, must be a present yielding of the "every" and the "all" to the tender beseeching of Chap. i. verse 10.

Readers of this paper should carefully study the extreme contrast between the Holy Spirit's teaching in these chapters, and His teachings in Chap. xii. of this epistle, or in that of Ephes. iv., where the sphere is still that of the Body of Christ, but with the ordering all of God, and in the energy not of fleshly nature, but of the Holy Spirit alone. In I Cor. xii., all is spiritual, and in the first eleven verses the Holy Spirit is mentioned *eleven times*, whereas in Chap. xiv., where, though the saints are acknowledged as of the Body, we have a local assembly "coming together into one place," men and women in fleshly confidence and energy with nothing of the "all," but much of the "every," *the Holy Spirit is not once mentioned.*

Surely we have in this a great distinction worthy of our most prayerful and earnest attention and study.

May God, the Holy Ghost, enlighten, teach, and cause us to profit.

REMARKS ON JOHN XVII.

WITHOUT doubt the Gospel of John has had an attraction for the people of God during the Christian era equalled by no other portion of the New Testament. This is not surprising. That which is personal of necessity appeals to the individual interests. May we not say that the reason for the extreme fascination exercised over the hearts of Christians by Chapters xiv. to xvii. is because the truths there introduced appeal in a peculiar way to each heart that has been touched by the grace of God. The fact that these words which express such precious truths came direct from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself tends no doubt to increase their sweetness in our estimation, though this by no means should be allowed to weaken our appreciation of the value and importance of other portions of the Word of God, spoken or written under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, through the medium of "holy men"—2 Pet. i. 21—for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," &c. (2 Tim. iii. 15).

The xviith of John certainly possesses a peculiar charm, for it permits us to take the place of silent listeners to the Son of God as He addresses His Father. The Lord Jesus is about to leave His beloved disciples whom He had gathered around Himself. He will leave them in a world which hates them even as it hated their Lord (John xv., 18, 19 and 24. He is deeply and tenderly moved as He thinks of their weakness and helplessness, exposed as they will be to the hatred of man, instigated to cruelty by the malignity of Satan.

While He was here He kept "them," but in His absence what will these poor, weak disciples do, surrounded by all the adverse powers of Satan and the world? He appeals to His Father, and how confidently He does this (v. 11). He Himself was no longer to be in the world for He was going to the Father. So He prays "Holy Father," &c. He has before addressed Him as Father, but now "Holy Father."

What is the significance? Is it not striking that when the Lord is about to pray that His own may be "kept" He calls the Father "Holy"? Shall we be slow to realise the relative connection between the two words "Holy" and "kept"? If we as saints of God have been taught to appreciate the "beauty of holiness" and have equally learnt the difficulty of maintaining a holy walk as we pass through the world, we see at once the appropriateness of the prayer being addressed to the "Holy Father" to keep His own while passing through a scene of sin and defilement. Where is the saint of God who has not found that with all his own watchfulness and endeavours to keep himself "unspotted from the world," he has had to mourn over his lamentable failures and defeats in his Christian career?

With the painful consciousness of failure, despite prayer and watchfulness, what a comfort to read this prayer of the Lord Jesus to the Holy Father, uttered nearly 2,000 years ago, cherishing the belief that it will most assuredly meet with a complete answer. Our prayers may at times miss the mark through our own fault, but this prayer, never. And let us remember that we who live in this late day are equally embraced in this prayer with the disciples who lived at the time this prayer was addressed to the Holy Father (v. 3-20). The use of the word "Holy" as applied to the Father seems to imply a special need on the part of the disciples which the Lord now gives expression to by the use of this title. We

have elsewhere the exhortation "Be ye holy for I am holy" (1 Pet. xv. 16), which means that there must be a moral correspondence between the called and the One Who had called them. So in the prayer of our blessed Lord. He is expressing the deep desires of His heart for His beloved disciples who are to be left in this unholy world.

If we prayerfully and devoutly meditate on these holy utterances we are of necessity led to feel their marvellous importance. Let us lay hold of the fact that the Lord was actually praying for us who are now living in this 20th century. Are we conscious of the need of this prayer (in vv. 11 and 17) being answered in our own personal experience? "Holy Father, keep in thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me." By this we understand the privilege of the children is to be kept according to all that is contained in that name Holy. What that all is we cannot, of course, fully comprehend, but certainly there are holiness, purity, goodness, and every moral and spiritual excellency.

Since we are children of this Holy Father, we are in possession of a nature which delights to exercise itself in all that belongs to that nature, and surely intimate personal acquaintance and communion with Him would be the deep desire of one who was answering sympathetically to the prayer of Christ. Where the love of the Holy Father exists there will be the desire to express that love by the cultivation of that holiness which alone produces resemblance between the Father and the child. Where this exists the response to Christ's prayer will be realised, for this will distinctly evidence the blessed fact that such are being kept according to the character of that holy name. This indeed must be a joy to every true heart that responds to that word, "be ye holy for I am holy."

If we are in any measure to realise the object of Christ's prayer, namely, the unity of believers, we shall see the essential importance of the truths we have been considering. The prayer in verse 11 is: "That they may be one as we are." This cannot possibly be any external unity such as man can produce by slavish obedience to rules and regulations, but evidently this is a vital unity, the effect of an indwelling power producing results which, when manifested, would declare their divine and heavenly origin. Do we say when manifested? Alas! where is the manifestation to be witnessed? Is not the absence of this unity, as something to be witnessed on the earth, one of the most solemn features by which

the professing Church of God is characterised at the close of nearly two millenniums since this prayer was uttered? It is not implied that the unity for which Christ prayed is to be brought about by any external agencies or any human ecclesiastical arrangements. Such means, doubtless, can succeed in producing an external unity, but the unity for which Christ prayed is as far removed from that as the east is from the west.

This unity is spiritual and vital, and can only be effected by spiritual means. Hence the means being spiritual the result will be spontaneous. Notwithstanding the complete failure of the Church of God to manifest anything approaching true unity on the earth this must not be regarded as sufficient reason why an utter indifference shall be maintained in these last days towards this prayer of our Lord.

Verse 11. The desire for such unity should be awakened in every true heart, and though a general outward and manifest display of that unity cannot be realised through the general failure of the Church, that consideration by no means frees the saints of God from the obligation they are under so to act in their several spheres of influence and service as though they were the instruments God would employ to disseminate and exhibit His truth, so that each individual believer shall realise both his solemn responsibility and blessed privilege so to act towards all saints that there shall at least be some approximation towards the fulfilment of the desires of the heart of Christ, rather than a widening of those breaches which, alas! the enemy of Christ has been so successful in bringing about.

It seems scarcely possible for a believer to be imbued with the Spirit of Christ and remain indifferent to this blessed result for which Christ prayed.

Finally, let it be asked—What is the attitude of soul which the believer should assume towards this momentous question? With the almost painful consciousness of our own weakness and helplessness, shall we resign ourselves to hopeless despair in regard to this unity as though we personally had neither part nor lot in the matter? Or, on the contrary, shall we not rather seek to keep ourselves in such complete harmony with the mind and will of Christ that we may be found fit and willing instruments in His hand of furthering, and not hindering that unity amongst His own which is an object so deeply precious to the heart of Christ?

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

In my last letter I was not able to say quite all I wanted on the above subject. I therefore refer to it again. You may ask, How is it possible that a simple rite like the Lord's Supper has become so perverted? Partly through the cravings of the human heart after some visible representation of the unseen, sight being so much easier than faith. Partly to satisfy ambitious priests and their claim to possess special power. And partly through misconception as to the meaning of certain passages of Scripture. Take John vi. as an example of the last. Verse 53 reads, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you." This and other verses in the same Chapter are taken to refer to the Lord's Supper.

There are three reasons against this view. First, these words were not spoken in the upper room at Jerusalem, but long before at Capernaum. Second, they refer to the means whereby we obtain life, and sustain it. No such thought enters into the passage written by Paul to the Corinthians (Chap. xi. 23-6), where he sets before us the real meaning and intent of the Supper; in which there is no thought of obtaining anything for ourselves, but of remembering a Person. Third, the eating referred to in John vi. is a continual eating (see vv. 54-7), while in 1 Cor. xi. it is occasional.

The simple meaning of the passage in John vi. is that Christ's death was necessary in order that we might obtain life. It is as One Who has died for us, and borne all our judgment, that we must receive Him. His death is the door of liberty to us from all that appertains to the flesh and the world. His flesh and blood represent His death. We appropriate it by faith. "The words that I speak unto you," He said, "they are spirit and they are life." We have only to believe His words. To make this refer to the actual eating of bread and wine is carnal, and is to miss the very force of our Lord's meaning, "they are spirit."

As to 1 Cor. xi. 23-6 the one word that covers it all is "remembrance." We call to mind the **absent one**. In the act of doing so we shew forth His death until He come. Could anything be sweeter to the heart that knows the love of Christ than in this very distinct way to remember Him? May you, my dear young friends, desire more and more to carry out simply and faithfully this last request, and let it be to you a real feast of remembrance. Your only desire as it will be your deepest joy.

Your affectionate friend,

THE EDITOR.

OUR COMING LORD.

"Then said I, Lo, I come."—Psalm xi. 7.

"Surely I come quickly."—Rev. xxii. 20.

"*Lo, I come*," the words prophetic
Of the Christ of God on high,
Uttered in the age eternal,
Ere He came to earth to die.

Time rolled on; the promise lingered;
Was it like the ocean's foam?
No! it was fulfilled—behold Him!
Christ incarnate; Christ had come!

So, the last prophetic promise,
Ere was closed the book of God—
"*I am coming*"; words of Jesus,
Sounding from His bright abode.

Now, as in the distant ages,
Ere He came, time rolled away,
So, as then He seems to tarry,
Testing thus our faith to-day.

Shall we falter, shall the patience
Of our souls grow faint or die?
No, the coming cloudless morning
Breaks in radiance from the sky.

Come He will; e'en though, departing,
We might in the tomb be laid;
Like the ancient seer and prophet,
Ere he came, death's tribute paid.

To the "other side" if bidden,
We shall wait for Him to come,
Thence to antedate the glory,
Thence to wait our deathless home.

"It is well" whate'er betide us,
Present, absent, all is well,
All united in the morning
Harps of sweetest tone to swell.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

In the words of Psalm xx. we would greet all our readers on the threshold of another year :—

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble ;

The Name of the God of Jacob

Defend thee ;

Send thee help from the sanctuary,

And strengthen thee out of Zion ;

Remember

All thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice ;

Grant thee according to thine own heart,

And Fulfil

All thy counsel

The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.

With another year in prospect is it not a comfort to think there is One Who is ever ready to *hear* us, *defend* us and send us *help*; One Who remembers all we have ever done for Him, whether in the offering up of *ourselves* as a living sacrifice, or in service of any kind, whether to Himself or others, and Who is ready to grant us our desires and fulfil all our counsel. In the above Psalm does not the central verse of the portion quoted (v. 3) seem the appropriate link connecting the two that precede and the two that follow? Does not a great deal depend upon a full surrender to God? After the mention of the offerings and burnt sacrifice we have the word *selah* (pause, consider). May we not well pause as another twelve months have run their course, and another revolution of time is completed, and ask whether our offerings to the Lord have been what they should have been, or might have been. There is a sense in which God deals with us as we deal with Him. It is when Abraham had given up all, laying his own son—his beloved, and upon whom all his hopes rested—upon the altar, that God speaks as He does in Gen. xxii. Because thou hast “not withheld” He virtually says, I will not withhold. “By Myself have I sworn . . . that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore . . . *because thou hast obeyed My voice.*” And the same principle applied at the end as at the beginning: “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house,” is the summons centuries later to Abraham’s descendants, “and *prove Me.*” And if they did this God’s promise is, “I will . . . pour you out a blessing.” So with our Psalm. If God has offerings and burnt sacrifice to remember which we have offered, we may count upon being heard, defended, helped on the one hand, and all our petitions granted, and our counsel fulfilled on the other.*

Two kinds of sacrifice are spoken of in Hebrews xiii. 15, 16—the sacrifice of praise and of good works. Is there not often a serious defect in our Christian life in the matter of praise? It would be well if we set aside a certain portion of every day, even if it be only two or three minutes, to offer this sacrifice. How little we give Christ to do in this respect. “By Him,” it says, “let us offer the sacrifice of praise.” He is on high, in the very presence chamber of the Majesty in the heavens, to offer what we bring.

* Christ, Himself, as the burnt offering being the basis of all of course.

Are we bringing anything, and how often do we come? We come frequently with our petitions, but do we come with praise? In this verse there is nothing about asking, it is all giving. "*By Him.*" As well as being the High Priest, He is in this chapter the antitype of the golden altar in v. 15; as He is of the brazen altar, v. 10. Under the old dispensation twice every day, morning and evening, sweet incense was burnt upon the former. Is there nothing answering to this in the new? Yes, this sacrifice of praise of which we are speaking. How often is it to be done, and what is it? It is to be done "continually," we are told; and it is the fruit of our lips—confession before God of the perfections of Christ, with accompanying praise for all that He is, as well as for all we receive through Him. May the golden altar then during 1909 never be empty, as far as we are concerned, but may Christ's hands be full of sweet incense, which are our praises presented to God by Him, and telling of what He is.

We will now give our friends and helpers an opportunity of fulfilling the next obligation, as set forth in verse 16, if they wish it. There has been considerable initial expense, as there always is, in starting this new magazine. A large number of free copies have been distributed, and this, together with postage, means something considerable. Moreover a great deal has yet to be done. The price of the magazine has been put so low that a circulation of at least 10,000 is needed to cover the bare cost of publication. As no commercial profit is sought, being purely undertaken for the benefit of the Lord's people, it is felt that many would like to help, as far as they are able, in the *extra* expense which has already been incurred, and in the efforts which still have to be made before the above circulation is reached. It is surely better to have ten thousand readers at a penny than five thousand at twopence. As things are our present subscribers are really getting the periodical at half price; will they make up for this either by distributing an extra copy gratis, or by contributing, as the Lord inclines them, to a fund to enable others to do so. Contributions may be sent to the Editor, and will be acknowledged either direct or through the pages of "*The Faith and the Flock.*" Many letters continue to reach us telling of good done, and containing expressions of thankfulness, which surely is much cause for encouragement.

The Editor desires just to say how very conscious he has been of help received through the many prayers that have gone up on his behalf, and earnestly desires their continuance. His thanks are due also to contributors whose co-operation has tended so far to make the magazine a success. But both they and himself are indebted more than can be told to those supplications which no one may observe but God Himself, but which are in every way so potent.

THE FUTURE.—1909.

“ I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise ;
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar ;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air ;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.”

CHRIST stood before GOD taking the effect of my work : I stand before GOD taking the effect of HIS work.

GOD proves Himself rich in mercy not by exempting those He loves from suffering and sorrow, but by giving the faith that accepts all at His hands with confidence in His love.

Our fellowship with GOD and with His people must rest upon the foundation of settled peace, and this must rest upon the foundation of a perfectly purged conscience, and this must rest upon the finished work of CHRIST.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHANGING ORDER AND THE UNCHANGING CHRIST.

WE live in a world of change ; but of all the changes that ever took place probably none was harder to bear ; none so difficult of comprehension ; none greater in its character than the one the Hebrews were called upon to make in giving up their religion for one that *seemed* entirely opposed to it. Yet, although the new régime seemed to deal a death-blow to much that had been ardently cherished, and sweep away much that seemed to form part and parcel of their national and individual life, it was to prove an immense gain.

Entering as we do upon a new year, it may be well for us to be reminded that the outward order of things to-day is just as changing, and as liable to be displaced. Do not let us cherish too fondly the existing state of things, or allow ourselves to become too firmly attached to the visible and external. This applies to every sphere in which we move—religious, commercial, social and domestic. Methods, means, customs change. Nothing is permanent. “Change and decay in all around I see.” Only one thing can really reconcile us to this—the thought that God has still to introduce His best. If we see that the present is not, and cannot be perfect, change will neither surprise nor alarm us. Behind all there is God ; and of Him it can be said, “**Thou remainest.**” Behind all this transitory show of things there is the perfect and the permanent which the presence of Christ alone can bring to pass, and of Him it can be said He is “the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.” In the sure and certain knowledge of this we shall be able to say :—

“The changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see.”

All through the epistle to the Hebrews we have the foregoing thought kept very prominently before us. The shadow and the substance ; that which could be shaken, and the things that cannot be moved ; the external and passing form and the changeless spirit are constantly brought into contrast. And while perfection is

written upon the one; "nothing perfect" is written upon the other. The one great lesson we have to learn in all this is not to rest in the outward, but seek the inward; not stop at the form but become possessed of the spirit which animates it. Had the Hebrews kept in mind that their ordinances, customs and ceremonies ever pointed on; had the ceaseless voice which ever spoke in them been listened to, telling as they did of the future, they would not have been taken by surprise, but found it an easy transition from the old order to the new.

In the chapter under consideration we shall notice how the writer of the epistle brings forward every leading feature of the old order, and shows that the new can offer something far higher.

"God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

Here we have the first contrast, and the speciality of it cannot be missed. It is between the *prophets* and THE SON. Before dwelling upon this let us notice the distinct recognition of the significant fact that God spake through both. Evidently both the writer of this epistle and his hearers believed in inspiration. The prophets, however patriotic they might be, whatever their desire that their countrymen should have the knowledge of God and walk in His ways; however great their zeal, did not deliver messages of their own. When the prophets spoke the people were face to face with God. **"God . . . spake . . . unto the fathers."**

To them it was by prophets. Great men, holy men, devoted men, but men at most. Now One has come Who is more than man—God's Son—and God has spoken by, or in, Him. The ultimate word has reached us.

Immediately, to show the importance of that word as containing a fuller revelation than had ever been given by prophets, there follows the enumeration of seven distinguishing glories of this Person, in order that being fully impressed with the dignity and exalted character of the speaker, we may give the more earnest heed to what He has to say.

These distinguishing glories are:—(1) "Heir of all things"; (2) "By Whom also He made the worlds"; (3) "The brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person"; (4) "Upholding

all things by the word of His power ” ; (5) “ When He had by Himself purged our sins ” ; (6) “ Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High ” ; (7) “ Being made so much better than the angels.”

What was the greatest prophet compared with one so glorious as this ? Only like the faintest star compared with the full splendour of the noonday sun. The fact is, the prophets themselves found their highest service in bearing testimony to Him. “ To Him give all the prophets witness,” said Peter in the house of Cornelius. And the one described as “ much more than a prophet,” greatest amongst those born of women, became such from the fact that he was Jehovah’s messenger sent before the face of this One, of Whom he testified, he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his shoes.

For these reasons Judaism pales before the rising sun of Christianity. It is as starlight to sunlight. “ He must increase,” said John, “ but I must decrease.” What could Judaism furnish in comparison. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were heirs of promises, and they and their seed were to inherit Canaan ; but here we have the “ heir of all things.” As descended on the human side from Abraham and David He inherits all the promises made to them, and more. Joseph’s dreams of the sheaves in the field, and the sun, moon and stars doing obeisance to him, give us some vision of the extent of all that Christ inherits, the one speaking of earth and the other of heaven. Or as described in the words of the Apostle Paul, “ that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in Him.” And then immediately adds, “ in Whom also we have obtained an inheritance.” Our inheritance is commensurate with the vastness of Christ’s. The religion of Israel coming though it did from God had nothing to offer like this.

But He Who is the heir is also Creator. “ By Whom also He made the worlds.” The work of creation is attributed to the Son. Does not this throw some light upon the meaning of the expression, “ it was pleasing that in Him should all fulness dwell ” (Col. i. 19), That is to say, Christ fills every office, and every manifestation of divine power and glory is in and through Him. Is He the Redeemer ? He is also the Creator. And the same One Who creates and redeems

will be the One by and by to judge and govern. In this four-fold way God is completely revealed. How we are carried then beyond everything else that ever was as we think that the Founder of Christianity is the Creator of the universe.

If these give us His official glory we are next introduced to what is moral. What moral glory must belong to One of Whom it can be said He is "*the brightness (or effulgence) of God's glory, and the express image of His Person*" (or substance). God's glory became effulgent in Him. This had never been before. Only One Who knew God perfectly, in all the absolute intimacy of relationship and equality; only One, of Whom it could be said He was "in the form of God"; and again, "the only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father"—He alone could be the vehicle by which God's glory could become effulgent. Moses—the mediator for Israel—the divinely given legislator—Israel's boast and pride—might say, "I beseech Thee shew me Thy glory." Here was One Who dwelt in it and came from it. Moses might bring some reflected rays of it down from the Mount. Christ could say "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." So exactly was He the express image of His substance. There was no difference between the holiness of God and the holiness of Jesus.

He upholds "*all things by the word of His power.*" Yet, amazing fact, He went beneath all things—yea, beneath the very load of our sins; for the next clause concerning Him is "*when He had by Himself purged our sins.*" How happy for us to be able to link these two things together—the upholder of all things is the bearer of our sins. He Who brought all things into being and maintains them by His power, alone could take our sins out of the way. There is this difference. The one He could do, and still does, by His word. The other He could only do by the sacrifice of Himself. What a combination of glories. The one speaks of almighty power; the other of infinite love. The one of strength; the other of weakness. The one of sovereignty; the other of subjection. The one of authority; the other of obedience. But all alike equally perfect.

How superior in every way is Christianity to Judaism. The latter offered no final and complete settlement of the sin question. Under the law there was a remembrance again made of sins every year. These sacrifices could never take away sins. Is that the case

still? Ought the believer of this dispensation to live in a vague hope of finding it all right at the Judgment day? Is uncertainty the language of Christianity? The very opposite. "*When He had by Himself purged (or made purgation of) sins.*" Who has done it? The One Who made the worlds, and upholds all things by the word of His power. How can we call in question what He has done? And for whom has He done it? For every believer. Perhaps one says my difficulty is I do not know if I am a believer. Do you believe that if you did believe, Christ is able to save you? Oh yes, I believe that on the authority of the Bible. Then if, on the authority of the Bible, you believe that if you did believe you would be saved, why not become a believer at once on the same authority. The Bible says Christ made purgation of sins. If you really want your sins taken away then Christ is the One you want. Do not trouble about your faith, go to Christ. Faith comes by having to do with Him. You never think of doubting the solid earth, or tremble lest it should give way beneath your feet, yet you presume to doubt the One who gave it existence, and now upholds it by His power.

A further proof that He has taken away sins—the sins of those who own Him as their Saviour and Lord—is found in the next clause, for it tells us He "*sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.*" Could Judaism offer anything to compare with this? It is significant that one piece of furniture was conspicuous by its absence in the Tabernacle of old, no seat was provided. The High Priest never sat down, for his work was never finished. "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever *sat down* on the right hand of God" (Ch. x. 11, 12). This tells us that the work for sins is for ever completed. Consequently the believer's sins are forever taken away, *or they never can be*, for Christ will not die again.

See then thy Saviour—the upholder of all worlds, the purger of thy sins—see Him seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, in token of the glory of His Person, and the efficacy of His finished work, and as you look your wonder and faith will grow until you can no more doubt your own salvation than His ability to save Who undertook it. If a believer's sins are not taken away Christ could not be where He is.

We have said that every leading feature connected with Israel as the people of God is taken up in this first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews in order to show that Christianity has something superior to offer. The *prophets* are surpassed by the **Son**; the ceremonial law under which sins were never taken away (*i.e.*, in perpetuity) is surpassed by Christ having, Himself, made purgation of sins; the High Priest, the representative of the old system, never sat down; the High Priest, the representative of the new, has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. We now come to another feature of Israel's history, *viz.*, *angelic* ministry. The constant ministry of angels was a marked feature of their national life. In every crisis angels were sent to deliver, to warn, or to instruct. What is there superior to this in Christianity? This thought seems at once suggested to the writer of the epistle, for no sooner has he shewed us Christ seated at the right hand of God than he adds:—

“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (v. 4).

He has been greeted, as they never were, as **“My Son.”** And great as angels are they are commanded to worship this One: *“And let all the angels of God worship Him.”* Angels may “excel in strength,” but they are messengers, and ministers, *“but unto the Son He saith ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,’”* &c.

This brings out another feature in which the condition of things in Israel is surpassed. God's throne on earth was in their midst. He dwelt between the Cherubim above the mercy seat. And so the *throne* comes into view here. It is connected with the Son instead of with Israel—and it is for ever and ever. He can never fail, He has *“loved righteousness and hated iniquity.”* Israel loved iniquity, and therefore God removed His throne—the glory departed.

Finally, we are led to see how transitory are even the most solid and stable things compared with Him of Whom we speak—the One, be it remembered, Who gives character to Christianity:—

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail” (vv. 10-12).

What a voice to us have such words in the midst of a scene where all is changing. Time passes, but the eternal is in view. Our years run out ; one by one, one by one, the total sum is made up ; but His " years fail not." Can we take our stand, at the opening of a new year, along with Him ? It is well. He wishes it so. " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," are the words He breathes into our ear. Or, do we stand there alone ? 131

ANNO DOMINI.

" Thy years shall not fail."—Heb. i. 12.

Jesus Christ the same, yesterday and to-day, and for ever.—Heb. xiii. 8.

The very years bow down to Him
 Baptised into His name,
 And centuries in silent march
 His endless life proclaim.

And e'en the hearts that own Him not
 Nor care His words to hear,
 Must read the witness unto Him
 That history writeth clear.

But sweet to those who own His sway
 Is this unfailing sign,
 All lives grow small, all influence pales,
 Oh ! Son of God, by Thine.

We date our years by Thy dear name,
 By Thee the past we read ;
 Our years are Thine by Sovereign right,
 Oh ! make them Thine indeed.

Faith is calling one's heart a liar and believing GOD.

Unbelief is believing one's own heart and making GOD a liar.

I am not what I would be, but the real question is whether GOD is what we should like Him to be, whether JESUS is all we could wish.

There is an answer in CHRIST'S heart for every want in His Church.

GOD works when things are in ruins, and rests when they are perfect. Man insists on resting when all is wrong, and now that the work is done, he insists on doing the best he can.

FOLLOW WHERE HE LEADS.

Extract from a Letter.

“ONE can but follow where *He* leads—that alone is the plain path—there solely is strength and rest. May God enable you to take up your cross and follow Him wholly—Him who alone is worthy of it. Stick to the *old paths*. In these last days we need firmness and a heart which knows how to take forth the precious from the vile. Obedience is our only safety. Faith does firmly trust Him, come what may—we shall not abide in darkness, though it may be permitted for a time. To follow the cloud meant God’s presence. Grace can keep you calm by waiting upon Him and resting in Him—and then nothing shall by any means harm you. May you be guided by the Word of God, losing all confidence in self. He who has been with you in six troubles, will be with you in the seventh, and will daily unfold Himself and His plans before your eyes, and what more precious ?

Only be steadfast—immovable—I am sure the Lord will and does approve of the path of patient consistency and contentedness to be nothing in the eyes of man. All one needs to do is to walk with Him, and how happy should we be in such companionship—to have one’s heart filled with thoughts of Him who is love, and Who so loved us as to give Himself for us, and *Who gave Himself to God !*

Sweet it is to know He nourisheth us and cherisheth us ! I am sure *devotedness* is the *thing*—near Him He *renews* our strength—we go from strength to strength, and His is made perfect in our weakness. Be of good cheer. God is carrying out His purposes. He is never baffled in His ways—not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him—nothing escapes *Him*—all must come to pass under His hand. He is weaning us in every way from this world, that He may attach us to that One for whom He has created us anew. How true this world is a wilderness wide where Christ was cast out—may we, indeed, be ready to leave all here, and all our desire be to work for Him and glorify Him. Oh, to look away beyond all that presses here—to *Him* Who has passed into the heavenlies. He bears a part in all our afflictions ! ”

THE OUTLOOK.

The Commercial, Political and Religious tendencies of the present day considered in the light of Holy Scripture.

WE are living in serious times. The most superficial observer cannot fail to perceive that everything is changing around us. Great changes have taken place during the past few years in every sphere, and even greater changes seem probable in the near future. He who refuses to consider the tendencies of the things that are happening is foolish beyond expression.

Everything is in a condition of unrest. If we look at the commercial world, the relations between Capital and Labour have become strained to a dangerous degree, and this in nearly every country on earth. All around us we hear mutterings of an approaching storm. From time to time the daily press reports outbreaks here and there of a more or less disastrous character. Combination confronts combination menacingly; Labour Unions on the one hand, and Capitalist Trusts on the other. There is every prospect of the two being locked in the throes of a great death-struggle ere long, unless God mercifully intervenes in some unforeseen way. To every eye anointed by the Spirit of God it is clear that the way is being prepared for the time when men will be suffered neither to buy nor sell unless they accept the mark of the Beast (Rev. xiii. 16-17). Truly "Coming events cast their shadows before," though men in their infatuation frequently perceive it not.

The political world is as disturbed as the commercial world. In the United Kingdom the doctrine of "Government BY the people and FOR the people" is now the darling ideal of the many. Ever since the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832 the masses have been clamouring for increase of power and influence. Statesmen of all parties fawn upon the people, and pamper them in every way in order to gain their favour, and so secure a few years of office. A strong Government, which will sternly repress lawlessness, and maintain righteousness, seems out of the question in these days. Even Members of Parliament—law-makers—are suffered to preach sedition both in India and at home, and to speak of the Sovereign himself with the gravest disrespect publicly, and no hand is laid upon them. The women also are in motion. The great cities are becoming accustomed to displays on the part of the gentler (!) sex

which are a disgrace to any civilised country. That the fear of God has absolutely no place in the minds of these feminine agitators is sufficiently proved by their habitual desecration of the Lord's day for the purposes of their propaganda. The fact is that the masses are refusing to be ruled. Having been educated in the notion that the people are the real source of power, they are determined to exert their power and be quit of all restraint. Socialism suits the present condition of the public mind, and cannot fail to make progress. When it finds itself in a position to strike, may God have mercy on the nation. Outbursts of Sansculottism are more appalling evils than the selfishness of the rich, against which they are professedly directed.

We need not go far afield in order to find the spirit of revolution. Within the memory of many of us, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria-Hungary, Servia and Norway have had their Governments subverted. As we write, Russia, Persia, and Turkey are in the melting-pot, with what result time will show. With Socialists and Suffragettes clamouring around us, dare we say that Great Britain is secure from the possibility of these dire calamities?

The nations have come to dread war. With the present-day implements of destruction, both naval and military, it is felt that everything possible should be done to avert it. Every thoughtful man shudders at the thought of Europe's scientifically armed millions coming into conflict. The Russian Czar was probably sincere enough when he proposed the first Peace Congress, though he found his own nation plunged into the horrors of war soon after the Congress closed.

We might say much as to the condition of things in the social sphere—the growing disregard for parental authority, the jeopardising of home life in the modern mania for pleasure, and the morbid taste of the many for pernicious literature, but we refrain. Concerning the religious position we shall have somewhat to say later on.

Now to what point are things drifting? Is it possible to obtain light from any quarter as to this? Surely it is. We aver without hesitation that God has spoken in His most Holy Word, and it is wisdom on our part to give heed to His voice. But here we are confronted with a serious difficulty. The irreverent tampering of the clergy in recent years with the Scriptures has seriously

shaken men's confidence in their divine authority. Strange as it may seem, it is the Protestant rather than the Romanist clergy who have been guilty of this great sin. Both the late and present Popes have acknowledged with no uncertain sound in public documents the divine authority of the Scriptures. For ourselves, we are satisfied that the old faith is the true one, *i.e.*, that the sacred writings are in their entirety God's message to men. No higher ground could possibly be conceived than that which is claimed in 1 John iv. 6 for the writers of Scripture: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error." If this claim of the Apostle be not admitted, if the inspired writings are not God's infallible standard of truth, then are we absolutely without light as to the future, and are at the mercy of familiar spirits, designing priesthoods, and wolves of every kind.

But God has spoken. He has certain definite purposes concerning the earth, and He has been pleased to reveal them in the Scriptures for those who have ears to hear. It is His intention to give the earth into the hands of His Son as part of His vast inheritance. His good pleasure, purposed in Himself, is to gather together in one (or "head up") all things in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians i. 10). The rightful Heir was refused His inheritance when He came into the world the first time, and He did not enforce His claim. He accepted instead the cross and the tomb, which, though apparently a great defeat, was in reality a victory of the first magnitude; for by the blood of His cross He has made peace, thus rendering it righteously possible for God to bless individual souls now, as well as laying the foundation for a new and perfect order of things in the whole universe by-and-by. At the present moment He who should be sitting upon His own throne in Zion is sitting as earth's rejected One upon the Father's throne in heaven (Rev. iii. 21). But the divine purpose has not been abandoned. The Son of Man will yet be enthroned here—"The Lord shall be King over all the earth" (Zech. xiv. 9; Psalms ii. 6). Until this comes about, God takes no active part in the government of the earth, though watching the development of things from His heavenly dwelling-place, and interposing restraints from time to time when matters seem likely to go beyond His purpose. But the day will come when the silence of heaven will be broken, and

the King of kings and Lord of lords will come forth in all His majesty and power (Rev. xix.). His kingdom will be established upon the ruins of everything human. Mighty convulsions will precede the holy calm and universal blessedness of His reign.

Is all this mere poetry? Nay, it is sober, solid fact. But we must examine these great matters in detail.

It is God's intention to deliver and bless the world by means of Israel. Let the Gentile powers behave ever so proudly towards the seed of Abraham, it is nevertheless true that the world's blessing turns upon that despised people. When God scattered men at the time of Babel, He divided to them their inheritance with a view to Israel (Deut. xxxii. 7, 8), *i.e.*, He put certain nations to the north of Palestine and certain nations to the south thereof, because the future history of the chosen people required them to be in those geographical positions. Strange as it may seem, the map of the world has been divinely planned in view of one comparatively insignificant people. The history of Israel cannot be discussed here. Let it suffice to say that the people never realised the divine purpose in their election. Instead of bearing a true testimony in the midst of the world's evil, their ways became so abominable that God was constrained to overthrow the throne of David and eject the people from their land. Supreme power in the earth was then given into Gentile hands, and in their hands it remains until "David's greater Son" comes upon the scene and gives happy effect to the purposes of God.

The course of Gentile rule was shown to Nebuchadnezzar in the vision of the image composed of four metals, and to Daniel in the vision of the four wild beasts (Dan. ii. ; vii.). The empires thus represented are Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Concerning the latter power very much is stated in Scripture. It is singular in this respect that while none of its predecessors will ever again fill any important place in the earth, the Roman empire is destined to reappear and to become the leading factor in the politics of the last days. It will revive as a consequence of the disturbed condition of the European nations, and it will be energised by Satan for his evil purposes. This is the force of the symbols "sea" and "bottomless pit," out of both which the beast is seen to emerge

in Rev. xiii. 1, and xvii. 8 respectively. It will be a confederation of ten kingdoms, under the presidency of a powerful chief called in Dan. vii. 8 "a little horn." Each state will retain its own Sovereign, as in the German Empire of to-day, but the whole mass will be swayed by one head.

The last wild struggle between democracy and monarchy will result in the complete triumph of the latter. Democracy will be squelched in torrents of blood. We do not presume to offer a list of the ten kingdoms in question, but it is interesting to remember that England, France, Spain and Italy were some of the countries included in the ancient Roman Empire. Egypt and Greece, though formerly ruled by Rome, will have no place in the revived empire, as Scripture predicts for both of these States independent action in the latter-day crisis (Dan. xi. 40; Zech. ix. 13). What will be the potent factor in the reconstitution of the empire none can say at present. It may be that the growth of Socialism in every country will cause the crowned heads of Europe to combine for mutual help; it may be the Yellow Peril; or it may be the increasing aggressiveness of Russia. We leave this for the future to unfold. It is significant, by the way, that the Press of to-day frequently speaks airily of a possible "United States of Europe." The writers perhaps little realise that the thing of which they speak so lightly is destined soon to become an accomplished fact.

The empire will be infidel. "He (the Beast) opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name." It will also be a persecutor. "It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Rev. xiii. 6, 7). The saints referred to here are not the present Christian community, the whole of which will be removed to heaven before the empire re-appears. The proper hope of Christians is described in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. Sleeping believers will be raised, and living believers will be changed and glorified in the moment of the Saviour's descent into the air, which may take place at any hour. The latter-day sufferers are a new order of believers, in whose hearts God's Spirit will work after the history of the Church is closed. The Roman Empire will meet its doom at the hands of Christ when He appears in the clouds of heaven accompanied by His heavenly elect. The destruction of the empire was shown to Nebuchadnezzar pictorially as the falling of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands upon the toes

of the image, and grinding the whole mass to powder (Dan. ii. 34, 35); Daniel saw in vision the Son of Man receiving the universal kingdom from the Ancient of Days, and then coming forth to claim it in power (Dan. vii. 13, 14); John saw the great King of kings riding triumphantly upon a white horse in righteousness to judge and to make war (Rev. xix. 11-16).

The annihilation of the empire will be a merciful deliverance for the world. Its tyranny will be insupportable. Idolatry of the most advanced type will be forced upon the nations. Every man must accept a brand upon his flesh, or be debarred from doing business in any shape or form (Rev. xiii. 8, 15, 16). The head of the empire is expressively likened to the sun "having power given unto him to scorch men with fire" (Rev. xvi. 8). Men's rapturous welcome of the great leader will give place after a time to a wail of despair when they learn the true character of that to which they have committed themselves (Rev. xiii. 4). Democracy will end in the most galling despotism Europe has ever known, from which no deliverance will be found until the strong hand of the Son of Man shows itself from heaven. In the past, revolutions have bred dictators; history will repeat itself in this respect in the disturbed future. The doom of the cruel oppressor is peculiarly terrible. Taken red-handed at the head of armed hosts madly gathered together to oppose the Lamb at His appearing, he, with his coadjutor the false prophet (of whom more later), is cast alive into the lake of fire. This pair of transgressors will not pass through death and resurrection, as other sinners, but, without experiencing either, will be despatched from the field of battle to Gehenna (Rev. xix. 20). To such an end will come Europe's greatest ruler—its insane pride and boast in the last days.

A few words more as to the ten kingdoms of which the Roman Empire of the future will be composed. Fifty years ago the map of Europe presented a vastly different picture from that which it presents to-day. The ancient dominions of the Cæsars were parcelled out into nearly a hundred independent States. That the number could ever be reduced to ten must then have seemed very unlikely. But since that time the several States of Italy have come together; the many States of Germany also. A yet further closing up is predicted in Scripture, which will alter the map of Europe for the last time before the earth's true Sovereign appears.

(To be continued.)

SELECTIONS.

“Read always with your eye on the object.” That is to say, read not so much with your eye on the words as on the things. And the best literary critic of the past generation has said in illustration of that aphorism, that Homer, his blindness and all, stands at the head of all subsequent poets, simply because he always sang with his whole inward eye fastened on the thing about which he was singing. But we do not need to go so far afield as Homer. For we have another man of that same genius, John Bunyan. Hear him: “There was not one part of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus but I was orderly led into it. For, always as I read it, me thought, I was as if I had *seen* Him born; as if I had *seen* Him grow up; as if I had *seen* Him walk through this world from His cradle to His cross; to which also, when He came, I *saw* how gently He gave Himself to be nailed and hanged upon it for my sins and my wicked doings. Also, as I *mused* upon this His progress, that Scripture dropped upon my spirit—He was ordained to the slaughter.” My brethren, to read about your Saviour in that *seeing way* is the whole secret. Only *see* what you read about, and hear about, and sing about, and pray about and preach about, and all the rest will follow. Your eye, like the prophet’s eye, will always affect your heart. And when your heart is properly and sufficiently affected that will soon drive all the idleness out of all your words, till all you think, and all you say, and all you do will be well pleasing in the sight of God. And what a reward that will be!”

“The distinction,” says an able Anglican divine, “which our Lord and the New Testament continually make, is not that some men are sinners, and some are not. But that some men are so content to be sinners that they do not know they are sinners. While some other men are so convicted and convinced of their own sinfulness that they are conscious of nothing else in themselves but their sin. Blessed are we,” he continues, “even that we are sinners, if we see and know our sin: if through knowledge of the curse of sin we have been brought to know the supreme blessedness of holiness. For beings like ourselves, the consummate joy of holiness would be incomprehensible and impossible, save through a corresponding and an equal sense of sin. All our true joy,” he adds, “in what we are yet to be is born of our true sorrow for what we now are.”

“You will all remember how he was wont to pray at the third hour of every returning day for the grace of humility, and at the sixth hour of every new day for more and more love in His heart, to God and man; and then at the ninth hour of every departing day for immediate and entire resignation to the will of God in everything. And then you will remember how that so able and so sincere and so honest man always sequestered Himself at night and took Himself over the past day; and especially over the use He had made of the humility, and the love, and the resignation He had so pointedly prayed for. And that so punctual and so searching self-examination of His led Him sometimes to a great sacrifice of praise the last thing that night. But sometimes, and not seldom, He was compelled to offer that other sacrifice that we are assured so greatly pleases God—a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.”

ONE FLOCK.

IN the spring of the year I was in the neighbourhood of Penrith, and while walking along the high road which unites the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, I met a large flock of sheep, consisting of lambs and ewes. After this flock, walking softly, and with its accompaniment of gentle and harmonious noises, had passed by, my attention was arrested by a man running towards me at the top of his speed.

He was waving his arms and shouting wildly. He apparently meant myself, and thinking a wild bull was following him, I went forward.

He tore past me at a tremendous pace, and joining the shepherd of the flock, they immediately proceeded to open the nearest gate and drive the whole flock of sheep and lambs into a field.

In this operation I sought to render assistance, being alarmed at the evident urgency of the case.

Now, gentle reader, what think you was the danger? Run-away horse? or mad bull? Neither. *Another company of sheep and lambs travelling in the same direction was coming, and the shepherds were afraid that they should join and walk together as one flock until the end of the journey.*

UNITY (*concluded*).

IV.

ROMANS XIV.—XV., 7.

IT cannot be doubted that one of the uppermost questions at the present moment amongst a certain section of the Lord's people is that of *reception*. How far can Christians go with one another intelligently and with a good conscience? Can they, not seeing eye to eye on all points, yet worship together, and break bread together? Are there any lawful hindrances to this? These are some of the questions that agitate the minds of earnest believers; and all who desire the glory of the Lord, and the welfare of His people, have to face them. It was never more necessary to do so honestly and fearlessly than now.

In the first place all Christians recognise with more or less intelligence that there is, in spite of outward differences, after all only one church. The real difficulty therefore, is not so much about what unites as what keeps us apart. As to this it will be seen at once on consideration that it is a question of *degree*. All evangelical Christians feel that there are doctrines and practices from which they must separate. They would not, for example, admit Unitarians; nor would they participate in the idolatry of the mass. This might be as far as many would go. Others feel they must go further. They have come to see that forms, and ceremonies, and customs have taken such a place in the Church as not only to vitiate her life and usefulness, but so as to become a denial of the truth. Further, there are some who would make baptism a question of division; and still further, those who will separate from all who are not exactly of their way of thinking; and will receive only those who will join *them*.

If this is so then clearly the question of what is to separate believers and prevent them receiving one another to the breaking of bread, becomes, as we have said, one of degree.

It is just here that divine wisdom and guidance are so much needed, to enable us to distinguish between what is material to Christianity, and what is immaterial; between a question of vital principle, and a mere matter of form; and as to the point where a thing passes from a matter of indifference to a matter of grave

concern. As to these questions we have always to remember that our training, our mental and moral bias, and our preconceptions will all affect our judgment. We need therefore to exercise the very largest charity.

In considering this subject perhaps no passage of Scripture will help us more than the one quoted above. Differences of judgment and of custom arose in the early church. And this necessitated the laying down of principles for our direction. The first verse sets forth one of immense importance. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to judge his doubtful thoughts." That is, there will always be differences of apprehension because of different stages of growth. We are not called to decide matters of this kind. I have got to receive the individual—the command is clear as to this—but not necessarily his opinions. Would that we might learn to regard one another *as Christians*. And receive one another *as such*. Instead of which we often try to discover if he or she holds the same opinions about a variety of things. To do this may be only vanity, for it shows that I think all *my* opinions are right. The real question is—Is he in the faith? If he is *receive* him.

The Apostle adds, "let every man be fully persuaded in *his own mind*." But let him keep his persuasion there, and not try to get everybody else to share it. It does not say "let every man try to fully persuade other people." Then in v. 6, we have people doing exactly opposite things, and yet both doing it to the Lord. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." To whom do we live? To one another? It would seem so sometimes. We want everybody to coincide with us, and everybody else would like us to coincide with them. Each half of the church is engaged in effecting improvement in the other half. How different to all this the language of Scripture. "For whether we live we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." The Apostle may well add in view of this, "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Yet in spite of this plain, solemn Scripture do we not often erect the judgment seat now, and sit upon it ourselves? Instead of leaving matters for Him to settle, we ante-date the judgment day by erecting a judgment seat of the

saints, as if we were determined to take every matter into our own hands, and leave Christ very little to do when He sits in His judgment seat. This will be called profanity. Yet it is not so profane as to usurp functions that belong to the Lord, and not to us. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD" (vv. 4 and 12). Well may the Apostle add, "let us not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (v. 13). More evil has been wrought by judging evil (so-called) than in almost any other way.

Now we come to what is positive and essential. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." How important is this utterance as showing that the things about which believers mostly differ are those where each must be responsible to God for what he holds; while there is practical agreement amongst the godly as to what the kingdom of God really consists in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Especially are those last four words "*in the Holy Ghost*," significant, guarding us against routine and formalism of every kind, and leaving us with no excuse for attaching to externals the importance we often do.

How affecting, too, the way in which this inspired writer sets Christ and God before the saints, telling them that they are not to please themselves because Christ pleased not Himself; and to be likeminded one toward another according to the example of Him Who was the image of the God of *patience* and *consolation*. And then the effect of all this. "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Closing with "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

As we connect these last words with the whole bearing of the passage with what power do they come to the soul. The passage begins, "Him that is weak in the faith *receive ye*," and closes with the same exhortation. Is it not clear then, that the great point all through is, **Christians are to receive one another.** Does this reception extend only to greetings in the market places or in our homes? Or does it mean *as Christians* in the fullest sense as regards Church fellowship? It may be said by some the passage

does not embrace church truth, but refers merely to the Kingdom. We admit there is a distinction, and a distinction with a difference, but the same persons are in both. We are to receive one another, "as Christ also received us to the glory of God." Surely He received us in the fullest way. Did He receive us for the Kingdom only, or for the Church also? Did He make any reservations? Not one. If He received us at all, He received us to the full.

Yet what reservations we are inclined to make; and here we bring in all the difficulty. We raise questions with one another which Christ never raised with us. And hundreds and thousands of brethren in the Lord have left off receiving one another for this very reason, to their own loss and their Lord's dishonour. Shall we not repent of this? Shall we not receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God? And how did He receive us? Did He require more than repentance toward God, and faith toward Himself? That we forsook the evil *we knew*, and trusted Him. Yes, the evil we knew. Our views of evil were for the most part defective in the extreme. Some of the worst forms of it in Christ's eyes we were scarcely conscious of. Yet in spite of all He received us, well knowing that only in company with Him could we trace out and discover and judge other forms of evil which He hated quite as much as some we had already forsaken.

But how is it with us in our reception of one another? Often and often we require that Christians shall forsake evil that they *do not know* before we will receive them. And we will not receive *them* though they have done the very thing on the ground of doing which Christ received *us*. That is they have forsaken the evil they knew. To require more is to arrogate to ourselves a holiness which even Christ did not assume. It is not of course holiness, its proper name is Pharisaism. No doubt a charge of *looseness* will be brought against all who seek to receive one another in this way, but for our comfort we may remember that this was the very charge the Pharisees really brought against Christ in those memorable words: "this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

Brethren, in the face of such a Scripture as we are considering what are we going to do? Are we going to continue to refuse, refuse, refuse, when we ought to receive? There are thousands of brethren standing apart to-day who might be receiving one another to the glory of God, not because evil is knowingly unjudged, but because it is expected of people to judge evil they know not of.

We will receive them for one Sunday, say some. This is nothing more nor less than a human expedient. It is either too much, or too little. If they are connected with what you suppose evil, and your reception of them identifies you with it, it is too much. For one reception would link you with the evil as much as if it were repeated a hundred times. If on the other hand they ought to be received it is too little, and becomes sheer mockery.

“Receive ye one another,” this is God’s word. Many will say, “I am afraid of the consequences.” So was Peter afraid at first to go to the house of Cornelius, but the Spirit bade him go nothing doubting. It was the language of the unprofitable servant, “I was afraid,” he said, and did nothing. Many are afflicted in this way more than they are aware ; specially the godly. It is, however, the result of ignorance. They do not know God enough. They think of God more or less as an austere man, just as the unprofitable servant did. God loves to receive. He says He hates putting away.

With such examples and such exhortations before us do not let us keep away from one another any more. Such separation is a source of weakness to ourselves, dishonour to the Lord, and a terrible stumbling block to multitudes. What is the actual position ? Here are two Christians agreed on such vital and foundation facts as the atonement, the Person of Christ, their hope of glory, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of grace. They own the same Lord, and each calls God his Father ; and yet outwardly they are as much separated as if one believed all these verities, and the other none of them. It is simply barbarous. We can agree about what unites us, we cannot about what should separate us. Yet it might surely be thought that if the former were settled the latter need not present any insuperable difficulty. To allow it to do so is surely a grievous sin.

When the sea recedes it often leaves isolated pools of water on the shore. It seems to us that some assemblies of Christians are very much in this position. They have no more public intercourse than the drops of water in one pool have with the other drops in a neighbouring one. What should we think if each pool magnified itself above the rest, spoke of itself as if it were the ocean, or worse still actually claimed to be so ; or at least the one most resembling it ; and accordingly made the attempt to get all the other drops within its own enclosure. Not far away is the mighty ocean. The little

pools are the result of its absence ; when it returns their difficulties will be settled, as well as their rival claims. What will be the effect ? It will make them one again in itself—they will be all swept together ; each a part of one vast whole—the little drops no longer enclosed in narrow sandy walls, but filled into all fulness.

Perhaps there are circles of Christians to-day who are saying, “ Our little pools are so quiet they are never disturbed by any big waves of blessing, though we think some of the drops with us would be better in some other pool, and we intend to keep ourselves rigidly to ourselves, and allow no inter-communication with our neighbours, though in many respects they are very much like us.” Yet just as the pools left on the sea shore by the receding tide were all part of the ocean, so these different circles of believers, we speak of, are all part of the one invisible church, the one family of God ; they have the same origin, they bear the same Name, and have precisely the same destination. Yet they are apart like the pools on the shore. Surely a painful witness to the receding tide of spiritual power and blessing. Yet the ocean is hard by—the ocean of God’s fulness to cover all our nakedness and shame. Its return in this instance, however, depends somewhat upon ourselves. Have we no desire for it ? The eternity which will ultimately bring us together, on the shore of which no separate pools will ever lie, is near at hand. The prayer of Christ will be answered then. Is it to have no influence upon us now ? Shall we despise the love that once gave us hearts united, that died to make us one, and that grieves over an antagonism which is not of Himself ?

May it be once more true again, “ Of His fulness have all we received and grace upon grace.” Here is the ocean ready at hand to bring us once more upon the flood tide of blessing, and fill our hearts with a love which shall overflow, until we “ comprehend with **all saints** what is the *length* and *breadth* and *depth* and *height*—no room for shallow, isolated pools here, but filled unto all the fulness of God.”

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.—Amen.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

W.M.—*Are we to understand from Hebrews ix. 3, 4, that the golden censer was in the Holiest of all?* Ans.: There is no record in the Old Testament of the censer being made, or of where it was placed, but clearly from the above passage we may conclude it was in the Holiest. Other censers were used (Lev. x. 1; Numb. xvi. 6), but this is expressly said to be the golden censer. The first mention of a golden censer is 1 Kings vii. 50, in connection with the temple. If we may venture on a conjecture as to why all mention of it is omitted in the Old Testament in connection with the tabernacle, while so much prominence is given to it in the above passage from the New, we should say that, whether designedly or not, it is in keeping with the character of each dispensation. The special use of the golden censer would be on the day of atonement (see Lev. xvi.), but the way into the holiest was not then made manifest. Heb. ix. is the contrast of this, showing that on the ground of His one offering Christ has entered in, and thereby opened the way for us. Thus Hebrews ix. in keeping with this, omits all reference to the golden altar which was outside the veil, but refers to the golden censer (which was the vessel actually used in approaching God) as being inside.

J.H.H. asks: *Does every believer receive the Spirit or must he claim it? If the former, what about Luke xi. 13: "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."* Ans.: Two things must be kept distinct; first, the possession of the Spirit; second, the supply of the Spirit. The *normal* condition of every believer is to have the Spirit (Eph. i. 13), and further we are said to be "sealed unto the day of redemption." This follows upon believing the gospel. On this side it is God's doing. He seals us for a purpose (see also 2 Cor. i. 21-2; v. 5). There is no such thought in Scripture as *claiming* this. We believe God's testimony about Christ, and He seals us. But the supply of the Spirit, and the being filled with the Spirit are our side of the question. The former (Phil. i. 19) is distinctly connected with prayer, and practical salvation; the latter (Eph. v. 18) is an exhortation. It is with this last view of the subject I should connect the passage above quoted from Luke's gospel (ch. xi. 13). So that we may, and must pray for the *supply* of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. But as to being *sealed* it is a question not of our asking God for anything, but of believing what He says to us. If we take care of that, He will take care of the other.

Remaining questions must be held over.

We append an open question to which we shall be glad to receive answers from our readers :

- (1) What is the true rendering of II. Cor. iii. 18 ? Some translators having omitted the words " reflecting as a mirror."
- (2) Is the force of the passage, taken as a whole, that the veil is removed from us, or from the Lord ? Mention is made of this subject in " Shadows," pp. 38-9, of our November issue, to which readers may refer. Please let answers be *brief*.

GOD'S NOBLEMEN.

DANIEL III.

They stood, those noble men of God, tho' earth and hell assailed ;
 They spurned decrees of sinful men ; God's banner they unfurl'd
 Right in the face of earthly pride ; in lying, godless days,
 They trusted in their fathers' God ; they showed His glorious praise.

There was one true and only God ; their hearts by Him were taught.
 So any idol made by man was to their souls but nought ;
 Tho' cornet, flute, harp, sackbut rang, in varied strains most sweet,
 To cause the sons of men to fall down at the idol's feet.

Such music there charmed not their souls, nor did they dread the fire,
 Their faith arose to Israel's God. It woke the king's great ire.
 " We will not bow," was their reply ; " the God we love and serve
 Will shelter from the darkest day ; our souls He will preserve.

But know, O King, if even then He comes not to our aid,
 We'll neither bow to stocks nor stones which your own hands have made.
 We'll trust Him, for we know He's true ; our times are in His hand,"
 Such were the thoughts of these three men—a noble, happy band.

They fiercely cast them in the fire, O dark and evil deed !
 But God in love and faithfulness was with them in their need.
 A fourth was seen, like God's dear Son—their sufferings He would share—
 A Heaven they found in hottest flames, as He walked with them there.

They honoured *Him*, *He* honoured *them* ; to idols they'd not cringed ;
 O happy men who stood for God, not one hair even singed.
 It caused that great and mighty King to own God's perfect ways,
 And through the faithful act of three proclaim the true God's praise.

And then, promoted by the king, they gained more than they lost,
 Because they trusted in their God regardless of all cost.
 And so it is our God's blest way to make us know His mind
 That if our lives we lose for Him, our lives we then shall find.

ONE.

- One God**—Mark xii. 32. The first and fundamental truth of Divine Revelation.
- One Lord**—Eph. iv. 5. All Christian responsibility falls under this title of authority.
- One Spirit**—Eph. iv. 4. One sovereign directing Power in diversified operation.
- One Mediator**—1 Tim. ii. 5. The condemnation of the mediatorial system of Rome.
- One Sacrifice**—Heb. x. 12. Its exclusive character and permanent value.
- One Offering**—Heb. x. 14. The personal worth of the offerer is the value of the offering.
- One Faith**—Eph. iv. 5. Christianity in all its parts and doctrines—one complete system.
- One Hope**—Eph. iv. 4. His Personal presence and revealed glory.
- One Baptism**—Eph. iv. 5. The unity of the ordinance is founded on the undivided name of Christ (1 Cor. i. 13).
- One Flock**—John x. 16. The scattered sheep throughout the earth are *one* flock.
- One Body**—Eph. iv. 4. The death blow to sectarianism in every shape and form.
- One Thing**—Phil. iii. 13. Unity of aim and purpose to reach Christ in glory.

There is but *one* source of permanent authority—The Holy Scriptures. The Cross is but *one* in its exceeding worth and glory. The Sacrifice was not *it*, but Himself in the dignity of His Person, in the absolute perfection of His nature, and in His unsullied Holy Life. **This**, then, is the Rock of Ages on which our souls rest.

Our Fellowship—save when marred by sin—extends to the utmost limits of the one mystical body of Christ. We travel out from the Centre (Christ), down from the Head (Christ) to the extremity of the circumference in Asia, Africa, or elsewhere. The limit of the body is the limitation of our fellowship.

Our Hope, just about to be realised is His Personal presence for us, His Personal coming with us, the Revelations of His Personal Glory, and the sharing of the vast, grand, and everlasting inheritance with Him. O what a magnificent future!

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEMLY.

LIGHTNESS OF SPEECH.

“NEITHER foolish talking nor jesting, which are not convenient.” That is to say, not fit or proper for Christian believers to indulge in.

Let us view the subject from different standpoints, and we shall see in every case how just and necessary the prohibition is.

Let us consider what we were:—Lost, guilty sinners, living without God and without hope, dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath even as others, snatched as brands from everlasting burning, brought nigh to God and reconciled through Christ’s atoning blood. Should we who have escaped such awful doom sport and make merry as those who know not God? Should he who has escaped a precipice, a raging fire, a destroying flood, laugh like the careless and forget his mercies? No more should we who have escaped so great destruction.

Let us consider what we are:—A new creation, born of the Holy Spirit, children of God, servants of Christ, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. Does lightness of speech become us, who have been called to such a high position?

A royal priesthood! Have we ever realised what it means? What calm solemnity and holy gravity should be ours; how careful we should be to walk worthy of the vocation to which God has called us by His grace.

Let us consider our brethren:—Is this to edification? Do we cause others to stumble by our light conversation? Are we hindering the gracious influences of the Spirit, the unction which He is so willing to bestow upon us? Do we speak with *one* voice on special occasions, and with another far different in our ordinary social intercourse?

Let us consider the world around us, still groping in darkness, still following the ways of sin and vanity; the world that beholds our ways and marks our every failure. Are we showing forth to them the ways of Christ, or do we by our lightness give them cause to speak reproachfully?

Let us consider Him Who has redeemed us:—"He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Let us remember that our Saviour requires of us, that we should be distinct and separate, a peculiar people, abounding in every good word and work. Consider His claims upon us; He has bought us and we belong to Him; He judges amongst His people, and nothing is hid from Him; He knows even the thoughts and intents of the heart. Let us live, then, as in his sight; let us judge ourselves in all things; let our conversation be brought into harmony with the mind and ways of Christ; let us make Him our pattern and our standard, and ever seek to merit His approving smile.

But someone will ask, "Does not the believer need relaxation, social communion, pleasant and cheerful intercourse with his fellows?" Certainly these things are needful, for health and refreshing of body and mind, and if exercised with self-control and under the Spirit's guidance, not only harmless but beneficial to the soul: but let us not condemn ourselves in those things that we allow; our thoughts and speech need constant lifting up; their natural tendency is earthward.

"Is any merry, let him sing psalms." Men and women are by nature volatile, and the natural man seeks ever to assert itself; how quickly we pass from the gravest subjects to those that are trifling and to no profit, and we suddenly discover how easily and almost unconsciously we have fallen. How needful, therefore, to watch and pray, to restrain the fleshly tendency, to employ our joyous emotions in the service of praise to God, and to the edifying of his people, and not allow them to run riot in things that are unprofitable and vain.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

What an inspiring word is this ; should we not seek to realise it in our daily practice. How sweet would it be if amongst all believers such speech and such intercourse were common and habitual—not forced and constrained like a strange unfamiliar language, but rather as some sweet language that dwells in the heart and issues forth in streams of blessing, edifying and enriching others, binding the Lord's people together in bonds of holy fellowship which grow closer and closer as days and years go by.

How gladly we forget the old, vain, foolish way. When once we discern the sweetness of such godly intercourse, we live in a new world, we breathe a new atmosphere, a glimpse of heaven comes down to cheer us, and help us forward on our pilgrim way.

* * The Editor sends his warm greetings to his young friends and best wishes for their true happiness. The secret of that is found in the following words:—"Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching *daily* at My gates, *waiting* at the posts of My doors. For whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." (Prov. viii. 34-35).

Instead of writing a letter this time he has brought under your notice something sent him by a friend. He hopes next month to write on "Some Lessons from a Glacier." In the meantime having written you three letters he will be glad to hear in return from any who have something they want to say.

THE "FAITH" AND THE "FLOCK."

"Have faith in God." Mark xi. 22.

"Have faith in God," though sorrows overtake thee,
For He hath said, "I never will forsake thee."
When days are dark, remember *He* is near ;
Why dread the CLOUD? *He'll* make thy pathway CLEAR.

.....

"Fear not, little flock." . . . Luke xii. 32.

"Fear not, little flock, 'tis your Father's good pleasure,"
In spite of affliction and grief beyond measure,
"To give you the Kingdom." Then why be cast down?
To-day is the CROSS, but to-morrow the CROWN.

BIBLE BRIEFS.

The Christian's A B C.	{	Accepted in Him	...	...	...	Eph. i. 6.
		Built up in Him	...	...	...	Col. ii. 7.
		Complete in Him	...	..	...	Col. ii. 10.
"Remember"	{	Precept: "Remember thy Creator"	...	...	...	Eccl. xii. 1.
		Prayer: "Remember not the sins of my youth"	...	...	...	Psalms xxv. 7.
		Promise: "I will not remember"	...	...	...	Heb. viii. 12.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

Vol. I.—No. 5.

FEBRUARY, 1909.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

TWO answers to our open question, given on p. 124 of January issue, have reached us, and are printed in this number. We shall be glad to receive some further replies.

No response has yet reached us to our appeal last month (p. 99). We asked for help in order to increase the circulation of this magazine. So far we have nothing to acknowledge either directly or through the medium of our pages. This is the more surprising as the periodical seems appreciated by many. Perhaps the season of the year when there are so many demands partly accounts for this apparent lack of interest; and possibly, too, everybody has thought that everyone else would send, and for this reason what has been left to all has been done by none. The need for such a magazine becomes increasingly obvious, and if our progress is at all commensurate with the benedictions that have reached us, the success of "The Faith and the Flock" is established, and its future assured.

For the encouragement of any who desire to spread the truth—and in these days what more necessary?—we would mention that one friend by her own efforts secured *twenty-four* subscribers. In another town where, at the beginning, it was known only to a few, the number now required every month verges on one hundred; and,

in fact, in place after place, where the same effort is made, similar results follow. This is extremely encouraging, and should be an incentive to all our friends to do what they can.

The following, culled from a contemporary, will be found interesting: "One of the most extraordinary proofs of the tremendous change which, in a few brief weeks, has passed over the Ottoman world is found in the fact that the question of the rebuilding of the Temple on Mount Moriah has been seriously raised. It is reported from Jerusalem that the chief rabbi of a Gallician town has addressed to King Edward a memorial, soliciting his good offices in securing the permission of the Sultan to undertake the work. This is moving on indeed."

It is interesting and instructive to notice the connection of Mal. iii. 16 with what precedes. At the end of Chapter ii. God complains of His people saying "everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, where is the God of judgment" (v. 17). And it does indeed often seem as if God took no notice of wrong-doing, nay, further, it seems sometimes as if He endorsed it. But come to the end of Chapter iii. and see what God says there. The time arrives when He does make manifest who and what pleases Him. Again, first of all, we have identical language on the part of some with what has been quoted above. "Ye have said it is vain to serve God, &c. And now we call the proud happy, yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (vv. 14, 15). But is it so? Verse 16 tells us differently, it shews us that after all God approves something quite opposite, and it indicates as well the course to follow. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (the evildoers were not after all His jewels) "and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." And now what follows? "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." Even if God *seems* to favour the wrong doer to-day, do not let us be wrong doers. God remembers everything that is right, and He will requite everything that is wrong.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition. 101

CHAPTER II., 1-9.

SO GREAT SALVATION.

IN considering Chapter I. the greatness of the Person of Christ came before us. The keynote was, that, God had spoken unto us by (or in) His Son. This necessarily gave a character to what was said, and therefore, distinguished Christianity from all that had gone before. Even angels have to take an inferior place. For we are in the presence of One Who could be addressed as the Son (which, we are told, no angel ever was) and even as God (vv. 5, 8, 9).

Upon the foregoing is based the exhortation with which our chapter opens. "*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*" It is the giving **earnest heed** that is important. The wayside hearers, in the parable, are not characterized thus. They heard as though they did not hear. The speaker here demands attention. We slight His message at our peril. "*For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him*" (vv. 2 and 3). Once God spoke through angels in order to give significance to His communications, which are always important and for man's blessing, but the "great salvation" He now offers is so great, that one superior to angels must inaugurate it.

What is this great salvation? It is complete deliverance for man from all the consequences of the fall, and the one who brought it about—deliverance from Satan, sin and death. This is brought about by the revelation of God in grace. Christ's very presence here was a revelation of God. It meant that God was not against man, for He appeared as His deliverer. He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" said Christ. "God was in Christ reconciling the world

unto Himself, *not imputing* their trespasses unto them." Here was grace. The climax of it all is presented in our chapter. "That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (or thing). For this "great salvation" includes the final emancipation of a groaning creation.

If Adam's one act of disobedience involved his dismissal from the garden, and brought ruin upon his posterity, what must be the guilt of rejecting, despising, or neglecting the grace of God? Everything depends upon giving *earnest heed* to God's word. Had Adam and Eve done that their fall would never have taken place. Had Israel hardened not their hearts, but listened to the same divine voice, no forty years wandering in the desert would have been theirs. It is on the same principle to-day. If this great salvation is to become ours, we must give "**earnest heed**" to what was spoken by the Lord and confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. How shall we escape if we neglect? To give no heed is enough to deprive ourselves of all the benefits Christ came to confer. It is not necessary to be a great sinner. It is not necessary to sink below the average in worldliness and wickedness. It is only necessary to be negligent. **But**, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

The miracles spoken of in verse 4 were but to draw attention to the message—God's *imprimatur* upon His own word. The message, however, was the all important thing. Those who stopped short at the miracles, and only believed because of them, really came short of everything. To such, neither miracles or message were of any use. Examples of which we find in John ii. and Acts viii. Christ wrought miracles, but He was pre-eminently a preacher. It was His word when received and kept, which took effect. "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth" (Mark i. 38). With the Apostle Paul it was very much the same. He wrought miracles, but he did not say "woe is me if I fail to work them," but "woe is me if I preach not the gospel." And in his closing days all his thoughts seem to have turned upon the gospel. "Preach the word," he writes to Timothy. "That by me the preaching might be fully known" he adds, further on. Some people to-day are clamouring for miracles. They are just the ones not to be benefited by them if they could

now be seen. Besides, the miracles have been. If they will not credit past miracles, what guarantee is there they would believe if such were repeated ?

Let everyone then consider seriously these two facts, (1) God has spoken—His voice became articulate through no less a person than His Son—and (2) God bore “ *witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.*” Yes, Christianity is of God, established by God ; it rests upon the Person of the Son of God ; and it has been accredited by the accompanying power of the Holy Ghost, manifested in signs and wonders. How shall we escape if we *neglect so great salvation* ?

In this salvation nothing is wanting. Every need of man has been fully taken account of. Its author is God. It is executed by the Son. It is ratified in the power of the Holy Ghost. The world to come is to be the scene of its full display. So the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews immediately passes to that thought. “ *For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*” Again, angels are mentioned. As we have seen before, angelic ministry characterized God’s administration in Israel. An angel touched the waters in the Pool of Bethesda. Angelic visitations accompanied the birth of Samson, of John the Baptist, and of our Lord. But the world to come will not be in subjection to angels, but to man. God has thoughts for man which surpass even His thoughts for angels.

“ *One in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man that Thou visitest him ? Thou madest him a little lower than (or a little while inferior to) the angels ; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands : Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*”

All this gives us some idea of **the great salvation**. We see man at last delivered. Man at the head of a scene where there is

no usurper, and no oppressor. All things are brought under the beneficent sway of the Second Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One of Whom it is said, He will "subdue all things unto Himself." This is God's great salvation, for it is His deliverance for man, and for creation, from all the works of the Devil. In infinite grace His Son has become Man, taking upon Himself in death all the consequences of the fall, and destroying him that had the power of death, while all the blessing that accrues takes its character from the One Who has done this. Can anyone afford to neglect so great salvation? Out of Christ there is, there can be, no blessing for man. Man is to be blessed, for God has decreed it, blessed above angels—the fall, sin, sorrow, tears, pain and death will all be wiped away—but it is all introduced by the Lord Jesus, all based upon His death, and only enjoyed by those who accept Him as their Saviour and Lord. 164

"Happy they who trust in Jesus,
Sweet their portion is and sure."

(Chapter II. to be continued.)

"JESUS."

"Jesus"—the Crucified One Matt. xxvii. 50.

He was crucified! Stupendous truth! The Lord of Life and Light
Suspended on a Cross of wood! Behold the wondrous sight!
Has Satan gained the vict'ry now? Has Jesus lived in vain?
Ah! praise the Lord! it cannot be! He died—but rose again!

"This Jesus"—the Conquering One Acts ii. 32.

He has conquered death! Behold the tomb! No occupant is there!
His loved ones seek Him, with their hearts oppressed with grief and care.
The Father hath received Him—His heart is satisfied;
And Christ, the once-rejected One, is now the glorified.

"This same Jesus"—the Coming One Acts i. 11.

He is coming soon! O blessed hope! O joy beyond compare!
When we, with all the ransomed ones, shall "meet Him in the air;"
"Caught up together" in the clouds, we'll worship and adore
"This Jesus"—"this same Jesus"—and we'll praise Him evermore.

THE OUTLOOK (*continued*).

II.

BY far the most interesting sign of the times is the restlessness of the Jewish people. The fig-tree, long ago cursed by the Lord Jesus for its fruitlessness, is putting forth its leaves again (Matt. xxi. 19; xxiv. 32). National aspirations, which have lain dormant for ages, are re-asserting themselves once more. The Zionist Congresses, now being held annually, are not the work of a few fanatics, whom the world can afford to treat with contempt; the movement is backed by many of the most influential and wealthy of the Jewish race. The kindly offer by the British Government of territory in East Africa for the planting of a Jewish State under British suzerainty has been declined as altogether inconsistent with the expectations of the people. Their eyes are upon the inheritance of their fathers, and nothing will satisfy them but to be possessed once more of the land of Israel. The Turkish Sultan has on several occasions discussed the project with Zionist leaders, but up to the present, nothing has come of the negotiations.

The establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, when it takes place, will be one of the most important events in the history of our planet. It will prepare the way for the stirring events of the last days. It is in Jerusalem that the Antichrist of Scripture will first assert himself. Accepted by an unbelieving people as the long-promised Messiah, he will become their civil head. He is the King of Dan. xi. 36-39, against whom the Kings both of the North and of the South declare war. The Jewish State being wealthy, and not over strong, and having many dangerous enemies, a seven years' treaty will be made with the restored Western empire. This short period is the closing part of the remarkable prophecy of the seventy weeks, spoken of in Dan. ix. 24-27. The treaty in question being made in independence of God, and moreover with the most blasphemous power in the universe, is stigmatised in Isa. xxviii. as a "covenant with death" and an "agreement with hell," and it will avail the people nothing in the time of emergency.

It is at this juncture that Satan is cast out of the heavens into the earth (Rev. xii. 7-12). Being no longer able to oppose the Lord Jesus in His priestly character, he will busy himself in raising up opposition to Him as Prophet and King. The Beast and the False Prophet are his chosen instruments for this purpose.

Politically, the Antichrist will be of but little importance, being only the ruler of a small buffer-state; but religiously his influence will be very far-reaching. In his day the profession of Christianity will be non-existent. "The salt of the earth" being removed at the Saviour's descent into the air according to 1 Thess. iv. 16-17, the mass of merely nominal Christians will speedily renounce even their empty profession. In a word, the predicted apostasy will set in (2 Thess. ii. 3). The present tampering with divine truth in almost every religious circle is preparing the way for this catastrophe. Our grandfathers, could they rejoin us for a season, would be shocked beyond measure to hear pulpit orators flouting the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin-birth of Christ, His miracles, His atoning death and resurrection, and the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and of eternal punishment. Yet this is done to-day in every quarter of Christendom. As a direct result of the apostasy, the Antichrist will advance his pretensions. There will be three objects of worship in his day: the Roman Emperor, the Antichrist, and the Dragon (Rev. xiii. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 4). These are men's substitutes for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all then utterly discarded. The dream of universal conversion before the opening of the millennial era, though piously held by many true Christians, finds no support in Scripture. On the contrary, it is distinctly asserted that before the glory of the Lord arises "darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples" (Isa. lx. 2). Instead of the Church converting the world, the world will convert the Church. The latter is happening even now before our eyes. From Jerusalem as a centre the new religion, strongly backed by miracles, will spread itself over all Christendom. The thoughtless multitudes in this and other lands, who know all the great facts of the Gospel, yet care nothing for them, will shortly become frantic in their acclamation of the new system. "Who is like unto the Beast?" will be their jubilant cry (Rev. xiii. 4). The Eden promise, "You shall be as God," is at last fulfilled; Man is deified, and the Creator is bowed out of the world.

The desirability of a universal religion—a religion that will suit the tastes of all—has been frequently spoken of. The "Review of Reviews" (June, 1908), in describing the Theosophist propaganda of a well-known Methodist (who yet retains his church membership without protest) remarks: "Nowadays all religions tend to approximate. The sharp corners and cruel angles are smoothed down.

It is possible to preach in a Christian pulpit doctrine to which Jews, Buddhists and Moslems would listen with approval." It is reserved for the man of sin to bring this kind of thing to perfection. His system will be palatable to the mass. Woe to the godly few who refuse to conform to it!

The temporal power of the Antichrist will be seriously inconvenienced by Russia, a power ever bitterly hostile to the Jews. The King of the North who invades their territory, and works the fearful havoc described in Dan. xi. 40-43 and other passages, is an ally or puppet of Russia, and acts by her instigation. This is the evident meaning of the words in Dan. viii. 24: "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." This Northern Kingdom has yet to be created out of the Asiatic dominions of the Turkish Sultan. When it does come into being (and a fresh outbreak of atrocities in Armenia might easily bring it about) it will lean upon Russia as its natural supporter. The future King of the North is the representative of the ancient Seleucidæ, and will manifest the same antagonism towards the Jews as they formerly did. He will be actually engaged in the siege of Jerusalem when the heavens open and the Son of Man appears and overwhelms his forces with destruction (Zech. xiv. 1-4). The Western hosts, hastening to the relief of Jerusalem, in keeping with the treaty already referred to, and finding the Lamb and His heavenly hosts there, madly turn their arms against them, to their own irretrievable ruin (Rev. xix. 17-21). This is the battle of Armageddon—the last great conflict between East and West (Rev. xvi. 14-16). There the costly militarism of Europe will find its grave, and from that dread battlefield both the Beast and the False Prophet (the Western Emperor and the Antichrist) will be despatched to the lake of fire, fully a thousand years before the mass of the ungodly.

Russia will not be represented at Armageddon, having its own special part to play in the tragedy of the last days. This great power was spoken of in Scripture, and its last disastrous enterprise described in detail, nearly fifteen hundred years before Ruric arrived at Novgorod with his Varangians and laid the foundation of the empire. Our reference is to the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy. Instead of "chief prince" in Chap. xxxviii. 2-3 read "Prince of Rosh." This is the rendering

in the Greek Septuagint, and also in the English Revised Version—"Rosh" means Russia; "Meshech and Tubal" refer to her ancient European capital Moscow, and her well-known Asiatic mart Tobolsk. Even Gibbon, the historian, who had no love for God's Word, appears to have been impressed with this Biblical reference to the Northern empire.

The ruin of her ally, the King of the North, will cause Russia to arise and put forth all her strength for the extermination of the restored Jewish State. A number of Satellite powers will join her in the enterprise, among others Persia and Ethiopia (known to us as Abyssinia). Persia and Ethiopia have been for many years centres of political intrigue on the part of the European powers, each endeavouring to checkmate Russian influence and establish its own. The diplomatic game may as well be abandoned; Persia and Ethiopia are destined to fall under the thumb of the Muscovite. The voice of divine inspiration so declared it two thousand six hundred years ago. Every political question will find its solution in connection with Israel. The King of the North and his Asiatic confederates will find their grave in Palestine, the Western Emperor and his European hosts will meet their doom there also; and upon the same rock the vast Russian power will be utterly wrecked. Russia's meddling with the returned Jews will be her last piece of meddling. The prophet graphically describes the fury of Jehovah as it bursts forth against this malignant enemy of His people. His story of slaughter is terrible reading. The carnage will be so great that it will be a national work on the part of the people of Israel for seven months to bury the bones (the birds leaving nothing more); and the number of Russian weapons left upon the field will be so enormous that the whole nation of Israel will not require to cut firewood for seven years afterwards (Ezek. xxxix. 9-16). "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am Jehovah" (Ezek. xxxviii. 23).

Let it be distinctly understood that it is against the whole twelve tribes of Israel the malice of Russia is directed. Only the two tribes, representing the ancient Kingdom of Judah (known to us to-day as "the Jews") will be in the land when the Antichrist is in power there. They being directly responsible for the betrayal and murder of the true Christ will suffer retribution under the

oppressive rule of the false Christ. The ten tribes, who were deported by the Kings of Assyria about seven and a half centuries before the Saviour's first coming, will be regathered to their own land by the blast of the trumpet at His glorious second coming (Isa. xxvii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 31). Where these tribes are at the present moment need not concern us. He who scattered them will know where to lay His hand upon them when the appointed hour for their restoration arrives.

Concurrently with the re-appearance of Israel upon the platform of the world's politics there will be seen again many of the powers with which Israel had dealings in the past, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines, among others, have quite a shoal of prophecies yet to be fulfilled in them. In Greece, Italy, and other prophetic powers the national spirit has markedly revived in recent years. It reminds us of the Lord's words in Luke xxi. 29: "Behold the fig tree, *and all the trees.*" If the fig tree is Israel, "all the trees" represent the powers which have to do with her. All must take up their respective positions in order to play their allotted part in the last scenes. Europe, Asia and Africa will contribute the various actors required. America, so far as Scripture speaks, has no special place in the prophetic future.

The days preceding the final crash will find men at once confident and uneasy, inconsistent as this may seem. The Lord Jesus has likened their false feeling of security to the indifference that marked men in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the deluge (Luke xvii. 26-30). Having both a religion and a leader to their taste, and having brought all their works to a higher pitch of development than the world has ever known, "Peace and safety" will be their satisfied cry (1 Thess. v. 3). They have broken the divine bands asunder, and have cast away from them the cords of Jehovah and His anointed. The earth is theirs in full possession, and they flatter themselves that it will abide for ever. Yet underneath all the infidel boasting of that day there will be a certain indefinable dread which perhaps men will scarcely care to broach to one another. The Son of God has expressed it thus: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke xxi. 26).

The revelation of the Son of Man from heaven will come as a terrible shock to the world. In one moment its boasted leaders will be brought to nought, and their enterprises will perish. Accompanied by all His heavenly saints—the redeemed of earth—

and attended by His holy angels, the once-crucified One will subdue all before Him. His enemies being swept out of His path, He will establish His throne in Zion "for Jehovah hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psa. cxxxii. 13, 14). Israel will then be the head of the nations, and no longer the tail. To Israel's metropolis every country must send its ambassadors at least once in a year in token of allegiance to the great King who reigns there. Chastisement will be inflicted upon any country that fails in this obligation (Zech. xiv.). Each nation will have its own sovereign during the millennial era, but all will be required to acknowledge the supremacy of the Lord Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is God's answer, as far as earth is concerned, to the humiliation of Calvary.

During a thousand years the government of the earth will thus be in the hands of the Son of Man, the tempter being under divine restraint in the bottomless pit. Peace and blessing will characterize that glorious age. The science of war will no longer be studied. The dread of conscription will be gone for ever. Righteousness will be administered with equity to all. High and low, rich and poor, alike. Want will be unknown, and every burden will be removed. The social problems which baffle to-day the intellects of the world's wisest and ablest statesmen and philanthropists will then be solved perfectly and for ever. Earth's long moan will be hushed by a divinely sympathetic hand. The true hope of the world is most assuredly the long-rejected Lord Jesus Christ. When will men see it? Neither wise legislation nor lavish benevolence will succeed in healing the woes of men, though they may mitigate them in some degree. No human hand, however well-disposed, can make the crooked straight nor the rough smooth. But when He who is infinite in power and wisdom rises up from the Father's throne and asserts Himself, perfect deliverance and fulness of blessing will be brought in for all.

(To be continued.)

"We have one comfort—we are nearing the end. Oh to have more real and true *heart* affection for Christ Himself. That is what is needed everywhere. If that were present, heaps of things would right themselves at once. The Lord graciously produce it in us all."

“THINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING.”

THERE is a peculiar and instructive beauty in the *reflected light* which the Psalms throw upon the hidden motives and feelings of the Lord Jesus. What is designedly lacking in the Gospels is furnished prophetically by the Psalms, but in an indirect way, which we cannot help seeing to be the one most appropriate to so sacred a topic. Thick darkness, and the silence of death, hid His deep sufferings from the enquiry of the curious; but a prophetic echo is heard in the experience of another, through whom the Spirit of Christ found expression. There is a delicacy and beauty in such a treatment of the subject which commends itself to all, and has suggested the propriety of following so valuable an example.

The thought came to the present writer whether some of the well-known types of Scripture might not be handled in such a way as to shadow forth, indirectly, that which the heart feels must be true in Christ, but which cannot with propriety be made the topic of direct descriptive treatment. A freedom of language will then be permissible which would otherwise be impossible, but which, it is thought, will bring the lesson home vividly to the soul that is prepared to discern the analogy, while veiling it from others who are not interested to learn. If this is kept in view, and the following pages are read in the spirit in which they were written, it is believed that the profit which the writer found in the study will be shared by the readers.

* * * *

“So your long-cherished wish has at last become an accomplished fact!”

“I can hardly trust myself to speak of it, and yet I feel I must unburden my heart to someone. My joy is full, overflowing, and no one will understand me better than you, dear friend.”

“I think I can appreciate something of what you are feeling, but we will not speak of the interview just yet. Let us review the past, and thus prepare our thoughts to enter more fully into the import of the present. When was it that you first saw David?”

“It was on that never-to-be-forgotten day when I saw him as my saviour, in Elah’s drear valley, where he met the enemy’s champion in deadly combat, and gained the victory alone. Even

now I can recall the emotions that then filled my soul! The fear and trembling, as the champion's defiant challenge rang out on the morning air; the hope that revived in our hearts when it was rumoured that one had arisen in our midst—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—to face the uncircumcised Philistine; and then the excitement as we strained our eyes towards Saul's tent, to see 'the hope of Israel' sally forth to the combat. Before even Goliath had called for a champion, I had heard some stout braggarts boasting of their prowess, and I looked to recognise one or other of them in the hero of the hour."

"No doubt you were surprised to see so youthful a warrior adventuring himself in such a serious cause?"

"I was, indeed, and, though I could not expect him to conquer in the unequal encounter, my whole soul was filled with admiration at the heroism of a youth who could lay down his life in the glow and freshness of its early years, in one desperate attempt to free his people from the Philistine yoke. As he crossed the green valley I could only think of him as going down to his death, but when I remembered that it was for my sake, I loved him for it."

"Did you see his face?"

"Just a passing glance, but I never forgot it. You know I have always reckoned the countenance—not the features, but the expression—as an index of the soul, and in his there was a purity and grace that charmed me."

"And you saw the champion fall?"

"I did; and joined in the shout that was raised."

"And doubtless you gained some material benefits from the spoiling of the Philistines' tents?"

"No, I lost my opportunity, for I hurried to the open space in front of Saul's pavilion to greet the shepherd-lad as he returned victorious from the valley. The elders of Israel were there, and many veteran warriors, but they all made way for David, as Abner led him to the presence of the king, with a flush of triumph on his cheek, and the trophy of victory in his hand. And then I experienced a new pleasure."

"What was that?"

“ I heard him speak. In answer to a question from Saul he made some communication about his father’s name, and the grace of his address was added to the charms of his person and the benefit of his work. I felt that I loved him as my own soul, and when I saw the heir to the throne stripping himself of costly robe and jewelled sword to put them on David, I could not help saying, with a full heart, ‘ He is worthy ! ’ ”

“ But you did not do the same ! ”

“ I had nothing fit to offer at such a moment, and I felt it keenly. How little I thought that within a few short months, David would be in circumstances to value even my humble service. He was owned the chiefest of ten thousand then, but in the hour of his reproach, I found my opportunity to serve him.”

“ You must have been put to some expense during the time you were caring for David’s interests ? ”

“ I scarcely looked at it that way, but all I had I thought it a privilege to use for him and his. He said something about repaying with interest when he should come into his kingdom, but I did not occupy myself with that.”

“ I believe you suffered some bodily injury in his service ? ”

“ Well, I feel it a very special honour to bear in my body the marks of the Lord’s anointed. He faced death for me, and I was but wounded for him.”

“ Was he the same when hunted on the mountains as when you first saw him, going down to meet the Philistine ? ”

“ The change of circumstances threw other characteristics into relief, but the person was the same. My earliest impression of him was of a youth fresh from the home-circle of a father’s love. Indeed, I understood that what brought him to the battlefield was some little service which his father had entrusted to him for the benefit of his brethren. However, they did not appreciate either his message or motive, and, as events turned out, he found they needed not only food, but salvation ; and that, too, he accomplished, though without taking counsel with them about it.”

“ And what do you now say of the days of his rejection ? ”

“ I would not for anything have missed the fellowship of his reproach. Some of the loveliest traits appear in adversity ; and they would seem to have reflected themselves in those who accompanied with him. But, of course, he was not at his ease ; the circumstances were not suited to him.”

“ You have allowed many years to elapse before your first visit to court ? ”

“ It was his wish. He gave me to understand that I could serve his interests better where I was. However, the summons came at last ! ”

“ What was your first thought on receiving it ? ”

“ ‘ I shall see his face ! ’ There had been frequent communications between us, but you know that nothing can be like the very presence of one we love.”

“ There were many awaiting an interview yesterday, were there not ? ”

“ Yes, but not all for the same reason. I asked one who was in the ante-chamber, and who had been occasionally employed by David, if he was waiting to see the king, and he said he should see him, but not now, and behold him, but not nigh. I understand he was waiting to be sentenced for his unfaithfulness. I told him I had a brighter prospect before *me*.”

“ Did you think the presence-chamber very magnificent ? ”

“ I thought it very appropriate, and I looked at all from his point of view, for I had learnt to know and love his tastes in days of old. There was a glorious burst of music while I was there and in majestic cadence I heard one of the airs that he used to sing softly, almost beneath his breath, when hiding in the caves.”

“ Were you alone with the king ? ”

“ Yes, in spite of the crowd. I confess I noticed no one, nor did he seem to me in any way preoccupied with the presence of others. His first word was ‘ Welcome ! ’ and then ‘ well done ! ’ but I cannot tell you how his voice thrilled me ! Erstwhile there had been a touch of sadness in his tones, a weariness, and at times a stern reproof ; but yesterday his voice rang with an exuberant gladness, to which it somehow seemed that my presence contributed. And then his embrace ! It may be from a sort of deference

on the part of our neighbours, or because I have no near relative, but my life has lacked the touch of intimacy for which, somehow, the soul hungers. But though the lack has been noticed, I never dreamed that it would be supplied from Israel's throne! We spoke together of the past, and much was explained that had once been hard to understand. Present circumstances and future prospects were referred to, and the personality of the king seemed to fill every period."

"Was no state business transacted in your presence?"

"Yes, several matters received attention, and I could not fail to notice David's great administrative ability. He seemed born to rule, and you know how much a nation's welfare depends upon the one who holds the reins. Some would call his a 'paternal government,' but what I saw was the skill and integrity of a shepherd-king."

"Your interview was a long one, was it not?"

"It seemed but a moment. As I left the presence I felt an overwhelming longing to go no more out, and yet, if you can understand me, I seem to have been dwelling there ever since."

"And what have been your reflections since the event?"

"I seem to have had a foretaste of some infinitely greater occasion, still future, which will exceed my ideal of bliss far more than the interview came short of it."

"If I may add a wish to your prospect, I would say, 'May we realise it together!'"

Men place their choicest wares for exhibition in carefully prepared showcases; a Christian is God's showcase of wonderful structure in order to exhibit the virtues of Christ.

"In comforting others shalt thou be comforted; in strengthening others shalt thou find strength; in loving others shalt thou be loved."

We are promised grace for to-day, not for to-morrow, why should we go on a warfare to which we have not been sent. Let us wait until the order comes.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.

SOME LESSONS FROM A GLACIER.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Amidst all the wonders of mountain regions there are few things more remarkable than a glacier. Some time ago I had the opportunity of visiting one, and shall not easily forget the long and tough climb over a rock-strewn valley which led to it. Boulders of rock weighing many, many tons, were as plentiful as marbles in a schoolboy's bag, and as I sat under the shade of one of these out of the glare and heat of the noonday sun, certain lessons seemed conveyed to my mind, which I will try to pass on to you.

1. The glacier at first sight might appear comparatively useless, and to serve scarcely any purpose whatever. The reverse is true. Though so silent and lonely, it confers an immense benefit upon the regions below. Some of the largest and most fertilising rivers of Europe flow from glaciers. Do not let us measure the usefulness of people by the noise they make in the world. Composed of thousands of tons of ice as it is, a glacier yet descends to the valley almost without a sound, gladdening and refreshing the thirsty earth below by what it gives forth.

2. But it has to receive continually fresh supplies from above in order to do this. The river may leap out at the lower extremity with rush and noise, but at the other extremity, amidst a silence and loneliness that is scarcely ever broken, the renewal is in constant progress. What teaching we have here. How apt we are amid the rush of life to forget, that, there are lessons which can only be learned in silence, and alone. How prone, too, we are to overlook the fact that if we give out we must also take in; that we must receive to impart. If we learn no more than this from the glacier it will be a lifelong lesson of the utmost value—that it is in silence and loneliness it looks up to heaven to receive from thence what is ultimately conveyed to cities, towns and districts far and near.

3. We may learn, too, from the glacier that if we are to do any real good *we must give our very life—our very selves away*. This is what the glacier does. What it gives is its very self. Let us learn to put our whole soul into our work. If our work is not ourself, it is worth

very little. If we never know what it is to be spent, we shall never achieve much. A well known writer was always prostrate whenever he had finished a new book. Such books tell.

4. Such work—whether it is lessons, business, preaching, or whatever it may be—will cost us something and leave its effect upon us, but it will also produce its effect upon others. All around a glacier are the effects of its gradual descent. It wears the very mountain down, and strews itself with *débris*—rocks, stones, earth are torn from their places and scattered everywhere. The mountain is partly ground to pieces. Is it worth it? Gaze upon the smiling valley with its rich pastures far below, and they will answer. The devastation above is answered by the fertile plain beneath.

5. Here also another lesson is conveyed to us, for some lives are devastated in order that others may become richer. Let us learn to trust. Some good will issue. Some patches of your life may appear to be desolations. Never mind so long as life comes from you to others, and not death. Around the mountain summit the storm clouds often gather, but when they pass, and the sun shines once more, it reveals a benediction left in a fresh fall of snow. If this did not happen the river below would soon disappear.

6. Next, the glacier seems to live two lives. Up above all is purity and peace. Down below, as it nears the earth, its whole character seems to change. The snow and ice are sometimes so dirty in appearance as to be scarcely distinguishable from the ground. Yet it is as necessary for it to descend as it is to keep up the connection with the regions above. So with us. It is very important to be in contact with life. If this is neglected we become useless. It is equally necessary to be familiar with the mountain top of prayer and communion, otherwise we become powerless. We must breathe the upper air, the spirit must renew itself amid the solitude and grandeur of the uplands where intercourse with God is known; it must bask in the sunshine; but it must enjoy these things not to make us transcendental, but that we may be able to bring comfort and help to the world below.

7. There are yet further lessons to be learned from this interesting study. No one would believe that a single glacier could furnish such a supply of water. So we sometimes fail to realise how much one life means to the world. How fruitful may a single life become. What an amount of good the energy of one person, rightly directed, may accomplish. It was once said to Moody, "the world has yet

to learn what God can do through a thoroughly consecrated man." This may be an exaggeration, but it nevertheless contains a profound truth. If has of course already been seen. In three and a half years the Lord Jesus Christ by His works of mercy, and His death, created a new era. It will be said He was more than man. True. Still He was a man—one Who knew no other will than God's, and had no other purpose in life than to serve Him, and therefore He accomplished so much. It is when our very meat is to do the will of Him that sent us, that, our life and labour are not in vain. But let us descend to one who was of like passions with ourselves. The Apostle Paul was described as one who turned the world upside down. How did he accomplish this? By the Holy Spirit of course—but also because he was a man of one object, one passion, one pursuit—like the glacier whose only bent seems to reach the valley, and convey the bounty it receives from heaven to the thirsty land below

8. Further. What a picture of our life the glacier and its river present. It may be compared to a mother and child. The river at first flows beneath the shelter of the glacier like a child under its mother's care; then it seems to break away, frolicking and leaping with childish glee—tumbling, roaring, rushing with impetuous haste in all the energy of youth. Now plunging down a steep gorge, then disappearing altogether. By and by it broadens out, and becomes more silent. Not so much foam, but more depth; less demonstrative but more useful. At length the plain is reached. Hamlets and towns come into view—it begins to see life. Broader, deeper, more majestic still, it flows, until finally, having served its day and generation, it reaches the ocean and disappears. So with ourselves. The buoyancy and high spirits of youth, often difficult to restrain, are succeeded by the more sober habits of early, middle and later manhood, our life is put to some purpose, it runs its course until death stops it—that great ocean which though always receiving is never full. How perfect each stage is in its place. It is just as impossible—indeed it would be out of keeping even if it were possible—to fashion a child at once into a man, as to expect a river to emerge from a glacier down its precipitous and rocky bed with calm and even flow. Let us observe this and learn to make each stage of life appropriate to the occasion. The river is none the less useful, or less majestic afterwards, because of its frolic at its source. But let us also remember that if the same behaviour continued in its subsequent career it would be of little use. "When I was a child, I

spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor. xiii. 11. May our lives be like a river. May the glee of childhood—free and unrestrained—pass into a useful manhood, leaving in its track innumerable blessings, ever fed from above, and ministering as we go, till at last the end of the journey is reached, and

"In the ocean of Thy love,
We lose ourselves in heaven above."

9. The glacier teaches us, too, that there is no waste in the economy of nature, and by inference, that there is none in our lives, if they are directed according to the will of God. The river which flows from its bed, at length as we have seen, loses itself in the ocean, but the ocean gives all that it receives back again to the mountain. There is continual waste, and just as constant recuperation. So with us. What we spend comes back to us in another form. What we give out returns with added blessings. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The one who loves his life, lives to himself, and for himself, and so loses it; he who hates his life, sacrifices it in innumerable ways for the benefit of others, and so keeps it.

The same lesson may be learned from another standpoint. If the mountain continually received without any corresponding process of depletion, the accumulated masses of snow would become a source of danger. So with our natural and spiritual energies. All sorts of calamities arise if they find no proper outlet.

Sometimes the waste *seems* altogether disproportionate to the amount of good. As you climb upward toward the glacier a scene of desolation greets you. For more than a mile perhaps you witness nothing but wreckage. It appears a waste. The same thing, apparently, is the case in human life, sometimes. A devoted Christian, full of energy and enthusiasm, and gifted with every qualification for the work, goes out to the foreign mission field. Some good is done, some work accomplished, but the demands are too great, and in a few short years, when least able to be spared to our sight, he succumbs to the pressure, and his life ends. But this is not the end. Just as through the waste of rocks and stones and earth (which is really the mountain itself), there flows the river carrying life and refreshment below, so a similar river of life often flows to others through the apparent waste of human life. The

mountain is thrown carelessly, and with prodigal waste all around, but if its side is thus torn open it is only to enable it to give forth the living stream that is of more value than all the gems of earth. Does not many a life, too, even before it is terminated, seem a waste? Sorrow, bereavement, loss have devastated it, yet if but some sweet river is flowing through, refreshing and ministering to others, it is not loss, but gain. As through the torn and rent mountain side comes the stream that imparts virtue as it goes, so the one who has suffered most can often sympathise most—the storm-tossed life can breathe the sweetest calm into the lives of others.

We must see the whole of life, and get a peep into eternity as well, before we can properly estimate our gains and losses. It is not enough to look at the waste round the glacier, we must survey as far as the eye can reach, "the pastures clothed with flocks, and the valleys covered over with corn." A man who went out to South Africa, and even went down into a gold mine, never saw a bit of gold while he was there. Once he was told to put his hand into some running water, and he was assured there was gold there, but he never saw any—nothing but discoloured water. Not until he arrived back in England did he see the actual gold, and there upon the quay he saw golden ingots piled up one upon another. May our lives be such that, though often clouded here, the hereafter may reveal the *gold*.

10. This brings us to our closing lesson. If our lives are to be of this character we must take care of our contact with the world. You look sometimes at the lower extremity of a glacier, and you are ready to mistake it for a *dust heap*. Why? It has been too long, and too intimately, in contact with the earth. Up above, it is like a fair angel; down below, it more resembles, in some parts of it, a foul fiend. What a warning—a warning to keep our garments always white, and unspotted by the world. While there is another side to this, to which allusion has already been made, do let us remember that our "life is hid with Christ in God," and to seek the things which are above. If we settle down in the world we must partake of the world's character, just as the glacier gradually assumes the colour of the earth upon which it rests. Hoping, my dear young friends, this may not prove uninteresting, and with every good wish.

Your affectionate friend.

THE EDITOR.

THE BELIEVER'S PATH ECCLESIASTICALLY IN THE PRESENT CONFUSION.

We wish to call the special attention of our readers to the following lecture given in Boston, Thursday, April 7th, 1904.

(Reprinted by permission).

I FEEL in approaching the subject that I have selected, or rather that has been pressed upon me, very much as must the Israelites on their last journey into the land when the word passed through that host "*ye have not passed this way heretofore.*" For so it is with us—never in all the history of the Church of Christ, from the day of Pentecost, has there been the same condition of things as at present. And as the past affords no exact parallel, so do the lessons that God's people then learned afford no adequate help to us to-day. We need to wait on God as did they, and we may surely have the conviction that the resources of God are by no means exhausted, but still fully sufficient even for the present emergencies.

But I speak to a mixed company of varying light, intelligence, exercise, and interest on this matter. Let me first ask then, Is it of any practical importance? Does it affect my life? My testimony? Has God anything to say to it—or is this matter left entirely to my will? In answer will you permit a word of personal experience here, which is probably not mine alone, but may be shared by many of you who now hear me?

When first I was brought back to God, I wondered which among the multitude of opposing churches, He would have me join. I sought counsel of those older and wiser, who gave me this: "it makes little difference with which you unite, only unite *somewhere*, select the one in which your soul is fed, and where the gospel is most faithfully preached, and go there." It seemed unsatisfactory and strange; but it was the best I could get, and for ten years I acted on it. It is because, in the fear of God, I am quite assured that God Himself has a clear path for His own, and some distinct light in His Word on this question, that I desire to speak on it this afternoon.

There are three very depressing phases of the present ecclesiastical position. First, the universal confusion, that all sane people must admit exists, presenting such a sadly marked contrast to the

early chapters of Acts, where all believers were of one mind and heart. In contrast with that harmony we live in a very Babel. Second, this is intensified by the confident *claims* of these opposing companies on all sides, with correspondingly solemn warnings against having anything to do with any of the others. Third, the failures of all the opposing parties, or churches, on all sides. Failure in conduct, in doctrine, and every form of testimony: and this I say not in any spirit of accusation, but identifying myself fully with it. Let me, before proceeding, ask one question, which I will leave your hearts to answer rather than your lips: Do you at least share Paul's ambition "that whether present or absent" you *may be pleasing to Christ?* (2 Cor. v.). Do you at least earnestly desire God's smile and approval, however much you may lack man's or even your brother-believer's? Do you long to know God's will, and at all cost, to do it? I will assume you give an affirmative answer to this.

Then let me give you five broad suggestions or axioms before applying them to details.

First, *Reject, or at least suspect, anything that tends to hide Christ, or that makes you think less of Him or realise less your need of Him* (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3, etc.). We may not know much; but we do know that this is always Satan's desire and purpose. It is far better to be ignorantly in an unscriptural ecclesiastical position; and to be walking with God there, according to the measure of your light; than to be in the most perfectly scriptural position, and your heart cold towards the Lord Jesus.

Second, *Reject everything that makes you think evil of other believers; that tends to narrow your heart towards all saints.* This too is a distinct characteristic of Satan's work; for he is distinctively the accuser of the brethren, and the prime agent in introducing discord and acrimonies between the saints of God. One guarding word will be necessary on this point before closing.

Third, *Reject everything that necessitates your going outside your Bible,* and becoming occupied with controversial pamphlets, etc. The *Word* of God is still, down to the end, sufficient for the perfection of the *Man* of God. No failure at any time affects or weakens the authority of that Word.

Fourth, *Never go beyond your faith.* And this must be founded alone on a clear apprehension of the truth as found in the Word of God; not by your love for any individual; not by your confidence in any teacher; not by your recognition of the spirituality or activity of any company. All these are helpful, but must not eclipse, in the slightest, the sole authority of God's Word.

Fifth, *Never linger behind your conscience; i.e., act promptly on what you know, or you will lose it.* The danger consists not in not having truth, but in holding, what we have "in unrighteousness." How much have we all lost in this way?

In going more closely into details I desire to be very simple and practical.

You are, we will assume, connected with one of the evangelical churches in Boston and you have seen nothing to make you feel at all uneasy or unhappy there. There your parents were before you; there God has met and blessed you with the knowledge of His salvation; there are the friends you esteem. Why should you move? Under such conditions, our fourth axiom applies, and one may unhesitatingly say that your path is quite clear to remain where you are, as long as you possibly can do so happily.

But suppose some true gleam of light from God's Word has affected your conscience, and it is more or less uneasy and perplexed. Surely, you may say, these various denominations are nothing more nor less than *divisions* in the One Church, either quite unknown in apostolic days; or even in their incipiency, *clearly condemned.* "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by those of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith I am of Paul and I of Appollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?" "For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith I am of Paul; and another I am of Appollos, are ye not carnal?"

You ask yourself, "Was it then so sharply forbidden to say, "I am of Paul," and is it now permitted to say, "I am of Luther?" Was it forbidden to say, "I am of Peter," and allowed to say, "I am of Wesley?" Was it forbidden even to say, "I am of Christ," when this holy name was used as a party-badge to separate or

distinguish from other Christians? Is it not perfectly clear that what is forbidden is *any* name that would deny the absolute unity of all believers, as members of the One Body of Christ; and that this clear principle tells equally against "I am a Presbyterian," or "I am a Baptist," or "I am an Episcopalian," or "I am a Congregationalist," or anything of that kind, that does not cover "all saints."

But, then, where can we turn where the same thing is not? If we thus are compelled to turn away from the avowed denominations, are those known as "*Brethren*" in a better, or still sadder case? Let me still speak in the spirit of sorrowful confession, not accusation, and say that here the separations and divisions are newer—fresher. The wounds that have largely healed or become callous and cicatrized in the avowed sects, are still all quivering with pain amid "*The Brethren*." Far more "*feeling*" is there. And where does the reproach of division lie more justly and evidently than amongst those of us who, by profession, most strongly condemn it? Here, too, we find practically the same schools of believers, only the names are now "open" and "exclusive" with sub-divisions, and sub-divisions (of these I speak with shame as being one with my brethren in the confusion), composed of those who pin their confidence to certain leaders, and honored teachers. Shall I join one of these?

There are three things that powerfully attract me to all:

First, the scripturalness and lovely simplicity of their *gathering to the One holy and attractive Centre, Christ* (cf. Matt. xviii. 20). Here, at least, there is no rival attraction in sweet music; no sensuous ritual; no oratory; no learned essays; no carnal sensationalism; no worldly entertainments; no unworthy methods of collecting money: In all this my spirit rejoices.

Next, the simplicity of gathering *professedly in fellowship with all saints*. Every Christian heart springs to this with instinctive delight. Here all carnal distinctions are dropped, and every believer, everywhere, may be recognised as in the one divine circle of fellowship. I speak of what all profess and claim—not of the practical failure in carrying this out.

Finally, *the scripturalness of ministry*. Here all the responsibility for this is not heaped on one poor man, as if the possession of one gift—assuming this to be the case, which often it is not—

necessitates the possession of all. Here, at least in the principles professed, there is full liberty for the Holy Spirit to minister through whom He will (1 Cor. xii). Conscience surely bows to this.

But against all these there is still the repellent fact of the spirit of contention, strife and division that may well make any enquirer hesitate. Must we indeed examine into all these obscure, and often complex, questions that have been coming up one after the other for the last sixty years? *Can* we do this? We have not the competency for it—not even the materials. Many of the witnesses are no longer here, but have gone where strife is not; whilst all confute each other in a way in which it is next to impossible, if not absolutely so, to discern where the truth lies, or whether the error or fault is all on one side, and which is that. And what would be the result of such an examination? Am I to throw myself into one of these many parties and adopt its shibboleth as a war-cry of accusation against my brethren in the others? Does that commend itself to any mind in the least Spirit-taught? No—a thousand times no. If I know nothing else I know *that*. Our third axiom surely applies here, and if the Word of God alone in our hands, with the Spirit in our hearts, is not sufficient to lead to a conclusion, then the “question” to be settled may be *ignored*. One may feel quite confident of this.

But what then does Scripture tell me to join? Well, we at least get a suggestive hint as to this in Acts iv. 23, “being let go they went to their own company.” *They* do not seem to have had any great difficulty; and we need only ask, what was their own company? The answer is simple: The company of all believers in the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem; and *that* is the company the Spirit of God within us will ever lead us to join, as simply and naturally as I have seen a sheep “let go,” after being separated from the flock, run back to and join *its* company. The sheep had no difficulty. It did not stop to meditate; even if some trouble had scattered the flock it just ran to those *nearest*, and these, in their turn, ever sought to re-establish the broken unity of the whole flock, or at least act upon the truth of the vital unity of the whole flock. We may learn something even from sheep. My company—your company—our own company is that of “all saints,” and we must own no other. So Acts ix. 26: Paul, hitherto known only as a persecutor, seeks, in accord with the new sheep-nature, to *join the flock*. The

sheep distrust him, till Barnabas speaks for him, and then he is with them "going out and coming in" with perfect confidence and liberty.

Now with new birth, is implanted in every child the same divine nature that necessarily leads all to flow together around the Great and Good Shepherd of the sheep. So whenever one finds a few real true sheep gathered together to the Name of the Lord Jesus simply as believers, avowedly and confessedly in fellowship with all saints, and in separation from wickedness one may, should, and must feel quite free to identify oneself with them. And that, not by any formal ecclesiastical ceremony, which, in itself, identifies one with that one company or confederacy of companies only, and in rejection of other saints; but simply to be with them, with the divinely-given liberty of "coming in and going out" to every other such company anywhere and everywhere. But if our brethren refuse us this liberty—if they neither themselves "receive the brethren and forbid them that would and cast them out of the assembly," then must they bear the mighty responsibility of direct disobedience to God's Word (3 John x.). Yet must we even in this case, in such a day of difficulty, maintain an attitude of grace towards all, with self-judgment, would we have the Lord's approval. A spirit of retaliation or hardness is surely not of God **in these days.**

Now to bring these questions home very practically suppose yourself a stranger in Ephesus one Sunday morning of the year 60 or thereabouts, with all the confusion of the present day in your mind. You meet an Ephesian Christian, and you ask him to kindly direct you to "the Episcopal Church." He stops dumb-founded, looks you up and down, and replies: "I don't know what you mean." "Perhaps," you say, "you are better acquainted with the "Methodist." "Methodist—Methodist—never heard of it."

"Surely you have a Baptist church?"

"The ordinance of baptism I am acquainted with, but I know of no Christians divided from others on it."

"That is strange," you say; "may I ask if you have not at least a meeting of "Exclusive Brethren?"

The poor Ephesian begins to look distressed, as doubtful of his questioner's sanity, as he says: "*What brethren? Exclusive brethren!* Do you mean as excluding wickedness; if so, we are all that?"

"No, not as a matter of fact; but it is a name applied to some Christians to distinguish them from others called Open Brethren. I was going to ask if you had any '—— Brethren,' or '—— Street Brethren,' or '—— Street Brethren'; but I confess I am discouraged at your lack of intelligence on these matters."

"My dear sir, you speak a foreign language to me, and it sounds very much like the language of Ashdod (Neh. xiii.). It is an outlandish Philistine tongue, that it surprises me you can speak without a blush of shame. I know nothing of all this jargon. We have no Christians here, but simply brethren, who have found such overwhelming attraction in the gospel of God: that God has loved them, and given His beloved Son, that those who were naturally most bitter enemies as Jew and Roman, or most far apart socially, as master and slave, or differed most in refinement and culture, as Greek and Barbarian, love each other with a love that only hungers for opportunities of evidencing itself.

"There is but one Church in Ephesus; it is called the Church of God, and if all who compose it could come together in one place, we should do so; but the fact that this is not possible under present conditions, does not in the least affect the principle. We are one; and although we find it necessary to gather to One Name we love, in different localities; each of these local assemblies is but an expression or representation of the whole; as indeed the Church in Ephesus is of the whole Church of God on earth; and this, in its turn, of that still wider view of the same thing that includes every believer from Pentecost to His Coming. We will not admit, nor permit, anything that denies this unity. Thus we will know nothing of your 'Episcopal' or 'Methodist' churches—whatever these words may mean—nor of your 'Exclusive' or 'Open Brethren'—which are still more mysterious—for not one of these can possibly be a representation, or expression, of the whole church; but are names evidently assumed or accepted to distinguish some, from other members of the One Body. You speak of 'intelligence,' I'm afraid you have, under cover of a fancied intelligence, really lost the simplest elementary truths of the Church. I repeat, we are brethren, we are *brethren*, simply brethren in fellowship with

all saints, and we disavow with loathing, those strange and ungodly distinctions, which our beloved apostle Paul has already severely condemned in Corinth."

Now would that have been Scriptural in Ephesus A.D. 60? *If so, why not in Boston, 1904?* Does our failure and sin weaken God's Word? Is our responsibility *less* because we have sinned more? That would be a strange way of evading responsibility.

But it gives me at least my clue. "I will not join any sect, or party, nor separate from any saint."* Wherever I can clearly recognise sheep gathered to the Shepherd, I will gladly, *hungrily*, be with them, if they will receive me simply as one who, by unspeakable mercy and grace, has already been received by Christ to the glory of God; *and here I stand till He comes and puts all in order.*

One important guard before I close. There are three degrees of evil recognised. First there is that which appears unavoidable for such as we, with an evil nature still within; our feet are constantly being defiled and need washing. The most blessed Christians are those who can wash one another's feet (John xiii.).

Next, there is the sudden fall, the being tripped up through lack of watchfulness, the being overtaken in a fault (Gal. vi. 1). Here still greater spirituality is needed. It takes no spirituality at all to judge, to condemn, to hit, to cast out; but they who are spiritual will *restore*, considering themselves lest they also be tempted.

Lastly, there is the persistent delight in evil, whether doctrinal or moral. What is to be done here? First, as ever, *self-judgment* (1 Cor. v. 27); a clear eye is very necessary; no beam must be in it, and then, but not till then, solemn action; "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 13).

First is *walking through mud* as all sheep here do; the second is *falling in mud* as all sheep, if not careful, may do; the third is *wallowing in mud* as no sheep ever should do.

The first calls for *washing*, the second for *lifting up* or *restoring*, the last for *putting away*; and never are we where these may not be carried out by the feeblest two or three, for it is not numbers that give validity or efficiency to discipline, but the holy Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; absolute, present, living dependence on Him in their midst.

* Who is walking as one.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

W.L.—The term “ Hebrew ” denoted the nationality to which Abram belonged, as distinct from the Canaanites, &c. As to Lot being called Abram’s brother, we often find such instances in Scripture. In some cases “ father ” is put in place of “ grandfather,” &c. The “ trained ” servants, as is said, were “ born in his house.” There was another class of servant—the *hired* servant—not born in the house, and holding an inferior position to the other.

From Earlestown.—Is James v. 14, 15, applicable in these days ? This is a perennial question. The difficulty is, in the present confusion and decline of faith and power in the church, to find the elders. *If the elders can be produced and they possess the necessary faith, well and good, by all means let it be done.* In the abstract, this Scripture is certainly applicable, we know of no other which cancels it, but it has fallen into disuse from sheer inability to comply with the conditions. The calling in of a doctor does not necessarily clash with it. God can use the doctor’s remedies just as effectually as anything else if it pleases Him. Though let us have at least as much faith in God as in the doctor. Our great lack is want of faith, and of the Holy Spirit (to which the oil has perhaps some reference), and if we were full of faith and the Spirit, it would be better for both *body and soul.*

To the Editor, “ The Faith and the Flock.”

SIR,—One or two criticisms have reached me on “ Shadows,”^{p. 36} due to condensation of the address in the shorthand summary so ably given.

I, of course, believe that Christians *are* going to heaven ; and should not occupy your space with stating this, had I not received pages of texts to prove what I am supposed to deny. I trust this letter will suffice to show that I hold all the points of our common faith, and that any statement in my paper that appears to cast any doubt on this is due, as I have said, to some slight error in abbreviating my address, which has been so ably done by the honorary reporter.

Yours truly,

Dec. 31st, 1908.

AUTHOR OF “ SHADOWS.”

ANSWERS TO OPEN QUESTION.

Answer to Question No. 1.—"But we all with unveiled face beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord are being changed into the same image, from glory unto glory, as by the Lord the Spirit."

The word which is here translated "beholding and reflecting" contains the double meaning as expressed by these two words.

As mirrors in early days were made of polished metal, the image was not only beheld but also reflected. That is what takes place when we—believers—gaze upon the glorified face of our beloved Lord. Was not Stephen a partial illustration of this? (Acts vi.15 and vii. 55, 56).

Question No. 2.—Clearly the meaning of the passage as a whole is that the veil is removed from the face of the believer.

S. B. B.

2 COR. III. 18.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

(1) The words "reflecting as in a mirror," have been used by some as giving a suitable meaning to the one Greek word *Katoptrizomenoi* (from *Katoptron*, a mirror). But the word also has the simple force of "seeing clearly," or "looking at."

(2) The reference of the Chapter is undoubtedly to Exod. xxxiv. 33-35, where two things are stated. First, that Moses was privileged to commune with Jehovah with no vail on his face. Second, that when he went forth to carry Jehovah's communications to the people, he veiled his face, that they might not fear to approach.

2 Cor. iii. seems to refer to *both* these facts. On the one hand, *we*, like Moses (and unlike Israel, upon whose heart the vail still lies) are privileged to draw near to God with no barrier to perfect communion. On the other hand, the Lord, as the One through Whom the Ministry of the New Covenant comes, has no vail on His face. Supremely great as is the glory that shines from Him there is nothing in it to terrify us, for the Ministry of the New Covenant is one of unmixed blessing.

Yours faithfully,

ADELPHOS.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

WE shall be glad to receive brief answers to the following question, which, for the sake of clearness, we will separate into three divisions. 1. Why did God meet with the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert, and not at Jerusalem, whither he had gone to worship? 2. Why were not any of the Apostles, who were at Jerusalem at the time, used to enlighten him? (As far as we know the eunuch saw none of them). 3. Has this any bearing upon, and any connection with, the close of the seventh and opening of the ninth chapters? (See Acts viii. 26-40).

We are extremely thankful for the answers to our former question, which we were able to publish last month. They bring out the double fact, so important to see, that not only is there no veil upon Christ, but as we apprehend what is set forth in Him, there is no veil upon us. The veil is still upon the hearts of the Children of Israel, because they do not apprehend Christ as the One Who has met all the demands of law, so that there is a change

of covenant, God no longer exacting, but giving. Apart from Christ, man must ever regard God as demanding something, and this thought underlies all the false religious systems of earth, including those of Christendom. The truth is, instead, we gaze upon One Who, as Man, met every demand; and in that very One we learn that God is for us, and all that He is pleased, for His righteousness sake, to be to us. This removes the veil from our hearts— hearts which shrank from demands, because unable to meet them— but which now delight themselves in all that is freely ministered— righteousness and life—through Him Who did meet them. The glory of Christ thus speaks of two things. One, how perfectly all the claims of a holy God have been met; and the other, that “the Father’s face of radiant grace shines now in light on us.” As we gaze upon Christ, and see all that God is as revealed in Him, and is now to us, we are changed into the same image, and consequently reflect His glory.

Very gratefully do we express our thanks to those who have rendered assistance in spreading this Magazine, either by ordering further copies, or by monetary help. In each case of the latter kind an acknowledgment has been sent direct, with two exceptions, viz., J.S. Larkhall, 1/-; and Phil. i. 6., 5/-. Our friends will be glad to know that the circulation increases, and has doubled itself since the commencement. We need that repeated twice more, and then our aims will have been realised, with something to spare. There is still, therefore, a good deal to be done. But it will be done, we have no doubt. For with God nothing is impossible, and our trust is in Him, Who has already given so many proofs of His support and goodwill.

“**From the beginning.**” This is quite distinct from “*in the beginning*” of John i. *That* implies Christ was there before there was any beginning. *This*, however, has the force of the commencement of a new era. It is not so much a question of fixing a particular date, as it is an event which marked something completely new. It is an event so important that it constitutes a beginning. Thus, further on in the same epistle (1 John iii. 8) we read: “the devil sinneth from the beginning.” This was the beginning of sin, and the devil, we may therefore conclude, was the first to sin.

Sin was so stupendous a fact, so far reaching in its effects, raising such tremendous issues that it formed a beginning, *i.e.*, it was the beginning of a new era. Attach then this idea—not some particular date, whether A.D. 1, or A.D. 30—to the words as they refer to Christ in Chapter i. v. 1, and we see at once what stupendous importance they lend to the fact of His becoming flesh. It marked another beginning. As sin marked the beginning of eternal woe to some. So this meant the beginning to others of eternal blessedness. For man it is the beginning of all beginnings.

THE FERN AND THE MOSS.

There was fern on the mountain and moss on the moor
 And the ferns were the rich and the mosses the poor ;
 And the glad breeze blew gaily, from heaven it came,
 And the fragrance it shed over each was the same.
 And the warm sun shone brightly and gilded the fern,
 And smiled on the lowly born moss in its turn ;
 And the cool dews of night on the mountain fern fell,
 And brightly they glistened on mosses as well ;
 And the fern loved the mountain, the moss loved the moor
 For the ferns were the rich, and the mosses the poor.
 But the keen blast blew keenly, the sun waxed high,
 And the ferns they were broken, and withered and dry ;
 And the moss on the moorland grew faded and pale,
 And the fern and the moss shrank alike from the gale.
 So the fern on the mountain, the moss on the moor
 Were withered and black, where they flourished before.
 Then the fern and the moss they grew wiser in grief,
 And each turned to the other for rest and relief ;
 And they planned that wherever the fernroots should grow,
 There surely the moss should lie sparkling below.
 And the keen blast blew bleakly, the sun waxed fierce,
 But no wind and no sun to their cool roots could pierce ;
 For the fern threw her shadow the green moss upon,
 Where the dew ever sparkled, undried by the sun.
 When the graceful fern trembled before the keen blast,
 The moss guarded her roots till the stormwind had passed.
 So no longer the winds parched the roots of the one,
 And the other was safe from the rays of the sun.
 And thus, and forever, where'er the ferns grow,
 There surely the mosses lie sparkling below ;
 And thus they both flourish where naught grew before,
 And they both decked the woodland, and mountain and moor.

“ BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER.” —*Selected.*

There is light enough in the Bible for those who wish to see and there is darkness enough to confound those of opposite desires.

What good is it for men to break up all the old safe roads to heaven ? They have made us no ladders to take their place yet.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition. 131

CHAPTER II. (*Continued*), vv. 6-15.

“WHAT IS MAN”? “WE SEE JESUS.”

Verses 6-9, which we considered a little last month, raise the momentous question, What is man? Surely one of the most profound questions which can be asked, and, to mankind in general, one of the deepest interest.

The truth is that for the purposes of God's glory, man is to hold a position second to none among created beings. If we look at him as he is at present, we can scarcely realise this. He is still, as he has been for centuries, degraded by sin, often sinking lower than the beasts which perish; living in ignorance of God, of holiness, and happiness; having no higher aims than self-indulgence, and no thought beyond the passing day. But all this is the effect of the fall, and man's own wilfulness, and not the purpose of God for him. Man, in himself, is ruined, hopelessly and irretrievably. By no power of his own can he regain his lost estate, or raise himself from the fall. We speak of the first man. “The first man is of the earth, earthy.” But there is the second Man—and the second Man is “the Lord out of heaven”; and it is in Him, and all who are His, that God's purpose—a purpose which dates before time began—will be fulfilled.

The first answer to the question What is man? is, *an object of attention on the part of God*. “What is man that Thou art mindful of him?” He is never out of God's mind. He never was, for we were “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world”; and again, “His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (Eph. i. 4., 2 Tim. i. 9). He is not now. For God does us good, sending rain from heaven and fruitful seasons. He daily loadeth us with benefits. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry: “Yet, the Lord thinketh upon me.” “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of”; and many another testimony might be quoted to the fact that “the Lord is mindful of His own.”

“The Lord is mindful of us, He will bless us”; are again words which speak of His present mindfulness. “Thy walls are continually before me,” and again, “I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.” But will He ever forget? Will man ever pass from the mind of God? Never. “In the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Eph. ii. 7).

Truly we may exclaim, “what *is* man, that Thou art mindful of him?” Was not God mindful of his every need when first he was created? Not only Eden, but the world at large, bears overwhelming evidence of this. How amply this earth was furnished in view of man becoming its inhabitant. What vast coal beds stored up through past ages! What abundance of material for all the uses to which man might put it! What treasure stored beneath earth’s surface for man to discover and employ! What gold, silver and precious stones; what metals of every kind; what rivers of oil, and springing wells; what soil, taking ages to prepare, capable of bringing forth “food for cattle and herb for the service of man”! The sun shining in the heavens; every shower which waters the earth, yea, everything, from the drop of dew that rests upon a blade of grass, up to the rainbow that spans the heavens, makes us exclaim, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of Him?”

But, more wonderful still, if possible, is the thought that God *visits* man. Not satisfied with ministering to his wants, and taking account of his varied needs, the blessed God seeks man’s friendship and companionship. In dreams; in waking hours; in silent watches; in times of distress; in periods of perplexity; after hot temptation and strenuous toil, God visits man. “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and **He took** one of his ribs, and closed up instead the flesh thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made **He** a woman, and **brought her unto the man.**” When God visits man, He generally comes with something bountiful in **His hand**. The next visit was of a different character, but still it speaks in its own way, and that a very peculiar one, of the Divine interest in man. “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day . . . and the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto Him, Where art thou?” God could

not depute anyone else to visit man on this occasion, He must come Himself and see what was the matter ; and so He walks in the garden, and speaks. What a visit to this guilty pair. What an enquiry. Where art thou ? Adam was missed by his visitor. But God could not leave without seeing him, and so He calls. If He had turned His back on them there and then, and for ever, we need not have wondered. But the circumstances demanded, and God's love demanded, that God must see them and speak to them. And He cannot go away without leaving them a promise, little as they deserved it. " I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Time fails to tell of other visits—to Abraham in his tent ; to Jacob asleep and alone on the desert ; to Moses in the burning bush ; to Joshua outside Jericho ; to Gideon as he threshed wheat ; to David, and to others. We must now pass on to consider the *place* God gave to man, and which He intends he shall eventually fill. "*Thou madest him a little lower than (or a little while inferior to) the angels ; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*" The place for man is at the head of creation. He is very small and weak compared with other objects in creation. This the Psalmist seems to feel when he says, " When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which Thou hast ordained ; *what* is man that Thou art mindful of him, &c." (Ps. viii. 3-4). In making this comparison, the Psalmist calls attention to the insignificance of man. His excellence, however, lies in his quality, not quantity. He was made in the image and likeness of God. " So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him ; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it ; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth " (Gen. i. 27-28).

The Lordship of Adam is emphasised in the fact that he gave names to all the living creatures. " And whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof." He, himself, was subject to but one law. His tenure of office ; the permanency of his position, all depended upon this law being kept inviolate.

Adam transgressed, and lost all. Thus we have to turn to Jesus Christ for the realisation of God's thoughts for man. In Him God more than recovers His pleasure, and man more than regains his lost position and blessing.

Thus, though the first head of creation lost all, all was not lost. "We see Jesus." For the final and adequate answer to the question "What is man?" we must look at Him. Only as we study Him, and become acquainted with Him, can we at all fathom the meaning of the question we have already been considering, "What is man, that Thou art *mindful* of Him? or the son of man that Thou *visitest* him." These words gather to themselves a new meaning, and a new mystery, as they are seen to refer to Jesus; and yet at the same time, they find their true bearing and explanation. Jesus—the Man—accounts for all that is said here of man. He becomes the solution of everything. He explains why MAN has such a place; why God should be so mindful of him and visit him. *God's own Son was to become man*—this explains all. And so it comes to pass that after indicating that man is to have a position not even allotted to angels, for the world to come, is to be in subjection to man, not to them; and after giving us in divinely-inspired words God's thoughts about man, we are immediately directed to Jesus as the one to Whom it all refers, and in Whom all is to be made good. "We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus."

Yet God could not bring all His purposes to pass without taking account of sin; and death which had entered in by sin. For Jesus is not to be alone. This fact distinguishes this chapter from the previous one. In Chapter i. it is **One Person** eclipsing every other, here it is the same one in company with others. As man He will not be alone. He is seen bringing the "many sons" to glory; the sanctifier, along with the sanctified—one company and one kindred: He is seen in the midst of the assembly leading the praises of those to whom He has declared the Father's Name; and He can say "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me."

How is all this to be brought to pass? How are the "many sons" to be brought to glory? They are by nature children of wrath. How can the "sanctifier" change sinners into the

“sanctified” ? How can One in intimate relationship to, and perfect acquaintance with, the Father, take His place in the midst of those afar off, lost and dead ? How can He say “ I and the children,” when He alone deserved that place ? Jesus must undergo *the suffering of death*. If ever we were to be brought into His place, He must take ours. *He* could be crowned with glory and honour, even in His lifetime. The Mount of transfiguration is the witness of that, as the waters of Jordan had been, to some extent, previously, but all that glory and honour, which by right belonged to Him, could not have imparted life to our dead souls, or have taken away one stain of sin. Nor would it have told us all that our God is. What that glory and honour, which He received from God the Father on that holy mount, does tell us is, that, He Who was fit for the highest station was equal to taking the lowest—He Who was fit to enter heaven according to His own perfection, was the One alone able to taste death for everything outside.

This was “ by the grace of God,” we are told. How such words reveal the glory of Christ, and distinguish Him, though man, from all who precede, or follow Him. Adam’s death, and the death of all his descendants, was endured as a well deserved penalty inflicted by divine justice. Death had no claim upon this one. It was by the grace of God. He *tasted* it, that in Him we might find salvation from it and be brought to glory.

What grace ! that One altogether worthy should suffer for the unworthy ; that the guiltless should bear the judgment of the guilty ; that the Son of God should take the place of condemned sinners ; that the One Who had life in Himself should voluntarily taste death.

Does not Jesus rise before our souls in all this, superlatively great and precious ? Can we not truly say, as all this grace comes before us, “ we see Him ” ? Where else can we look for one like Him ? One willing to suffer, that all God’s purposes for man might be fulfilled. Behold the One for Whom all was destined, to Whom everything will be made subject ! The first man to gratify himself disobeyed God and ruined all. This One suffered, and by His obedience unto death delivered all—the many sons, and creation brought into the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God.

It was necessary for God’s glory that He should suffer. “ *For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things,*

in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Christ was perfectly willing to tread that path, as well as perfectly able. How blessed to see such obedience and self-sacrifice in One Who was human as well as divine. Surrendering Himself absolutely for God's glory on the one hand, and equally for our benefit on the other. And we through His sufferings are being brought to glory, to have place and part with Him eternally. The salvation we are called to participate in is the "salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." And what glory! If the scene to which unfallen man was first introduced was fair to look upon, if God could survey it and behold it was "very good," what a scene has not God prepared for Jesus—the One Who has done so much for Him, and was so much to Him? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

Christ is Lord of Glory, but, wonder of wonders, He is not to be alone.

"The sons of ignorance and night
Shall dwell in the eternal light
Through the eternal love."

It is the fact of our association with Christ which chiefly characterizes this second chapter. Again, let us repeat, "We see Jesus," but we also see the "many sons." We see the Sanctifier, but we also see the "sanctified." We see the One Who is in the bosom of the Father, declaring that Name to His "brethren," and singing His praises in their midst. We also hear Him saying "Behold, I *and the children.*" In Chapter i., He is presented as the Son—the creator of the worlds—the One in Whom every ray of the Divine Glory is, and will be, seen—the Upholder of all things—the Purger of our sins—and the sole occupier of that supreme place, at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In all this—all that so truly belongs to Him—we are not seen. But here it is **Jesus**—and as Man, He has companions—we can be near to Him, and like Him. He became Man and accomplished redemption that it might be so. The Creator and upholder of all worlds, of the first chapter, is also the Man, Christ Jesus, Who sat weary on the well, and was anointed with the spikenard; the One Who could bear the burden of our sins, when divine justice dealt

with Him about them, could also say, "handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." Mystery of mysteries, but how precious to the heart to know that the One to Whom all the greatness and glory of the first chapter belong is also the Jesus of the second chapter, and we are one with Him.

Delivered from everything by His death, we are being brought to glory. But on the way, what foretastes, what entertainments, what delights may be ours. The sorrows that He bore, the sufferings of the Cross when made sin, the tasting of death vicariously, have delivered us from all our fears, and left us free to enjoy His company. By His work, no stain and no shame are left to the believer, the accusations of Satan fall harmless, and the terrors of death cease to appal. He claims us as His brethren. Can any harm ever come to such? But may we not also ask ourselves (if we have been delivered from all our fears) whether we really enter, as we should, into the meaning of those words, "*both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.*" Not only are we to know that Jesus having tasted death for us, has delivered us from fear of death, but to know, our oneness with Him—not only saved, but sanctified. What an inconceivably blessed place our Lord Jesus must occupy as Man before God. Well, God sees us as He does Christ—one generation—one stock. No longer guilty, hell-deserving sinners now. No longer subject to judgment now, or under the authority of darkness, but of Christ's order—one with Him in kindred—**His Brethren.**

Two things are connected with this. They are mentioned in the following verse, in order that we may know what is involved in being His brethren. Verse 12 reads: "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." We must know the Father, first of all, or how can we apprehend what it means to be in this relationship of brethren to Christ. Second, if the Father is known, praise must follow, and Christ takes His place in the midst of His own, leading their praises to the Father.

Do we ever realise this? Christ came out of death, having trusted God all through in spite of darkness and desertion, and delivered at last by His power—Christ, returned victorious over all His foes, sings praises. That ineffable note of gladness and triumph struck by Christ is to be taken up by us, for we share in

the great salvation. Exodus xv. gives us to some extent a picture of it. The salvation of Jehovah is known, for Pharaoh's power has been overthrown, and God's people delivered. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Here it is **Moses** and the children of Israel. In Heb. ii. it is **Christ and His brethren**. We share in His victory, and He the first-born among many brethren leads their praise.

It is the One Who put His trust in God and was delivered Who sings. So the next verse "*I will put my trust in Him.*" And again "*Behold I and the children which God hath given Me.*" He trusted God though He appeared to labour in vain, and spend His strength for nought, for Israel did not acknowledge Him, but God gave Him children. We are His, and He is ours for ever, and one day He will present us with Himself before God and say, "Behold, I and the children Thou hast given Me."

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them who, through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

This is, indeed, salvation. The power of Satan is annulled, and the terrors of death are gone. The "prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered." And in company with the One Who has done all this, we learn our identification with Him, and our sanctification—separated from all evil unto God. He Who entered into all on our side, delights to call us brethren, and introduce us to all on His side. He leads us to glory, and He leads us to God. What cause indeed, for praise. And oh! the joy of praising with Christ.

What is Man? Those who have by faith seen Jesus can answer that question. Our thoughts of man are no longer limited to a slave of sin, a captive to Satan, one subject to death; but as we see Jesus, we see a Man crowned with glory and honour, God His everlasting portion, and He everything to God. While eventually, things in heaven, as well as things on earth, will be brought into subjection to Him. And it is with that One we, through grace, are

inseparably linked. He suffered *alone*. But He is alone no longer. He is the Leader of "many sons," who sing on their way to glory, and He praising in their midst. Thank God, we have not to look at ourselves for an answer to our question. We have only to look at our Deliverer, Leader, and Sanctifier—the One crowned with glory and honour, and learn what that meaneth, "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are all of one*, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." To be near Him, and like Him, is heaven. 197

"SAFE."

Safe in Jehovah's keeping,
 Led by His glorious arm,
 God is Himself my refuge,
 A present help from harm.
 Fears may at times distress me,
 Grievs may my soul annoy ;
 God is my strength and portion,
 God my exceeding joy.
 Safe in Jehovah's keeping,
 Led by His glorious arm, &c.

Safe in Jehovah's keeping,
 Safe in temptation's hour,
 Safe in the midst of perils,
 Kept by Almighty power.
 Safe when the tempest rages,
 Safe though the night be long ;
 E'en when my sky is darkest
 God is my strength and song.
 Safe in Jehovah's keeping,
 Led by His glorious arm. &c.

Sure is Jehovah's promise,
 Nought can my hope assail ;
 Here is my soul's sure anchor,
 Entered within the veil.
 Blest in His love eternal,
 What can I want beside !
 Safe through the blood that cleanseth,
 Safe in the Christ that died.
 Safe in Jehovah's keeping,
 Led by His glorious arm, &c.

Lack CHRIST and have nothing ;
 Have CHRIST and lack nothing.

No carefulness, O child of GOD,
 In nothing careful be :
 But cast thou all thy care on HIM
 Who always cares for thee.

ECLIPSE—HE SUPERSEDES.

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have unfolded in some detail the wonderful transformation made possible through the Cross of Calvary.

It is a Book, not exactly of *contrast*, but of *supersession*, of eclipse. The natural law of eclipse is for the moon, a non-luminous and a merely light-reflecting body, to pass before the Sun and thus obscure its beneficent light and heat. The opposite obtains in the spiritual eclipse of Hebrews; the Sun—"The Son"—shines forth in all His solitary grandeur, and nothing can be placed in contrast with Him.

In Chapter I. God speaking "in Son" supersedes prophets; and even angels.

In Chapter II. The Man installed through suffering in glory, supersedes the man who lost all through pride, in the Garden.

Chapter III. "The Son" over His own house supersedes Moses and his house.

Chapter IV. The Rest—God's Rest—Christ, supersedes the rest of Canaan.

Chapter V. The Great Priest—Christ—supersedes in every way, Aaron.

Chapter VI. The forerunner—Christ—reaches the goal within the veil and supersedes the "beginnings."

Chapter VII. The new order of "The Priest" for ever "after the order of Melchisedec," supersedes the Levitical.

Chapter VIII. The Minister of the Sanctuary and the true Tabernacle—Christ—and the new covenant in Christ's blood, supersede the Tabernacle "made according to the pattern in the Mount," and the first covenant "made old."

Chapter IX. He—Christ—enters once for all the Holy Place with His own blood, superseding Priests who only entered once a year, and that with the blood of bulls and of goats, which could never put away sin.

Chapter X. The Law, the shadow of good things, superseded by the "Living One," the substance.

Chapter XI. The portrait gallery of Old Testament giants in faith superseded by Christ the "beginner and completer" of this divine pathway.

Chapter XII. Mount Sinai superseded by Mount Sion.

Chapter XIII. A Tabernacle of Sacrifice superseded by a Temple of Praise.

"He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely One."

Oh! fix our earnest gaze
 So wholly Lord on Thee
 That with Thy beauty occupied
 We elsewhere *none* may see.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

EPHESIANS III. 19.

Great was indeed the love of Christ,
 To leave His throne on high,
 To come to seek and save the lost,
 And in their place to die.

Oh! who can tell what grief was His,
 When hanging on the tree?
 He bore the smiting and the stripes
 That we might healéd be.

This life He spent in doing good,
 And healing the oppressed.
 He bid the weary come to Him,
 That He might give them rest.

The Gospel to the poor He preached,
 The multitude He fed;
 He comforted the sorrowing,
 To life He raised the dead.

He cleansed the lepers, healed the sick,
 Gave eyesight to the blind,
 His ceaseless acts of power and grace,
 How sweet to call to mind!

He is the same, though now in heaven,
 And waiteth to receive
 And give eternal life to all
 Who in His name believe.

Then, come to Him, His open arms
 Are open to embrace
 All those who in His blesséd Name
 Their confidence will place.

His people's great High Priest in heaven,
 At God's right hand on high,
 He ever lives to intercede
 For those He has brought nigh.

We wait to see Him face to face,
 What wondrous bliss 'twill be
 With Christ, the well-beloved of God,
 To spend eternity.

THE LONGING SOUL.

“If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink.”—John vii. 37.

IT is most important in the interests of Christianity generally that we give most earnest heed to sound doctrine. Every child of God should be deeply exercised as to this in these days of abounding error. It is also of equal importance in the interests of one's own soul, and practical Christian life, particularly, that the heart should be kept right with the Lord Himself—occupied with Him—finding its resources in Him in such a way that His presence, power, and love should be no mere visionary matters, but solid realities to the soul.

We all know it to be possible to assent to the great doctrines of Christianity (to have the mind alone interested) and even to contend for them, without being taken up with the Lord Himself, without giving Him His desired place in the heart. In such case, our witness lacks that real and unctuous tone which gives effect to it.

Sound doctrine, as the foundation of Christianity, and Christ Himself, personally, as the soul and substance of it, in all the power and freshness of His love, should never be separated in the thought of believers, as they are not in the scriptures; but alas! the former too often is the case, to the dishonour of our blessed Lord, and the loss of our own souls. We know it is possible to have a sound theology while the heart is far from Him. We know too, that it is possible (yea is characteristic of the rationalistic school), to talk loudly about following Christ as an example, while denying the great truths which He and His Apostles teach, that set forth the dignity of His Person and the value of His work, as also the utter ruin of man. This is nothing more or less than hypocrisy. For how can a man truly follow Christ while denying the teaching by which is maintained the dignity and nature of His Person, and the need and value of His work. To deny the great truths of Christianity is to deny Christ and falsify the nature of man in relation to God, for these truths set Him forth. How can a man at the same time deny and love Christ?

Sound doctrine is essential to godly intelligence—to the understanding the purposes of God, and the position and prospect of His redeemed people, as also the true position of unbelievers. Indeed,

sound doctrine puts everything in its true relation to God ; the denial of it falsifies either the character of God or man, or both. How important, therefore, is its maintenance ! Yet, in itself, as a matter of mere knowledge, it leaves one without power to act consistently with it. Indeed, because of what we are, it may become a means of pride and pretension. " Knowledge puffeth up."

Only contact with our blessed Lord Himself by faith and love can give the truth freshness and power in the soul, and practical effect in the life ; only this can impart motive power, and keep and fill the heart, replenish the soul, and make fruitful the life. The earnest prayer of the writer for years has been : " Lord keep me sound in doctrine, but preserve me from becoming a mere theorist, by keeping me near to Thyself."

This line of thought is suggested by the chapter in which the text at the head of this paper appears. We might say that the theology of the Jews, as followed out in this chapter, was correct ; they were keeping the ordered feast in the appointed way, and at the proper time ; yet their hearts were far astray ; their true Messiah, Who, alone, could bring in the blessing anticipated by the feast, though there in their midst, was utterly rejected, yea, they were at this very feast seeking His life.

It is surely significant also of their state generally that this feast—as well as that of the Passover (called in the Old Testament, feasts of the Lord) should in the New Testament be called feasts of the Jews. Quite in character with this too, we may notice, is the action of the Lord in refusing an open acknowledgment of the feast, but going up as it were in secret. Nevertheless, being there, His presence made manifest the real state of things. He was there as the light that makes manifest.

But there was something more than this that led Him to go up secretly. He went up for the sake of individuals who were dissatisfied with such a deplorable state of things, that He might fill and satisfy the longing soul—the soul longing for something better. Wondrous grace !

Does not this chapter afford food for serious reflection ? Does not subjective Christianity in these days present something analogous to what we have in this chapter ? Do we not find ourselves in the very midst of such a state of things ? Christianity without Christ !

Alas! how very much of this there is around us. Plenty of religion, but little of Christ. Are we found vainly trying to make ourselves satisfied with this sort of thing? What is the use of loud profession without reality? Yea, what is the use of even truth without the power of it. "The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

It is in the midst of such a state of things that the Lord stands forth and says, "If any man." Has the reader noticed the blessed yet searching force of these three words in the New Testament in the several places in which they occur? They are intensely individual. And they leave the individual without excuse, whatever the collective state of believers may be, however low the state of the Church, however lukewarm the condition of things generally. Such a state of things affords no excuse whatever for the bad condition of one's own soul. The words "If any man," coming from the lips of our blessed Lord, are intended to arrest the individual who wishes to "wholly follow" Him—the soul who is dissatisfied with the current state of things, and earnestly longing for something better.

Let us hear the searching words and give them their full force in our consciences: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. xvi. 24). "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve Me, him will my Father honour" (John xii. 26). "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20).

The reader will do well to look up several other such appeals to the heart and conscience of the individual.

The passage before us is extremely precious, as showing our blessed Lord's solicitude for the individual who is dissatisfied with mere religious routine—with empty formalism. "If any man *thirst*"; is there a deep longing for something more solid—more real? Where, then, is it to be found? It is only courting disappointment to turn from one religious society to another, or from one body of Christians to another, or even to more religious enterprise. No, the word is, "let him come unto Me and drink." Yes, it is in Himself alone that our thirst can be slaked—that the deep longings of the soul can be satisfied; and for this purpose He is

blessedly accessible to His own beloved ones. It is impossible for the child of God to find himself in any place or in any legitimate circumstances where he cannot find his Lord. The authorities might put Paul in prison, but they could not put him out of touch with his Lord; the only thing that can do this is the bad, *i.e.*, the unjudged condition of one's own soul.

Mark. not only "let him come unto Me," but "come and drink." What does this mean? Is not the same thing, worded differently, given in the passage quoted from Rev. iii., "I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me"?* What is it, but the real seeking His presence, there to meditate upon His love—His beauties—His glories, and the purposes of God in Him, till the soul is filled with holy ecstasy, till the heart is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, yea, running over, for "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." It is impossible to keep the blessing to oneself. For one to drink at this fountain means that many are blessed. Oh! to be kept in communication with this living fountain!

It is not mere intelligence that is here appealed to, it is not the intellect that is in question; it is the inmost springs of the moral being. Nor is it a matter of legal effort, there is no pumping up work here; the rivers flow forth.

It is not that I try to do this or that, under legal obligation—try to serve God; try to be a blessing to others; no, I drink, and the rivers flow forth; it must be so as surely as one drinks, the rivers "shall flow." Here there will be no lack of activity, no lack of effort and enterprise in the Lord's work, but this will be the delightful occupation of one who is acting under the influence of an impelling power within. There are no dry essays nor laboured sermons here—the rivers flow.

It is real contact—habitual contact—with the Saviour Himself, that makes one a blessing to others; a blessing in the home; in the assembly of saints, and in the preaching of the gospel. Happy condition! How precious! "Drink, drink abundantly, oh beloved." Excess is impossible here. Oh, the egregious folly of turning away from this fountain of living waters to hew out for

* Only let the distinction be observed that in the one case the consequence of drinking is that the one who does so becomes a source of blessing to others; while in Rev. iii., 20, it is a question of individual communion with the Lord alone. (Ed.)

ourselves cisterns that can hold no water. This is what we do when we turn to the resources of men instead of the living God, as revealed in our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, to satisfy the cravings of our souls. In such case, we can but be barren and unfruitful.

Very different is the condition when we turn to the Lord from all around, and in self-judgment, to find our resources in Himself; then the blessing must flow. Nor is it reserved only for special times. No matter where one is, if the heart is fixed upon Him, our risen Lord and Saviour, exalted in heaven, and the soul learning of Him by the teaching of the Holy Ghost; then in the power of that same Holy Spirit, the rivers flow forth. For here the Lord is speaking of what should take place after He was glorified.

A glorified man occupying the highest place in heaven, and God the Holy Ghost, occupying the lowest hearts on earth; these are two of the greatest characteristics of Christianity. And if the lowly heart in which the Holy Ghost dwells, and the Man exalted in Glory are kept in habitual touch with each other by the exercise of real and simple faith, a happy, active, and fruitful life, dispensing blessing to all around, will be the result on earth.

EPHESIANS III.—10.

“Unto the principalities and powers”—to the governments and authorities, the Princes of the angelic hosts—may be made known by *means* of the *Church*, the *variegated wisdom* of God; thus the *hosts of unfallen beings* are learning their lessons through God’s dealings with His people on earth, and are being taught what Omnipotent Love can *do* with the material of a ruined race.

ZECHARIAH IX.—17.

How great is His goodness;
Trust him, trust him, trust him,
He ne'er will forsake thee,
Nor fail to provide.

How great is His beauty,
Praise him, praise him, praise him,
Admire Him, adore Him,
And keep near His side.

THE OUTLOOK (*continued*).

III.

THE political and commercial outlook is thus grave enough.

Human sin and folly are destined to plunge the world into a veritable whirlpool of agony before the mighty yet gracious hand of the Redeemer shows itself from heaven for deliverance and blessing. What is the religious outlook? It is certain that in religious circles there is much the same spirit of self-complacency as is observable in the world. Glowing statistics are published, learning and "modern thought" are idolised, and imposing clerical congresses are paraded with enthusiasm. "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" is the boast, as predicted long ago (Rev. iii. 15). The few who express themselves with misgiving about the present trend of things are brushed aside with contempt as cranks and pessimists. But scripture shows that a similar feeling of security prevailed amongst the religious chiefs of Jerusalem on the very eve of its destruction (Jer. vii.).

Is the present complacency of the professing Church justifiable? What saith the Scriptures? It will perhaps help at this juncture if we briefly indicate the true nature and character of the Church of God as revealed therein. The Church (or assembly) of God dates from the day of Pentecost. On that memorable day the Holy Spirit descended from heaven as a result of the divine acceptance of Christ's atoning sacrifice and His departure out of this world unto the Father. By the baptism of the Spirit, all believers were united to the Head in glory, and became members of His body. They were also constituted the temple of God, in which the Holy Spirit was pleased to take up His abode. The new order of things was in every particular the exact opposite of that which had prevailed from the days of Moses. No earthly sanctuary, no priestly order, no religious festivals nor legal enactments, were prescribed for Christianity. The religion of "the upper room" was marked by unworldly simplicity. Strict separation from the world and all its ways characterized the new community. The living Saviour in the glory of God satisfied all their hearts, and for His coming they looked with fervent desire. With burning lips each and all declared the exceeding riches of God's grace as God was pleased to give ability and opportunity. No one dreamed of waiting for official authorisation before speaking of the things which delighted their hearts.

How soon the fine gold became dim! Paul and his fellow-apostles had a fierce fight to wage with those who were determined to assimilate Christianity to Judaism. Through their faithfulness the heavenly character of Christianity was preserved for a season. But these spiritual heroes had no successors. Paul saw none to follow him but grievous wolves and perverse men, and could only commend the saints to "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx.). Peter and John also, in view of their departure, cast the flock wholly upon the Scriptures as their safeguard and stay. Apostolic energy having ceased, everything in the Church gradually changed its character. The spirit of self-assertion soon bred a clergy; a little later a diocesan episcopacy; and, when full-blown, a Papacy. Christendom became in time an unholy blend of Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity. The hope of the Lord's coming being dropped, the Church sought ease and honour in the world. The Scriptures, so grievously slighted in their teaching, became a sealed book. While "the Church" ruled supreme, the grossest horrors prevailed. Men call those centuries "the dark ages," and one historian has said "the annals of the Church are the annals of hell."

In due course came the Protestant Reformation—the mightiest religious upheaval that has yet been witnessed. The Bible became an open book once more. But Scriptural simplicity was not recovered. The civil authorities took religious matters in hand, with the result that State Churches were formed. These, which soon became as intolerant as Popery, ultimately drove out from amongst them those who dissented from their Rubrics, and so various Nonconformist bodies came into being. But both the State and the Free Churches were one in their reverence for the Scriptures, their fidelity to the great fundamentals of Christianity, and their horror of Popery. But how do matters stand to-day? The Church of England is honeycombed with conspiracy, hundreds if not thousands, of its clergy being members of Romanising Societies. The Bishop of London is suffered without rebuke to fraternise with Greek idolatry in St. Petersburg, and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York are allowed to speak in Convocation of "our sister-Church of Rome," without protest from those around them. In addition to all this, many of the clergy openly scoff at the inspiration of the Scriptures, and repudiate some of the most sacred verities of the faith, as the Saviour's Virgin-birth, etc. The ranks of the Nonconformist ministry also contain a large

number of men who are best described as religious infidels. There are doubtless faithful individuals in many quarters, but we speak of what characterizes the mass.

Let us briefly state the present religious position in England, where perhaps things are seen at their best. Romanism is gaining ground everywhere, largely helped by the encouragement which misguided Protestant parents are giving to its educational system; the Church of England is filled with Ritualism and Rationalism, with fierce contentions such as Parliament finds itself obliged to notice; the Nonconformist bodies are riddled with infidelity and worldliness; multitudes are carrying on an illicit intercourse with demons under the name of Spiritualism; and to increase the confusion, swarms of American heretics are diligently canvassing the land with their blasphemies—Mormonism, Seventh-day Adventism, Millennial-Dawnism, and Christian Science.

Whither are things drifting? What will be the outcome of the present condition of affairs? We believe Rev. xvii. supplies the answer. A gorgeously apparelled woman is seen riding upon a scarlet-coloured beast, which, from the description given, is manifestly the revived Roman empire. The woman's name is emblazoned on her forehead: "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots, and the abominations of the earth." Protestant expositors teach with all readiness that this evil woman is the Church of Rome, and some Papist expositors admit it. But this is not the whole truth. If Babylon is Rome, where are all the other so-called churches represented? It is beyond controversy that the Apocalyptic vision shows us one woman only. The reason, we believe, is this: that ere the vision is fulfilled "the re-union of Christendom" so often discussed now, will become an accomplished fact. Painful and repugnant as the thought may be to godly men, every professedly Christian body will coalesce before the end comes. A way will be found whereby the Roman, Greek, Anglican, and other Churches can unite and submerge all differences. Union, at whatever expense as regards truth, is the cherished ideal to-day. The Scotch Presbyterian amalgamation of a few years ago, the more recent Methodist amalgamation, and the federation of the Free Churches, are all steps in the direction indicated. Instead of many Churches, one vast and pretentious, but unutterably corrupt, system will be seen at the end. "The Church of the future!" Familiar words in

present-day literature, but suggesting painful thoughts to those who seek to view matters in the light of the word of God.*

The woman rides the beast. For a brief season ecclesiasticism will be supreme in Christendom once more. "The Church" will again rule the State. The civil power will tolerate this for its own purposes until it finds itself in a position to shake off the incubus. Then will happen what is described in Rev. xvii. 16, 17: "The ten horns which thou sawest, and the Beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their Kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." The Beast and the ten horns are the Western Emperor and his ten associated Kings. These being utterly apostate, will not tolerate even Babylon's caricature of Christianity, but will wipe it out with overwhelming destruction. The horrors that are wrapped up in the words of the two verses just quoted none at present can know. The wholesale butchery of clergy in France when the Revolution was proclaimed, and the desecration and confiscation of religious property, suggests in a lurid way something of what will then be witnessed. It is infidelity's utter suppression of everything suggestive of Christianity.

But the hand of God also is in the great catastrophe. Hence, in Rev. xviii. 5 we read: "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." The saints in heaven rejoice over Babylon's downfall, and praise God for it with Hallelujahs. "True and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand." This happens on the eve of the Saviour's public manifestation from heaven. That great event will be the first divine step towards the complete adjustment of all earthly affairs. When Christ and His heavenly bride (composed of all true Christians) are in the ascendancy here, every problem, whether religious, social, commercial, or political, will be perfectly and divinely solved. Till then everything is out of course. Well, therefore, may we pray: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" (Matt. vi. 10).

* All this will be consummated after the true Church—the Bride of Christ—has been removed from the scene—caught up at the Lord's coming into the air. (Ed.)

HEBICH'S TUB.

[Although this may not be new to some, they will, perhaps, not be sorry to read it again.]

IT is rather more than thirty years ago that a missionary of the Basle Society, named Samuel Hebich, lived and laboured on the west coast of India. He was a remarkable man, fearless, earnest, and more successful as a soul-winner among Europeans than any other of whom I have heard. The striking characteristics of his ministry were the *personality* of the Lord Jesus and the *personality* of Satan, and the conquests he made of the most determined opposers of the truth were many and striking.

One regiment that had been stationed at Cannanore were so powerfully affected by his preaching and house-to-house visitation, that no less than seven officers and most of their wives were truly converted to God, and were not ashamed to confess their faith in Christ. Several non-commissioned officers followed, so that ere it had left the station it had earned the sobriquet of *Hebich's Own*.

From Cannanore, this regiment was sent to the French rocks, a military station near Seringapatan; and after they had been there a year, the Christians specially invited their beloved friend to pay them a visit, which he gladly responded to. From one house to another, according to his wont, he visited, and, though with tenderness of manner, put the most searching questions to his children in the Lord. These elicited a fact which gave him no small uneasiness, namely, that the prayer-meeting, once so thronged and so much set by, had dwindled away till some were not sure that it existed at all. His presence stirred up their hearts. Every night he held meetings, and they were fully attended not only by those who had good cause to love the man, and listen to his words, but by others from the neighbourhood, who had heard of him and longed to obtain some blessing for themselves.

It was thus the writer found himself in the company of those thus gathered; and he was greatly struck by his sight of the German missionary, as he stood behind a table with a large open Bible on it. I shall endeavour to give his discourse on this particular occasion, as nearly as I can remember it, in his own language. There is a force and pathos in foreigners' English that so materially helps one to remember the subject, that I shall not attempt to

improve it. He read the fourth of Ephesians, and expounded it till he came to the sixteenth verse, which he read slowly, and repeated the words, "*fitly shoined togeder.*" :

He paused a few seconds, and abruptly put the question, "Did you ever see a tob?" This homely appeal roused the audience, and caused a smile to pass over every face.

"If you go to P——" (a factory in the neighbourhood), "you will see some fery large tobs. You and I cannot make a tob; it requires a cood carpenter to make a tob, or it vill hold no vater, because it is not made of von peece of vood, but of many, and the many fitly shoined togeder. Dere are four tings to make a cood tob.

"1. It must have a cood bottom.

"2. Each of de peeces must be fitly shoined to de bottom.

"3. Each von must be fitly shoined to his fellow.

"4. Each von shall be kept close by the bands outside.

"Von peece may be narrow and the next peece be vide, yet it shall be a cood tob; but if a leetle shtone or bit of shtick vill come between the peeces it vill not do at all; and if all de peeces but von touch, and are fitly shoined togeder, and dis one fall in or out of de circle, it is no tob at all. Now, if vee haf a cood bottom, and efry peece be fitly shoined togeder to de bottom, and all are fitly shoined togeder from de top to de bottom, haf ve now a tob? No, it vill not hold vater for von moment till de bands be put on. De bands press hard on each peece of vood, and den de are more fitly shoined togeder. 'Oder foundation can no man lay dan dat is laid, vich is Jesus Christ.' Here ve haf de *cood bottom* for our tob. It is perfect, and efry von dat truly believes is resting on dis cood bottom, and is fitly shoined to it by de Holy Spirit of God. Dere are many who call themselves Christians who are not so shoined, but vee are not speaking of dem now.

"In de Acts of de Apostles vee read often of being 'filled with de Holy Ghost,' and ven gadered for prayer vonce, de whole house did shake vid His power. Shust so now He fills vid peace and shoy de soul dat loves de Lord Jesus, and likewise de company gadered in His name. Sometimes! Not always. Vy not always? Ve shall see. Vat is de shmall shtick or shtone between de peeces

of vood dat make de tob? It is de *lectle quarrel*—de *hard vord*—de *dirty bit of money*—dat keeps de broder from being fitly shoined to broder. Vat is de space between de peeces from top to bottom, troo vich you can see light? It is de *coldness* dat you feel, but do not tell. De major's wife and de captain's wife vill bow, but do not speak or greet each oder as formerly, because vispering has come between dem. Vat is de peece of vood dat falls out of de circle? It is de proud, unforgiving spirit dat efry von can feel is in de meeting, and vich causes all heavenly peace to run out. You are fery sorry dat you have no blessing, and you leave de meeting because it can do you no cood. You stay at home with de devil, and become dry indeed.

“Oh, beloved, *be fitly shoined togeder!* You haf no power of your own. Dat vich shall keep you is de *encircling bands* of de love of Jesus from head to foot, and as dis power presses on each of you, so vill you become yet more closely shoined togeder. Den de Holy Spirit shall fill you to overflowing. Den all who come into your midst shall be refreshed, and de name of de Lord Jesus be glorified.—Amen.”

UNANSWERED PRAYER.

1.

Unanswered yet!
 The prayer your lips have pleaded
 In agony of heart these many years;
 Does faith begin to fail, is hope departing,
 And think you all in vain these falling tears,[?]
 Say not the Father had not heard your prayer,
 You shall have your desire,
 Sometime—somewhere.

2.

Unanswered yet!
 Though when you first presented
 This one petition at the Father's throne,
 It seemed you could not wait the time of asking,
 So urgent was your heart to make it known;
 Though years have passed since then, do not despair,
 The Lord will answer yet,
 Sometime—somewhere.

3.

Unanswered yet!
 Faith cannot be unanswered,
 Her feet are firmly planted on the Rock;
 Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
 Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock;
 She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,
 And cries, “It shall be done,”
 Sometime—somewhere.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



THE DAISY AS A TYPE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

THE daisy has a golden centre (Divinity), surrounded by white petals (Purity): so Christ is the centre surrounded by the members of His Church.

If one petal were taken out, the daisy would be incomplete, and the petal would soon lose its whiteness: so not one member could be taken from the Church without spoiling the whole, and the purity of each member is entirely dependent upon Christ, the divine centre.

The white petals surrounding the daisy are really little signals or flags to attract the bees into the centre, that they may obtain the honey, and go away covered with the golden pollen dust: just so the members of Christ are to attract others to Him, their centre, having nothing themselves to offer, but that they might obtain of Him sweetness and nourishment, and go away bearing traces of having been in His presence.

Some of the petals are longer than others, and some misshapen, but all occupy a similar position in relation to the centre; so the members of the Church vary in strength and capabilities, yet each is firmly attached to Christ.

In the darkness of night the petals fold themselves tightly around the centre. In like manner, should the members of Christ when in tribulation lay down in entire reliance upon Him.

The daisy springs up in utter opposition to the law of gravitation, which would crush it down, because it possesses life in itself; just so the Church of Christ can stand up boldly around its centre in the presence of all the powers of the devil, and this world, which would crush it to the earth, because of the life within it.

The life of both centre and petals is sustained by the same sap; so the Church is upheld by the Spirit of God, the same power by which Christ did the will of the Father.

The daisy grows in an open field among various flowers and grasses, but it can easily be distinguished by the whiteness of its petals. In like manner should the Church stand out in distinction from all the world around it, contrasted by its purity.

THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEMLY.

PRIDE.

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

THE sin of pride is most detrimental to Christian character, and most abhorrent in the sight of God, and yet there is perhaps no sin more prevalent than this, not only in the world, but in the Church of God. The desire to be, or to appear to be, something in our own eyes or in the eyes of others, is to many Christian believers an ever present snare.

How many various forms it assumes:—Pride of birth, of money, or of power; pride of intellect, of knowledge, or of influence; pride in other men; pride in our own righteousness; all these and many other forms beside. How many a true believer, forgetting the ground of his own acceptance, which leaves no merit to the ransomed sinner, nought in which to glory, yet nevertheless exalts himself above his fellow men, and manifests within the Church a stern exclusiveness towards humbler ones quite foreign to the mind and ways of Christ.

But pride is not monopolised by any class; the rich are tainted with it, and the poor likewise; the learned practise it, and the ignorant follow suit; it is natural to all, being part of the old Adam nature, condemned by God in the Cross of Christ, and we must therefore mortify it and not obey it in the lusts thereof.

Dear Brethren, we need to be consistent and right hearted in regard to this; pride in the believer is as the fly within the ointment, that neutralises all its precious savour; it mars the character of many who would otherwise be loved and valued, and mars their usefulness in the Church and in the world.

Pride brings its own reward: leanness of soul, mutual alienation, strivings, murmurings, and disputings; all these abound where pride obtains the mastery. Why then should we cherish such an evil principle, an unholy passion, unholy in its origin and destructive in its effects. Pride cannot enter the mansions of the blest, for there it stands condemned for ever: its building is of wood and hay and stubble, which cannot stand the testing fire, and shall be burned up.

Think of its fruits down here : how many a godly work is left undone, how many a faithful heart is wounded, how many a weak one crushed by pride and its outgoings ; what mutual suspicions it creates, what weakness and paralysis prevail. Where is the mind of Christ in all these things ? Where is the goodly fruit ? Where is the grace and blessing which should rest on those whom Christ has called his own ? Awake, dear brethren, from this sleep of death, that Christ may give you light.

There are ores that miners meet with which are called "rebellious," for they will not yield to any treatment used ; the precious metal is locked up, unuseable, because combined with some ingredients which cannot be resolved.

Before the ore can be extracted, a solvent must be found ; this solvent, mingled with the ore and fused, effects the needed purpose, and frees the metal from its house of bondage.

Just so, in spiritual things, pride is the evil principle which makes the ore rebellious, hinders the work of God on earth, and keeps the church in poverty of soul. Humility is the mighty solvent, that precious gift which comes from God : how sweet and precious are the fruits this lowly grace affords ; what heavenly unction rests on those who truly practise it. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Such are the words of the meek and lowly Saviour. There is no rest in pride ; it brings no rest nor peace, nor satisfaction to those that are possessed by it : but humility solves difficulties, heals spiritual diseases, unlocks the door which pride has fastened, and unlooses the sympathies which pride would stifle ; it speeds the work of love which pride would hinder ; it teaches heart and heart to beat in unison, and hand to join in hand in holy fellowship and works of living faith.

In the present world we are learning that our God has treasures of grace to meet our need ; and in the coming world we shall learn His treasures of glory to meet our joys.

Worship is being nothing, and having God's thoughts of Jesus filling my soul.

We gather at the Lord's Table in all the joy of conquerors. We look back to the Cross where the battle was fought and won, and forward to the glory where we shall enjoy the full and eternal results of the victory.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

H.H.—Ques. : *Is Rom. iii. 3 to be understood like this or not? "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith (which God gives) without effect?"*

Ans. : The context clearly shows that the faith of God in this passage is the truth of God (see vv. 2 and 4). It refers primarily to what people are called upon to believe, as well as inviting belief on their part. God's word does not return unto Him void; it prospers in the thing whereto He sends it. Thus in another place it says "some shall depart from the faith," which means Christianity.

Ques. 2: *Is Heb. xi. 1 a definition of faith?*

Ans. : Not exactly. It rather tells us what faith does. See R.V. margin. "Now faith is the giving substance to things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." It is as difficult to define faith as it is sight. No man has ever yet discovered sight, nor has anyone discovered faith. The best proof of sight is that a person sees; and the best proof of faith is that he believes. When a man does really believe, the things reported to him become realities. Someone comes from Australia, and writes you that a friend of yours gave him ten pounds to bring to you, and that on an early date he will call with the money. If you believe the message your faith at once gives substance to what you hope for. You would think of the ten pounds as yours, and perhaps begin to speculate what you would do with it, though you have not seen the money, or the person who has brought it.

J.O.—Ques. : *I would like some light on 2 Tim. ii. 20-21: "From these." Does "these" mean the "vessels," or the profane and vain babblings? Does this verse authorise us to walk apart from Christians?*

Ans. : To reply to the latter part of your question first, it certainly does not, unless those who profess Christianity are characterized by what the Apostle Paul here tells Timothy to shun. In v. 14, we read of "subverting the hearers"; v. 16, "profane and vain babblings"; vv. 17 and 18, of "Hymenæus and Philetus whose word will eat as a gangrene, and who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." All this clearly indicates what constitutes a vessel to dishonour, and the faithful follower of Christ is exhorted

to purge himself from all such iniquity, as well as those guilty of it. Thus the "purging out" undoubtedly will include the vessel to dishonour, and what characterizes it. What the precise meaning of "purging out" may be, is indicated by other words used, such as "shun," "flee" (youthful lusts), "avoid" (vv. 16, 22, 23). It is not necessarily leaving a particular company, and certainly not the Church, for the closing exhortation of the chapter has to be borne in mind, "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (vv. 24-26). The iniquity from which it is incumbent to purge oneself is, therefore, of a very definite, and easily recognised, character. If a man has given up the truth, I am to avoid him, not follow with him (except with the one object of recovery), but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. And these last words give us a clue to the real meaning of "purging himself from these." "Purging" is in order to a pure heart. This shows that mere outward separation—simply ceasing to have anything to do with a person—is not enough, while it has often been carried too far; any more than it is enough to forsake a plague-smitten district when the plague is already within a man. We are to take care there is no plague within—a man is to purge *himself* out from everything of that nature, while taking care he does not visit the plague-smitten area, *except* to rescue others. This purging is something more than not "erring concerning the truth," in the sense of being clear of false doctrine. There must be the positive as well as the negative—following "righteousness, faith, love, peace," and only such have the purged, or pure heart here spoken of.

What mistakes have been made in the interpretation and application of this passage of scripture. Making it a ground of separation from simple hearted, devoted Christians—calling that iniquity which was not of that character at all—making the being a vessel unto honour solely a question of separating from saints who had, perhaps, but little intelligence—and while posing as such, breaking the very peace a vessel unto honour ought to follow. The fact cannot be too clearly emphasised, that only those who definitely and persistently follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, can have a "pure heart," and only the possessor of such a heart is "sanctified and meet for the Master's use." (See also note on 2 Tim. ii., page 192).

Ques. 2: Does 2 John 10 contain the idea that identification is participation?

Ans.: We think it would. Bidding a person God speed would be identifying oneself with that person, and "he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." But in this case two things have to be borne in mind: (1) the gravity of the evil; (2) the intimate nature of the contact. In less serious matters there might be points of contact with no identification, and therefore, no participation.

Other questions must stand over till next month

NOTE ON 2 TIMOTHY, II. 22.

"I was very much struck the other day with the fact, that, what we are to follow as individuals, righteousness, faith, love, &c., comes before "with them." In other words, we have made everything of a company—a company determined by a list of meetings—then taken it for granted, that that company was right, and *we* right because we belonged to *it*. Whereas all that may be the purest assumption. What 2 Tim. sets before us is rather certain moral characteristics which we first of all follow for ourselves, and then with others of a like mind. But there is all the difference in the world between having my eye upon a company and following with it; and, as an individual, following righteousness, faith, love, &c., for myself, and only with others because they are following the same things."

How to be Wise	..	..	..	..	..	1 Cor. i. 18.
How to be Rich	..	..	..	..	..	1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.
How to be Healthy	..	..	..	..	..	1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.
How to be Well Dressed	..	..	..	..	..	Col. iii. 12, 13, 14.
How to be Beautiful	..	..	..	..	..	2 Cor. iii. 18.

The Cross is the only remedy for man's infirmity and man's defilement, and be it known for our joy and comfort that it is not the depth of our experience, the stability of our faith, or the strength of our apprehension, but the divine value, the changeless efficacy, of the blood of Jesus.

It is so exceedingly sweet to find ourselves wholly dependent upon One Who finds infinite joy in blessing us.

See Special Notice Below.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

Vol. I.—No. 7.

APRIL, 1909.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

A Contributor sends us the following:—

“ May I suggest from personal experience that the best way to obtain subscribers for the *Faith and the Flock* is for one person in each meeting to be responsible for a certain number of copies, and be the circulating medium each month. One man in a meeting a few miles off asked me to obtain for him monthly three bundles, or seventy-five copies. I noticed him distribute these last night. As soon as it became known that March number was ready, he was surrounded by a crowd of purchasers, and the seventy-five copies were sold in a very few minutes, and like another, they were still ‘ *asking for more.*’

Now the Magazine is good reading, and helpful; it will do its own work and tell its own tale in time. Many who cannot preach, could take up this important service of distributing the truth and the Magazine. Many would like to help as indicated, and yet hardly know how to begin. May I suggest that you invite correspondence from all such, and arrange the business details for them in order to help them to start? Some specimen copies of old numbers might also be available for introductory purposes.

Three things are evident: The Lord is in the work; the readers are being edified; the sales are increasing. The next thing needed is that some enthusiastic distributors be found in every locality to increase the sale. May the Lord graciously raise up such.”

The writer of the above distributes by personal effort, 200 copies a month.

* * * *

Will any who are willing to take up the service indicated above, whether brother or sister, for it is work which can be equally well

done by either, communicate at once with G. W. H., Netherhall, The Drive, Sidcup, Kent? Great success, we are assured will, under the blessing of God, attend such efforts. It would be easy to mention instances where this has already been the case.

* * * *

A further suggestion.—We wish to make a further suggestion. Will every reader order at once, either through a bookseller, or direct from the publishers, three extra copies of the forthcoming May number, or any back number which may be preferred. And will you use these copies to obtain fresh subscribers, or at least send them to someone likely to appreciate the effort? If you do not know of anyone personally, there are earnest Christians everywhere, ministers, missionaries, and other workers whose addresses can easily be obtained, either by a little enquiry in your own locality, or from religious periodicals, and the monthly organs of various societies. Much good might be done by distribution from house to house; it might be the means of an introduction which would prove a great blessing. Another opportunity that might be utilised is when Christians are dispersing after a meeting. If all will do a little, the work falls heavily upon no one, and will surely prosper, and bring to each one its own reward. Will you please, then, send at once, before you forget it, fourpence halfpenny to Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co., for three extra copies, stating clearly which month you require?

* * * *

We would call the attention of our readers to the question proposed in the March issue on opening page.

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The article on Faith, though printed on Young People's Page, will, we hope, be read by all.

* * * *

The Body of our Lord's humiliation.—A discussion has recently been carried on in a religious weekly as to whether the term "mortal" can be applied to our Lord's body. Many rightly, as we think, repudiated any such reference. We regret, however, that the originator of the phrase (as to this particular controversy) maintained his doctrine (in spite of these objections) in a long closing letter, and thus remained master of the field. In case some of our readers may have read the correspondence, and may not, perhaps, see the danger of this doctrine, we are glad to be able to print the

following, received from Sir Robert Anderson for publication in this Magazine :—

Some recent articles in one of our religious weeklies have raised anew the question whether our Divine Lord was mortal as to His humanity. And this has been rendered the more distressing and the more dangerous, because the writer is a man whose "heart orthodox" (if such a phrase may be allowed) seems unquestionable. Indeed, his defence, when challenged, gave proof that he may have erred through failing clearly to apprehend the meaning of the terms employed. I will use his words, therefore, not for the purpose of a heresy hunt, but merely to make the question at issue both clear and interesting to the reader.

Here, then, is his apology for the use of the word "mortal": "Tested by any legitimate definition the word is strictly correct. The flesh of the Redeemer was 'liable to death'—He died; . . . 'subject to death'—He continued under the power of death for a time."

No treatise is needed to refute the error of this. A single verse will suffice. Here are the Lord's own words:—"Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Now my purpose is not to hunt for heresy, but to seek for truth. And we need to remember Coleridge's dictum, "Call no man heretic because his creed is heretical." A writer who uses words in a loose and popular way ought not to be held too strictly to account. "The flesh of the Redeemer" is a phrase that is fitted to offend those whose thoughts are governed by the language of Holy Scripture; but no doubt it means Christ as man. And the English word mortal may be used to mean merely "admitting death; accessible to the action or influence of death." But this meaning of the word is unknown to classical English; and though given in some editions of Webster, it will not be found in the older, or in the best of our modern, dictionaries. Even the Oxford Dictionary now in course of publication, though the most exhaustive work of the kind in the language, does not admit it. The word mortal in our English version, like *thnetos* in the Greek original, means only and always "subject to death," "destined to die."

To deny that the Lord was mortal, in the popular and secondary sense of the term, would be to ignore the facts, and to contute His own express declaration. But, in view of His words, the statement that He was "subject to death" is not only false, but profane. It amounts, indeed to a denial of His Deity. When dealing with matters of such solemnity, we must be careful and accurate in our use of words. We must not be slovenly-minded. The Apostle's statement in Rom. vi. 9, in no way clashes with the Lord's words above cited. If I freely and voluntarily place myself under the dominion of a tyrant, who could not enslave me but for my own deliberate intention and act, nor hold me for one single hour longer than I choose to submit to him, to treat my surrender as proof that I was "subject" to him is to trifle with words. And this is but a poor illustration of the truth here in question. When they seized Him in Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus declared that a word would bring myriads of angels to His help. "But," He added, "how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?" (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54). And if it was not till the third day that He rose from the dead, this too, was "according to the Scriptures." He need not have lain in the tomb a single hour.

Here is another of His utterances: "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Such a statement would be false if used of the angels, who never fell, or of the saints in their destined glory. The words connote immortality in the only absolute sense of that often misused expression. And to say that He who uttered them was mortal, is to charge Him with falsehood, or with folly.

We would call attention to the fact, that in the letter which closed the discussion of this momentous subject, above referred to, the writer quoted several passages of Scripture referring to the Lord's death, and gave the references; but he also gave as a quotation "subject to death," but here all reference to Scripture was omitted. Why was this? The fact is, although Mr. M. gives it as a quotation, it is not a quotation from Scripture at all. Scripture never once says Christ was "subject to death." Moreover, it carefully avoids saying it. It says He "*tasted* death," and He was "*obedient* unto death," but never uses the word "subject." Neither does it ever use the word "mortal." What right, then, have we to employ words that are questionable as referring to Christ, which the Bible never once uses with reference to Him?

Let it be remembered, too, that when we speak of the body of Christ, or "the flesh of the Redeemer," we are not speaking of something apart from Christ Himself. The body involves personality. The word of God does not say Christ's body died, but, "Christ died." The question really is then, Was **He** mortal? To ask such a question is surely to answer it. But in view of what has been written above by an abler pen than ours, we need not add more.

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Mr. H. Ernest Marsom, of 315, Broad Street Corner, Birmingham, issues leaflets for letters in neat boxes, costing Sevenpence by post. This new form of doing them up will probably be appreciated by many. They are well got up, and perhaps some of our readers may like to know about them. This Magazine can also be obtained at the same depot.

"The more we rest on this fact—that we do not know the way we are going, but that we have a Guide who does know; that we do not know how to accomplish our service, but that He never leaves us to devise our own service, the more restful does our life become. Then we find we have just to do this—to look to our Saviour to be filled with His perfections; not to be fretting and fuming as to how the Divine life shall manifest itself, but to leave the life to work spontaneously through us. A heavy bunch of grapes on a tender shoot would break it; but let the shoot abide in the vine and it will grow stronger, and as the fruit develops, the strength of the branch will increase also; and the life left to its own natural and healthy development will be brought to perfection."

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition. 1644

CHAPTER II. 16—III.

“CHRIST—APOSTLE, HIGH PRIEST, AND SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE.”

In Chapter ii. of this Epistle, the Lord Jesus Christ is not only presented as Son of Man, but in verse 16 He is spoken of as taking hold of the seed of Abraham. The two comprehend all the ground covered by God's promises to man. As Son of Man, His Kingdom will be universal (according to Dan. vii, 13-14; John i. 51); as the seed of Abraham, He inherits all that was promised to Israel.

It is in this last connection Priesthood is introduced. “*Wherefore, in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation (or rather propitiation) for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted*” (vv. 17-18).

The writer of the Epistle then sums up what he has thus far presented by calling upon us to “*consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*” Addressing those to whom he writes as “*holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.*”

How important that we should obey this exhortation. In these two chapters (i. and ii.) we have been hurried breathless, as it were, from one view of this glorious Person to another, and now we are called upon to pause, and try and take in what it all means. Consider it, let it sink down into your hearts; meditate upon it, ruminate. Think of this Person. “The glory of Christianity” some one has said, “is this, that all that it has, and all that it offers is treasured up in a Person. Who is not for one generation a present Teacher and a living Lord, and then for all succeeding generations a past, and a dead one, but Who is present and living for all.”

Let us look, then, for one moment, at these two offices—Apostle and High Priest. The character of the first is unfolded to us in the statement with which the Epistle opens, “God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.” And again (Chap. ii. 3), referring to the great salvation, “which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.” God has actually spoken to men by word of mouth, through the lips of His own Son. It is God addressing us. But then there is the other side; it is necessary, if we have listened to God's voice, and believed the message, for

us to address God ; and for this we need a High Priest. What completeness then in the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks to us from God, delivering the divine message from human lips, and through human words. He tells us all we need to know about God as such—all that we need to know about ourselves as sinners, and what God proposes. His words are the words of salvation. He comes with no threat. He presents no demands of law. His advent is not to enforce penal enactments. He says, " If thou knewest the *gift* of God, and Who it is that saith unto thee give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Such is He as the Apostle. Oh ! consider Him. Think deeply upon His words. Let them enter the inmost recesses of your being.

But He is also the High Priest. For if God has approached us in grace, it is that we may approach Him in the sense of His eternal favour. Yet in ourselves we are weak, failing, infirm. We need someone by Whom we can come to God. Christ fills this office for the believer. " Through Him we have access to the Father." Notice two things in connection with the priesthood of Christ. He is both " a *merciful* and *faithful* High Priest " (ch. ii. 17). The one has reference to us, the other to God. For, to be a priest, He must be able to take account of both : He must be able to take full account of what we are, and so we read " in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." But priesthood " is in things pertaining to God," and therefore He Who fills that office must be able to take full account of all God's requirements. Blessed be His name, our High Priest is equal to every demand.

The first thing to be done if God were to have a people in relationship with Himself was to make propitiation for the sins of the people. Satisfaction must be rendered to God on account of sin. This Christ did, once for all, when He offered up Himself. Then, secondly, God's people are still in the wilderness, where dangers and trials, disappointments and afflictions assail them. The office of High Priest is to render succour to God's people that they may not be weighed down by over much pressure, and turned aside from the path of God's will in consequence. When sorrow, suffering and trial come upon us, how often we are inclined to wish for a different lot—a different path. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ, in being made like unto His brethren, entered into all this. In the wilderness he was hungry, and needed bread. But He would

not use His own power, at the suggestion of Satan, to get it. He was there in dependence and subjection. Where would have been either had He sought a way of His own out of the difficulty. He waited for God's word. And in the meantime accepted God's will. He suffered. It is the same with ourselves. We are called to live to the will of God. In doing so we cannot make anything an object but that, and we suffer. If we are seeking our own way through this world, gratifying ourselves, we shall certainly escape the suffering that lies in the path of God's will. But then, we miss the blessing, and perhaps entail a worse suffering because endured out of communion with God. Christ is our Priest to sustain us *in the path of God's will*. If we get away from that path, there is no knowing where an opposite one may lead us. What unutterable joy for Christ, when having done the will of God, resisting all the enemy's efforts to divert Him from it, angels minister to Him. Our joy will be of the same character, when, pursuing the path of that same will, we become conscious of the all-sufficient help of the One Who has trod the path before us. Oh, tried, harassed believer, *consider, consider* the High Priest of your confession. He is merciful, He feels, He pities, He has compassion. He is *merciful* to you, and *faithful* to God, He is able to succour you in all your trial. First, because He perfectly understands; next, because He Himself has overcome.

Just a few words more; for these are all we can give to Chapter iii. Christ is seen here to have more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He is a "Son over His own house," and it adds, "*whose house are we.*" Think of being Christ's house. How able He is to take care of us, and how careful He is about us. Able, too, to maintain all according to God. Why has Christianity never been stamped out, and why is it the most living force in the world to-day, in spite of all Satan's opposition, and in spite, too, of the unfaithfulness of Christians? Ah! Christ is faithful. Christianity was established by Him. And though an empty profession may one day be spued out of His mouth, and be trampled on by men, yet those who "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," will be kept, for they are His house (though others not His may take the same place) and He is faithful."

What we have to do in the meantime, is to "hear His voice"; "harden not our hearts"; see that in us there is no "evil heart of unbelief"; "exhort one another daily"; and "hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." 224

NEW GARMENTS AND NEW WINE.

[T is a great moment in the history of the soul when the truth is grasped that God has absolutely nothing whatever to say to the flesh. The notion is too sadly common that Christianity is an improving of the flesh. Hence, the degree in which many true believers are occupied with themselves (on the lines of Rom. vii.), and in their labours seek to amend the world. All who act thus are really nineteen hundred years too late in the line which they seek to pursue. In Judaism, God was disciplining the flesh. Not, indeed, to see if any good could be brought out of it (He who knoweth all things could be in no manner of doubt as to that), but to make it manifest to all succeeding ages that flesh is hopelessly evil before Him. The cross has settled this definitely. The murder of the Son of God, come to earth in wondrous love, compassed, as it was, by all classes, has shown in hideous colours that flesh is incorrigibly evil. Whether educated or uneducated, whether religious or irreligious, whether in authority or under authority, flesh is irremediably bad. God's trial of it is over. "The end of all flesh is come before Me," is His word in regard to it. In the death of Christ, He has "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3).

God is now occupied with something else, with which the old cannot blend. The Lord Jesus presented this parabolically in Matt. ix. 16-17, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break (or, the skins burst), and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

The old garment is that with which men have been seeking to cover themselves ever since the first man made his apron of fig-leaves in Eden (Gen. iii. 7). It is "the righteousness which is of the law," expressly contrasted with "the righteousness which is by faith," in Rom. x. 5-6. Not only in Israel, but elsewhere also, men have been going about to establish their own righteousness. Even true-hearted believers, in some instances, are not altogether free from this blunder. Too often the eye is partly on Christ and partly on self. Though they would not care to say so in as many words, Christ is looked upon rather as One who makes up for their

deficiency. This is to put a piece of new cloth unto our old garment; and it will not do for God. Paul rejected with disdain the old garment when divine grace revealed to him the new. Or to put it in other words, he threw over his own righteousness, which was of the law, when God shewed him "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 9). In advance of his nation, the man who saw Christ in glory, and divine righteousness displayed in Him, denounced his own righteousness "filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). Faith turns with loathing from the flesh and all its works, and delights itself in the blessed fact that Christ is all as regards the soul's standing before God, as in every other particular.

But the Lord spoke of new wine as well as of new cloth. The "man in Christ" is introduced into divine joys. The "ministrations of righteousness" is also the "ministration of the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii.). From Christ's glory the Holy Spirit has come, the Father's precious gift to all who believe on the Son. It is His business to conduct us outside of this world in spirit in order that our hearts may, happily, enjoy the things of that other sphere where Christ now is. In the days of "the old wine" there was no glorified man upon the throne of God with which faith could delight itself. Whatever there was of divine joy was connected with our earthly portion and inheritance. Knowing our own hearts, do we marvel at the words (found only in Luke v. 39): "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, 'the old is better.'" The annals of Christendom testify to the truth of this. The heavenly character of Christianity has become obscured, if not altogether lost by the establishment of worldly religious systems which link the soul with this world and its objects and pursuits. The epistle to the Hebrews was written because men were saying: "The old is better."

"New wine must be put into new bottles." A statement similar in meaning may be found in 1 Cor. ii. 9: "but the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither indeed can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." Divine unfolding and heavenly joys mean nothing to flesh, even though it be religious flesh. A new bottle **must** be furnished for the new wine. Hence we read in

Eph. iv. 24 of the new man, which, according to God, "is created in righteousness and true holiness."

The Christian has thus been lifted by divine favour and love completely out of his old position as a man in the flesh, ruined in the first man, and has been set in Christ in divine acceptance, righteousness and blessing. New joys are his portion, ministered in power to his soul from day to day by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. May the God of all grace mercifully preserve both reader and writer from the disastrous blunder into which the Galatians fell, who, having begun in the spirit, sought to be made perfect in the flesh (Gal. iii. 2).

THE NEW ENVIRONMENT.

"Delivered from the power of darkness."

"Translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love."

HAVE you ever sought with earnest longings the fresh, free, invigorating air of the mountain top? The air in the deep valley is hot, humid, depressing, and the longing to rise higher possesses your soul. Up, up and still upwards with ever quickening step you rise, the heart beats freely, the lungs expand, the whole being is renewed as the intoxicating mountain oxygen sets the very blood coursing with quickened energy along its channels.

From the dark valley of Satan's power where the miasma breath of envy, hatred and malice poisons and vitiates all, we have been delivered and translated into a kingdom of ethereal and eternal blessedness ;

Where the very **AIR WE BREATHE** is Holy Love.

"Holy and without blame before Him in Love."—Eph. i. 4.

Where the very **SOIL WE GROW IN** is Holy Love.

"Being rooted and grounded in Love."—Eph. iii. 17.

Where the very **LIFE WE LIVE** is Holy Love.

"With all lowliness and meekness forbearing one another in Love."—Eph. iv. 2.

Where the very **FELLOWSHIP OF OUR SERVICE** is Holy Love.

"Making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in Love."—Eph. iv. 16.

Where every **STEP OF THE JOURNEY** is in a path of Holy Love.

"And walk in Love as Christ also hath loved us."—Eph. v. 2.

Such are some of the wonderful in-breathings and out-livings of this high and holy kingdom where the "Son of His Love" holds sway.

THE COURSE OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

WE, here, have for some time past been greatly interested in the study of the life of the Lord Jesus as reconstructed from the accounts given to us by the four Evangelists.

John in the opening of his first Epistle says "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us." His desire was that the Lord though now in Heavenly glory and no longer visible and tangible, yet shall be as real to His people who only know Him by testimony as He was to himself, whose eyes had seen and hands felt. (*Blessed* are they who have *not seen* yet have believed).

Also Christ himself in the course of that sweet intercourse of His last hour or two of earthly association with His Disciples before His death, recorded also for us by John, said "He that hath seen *me* hath seen the *Father*," and ever be it remembered this was said of the Living Man walking here on earth.

Urged by these passages, and others of like import, we felt that nothing could be so deeply interesting as to make the fullest acquaintance that we could with the whole continuous image of the Lord presented for us by the Holy Ghost. Remembering all the time those words, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," by which we know that every blessed lineament of the Man of Sychar, the Man of Nain, the Man of the hillsides of North Galilee, that was impressed on our minds, is a living feature of our adorable Master. When John was overwhelmed by the majesty of the One who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one word restored him, by bringing to his memory that that resplendent Being was the One upon whose breast he had once pillowed his head, and who had companied with Him for those three years that ended at Calvary.

With this object we addressed ourselves to the four Gospels, following the steps of Jesus, first in one, and then in another, as each supplied what others left out, or narrated less fully.

We gained also another advantage, quite subsidiary it is true, but still full of interest, and that was the observation of the peculiar characteristics of each of the narratives.

In case any of your readers feel stimulated to follow the same line, I take leave to lay before you a few considerations as to what may be looked for from each Gospel, which we ourselves found helpful.

It will be understood that we were not at this time concerning ourselves with the doctrines taught in the Gospels, or their typical meanings, or even with the moral aspects in which each may present the Lord, but simply with the Man, Christ Jesus, in His own person. That the glorious image of that wonderful Being should be formed on our minds so that when we gather together to enter by the power of faith into the joy of His presence with us we should feel that He is, in so far, personally not unknown to us, and that if we have not seen Him with *our* eyes or handled Him with *our* hands, yet we are conversant with those who have.

All I can say is, that gradually as the minuter details of the Lord's acts and words become known, and group themselves into a continuous image, and the circumstances in the midst of which He moved are perceived, and the immediate import of His teachings—His casual remarks—even his table talk, in some measure understood, the divine charm of His adorable personality lays hold of one's soul, and one can enter, in a degree, into the feelings of those disciples who had fallen under the spell of His blessed influence, and thenceforward found themselves unable, no matter what claims were made upon them, to tear themselves away from His company, and can sympathise with their utter broken-heartedness when they saw Him, with cruel hands, taken away from them and crucified and slain.

If by the grace of God we know that our sins are all forgiven, that our future is assured, that our relation with God our Maker is changed from that of rebels and enemies to that of beloved and cherished children; in a word, that every question of eternal import is settled, the soul is at leisure from its own necessities to contemplate the excellencies of that One through whom all these blessings have been brought. At the mere mention of His name the response of the soul is "To Him that loves us and loosed us from

our sins in his own blood” But besides what He has done for us that binds us to Himself by an eternal adamantine bond, there is the supreme delight of His adorable personality—what Paul who knew it beyond what we know or can know, called “The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” This I think is what is in John’s mind when after speaking of the Incarnate Word he says “And our fellowship is with the Father.”

That it should be for us to share in an infinitesimal degree in the pleasure of God in “The beloved Son”—to share in kind though even in minutest degree, in the objective pleasure of God the Creator—is a privilege, and a glory, and a joy that transcends all human words.

When this excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord really lays hold of our soul, not as a sentiment but as a conscious reality, it arouses in us an earnest desire to render that service that the Baptist considered was an honour too great for himself. But He our adored one is now exalted beyond all human ministrations. But His parting words ring in the chambers of the soul “He that hath My commandments and keepeth them he it is that *loveth Me*,” and the ravished heart runs up and down the pages of the Word to gather up the expression of His will for the sheer joy of consciously obeying His commandments.

Now first as to John’s Gospel, that treasure-house of delights for the lovers of the Lord Jesus. John deals almost exclusively with the Judean and particularly with the Jerusalem ministry as to which the synoptists are entirely silent (the exception being Holy Week, which all four describe). Neither of the other Evangelists presents so detailed and graphic a narrative as he does of the events with which he deals. John too, by his frequent reference to the Jewish feasts, gives us almost the only notes of time in the Lord’s life which we possess, and by which we may safely, wherever they apply, correct our understanding of the sequence of events given in the other Evangelists, but at the same time I must say it needs a very careful examination of the synoptic narratives to see where they and the Johannine synchronize.

In John the historical sequence is never broken. In Matthew it does not exist except in the most general way. As far as about the middle of the 12th chapter we have instructions and actions, which we know from the other Evangelists were separated by wide

distances of time, grouped together by the Holy Ghost in another order than the historical. This makes Matthew a little puzzling to read until this is understood. At the same time Matthew often gives events with a special fulness of detail, and to him we are indebted for a great deal not found in the others.

We rely upon Mark for the historical sequence of events in the Galilean ministry. I do not think he ever fails us in this respect, though his narrative has to be supplemented at certain places. His plain, unvarnished, loving narration, furnished at times with invaluable touches of detail, is most sweet; and well may we believe the ecclesiastical tradition that it came originally from the lips of Peter.

Luke, up to the middle of the 9th chapter, gives us the regular order of events quite in agreement with Mark, and after an interval of the three next chapters, during which it is dropped, resumes it again in the middle of chapter 13. In that interval are related various things out of their chronological place. Luke relates the circumstances of the Lord's last days in Galilee and of His journey from thence to Jerusalem in far greater detail than the other two synoptists. One thing should be observed in reading Luke, especially in the early part, and that is, that he often relates the general result of an incident and afterwards returns, and goes over the detailed transactions.

The "harmonizing" of the Gospel narratives has been a subject on which immense labour and ingenuity have been bestowed from early patristic days, and is now generally recognised to be a hopeless task. Nevertheless, when the endeavour is made, carefully and discerningly, to gather from those several sources the particulars of the earthly path of the Lord, due regard being had to the peculiarities of each writer, the incidents fall wonderfully into their places, and if difficulty is found it does not arise from discrepant relation, but from paucity of material. For this we are prepared, for John expressly tells us that a mere fraction of all the things that Jesus did is recorded.

Another thing also should be borne in mind, and that is, that the Lord was incessantly teaching and preaching, and constantly in different localities, and to different auditors. But He had one message to deliver, and that definite and momentous. He was not

like our preachers who have to intellectually entertain their auditory, and whose mode of presentation is criticised rather than the message, because the message itself no longer commands sufficient interest in itself ; and since they habitually address one set of people they have to be on their guard against being called to account for repeating themselves. He repeated His message continually, without doubt in similar words, again and again. For this reason we need feel no surprise at finding similar utterances placed by different Evangelists at different periods, and need not waste our time in trying to "harmonize" different reports, because often they refer to different occasions.

PETER IN PRISON.

"The same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains."—Acts xii. 6.

He sleeps whilst the silence of midnight reigns
The prison walls around ;

He sleeps, though galled by the heavy chains
The Roman hath on him bound.

No dread of to-morrow casts o'er his brow
One shade of terror's gloom ;
Tho' even in Herod's council now
Is sealed the prisoner's doom.

To-morrow the tyrant hath vowed his eyes
Shall feast on the martyr's gore ;
His sword from a victim yet reeking lies,
It thirsteth still for more.

Oh, say why doth sleep thus his eyelids close,
On eve of such dreadful day ;
How resteth his soul in this calm repose ?
On what doth his spirit stay ?

'Tis he whose faith by the tempter's power
Was once so sharply tried ;
And the tempter triumphed in that dark hour,
For his Master was denied.

But the Master hath pleaded that Peter's faith
Should over all prevail ;
And Peter can now though faced by death,
Sleep calmly and not quail.

Oh, marvel not then that Peter can sleep,
Nor of bonds nor death is afraid ;
The Lord will still him in perfect peace keep
Whose mind on Him is stayed.

All our usefulness as Christians depends upon our feeding on Christ.

ATONEMENT.

From the Hebrew Verb—*To cover perfectly.*

WE are all too apt to look at everything as it affects ourselves.

We can readily understand that the sinner should be concerned with his own need, and God's provision for it; his sins, and the possibility of divine forgiveness; his ruin, and the one only remedy; his great debt, and its remission; his perishing soul, and God's great salvation; but the believer, set free from all this self-occupation in virtue of the eternal redemption obtained by our Lord Jesus Christ, can now look at everything from a different standpoint, and is set free, through grace, to make, not self but *God* his first object, and to look at everything as it affects Him.

Now, *Atonement* is founded upon a work which satisfies the justice of God, and in every way secures His glory.*

If He had not foreseen the ruin and provided for it; if *the Lamb* had not been "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," nothing could have saved the sinner from instant destruction. SIN must be *put away*! And who could do this? Ah! thank God, there was One, Jehovah's fellow, eternally His delight, the One by whom He had made the worlds, and He had said, in anticipation of all this "Lo, I come, I *delight* to do *Thy will*, Oh, my God!

Yes, *that* was the point; *God's will* had to be done; but, sin having come in, this involved not only obedience, perfect and complete, but obedience unto death, for sin had to be dealt with according to the righteousness of God; its judgment borne; its guilt *atoned* for. And to accomplish all this, the One who volunteered to do it, Himself *God*, must become a man, that, as man, He might render the perfect obedience demanded; and then by His death atone for, and put away, *sin*; and so thank God, "*Once* in the consummation of the ages *hath* He appeared, to put away *sin*, by the sacrifice of Himself." And *He has done it!* What He came to do, He *has done*. Sin has been "*put away*," absolutely *atoned* for by the infinite value of that great sacrifice. *God* has been glorified, *He* has been vindicated in all His ways; His authority established; His righteousness manifested; Himself magnified in all the infinite holiness of His being. Thus the blessed Son of

* In 1611, when our authorised version was translated, the word stood for the *effect* of the work of Christ rather than for the work itself. (See Romans v. 11). Now it means invariably the latter.

God could say "I have *glorified Thee* on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Yes, one lingers over it with adoring heart, sin has been *put away* to God's eternal praise.

But this is not *all*; for, in the infinite love of His heart toward those who had sinned against Him. He has bound up with His own glory, the present and eternal blessing of all those who, *as sinners*, put their trust in the One who has accomplished the mighty work.

Thus God puts honour upon *Him* who has done it all; and *for His sake* accepts and pardons; justifies and glorifies, all who believe on Him whom He hath sent.

But for this, the death of Christ was an absolute necessity. *Our sins*, our very sins, in all the enormity of their guilt, as God alone knows it, must be borne; and so "He bare *our sins*, in His own body on the tree." "Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of *us all*." "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes, *we are healed*." What grace! what infinite grace! Has your heart bowed to it? Have you ever thanked Him?

Again we read "He hath made Him *to be sin* for us, who knew no sin. . . ." The Holy One of God, *made sin*; the eternal son, whose dwelling place was in the bosom of the Father, made (accounted as) the thing which God hates! What *this* was *to Him* we can never fathom. "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin." What a sacrifice! What an *atonement*! What glory to God! What blessing to us! But, oh, think what it meant to *Him*; the horror of that great darkness; the anguish of His holy soul; the forsaking of His God! And yet, never was the Father more "well-pleased" in Him than then! What obedience! What infinite devotion! "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth."

And now, *IN Him*, risen and glorified, beyond the power of death and judgment, the seated, crowned, exalted man at God's right hand, *we are*. In Him are we seated now in heavenly places. Himself the measure of our acceptance, and of our nearness to God, all the infinite efficacy of His atoning work applied to us for the perfect cleansing away of all our sins. All that we were by nature

judged in His cross, all the bitter fruit that we have borne, blotted out by His precious blood, not according to *our* thoughts, but God's thoughts of His beloved son ; nor our estimate, but God's estimate of the infinite value of that precious blood.

Here we have nothing of the modern human thought of *at-one-ment* in the *incarnation*, but *at-one-ment* through His death. It is *the blood* that maketh an *atonement* for the soul.

Man, guilty man, proud in his degradation, haughty in his alienation from God, would fain eliminate from his system of religion all reference to " sin," and " judgment," and " the precious blood of Christ," but he is like the ostrich, only hiding his head in the sand ; *God* sees him, and all his religion shall prove to be but a refuge of lies. *God* shall mock at him, and bid him warm himself at the sparks which he hath kindled ; but these shall prove a sorry refuge from the unerring judgment of a holy and sin-hating *God* !

All who refuse to own their guilt, shall learn its depth in the torment of the lake of fire ! Those who spurn the offered grace, and trample upon the son of *God*, shall bewail their folly in the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth !

But *God* willeth not the death of a sinner, His cry is still " Turn ye, turn ye, for why *will* ye die ! " and the gracious voice of the Son of *God*, still rings through this sin-stricken scene. " Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I *will* give you rest. " " 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. "

You will never find a man in the truth of his own ruin without finding *God* there in the truth of His own love giving him eternal life in His Son.

" Run, John, and work ! " the law commands,
But gives me neither feet nor hands ;
But better news the gospel brings,
It bids me fly and gives me wings.

God's right to bless through Jesus Christ according to all that is in His heart is the righteousness of *God*.

Worship is being lost in wonder at what we find in *God* and Christ.

What could you do if Christ's work is not finished ?

What can you do if it is ?

ON GUIDANCE IN PRACTICAL LIFE.

“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”—Colossians iii. 17.

HERE I get the whole course of everyday life. There are constantly difficulties that I find passing through this world. I say, ought I to do this thing or that, or not? I am uncertain as to the right course, or I may find great hindrances to doing what I think to be right. Now, if ever I find myself in doubt, my eye is not single, therefore my whole body is not full of light. God brings me into certain circumstances of difficulty until I detect this. It may be something that I never suspected in myself before which hinders me from seeing aright; but it is something between me and Christ, and until that is put away, I shall never have certainty as to my path. Therefore he says, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

This will settle nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand. If you are questioning whether you shall do a thing or not, just ask yourself. Am I going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? It will settle it at once. Thus if a person says “what harm is there in my doing such and such a thing?” I ask “Are you going to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus?” Perhaps it may be something of which you will answer at once, “Of course not.” Then it is settled at once. It is the test of the state of the heart. If my eye is single, if the purpose of my heart is right, I get here what settles every question, it tests my heart. I wanted to know the right path, and it is as simple as A B C. If my heart is not upon Christ, I shall endeavour to do my own will, and this is not God’s will. There is the constant uniform rule which clearly judges every path and circumstance, am I simply doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus?

He and I in that bright glory,
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, to be for ever with Him,
His, that I am there.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home rejoicing brought me.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.

FAITH—A CONTRAST.

“ I have not found so *great* faith.”—Matt. viii. 10.

“ O ye of *little* faith.”—Matt. viii. 26.

BOTH the above expressions fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus, and both occur within a few verses of one another in the same chapter. But what a contrast they present. Reader, if the Lord Jesus were to address you, would He describe your faith as *great* or *little*?

There are three classes in the world. Many with no faith; others with little faith; some with great faith. We propose to refer to each.

The all-important thing is to have faith. There is no blessing and no salvation without it. “ Children in whom is no faith ” is God’s complaint against Israel. “ Not being mixed with faith ” is the reason given why the gospel preached did not profit them. “ Without faith it is impossible to please God ” is of universal application.

The first important consideration, therefore, is how is faith to be obtained? The Apostle Peter in his second epistle, addresses those *who have obtained like precious faith*. How did they obtain it? In Romans x. 17, we read: “ so then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” It is then by hearing the word of God that faith is obtained. When the word of God is so received that a man hears, *i.e.*, not the mere voice, but the message—the hearing produces faith. Everything depends first of all upon the word of God. In verse 8 of the same chapter it is called “ the word of faith,” because it produces faith. It calls for it. It is presented as in contrast to law. Law demanded works—the word demands faith. If anyone speaks to you it demands that you believe him. God calls upon us to believe what He says to us. The law was—this *do* and thou shalt live. The gospel is “ the *word* is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.”

What, then, are we called upon to believe? Here is the answer. “ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord,

and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In our experience, the believing comes first, then the confession. But both the believing and the confession have reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have to believe what God says to me about Christ. I have to believe that God raised Him from the dead, and confess Him as my Lord. Why is it the resurrection here? Because Christ could not save unless He had first of all been raised from the dead Himself. It involves His death. Unless He had died, He could not have been raised. He died for the ungodly. The passage presents the whole plan of salvation in its completeness. Do you then believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead? If you do, it involves your believing that He died in your stead. It is these facts the word of God presents. Faith believes and salvation is the result.

Notice, it is not a question of feeling, or seeing, but of hearing—listening to what God says; and believing what God has done. God knew all that was necessary to be done, and Christ knew how to do it; God wants me to get the benefit of it. How? BY FAITH. How simple. "People quote various words of the Lord," said one learned man to another, "as containing the sum of the gospel, but to me the essence of the gospel is in the shortest of all terms: 'Fear not! only believe.'" Ah! mark that 'only.' 'Fear not! *only* believe.' And his eyes were filled with tears as he spoke. "Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief," was the only answer." Are we not all ready to make that cry more or less our own, because our faith is so small?

But, now, having obtained this precious faith, a further question arises. Is it to be "little faith," or "great faith"? Probably we all begin with the former. But need it always characterize us? The Apostle Paul, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, thanks God because, he says, "your faith groweth exceedingly." How is this to be accounted for? We shall get our answer if we turn back to the first epistle. In chapter ii. verse 13, we read: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." That accounts for their faith growing exceedingly. It was fed and nourished by *the word of God*. How often the Bible is treated as if it were the mere

word of man, little believed, and as little read. While other books are preferred, and even the novel taken up instead of it, there will always be little faith.

Another thing must be borne in mind if faith is to grow. We must exercise what we have. In an earlier part of the same epistle (1 Thess. i. 3) the Apostle could speak of their "*work of faith.*" A faith that is inactive, and inoperative, is never likely to be strong. Could we expect a baby always tied up in a chair, to learn how to walk or to grow strong? Neither can we expect our faith to grow unless we make continual use of it. Every time we read a verse of the Bible it is a call to exercise faith.

The Apostles once put up this prayer: "Lord, increase our faith." The answer they received was: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed." What does that mean? You only need a small seed to get a tree. Potentially, there is a tree in that tiny seed. But it must not be held in the hand, or kept under a glass case simply to be looked at. It must be sown in the soil, and earth, and sun and rain will do the rest. So if our faith has daily to do with God, trusting Him in times of difficulty; waiting for His counsel when we know not what to do; relying upon His word; expecting His assistance; believing He will be as good as His promise; and feeding upon His truth, our faith from being small will become of that character which removes mountains.

Faith grows stronger, too, by testing. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 7). Faith is tested, we learn from this verse, in order that it may be found. The test proves whether we have faith or not. The fiery trial may consume much that was not faith, but if there was ever so little real faith, it abides, purified and strengthened, and it will be found when all is over.

But God's tests are graduated, and suited to our condition. As with the Children of Israel, we read, He led them not by way of the Philistines, lest they should see war and be discouraged; so with us, the greatest trials do not come at the beginning. Israel saw God's mighty hand put forth for their deliverance at the Red Sea, before they had to face the perils and privations of the wilderness.

The story of how old Henry Venn, of Huddersfield, cured his little grandson of being afraid of the dark, illustrates the divine method with ourselves. The child, when of very tender age, received a severe shock through fright. He became so timid that he was fearful of being left alone, and night-time became a terror to him. His nervousness seemed incurable. At length, his grandfather took him in hand. He went with him into his study when it was quite dark, and sat down in a chair with the little fellow in his arms. The child nestled close up to his grandfather, and in this position they remained for some time. This was repeated for several evenings. Then the little fellow stood between the grandfather's knees, holding his hand, and this was again repeated several times ; then he stood without holding his hand ; after that, a little further off still, and so it went on night after night, until, with patience and perseverance, he at last reached the opposite corner of the room and stood there, quite in the dark, and not the least afraid. He was completely cured.

Does not this incident, perhaps, throw some light upon our Lord's dealings with His disciples in the storm, in the chapter we are considering. It was just a test of their faith ; and surely to such men, many of them fishermen, the easiest test that could be applied. Christ knew the dangers they would be exposed to in the mission upon which He would ultimately send them. He would put them under trial. The raging waves, the howling wind, and the low'ring sky, to all of which they were more or less accustomed, were as nothing compared with that storm which eventually would beat upon them, when they would be called upon to withstand, and face, the full fury of man's hatred and opposition. It is true they utterly broke down under the discipline. They proved that their's was a little faith indeed. But this is one side of the picture only. On the other, they learned a lesson they never forgot. They learned if *their* faith had failed, the Lord had not failed. They saw Him in such a light that they never could easily doubt Him, in the same way, afterwards. When they heard Him rebuke the winds and the sea, and saw the great calm that followed, they left the boat with more faith than they had when they entered it.

And herein surely lies the secret of all increase of our faith, and reveals the principle upon which our "little faith" grows into a "great faith." *The test of the disciples' faith became the*

opportunity to learn Christ better. Our faith is little because we know Him only a little; it becomes great in proportion as we know Him better. The words of the disciples reveal how little they knew their Master. They approached Him with this language, as another record gives it: "*carest Thou not that we perish.*" The "we" might have included the Lord, but in any case, it shewed how little they recognised His power, how little they really knew Him. And cannot we trace all our unbelief to the same cause?

The secret of the "great faith" on the part of the centurion was that he did recognise Christ, and the mission upon which He had come. Jesus of Nazareth to him was One clothed with all authority and power by God Himself, for His own glory and for the benefit of disabled, diseased and distressed man. It was the realisation of this gave Him the faith he had. And is not the whole of this eighth chapter of Matthew, as well as the one that follows, capable of inspiring us with a new and enlarged faith, as we trace the ways of the Lord through both. He had been on the mount setting forth the laws and principles of the Kingdom of Heaven until, we read, "the people were astonished at His doctrine." If that was all He had come to do, He might well never have come at all. Such was man's condition that he needed something more than heavenly rules for daily life on earth. Jesus knows this, and He leaves the sermon for the sufferer. He comes down to the level of human need. And there He is with all power, and all willingness, to meet it, and all compassion to feel for it. All that is needed is faith on man's part to draw upon the boundless resources placed gratuitously at His disposal. And mark the manner in which this help came to man. It was not something placed within his reach for him to take. But he was to *receive* it from a PERSON *as willing* as He was able to bestow it. That PERSON becomes the object of faith, and then all that He has is ours.

And the first act in this great drama of uplifting for man (if one may express it so) is precisely to emphasise this willingness. For both on God's side and ours, everything lies, first of all, in the will. Ours is perverted, His is good. Ours has to be brought round to be in harmony with His. "God will have all men to be saved." If man were as willing, what world-wide blessing there would be. And so we have the leper raising this very question

of willingness, and Christ meeting it. It is one in a condition expressing more powerfully, perhaps, than any other the deep-seated and desperate need of man. It is a leper that first confronts Christ as He comes down from the Mount. And the question arises, was One Who could tell man so perfectly what he should be, willing to take account of what he was, and render him the assistance he needed. "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst" are the words of the leper. "I will" is the answer of Christ, with an accompanying touch which demonstrated it beyond all possible misconception. Here is the willingness. While the added words, "be thou clean," tell with equal plainness of the power.

Willing and able. Is not this an incentive to faith? Shall we miss all the blessing because we will not credit such goodness on God's part? Let us only fix our eyes where they ought to be fixed, and faith will come. It may be little at first, but it will become strong faith as it feasts upon Jesus. Until at last we trust His every word as did the centurion.

What a picture of faith these chapters present, and of consequent blessing, because of One Who never failed to respond. He never did, and He never will. *Faith* never counts upon Him in vain. See the leper; his leprosy is cleansed; see the centurion's servant; on the ground of his master's faith he is healed; see the palsied man borne of four into the presence of Jesus, when he saw *their faith*, forgiveness is pronounced, and afterwards, "Arise, take up thy bed and go into thine house"; see the woman with the issue of blood: Jesus says to her, "Thy *faith* hath made thee whole"; and, last of all, see one actually dead; does faith fail here, or Christ fail? No! Listen to the language of faith, and never doubt again, "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hand upon her, *and she shall live.*"

It is said of Abraham Lincoln that he could fight valiantly against what he deemed to be wrong, and yet preserve undiminished his love and respect for the brother from whom he differed. Where no dishonour to our Lord is involved, how blessed to cultivate such a spirit,

* * * *

It is a saying of Luther's that the man who cherishes anger in his soul can never hope to prevail with God in prayer.

HINTS FOR PREACHERS.

FROM OLD AUTHORS.

“Rash preaching always disgusts; timid preaching does nothing but leave poor souls fast asleep; while bold preaching, if delivered under an affectionate love to the souls of men, and with a humble desire to promote the glory of God, is the only preaching that is owned and blessed of Him.”

* * * *

“There are vacancies in the heart of Christ, and the evangelist is gifted by Christ to go out and seek the lost ones to fill them. He starts from the heart of Christ, and brings the lost piece to where the rest are. He knows what a shelter the heart of Christ is, how it loves and cares for them; he knows what that heart is; and goes out and seeks the lost, because the Lord came to seek the lost. He searches through all the dust here looking for the silver piece; but where does he put it? Surely He knows the place He comes from, and knows the delight there will be in heaven; not merely the delight of the person's own soul, but the delights of heaven. If I am occupied with the heart of Christ, I am occupied with the circle of interest in which that heart works.”

* * * *

“The way in which the Lord prepared the two chief labourers among the Gentiles and the Jews is remarkable. Peter, cursing and swearing, declared that he knew not Christ; Paul sought to destroy His name from the earth. Neither the one nor the other could have opened his mouth, except to declare the sin of man and the sovereign grace of God.”

* * * *

“The minister commended HIM, and commended Him again and again, till He made my heart and soul commend Him, and so I closed with Christ that day. Oh, that all preachers and teachers would commend Him whom my soul loveth!”

* * * *

“If there be no harvest, can the seed be the true seed? Are we preaching apostolic doctrine if we never see apostolic results?”

* * * *

“It is sweet to serve Him; sweet to let the light of His eye be one's guidance; to do nothing until He speaks; and, when He speaks, to do what He bids, and then again rest.”

THE ONLY WAY TO BLESSING.

IT is frequently remarked that the way of Salvation is so simple, that unbelievers often stumble at its simplicity.

This failing is often true of the believer, inasmuch as he fails to discover his pathway in this world for God, although it is clearly pointed out to him.

The way to blessing—and the term is used to express the favor, care, and help of God, which if the believer enjoys, can be described as blessing in its fullest sense*—though very simple, is not of necessity an easy one, but it is not the difficulty but the simplicity of it one wishes to point out. The terms simple and difficult may seem contradictory, but the way is simple in the sense that it is very clearly defined for us in Scripture. To follow that way may not be easy, and we probably shall have to grapple with many obstacles if we intend doing so; if we are willing we can count on the help of God, and with Him all things are possible.

What, then, is this way by which we can secure the favour, care, and help of God. In a word it is obedience. As Creator, God expects the obedience of His creatures. The sentence passed upon unbelievers at the judgment day will not be because they were sinners merely, but on account of their having disobeyed the Gospel (2 Thess. i. 8).

If then, God expects obedience of His offspring as Creator, surely He looks for it in those who have been made children and sons by redemption. God's blessing upon Israel as a nation depended absolutely upon their obedience to His will and word.

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people,” (Ex. xix. 5). “Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commands of the Lord your God, which I command you this day and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside† out of the way which I command you this day,” (Deut. xi. 26, 28).

* NOTE.—That is as to his pathway here. He is also blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Ed.)

† See also Ex. xxiii. 21-22; Deut. xxx. 20; Job xxxvi. 11; Jer. xi. 1-10.

We have seen, then, that God expects obedience from man generally, and that Israel's success or failure was governed by their obedience or disobedience to the commandments of God. Shall we then be so foolish as to suppose that God expects less of those who have been redeemed to Himself by the precious blood of Christ. Judging from the very little attention given to this all-important subject it would seem that it was so. On the contrary, we are admonished by God through David; "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee;" and this follows that beautiful verse, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye."

Obedience is a result of our appreciation of the love of God to us as expressed in the gift of His Son, and as we get to know our Lord and Master, surely it will be our delight to obey Him in all things.

That the normal state of the believer is obedience may be deduced from Gal. iii. 1, where the Apostle describes the Galatians as being *bewitched* because they obeyed not the truth.

Obedience to Christ may incur scoffing and ridicule from the world, but it is the only way to obtain His smile and approval which will fully compensate for any suffering. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in My love."

In *whatever connection* we desire God's help, let us ever remember that we can only secure it by obedience to His word; to attempt it in any other way will only cause disappointment as we have so often proved.

Though He were a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered . . . and became the Author of eternal salvation *unto all them that obey Him*. (Heb. v. 8, 9).

The practical working out of the believer's life is contained in Rom. viii. 13. "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God;" also Col. iii. 5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth."

May God give us the needed grace and strength to be obedient in these things for His Name's sake.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

J.M. asks: *Is it Scriptural to say that the Christian (being once cleansed) no longer needs the blood, that, in case of defilement, washing is by the word alone?*

Ans.: If by "no longer needs the blood" is meant a *fresh application* of the blood, it is not unscriptural to say he no longer needs it in that sense. It is a doctrine assiduously taught in certain quarters that every time a believer sins, he needs to come under the cleansing power of the blood again. Not so saith the scriptures. There we read, that, by "*one offering* He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This means perfected as regards righteousness before God. As Abel obtained witness that he was righteous because of his offering. If we need the blood again, then we never have been perfected. Again, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is its abstract character. If I need a re-application, then it has not cleansed me from all sin. But scripture says: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Why? Because the cleansing power of the blood abides for ever. "When I see the **blood** I will pass over you." Supposing, for example, after the blood had been sprinkled on the door posts in Egypt, some one of the Israelites had sinned. Would there have been any need for a fresh sprinkling of the blood? You will say no. Why? Because the blood was there.* And so the blood of Christ abides in all its value. God never sees the believer apart from it. How then can God charge him with guilt? To do so would put a child of His back into the sinner's place again, guilty and lost, and render **the precious blood** of Christ of no more value than that of bulls and goats. This is the seriousness of the doctrine in question.

In the case of sin there is a judicial and a moral cleansing. The judicial cleansing is once for all; and the question can never again be re-opened. The moral cleansing is repeated as often as necessary. The judicial cleansing is by blood. The moral cleansing is by water, *i.e.*, the word. Both are referred to in 1 John i. In verse 7 it is the former; in verse 9 the latter. And this last has

* This is not meant to imply that that blood had eternal efficacy, but only used as an illustration.

to do with the sins of a believer. There must first be confession, then cleansing. And notice it says, "cleanse us from all *unrighteousness*." What led to the sin was some moral defect. This is what God, our Father, wishes to reach. Not merely the act, but what lay behind the act. He is not satisfied with merely a judicial settlement of the sin question, but He wants to change *us*, so that we may become more and more like Him, and less and less liable to sin. The moral cleansing leads us to see sin as He sees it, and to hate it, and judge it, accordingly. And how is this all brought about? In Chap. ii. 1 we read: "My little children, these things write I unto you, **that ye sin not**. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." Here is the divine provision for the sins of God's children. There is One absolutely righteous as our representative before the Father. He is there on the ground of His own work. He is both the Advocate and the propitiation. And so He takes the matter up. For all that concerns us concerns Him; our interests are in His hands. Is this an inducement to sin? Nay. What did it cost Him to become the *propitiation*? He had to be made sin; to feel all the horror and all the terror of it; to taste all the bitterness of being forsaken on our account. But oh! how safe the believer is with such an Advocate and such a propitiation from every charge of guilt, and every accusation of Satan.

W.W. asks, in view of the evil doctrines abroad in Christendom, and often proclaimed from its pulpits, about receiving those who come from under such teaching to the breaking of bread. We think a very wise discrimination is necessary, and that each case must be taken up on its own merits. Where it is a notorious case, such as the C.T., we should certainly decline anyone from there. If erroneous teaching of a serious nature exists, it should be pointed out to the individual in question, and time given for the admonition and warning to take effect. If they are quite free themselves from pernicious doctrine, they can be borne with. Great gentleness and grace are needed in these days, and thankful indeed should we be to be a harbour of refuge to distressed and perplexed souls. No one, however, can be allowed *indefinitely* to trifle with error. This would prove ourselves to be indifferent to it. As to further details in your letter, some may come under notice when dealing with Hebrews iv. (end) in our monthly exposition.

Enquirer asks if an *individual* may be said to be married to Christ. Is this prerogative for the Church only ?

Ans. : By a poetic licence it is sometimes individualised, as in the well-known piece by the late Mrs. Bevan, called "The Bride," but, in scripture, the bride is a collective idea. Rom. vii. 4 has, perhaps, fostered the individual idea, but the word "married" in the authorised version is translated "joined" in the revised, and this latter word gives a more correct rendering of the original. No individual is great enough to be the bride of Christ, and to systematically apply it in that way would be to falsify its whole bearing.

Questions from A.D. and T.C. will (*D.V.*) be answered next month.

AS THEY WILL BE.

I want to think of the loved to-day
 As the loved ones will be when
 The King of Kings to the world will say,
 "These, these are my jewels." Then
 'Twill glory bring to have helped them on
 In the hour of weakness now,
 To have a share in the honours won
 When the crowns are on their brow.

There are many now in the lowly place,
 Who will stand up high at last ;
 To-day they suffer the earth's disgrace,
 But the slights will soon be past.
 And the royal hand of the King enthroned,
 Will lift from the soiling dust ;
 While many will wish they had but owned
 The beggars of their disgust.

Oh, do not think of the sin and stain,
 That the blood has purged away !
 Oh, do not think of their faults again !
 Or the slips of the present day !
 For the Lord has said that they all shall stand
 In the spotless snow-white throng ;
 So love them now, as at God's right hand
 They shall be seen ere long.

God ever thinks of His loved ones now
 As the loved ones will be there ;
 And doth in the present time endow
 With the grace they then shall wear.
 So love like God, though you see not yet
 The gems that you hope to see ;
 That when the stars in their crowns are set
 We also may honoured be.

ACTS VIII. 26-40.

On the opening page of our March issue will be found the following question under three heads: 1. Why did God meet the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert, and not at Jerusalem, whither He had gone to worship? 2. Why were not any of the Apostles, who were at Jerusalem at the time, used to enlighten him? (As far as we know, the eunuch saw none of them). 3. Has this any bearing upon, and any connection with, the close of the seventh and opening of the ninth chapters?

The following reply has been sent to us:—

1. I believe it was because there was a danger of Jerusalem becoming a metropolis of Christianity, which God had determined should not be (John iv. 21).

2. For the same reason he saw none of the Apostles. Though in Jerusalem they must have been in obscurity, because all others had been driven out by the persecution, "except the Apostles." (Chap. viii. 1).

In view of the command to evangelise the world, and to tarry in Jerusalem *until* they were endued with power from on high, one cannot help feeling they were remaining too long. An organisation in Jerusalem was not what God desired to build, and it had come to pass and failed. The appointing of deacons being granted to meet the failure. Now God uses the persecution to scatter them "*everywhere preaching the Word*" to enlarge a Unity that was independent of any particular local company. Stephen, not an Apostle, was chosen of God to close the especial testimony to Jews in Jerusalem, and Philip was directed by the Spirit beyond the boundary of Israel to meet a Gentile, who had not found what he went for in Jerusalem. Compare in this connection John vii. 37: "The *last* day, the *great* day of the feast," and Luke i. 53.

3. I believe there is a connection. The grace of God ever overflowed (compare Luke iv. 25, 26, 27), and so when the wonderful testimony in Jerusalem to Jews was refused, the first conversions we read of are one in the far south beyond Israel, and going further south "on his way rejoicing" with the glad tidings. The other north beyond Israel, Damascus, and He a chosen vessel to the Gentiles.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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MAY, 1909.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

What is the race and what is the joy of Hebrews xii. 1-2? It is astonishing how far we can drift from the plain meaning and teaching of a passage of scripture when we have a preconceived notion in our minds. A celebrated preacher, speaking lately before the Free Church Council at Swansea on Hebrews xii. 2, said the race referred to in verse 1 was to the City of God in *this* world. That was the end the Redeemer had in view, that was the joy set before Him. The preacher said it was not heaven that was meant by the joy set before Him, but the victory of His Father's will in the lives of men. If this represents what the speaker really said we can only add that it seems to us at variance with the whole bearing of the epistle from which the text is taken. If the race referred to is to the City of God in this world, why does the writer of the epistle tell us in the second chapter that he is speaking of the world *to come*? (verse 5). Surely, too, verse 22 of the chapter from which the preacher's text was taken contradicts his assertion. There the city of the living God is distinctly said to be "the *heavenly* Jerusalem."

As to the joy set before Christ, surely that was to reach the right hand of the throne of God. When there is an obvious meaning close at hand, there is surely no need to travel so far afield as to speak of it as the victory of the Father's will in the lives of men. No one doubts that this gives Christ joy, but the point is, does the text bear that interpretation? Throughout the whole of the epistle to the Hebrews the point of attention is the right hand of God (chap. i. 3; vi. 20; viii. 1; x. 12; and xii. 2). Does not this fact make the bearing of Hebrews xii. 1-2 quite clear? Jesus, the man of faith, has reached a place no man of faith had ever reached, viz.: the right hand of the throne of God. He had gone there from the Cross—from the lowest to the highest. In doing so He had traversed the whole path. We are, therefore, exhorted to look off (off from the scene through which we are passing, and even from all the men of faith who had gone before), unto Jesus, the beginner and finisher of faith. And this indicates what is the race. The race must be to the point Jesus has reached. Blessed be God, no goal short of that is ours.

* * * *

A correspondent writes:—

“Kindly allow my suggestion in my last note to be published that all who have enjoyed the reading of *The Faith and The Flock* may become fellow-helpers by introducing it to other Christians.”

The suggestion is as follows:—

“Might I suggest to every reader who has found profit and help from the magazine, to try and introduce it to another person, as it is a monthly that all believers in God's Word should love, and through not publishing names, it does not manifest a party or sect.”

* * * *

The articles which appeared recently under the title of “The Outlook” are now published in separate form, and can be obtained of the author as specified on cover. The same applies to the articles entitled “Unity.”

* * * *

We hope next month to say something upon the subject of the question to which we have invited answers, and in the meantime shall be glad to receive further answers. See opening page of March.

The late Mr. Albert Midlane.—A correspondent sends us the following particulars of the interment:—

Hundreds of people found their way on March 4th along the snow-lined streets of Newport, Isle of Wight, and up the white-clad heights of Carisbrooke, upon which the Cemetery is situated.

The occasion was this:—The world-known hymn writer, and author of "There's a Friend for little children above the bright blue sky"—Mr. Albert Midlane—was about to be borne to his last earthly resting place. A lovely spot on the summit of the hill overlooking the little town, and quite near to the grassy slopes and grey walls of the ivy-clad castle, had been chosen.

Parkhurst Forest can be seen from this point, and the beautiful Medina, like a silver thread winding its way through the meadows of Cowes, and past the solemn towers of Osborne, until lost in the delicate haze of purple which rests upon the far distant Solent—here, a *white* grave, in the soft pearly chalk, had been excavated.

The funeral was most simple in character.

All felt it to be a peculiarly joyous and hallowed time. Quite in keeping with the happy home-going of this way-worn and battle-scarred saint, of whom it can be truly said that he never saw death. His was the triumph of the warrior! The shock of thoroughly ripe corn ascending in his season to the barn-floor of glory!

The element of sadness was only sufficient to temper and subdue the holy joy that filled the breasts of those present who knew that *his* Saviour, was *their* Saviour too.

Three of Mr. Midlane's own hymns were sung, the first beginning:—

"Star of the morning, rise,
Disperse these shades of night!
And fill our beaming eyes
With tears of rapt delight.
These hearts of ours have waited long
To join the blissful bridal song."

The 23rd Psalm was read, and 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. Mr. Holman, basing his remarks upon the Psalm, said:—"Our dear brother was one who could from his heart take up the language of the Psalmist and say 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.'

"His life was expressive of the beauty, and reality, of Christianity. God not only saved, but kept him. Through an exceptionally long life he proved the power and faithfulness of God.

"Could our friend speak to us he would ascribe all to God's grace. The grace that reached him and brought him salvation remained with him, and kept his feet in the way of life.

"This was the secret of his happiness and usefulness. Our brother was trusting not unto his own personal goodness, or righteousness, but wholly unto what a suffering Mediator had wrought for him upon the Cross. His Saviour was Jesus. He stood before God arrayed in a righteousness not his own. He has gone to be with the Saviour whom he so ardently longed to see.

"Absent from the body, he is present with the Lord.

"He had the blessed knowledge of sin covered and forgiven, and surely he is one of the blessed and holy ones who will have part in the first resurrection. For the work of Christ redeems not merely the soul, but the body—the mortal body, that this day it is our solemn duty to commit to the grave. Here it will remain, but not forgotten of God. On the Resurrection morn Christ will freshly mould this precious dust, and make it like unto His own glorious body, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord."

At the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 22-57, was read, and the hymn sung commencing :

“ Amen—one lasting, long amen !
 Blest anthem of eternal days
 The fulness of the rapturous song
 To Christ the Saviour's endless praise.”

The service closed by a number of little children from the various Sunday Schools standing around the grave as they sang : —

“ There's a Friend for little children
 Above the bright blue sky ;
 A Friend who never changes, whose love can never die ;
 Unlike our friends by nature, who change with changing years,
 This Friend is always worthy the precious Name He bears.”

Isa. ix. 6, 7 : “ His name shall be called . . . COUNSELLOR.”

Then the office that our precious Lord Jesus sustains is “ Counsellor.” Now there are numberless things before us continually in our earthly pilgrimage, regarding which we need counsel, we need advice, and then under these circumstances we should go to our Lord Jesus Christ and say to Him :—“ My Lord, my precious adorable Saviour, I am ignorant, now what am I to do ? Thou art my Counsellor, now show me clearly and distinctly how to act under these circumstances.” And what will be the result ? We shall be taught.

But our danger is to think ourselves wise, to say : “ I have lived many years and know how to act, I am a man of experience, I do not need to take advice.” This is the very way to make mistakes, to be left to ourselves ; but, feeling our ignorance, what we have to do, is to own that we are little ignorant children, and to ask the Lord to teach us. When the Apostle John was asked a question (Rev. vii. 13, 14) he said : “ Sir, thou knowest,” in other words, “ I do not know,” and as soon as he acknowledged his ignorance, he was taught.

And thus it will be in regard to ourselves, directly there is found in us a heart of humility, so that we come asking of God that He would tell us, we shall find what it is to have a Counsellor in heaven.

You need never to take a step in the dark. If you do, you are sure to make a mistake, *Wait—Wait—Wait*—till you have light. Remind the Lord Jesus, that as He is Counsellor to the Church of God, that He will be in your particular case, Counsellor and Guide, and will direct you. And if you patiently wait, believingly, expectantly wait, you will find that *the waiting is not in vain*, and that the Lord will prove Himself a Counsellor.

—*Extract.*

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition. 197

CHAPTER IV. 1—13.

THE REST OF GOD.

LET us, therefore, fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

The rest spoken of here is the rest of God. To lose sight of this, or confound it with any other kind of rest spoken of in the New Testament, is to miss the meaning entirely. It is neither rest of conscience, nor rest of heart. It is not our rest primarily at all, though we shall enter into it. Nor is it a present rest. It is the rest of God, and it is future.

Let us notice the exact words used. The subject begins in the previous chapter. Carefully note the closing words of v. 6: "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." It is getting to the end of the journey that is being pressed upon the attention of these Hebrew Christians. So much emphasis is laid upon the word "end" by the writer of the epistle, that Dr. Weymouth, in his translation, puts a capital E. Then follows in immediate connection a long quotation from the Old Testament, concluding with the words, "They shall not enter into My rest." Again in v. 14 we get "unto the end." And in v. 18, "should not enter into His rest." And this brings us to the verse with which our portion opens, where again it is His rest. And so on all through the passage (see vv. 3 and 5).

Let no one think that he loses anything by this strict insistence upon what is in this particular passage, and the exclusion of what is not there. God's rest must be infinitely greater than anything which meets our own need. God never needed rest of conscience, or rest of heart, for Himself. Yet we read of God resting after the work of creation, and He has a future rest more blessed and glorious still. It is this rest of which our chapter speaks; and it is to this rest God will bring His people.

How ineffable is the rest of God. Think of being introduced into a state where all is so perfect that even God finds satisfaction,

and nothing calls for intervention, for correction or addition. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." "*Rest in His love,*" or as the margin reads "be silent." Implying a rest and a joy too deep for words. This is rest, when you can be silent. Silent, because entirely satisfied.

God rested after the work of creation. Why did He do so? The answer seems conveyed in the significant words: "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was *very good.*" And again, "thus the heavens and the earth were *finished.*" "And on the seventh day God *ended* the work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day." Everything was "very good," everything was "finished." Not another stroke could be put; no lack needed to be supplied. Then God could rest, but He would not have rested otherwise. And to show the character of that rest, we read: "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." It seemed as if it was intended as a stamp upon all the work of the six days, to show that all was holy, and all was good, for when it was completed, God could rest. And that day—the seventh—was specially blessed, and specially set apart. God's rest is as perfect as His work. Ours is not so. Our work is never perfect, and never complete. But our times of rest are even less so. Often they are times of the greatest unrest and dissatisfaction. But God could not only complete His work, leaving nothing more to be done or even desired, but He could then retreat, as it were, into the blessedness of His own being. What He does takes all its character from what He is; and what He is, is as blessed as what He does.

Exodus xxxi. 13-17 shows us that it was God's desire to bring His people into the enjoyment of His own blessedness, and that it was for this purpose He was leading them into Canaan. God could not rest amid the pollutions of Egypt, nor could He rest in the waste, howling wilderness. His design was to have a people apart with Himself, holy as He is holy, in a land that He would give them, and there they should enter into His rest. The same chapter adds a touch of great beauty which gives us further insight into the true nature of God's rest. In verse 17 we read: "and on the seventh day He rested, and was *refreshed.*" God sought

refreshment after six days of labour as if He had been a tired workman. It is to that rest, and that refreshment, He is going to bring His people. "There remains a sabbath rest for the people of God" (Trans. R. F. W.).

But the cross throws an additional light upon it. If we read of the heavens and the earth being finished, we cannot forget that other and greater work of redemption, upon which that same word has been pronounced, when the Almighty Workman, amid toil and sweat and suffering such as creation had never cost Him, exclaimed, "**IT IS FINISHED,**" and bowed His head, and slept in the tomb on the sabbath day. That has introduced an eternal sabbath, never to be broken. Creation rest was broken. God's rest now is in Christ and His work, and all the fruits of it. Oh! what a rest must God have now, and what a rest He will have when Christ having subdued all things unto Himself, finally delivers up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, the Son also Himself subject unto Him that put all things under Him "that God may be all in all." If the work of creation was such that God could rest, and be refreshed, how must He be refreshed now that Christ, His Beloved, His own Son, has put away sin, sacrificing Himself to do it.

No work remains for God to do now, except the work of judgment, His strange work, in order to purge the scene of all that is offensive to Him, and give Christ His proper place. This is why we have not yet reached the rest of Hebrews iv., and cannot have it here. Our hearts' deep longings can only be gained when God His rest shall give, and He cannot rest in a scene such as this. Yet we are prone to settle down here, and seek rest where God cannot find His. This is precisely what Israel did. In their hearts they turned back again to Egypt. They lusted after the cucumbers, the melons, and the leeks of the country they had left, and despised the manna God had given them. And it is because sin and indifference are liable to gain the same power over us, that these solemn exhortations and warnings of God's word are impressed upon us, lest we should fall short of His rest.

"For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (or "not one in faith with those who gave heed to it." Trans., R. F. W.).

From this we see how requisite is faith. God's word to us is that He will bring us to His rest. If we believe the message we are entering into rest. Dr. Weymouth's translation makes it still clearer that the rest spoken of here is future. We will quote verses 3-10 as he gives them:—

“We who have believed are soon to be admitted to the true rest; as He has said, ‘as I swore in My anger, they shall not be admitted to My rest,’ although God's works had been going on ever since the creation of the world. For, as we know, when speaking of the seventh day, He has used the words, ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’; and He has also declared ‘they shall not be admitted to My rest.’ Since, then, it is still true that some will be admitted to that rest, and that because of disobedience those who formerly had Good News proclaimed to them, were not admitted, He again definitely mentions a certain day, ‘To-day,’ saying long afterwards, by David's lips, in the words already quoted, ‘To-day, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them the true rest, we should not afterwards hear God speaking of another still future day. It follows that there still remains a sabbath rest for the people of God. For he who has been admitted to His rest, has rested from his works as God did from His.”

Three things stand out very plainly from this passage. First, that God's rest has never yet been enjoyed by man. Secondly, that the promise of rest was not fulfilled in Canaan in the case of Israel, and has been repeated. Thirdly, that when anyone enters into rest his work ceases.

That this last is not the case, and as a further proof that the rest promised in this passage is yet future, verse 11 will show:—

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

It must “be our earnest endeavour to be admitted to that rest.” No language such as this is ever employed in connection with any rest we enjoy here. Nor can it refer to the rest of the grave, but only to the rest of God. God's rest is His purpose for His people. This purpose shines like a line of light from the time of creation until time shall be no more. We have seen it in Genesis. We have seen it in Exodus; it reappears in Leviticus in connection with the feasts of the Lord, which close with the feast of Tabernacles (ch. xxiii.); we find it again in Numbers when Israel refused to go up and take possession. “As truly as I live” said God, “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord” (ch. xiv. 21). And still the message is, there “remains a sabbath rest to the

people of God." This is God's promise—the Good News contained in His word—and how solemn are the concluding words of our portion:—“*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.*”

This is what the word of God is in itself. Have we felt its power? Has it been joined with faith in us? “God hath in these last days spoken unto us in His Son. If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.” This is the word of God. It does not occupy us with time, and the schemes of men—their politics, inventions and improvements—but it brings before us another world, it shews us Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and reveals Him as the One Who alone can save and bless man. The word of God reveals to us where we are, whether our thoughts are in Egypt or in Canaan. He knows, and He causes us to know, for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.

Let us remember, then, that as in the case of Israel, being sheltered from God's judgment by the blood of the Lamb; being delivered from their enemies at the Red Sea; and all the countless mercies and deliverances by the way, did not in themselves mean the rest of Canaan; so, no rest and peace we enjoy now as the fruit of faith means for us the same thing as the rest spoken of in Hebrews iv. That rest will come when our work **here** is finished. When God calls us to *His* rest, it will be to a perfect rest, where all is perfect. God cannot rest short of perfection, nor can anyone who knows God. How far from perfect is the scene in which we find ourselves, where man, subservient to Satan, exercises to so large an extent his own will. For that very reason it is to us a wilderness, and never can be anything else until God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven. This will be the rest of God, when God at last has His own way. We toil on now, as workers together with God, because of the need, and distress, and sin around us. We groan within ourselves because we are in the

midst of a groaning creation, and the Spirit is in us. Often weary, depressed, baffled, heart-sick and heart-sore, we see afar the rest of God, and we lift up the cry, How long? And the answer comes "there remaineth a sabbath rest for the people of God." "Oh, the rest forever and the rapture," then.

"Rest of the saints above,
 Jerusalem of God,
 Who in thy palaces of love,
 Thy golden streets have trod?
 To me thy joy to tell,
 Those courts secure from ill,
 Where God Himself vouchsafes to dwell,
 And every bosom fill.
 That rest secure from ill,
 No cloud of grief e'er stains,
 Unfailing praise each heart doth fill,
 And love eternal reigns.
 God and the Lamb shall there
 The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
 The unveiled mystery."

SONGS FOR SAINTS.

No. 1.

WORK, FOR THE "DAY" IS COMING.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—Rom. xiii. 12.

Work, for the "day" is coming by and by,
 "Day" when the Master all our work shall try;
 O that we may, with ever-single eye,
 Work till the Master comes.

Chorus.—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand";
 O let us heed our blessed Lord's command;
 Let us "go forth," a willing, happy band,
 And work till the Master comes.

Work, for the "day" is coming when the Lord
 Shall to the faithful give a bright reward;
 Then let the ransomed all with one accord
 Work till the Master comes.

Work, for the "day" is coming very near,
 When in the glory Jesus shall appear;
 Then shall be ended all our service here—
 Work till the Master comes.

“PULL FOR THE SHORE.”

SUCH were the words that came to the writer's mind, while thinking over the terrible disaster which had befallen the White Star Liner, “ Republic.”

No doubt, most of us have heard something of this disaster, which happened to the “ Republic ” on January 23rd, bound from New York to the Mediterranean, with passengers numbering about 461, and a crew of 300, making 761 souls on board, all told. She was run down by the “ Florida,” an Italian boat, in a dense fog, twenty-six miles south of Nantucket Shoals Lightship.

The captain of the great vessel soon found out that his ship and passengers were in deadly peril, the engine-room full of water, no craft in sight, land twenty-six miles away, in fact the steamer was sinking.

Marconi's Wireless Telegraphy is the captain's only hope. He gives instructions to the operator, who sends up into the air the signal for help. He had no guidance, but the hope that somewhere in the mysterious skies above him, the desperate appeal would be caught by air waves, and wafted to another ship, or some wireless magician on land.

The hope was not in vain. The message reached two other big liners, and two revenue cutters. “ In distress and sinking,” it said, and gave the name of the ship with her latitude and longitude.

In the meantime, the captain gave orders to get the lifeboats ready, and the passengers, most of whom were in their berths, and some asleep, were ordered to dress and get on deck. The “ Florida ” had heard the signal of distress and found her way to the “ Republic,” and learning what damage she had done, the passengers were transferred as quickly as possible to the “ Florida.” Later, it was found necessary to transfer all the passengers on to the “ Baltic,” which by this time had come alongside, and eventually they were landed safely in New York, Monday, January 25th, with the exception of six lost and four injured. The papers stated that the captain and second officer would not leave their ship till the last moment.

The captain takes to the rigging and climbs as high as the masthead lights, rests a moment, and then takes out a blue light, which, however, being wet, will not go off. Then he manages to get a

revolver out of his pocket and fires a shot, the water is now reaching him, and he begins to float, then gets caught in a whirlpool and is tossed about for awhile, until he catches hold of a large hatch covering, and manages to lie spread-eagle fashion till picked up, in a very weak state by one of the revenue cutters' boats. He found, safe in that little lifeboat, the second officer who he thought was lost.

Dear reader, let me ask you, in all kindness and love, what boat you are in. Are you in the World's boat or the boat that is bound for Glory? The Captain of the first boat is Satan, the Captain of the second, Jesus the Saviour.

The World's boat is a great pleasure boat, the captain caters for every class of people, young and old, rich and poor, there's a big crowd on board, but let me tell you, dear unsaved reader, she is travelling very quickly into a thick dense fog, someday there will be an awful crash; there is no wireless telegraphy on the boat, you will find the captain has deceived you. It will be too late to send even a message, the boat will not be able to stand the storm of judgment that is coming, every soul will be lost. There will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and blackness and darkness for evermore. Do you wish to be transferred? Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2). The lifeboat is alongside just now. The people on board the "Republic" acted in perfect obedience to the captain's command, there was no time to be lost, if they wanted to be saved.

Now the Captain of the Glory boat says:—"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else (Isa. xlv. 22).

There is life for a look.

Is there a cry from some poor soul "in distress and sinking"? Just tell God where you are, give Him your name, latitude and longitude, dear unsaved one, and your cry will be wafted up and reach the heart of God, the lifeboat which will get the signal of distress, is waiting to help you, transfer at once. Then you can sing:—

Saved for Glory! yes for Glory.
By the work of God's blest Son;
Saved for Glory, wondrous story,
I believe what Christ has done.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? (Heb. ii. 3.)

BALAAM AND HIS PARABLES.

THE episode, of Balaam and Balak is by far the most interesting in the whole wilderness history of Israel. It occurred at the close of their long pilgrimage. The forty years of perverseness and unbelief were almost ended, and God was about to lead His people across the Jordan, and put them in possession of the land of promise. At this point, Satan roused himself for his last grand effort against them. He would hinder, if possible, the consummation of God's grace concerning them, and transform their blessing into a curse. His chosen instruments for this evil business were Balak, King of Moab, and Balaam, the soothsayer. These enemies foreshadow in some measure, the Beast and the False Prophet who will conspire together for the destruction of Israel just before the Son of Man appears.

It is of the utmost importance to us to observe how God acted in the hour of His people's peril. Israel's God is our God also. Can His mind be influenced against His elect, so as to induce Him to hand them over to the cruel devices of the enemy? The question is the more serious when we remember the ingratitude of Israel during the forty years of wilderness sojourn. Could *this* annul, or even modify, the purposes of God? The divine answer is found in Num. xxii.-xxiv. Centuries afterwards, Jehovah reminded His people of this time in the following terms: "O My people, remember now what Balak, King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness (*i.e.*, the faithfulness) of Jehovah" (Micah vi. 5). Without being appealed to by Israel (who apparently knew nothing of what was going on), Jehovah took the matter into His own blessed hands, and constrained the would-be destroyer of His people to pronounce blessing after blessing upon them. The more persistent the enemy's efforts to harm them, the fuller the opportunity of proclaiming God's thoughts concerning them, until in the four parables the whole story of divine grace was told out.

Let us look at the circumstances a little further. Israel was encamped, as we have said, in the plains of Moab. "And Balak, the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel" (Num. xxii. 2, 3). Had Balak known it, he had nothing to fear from

Israel. God had forbidden them to touch the territory of either Moab or Ammon ; the children of Lot were to be left in undisturbed possession of their inheritance, while Israel pressed on to the better portion selected for them by Jehovah (Deut. ii. 9). But Balak *was* alarmed. Israel had but recently destroyed three Amorite powers—Arad, Heshbon and Bashan (Num. xxi). Sihon, King of Heshbon, had once been a terror to Moab, but he had succumbed utterly before Israel. In order to guard against possible trouble for his own kingdom, Balak took two steps : (1) he formed a political alliance with Midian, and (2) he summoned from Mesopotamia, Balaam the soothsayer. He hired Balaam because of his known influence with the invisible world. The King rightly felt that Israel's miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and all the wonders of their wilderness history argued the presence with them of a supernatural power. He desired, therefore, to interest supernatural power on his own behalf. But it was the power of hell that he invoked !

Balaam furnishes us with a character-study of a remarkable kind. Unlike Balak, who was just an ignorant heathen, Balaam had considerable knowledge of God. No one ever spoke more piously than he, yet his heart had never been touched by divine grace. He dealt in enchantments and divinations. In this polished day, when it is customary to call ancient abominations by new and more refined names, Balaam would be called a Spiritualist. " Spirit—ist " would be a more suitable title ; the word " spiritual " being used in Scripture in a totally opposite connection. The Mesopotamian soothsayer is quoted in Jude ii. as the type of ministerial corruption for the sake of gain ; now, as for centuries past, one of the public evils of Christendom (compare Micah iii. 11). Balaam was prepared to preach to the order of those who employed him. He had no objection to bless Israel, if blessing would secure reward for himself, but on the other hand, he had no scruple about cursing them for the sake of " the wages of unrighteousness " (2 Pet. ii. 15). In his heartlessness, he was willing to damn a whole nation in cold blood ; for he had no personal quarrel with Israel. But if God be for us, who can be against us ? Such is the absolute-ness of divine grace, that all the power of the enemy is impotent against God's elect. Balaam was soon constrained to publicly proclaim this. Those who seek to frustrate God's purposes of grace only dash themselves to pieces in the vain effort. This both

Balaam and Moab proved in the sequel (Num. xxxi. 8, Deut. xxiii. 3-6).

When the messengers of Balak first approached the soothsayer he proposed to refer the matter to Jehovah, for guidance. Instead of going to God, he went to bed, and God came to him, forbidding him to curse His people. For a man born of the Spirit this would have settled the matter once for all. Balaam, however, consented to receive a second deputation from the Moabite King. God then bade him go with them, thus dealing with a fool according to his folly. The Spirit speaks elsewhere of "the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet. ii. 16). Let none entertain the smallest doubt that Balaam's ass really spoke with human voice. The certainty of it is vouched for in both the Old and New Testaments. Unbelief may sneer incredulously at such a record, and give utterance to one of its scornful "How's," but faith trusts God, knowing both His wisdom and His power. He who gave the power of speech to man is quite able to grant the same power to a beast, if it pleases Him so to do.

Arriving in Balak's camp, Balaam was conducted by him to "the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people" (Num. xxii. 41). The oracle was thus to speak from a point distinctly Satanic. Oh, the blindness of the enemy! He thus prepared the way for the marvellous spectacle of the Gospel being proclaimed from the devil's own platform. What triumph for God; what confusion for the foe!

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REMARKS ON 2 CORINTHIANS, III. 18.

Some further remarks have reached us with reference to our former question.

P.C. writes from Lewes:—"The way I read 2 Cor. iii. 18 is this. We, who have by faith had the veil of unbelief removed, by the Holy Spirit, from our hearts, are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, and, beholding Him, who is the Father's glory, are being changed, or growing up into His likeness. In other words, are becoming in grace more obedient to the Father's will, and more meek and lowly in heart, as we gaze on our Glorified Pattern. Hence we seek to reflect His glory in our everyday life.

It has been said that those who were much in the presence of the late Queen Victoria largely copied her ways, and unconsciously lived them out.

God help us to be more like Jesus."

HINTS FOR PREACHERS.

FROM OLD AUTHORS.

“ Never mind breaking grammar, if the Lord enables you to break hearts, and bring souls to Christ ; but if you could acquire a little more culture, without losing any of your zeal and holy simplicity of heart, your usefulness might be more extended. I would not give you a single sixpence to have your tongue dressed at any of our modern academies ; they are, in general, sad soul-starvation places. Only take the hint, and work on, and blunder on as hard and as fast as you can.”

* * * *

“ The plainest words are the most profitable oratory in the weightiest matters. Fineness is for ornament, and delicacy for delight ; but they answer not necessity, though sometimes they may modestly attend that which answers it.”

* * * *

“ It is to the last degree awkward and absurd, to attempt a poetical florid style, on occasions, when it should be our business only to argue and reason ; or to speak with elaborate pomp of expression, before persons who comprehend nothing of it, and who can only stare at our unseasonable magnificence. These are defects not so much in point of style, as, what is much worse, in point of common sense.”

* * * *

“ Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast ; but I am not ; mine are the words of truth and soberness. When I first went into Gloucestershire, and was walking on a hill, I saw a gravel pit fall in, and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help, so loud, that I was heard in the town below, at a distance of a mile ; help came, and rescued two of the poor sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast then ; and when I see eternal destruction ready to fall upon poor sinners, and about to entomb them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast now ? No, sinner, I am not an enthusiast in so doing ; I call on thee aloud to flee for refuge, to the hope set before thee in the gospel of Christ Jesus.”

SCIENCE AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

GOD has measured the philosophy of man. What is it worth in the things of God? Is divine revelation helped thereby? Is a highly trained intellect competent to grasp the immensity of what God has revealed? Can the subtle brain of man, developed to the highest state of perfection, fathom the mystery of his own complete being? What is life? For 6,000 years the problem of human life has been a burning question. We are no nearer its solution to-day than in the year one. The world by wisdom knew not God, worse still, it combined its wisdom, religion, and power to crucify the Lord of Glory. If that which is *in* man and *round* about him baffles human understanding, how helpless must the creature be when he assumes to grasp the Infinite and comprehend what God alone can, and has revealed. If in his own domain, the ignorance of man in almost every department of knowledge, is an *acknowledged fact*, what when he attempts to soar into the region of the Divine? O, how foolish! unable to fathom *many* of the scientific and moral questions which affect him in daily life, yet undeterred by repeated failure and manifest ignorance, the creature presumptuously arraigns God and His Revelation!

In the ancient book of Job—perhaps written before the book of Genesis—we have in one chapter (xxxviii.) about forty questions put by God to man. Have those forty questions ever been answered? *Never*. The truth is that the mind of man is fairly baffled, even in the field of physical science where he feels strongest. As to the antiquity of the earth, the greatest scientists of the day are in hopeless disagreement. Here, then, we turn from man to God, from the rude and rudimentary knowledge—all uncertain—to what is revealed, to what is positive, to the Holy Scriptures.

Faith in God imparts certainty. The *reasonableness* of this must be apparent to the simplest mind, for it is faith in the Creator Himself. It is faith in the source and origin. The only Revealer of what is, and will be, the only Judge of what is right and good is *God*. Without faith a creature is like a tempest-tossed ship without anchor, ballast, or sails.

Faith can soar to any height, fathom the profoundest depths, and unravel the most complicated mysteries. Faith in God is the soul's anchor. By faith we understand (Gen. i., Heb. xi. 3). How simple are the first steps in knowledge! for God rests the

brain as well as relieves the conscience. In the first ten words of the Bible we learn the first two fundamental truths of all sciences: first, that God is the Creator; second, that ordered and fashioned matter is not eternal, nor evolved out of a state of chaos.

Where are we as to the blessed and full unfolding of the inexplicable wonders of creation and redemption? Does the *how*, and the *why*, and the *wherefore* trouble and perplex? "Wearied in the multitude of thy counsels" get the throbbing brain into the certain light and calm of divine Revelation—God, the Creator, and God, the Redeemer.

No amount of scientific research can add the tiniest ray of light to the perfectness of divine truth. Science in all its departments has been helped by it. The more thoroughly you explore the earth's surface and strata, the more that the starry host on high and its countless glories are examined, the better you search out the principles, understand the truths, and grasp the laws which govern and guide creation in its upper and lower spheres—the more truly will it be found that the Bible—although not a teacher of science—is yet far beyond all in the exactness of its statements. What is the united result of ancient and modern research into the mysteries of creation, of providence, and of redemption? *Darkness and uncertainty.*

Can the learned lore of many centuries and the accumulated stores of research give a resting place to the soul? We want to put down our feet on solid ground. We want rock, not sand; certainty, not opinion.

It is said "Progression is stamped on everything; development is a law of nature." Then is there nothing fixed; nothing absolute? There is—thank God. In the Holy Scriptures **we have the Truth**. We are not guessing after it. *We have it.* The truth is a fixed system in the Bible. The Revelation is complete in all its parts. In Old Testament times there was development in the progress of the Revelation. *Now* all is fixed. There is no development in the truth itself; there is, of course, development in our apprehension of the truth. Christ is the truth (John xiv. 6), and there can be no development, no progression, no improvement in the Person of our Lord. "Jesus Christ is the *same* yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." You cannot have a destroyed Bible. The truths enshrined in it are eternal—as the years of God.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE.

WHEN recently reading in a work on biology about the characteristics of living organisms, the thought occurred to me, that there is a most instructive analogy between the physical and the spiritual world. Indeed, this is what we might expect, seeing that the God of Nature and the God of the Bible are one and the same Person. The Lord Jesus, Himself, "God over all blessed for ever," made frequent use of illustrations drawn from nature, in His parables and teaching (*vide* Matthew vi. 28-30, xiii. 1-48, &c.).

"A living organism," says the work above referred to, "exhibits five everyday activities:—(1) the power of *movement*; (2) the power of *feeling*; (3) the power of *nutrition* or *utilisation of food*; (4) *respiration*; and (5) *excretion*." Let us briefly take these up in order:—

(1) *Movement*.—The normal Christian life ought to be one of activity or movement, though this need not necessarily imply bodily action. Many a bed-ridden saint has done good work for God (*vide* Col. i. 10, &c.).

(2) *Feeling*.—It is remarkable that the Apostle Paul, in enumerating the characteristics of those who are "alienated from the life of God," says of them that they are "*past feeling*." "But ye," he goes on to say, speaking to the saints (Eph. iv. 19) "have not so learned Christ," and then exhorts them to *feel* for one another (see v. 32).

(3) *Nutrition* or *the utilisation of food*.—This is a most important point, for, even as it is possible for the natural body to take food and yet not assimilate it, so this may also happen to the Christian. How often, speaking at least for oneself, do we read the Word, and yet are humbled when we reflect, how little we really assimilated or made our own?

(4) *Respiration*.—We hear much (at least in this country, Ireland) of a "Catholic" or Protestant "atmosphere," and the thought suggests itself, what atmosphere do we habitually breathe? Is it that of the world, or that order of things which is "not of the world"?

(5) *Excretion*.—Waste products must be got rid of in the natural body, if a healthy state is to be preserved. It will be found, I think,

that there is a parallel for this also in the spiritual sphere. For are not "the works of the flesh," the manifestations of "the old man," but so many "waste products," which must be rigorously excreted if the spiritual life is not to be clogged and impaired? (*vide* Col. iii. 5, &c.).

To again quote:—"The living organism *grows* at the expense of material *different from itself*." Now, scripture, I think, never contemplates that the Christian—*i.e.*, one who through grace has divine life in his soul—should stand still and make no progress or growth after having been born again. But how is the Christian organism to grow? Is it by feeding on the subjective experiences of his own mind as some would have us believe? No, but in the words above quoted, "at the *expense of material different from itself*," which material, we need hardly say, is the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. ii. 2). The apostle tells us a few verses higher up, that we are born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. Thus, we see that that which gives us divine life is that upon which we must feed, if that life is to be maintained. May the Lord give all who are His the desire to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

"ALL THE DAY LONG."

"Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."—Prov. xxiii. 17.

When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write,
When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight;
To be kept from all wrong when at home or abroad,
Live always as under the eye of the Lord.

Whatever you read, though the page may allure,
Read nothing of which you are perfectly sure
Consternation at once would be seen in your look
If God should say solemnly, "Show Me that book."

Whatever you think, never think what you feel,
You would blush in the presence of God to reveal;
Whatever you say, in whisper or clear,
Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.

Whatever you write, though in haste or with heed,
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read;
Whatever you sing, in the midst of your glees,
Sing nothing that His listening ear could displease.

Wherever you go, never go where you fear
Lest your Father should ask you, "How camest thou here?"
Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from pursuing
If God should look down and say, "What art thou doing?"

WHAT IT IS TO BE CARNAL.

GALATIANS V. 16.

Some ways in which carnality may appear and show itself even in spiritual matters.

1. *When Christians who are very far agreed in the most important things, make little of the things wherein they are agreed, though never so great in comparison of the much less things wherein they differ.*

2. *When sundry verses of Romans xiv. are not heeded, particularly verse 10.* This is a most high usurpation of Divine prerogative!

With what reverence and dread should so plain and awful a scripture strike a man's soul in such a case. When we have the rights of the Redeemer asserted in those whom He hath bought with His blood! and are told that for this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living!

Why dost thou judge thy brother, or set at nought thy brother?

We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We are all of us His. He both died and revived and rose again, that He might be Lord of all (as Acts x. 36), and here of dead and living, *i.e.*, that He might be owner of all, which is the first idea of Dominus, or Lord, and in both worlds, the visible and the invisible. That into which many are dead and deceased from hence, and so to us become invisible, and many that yet surviving are still visible to us. So ample is His dominion! And because the *jus imperri*, the right of government, of which judgment is the last conclusive act, hath for its foundation the *jus dominii*; it is, therefore, asserted to Him as the very crown and summit of His acquired rights, that He is to finish all things by the last judgment, which must pass upon the already dead and the yet living. Thus is the ground of the expostulation laid, Who art thou that presumest to jostle Him out of this His supreme and most sacred right?

Perhaps the matter disputed about may be doubtful, but there is no doubt concerning this incommunicable authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, or concerning His law against such judging:—"Judge not that ye be not judged."

To judge other men's consciences is of so near affinity with governing them, that they that can allow themselves to do the former, want only power, not will or inclination, to offer at the other too.

Upon which account that passage is memorable of the Emperor Maximilian II. to a certain prelate, that there was no sin, no tyranny more grievous than to affect dominion over men's consciences, and that they who do so go about to invade the tower of Heaven.

3. *When we over-magnify our own understandings, and assume too much to ourselves.*

That is, to expect that our minds be taken for standards to all minds; as if we, of all mankind, were exempt from error, or the possibility of being mistaken. A certain sort of *φιλαρτία* an excess of love and admiration of ourselves, or overpleas'dness with ourselves, too much self-complacency, is the true (though very deep and most hidden) root of our common mischief in such cases.

We wrap up ourselves within ourselves, and then we are all the world. We do only compare ourselves with ourselves, never letting it enter into our minds that others have their sentiments too, perhaps wiser than ours. But we abound in our own sense, and while (as the apostle in that case says) we are not wise, and perhaps are the only persons who think ourselves so, we yet take upon us, as if we were fit to dictate to the whole world to all Christians and to all mankind; or as if we only were the men, and wisdom must die with us.

Nothing is plainer than that principles and ends measure one another. When enough is agreed already to serve the most important ends, viz., unity among brethren, and the salvation of souls, and yet things are further insisted on, unnecessary to either, yea, prejudicial to both, and upon which the weight and stress of either of these cannot be laid without sin, it too plainly appears vain glory to oneself in the end, and then the principle is proportionable. Humility would surely teach that as there is no hope of proselyting the world to my opinion or way, that if I cannot be quiet until I have made such and such of my mind, I shall still be unquiet if others are not of it, viz., always. That if some one's judgment must be a standard to the world, there are thousands fitter for it than mine.

Have those who always pretend to be striving for a right scheme of Christian doctrine, duly considered that the more entirely, and the more deeply, a right or true scheme of Christian doctrine is inlaid in a man's soul, the more certainly it must form it into all meekness, humility, gentleness, love, kindness, and benignity towards fellow-Christians of whatsoever denomination ?

Not confined, not limited (as that of the Pharisees) unto their own party, but diffusing and spreading itself to all that bear the character and name of Christ.

The spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is a Spirit of greater amplitude, extends and diffuses itself through the whole body of Christ.

NOT UNDERSTOOD.

(Selected).

Not understood, we move along asunder,
Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep
Along the years ; we marvel and we wonder
Why life is life !—and then we fall asleep—**not understood.**

Not understood, we gather false impressions
And hug them closer as the years go by.
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions,
And thus men rise and fall, and live and die—**not understood.**

Not understood, small souls with stunted vision
Oft measure giants by their narrow gauge !
The poisoned shafts of falsehood and derision
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who mould the age—**not understood.**

Not understood, the secret springs of action,
Which lie between the action and the show,
Are disregarded ; with self-satisfaction
We judge our neighbours, and they often go—**not understood.**

Not understood, how trifles often change us,
The thoughtless sentence, or the fancied slight
Destroy long years of friendship and estrange us,
And on our souls there falls a freezing blight—**not understood.**

Not understood, how many breasts are aching
For lack of sympathy. Ah, day by day
How many cheerless lonely hearts are breaking,
How many noble spirits pass away—**not understood.**

Oh God ! That men would be a little clearer,
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see.
Oh God ! That men would draw a little nearer
To one another, they'd be nearer Thee—**and understood.**

THE PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS.

MATTHEW XX. 1-16.

IF we are to understand this parable we must read from verse 27 of the previous chapter. Peter says to the Lord, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have, therefore"? The answer he gets is, in the regeneration they should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Then the Lord goes on to liken the Kingdom of Heaven to "an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, &c."

Two things, therefore, must be borne in mind as we approach the solution of the parable; one, that it has some reference to Israel; the other, that it not only takes in the present, but the future. The Lord, in His reply to Peter, refers to both.

First, then, as to the future. If the whole transaction, as recorded in the parable, had begun and ended within the one day, there would certainly have been some appearance of partiality. But our labour here does not get its full reward here. The householder hired the first batch of workmen for a penny *a day*. But the season did not terminate with the one day, and they should have waited until the end. The householder, surely, when all was over, would not have forgotten who had served him best and longest. So we are not to think merely of the passing day, and the reward we get *now*, we are to look onward to the regeneration—the time of reward.

Secondly, the Lord by this parable evidently intended to convey a lesson to Israel. They stood in the place of those who had been hired first. Yet, through a want of the apprehension of *grace*, they might fail altogether, and the first would be last. Grace underlies all God's present dealings, and unless we admit this, we miss the mark altogether. The sense of this must underlie even all our service. For what have we that we have not received. Clearly the thought of grace enters into this parable when we consider the treatment of those who came last. Some wrought but an hour yet they received a penny. This was gracious behaviour, nor was it unfair to the others with whom a definite agreement had been made.

But they murmured against the good man of the house. In other words, they rejected grace. This is precisely what Israel did. They had no sense of God's goodness, and when they saw that goodness flow out without let or hindrance in the ministry of

the Lord Jesus Christ, they were scandalised. So when Christ went to the house of Zacchæus "they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner" (Luke xix. 7). They were occupied with their own importance and claims, instead of with that grace which delighted to wait upon the need of man.

There had been a sort of agreement with Israel: "This do and thou shalt live." But they had no claim to more. So the householder had a perfect right to say, "take that thine is and go thy way." And again, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, *because I am good.*" What lessons for all of us in such words: **I am good.** Ought not the very goodness of the householder—"the good man of the house," as the Lord calls him—have been a reason why the earliest labourers should have trusted Him, and led them, instead of murmuring, to have concluded, that, if they were dealing with one who could be so generous to others, he would in his own time and way not be less generous to them. And so with the Jews of Christ's day. When they saw how unlimited was His bounty, that He even received sinners and eat with them, that none were too bad to receive blessing, they ought to have said, What a God we have, what will He not do for us if we accept His ways and trust Him.

Let us remember then, that God can do what He likes with His own. Everything is His and He dispenses it as He will. We have only to wait until the end to see that He will never deal unfairly. Let us not murmur because the present moment may not bring us all the honour and recognition and reward we may think we have earned. Let us think of the "regeneration." The time of full reward will be when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His Glory. Till then—

"Go labour on, spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will;
It is the way the Master went,
Should not the servant tread it still?"

The lessons of the parable are then, first of all, how grace was about to act in calling others to share blessing with Israel. Secondly, that God has a right to reward labour as He pleases, and that we must not judge of this in the present time, but wait till the end. And, lastly, a further lesson, that if God, as represented by the householder, and his dealings with those who came at the eleventh hour, is so generous, making no conditions but giving according to the largeness of His own heart, it should be an inducement to enter His service and not stand all the day idle.

OUR "VOCATION"—"THEREFORE."

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the *vocation* wherewith ye are called," (Eph. iv. 1). The word "*therefore*" connects it with something that has gone before. What is that? "*Our vocation!*" What is the vocation we are told to walk worthy of? The Apostle Paul in his prayer for these Ephesian saints desires that they might know, what is the "*hope of his calling,*" what the riches of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of *His* power to usward who believe. He does not pray that they might know the greatness of their inheritance, he prays that they might know the greatness of *God's* inheritance in the Saints. That is the startling thought. If it were a question of our inheritance in God, we should still magnify His grace, and be astonished that all His wealth was placed at our disposal as an inheritance. But this is far more an astonishing matter demanding our close attention.*

It would seem from the Apostle's prayer that there is some way in which God is to gain from us. We can perfectly understand how we can gain from God, but how can God be enriched by us? The Church is an inheritance, something into which He comes, through which He gains. The Apostle is dealing with the great subject the vocation of the Church, Jew and Gentile made one, and builded together for a habitation of God. He also declares that God raised us up with Christ and made us sit together with Him in the heavenlies, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Here the Apostle affirms that in the ages to come the Church will be the medium through which God will be able to reveal His grace.

Angels can never teach God's grace to the ages as the saints will be able to do. Angels' songs will be full of music and glory, and beauty, but the Church will be able to sing a song no angels can ever sing. The Church will be able to say "unto Him that *loved* us and *washed* us from our sins" by His blood. Angels will tell how they bent over the Redeemer, and then *watched* the Church come through trouble, toil, and pain into the light. The Church will tell how she was *brought* out of darkness into light, and in all the wonderful music of heaven there will be no music like that which celebrates

* Our vocation also comprises what is set forth in Chap. ii. 14-22.

His grace, and in all the matchless splendours of His grace there is nothing so marvellous as the redemption of lost and ruined sinners. Angels cannot tell the story of redemption. The Church must do that, God gives in the Church a medium through which He reveals His love, His heart.

Secondly, not only is the Church to reveal His grace to the ages to come, but the Church is to teach the "Wisdom" of God to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. (Eph. 3. 10). "To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hid in God, who created all things to the intent, that now unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold *wisdom* of God." All the ranks and orders of unfallen intelligence in the heavenly places are to learn the wisdom of God from the Church, ransomed from earth.

But surely Angels can tell us more of God's wisdom than we can teach Angels. Nay, the Sons of God sang together at the creation, and these Angelic Sons can tell us the story of creation, they can tell us of infinite wisdom manifested in it, but the profounder wisdom of God is the wisdom of redemption. The wisdom of God was never so marvellously manifested as in the way by which He ransomed lost men and women. The Church will teach Angels this wisdom, so while the Church of God has its work to do here and now, it has its greater work in the future. The Church of God will go out to teach the ages to come the grace of God, and make known the wisdom of God to Angels. This is the *vocation* we are told to walk worthy of. It is not earthly, but it is a heavenly vocation.

You and I are seeking to tell out this story now, and the more we tell it, the more wonderfully sweet does it become. But O to think of it. To have to tell it out for ever, to tell it in the perfect light, love and life of God. The Church of God in its final fulfilment of its vocation is called to the illumination of the ages, and the instruction of Angels. That is the Church's vocation. Does that make us careless about our life and walk down here? Nay, but while the first three chapters of Ephesians lead us to the heights, the last three lead us to the everyday commonplace things. He leads us to the heights in order that we may come down to the common places of everyday life.

How shall we walk worthy of this great vocation? In the first place he shows us the Church growing up into Christ, unto completion. *Our first* responsibility then is to *keep* (not to make) the unity of the Spirit. *Second*, to be true to the fact that in baptism the believer has put off the old man and put on the new.

We are to walk in the light. We are to be filled with the Spirit. We are to submit ourselves unto one another as unto the Lord. These are practical things. Then there are duties to husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants. If we walk in the light of the *heavenly vocation*, then whatever we do, we shall do it to the Glory of God. Then in the last chapter we find it means conflict, it means fighting wicked spirits in heavenly places. Therefore it means that I am to take up the whole armour of God, to withstand, and having done all to stand. Let us live and work then in the light of our *high vocation*.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

A.D. Ques. : *Is it intelligent to address the Father as "Heavenly Father," does it not imply a distance?*

Ans. : We think the term implies an earthly people with blessings on earth, rather than a heavenly people blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. This expression, heard sometimes from the lips of Christians, is found in Luke xi. 13; but there it is used in *contrast* to what an *earthly* father would do, and the word heavenly simply makes the distinction. The prayer which our Lord taught His disciples opens with "Our Father which art in heaven," and this probably has led many to use the prefix "heavenly" when addressing God. It is remarkable, however, that the term is never once adopted in any of the epistles. The Apostle Paul speaks of bowing his knees to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 14). And the Apostle Peter speaks of calling on "the Father" (1 Pet. i. 17). Other expressions are "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory," and "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." But not once heavenly Father. What is the reason? Surely it is one evidence of the great change from Judaism to Christianity. When the Lord taught His disciples that prayer, this change had not been effected, and, moreover, He was with them on earth. He is not now associated with us on earth as being personally here, but

we are associated with Him in heaven. This makes all the difference. Our place being in heaven—seated in heavenly places in Christ—the term heavenly as applied to God has no force, and indeed is a little incongruous. At the same time, let it be remembered, that the correct form of words is far from being everything. And a person using imperfect expressions in which to clothe his petitions might be really nearer to God, and praying more in the Spirit, than one with whose use of words no fault could be found.

T.C. Ques. : *Does the command "owe no man anything" imply that a Christian should not get into debt even if he is ill and out of work?*

Ans. : It is the spirit of these exhortations we need to grasp, and carry into effect. The letter kills and brings under bondage. If anyone thought of carrying this injunction out to the letter, he would either have to live in his own house or pay his rent every day. Or even every hour, and every minute, for that matter, for the debt is ever accumulating. This shows the absurdity of adhering too strictly to the letter. A debt really depends upon arrangement, and also upon the attitude of the creditor. If it is agreed that the rent be paid quarterly, a tenant cannot be considered as violating the above principle if the rent is not paid every month. As regards one out of work, he should act on this principle. Let him consult with those who supply him with the necessaries of life; and if, on the full understanding of his position and that he pays his debts when he is again earning money, they agree to provide him with what he requires, he cannot be considered as breaking the above command, if, under the circumstances, he is in debt. How far this can be carried must rest with the individual to determine in the sight of God. He might not be free to go even as far as his creditors would let him.

E.W. Ques. : *Was Judas at the Passover Supper on the night of the betrayal?* Yes. He was at the Passover Supper, but not at the institution of the Lord's Supper. The sop was given to him at the former. And in John xiii. 30 we read "he then having received the sop went *immediately* out." In Luke, it is true, we get the account of the Supper in vv. 19-20, chap. xxii., and in v. 21 we read "but, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table." But we must remember that Luke

was not an eye witness of these events, and that he groups things in their moral, rather than in their historical, order.

As to the Lord's words that He would "not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God," and that He would "not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." They mean that the Passover was fulfilled in His own death, and that He will not taste of earthly joy until He comes in His Kingdom as Son of Man. For the time being He is apart from all this.

A.W.J. Ques. : John xx. 6-7. *Why was the napkin found apart from the linen clothes, and evidently carefully wrapped together, whereas, the linen clothes lay presumably as they fell from off the Lord's body as He rose?*

Ans. : In the first place let it be noted that the Apostle John alone records these details. As he presents Christ in the greatness of His Person, as Son of God, everything possesses a significance. Just as the doings of King Edward are chronicled such as would not be of any other in the land. (See John ii. 12.) Secondly, it may be intended to set forth the greatness of this same Person in another light. All speak of One Who rose from the dead just as if He rose from ordinary slumber. No trace of scuffle or of conflict. The napkin was wrapped together. As to the significance of its being in "a place by itself," one would not like to dogmatise. Does not this again remind us that He has a distinct place of honour? He will be crowned with many crowns. The head is the place of honour. "Let the blessing come upon the *head* of Joseph and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren."

J.K.McE. Ques. : (1) *Is the putting away of sins named in 1 John iii. 7 (? 5) a past or present work?* (2) *Do the words in 1 John v. 10, "hath the witness in himself" refer to the believer or God?*

Ans. : (1) We presume you mean verse 5. Undoubtedly this refers to what Christ accomplished when on earth. It is an argument against practising sin. How can we oppose the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world? But we must abide in a sinless Person if we are not to sin. So it adds "*in Him is no sin.*" (2) Verse 10, chap. v. refers to those who believe. They have the witness in themselves of the eternal life which has been given them. It is, however, the result of believing God's word, not of looking within.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



FAITH AND RESULT.

“ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH BE IT UNTO YOU.”

LAST month the subject was *great* faith and *little* faith, and we saw how faith was interwoven with the whole series of miracles that are found grouped together in chapters 8 and 9 of Matthew's Gospel. The exception is in the case of the demoniacs where it is more a question between Christ and Satan. One cannot, therefore, read these chapters without being struck by the emphasis laid upon faith. This is accentuated in the last incident to which we are about to refer.

The whole result apparently is made to depend upon the faith of the two blind men who came to the Lord for healing. They follow the Lord crying for mercy, and when He enters the house they still pursue Him. But Jesus had not come to satisfy men's credulity, or play a part in mere experiments. And so He says to them at once, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” What a test for them! But there must be reality when we have to do with God. If we were challenged sometimes as to the requests we make in our prayers as to the amount of our faith, and real expectation, we might be astonished to find that our asking was very much a matter of form. Someone has said we are not to give runaway knocks at the heavenly door. Do not our prayers often take that form?

The Lord has still a further test for these blind men. In reply to His question, Believe ye that I am able to do this? they give an affirmative answer. But a more crucial test was to follow. “According to your faith be it unto you.” The result proved that their faith was genuine. “Their eyes were opened.”

What a simple yet profound lesson this story conveys. Jesus touched their eyes; the answer was according to their faith. Is it not so always? There is some mysterious co-operation between the divine and the human. There was the touch on His side.

There was the faith on theirs. Without the touch nothing would have been done. Without the faith the result would have been equally barren.

Let us remember, whether young or old, that when we come to God with our petitions He looks at our faith, just as Jesus did with the two blind men, and *according* to our faith so is the answer. How often we give runaway knocks at heaven's door. When the man we read about in the 11th chapter of Luke came to his friend at midnight, saying, Friend, lend me three loaves, he did not ask and run away, he persisted until he obtained what he wanted. So, "according to your faith be it unto you" is what God says to every one of us.

"Once in a northern village during the revival of 1859, an eminent evangelist preached to the people without any apparent response. He pleaded that those who were anxious should remain behind, and he preached his very heart out. But night after night the congregation went out into the street without making a sign. At last, one night when they had all gone, the evangelist fell to his knees in the empty hall, and pleaded with all his soul, and pleaded in anguish that they might turn back. One by one they turned, and this was the beginning of a great work of grace." Here was an instance of faith—faith that would not be denied.

What lessons in faith, then, these two chapters (Matt. viii. and ix.) teach us. They form a wonderful and striking commentary on Romans i. 17, where, speaking of the gospel, the Apostle says, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'the just shall live by faith.'" It is on the principle of faith, faith all along the line. As we begin, so we go on. Justification is ours by faith, at the start, and we continue to live by faith. How these lessons are impressed upon us in the scripture we have had in review. Instance after instance is given of different persons coming to the Lord with every variety of need, and all helped, all getting what they sought. And the Lord Jesus, as if to emphasise the fact that faith was everything, calls the attention of everybody to the *great* faith of the centurion, rebukes the *little* faith of the disciples, while, finally, the series of miracles closes with the significant statement—the meaning of which we cannot surely mistake—"according to your faith be it unto you."

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

Signs of Revival.—According to the account given in a religious weekly an extraordinary scene was witnessed recently in a North London Presbyterian Church. The preacher was a returned missionary from Manchuria. He took as his text Jeremiah xxiii. 28-9, and said “ he was going to speak on the confessions which marked so uniquely the work of God in the recent revival in the Far East.” He never pressed for them, he said, and added, “ As soon as I am through my address I say to the people, Now is your opportunity. If you wish to say anything, or confess anything, now is the time.” At the end of the address he stopped and said, “ Let me close as I do in China, by asking if any wish to say anything or confess any hindering sin.” Bowing his head he waited for a response. For a moment a silence that could be felt pervaded the place. Then a strong voice was heard in supplication. Another followed. “ By this time men and women all over the building were in tears, and a murmur of assent followed the utterance of the prayer, ‘ Thou hast done so much for China ; do as much for our

beloved land.' Confessions and prayers in rapid succession followed one another. More than one cried out for London. Then an elderly man rose, and in a voice he could hardly control, made confession of his own sin, and of the sins of that Church. The preacher waited for the end, and when the last prayer ceased he quietly gave out "Lord, I hear of showers of blessing." It was sung with evident emotion.

The above event seems to point to a distinct work of the Holy Spirit. There appears to have been nothing else to account for the extraordinary and unexpected occurrence. For it was quite unexpected, everything proceeding as usual until the thing occurred. One point that claims particular notice was the call to confession and the response. It is undoubtedly the definite confession of sin, failure and shortcoming, that is so much needed to-day. Just as we read of John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus by preaching repentance which led, as we read, to the people *confessing* their sins, so it must be now. God's power will not be put forth—Christ will not manifest Himself to His people—the Holy Ghost will not work apart from sincere and contrite confession of sins.

* * * *

The following answer has reached us in reply to the question propounded in our March issue (p. 161). 1. To show that God is not restricted to a certain place of worship, but meets the seeking soul when all around is as a desert; nothing to satisfy. 2. To show that God will use as a medium of blessing anyone who is Spirit-filled, and Spirit-led, as was Philip, irrespective of calling or position. 3. God will preserve a new-born soul from persecution, which he would be less able to bear than a more advanced Christian.

* * * *

The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is undoubtedly of peculiar interest, and fills a unique place in the history of events unfolded in the Acts. It comes in between the death of Stephen and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and his call to a special work. It seems the link which marks the transition from the old order to the new, and clearly indicates the immense changes about to take place. Thus God allowed this Gentile to visit Jerusalem and to leave it again, and there in the desert, right away from all that had been most distinctly connected with His Name and worship, to discover His mind, and find blessing. Nor does He instruct this

man to return to Jerusalem afterwards. The eunuch goes on his way rejoicing. His back turned upon the very place God had turned His back upon. Had the Apostles been used to enlighten him this might have connected his thoughts with an earthly centre, an earthly system of worship, and with things seen instead of things unseen. In contrast with this he learned that Christ was everything—Christ, Whose life was taken from the earth, and his life was hid with Christ in God. Stephen, as we find at the end of the seventh chapter, filled with the Holy Ghost, looks up stedfastly into heaven; and Saul, as we find in the ninth chapter, is converted by One speaking from heaven. He, too, is away from Jerusalem. The glory of God is connected now with Jesus at His right hand; and the Church is associated with Him there. Everything is transferred from earth to heaven.

THE CHORD FOUND.

Music: Sir Arthur Sullivan's "Lost Chord."

I sat alone in the twilight,
 I was watching the evening star,
 My thoughts were of coming glory,
 I heard a voice from far—
 A voice that set my heart beating
 As first He spake to me, when
 He found me alone in the desert
 And He gave me a welcome then.
 It sounded in loving accents
 On the calm of the evening breeze,
 For it hushed my deepest longings
 And it set my spirit at ease.
 Lord Jesus! lead me to listen,
 Speak now in the music of Love;
 Let me sit down in Thy shadow,
 Lord, call my soul above.
 He spake, and He said: "Belov'd one!
 "Whoever hears My voice
 "Shall have Me come in and sup with him,
 "And in Me he shall rejoice.
 "For soon I am coming in glory
 "To call My own away,
 "To Rest in the peace of the blessing,
 "Of one Eternal Day."

Lord Jesus! we wait the moment
 We shall hear Thy voice again,
 Amid all the glory of Heaven
 With those all praising Thee then,
 One theme of harmonious worship
 To Thee, Blessed Lord, again!
 One theme of harmonious worship
 To Thee, Blessed Lord, Amen.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition. 229

CHAPTER IV. 14—16.

THE SYMPATHISING PRIEST AND THE THRONE OF HELP.

WE have now reached a most important point—the provision God has made for us on the journey. We are journeying to God's rest. On the way, amidst all the difficulties and hindrances, and compassed by infirmities, we need a sympathising Priest and a Throne of help; and we learn from the passage we are about to consider that the God Who has called us to His rest has provided both.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into (or through) the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

From this we learn two things. First, we are to hold fast our profession because we have, as a Great High Priest, One Who has passed through the heavens. Second, we are to come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help. Those to whom this epistle is addressed would readily understand the force of these references to the heavens and the throne. On the day of atonement Aaron passed from the place of the sin offering which, as typical of the death of Christ (He was lifted up between heaven and earth) may be considered the first heaven, through the “holy,” or second heaven, into the “holiest,” or third heaven. This type was fulfilled in Christ. He has passed through the heavens. In other words, He has reached the throne. He is at the end of the journey. But although there He is not unmindful of the needs of His brethren. We read He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” And this is intended to encourage us to come boldly unto the throne of grace so that we may receive all the help we need along the way.

No Christian can have been long on the road without discovering his need of sympathy and help. It is no question of our justification, or standing before God. The work of Christ on the cross, before He became our High Priest, has secured for us forgiveness and peace. Our relationship with God is a settled question. His forgiveness, His love are the portion of all who believe on His Son.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” He was “delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification.” But yet, in spite of all this, in ourselves we are weak; subject to infirmity; liable to be turned aside by the difficulties of the way; prone to become disheartened and discouraged; and so tempted to give up. It is on this account we need the sympathy of One Who has passed this way before us and had similar experiences; and the help which can be obtained by application to the throne of grace.

Sympathy is one of the most precious things we know. There are times when it is the only thing that avails. That some one else is conscious of all that we are passing through and can understand our feelings, yea, can share them, this is indeed consoling. How all this is enhanced by the thought that *the* Sympathiser is Jesus the Son of God, and that He is *our* Sympathiser. He is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” How His pathway down here fitted Him for this office. He was made perfect through *sufferings*.” What a catalogue and range those sufferings comprised. There was all the suffering of being *misunderstood*. How early this began. “How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” was spoken when He was only twelve years of age, and was said in answer to the complaint of His own mother, “why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.” There was the suffering of being *rejected*. “Neither did His brethren believe in Him.” The cities where most of His mighty works were done repented not. He became acquainted with *hunger* and *thirst*. He was *weary*. He knew *poverty*. He had not where to lay His head. He stood beside the grave with all the feelings of having lost a friend. “*Our* friend Lazarus sleepeth.” “Jesus wept.” He “was in all points tempted like as we are.” Every experience was His—forsaking, scoffing, insult, betrayal, death. All human weakness, and all human woe were His portion. And as a consequence, although now in glory, having passed beyond all that is incidental to this scene, He is able to sympathise with those who are still in it. “Jesus knows all about our sorrows.” Are you bereaved? He has felt what that means. Have you lost your property? He has been poor. Are you suffering in body or in mind? He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Do you feel the need of being strengthened? “There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.”

Are you even in an agony ? It is said of Him : " Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly."

" Is there anyone to help us—one who understands our hearts,
 When the thorns of life have pierced them till they bleed ?
 One who sympathises with us, who in wondrous love imparts
 Just the very, very blessing that we need ?
 Yes, there's One ! only One, the blessed, blessed Jesus, He's the One !
 When afflictions press the soul, when waves of trouble roll, and you need
 a Friend to help you,
 He's the One."

What is the value of this sympathy ? It has the practical effect of attaching us to Christ. It draws us to One in the highest heavens. Nothing is more powerful than sympathy to draw out the heart. This was one reason, undoubtedly, why, when the Lord was on earth, He did not go to Bethany until Lazarus was dead. Sickness could not have called forth the same power and the same sympathy. Death gave occasion for the full display of both. First the sympathy and then the power. First the groaning and the tears ; afterwards the voice that bade death deliver up its prey. It was thus they learned to know the Son of God. So with ourselves. It is His sympathy we are learning now. Soon His voice will call us by its mighty power to join Him in that everlasting home of light and love, where sympathy will be no longer needed. Let us not then be surprised at the trials by the way. It is just in those very trials He teaches us to know Himself. And what gain there is in such knowledge. Its effect, too, is to draw us to the place where He is.

It should be well understood that this sympathy is in connection with our weaknesses (infirmities), and has nothing whatever to do with sins. We draw attention to this because the last clause of v. 15 has been greatly misunderstood. The words "without sin" have conveyed a wrong impression. As though Christ was tempted of sin, yet did not sin. The fact is He was not, and could not be, tempted of sin. Therefore the words "sin apart" more accurately express the original. Dr. Weymouth's translation is very much at fault here, as his version emphasises the error even more than the A.V. His rendering is, " One Who was tempted in every respect just as we are tempted, and yet did not sin." The following, however, is Dean Alford's commentary upon the point. " 'Apart from sin.' So that throughout these temptations, in their origin, in their process, in their result—sin had nothing in Him. He was free and separate from it. This general reference is the only one which fully gives the general predication of the Greek words. And so it has been usually taken."

It is sometimes asked, How could Christ be any help to us if He could not be tempted of sin? But this supposition arises from a misconception. It confounds sin and weakness, and confuses the situation. Weakness, in itself, is not sin—though it may lead to sin. Nor is sin a weakness to be overcome. Christ bore “our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” It is, therefore, His death we need for our *sins*. While as *to sin* we read, “For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.” The sympathy and succour of Christ come in to help us so that our weakness may not lead to sin. It was not therefore necessary for Christ to be tempted of sin. Accordingly what it really says in Hebrews iv. 15 is, He “was in all points tempted like as we are—sin apart.” In agreement with this we find in the temptation Satan did not directly tempt Him with anything sinful. Turning stones into bread was not sinful. Possessing all the kingdoms of the world was not sinful, for one day Christ will possess them. Committing oneself to God in a position of danger is not sinful. The whole situation turned upon, What was the will of God at the moment. It was not the will of God for Christ to have bread, and so He waited. And the same applies to the other temptations. This lifts us to a higher level altogether than the ordinary one of mere right and wrong—sin or no sin. And herein lies a wonderful secret for all Christians. The whole of our after life, subsequent to conversion, is to turn upon this simple question, What is the will of God? It is not enough to ask, Is it lawful? Many things are lawful in themselves (indeed the Apostle, speaking of things outside what is positively sinful, declares more than once that all things are lawful), but it may not be God’s will that I should take part in them, or seek them. It is precisely with this aspect of the Christian life that the Priesthood of Christ is connected. God’s will is to rule our life, even as it ruled Christ’s. In order that it may, all the succour and sympathy of our High Priest is available. And oh! the sweetness of having the sympathy of Christ in treading the very path He Himself trod.

Let us now consider for a moment “the throne of grace.” We have in heaven a Person to sympathise with us, and we also have all the power of God’s government, represented in the throne, to

help us. Could there be anything higher, as far as earth is concerned and present things, than for anyone to feel that he had the throne of his country to turn to for help? Behind that throne lies all the wealth, and all the power of the land. In every need he could go, and every need could be supplied. But we have needs, as believers, that no earthly throne can meet. But God can meet them. He meets them at His throne. It answers to the mercy seat of old. When Aaron passed through he reached at last the mercy seat, and there He sprinkled the blood. Our Great High Priest has passed through the heavens to the throne. His blood has made it to us a throne of grace. It must have astonished the Hebrews to think of approaching God's throne. This accounts for the language used. "Let us therefore come *boldly*." It had proved a throne of judgment to Nadab and Abihu. To us it is one of grace. It is favourable to us, and all is free. There we can obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Do we rise in the morning, sometimes, with a sense of soul emptiness, with no spiritual desires, and feeling little equal to the demands of the day? Let us repair to the throne of grace. Whatever may be our need, from whatever cause—weariness, sorrow, depression, spiritual languor, indifference—let it drive us there. Remember first of all Jesus is there, and He can understand your feelings. He is touched by them. And next, that you will obtain mercy. Mercy will stoop down to you at your lowest point. You may feel so spiritually dead as not to have one thought or desire; so weak as scarcely to lift up your eyes to heaven; so heavily laden with care as to feel yourself beyond reach—but mercy will reach you—mercy you must and shall obtain—if only you come. Mercy takes account of it all and will never turn you away. That is one side of the case. But there is something further. You will find grace to help. Is there not something overpoweringly attractive and uplifting in the thought of being helped through this world by God? Yet this is His very plan for us. "Having obtained help of God we continue," said the Apostle. What gracious provision the God of all grace has made for His children. May we never neglect to avail ourselves of it. How soon it may lead to some mistake, or even to sin, if we do. But if day by day, and even through the day, we come boldly to the throne, mercy and grace will prove sufficient to keep us from falling, and help us on the way, until at last we are presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

BALAAM AND HIS PARABLES (*continued*).²³⁷

I.—ISRAEL A SANCTIFIED PEOPLE.

BAALAAM now goes aside to consult his oracle. In his wickedness he says, "Peradventure Jehovah will come to meet me," all the while really seeking for enchantments (Num. xxiii. 3 ; xxiv. 1). "Peradventure" has no place with a man of God ; for God is ever ready to meet those who seek after Him, and faith knows this right well, and delights in it. "And God met Balaam." Hell could not be permitted to supervene here, for the elect of God were in question. Accordingly a message was divinely put into the mouth of the prophet, which he was constrained, however unwillingly, to deliver.

His message—his first parable—was as follows :—"Balak, the King of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the East, saying, 'Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy (or denounce) Israel.' How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed ? Or how shall I defy (or denounce) whom Jehovah hath not defied (or denounced) ? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him ; lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone (R. V.), and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel ? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." (Num. xxiii. 7-10).

The prophet thus opens with a clear statement of the object for which he had been fetched from his distant home ; it was to curse Jacob and denounce Israel. But he acknowledges at once that the thing was impossible. God had not cursed ; how then could he ? This is truly magnificent. After well-nigh forty years of perversity and unbelief in the wilderness, Israel could not be cursed, let the enemy desire it ever so fervently. Let our souls drink this in. The purposes of divine grace stand for ever. Neither Satanic malice, nor human unfaithfulness can affect them one iota ; though the latter must needs bring down God's holy hand in governmental discipline upon the offenders. Balaam really settled the whole business in his opening words. He declared that if God be for His people none can be against them. But matters could not be suffered

to rest there. This was God's opportunity to unfold the whole story of His grace, and so the thing must go on to its appointed end. Accordingly the prophet says: "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him." Everything depends upon the point of view from which we contemplate the people of God as to how we feel towards, or speak of, them. Had Balaam descended into the plains, and walked through Israel's camp, and then given public utterance to what he saw and heard, what a humiliating tale it would have been! But upon the hills nothing presented itself to him as to the people's condition. From that elevated standpoint he could be occupied with God's thoughts alone. The apostle takes us, as it were, to the hill-top in Eph. i., and there shows us what the saints are in Christ according to the purpose of the Father's love; in I. Cor. he leads us through the camp, and shows us all the evil of which even "The sanctified in Christ Jesus" are capable. Let us beware of occupation with evil. Nothing is more desolating to the spirit; nothing more completely unfits the soul for true service to the people of God. If from the high altitude of faith we enter into the divine thoughts and feeling concerning them, we shall be enabled, in the exhilaration of it, to labour zealously for the removal of every blot and stain. What the saints are in God's sight we shall long to make them in the sight of all who behold them. We shall "Warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28). It was in this spirit the devoted apostle traveled in birth the second time for the brethren in Galatia (Gal. iv. 19).

Now we come to the grand distinguishing statement of Balaam's first parable: "Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Israel was thus a sanctified people—a people set apart for God alone. "I, Jehovah, am holy, and have severed you from the peoples, that ye should be Mine" (Lev. xx. 26). The faith of Solomon recognised this unique position when he prayed at the dedication of the temple: "Thou didst separate them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Thine inheritance, as Thou spakest by the hand of Moses Thy servant, when Thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God" (1 Kings viii. 53). Israel was in the mind of God for blessing before the nation began to be. As far back as the Babel scattering they were before Him, as Deut. xxxii. 7-8 testifies unmistakably. But *we* were chosen

in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. i. 4). The whole Christian company are "The sanctified" of Heb. ii. 11, whom Christ is not ashamed to call His brethren. State does not affect standing, nor does condition annul position; accordingly even the deeply failing Corinthians were addressed as "the sanctified in Christ Jesus," and were proclaimed to be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. i. 2; vi. 11). O that the power of such a position dominated our souls! But as with Israel, so with the Church of God, there has been failure, deep, shameful and continuous, in the realisation and practical carrying out of the wonderful grace of God.

With fervour Balaam concluded thus: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But this could not be. One who loved "the wages of unrighteousness" could only expect to receive "the wages of sin." Accordingly he perished amongst the enemies of the people of God (Num. xxxi. 8; Josh. xiii. 22). His words were pious enough, but his heart was never right with God.

(To be continued.)

"Preaching is sadly weak when it goes to noise, or rant, or rhapsody, or childishness, or a mere text-string, or a beginning at Genesis with intent to do the entire canon, the high vulgarity of cant or the low vulgarity of slang, or anecdotism, or a kind of light, jaunty, jolly air not unsuitable to the selling of knives and razors, needles and tape, or the same speech over and over, and over again, till the spirit of the thing has fled, and the preacher carries about the dead body of a once-living address, as the showman carries about his Egyptian mummy for exhibition."

* * * *

"We have heard of a preacher, of whom they said that he preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit, they thought he ought never to come out of it; but when he was out of the pulpit, they changed their minds, and sorrowfully concluded that he ought never to go into it again. Every man should be clean—it is a natural, sanitary duty; but there is a special precept which says, 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord,' and this relates to moral and spiritual character. An unholy minister is unclean with a vengeance."

BEHAVIOUR BECOMING THE HOUSE OF GOD.

THE first epistle to Timothy contains apostolic instructions for the regulating and ordering of "the Churches" of which that at Ephesus was one, and where, too, Timothy was staying; and Paul writes this epistle to him while he was there, that he might know how he ought to behave himself in the House of God, which is "the" Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. iii. 14). He had previously sent him to Corinth, to bring the Church there into remembrance of his ways which were in Christ as he taught everywhere in every Church. Godly order is essential to God's House. The Church at Colosse was in good order and steadfast in the faith, which was a matter of joy to the apostle (Col. ii. 5).

"THE CHURCH OF GOD" AND "THE CHURCHES OF GOD."

We must carefully note the difference between the Church of God viewed *universally*, and the Churches of God viewed *locally* and congregationally. In the former aspect the saints at Ephesus are viewed in the universal relations common to all saints (Eph. ii. 19; iii. 18; vi. 18), and in the latter as builded together for a particular local habitation of God (ii. 22), and also as compacted together for mutual edification (iv. 16). The expression "the Church of God" is applied to the universal Church (1 Cor. x. 32; Gal. i. 13; Acts xx. 28), and also to a particular local Church. Paul writes to "the Church of God" at *Corinth*, and although in the universal application of this designation there is only *one* Church of God, yet in the local and congregational application we have "the Churches of God," implying many such (1 Cor. xi. 16). So again we read "Christ loved the Church," which is the one universal Church (Ephes. v. 25). While in 2 Cor. viii. 23 we read of "the Churches," meaning local assemblies of saints.

Now there are certain things that belong to the Church universal that do not belong to the Churches as congregations of saints, and *vice versa*. It is to "the Churches" generally and to each Church in particular that order and discipline attaches, because each Church is viewed as to its status, and should be as to its character, the pillar and ground of the truth; and therefore is responsible to maintain

sound Christian doctrine and godliness of walk, and so must safeguard itself against all that would obscure or deny this. The seven Churches in Asia were local congregations, and the great point was as to the conduct and doctrines thereof.

When the Church viewed universally is referred to in Scripture in its proper normal nature and status as "the Church," its actual practical state is not considered, but when "*the Churches*" are referred to, their practical state is the main thing to be dealt with. Hence so much detail in the epistles to "*the Churches*" as to their order and behaviour. It is "*the Churches*" that need to be guarded and safeguarded, in a way not called for as regards "the Church" (see Matt. xvi. 18). "The Churches" may increase or decrease, but "the Church" abides. It is Christ, too, who brings *sinners* by conversion and the gift of the Spirit into the Church universal, and He never casts out those He brings in. On the other hand it is "the Churches" who receive *saints*, and even these saints so received may have to be put away from "the Churches," if misconduct calls for it, but that is not putting away from "the Church" into which Christ has brought them. This distinction is essential, and much confusion has arisen and serious mistakes have been made by losing sight of what is a self-evident truth.

Inasmuch as the Churches are the public witness as to Christian doctrine and walk, such Churches must maintain their real status practically as the pillar and ground of the truth.

FELLOWSHIP IN AND WITH "THE CHURCHES" FIXED NOT FLUID.

The constituents of "the Churches" are such saints only who, residing in the same locality, definitely associate themselves Church-wise in an orderly, fixed and continuous way according to Acts ii. 42. The "*sine qua non*" of such who so associate themselves in Church fellowship is their willingness to fulfil the responsibilities as well as enjoy the privileges of such fellowship. This clearly is something over and above being converted, as Acts ii. 42 proves. Conversion is individual, but fellowship is the association of the converted in Church-relations and responsibilities.

Saints who form any particular local Church-fellowship do so on the mutual understanding that they will, one and all, right loyally submit to, and be governed by, the regulations and commandments

of the Lord in regard to such fellowship. And where this is ignored such fellowship is virtually dissolved, because its fundamental elements and conditions are lacking or refused.

We have, so to speak, the Articles of Church-association or fellowship contained in the Scriptures of the New Testament, especially those of the apostle Paul, and each particular Church must be as it were incorporated according to the terms and conditions of such articles, and any individual saints who ignore such articles or refuse to be bound by them *ipso facto* forfeit their title to the Church fellowship based thereon; and inasmuch as the general articles of association must govern such particular Church incorporated thereunder, each such Church is bound thereby, and all administrative Church acts must be within the instructions and powers contained in the articles. All else is invalid. Were each particular Church to make the articles their constant and only guide, reference and authority, instead of the conduct and ways and decisions of other Churches, there would be in the main a unity and harmony of judgment which is sadly lacking now. Paul's "ways in Christ" were the articles of association which he taught and enforced everywhere in every Church (1 Cor. iv. 17; xiv. 37). He admonishes the Hebrew Christians "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together" (Heb. x. 25), as doing so was a drawing back. Such assembling together was the public congregational avowal and confession of their faith in Christ (see Heb. iii. 1; iv. 14; x. 23, 38), and Christians who are slack in this respect should bear this in mind. Saints who neglect the public re-unions of the Church assemblies are in a low spiritual condition, and are certainly on an inclined plane. The assembling of ourselves together and the Breaking of Bread in an orderly and regular way is the public congregational or Church-wise avowal by the disciples of their common and joint confession of and allegiance to Christ (see Acts ii. 42; xx. 7; 1 Cor. x. 15, 17; xi. 26).

Church-fellowship, then, must be continuous and regular, fixed, not spasmodic or fluid. Each and all must continue steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers (Acts ii. 42). The Church at Colosse seems to be an example in this respect well worthy of our imitation (Col. ii. 5).

(To be continued.)

“THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL.”

2 COR. X. 4.

WITH A REVIEW OF “NONCONFORMITY AND POLITICS.”

IT is always necessary to remind ourselves that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” There has scarcely been a moment in the Church’s history since the commencement when this necessity has not existed. In the present period it seems more than ever incumbent to call attention to it. Every form of carnal weapon is requisitioned to-day. What with bazaars and concerts ; whist drives and dances ; solo singing, and special music by the choir ; institutional churches with their billiards and round of amusements ; beside all the usual stock-in-trade of ritualistic performances—the Church might well respond with equal truth “the weapons of our warfare are often carnal ;” and add, “we are more familiar with these than any other.”

The question might well be asked, “Is the Church, to-day, accomplishing as much with her carnal weapons as the Apostle Paul did with those which were not carnal ?” He could speak of his as being mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Do the strongholds of vice, of reason, of infidelity, of insubjection to the will of God, do these yield before the attacks made with present-day weapons ? Do the forces of superstition and rationalism flee before an arm of flesh ? Are the indifferent—that large and growing company—convinced by what does little more than tickle the ear, and appeal to the senses ? Is not the Church looked upon by the world as a boon companion, rather than as having a direct message from God commanding attention ?

How different with Paul. He threw away every carnal weapon. He speaks of “Casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Is it any wonder we read in one place he “so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.” In another : “And the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*” No wonder he said, “I am not

ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation." When he was about to visit a place he could write beforehand, saying, " I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Christ." And again, " And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

We are concerned more particularly with one aspect of this question. A book has recently been published entitled " Nonconformity and Politics." It is written by a Nonconformist minister, and deals with the question whether Nonconformists as a body are not far too political, and whether, as a consequence, they have not declined as a spiritual force, and failed in their proper mission. It is a heavy indictment against the Nonconformist body as a whole, and it is little wonder that, at the recent Free Church Council meetings held at Swansea, they were put on their defence. In what we have to say here we do not propose to take up either the accusation or defence of our so-called Nonconformist brethren as such, but to enquire what the Christian's relations are to politics, or in other words, Is it a carnal weapon or not ?

The main contention of the writer of the above named book is that it is not wrong, but may be very desirable, for the *individual* Christian, in his private capacity, to engage in political action, but decidedly wrong for Nonconformity in its *corporate* capacity to do so. His words are, " Let it be clearly understood that it is not political action on the part of anyone, Nonconformist or anything else, that is animadverted upon. It is the political action of *corporate* Nonconformity that is all the time to be kept in view." And again, " Nor is there any suggestion that political affairs belong to a kingdom of evil from which religious men and women should stand aloof."

Now this narrows the issue down considerably, at least as far as this book is concerned. The point which remains to be discussed is whether the distinction holds good, that, while it is not expedient, or desirable for the Church (to put it in that way) to enter the arena of politics, it is both desirable and expedient for the individual Christian to do so. Can this distinction be maintained ?

It is not difficult to conceive of cases where a certain course may be perfectly legitimate for the individual, but not for the Church. The individual Christian, for instance, may become a soldier—believing soldiers are referred to in the Bible, and without so much as a hint that they were called upon to resign their commissions—but it would be quite wrong for the Church to form and support an army of her own. But is the case before us one of this class? Is politics wrong for the Church, but right—nay, a duty—for the individuals composing the Church?

One argument against this conclusion may surely be drawn from the writer himself. Throughout his book we constantly meet with such admissions as the following: "From our modern Nonconformist life moral and spiritual passion is gone. We run to and fro, and are busy about many things—about many things which, because they are right enough in themselves, we take as sufficient substitutes for saintliness. But saintliness is not here." Now why is saintliness not there? His answer is, because the political arena has made men forget their saintship. "We are pretty much," he says "of the earth earthy." Now if the political atmosphere, and political strife, have this effect upon men corporately, are they likely to have a different effect upon the individual? Especially when we throw into the balance the fact that in any corporate action there is very little strife, because nearly all are agreed, whereas with the individual it does become one of strife, and that with the world.

Do not these last words warn us that the political arena is not one for the Christian just because it is, more or less, a call to strife, and to strife for the most part with the world's weapons; and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

We have no direct statement in scripture either for or against taking part in politics. In the days when the Bible was written men had not the right to vote as they have now. But we are not on this account left without direction. The calling of the Christian as well as the origin and nature of Christianity seem opposed to political agitation. Let us look at this a little more closely.

It is not only the Church that is called with a heavenly calling, but the individual believer (see 1 Pet. ii. 11; Heb. xi. 13-16; xii. 1-2; Phil. iii. 20-21; Col. ii. 20; iii. 3). Now, in keeping with this the believer is exhorted again and again to "*submit* to every ordinance of man," to be "*subject* to the higher powers." Political

principles, to-day, would reverse all this. Power is put into the hands of the people. So that the voters are actually the rulers; and the Christian is invited to reign in the world from which his Saviour and Lord has been rejected, and to reform and mould the very world which is under the judgment of God as a consequence of that rejection. To do this—to be a ruler in the world that rejected and murdered God's Son, for which act God still holds it responsible—is for the believer to deny his own character and calling.* If we are “strangers and pilgrims,” if our “citizenship is in heaven,” then we cannot take up our political rights down here. An Englishman in France has no political rights. He is a stranger there. His home is in England. He may engage in business, he may take part in many other things, but if an election were going on he would take no part in that, it is not his country. So with the Christian. He can be a business man, but he cannot consistently be a politician. He must take the world as he finds it, he cannot as a stranger seek to govern it.

Then, again, his Guide Book tells him that Satan is the god and prince of this world, and he will certainly not try to fashion the policy of such a world.† It tells him, too, the end from the beginning. He knows beforehand what will come, and how little the policy of statesmen is worth. He is made fully aware that no legislation will ever bring this world back to God. We were reading to-day that there probably never was a time when so many laws were being placed upon the statute book both in this country and elsewhere, and yet there never was a period when people lived so much for time and so little for eternity—when men lived for themselves and forgot God. As the writer of the book we are reviewing well says: “It is one of the commonplaces forced upon the mind by observation and experience that material advance, unless accompanied by a corresponding advance in moral development, sinks the level of mankind nearer to the level of the brutes instead of elevating it nearer to the angels' rank.”

The Christian is called to something very different, and to something much higher, than political agitation, or the exercise of

* There are, of course, many Christians doing so, *i.e.*, seeking to rule. All we are discussing is, is it in keeping with their calling?

† If this had been God's intention, *viz.*, that Christians were to seek to rule the world, He surely would have given some direction as to it. Instead of which there is not so much as a hint, but on the contrary, many allusions which point the other way.

political rights. He is called to "endure grief, suffering wrongfully." He is called to follow in Christ's steps, and He did not resist the world or seek to change it. We little conceive what power would be with the Church, to-day, if believers walked in separation from the world, accepting things as they are, exhibiting meekness and patience, and doing good to all men. In reading over the history of the Nonconformist struggle for religious equality, the reflection was forced upon us how much grander would have been the spectacle of the quiet sufferance of these penalties and disabilities than of the political agitation and resistance which led to their removal. What a witness the former would have been to the grace of God. It is the time of suffering now, but how little we are prepared for it. If we suffer we shall also reign with Him—we shall be glorified together.

We cannot, therefore, accept the distinction between the Church and the individual in the case of politics, while admitting that in some cases the distinction does hold good. The very nature of politics, and the very nature of Christianity prevent any approach. The aims and objects of the one can never be the aims and objects of the other, rightly understood. Christ's Kingdom is to be established by overturning every other. Thank God the time is coming when every wrong will be righted. But that will be done by the One Who has power and authority from God to do it. Which power and authority has not been committed to Christians. They have another warfare and other weapons. They do not war after the flesh. "For the weapons of our warfare are not *carnal*." What need to remember this in every department of our service. It is so easy to rely upon an arm of flesh, and the temptations to do so are often so subtle. If we attempt to serve God in any capacity we need first of all to tarry for the power. "Tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

"This showed me, too, that gifts being alone were dangerous; not in themselves, but because of those evils which attend them that have them; to wit, pride, desire of vainglory, self-conceit, etc., all of which were easily blown up at the applause and commendation of every unadvised Christian, to the endangering of a poor creature to fall into the condemnation of the devil."

WHAT IS THE DIVINE GROUND OF GATHERING ?

I.

BY this is meant : Is there still amid all the ruin, failure, confusion of the day, any principle that is really divine to govern the Lord's people in their gathering together for worship or prayer ? If so, what is the motive power, and what will be the constituent elements of such gatherings ? In other words, who or what is the *Central Attraction*—who and what will be excluded and included ? What the centre, what the circumference ?

At the very outset we may confidently say that divine principles must be exactly what they have ever been. The Scriptures will therefore give us all the light we need, to answer all these questions—to go outside them would be no less folly than sin—and the responsibility to be obedient to them must be as weighty as it ever was.

But then at once we have a clear and precious answer to what is the motive power or central attraction of gathering in Matt. xviii. 20. "*For where two or three are gathered to My Name, there am I in the midst of them.*" The Name of Jesus is thus the one divinely given Centre of gathering ; for, being so gathered alone gives assurance of His presence.

And without the Lord Jesus Christ, no gathering is anything at all but a vain, empty, dry, hopeless company of ciphers ; not one of whom, although in the world he may be of most exalted rank, or of profound learning, or of greatest wealth, or of loveliest natural disposition, is worth anything at all ; and a million of them, although you may add solemn form, impressive ceremony, and most religious accompaniments, are worth exactly the same and no more. He—the Lord Jesus Christ—gives the only power, the only value, the only vitality, in a sense the only real existence to any gathering, whether it be of two or three, or of two or three thousand. All, not merely the greater part, but all the power is in The Name alone (1 Cor. v. 4). This never wanes in power, never diminishes in value, is never affected by the failure of men ; but is as potent to-day as it was in the fresh early morning of the Church's history. Surely no Christian will deny this, and who can estimate the blessedness of it ?

Thus what He *is*, as expressed by His Name, is the one Attraction for scriptural gathering. Here is the first mark of "divine

ground." It avails nothing to disavow all denominational divisions and distinguishing names (which indeed in themselves deny the sole value of the One Name), if there be not, firstly, a real sense of deepest need, and, secondly, assured faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ to meet it. The word "gathered" in Matt. xviii. has all this force. It speaks of an irresistible attraction due to felt need, and a full recognition of the perfect sufficiency in Jesus to meet that need: a sufficiency that is beautifully expressed by the Name, attractive as it is, only to the poor and needy.

No self-sufficient one, no coldly indifferent one—whether he be sinner or saint, as we speak—can ever be really gathered to that Name, for it is *Jesus—Saviour*—and only those who really need a Saviour, will feel the attractive power of such a Name.

From this it follows that the gathering to His Name implies something more than an externally correct ecclesiastical position. Two or three hungry, poor, and needy ones, with hearts set on Him, may still, in profoundest truth, if walking up to the light they have, be *gathered to His Name*.

It must be far less a question of external position, than of internal condition. Nor does this in the least militate against an external position which *is* alone in accord with the truth of Scripture. If people gather together as sharing convictions on any inferior truth—even assuming it to be truth—then do they, to that extent, deny the One Name as their one alone gathering attraction. For instance: I hold certain convictions on the subject of baptism. I find some who differ from, some who share, these convictions. If I separate from the one, and join with the other, then do I let this question attract, or gather me with those who share a like conviction. It is not the divine principle but mere sectarianism, for I thus tell the world that the Name of Jesus is not as potent to hold together, as views on baptism are to separate His people! And it is exactly this that we see about us on every side in one form or another.

Jesus our Saviour must be the one sole unrivalled attraction. Thus, as to ourselves, not our knowledge, but rather our ignorance; not our strength, but rather our weakness; not our holiness, but rather our sense of shortcoming and defilement, for it is all these that make Him so attractive and lovely, as to gather us to His Name of Jesus the Saviour from ignorance, weakness, defilement.

We will, if our eyes are filled with Him, permit nothing, not even some other, but inferior, truth, to rival Him. Far less shall any "heavenly" music, any paid choir, any gorgeous ritual, any brilliant talent, any moving oratory—anything at all that the flesh in saint or sinner can appreciate, do so. We abhor them all, let them be ever so religious, ever so inspiring, transporting the soul by their loveliness. They are sensuous and carnal, and we will none of them. The Name alone—Jesus, Saviour—for us, for this alone is Divine, and must have no rival.

II.

But this leads us to the next question: What is the limit or circumference that marks this divine principle of gathering? It is the One Body composed of every child of God—of everyone indwelt by the Spirit of God. This we will seek to show from the Scriptures.

Rather superficial objection has been made to the term "the ground of the One Body," because there is no word "ground" so used in Scripture. But if the idea—the fact—the truth be in Scripture, the word we may use in English to express that idea is of small importance, and the *idea* of the One Body being the ground or principle of gathering as to its constituency, is as clear as constant reiteration can make it. For instance, "*Receive ye one another*" (Rom. xv.). Who are the "one another"? All the world, including those who reject the Lord Jesus? Surely not. Are they some peculiarly distinguished believers, marked by greater attainments, richer experience, a purer spirituality, or a clearer intelligence in divine truth? Equally not. It can only mean all in whom we can discover the divine nature by the marks—more or less distinct—of holiness and love: every child of God, every member of the *Body of Christ*, thus evidenced. And this is equally the case in the very many passages where this same term "one another" is used.

Thus the Lord's people are on divine ground, or are governed by divine principles, when they gather, not in separation from any, but in communion with every member of the mystic Body of Christ. Thus gathered they are an expression of the One Body in the locality where they may be, and are distinctly so called in 1 Cor. xii. 27.

Distance is but an accident incidental to present conditions; it does not really separate between saints; and, in no real sense, does it deny their unity. The world could never point to the Church in

Ephesus, and to the Church in Rome, and say, "See, how these Christians are divided"; as it surely can when it can point to a church, assembly, or gathering on one side of the street, and a rival or opposing church, assembly, or gathering on the other side, or close at hand. This is not an accident, but the result of human will: a sin and a shame in which we have all been and are involved.

Scripture recognises the Local Gathering—not as a distinct and separate entity from the One Body, as some now falsely teach, but as the representation or expression of that One Body in the locality where it may be. Thus the Holy Spirit writes to the Church of God in Corinth, in the verse already referred to, "*Ye are* Body of Christ." Not, surely, as distinct or separate from believers elsewhere, say in Ephesus, so as to permit any to say that a Christian in Ephesus was outside the Body of Christ, since he was not in Corinth. But ye, Christians in Corinth, represent or express the One Body of Christ there—and thus ye *are* "Body of Christ"—including as you do, in principle, every believer everywhere. The mere accident of distance alone separating you is nothing, for it does not affect the principle in the slightest degree.

So we may as truthfully say that even a believer falling asleep is but an accident that does not affect the unity of the Body. For in the Day in which that Body shall be manifested in its perfection, it shall be found to include every believer in whom the Holy Spirit has dwelt through all the centuries. Paul is not outside the Body in this sense, because in Paradise.

Thus there are three spheres in the Body of Christ, the smaller, being—or assumed to be—a microcosm, or exact reproduction in miniature of the larger, thus:—

1st, the Local Assembly, which may consist of but two or three in some little room. Yet, if in conscious need, they have no gathering attraction but the Name, and include, in their fellowship, every evidenced Christian all over the earth; they are "Body of Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 27).

2nd, the Assembly on earth, which on account of distance or other "accidents," never actually assembles; yet, since it has its members everywhere in closest organic unity, is still recognised as the one Church, as in Gal. i. 13.

3rd, the Assembly inclusive of all who in all the time between Pentecost and the Rapture, believe in Him (Eph. v. 27).

It follows, then, that if our fellowship be not in principle as wide as, or if it be any wider than, the "One Body" as far as this is evidenced by holiness and love, then is it utterly unscriptural, and corrupted with the "leaven of the Pharisees" in the one case, or the "leaven of Herod," or worldliness, in the other.

May God in His tender mercy, teach us in these last trying days to walk by faith. Faith, not in tradition, whether hoary with the age of centuries or of recent development; not in some gifted servant of the Lord; not in numbers; but in God and His Word (Acts xx. 32), so that, if no one at all were with us externally; if all refused us at that dear place where the unity of the Body is most clearly expressed by all partaking "of that one bread," we should still in calm rest of spirit be content to be alone, in the precious assurance of having no single attraction but the Lord Jesus Christ, of permitting nothing, *on our part*, to separate us from the least of those who compose His Body; of tenderly loving and keenly appreciating and longing for the fellowship of all such, leaving our judgment with the Lord, and the Day of Manifestation.

(To be continued, D.V.).

"If any man ask me, seeing that faith justifieth me, why I work, I answer, love compelleth me. For as long as my soul feeleth what love God hath showed me in Christ, I cannot but love God again, and His will and commandments, and of love work them, nor can they seem hard unto me. I think not myself better for my working, nor seek heaven nor a higher place in heaven because of it."

* * * *

"I think the evangelists would take a very different course if they had more before them the simple fact that they were sent to find the members of Christ's body—that they come from Christ, and have to answer to him for the work. They see it too much as the benefit of man, which is only philanthropy."

* * * *

"If in any way God is using you as one of His gathering and distributing points of spiritual life, be satisfied. There is no nobler work which anybody in this world can do than that. To know God so that other souls may know Him from us; to be in any way a deepener and enlightener of the lives of our brethren—what is there for a man to thank God for like that?"

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter ii., 5.

THE following lines contain, in condensed form, the substance of a series of Bible-readings. They are now being printed with the earnest prayer and humble hope that God may graciously use them for the guarding of the unwary against the mischievous influences of the superstitious errors of Ritualism, so rampant in our land, and that all who read them may find them a help for the promotion of practical holiness of life and usefulness in God’s service.

WHO ARE THE PRIESTS ?

If the New Testament answer to this question were carefully and honestly studied and seriously considered by all professing Christians, the systems of Romanism and Ritualism would necessarily fall : seeing they are based upon a pretended priesthood for which there is no warrant in the Word of God. There is no teaching in the New Testament that can lead to the belief that any order of men are set apart as Priests. That there are “ Bishops ” (Phil. i. 1 ; 1 Tim. iii. 1-2 ; Tit. i. 7). “ Elders ” (1 Tim. v. 17 ; Tit. i. 5 ; 1 Pet. v. 1), “ Deacons ” (Phil. i. 1 ; 1 Tim. iii. 8—13), “ Presbyters ” (1 Tim. iv. 14)—these Scriptures show,* but no mention is ever made of priests being appointed either by Christ or His apostles.

In Eph. iv. 11 we read of certain orders of men bestowed by our ascended Lord as gifts to His Church on earth. “ He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,” but not priests ; for the simple reason that *all* Christians are priests.

If the words that head these lines are addressed to Christians as such, it is certain that all who are “ lively stones ” are also a “ holy priesthood.”

The evangelist, pastor and teacher are *gifts* (as distinct from office), and their ministry is to man : and they must speak so as to be clearly understood ; but the special function of the priest is to minister to God, and for this he needs no special gift.

I have not been able to discover that even the Levitical priesthood was dependent upon man’s ordination. The Apostle, speaking of God’s call to the priesthood in Heb. v. 4-5, merely refers to

* Though apparently the distinct offices of the Church consist of two only, viz., Bishops and Deacons (see Phil. i. 1).

Aaron as the first high-priest in Israel (see Exod. xxviii. 1), and to Jesus the "Great High Priest" of His people: even the high priesthood of Israel passed from father to son, being a question of birthright, and not of man's ordination.* Idolatrous priests were ordained by man (see 2 Kings xxiii. 5), and in the New Testament we find Elders were ordained by man (Tit. i. 5) (see foot-note †).

As we shall have occasion frequently to refer to the Aaronic priesthood, I would remark here that Aaron's sons were priests by virtue of their union with Aaron himself; and all through the Jewish dispensation, the man who could prove himself to be of the direct line of Aaron had, by so doing, established his right to the priesthood (see Ezra ii. 61-62).

In like manner now, the man who has proof of his union with Christ, our "Great High Priest," by this very means establishes claim to *this* priesthood of which we are treating. For with us, even as with Israel's priests, the question is one of birthright, *i.e.*, spiritual birthright. As the "House" is "spiritual," "Sacrifices" "spiritual," so the priests are spiritual, having spiritual life, which necessitates spiritual birth, hence our apostle has told us we are born again" (Ch. i. 23).

REDEMPTION THE BASIS OF PRIESTLY WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

As there was no established priesthood in Israel till after the redemption of the people (they were redeemed to serve), so there can be no acceptable worship and service rendered to God by any man who is not actually redeemed.

You might as well picture one of Aaron's sons refusing to leave Egypt, and yet laying claim to the priesthood, as to imagine that a man can now offer acceptable worship and service unless he be redeemed from sin and death.

Rev. v. 9-10 shows that redemption is the basis of priesthood.
"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of

* He was called of God, though certain ceremonies were performed in connection with Aaron's ordination.

† The word "Priest" in the English Prayer Book is a shortened form of "Presbyter," for since the word "Minister" is so frequently used in reference to the same man who is leading the exercises of the congregation, it is evident that our Reformers never intended us to understand the word "Priest" in any other sense than that of "Minister."

every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

We cannot fail to see from this Scripture, not only that redemption is essential to priesthood, but also that God's priesthood is no longer limited to the house of Aaron, to the tribe of Levi, or to the nation of Israel: it embraces all the redeemed of mankind, forming them into one kingdom of priests.

Peter (who furnished us with our subject), before assuring us that we are a "holy priesthood," reminds us that we are "redeemed" "by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (Ch. i. 18-19), evidently referring to the Passover lamb, by which Israel was redeemed. Paul also says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

Israel's redemption was of a twofold character, and by a twofold means, viz.: The first-born sons were redeemed from *death* by the death of a substitute (a lamb), and the whole nation was redeemed from *bondage* by the power of God's hand. Exod. ii. 23-24 finds the people sighing and groaning by reason of their *bondage*, not on account of their *sin*. By the slaying of the lamb, God taught them that they were sinners as well as slaves, and that they must be redeemed from *death* before they could be redeemed from *bondage*. The former was the ground of the latter. It is well to remember that there was a death in every house in Egypt on that Passover night (Exod. xii. 30). Only there was this distinction: In the house of the Egyptian there was the death of a *man*, while in the home of the Israelite there was the death of a *lamb*. Where the lamb was not slain the man died. Surely little explanation is needed to enforce the lesson this is designed to teach.

The death-sentence is passed upon us all by reason of sin (Rom. v. 12). Sin and death are as inseparable as fire and heat, and unless, as individual sinners, we trust in "the precious blood of Christ," shed for our redemption, as each first-born son was sheltered by the sprinkled blood of Israel's Passover (Exod. xii. 12-13), we shall certainly perish.

Moreover, this *twofold* redemption must be ours in the same order as it was theirs. First deliverance must be given from sin's *penalty*, then from its *power*. Many a man is sensible of his *bondage*, *i.e.*, he knows that certain sinful habits are his "task-masters," and he sighs often by reason of this—yea, and even cries to God for

deliverance. Yet he is not delivered, because he is not sensible of his guilt. He has not taken his place as already a righteously condemned sinner.

So we sometimes sing :—

“He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free.”

This is God's order. Sin's power can never be broken till its penalty is *cancelled*. Paul never could have told the Romans, “Sin shall not have dominion over you” (Chap. vi. 14), if he had not already told them they were “justified by God's grace through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus” (Ch. iii. 24).

(To be continued.) 310

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

J.S. Ques. : *Is there any connection between the gifts of Eph. iv. and the talents of Matt. xxv. ?*

Ans. : There certainly is. As someone has said, speaking of the latter, “They were gifts which fitted them to labour in His (the Lord's) service while He was absent.” This equally applies to the gifts of the former passage. The use made of the gifts would be the same, too, in both cases. It would depend upon confidence in the Master, and love to Him, flowing from knowledge of Him. If this were lacking, the gift would lie useless. Thus Paul writes in his epistle to the Colossians : “And say to Archippus, ‘Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.’” So to Timothy, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” In both cases, also, rewards will be given for faithful service. “Woe is unto me,” said the Apostle, “if I preach not the gospel.” And again, “If I do this thing willingly I have a reward.” Once more in the case of the talents they “received every man according to his several ability.” They did not all receive alike. So in Ephesians iv. 7 we are told, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” What you say as to the present day, that “there are a number of gifts who limit their gift and reach very few only of the body of Christ” is perfectly true. In some cases the servant is responsible, and will suffer loss ; in other cases it is due to the state of Christendom, and the mere human arrangements in vogue.

F.S. Ques. : Please state your interpretation of the statement : " Thought it not robbery to be equal with God " (Phil. ii. 6). The interpretation given by some, as quoted by you, " that while the Son is of the Godhead, in the form of God, He did not possess equality with God, that is God the Father," we should certainly decline to accept. It satisfies neither reason nor scripture. If in the Godhead at all He must be on an equality with God. John i. 1-4 sufficiently proves that. If we look at the statement as in contrast with what was true of Adam we shall, I think, reach a better conclusion. Satan, in the temptation, did set equality with God before Adam as a thing to be grasped at. " Ye shall be as gods," was the prize held out. With Christ it was altogether different. He was God. To be equal with God was no object of rapine to Him. He could not go higher, but He could go lower, and He did. And He would go to the very lowest. He emptied Himself of all the outward form of Godhead, and instead took the *servant's* form. But angels were servants. Christ would go lower : " He was found in fashion as a man." But as a man even, He humbled Himself. And that to the lowest point of all " ' unto death,' even the death of the Cross." It is the path of the man according to God's heart in complete contrast to all that is characteristic of man after the flesh. " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." What a path ! From the highest pinnacle, where there was nothing above Him, to the lowest depths where there was nothing beneath Him, and then back again. The circle is completed, and the whole of it is filled with every moral trait that could glorify God.

W.P.M. : *Re* your question, we certainly think that v. 20 (Matt. xviii.) cannot be separated either from what precedes or what follows. Have we not had very superficial views of what it means to be gathered together in Christ's Name ? It is accepted as a sort of dogma which distinguishes certain from others who are said not to be gathered to that Name. It seems to us that it only applies really to those who are in the truth of what that Name expresses ; that is, those gathered, answer morally to the character of the One they gather to. Thus the Lord presents Himself to Philadelphia as the Holy and the True—this is what is involved in His Name—and He can say, " Thou hast kept My word, and hast *not denied My Name.*" For we may deny that Name all the while we profess to be gathered to it. Verses 1-17, we take it, set forth the moral traits

of those who are truly gathered to His Name, for they are descriptive of Christ. This, at all events, is what they seek, and any dereliction would be a denial of Christ's Name.

If the above is borne in mind does it not help us to understand the force of "if two of *you*" (v. 19). Who are the *you*? Surely not everyone who professes and calls himself a Christian, but those who are marked by the features outlined in vv. 1-17. For does not answer to prayer depend, not merely upon the verbal use of Christ's Name, or the verbal plea of being gathered to it, but very much upon our state of soul? "If we ask anything according to His will He heareth us," &c. But who can ask according to His will except those who are subject to it, and doing it? It is far more than sending up a chance petition that may happen to be according to it. May we not conclude, therefore, that the "you" of verse 19 are those who are "converted and have become as little children" (v. 3); who *humble* themselves as a little child (v. 4); who receive a little child in Christ's Name (v. 5); who avoid being a stumbling block to one such (v. 6); who will make any sacrifice rather than be turned aside (vv. 8-9); and who seek the erring, and to gain a brother who has trespassed (vv. 12-15).

"Ministry is the exercise of a spiritual gift. . . . What the Church gives, the Church has a voice in. But the Lord gave Philip a spiritual gift, and there the Church bows and accepts, instead of choosing."

GOSPEL INVITATION.

Poor sinner! come to Jesus
Now, while He bids you "Come,"
 He'll pardon and receive you
 And lead you safely home.

The door has long stood open,
 "Now" is salvation's day,
 But soon 'twill close for ever,
 So enter while you may.

The "wedding feast" is ready,
 And all who enter in,
 Safe, safe, shall be for ever—
 Eternal glory win.

Contributed by one who has been deaf from childhood; who until late in life was "deaf" also to the Gospel message, and kept through family tradition from full entrance into God's "marvellous light."

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



“FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.”

MATT. XVII. 20.

OUR Lord in the above statement likens faith to a grain of mustard seed, *i.e.*, ever growing, however small at first. This unfolds a vital principle in connection with faith, *viz.*, to make use of what we have. It grows by exercise. Thus the above words are not to be taken so much as a comparison as to size, but as to growth. If you have a faith that is ever growing, however slender it may be at first, you will at length remove mountains.

The passage from which the above is an extract is a very solemn one. It is solemn when compared with what had previously taken place. In the former part of the chapter we have the account of the transfiguration. For a moment the power and coming of Christ is made visible to the three chosen disciples. The Lord then descends to the plain, and what a different state of things confronts Him. Above, all was power and majesty and victory. It was an exhibition, though only a fleeting one, of that kingdom wherein the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed. Down below, there was an exhibition of weakness and defeat. A father comes to Jesus in despair about his son—an epileptic. He had previously brought him to the disciples and they could do nothing. Jesus exclaims, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.” Christ proves His power to be as great at the bottom of the mountain as at the top. He immediately expels the demon.

As soon as an opportunity occurs, the disciples raise the momentous question, “Why could not we cast him out?” Let us note well the answer, “Because of your unbelief.”

It is this unbelief that is the source of weakness in the Church, and in the individual believer, to-day. Christ's charge against His own generation lies with equal force against the present one. We are both faithless and perverse. Why is it? The Church, as a

whole, has lost the vision of the mountain top. She has grown unfamiliar with the heights—she has ceased to gaze upon the glory of her Lord—she has settled down on the world's level, and forgotten both the power and the purity of the One she serves—and her impotence in the face of the world's need is the consequence.

What is the remedy? "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed." Do we ask why we are so powerless? Here is the answer. It is want of faith. There is also another reason given. The Lord adds, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." It is doubtful whether these words really have a place here, but, in any case, they are found in Mark's account of the same incident, with the exception of the last two words, perhaps, which, again, are doubtful. We may therefore include prayer as one of the conditions. These two things—faith and prayer—will enable us to remove mountains.

These mountains—what are they? Things that will not yield to any known forces, except the two mentioned. Whatever obstacle confronts your heavenly progress, that is a mountain. Whatever stands between you and your Lord; between you and the good you seek; between you and your purpose in life, if it is according to God's will—these are mountains. There are mountains of sin, of misery, of opposition to the advance of the Kingdom of Christ, on every hand. Are we removing any? Have you ever cleared a mountain out of your way by faith and prayer? Or, is that obstacle in your way still hindering your progress, and you sitting down the wrong side of it?

Young Christians, never forget these two exercises—the exercise of faith and the exercise of prayer. Let your faith be *like* a grain of mustard seed—ever growing. And never forget the relation between the mountain top and the plain beneath; or in other words, where your power is to come from. Only as you are in the presence of the power of His glory will you be strengthened with all might "unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

"I desire to know the power of a little truth, rather, far rather, than increase the stock of truths. . . . Better to break the heart over one truth than get many truths in the mind. . . . The Lord keep us that our growth in knowledge may be healthful. In many souls I believe knowledge is doing mischief rather than good."

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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EDITORIALS.

We hope to publish one or two articles on “Divers and Strange Doctrines.” Quite a number of these, lately, have been brought under our notice. It almost seems as if a special effort were being made to unsettle and mislead many of the children of God. The first of the series appears in the present issue.

* * * *

There were two things, amongst others, the Apostle Paul did : “*Warning every man, and teaching every man,*” he says. These went together in his preaching. He preached Christ ; but he also pointed out the dangers that threatened the people of God. These are very real to-day. It is needful to remember that there are sins of the mind as well as of the body. And those who are in the least danger of the last are often the most prone to commit the first. “Casting down *reasonings* and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ.” This is in Chapter x. of Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians. In the very next chapter he takes up the same thread again, and adds : “But I fear, lest by any

means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his *subtilty*, so your minds should be corrupted from the *simplicity* that is in Christ" (v. 3). Here notice the contrast between *subtilty* and *simplicity*. And the simplicity is not a personal trait, but marks the doctrine as to Christ. It is usually those with a subtle intellect who are the leaders in false doctrine, though they may carry others with them. Let us beware, then, of fulfilling the desires (will) of the mind as well as of the flesh (Eph. ii. 3). What the soul needs above all is building up in the thought of the preciousness of Christ to God.

* * * *

Someone has said the great point is not what we have, but what we *know* we have. It was illustrated in this way. A father had a piece of land. That land was rich in minerals, but the father did not know it. The fact was discovered, however, when the son inherited the property, and he became immensely wealthy. The difference between the father and the son was not in what they had, but in what they *knew* they had. So, oftentimes, with Christians. We all possess alike in one sense. The difference here, again, is not in what we have, but in what we *know* that we have.

* * * *

How to Study the Bible.—More than once, lately, we have been asked the question: Which is the best way to study the Bible? One reader now writes to us as follows: "Can you through your magazine suggest a simple and fruitful method of daily Bible study, by which one may become more intimate with God's Word? Some methods suggested by Biblical students are much too complicated for the average reader—but a difference is suggested in the terms Bible reader and Bible student, and it would be so helpful to have Bible *study* made simple by some definite plan."

The distinction made here between reading and study is important. The Bible must be *studied* to be understood. That is, you do not read a passage through once, and then close the book, which is reading merely as a duty or for enjoyment, but you go over the same passage again and again—you ponder it. For this reason it is not good advice to say begin at Genesis and read straight through to the end of Revelation. If it is merely a question of *reading* the Bible that may be a very good way, but very few could *study* it that way. For the simple reason that the contents of the Bible are too varied—the scope too great. It is not a book, it is a library.

Supposing anyone had a small library of books to study—to get a thorough knowledge of their contents—would he take up one book and just read it through, then place it on the shelf, and take another, and so on ; and then when he had read through all in this way begin again ? No one would think of doing anything of the sort. There would be no harm in hastily glancing through each book, but the careful student would return to study each book separately. This is precisely the way to study the divine library we call the Bible.

1. Our first advice, then, to those who wish to become really acquainted with the scriptures is, *study carefully one book or epistle at a time*. Even if you spend a year upon it, do it. It will repay you. Better have a thorough grasp of the smallest section than a mere smattering of the whole. The same principle also applies to the amount to be read each day. Only read as much as you have time carefully to meditate upon.

2. *Take the most important sections first*. All scripture is equally inspired, and all, in its place and at the right time, equally important, but not all equally important for you. No one, for instance, would advise a *young* convert to read the Minor Prophets or even the Book of the Revelation to begin with. Hardly anyone could do better than begin with the epistle to the Romans. This epistle sets before us the gospel of God. It treats of man's need as a sinner and the way God has met it, in a fuller manner than is the case anywhere else in the whole compass of sacred writ. Then pass to the epistle to the Ephesians. When you have, by repeated reading, obtained some definite thoughts as to the truth unfolded in these writings, then give the first four books of the O.T. and the first four of the N.T. a very prominent place. Master these and you have really got the key to the whole Bible. But let Romans be your base. Just as it is said all roads lead to Rome, and, consequently, from Rome, so it may, in a broad sense, be affirmed that from Romans you will discover a track into almost every province of sacred truth. A thorough acquaintance with its teaching would save people from many a labyrinth of error.

3. *Make notes*.—In doing this not only jot down isolated thoughts as they occur to you, but, from time to time, try and put down on paper what you think you have learned. This may reveal your poverty at first, but do not be discouraged. Writing does two things. It leads to definiteness of thought, and it frequently

becomes an incentive to thought. In doing this, always try to express your ideas as well, and as clearly, as you possibly can.

4. *Study an epistle or a book topically.* Find out key words, oft repeated words, and see the different connections in which they are used. Write all these down and group them together, if necessary ; e.g., the word *grace* in Romans. If the meaning and use of this single word were understood, the rest would be easy.

5. Carry in your mind always what the Apostle Paul says about the scriptures in writing to Timothy. He calls them "*holy scriptures*"; he says they were all "God-breathed." They are not ordinary writings. If we read the Bible as an ordinary book, an ordinary book it will remain to us. Let us remember what is said to the Thessalonians, "Ye received the word of God . . . not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." It must therefore be read in *faith*. For only thus shall we be made wise unto salvation. (See 2 Tim., iii. 15-17.)

6. This same scripture also reminds us of the real subject of the Bible, and the real object we must have in reading it. *No study of the Bible can be for profit unless Christ be revealed to us.* The scriptures make us wise unto salvation only "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is all a dead letter until He shines from the page. As one has beautifully expressed it :—

"One line I read—and then no more—
I close the book to see
No more the symbol and the sign,
But Christ revealed to me."

The Apostle Peter impresses upon us very much the same lesson. "As newborn babes," he says, "desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby : *if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*" The word makes us acquainted with a living Person, and all that that Person has become to us. This is its primary object. Whenever we study it, our aim must be to sit at His feet and hear His word. It must be with us as it was with the two going to Emmaus. Christ "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself."

7. Further, if the study of scripture is to be really profitable there must be a conscientious effort to carry out its teaching and submit to its correction. It will only be head knowledge we shall

get unless this is so. To acquire a knowledge of God's will without doing it is in every way to be deprecated. Nothing is more profitable than the study of scripture if we remember what scripture is given for. "For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The study of scripture, therefore, can only be profitable as we continually seek to carry out what we know. Only as we "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work," can we increase in the knowledge of God (Col. i. 10).

8. Lastly, we leave to the end what is perhaps the most important of all in answering the question, How to study the Bible. It must be studied upon our knees. A knowledge of the original languages may be a help, and all the various aids students of the word have given us may be a help, but all are as nothing compared with the potency of prayer. This brings illumination to the mind, unlocks the casket in which the treasures lie hidden, and brings light where else all would be obscurity. We need the understanding opened in order to understand the scriptures, and how shall we obtain this but by prayer. If we often go down on our knees before the open page we shall rejoice as those that find great spoil, and not be sent empty away. "*Ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you."

May we ask the young people to read carefully the foregoing remarks on, How to Read the Bible, in lieu of the usual Young People's Page?

"I can live without luxuries, and be very happy without them.

"I may get so accustomed to them as to think I cannot do without them, counting them necessities. But you will notice that while there may be pleasant surrounding for the sloth and ease of the body, they do not nourish or strengthen the soul.

"We are safer without luxuries than with them; for they foster and encourage pride, selfishness and all the works of the flesh.

"God has promised to give us all needful things, let us be satisfied with them, and be content with such things as we have."—Read 1 Timothy vi. 6-11.—*Extract.*

PRAYER AND POTATOES.

An old lady sat in her old arm chair,
 With wrinkled face and dishevelled hair,
 And pale and hunger-worn features ;
 For days and for weeks her only fare,
 As she sat there in her old arm-chair,
 Had been nothing but potatoes.

And now they were gone, of bad or good
 Not one was left for the old lady's food,
 Of these her stock of potatoes ;
 And she sighed and said, " What shall I do ?
 Where shall I send, and to whom shall I go,
 To get some more potatoes ? "

And she thought of the deacon over the way,
 The deacon so ready to worship and pray,
 Whose cellar was full of potatoes ;
 And she said, " I will send for the deacon to come,
 He'll not much mind to give me some
 Of such a store of potatoes."

And the deacon came over as fast as he could,
 Thinking to do the old lady some good,
 But never thought once of potatoes.
 He asked her directly to tell her chief want,
 And she, simple soul, expecting a grant,
 Immediately answered " Potatoes."

But the deacon's religion went not that way,
 He was more accustomed to preach and to pray
 Than to give of his hoarded potatoes ;
 So not hearing, of course, what the old lady said,
 He rose to pray with uncovered head,
 But she only thought of potatoes.

He prayed for patience, for wisdom, for grace ;
 But when he prayed " Oh Lord, give her peace,"
 She audibly sighed " Give potatoes."
 And at the end of each prayer that he said,
 He heard, or he thought that he heard, in its stead,
 The same request for potatoes.

The deacon was troubled—knew not what to do,
 'Twas embarrassing, very, to have her act so
 About these " carnal potatoes ;"
 So ending his prayer he started for home,
 As the door closed behind him he heard a deep groan,
 " Oh give to the hungry, potatoes."

And that groan followed him all the way home,
 In the midst of the night it haunted his room,
 " Oh give to the hungry, potatoes ;"
 He could bear it no longer—arose and dressed,
 From his well-filled cellar taking in haste
 A bag of his best potatoes.

Again he went to the widow's lone hut,
 Her sleepless eyes she had not yet shut,
 But there she sat in her old arm-chair,
 With the same wan features, the same sad air,
 So entering in he poured on the floor,
 A bushel or more of his goodly store
 Of the very best potatoes.

The widow's heart leaped up for joy,
 Her face was haggard and wan no more.
 "Now," said the deacon, "Shall we pray."
 "Yes," said the widow, "Now you may."
 And he kneeled him on the sanded floor,
 Where he had poured out his goodly store,
 And such a prayer the deacon prayed
 As never before his lips essayed ;
 No longer embarrassed but free and full,
 He poured out the voice of a liberal soul,
 And the widow responded aloud "Amen,"
 And said no more of potatoes.

And would you who hear this simple tale,
 Pray for the poor and praying prevail,
 Then preface your prayers with alms and good deeds,
 Search out the poor with their cares and their needs ;
 Pray for peace, and grace, and heavenly food,
 For wisdom, and guidance, for these are all good,
 But don't forget the potatoes.

"Beloved, it is a sad thing, and truly so sad that it makes our very heart bleed within us to think of the Lamb's little party who are in strength the weakest, in riches the poorest, and in numbers the fewest, and shall they be in love the coldest, in judgment the most divided. Is not this sad now, that the little ones of Jesus Christ, that the lambs of Jesus Christ should love one another no better ?

"Oh Christian, either lay your malice aside or else God will lay you aside as He hath done too many of us, at this day to our great sorrow."

Life is too short for aught but high endeavour—
 Too short for spite, but long enough for love.
 And love lives on for ever and for ever,
 It links the worlds that circle on above ;
 'Tis God's first law, the universe's lever.
 In His vast realm the radiant souls sigh never
 "Life is too short."

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition.

CHAPTER V. 1—10.

“THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD.”

“THEM THAT ARE OUT OF THE WAY.”

THE Priesthood of Christ, with which the epistle to the Hebrews is so largely occupied, has mainly to do with two things: matters relating to God; and to keep us in the way, that we may not err from it. Both are referred to in the quotations above, taken from this chapter. The writer of the epistle is showing the qualifications necessary in a priest taken from among men, and the nature of his office. He then proceeds to show how Christ has become qualified for the same office, and how he fulfils it; as well as, at the same time, bringing out, in the way of contrast, the superior glory of His Person. All this really carries us down to the end of Chapter vii. We cannot traverse so much ground in the present article, but must content ourselves with a glance at the first ten verses of our chapter.

Verses 1—6: Already we have had two things under consideration in connection with our High Priest: His succour, and His sympathy. This is in order that, as God's people, we may be kept in the way. It will be observed both in v. 17, chap. ii., as well as in v. 1, chap. v., occurs the expression a “High Priest in things pertaining to God.” It is in order that God may not suffer damage *through the failure of His people. But for the intercession of our High Priest* how ready we should be to depart from the living God, and turn aside to ways of our own, or settle down in the world as if this were our rest; as Israel turned back in their hearts to Egypt. There is indeed another aspect of the Priesthood, connected with our entering the presence of God as worshippers, but this is not developed until we come to Chapter viii.

How perfectly, then, the priest was suited to the needs of the people. He must have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. In this respect what a resource we have in Christ. How comforting! Especially when we remember, what we are here told, that He did not take this honour upon Himself, but has been called to this office by God. What a gracious provision. For do not our hearts tell us how inclined we are to turn

back to the world; to settle down in easy, comfortable circumstances; and to forget we are strangers and pilgrims. When this takes place we cease to be worshippers, and thus how little God gets from us. The tent and the altar are inseparable. If one goes, the other is sure to follow.

All this teaches us our need of Christ. He can keep us in the way. He has compassion on the ignorant and the erring. We need never altogether fail. Think of Peter. He fell lower than we have ever fallen, perhaps. But he was converted—he turned again. Why? “I have prayed for thee,” said Christ. O child of God, think of it. Think of the gracious provision your Father has made so that you should never wander from Him. Again and again we read of Christ, when here upon earth, He had compassion. He is not different now.

Verses 7—10: Then in these verses we have wonderfully brought before us all that the Son of God endured to perfect Himself for this office. *“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from (or rather “out of”) death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.”*

He was “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,” and yet, too, very man. One Who in the days of His flesh, felt weakness and woe. He “offered up prayers and supplications.” Two things are to be learned here. First, Christ found deliverance by this means, and it indicates the means of deliverance for us. We must ever remember that the throne of grace is inseparably linked with the sympathy and succour of our Intercessor, and we shall not know much of either if we refuse, or forget to come there. But, secondly, if our adorable Redeemer knew what prayer and entreaty meant on His own behalf, He is equally ready to exercise both on behalf of those who are still under trial. Our case may be so desperate—the assaults of Satan may be so fierce—the peculiar circumstances so trying that we may even have to come to “strong crying and tears”; but, even so, we shall find Christ was there before us. The verse under consideration alludes, probably, to the

agony in the Garden of Gethsemane—the most awful conflict that ever took place in the world's history. On the cross there appears to have been none, but here, who shall describe it? All the terrors of death—all that it meant to be made sin—all that was involved in entering Satan's stronghold—seemed to press, with their full weight, upon His soul. So awful was it that He could even say, "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me"; but He added, "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." He must die. But His prayer was that He might be saved out of death. And He was heard.

And shall He not be heard on our behalf? What a guarantee the resurrection becomes of the efficacy of His intercession for us. He was saved out of death in answer to prayer. That cry, "Save Me from the lion's mouth," was answered. He was indeed heard "from the horns of the unicorns." And shall He not be heard still? If heard in the place of weakness and need, when out of the depths He cried to God, shall He not be heard in the place of exaltation and power, with all the brightness of His Father's glory about Him? It is in that place He pleads for thee. But He pleads in order to make thy prayers prevail.* If you do not pray you will be vanquished. The world will gain a hold upon you. Your own evil heart will turn you aside. The devil will lay some trap wherein you will be caught. If Christ needed to pray, how much more do we.

Thus He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. He submitted to God, obedient even unto death. God raised Him from the dead. What a salvation! Death, that cuts short everything here—death, that closes the eyes to all that is loved and longed for in this life—death, that brings us to an end as far as this present condition is concerned—death, the penalty of sin—the great enemy—death is vanquished. We are placed beyond it. Its terrors can never alarm us, nor its sting reach us. Its conqueror is the One Who has become our life. Well might the Psalmist say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Yes, *Thy rod and Thy staff*. Have we

* His intercession does not take the place of our prayers, but supplements them. Without our prayers we do not get the full advantage of His prayers. While without His, ours would be unavailing. In Gethsemane, Christ not only prayed Himself, but exhorted His disciples to do the same.

not these in the passage we have been considering? The rod of power that divided the waters of death when the Son of God rose triumphant; and now His Priestly grace becomes the staff that supports us all the journey through. What so comforting, in a scene of death and dearth, as the knowledge of resurrection and that the supply of mercy and grace can never fail us along the road?

THE WAY TO BE HAPPY.

Look more to Jesus than you look
 To any one beside,
 Beyond all others, look to Him
 Who in your stead has died;
 Oh do not give a passing glance,
 Look long and earnestly,
 For in the face of Jesus Christ
 Great wonders you will see.

Talk, too, with Jesus, as you would
 If He were here on earth;
 An hour's intercourse with Him,
 Oh, who can tell its worth?
 Talk to Him when you are at work,
 And in the morning hour;
 Who most converse with Jesus here
 Know most of Jesus' power.

And as you journey day by day
 Walk with this Heavenly Friend;
 Companionship with Him is sweet
 And it will never end.
 With loved ones here you've often walked,
 They may have changed or died;
 Jesus can never, never die,
 Nor ever leave your side.

Neglect not, too, to meditate
 Upon God's wondrous plan;
 Our plans may fail or disappoint,
 But Jesus' never can.
 From purest thoughts, spring purest joys,
 Give to your thoughts pure food,
 Feed them on Christ, the living Bread,
 The source of every good.

Read, too, about this Blessed One,
 Make Him your first and last,
 Your chief delight, from morn till night,
 Till life's short day be past.
 So shall your soul find happiness,
 A rich and boundless store,
 Enough for youth, enough for age,
 Enough for evermore.

BALAAM AND HIS PARABLES *(continued.)*

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II.—ISRAEL A JUSTIFIED PEOPLE.

BALAK was disappointed and angry. To have been at such pains and expense in order to procure a curse upon his enemies, and then to hear a blessing pronounced upon them was more than flesh could bear. To the king's rebuke the prophet could only reply, "Must I not take heed to speak that which Jehovah hath put in my mouth?" In reality the one was as disappointed as the other. Balaam was perfectly willing to curse Israel for reward. Not of his own will, but by divine constraint, he had proclaimed them Jehovah's sanctified people.

Balak now proposed a change of position. "Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence." The absurdity of such a proposition must be apparent. Were the counsels of God to be influenced in this way? Could a change of prospect really make all the difference between blessing and cursing? We are reminded of the words of the Syrian captains in 1 Kings xx. 23. Seeing their king dismayed because Israel had defeated him, they approached him thus: "Their Gods are Gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we: but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they." This made the matter one for Jehovah to deal with. Accordingly a man of God was sent to Ahab with the message: "Thus saith Jehovah, 'Because the Syrians have said Jehovah is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.'" Neither hills nor valleys make any difference to our God; and no change of position can affect His purposes of Grace concerning His people. Only a man utterly destitute of the knowledge of God could think otherwise.

Arrived at the field of Zophim, on the top of Pisgah, Balaam turned aside from Balak and his retinue in order to consult his oracle. "The Lord" is printed in italics in Num. xxiii. 15, and should be

scored out of our Bibles. He went to seek enchantments (Num. xxiv. 1); but Jehovah interposed again, and put a word into his mouth.

“ And he took up his parable and said, ‘ Rise up, Balak, and hear : hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor : God is not a man, that He should lie ; neither the son of man, that He should repent ; hath He not said, and shall He not do it ? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ? ’ ” (Num. xxiii. 18, 19). Here we have God’s answer to man’s folly. Balaam had the temerity in ch. xxii. 19 to consult Him afresh after receiving His distinct word, “ Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed ” ; Balak had ignorantly proposed a change of prospect in the hope that in this way an anathema might be secured ; to both these adversaries of His people Jehovah now declares that He is absolutely without falsehood or change. His word must stand for ever. This fact was an immense comfort to David in a later day. “ For Thy word’s sake, and according to Thine own heart, hast Thou done all these great things, to make Thy servant know them ” (2 Sam. vii. 21). And when years afterwards he had to mourn over the unfaithfulness of his house, he was enabled to say : “ Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure : for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow ” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). David and his sons had played sadly false ; nevertheless God and His word remained true. The absolute reliability of God’s word is a fact of which we need to remind ourselves continually at the present time. Christendom reeks with religious infidelity. Questions of every kind fill the air, and shake the faith of those who entertain them. Confidence in the word of God is at a low ebb, and yet it should be apparent to everybody that if we let the divine revelation slip through our fingers there are but two courses open to us :—refuge in ecclesiastical authority, or blank despair. It imparts robustness to the soul to hear God declare as in the verse before us, “ God is not a man that He should lie,” etc. We may well confide in peace in such a God.

“ Behold I have received commandment to bless : and He hath blessed ; and I cannot reverse it.” Here the prophet goes beyond what he said in his first parable. There we have a *negative* statement, “ God hath not cursed ” ; here we have what is *positive*, “ He hath blessed.” (Compare vv. 8, 20). On top of this the foe is

forced to confess, "and I cannot reverse it." Let us delight our souls in this. The would-be destroyer of God's elect is constrained to publicly acknowledge his impotence. Fear not, beloved child of God; in Christ the Lord every blessing is secured for evermore. Let Satan do and say what he may please; it will only result in confusion and shame for himself and all those whom he may employ.

Now we come to the central verse of the second parable. Verse 21 gives us its distinguishing statement. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." God's sanctified people are thus His justified people. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). It was not that Israel was without either iniquity or perverseness. Indeed, Moses, who loved them well, had to say, "Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah from the day that I knew you" (Deut. ix. 24). In Jeremiah's time it was solemnly declared that Jerusalem's entire history had been one of provocation from first to last (Jer. xxxii. 31-32). This could not, and did not, go unpunished. But from the top of Pisgah it was no question of the principles of God's government, but of His purposes of grace. It was not condition that was being discussed, but position. Israel had been brought out from Egypt under the shelter of the blood of the lamb. Could God ever forget this? In like manner has Israel's God saved and blessed us on the ground of Christ's redemption. The fact that He is risen again and accepted in the glory of God secures us for evermore. He who came down in grace has gone up in righteousness, and we have become "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

But while we triumph in the absoluteness of the Grace of God towards us, the government of God (to which all are subject) is a very serious thing. God can never treat lightly the evil ways of those whom He has brought near to Himself. To Israel it was said: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). We have only to turn over one page in the Book of Numbers to find this solemnly exemplified. If in ch. xxiii. 21 we hear God speaking in Grace; in ch. xxv. 4 we hear Him speaking in government. "Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before Jehovah against the sun, that the fierce anger of Jehovah may be turned away from Israel." The New Testament parallel to this may be found in 1 Cor. xi. 30 as compared with 1 Cor. vi. 11. After rebuking the

evil ways of "the washed, the sanctified, and the justified," the apostle says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." It would be folly to raise questions here as to the salvation of the soul. The point is this:—these Corinthians were fit for heaven, but unfit for Corinth. The blood of Christ fitted them for heaven; their scandalous ways unfitted them for Corinth. God will have true witnesses or none to represent Him amongst men.

Israel being God's justified people God was righteously able to dwell amongst them. This also the adversary told out in the ears of his Moabite audience. "Jehovah, his God, is with him, and the shout of a King is among them." God's presence is power. "God brought them out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn." Israel had but the glory-cloud dwelling in their midst, but each individual Christian, and also the Church of God collectively has received the Holy Spirit of God. Referring again to the first epistle to the Corinthians, ch. vi. 19 tells us of the individual blessing, and ch. iii. 16 of the collective. Oh, that we heard more frequently the "shout" of triumphant realisation of this! One of the saddest phases of Christendom's unbelief is its long continued indifference to the abiding presence of the Spirit of God. There is nothing to ask for in this connection, no fresh baptism of the Spirit, no new endowment of any kind; what is needed—sorely needed—is simple faith in the grand reality that the Spirit of God is indeed amongst us.

Balaam had earnestly invoked the power of hell against Israel, but he is now constrained to own that it was altogether in vain. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there divination against Israel." Such a people, blessed and shielded by the power of God, must ultimately be triumphant as a lion over all their foes. Unbelief in the people themselves might speak with dismay of "giants" and of "walls reaching unto heaven"; here the very foe declares that everything must fall before the people of God's election.

"According to this time (or, "at the due season"—see R.V. margin) it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'What hath God wrought!'" Israel's "due season" will be when the Son of Man appears. Then all Israel's miserable doings under the Sinai covenant will be swept into eternal oblivion, and God's grace towards

them will be seen in its full and mighty effects. As far as the earth is concerned, Israel will be the great outstanding triumph of divine workmanship. The Christian's "due season" will be when the Lord Jesus descends into the air to summon all His heavenly ones home. Then "in the ages to come He (God) will shew the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7). 329

(To be continued.)

THE LOVE OF GOD.

I sing the matchless love of God,
 Theme ne'er exhausted, ever new,
 Now shed in contrite hearts abroad
 Like the refreshing, silent dew.

Incomparable is Love; the glow
 It lends to earth, I oft compare
 With joys which Christian souls may know,
 With all that's beautiful and fair.

The heavenly blue I see above
 Reminds me Love is everywhere;
 All who inhale the breath of Love
 Desire no other atmosphere.

The glorious sun lights up the sky,
 It gilds the fleecy clouds at eve,
 Love beams upon us from on high,
 We light and joy from Love receive.

And in the evening of life's day,
 The darksome clouds their linings show,
 And happy souls are heard to say
 "Love turned to happiness, my woe."

I stand beside the fountain's brink,
 Or wander near the rippling rill,
 God's love is flowing, all may drink,
 The fount of love is open still.

Our island's shores the ocean laves,
 We wonder at its depth profound,
 Yet deeper still the love that saves,
 Encompassing the Church around!

I watch the vessels from the quay,
 All manned and ready to set sail;
 I think Love's sails will carry me
 Safe to my home through every gale.

Upon the sea of life I ride,
 Carried by strong eternal love;
 Onward I go, 'gainst wind and tide,
 My bourne, Love's fair abode above.

“DIVERS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES.”

HEBREWS XIII. 9.

DURING the past few weeks we have been confronted by quite a number of the above. “Many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ: and shall deceive many.” This was the warning uttered by our Lord. When His disciples asked Him about the sign of His coming and the end of the age, His first word was “Take heed that no man deceive you.” Multitudes are being deceived at the present moment, and because of this, we wish to draw attention, however briefly, to one or two forms of error that have recently come under our notice. Though the propounders of these “strange doctrines” do not say in so many words “I am Christ,” they do insist most strenuously upon the acceptance of what they affirm, as if the most important thing in life was to fall in with their notions, or, failing this, receive their anathema.

I.—MILLENNIAL DAWNISM.

We give the contents of a postcard recently received. The writer is an earnest man, though, perhaps, hardly one who is established in grace. It seems to be just such that are often misled. He was a soldier in India when first we corresponded with him a few years ago. Some while back he returned invalided, and has since come under the influence of the above teaching. He writes:—

“Apart from the question of Millennial Dawnism or any other *ism*, I take the pleasure to pass on to you the *News* that our Lord has come. Such is the truth *now due* to be received by God’s people, *if they will receive it*. Such is the truth that I myself am slowly beginning to wake up to and to appreciate more and more as the mist begins to roll away. Those who are in a right condition of heart, and love His appearing will not be long in coming to a knowledge of this; all who are out of harmony with His appearing will now be saying—Where is the promise, &c. Many Nathanaels are saying—Can there come any good thing out of *Adventism*, or in fact *Millennial Dawnism*; all that is needed on their part is to ‘*Come and see.*’ It is not now—Behold the Bridegroom cometh, but—**Behold the Bridegroom.** I would earnestly call your attention, dear sir, to the fact that the word lightning (Matt. xxiv. 27) is a mis-rendering, the correct rendering being, *bright-shining*. The

true and harmonious figure is the *Sun*, that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the *Presence* of the Son of Man be. His words, "Behold He cometh with clouds" is indeed a present fulfilling—the clouds of awful trouble are already beginning to muster before He will be revealed to the world. It is written, '*Every eye shall see Him,*' this can only mean for the world—*eyes of understanding*—no man in his natural condition will ever see Christ with naked eye. The *Day of the Lord* is 40 years long, and 1914 will close that period, and usher in His Kingdom. The smiting of the toes is already taking place."

Let us consider some of the statements in this extraordinary epistle. In doing so we wish to shew no disrespect to the writer, whom we would fain hope is a child of God, though we believe a misguided one. Our earnest hope is that he may yet be delivered from such a false, not to say absolutely ridiculous, position.

Think, first, then, of anyone taking upon himself to announce that the Lord has come. We should have thought that the Lord was quite capable of announcing Himself. We read, indeed, in words of His own, spoken to the Apostle Paul, and recorded by him, that when He comes for the saints it will be with "a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (see 1 Thess. iv. 16). Does our friend wish us to believe that all these are comprised in his postcard? He may get out of this difficulty, perhaps, by saying, they have already taken place. The question we naturally ask is, Who has heard them? Did our friend? We do not believe for a moment he can give an affirmative answer. We ourselves know hundreds of the most saintly Christians on earth, not one of whom has heard them. Yet we are calmly told in black and white "that our Lord has come."

But what will take place when He does come? (And let it be noted we are both occupied with the same phase of His coming.) "The dead in Christ shall rise first." Has this taken place? Are there thousands of empty graves around us? But further, when this does take place, the living will be "caught up together with them (the raised dead) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17). Has this occurred? See how the theory of the Lord having come destroys the teaching of Scripture! Yet we are solemnly assured "Such is the truth *now due* to be received by God's

people." So that God's people are deliberately asked to accept the word of man in place of His own word ; and all the blessed unfolding of 1 Thess. iv. 13-17 is lost to us.

The untruthfulness of the announcement that " the Lord has come " is only equalled by the effrontery which adds : " Those who are in a right condition of heart, and love His appearing, will not be long in coming to a knowledge of this ; all who are out of harmony with His appearing will now be saying—Where is the promise, &c."

But let us see how our friend further elucidates his subject. After informing us that " It is not now, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, but, Behold the Bridegroom " (we could have told him this years ago—the word " cometh " (Matt. xxv. 6) not being in the best MSS.) ; we are further informed " that the word lightning (Matt. xxiv. 27) is a mis-rendering, the correct rendering being *bright-shining*. The true and harmonious figure is the Sun, that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the Presence of the Son of Man be." How does this help us ? Was the lightning a difficulty in the way of making people believe that Christ had actually come ? But is the sun any better ? Surely the sun is quite as visible, and makes its presence quite as much felt, as does lightning. Yet who is aware of Christ having come after this manner ? But if this teaching means anything, it means that the Presence of the Son of Man is an accomplished fact, that Presence is like the sun : yet no one knows anything about it. Does even our friend ? Scripture tells us that when Christ arises upon this world as the Sun of righteousness it will be with healing in His wings. Where is the healing now ? According to this very teaching we are combating, it is the time of the tribulation and of darkness. For he goes on to say, " His words—' Behold He cometh with clouds ' is indeed a present fulfilling. The clouds of awful trouble are already beginning to muster before He will be revealed to the world." Let us see what confusion is here.

Our friend asserts that " the Lord has come." He goes on to tell us that the Presence of the Son of Man is like the Sun. And now he informs us " the clouds of awful trouble are already beginning to muster." The two things are altogether incompatible. When our Lord arises upon this world as the Sun of Righteousness it will be a morning *without* clouds. Before this, however, He comes for His

own as the Bright, the Morning Star. This will be to summon His own away as we have already seen from 1 Thess. iv. Neither of these has happened yet. Therefore the Lord has not come. Could anything be much more serious than to definitely state that He has. It is like saying "the resurrection is past already"; and equally calculated to overthrow the faith of some.

But our friend is even more bold—or shall we say, the system he advocates—for he fixes dates. "The Day of the Lord," he says, "is 40 years long, and 1914 will close that period and usher in His Kingdom." According to this teaching our Lord came in the year 1874. Others say He came A.D. 70, at the destruction of Jerusalem. Both are untrue. When our Lord comes secretly for His own, all those who are His will know it. The passage from Thessalonians proves this conclusively. When He comes back to the world to claim the kingdoms as His, the whole world will know it. "Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. i. 7).

We regret to say this is not the only error this system propagates. It is thoroughly unsound as to the condition of both the believer and unbeliever who have departed this life. Here is the teaching, taken from a recent publication. "Believers and unbelievers die and go into Sheol, into Hades, into the state of death. This dying process has continued now for over 6,000 years. The tomb, the great prison-house of death, is well filled with almost enough to reasonably populate the earth. The scripture declares 'that they know not anything.' They have not gone to a heaven of bliss, for our Redeemer declared that 'no man had ascended up to heaven.' " The reader will note that this teaching consigns believer and unbeliever to the same place and the same condition. Both are in a state of death, and know not anything. The believer has not gone to heaven. This last statement is supported by a scripture which is totally misapplied.

The remarks we have quoted are made to cover the whole 6000 years of the world's history. What does scripture say as to the condition of some of those who have died in their sins during that period? Speaking of Sodom and Gomorrhah, Jude tells us, they "are set forth for an example, *suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*" Yet believer and unbeliever are said to be in the same condition and the same place. Again we are made to feel how this system

comes into conflict with the plainest declarations of scripture. And with what confusion as a result. For this teaching makes no difference between believer and unbeliever, consequently the only logical conclusion is, if this teaching is to be trusted, that the believer is suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

But we must not dwell longer upon such mere imaginings of the human mind. The sale of the books setting forth these views has, we are told, in America alone reached to millions. Some in this country are also being deceived. It seems as if the Enemy of souls were on a special mission just now, that of instilling "divers and strange doctrines" into the minds of men, and of even the very elect. May God preserve His own by giving them more love for His own word, more desire to study it, so that becoming strong, and being fortified, they may overcome the Wicked One.

"Your talent in preaching does not increase; it is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this: you can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. Oh begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not; what is tedious at first will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life! There is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow; do not starve yourself any longer."

* * * *

"In divine things learning is of small value—except as a drudge to men of spiritual judgment and lowly; for the meek only has God promised to guide in judgment. The assumption that, because a man is a profound scholar, even if a Christian also, he is a safe expositor of Scripture, is a grave mistake."

* * * *

"Capito was a man of most gentle manners, and was devoted to learning; but in subservience to usefulness, not at the expense of it."

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS (*continued*).

II. 281

THE POSITION OF THE FIRST-BORN SONS.

AS soon as the Israelites were redeemed, even before they crossed the Red Sea, God said to Moses, "Sanctify unto Me all the first-born" (Exod. xiii. 1, 2), and in Num. iii. 13 He said, "Because all the first-born are Mine: for on the day that I smote all the first-born in Egypt, I hallowed unto Me all the first-born in Israel." Thus, every first-born son was dealt with by God: Egypt's first-born were slain, while Israel's were redeemed and therefore hallowed.

Thus does God still deal with men. They are either redeemed and hallowed or they are destroyed. As God laid special claim to the first-born sons of Israel, so does He lay special claim to every redeemed sinner. Thus the Apostle, having assured the Corinthians that "Christ our passover" was "sacrificed for" them (1 Cor. v. 7), reminds them in ch. vi. 19-20, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." So, laying His hand upon every redeemed sinner, hallows him.

It is instructive to notice that God separated the whole tribe of Levi, "instead of all the first-born" (Num. iii. 12), and this accounts for the conspicuous position which they occupied all through Israel's history. They stood in the stead of these first-born sons, who were redeemed from death and hallowed to God. And as each first-born son represented his family, so the tribe of Levi stood for the whole nation. In consequence of this arrangement, God commanded that the Levites should be numbered (Num. iii. 14-15), and also the first-born sons (v. 40), and as the total number of the Levites (v. 39) was 273 less than the first-born sons (v. 43), the odd numbers of the first-born sons had to be redeemed, or *bought-off* at the price of five shekels of silver per head (vv. 45-51). Ever after, all through their history, this sum was paid for every first-born son (Num. xviii. 15-16).

There is one very suggestive thing noticeable about the Levites in Num. iii. 9. "They were wholly given to Aaron from among the children of Israel." Thus they were entirely at Aaron's disposal for God's service.

Does not this remind us of the words of our blessed Lord in *John xvii.*, where, as our "Great High Priest," He no less than six times in vv. 2-12 speaks of the disciples as being given to Him by the Father? How sweet to know that we are in *His hands* as the Father's gift, and how glad we should be to do His bidding as the Levites did Aaron's.

While God is not bound to give a reason for anything that He does, yet the careful student of His *Word* and His *Ways* may often discover that which at least seems to be a reason for certain of His dealings with men.

There are great principles laid down in God's Word which will often reveal themselves to the observant Christian while they remain unseen by others. One of these principles is this, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30). It is certain that the Levites honoured God under very painful circumstances (see *Exod. xxxii.*). Moses had been in the mount with God for many days, when the people becoming impatient demanded that Aaron should make them gods (v. 17). Aaron yielded to their entreaties, and formed a golden calf, thus causing the people to commit idolatry. God sent Moses down to them, and after having destroyed the *idol*, "Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come to me. And *all the sons of Levi* gathered themselves together unto him" (v. 26). Moses next commanded them to slay the *Idolaters* (v. 27). This was much harder work than the destruction of the *Idol*. Nevertheless, his command was obeyed (v. 28). Thus the Levites honoured God, and He in turn honoured them by separating them from among the tribes, and setting them apart for Himself. This principle will ever remain unalterable; consequently, if we carry out the Apostle's injunction in *Col. iii. 5* (R.V.), "Make dead therefore your members," &c., God will honour us: for the things mentioned there are said to be "Idolatry" (*i.e.*), the things themselves are men's idols, and the serving of them is Idolatry. What we have to "make dead" (*i.e.*, slay) is the "inordinate affections" or desires, for these are the *Idolaters*, and if these are killed, the *Idols* themselves, *viz.*, the deeds to which these desires lead, will be destroyed.

Aaron was figuratively what Christ is in reality: a resurrection man, for Aaron was the first-born son of Amram (*Exod. vi. 20*), so

that he would have been a dead man but for the slain lamb by which he was redeemed. Christ, who is the antitype both of the lamb and the high priest, is really a resurrection man. In like manner (representatively) all the Levites, as standing in the stead of all the first-born sons, were resurrection men. So also were the high priest and the priests, as all the priests were of course Levites.

This fact is of the utmost importance, inasmuch as *they only* were allowed to take part in any services of the Tabernacle : not a pin or a cord must be touched by any other than they (Num. i. 47-54). Even so is it now in a deeper sense with us, for the believer is so fully one with Christ that he is frequently spoken of as having *died* and *risen* with Christ. " Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised unto His death ? " (Rom. vi. 3). Thus we are identified with His *person*, and so with Him in His *death*, *burial* and *resurrection*. The Apostle reasons as a natural consequence, " That like as Christ was raised up from the dead . . . we also should walk in newness of life " (v. 4). Then in v. 5, still following up his argument, he adds, " For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His *death*, we shall be also by the likeness of His *resurrection* " (R.V.). Nothing could be more conclusive than this. Here then is the blessed fact that we are so identified with our " Great High Priest " as to be " Risen with Him," even now as to our *standing*, and so are resurrection men. And if this truth has its due influence upon us, it will be also true as to our *state*, for we shall " Walk in newness of life."

We will close this section by drawing attention to what may be looked upon as a kind of parallel between the Jewish and Christian economies. In the former God began with *one* man—Abraham. During the life of Jacob there were *twelve* patriarchs, then *seventy* went down into Egypt (Gen. xlv. 27). These grew to a great *multitude*. Eventually they were brought out of Egypt, when God, who had multiplied them, now began to *divide* and sub-divide them, separating the whole tribe of Levi, of which there were three families. Of these God chose the *Kohathites* to bear the holy vessels (see Num. iii. 30-32), and from this family He selected an *inner family*—Aaron and his sons—to be priests, and last of all Aaron himself only, to enter into " the most holy place."

Thus there were five degrees of nearness to God in the Levitical economy. The people could come into the *Court* of the Tabernacle ;

the Levites ministered *about* the Tabernacle ; the Kohathites bore the *holy vessels* ; the priests went *into* the Tabernacle ; and the high priest into "*the most holy place.*" None of these dared to overstep the bounds of his liberty upon peril of death.

God also began the Christian economy with *one* man—Jesus, who gathered to Himself *twelve* Apostles. Afterward " He sent out other *seventy* also " (Luke x. 1), and on and after Pentecost these grew to *multitudes*.

Although all Christians have equal liberty of access (Heb. x. 19), yet, in actual experience the majority of Christians are only *court* worshippers, simply attending " places of worship." Others, like the Levites, are engaged in *some service* to help on God's worship and work ; while a certain number, like the Kohathites, come into *closer* touch with Church work. Some also, like the priests, know something of true *inner worship*, which is not confined to occasions of public worship, but in the *sanctuary* of their own hearts they exercise the true priestly function of ministry to God.

Then, of course, the last degree of nearness is that of our " Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God " (Heb. iv. 14).*

(To be continued.)

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" Be diligent, never be unemployed a moment. Spend all the morning, or at least five hours out of the twenty-four, in reading the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. ' But I read only the Bible ! ' Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible ; and by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said—, and what is the fruit ? Why now he neither reads the Bible nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you have got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. ' But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use ; or return to your trade."

* * * *

" Beware you be not swallowed up in books ! An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge."

* This is only a comparison of what may actually exist, not what ought to be. All Christians belong to the priestly family, and have liberty to draw near to God in the holiest.

DESPISED AND REJECTED.

"He is rejected and despised of men."
 Is this some fellow-mortal, mean of soul,
 And grovelling in desire,
 With objects base his final aim and goal,
 Seeking for nothing higher ;
 Of whom the prophet treats with heaven-directed pen ?
 Is it some Evil Personality,
 Some Being ne'er encased in human form,
 Who everlasting enmity has sworn
 'Gainst man's true int'rests and felicity ?
 Is it dread Lucifer himself, perchance,
 The fallen son of morn who, swol'n with pride
 Of his exalted station, vainly tried
 His self-concentred int'rests to advance ?
 My soul, 'tis none of these.

But 'tis "the Mighty God"—the Prince of Peace—
 The Self-Existent One—the Incarnate Word—
 It is the Son of God, the Nazarene ;
 It is the One Who all our sorrows bare,
 Who for our sakes the crown of thorns did wear
 And insults harsh endure and suff'ring keen.
 But chiefly it is He Who wrath Divine,
 Unmitigated, bore upon the Cross,
 To save men lasting misery and loss
 Of bliss celestial where His glories shine.
 Rejected and despised He still remains.
 Amid the fading, fleeting things of earth—
 Pleasure and Mammon—things of meaner worth,
 Enfold men in seductive, lethal chains.
 On evanescent things of time and sense,
 Which ne'er can satisfy the human heart,
 Incapable of happiness apart
 From love Divine, unsearchable, immense,
 Men fix their gaze, and pass the Saviour by,
 And trample on the precious Blood He shed
 That we might be redeemed and brought anigh,
 Accepted in the Church's Glorious Head.

HIS OFFSPRING.

"As certain also of your own poets have said, '**For we are also His offspring.**'"—Acts xvii. 28.

Love fills the heaven, the earth, the sea, the air,
 We feel His spirit moving here, and everywhere,
And we his offspring are. He, ever good,
 Daily provides for man his daily food.
 Ordains the seasons by His signs on high,
 Studding with gems of light the azure canopy.
 What time with plough and spade to break the soil,
 That plenteous stores may bless the reaper's toil.
 What time to plant and prove the vine He shews,
 And hangs the purple cluster on its boughs.
 To Him—the First, the Last, all homage yield,
 Our Father Wonderful, our help, our shield.

Aratus, a Greek poet who flourished B.C. 278. The quotation by Paul may have been taken verbatim from this ancient lover of the muse. "We are also His offspring" was, however, a favourite expression of the older poets.

WHAT IS THE DIVINE GROUND OF GATHERING?

III.

WE must not omit consideration here of a phase of our subject of great interest, and of the most weighty practical bearing on our own path to-day. I refer to what may be, in one word, called Discipline, or rather Discernment.

Whilst, in flagrant cases of moral depravity, or of unveiled evil doctrine affecting the Person and Work of Christ, there is usually little difficulty amongst saints gathered to His holy Name, yet are there constant difficulties arising in cases that may be called on, or close to, the line, where opinions are divided as to what course should be pursued, and this has been the fruitful source of sorrow, trouble and division amongst the Lord's people. Is there no help for this in Scripture?

Now the Old Testament affords the most valuable aid by its illustrations of New Testament truths, and by its foreshadowings, in Israel, of this present time; nor does it leave us without precious and divine light on this very question.

If we were to put the difficult cases, to which reference has been made, into Old Testament language, we should say that they were *suspected cases of leprosy*, which was, as we know, a figure of the activity of sin in the flesh. What then was the divine provision, in that day for settling, beyond any doubt or question, all such cases? *The suspect was to be brought unto the Priest.* No Israelite, no matter how rich in experience, keen in sight, or wise in the estimation of the people, must have a word to say, either as to the binding or loosing of such a suspect—he must be brought unto the Priest, either to Aaron or one of his sons. Then the only question for us is—and it is a very practical one—Who or what can answer to this, in a day of ruin and confusion like the present? It must be surely someone who does not share the ruin—is not affected by the confusion. But where is that one to be found? A myriad voices will here be heard, from Rome, to the youngest of her daughters, all crying, “Here and here only is the true church, or its only expression, and here only will you find efficacious priestly power.” Well, the number of the claimants will at least make us a little careful of giving any one of them our confidence at once. We will first seek to get the likeness of the priest as pictured for us on the page of

God's word, and then we may look at the features of our claimants and see how they answer to this likeness.

First, then, we repeat, it is evident that the priest must figure someone who does not share the ruin—is unaffected by the confusion. He must be, as Aaron and his sons, divinely washed and divinely clothed ; must see everything in the light of the Sanctuary, nor use any other balances than those found there. He must not be swayed a hair's breadth by human passion, or human weakness ; by the ties of natural relationships on the one hand, or by the repulsion of opposing natural temperament on the other. He must not be in the least degree governed by the wealth, learning, social standing, or reputation for piety or intelligence of any party to the matter on either side. He must not be under the influence of the old nature : its evil motions, its dark blindness, its cruel jealousies.

If this be so, and few will dispute it, then have we advanced a long way to our goal, or at least saved ourselves a long and fruitless search. It is certain that nowhere in the *old* creation, from the highest to the lowest, from first to last, shall we find any man that can answer, in any real way, to this picture. The features of all our claimants, in as far as they are merely men, or so walk, do not correspond with the likeness in the slightest degree. We must look for the antitype of the priest in the circle of the Trinity in Unity—the Godhead alone—He Who has always been with us, “ Immanuel ” —“ God with us ”—but now under the Name above every Name—Jesus.

But mark, it is not to the High Priest only that the suspect was to be brought, if this were the case, it might point us alone to the Lord Jesus, the Great High Priest, but it is to Him “ *or to one of his sons* ” ; and this necessitates our seeing some connection with those who are now “ His House ” (Heb. iii. 6, “ Whose house are we,” &c.)

Yes, the feeblest of His people have still all the virtue of that holy Name, and gathered to it. He is with them still. The Holy Spirit has not left the earth yet, for He came to abide with His people forever, and He reveals all that is in this blessed Name. God's word is still in their hands. But as, and only as, they are thus in absolute dependence on that unsullied *Name*, are led of that *Spirit* in the path of obedience to that divine *Word*, can they answer in the least to “ Aaron's sons.” Flesh has no part here. It is dead and buried, and must be so judged absolutely in order that the discernment may be truly priestly.

(*To be continued.*)

BEHAVIOUR BECOMING THE HOUSE OF GOD (*continued*).

II.

“THE CHURCHES” UNDER APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE AND ORDER.

DURING the apostle Paul's lifetime “the Churches” were under his personal supervision and care (2 Cor. xi. 28 ; 2 Thess. ii. 15) either by visitation or epistolary communications. Since his departure his writings are the sole directory and authority for the Churches, who are safeguarded, and orderly, just in proportion to their being regulated by the doctrines, and duties detailed in such writings which are indeed the Magna Charta of “the Churches” in perpetuity until the Lord comes (1 Cor. i. 2 ; iv. 17 ; xi. 16).

In the nature of things all Churches constituted according to the apostolic type and pattern will be homogeneous. How important that this should be maintained, yet how sadly it has been departed from.

The Churches of the New Testament were co-ordinate in rank however they varied spiritually, intelligently or numerically. Their relation to one another was fraternal, not paternal. The richer Churches were to help the poorer ones according to 2 Cor. viii. 14 and Lev. xxv. 25.

There was, however, no incorporation of Churches with Churches in the early history of the Acts, and hence there are no instructions in regard to this in the epistles. The notion, too, of a diocese of Churches under a Bishop—or of a synod or committee of presbyters or elders, is outside the apostolic order and writings, such things are of pure human invention and innovation.

Where a common danger affected certain Churches contiguous to one another in a district, such as Galatia, Paul wrote a circular epistle to correct them, but where difference of spiritual state and need and specific dangers existed a suitable apostolic epistle was sent to a particular Church only, such as the epistles to the Church at Corinth, &c., also the epistles to the seven Churches in Asia.

Furthermore, no Churches have power to legislate. All Church laws are already made and are on the Statute Book of the inspired epistles, and remain unrepealed to this day, and any who speak not nor act according to them, have no light to guide them, and must walk in darkness.

The Church at Corinth was in danger of legislating for itself, contrary to the custom of the Churches, and Paul demolishes this with a stroke of his apostolic pen. "What? came the word of God out *from you?* or came it *unto you only?*" (1 Cor. xiv. 36). What Paul wrote to the Churches were the commandments of the Lord, against which there can be no appeal (v. 37). How different this from Church Canon laws, Rubrics, Decrees and assembly judgments.

The incident contained in Acts xv. was apostolic as much as 1 Cor. xiv. 37. The brethren concurred truly in the same way that Paul sometimes associated some of the brethren with himself in his apostolic epistles to certain Churches (1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 1; Gal. i. 2).

(To be continued.)

"Service is gift, and therefore gift is the appointment to service, since the Giver can make no mistake. What an immense thing for the Church of God if it could rise up to this so simple truth, and every member of the body of Christ were to start out of the bands with which custom and tradition have enswathed him, into the healthful use of all the faculties and powers with which God has endued him! Does he question his title or responsibility to use any *other* faculties than spiritual ones? It would be thought strange indeed to do so. Here, and here alone, where the faculties are the highest, and the need for their exercise is the most urgent, here he questions."

* * * *

"A gift is not eloquence or any mental power, but it is a faculty conferred by the Spirit for expounding and presenting a distinct line of truth, drawing from the Word of God that which will contribute to the good of souls. His power is not natural or acquired, and it is great according to the true and direct application of Scripture. The power is in the Word of God, and the Spirit of God alone can impart it."

CORRESPONDENCE.

A correspondent writes :—

May I suggest in connection with the question asked by A.W.J. in the May issue, and answered in May, that the linen clothes did not fall off from the Lord's body, neither did He carefully wrap up the napkin when He arose.

He did not rise *in* any of them even for a moment, but arose *out of* them.

The scene described in the passage quoted is the grave clothes lying quite undisturbed, and this seems emphasised by the mention of the napkin. The word is rather "rolled up" than "wrapped together" (see the R.V.), and by its being in a distinct place apart may we not gather that it was lying just where it had lain before, and not on the other wrappings as it would probably have been if removed by human hands.

Comparing the resurrection of Lazarus the improbability of the grave clothes falling off is apparent, and moreover the impossibility of a living person divesting himself of them. They consisted of long swathings, and Lazarus came forth by divine command, not walking, but bound hand and foot with grave clothes. Apart from any typical significance it was a proof of resurrection, for had he divested himself of them in the tomb some trick might have been suspected by those who were now bidden to "loose him and let him go."

In the Lord's case this proof of resurrection was left behind. He had not, nor had anyone else unbound those swathings which contained also a hundred pounds of spices (John xix. 39, 40). They were undisturbed, just "lying there alone" (I uke xxiv. 12) (J.N.D.'s Trans.). The word "alone" surely has significance, and they were "lying there," no suggestion at all as to their being wrapped or packed up.

Turning to John xx. again we find John stooping down and seeing the part nearest the door—"the linen cloths lie." And then Peter enters and John also, and they see the whole, the napkin lying beyond the other wrappings still rolled up, like an empty envelope just where and as it had been folded by loving hands around that blessed head so lately crowned with thorns. It was evidence so overwhelming that "he saw and believed." No skill, no carefulness, no power but His could have left these things thus.

THE COMFORT OF THE ROD.

A correspondent sends us the following :—

In the opening number of *The Faith and the Flock* very appropriately the beautiful 23rd Psalm is brought prominently to our notice. The whole of the Psalm is taken up with the loving care of the Good Shepherd—how He leads, feeds, protects His flock till their wanderings end in the House of the Lord—safe for ever.

I think we must look for another comment on the 4th verse than that given. The thought of chastisement is foreign to the spirit of the Psalm.

Did anyone ever see a shepherd flog a sheep? Don't we shrink from the thought, and could any chastisement be spoken of as comfort? (Hebrews xii. 11).

What, then, is the comfort of the rod? Leviticus xxvii. 32 speaks of the numbering of the flock as "passing under the rod," and Jeremiah xxxiii. 13 and Ezekiel xx. 37 tell us the same.

In both eastern and western lands most of us must have seen the shepherd numbering his flock, both in its going out and coming in to the fold. Lightly tapping each back as it passes through the door, counting them, seeing that the number is correct—not one missing. He is satisfied if all are present, but if one is missing—read Luke xv.—he seeks and finds it, carries it home rejoicing; it is his own sheep, it bears his brand. Was this not so with Paul? (Galatians vi. 17). I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. This is real comfort of the rod. My name is written in the Lamb's book of life. But this is not all. Read Micah vii. 14. "Feed thy people with thy rod."

In the east I suppose every shepherd carries a rod. I have seen them many times. With this rod they beat down the fruit of deciduous trees and the flock gathers round and feeds. They know the rod as their food provider, and are comforted.

Moses the shepherd had his rod with him, fresh from the wilderness he had told his flock with it often, he had fed them all—it was his badge of office. What is in your hand, Moses? Merely my rod.

In his hand this rod became the rod of God, working mightily
The true Shepherd has this power.

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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PRICE—ONE PENNY.

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S LAST VISIT TO JERUSALEM, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

[N] all the New Testament there is nothing to me more inexplicable than Paul's last visit to Jerusalem. It was fraught with such direful consequences to the Church that I cannot at present in the least understand why, in the Divine counsel, it was suffered to take place. I suppose it is one of those things in the strange, eventful, and unaccountable history of the Church that will never be explained, until, knowing as we are known, the whole marvellous web, with its wisdom, fold upon fold, and ply upon ply, is displayed before our wondering eyes.

The first definite sign we have of this proposed visit is found in Acts xix. 21 in the narrative of Saul's stay at Ephesus. The Divine power in His ministry had culminated there. Never before do we hear of such marked indication of the power of the Holy Ghost present with him in teaching and in miraculous activity.

At Corinth some time before, although he had begun in weakness and depression, he had gradually become greatly blessed, and after staying there a length of time, he left them to pay a passing visit to Jerusalem, and a much longer one to Antioch. He then visited the scenes of his early labours in the south and middle of Asia Minor, and, at length, came to Ephesus, and there, as I noticed, the hand of the Lord was with him in a wonderful way.

The first idea of this visit to Jerusalem seemed to be present, as a passing thought, when he, at the early part of his stay at Ephesus, wrote the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 4). When he wrote the second Epistle, some time later, it evidently had not progressed, as he does not mention it, though he spoke of the collection. But by the time he wrote to the Romans, it was a fully formed purpose (Romans xv. 22-29).

I conjecture that the collection had reached so considerable an amount that he could not deny himself the pleasure of handing it over to the Jerusalem saints, many of whom doubtless were living who had only known him as a remorseless persecutor (Romans xv. 28).

At this juncture he felt he had so far finished his work in the countries bordering the Levant, and the "regions beyond" were calling him; the wide extent of the western Mediterranean littoral, Spain, possibly Gaul, and, may be, even our own Island. With this in view he spoke of calling at Rome, not with the idea of evangelising—the Church was already firmly planted, but of helping and strengthening them (Romans i. 11; xv. 24, 29, 32). All this, I think, he purposed in the Spirit of God, but before yielding to this guidance there was this little desire of his own he felt he must just gratify. What could be more sweet and amiable than this wish to recompense with the riches of the Gentiles, that the Gospel had made available for them, those he had so aided to impoverish (Acts viii. 3). Still, sweet as it was, it was but a natural desire. The saints at Jerusalem would have profited just as much if someone else had carried the bounty. (And conceivably much more, for we do not know what took place in the riot). This desire (at bottom and in the most subtil way selfish "when I have sealed to them this fruit") stood before the glorious programme the Spirit of God set before him in the plenitude of spiritual power.

At first he had misgivings (Rom. xv. 30-32), but these he seemingly stifled, and we hear no more of them. At the outset his

purpose went awry, for he never got to Jerusalem for Pentecost, for all his hurry. All along the journey the Spirit of God did not cease to warn him time after time that if he persisted in his purpose the programme would be endangered (Acts xx. 23), until, at last, at Tyre, He in set terms forbade the visit. But Paul was now beyond warning, the martyr enthusiasm had taken possession of him and mingled with the previous motive, so that when Agabus plainly told him that if he was obstinate in his intention the glorious programme the Holy Ghost had presented to him in Ephesus would never be carried out (for this I think was the plain meaning of the prophecy) his spiritual judgment was so blinded that he took the gracious admonition of the Spirit as a snare of Satan to turn him aside from the path of suffering for Christ's sake. All his friends could see it, Paul himself, only, was blind, and they had to take refuge in the supreme overruling will of God, though the "will of the Lord" was clearly that He should neither be bound nor die at Jerusalem for His name. He went on in his good and gracious blindness, and from the moment he set foot in Jerusalem he was in a sense a lost man till he got out of it.

At first all went smoothly, the saints at Jerusalem (to whom afterwards the Epistle to the Hebrews had to be written) gathered and heard his beautiful story, and loudly applauded. "They glorified God." But the sworn foe of Judaizing was not to get off so easily. The man who wrote the Epistles to the Galatians, to the Romans, and to the Corinthians, had to stoop and get down low enough to share in Temple sacrifices, to him mere shadows and worldly elements.

For a while things prospered, success seemed to crown the ill omened proceeding, but the astute manager behind the scenes was not going to let the prey escape. Paul was ill advised enough to enter the Temple. The seven days were almost ended, a few hours more and the immediate danger point would be past, but it was not to be. We know what followed, and presently the man who was ready for any suffering for the Name invokes his Roman citizenship to escape the scourge. But there was One whose eye was on it all, and He did not forget His servant, He knew his heart was true enough, if his judgment was all astray, and He stood by him and praised his fidelity, and promised, wonderful to say, that the programme, in part at any rate, should not be wrecked.

PAUL DIVIDES THE COUNCIL.

What follows reminds us of the book of Esther. The results of the Hand of God are visible enough, but the Hand itself is hidden. Paul is to be got out of Jerusalem, but not by miracle, that would have been out of place and would not have ministered to the intention of the Lord as we are now able to discern it. So his natural astuteness was made to serve the purpose, though in a very different way from what he intended. He succeeded in dividing the Council and creating a diversion in his favour, but the party he had influenced was not strong enough to carry his release, so the only consequence was a disturbance out of which Lysias had to rescue him a second time.

But another result also followed. A number of the most fanatical Jews perceived that it was too risky to let him appear again in his own defence, and that the only thing to do was "Jedburgh justice," to kill him first and try him afterwards, and they hatched the plot described in Acts xxiii. 12-16. But they had reckoned without their host. God, unseen, took care that news was carried to the proper quarter, and Paul was speedily out of Jerusalem. Once more, after unnumbered times, God made the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrained. His foes served His end, but lost their own. Paul went out of Jerusalem again, but not a free man. He may have thought that as the Lord promised that after all he should still carry His name to Rome, that He would speedily have him set free to take up again the broken purpose; but, if so, he was doomed to disappointment. Two years and, perhaps, nearly three, were to pass before the promise showed sign of fulfilment, and the while he remained a captive. The servant had misused his liberty, and his Lord would not trust him with it again.

But what a venial fault one would say to be visited with so heavy a punishment. Irresistibly we are reminded of Moses. The habitually meekest of men for a moment lost his temper, and with it lost the cherished object of his life, and had to die with the long looked for in sight, but unattained. "I will be sanctified in them that *draw nigh unto me.*" The nearer a man is privileged to walk before God, the more strictly he must expect to be judged. But against that must be set the inestimable blessing of being on such terms with the Eternal God as Moses was, for when he prayed for the reversal of the sentence, the answer was, "Let it suffice thee, speak to Me no more of this matter," as though He had said "It cannot be, but do not put Me to the pain of refusing you"—a man and the Living God!

APPEALS TO CAESAR.

Felix gave him opportunity to buy his freedom, but the servant of God could not in conscience bribe his earthly judge ; though doubtless funds would speedily have been forthcoming, and this no doubt Felix reckoned on ; and in the end Paul was left a prisoner at Caesarea. When Festus came things looked brighter, but the new governor wishing to begin well with his new subjects proposed to Paul to go to Jerusalem, where the evidence was (such as it was) and there at the Roman judgment seat the affair could be settled one way or other and be done with. But Paul was aware, as doubtless every one else, was that was " in the know " at Caesarea, that that meant assassination by the way. I think Paul understood by this time that His Master did not intend to have him die in Palestine, but that he was to go to Rome in bonds if it must be so ; consequently, he availed himself of the first opportunity of appealing to Caesar, and so gave up hope of immediate release, and submitted to go to Rome as a prisoner. Now he was back again in the way of the Divine purposes, and all the thwarting influences disappeared, and things went quite smoothly. In the meantime the faithful servant was rewarded in measure. All the great men of the kingdom, the courtiers, the Roman officers, and the king himself were brought together to hear the Divine message ; such an audience he never could have hoped for had he remained a free man.

His character, too, was vindicated. He might " have been set at liberty," said they, " if he had not appealed to Caesar." But if he had not he would never have preached to Agrippa, and he would not have been set at liberty either, because God meant him to go to Rome a prisoner, and by appealing to Caesar he submitted to the Divine will. Now see the Divine wisdom ! Had Paul gone to Rome free he could have ministered among the Jews and slaves and tradespeople, but could have had no access to the Pretorian guard, and the Emperor's household. God provided for Spain and Gaul being evangelised by other men, but Paul was to reap a rich harvest from another sphere, and the Roman church was to number " many mighty, many noble," among its ranks, and especially those of its army of martyrs.

I mentioned in the beginning of this paper the disastrous effect of Paul's journey to Jerusalem on the fortunes of the Church. I think to it must be mainly attributed the flood of Judaizing influence

that poured over the Gentile Churches, and greatly obliterated the effect of Paul's teaching, and exalted Peter to the primacy in his stead. How could any other result accrue? The Gentile Christians nourished on Paul's teaching, what were they to think? There was their own teacher who could bravely inveigh against Judaism and its practices as long as he was among Gentiles, but no sooner did he get to Jerusalem among those that were Apostles before him, than he had to bow to the superior power, and diligently build again the things he had destroyed.

What other conclusion could they come to, but that Paul's was a lower line of teaching, and, by the showing of his own conduct, that the fulness of the truth lay at Jerusalem with the Petrine teachers.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

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CHAPTER V. 11—VI.

FALLING AWAY AND OUR FORERUNNER.

WE have seen already how the Priesthood of Christ concerns itself with our being kept in the way as we journey to the Rest of God. In the passage before us, Christ is presented as One who has already reached the end of the journey, and as our Forerunner has entered heaven. A *forerunner* indicates that others are following, and, indeed, announces their approach. If this fact is borne in mind it will be seen what encouragement it gives, on the one hand, to all who follow, and, on the other, how solemn becomes the warning about falling away.

It is important to clearly understand to what the expression "fall away" refers. It does not refer to some ordinary sin, into which even a believer may fall. It has been used in this way, and upon it the doctrine has been founded that a Christian, if he falls into sin, forfeits all title to be considered a child of God, and has to begin again *de novo*. Such a result, if this doctrine were true, would be accomplished by small offences equally with larger ones, so that many times over in our lives we should be at one moment a child of God, and at the next an heir of wrath. Or, what is equally as bad, left in perplexity as to which was true of us.

The falling away here, however, refers to something very specific. In one word, it is apostasy. The writer of the epistle has to exhort the Hebrew Christians very earnestly because they were dull of hearing, that, on this account, it was hard for him to utter all that he wished to say about the glorious Person with Whom the Christian revelation is bound up, and to tell them how necessary it was to leave the beginning of things and go on to perfection. To understand, in fact, the meaning of Christ's present position in glory, and what was involved in His being a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (see Chap. v. 11-14, vi. 1-3.) "Leaving the word of the beginning of Christ," he says, "let us go on unto perfection." Then follows a solemn word about falling away.

The *falling away* is in contrast to the *going on*. The one who thus admonished them saw the danger of those who had once professed their faith in Christ falling away from Christianity altogether. And one great safeguard against falling away was to "go on." If they only knew enough of Christ, he was persuaded they would never give up. In those times of persecution and difficulty, there was the danger, apparently, of a giving up of Christianity altogether.

That this is the force of "fall away," viz., a deliberate giving up of Christianity, the context leaves us in no doubt. "*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame*" (vv. 4-6). He is uttering a warning. For people in their position, having adopted Christianity, to give it up again meant apostasy; it was crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame; and from such a course, for a people like the Hebrews, there was no recovery. In applying such a scripture as this we must be careful that the conditions are the same.

How different all this to the language of the Apostle John, where he is treating of individual sin. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And again, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous" (1 John i. 9 and ii. 1).

But even the writer to the Hebrews adds: "*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*" (vv. 9-10). Our attitude towards, and treatment of, the saints is a very fair criterion of whether our hearts are right with God.

The Hebrew Christians are then reminded for their encouragement of God's dealings with Abraham. How He gave a promise and confirmed it with an oath; and this in conjunction with the severest trial of his life. No doubt they themselves had passed through, and were yet to pass through, dangers, difficulties, and distresses of every kind. They had fled for refuge to Jesus, where alone any hope was afforded them, everything else, even their most cherished institutions offering none. That which had seemed secure and abiding was being shaken. What strong consolation was offered by the fact, that in Christianity a hope was given which connected itself with things unseen and imperishable within the veil, whither the Forerunner had for them entered. The soul may be cast down, and may be tossed about, it may find no haven or refuge down here, all is as shifting sand, but a hope that links itself to something outside all that is seen and temporal is like an anchor that holds to a rock which no storms or drifting currents can ever shake. Our hope is built upon nothing less than Christ's present position of power and glory, and the fact that He has entered within the veil as our Forerunner. With such an anchor of the soul we shall not "fall away," for it is in Christ's keeping.

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THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS.

Let us take to our hearts a lesson, no braver lesson can be,
 From the ways of the tapestry weavers on the other side of the sea.
 Above their heads the pattern hangs; they study it with care
 The while their fingers deftly move, their eyes are fastened there.
 They tell this curious thing besides, of the patient plodding weaver,
 He works on the wrong side evermore, but works for the right side ever.
 It is only when the weaving stops, and the web is loosed and turned,
 That he sees his real handiwork, that his marvellous skill is learned.
 Ah! the sight of its delicate beauty; now it pays him for all its cost;
 No rarer, daintier work than his was ever done by the frost.
 Then the master bringeth him golden hire, and giveth him praise as well,
 And how happy the heart of the weaver is no tongue but his own can tell.
 The years of man are the looms of God, let down from the place of the sun,
 Wherein we are weaving ever, till the mystic web is done.
 Weaving blindly, but weaving surely, each for himself his fate,
 We may not see how the right side looks, we can only weave, and wait.

BALAAM AND HIS PARABLES (*continued*) 237

III.—ISRAEL A GOODLY PEOPLE.

BALAK had heard enough and would now close the matter. “Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.” But to this the prophet replied: “Told not I thee, saying, ‘All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?’” (Num. xxiii. 25, 26). Perceiving that Balaam’s sympathies were really with him, the king proposed yet another change of view, adding: “Peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.” His previous proposal may charitably be imputed to ignorance; no such leniency may be permitted here. This was wickedness—a deliberate attempt to reverse the Word of God, and this after the decisive declaration of v. 19! “Balak took Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh down upon the desert” (R.V.).

The prophet did not again turn aside to consult his oracle. “When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.” From Zophim he had proclaimed the powerlessness of such hellish devices against the people of God; now he recognises it practically by seeking them no more. Acknowledging that God was stronger than himself, he abandoned the hopeless struggle, and yielded himself up to the divine influence.

“And the spirit came upon him.” Does this come as a surprise to some? It is a clear hint as to the sovereignty of the Spirit of God, in that He speaks through whomsoever He will. It could not have been said to Balaam, as to the Corinthians later: “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?” (1 Cor. vi. 19). The indwelling of the Spirit of God is one of the great blessings distinctive of Christianity, and it is true of none save genuine believers in the Lord Jesus. But when it is simply a question of an oracle, the Spirit uses whomsoever He pleases—the instrument that will best serve His purpose. Accordingly we have Pharaoh Necho speaking warningly to Josiah “by the mouth of God,” though the one was a heathen, and the other a distinguished servant of Jehovah (2 Chr. xxxv. 21, 22). In the same remarkable way we read of the Spirit coming upon Saul’s three batches of messengers, and afterwards upon Saul himself, in 1 Sam. xix. In Balaam’s case,

it suited the purpose of God better to give utterance to His thoughts of grace by means of an enemy than by means of one who ardently loved His people, as Moses. Every word comes with the greater force as emanating from one who would fain have said the very opposite of all that he did say.

Balaam now opens his third parable. "Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" (Num. xxiv. 1-9). The people of God are thus not only sanctified and justified; they are also a goodly people—beautiful in the eyes of God, whatever they may be in the jaundiced eyes of men. Ezek. xvi. 9 comes to mind here. Under the symbol of a helpless babe, once perishing, but picked up in mercy and tenderly cared for, is shown the exceeding grace of God to Israel. The babe developed into a lovely woman. "Thy renown went forth among the nations for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, said the Lord God." "Thy beautiful flock" expresses a kindred thought in Jer. xiii. 20.

Everything that is lovely is suggested by the figures used by Balaam in this parable. "Valleys," "Gardens by the river's side"; what can be imagined more charming? "Cedar trees" speak of stateliness. "Aloes" were used for purposes of fumigation and incense, the wood having a sweet smell. As one has said, the aloe is "the image of all that is lovely, fragrant, flourishing, and incorruptible." It is remarkable that all this is said, not exactly of the people themselves, but of that which covered them—"their tents." The Christian's covering is Christ. "In Christ" describes my whole standing and position as a believer. The eye of God sees no longer my natural evil as a child of the first man; He sees me instead covered with all the perfections of the Second Man.

The cedar trees were planted beside the waters. In like manner is the Christian in touch with the source of all blessing. In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him. From Him the whole body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God (Col. ii. 9, 10, 19). Those who are thus richly blessed are responsible to dispense blessing to others. Thus Balaam said

of Israel: "He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters." Not yet has this been realised in Israel. In the past, cold conservatism has characterised the nation. The very mention of blessing for Gentiles caused them to shout "Away with such a fellow from the earth," in the days of Paul (Acts xxii. 22). But in the coming age "the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Micah v. 7). The world's blessing awaits Israel's reconciliation to God.

Meanwhile, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8), is a great principle for all who believe in the name of the Lord Jesus. If a spring of living water has been put within us, it is that rivers of living water may flow forth from us for the refreshment of the needy on every hand. "Many waters" is suggestive of many peoples. Compare Rev. xviii. 1-15.

Let us carefully note that all that was declared by Balaam concerning the people of God was said while they were yet in the wilderness. It was not a Canaan city but a desert camp, of which the prophet said "how goodly!" Many Christians fully expect to be wonderfully blessed when they reach heaven at last who yet find it difficult to realise that fulness of blessing is theirs even now in Christ the risen Lord. My capacity for enjoyment will doubtless be largely increased in the glorified condition; but I shall not be one whit more richly blessed than I am now in the present world. What can even our God add to "all"? (Eph. i. 3; 1 Cor. iii. 21).

A people so fully blessed must necessarily be clothed with power. Accordingly the prophet proceeds to say: "His King shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows." The elect of God are unconquerable, let Satan rage ever so wildly. The bruising of Satan, however, is not yet; when that comes, the victory of God's people will be final and complete. But this cannot be, either for Israel or for Christians, while Christ remains seated in His present glory.

Balaam concludes with a striking confirmation of two ancient prophecies. "He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a lioness (*i.e.*, defending her young): who shall stir him up? Blessed is he

that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." Gen. xlix. 9; xii. 3 are naturally brought to our minds by these words. What is it therefore but the enemy constrained to say that God will be altogether faithful to every word of His promise? There are two things here:—power and blessing. Power first, blessing after. Blessing for all the earth is indeed and ever has been in the mind of God, but it stands connected with Israel's return to power and supremacy. This will be when the King comes, He whom we know as Lord and Head.

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(To be continued.)

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS (*continued*).

III. 281-310

CONSECRATION.

AS the word "consecrate" is first mentioned in Scripture in connection with the priestly office of Aaron and his sons, it may help us to a clear conception of its meaning if we consider the consecration of the priests as set forth at the beginning of the Levitical economy.

Full instructions are given by God to Moses as to the initiating ceremonies of consecration in Exod. xxviii., xxix., and xxx., and Moses is seen carrying them out in Lev. viii., where five things are done. The priests were washed, clothed, marked with blood, anointed, and their hands filled. This seems to imply that their hands should be filled with offerings to God, and in order to this, they must be washed, clothed, blood-marked, and anointed. All this was done at "The door of the tent of meeting" (Exod. xxix. 4, R.V.), *not inside*, for they must be consecrated in order to minister there.

Let us keep in mind that Moses acted in God's stead, so that what he does we may consider as being done by God Himself. Viewing Aaron as a type of Christ, and his sons as typical of the Priestly family to which all believers now belong, we shall be enabled, I trust, to apply these things to ourselves.

WASHING.

"Aaron and his sons thou shalt . . . wash with water" (Exod. xxix. 4). "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water" (Lev. viii. 6). Here is the personal application. "Having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with

a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies *washed* with pure water" (Heb. x. 21, 22).

What does washing in this passage signify? No one can imagine it to be necessary that we should literally wash our bodies in order to approach unto God. The sweep besmeared with soot, and the collier begrimed with coal-dust may acceptably draw near to God. Eph. v. 26 informs us that Christ cleanses His Church "by the washing of water with the *Word*" (R.V.) This certainly does not mean that He has washed His Church with *water*, although He did bathe His disciples' feet (John. xiii. 4, 5). What, then, is the typical significance of water? Does not Eph. v. 26 rather mean that the *Word* applied by the *Spirit* is the means by which His Church is cleansed? Thus our Lord said in John. xv. 3, "Now ye are clean through the *Word*," and in John xvii. 17 (R.V.) "Consecrate them in thy truth: Thy *Word* is truth," and he adds in v. 19 (R.V.), "For their sakes I consecrate Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." These words seem to refer to the setting of Himself apart, and His disciples' consecration with Him, even as Aaron and his sons were consecrated together. As in John xvii. the words "sanctify" and "consecrate" are both used, so are they in Exodus and Leviticus in connection with the consecration service.

There is an order observed in this two-fold cleansing of Heb. x. 22. First, "Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." The conscience must be cleansed in order to our drawing near to God "in full assurance of faith," and this before, and in order to, our "bodies" being "washed," or (as I take it to mean) our *outward* actions becoming pure and holy. The application of the water, then, refers to a *moral* cleansing by the Word.

MARKED WITH BLOOD.

In Exod. xxix. 19, 20, Moses was instructed to take a second ram (one having been offered as a burnt-offering, vv. 15-18), and Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands on his head, after which Moses was to kill it and mark their right ears, right hands, and right feet with its blood.* This Moses did (see Lev. viii. 22-24).

* The sin offering and burnt offering preceded this. The difference is seen by comparing Eph. i. 6-7 on the one hand with Rom. xii. 1-2 and I. Cor. vi. 20 on the other (*Ed.*)

Redemption brings us *out* from under death's sentence, reconciliation makes us suitable to God, while consecration *fits* us for worship and service.

The most casual reader could scarcely fail to see the significance of the parts of the bodies of the priests that were marked with this blood. The *ear* necessarily is marked first, as we cannot do God's *work* unless we know His *will*, and we can only know His will by His *Word*. "Speak, for thy servant heareth," is our request. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," is our resolution. "Mine ear hast thou opened," is our confession. If we were always reminding ourselves that our ears are blood-marked, and so consecrated, we should turn them away from unhallowed sounds, and find sweetest music in His precepts and promises.

Then the thumb of the *right hand* was marked, to signify that our *strength* and *skill* are to be devoted to His service, as both these are suggested by the right hand.

Lastly, the toe of the right *foot*, suggesting that our walk should be in the path of consecrated duty. We are not only God's *workmen* with consecrated hands, but also God's *footmen* (or errand boys if you like) carrying His messages. Thus, in Is. lii. 7, "The feet of those who bring good tidings" are said to be "beautiful," and the Apostle draws attention to this statement in Rom. x. 15, when speaking of the Gospel preacher. The Psalmist said, "Thou makest my feet like hinds' feet" (Ps. xviii. 33), that is, *swift*; and in verse 36 "My feet did not *slip*." Thus, consecrated feet are both swift and sure, so that we may dispense with the oft-repeated words, "Slow and sure," for we are more likely to stumble by standing still than by running on God's errands. Even loitering is dangerous while going with the King's messages. The writer of Ps. cxix., having "turned" his "feet unto God's testimonies," "made haste and delayed not to keep His commandments" (vv. 59, 60). If the law of our God is in our *hearts*, none of our *steps* shall slide (Ps. xxxvii. 31). Thus this blood-marking teaches us to attentively hear God's *Word*, faithfully to do His *Work*, and diligently to walk in His *Ways*, so shall we fulfil His *Will*.

ANOINTING.

"And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priests' office" (Exod. xxx. 30). "And Moses poured the anointing oil upon Aaron's

head and anointed him to sanctify him" (Lev. viii. 12). "And Moses took of the anointing oil . . . and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons and upon his sons' garments with him" (verse 30). It should be noticed in the first anointing of Aaron in verse 12 that the oil was *poured* upon his *head*, whereas the second time in verse 30 it was simply *sprinkled* upon him together with his sons, teaching us to distinguish between our blessed Lord and ourselves. He was "anointed with the oil of gladness *above*" His "fellows" (Ps. xlv. 7), and we read in John iii. 34 that "God giveth not the Spirit by *measure* unto Him."

With respect to ourselves as priests with Him, the Apostle says, "Now he that stablisheth us with you into Christ, and *anointed us* is God" (2 Cor. i. 21, R.V.); (see also 1 John ii. 20, R.V.).

Although in point of order in Lev. viii., clothing comes next to washing, yet I have ventured to consider these in the above order, because of 1 John, v. 8, R.V., "There are three who bear witness, the *Spirit*, and the *Water*, and the *Blood*: and the three agree in one." If we take the *water* here as figurative of the *Word* it is very suggestive.* Anyhow, without hesitation one can say, these three cannot be separated. Whether it is a question of redemption or consecration, neither can be accomplished apart from atonement by the *blood* of Christ, and the knowledge of such atonement can only reach us through the *Word*. Even such knowledge must be applied to our hearts by the *Spirit*, or our information will never lead to transformation.

(To be continued.)

"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. Elijah was able to cause the 400 prophets of Baal to be killed, and Jehovah to be recognised by the whole people. A few days after he flees through fright at the threats of Jezebel, and tells Jehovah that all was in vain notwithstanding his zeal; though God had still 7,000 who had not bowed their knees before Baal. This happened to a man who went up to heaven without dying. What a lesson for such as us! May God in His infinite goodness keep us near Him."

* In connection with the practical application to ourselves of the death of Christ. Does not the anointing with oil signify here, that only in the power of the Spirit can we either understand or carry out the will of God? (Ed.).

THE THREEFOLD ASPECT OF SALVATION.

SOME time ago a friend of mine pointed out to me three verses in the 9th chapter of Hebrews where the word APPEAR occurs, and explained the meaning of each verse as related to God's SALVATION.

It has been such a help to me ever since, I would like to pass it on to others who may be perplexed as to what Salvation really means.

In verse 26, Salvation is spoken of as PAST. "Once in the end of the world (or age) hath He (Jesus) APPEARED to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Then in verse 24 Salvation is spoken of as PRESENT. "For Christ is not entered into the Holy Places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, *now* to APPEAR in the presence of God for us."

And in verse 28 Salvation is spoken of as FUTURE. For "Unto them that look for Him *shall* He APPEAR the second time without sin unto Salvation."

When the Lord Jesus died on the cross He "put away sin," that is to say, He removed the great barrier between the sinner and God. Man, as the child of Adam, inherits a sinful nature. He is "shapen in iniquity" (Ps. li. 5). He is also a sinner in practice, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23), consequently he is separated from God by reason of sin. Now the Lord Jesus was manifested, or APPEARED, to put this away, and so satisfy the righteous claims of God that every child of Adam might be restored to the favour of God, and enjoy God in a deeper sense than ever Adam did. Christ has become the propitiatory (Rom. iii. 25), or mercy seat, or meeting place, where God, the Holy and the Just One, can meet the sinner, and restore him to life and salvation. Yea! Christ is not only the propitiatory, He is also the propitiation for our sins (1 John ii. 2), for He is both the altar and the sacrifice, and because He is all this, "God can be just and the justifier of all who believe in him" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). Those thus justified can truly say, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye *were* healed" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

Thus it will be readily seen that salvation in this respect is an accomplished fact because connected with something done in the

PAST. It is a salvation finished once and for ever, and should bring peace with God and rest of conscience (Acts xiii. 30 and 39).

But some may say, How is the believer to know that God is satisfied with the death of Christ? I answer in the language of scripture: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11). Again in Acts ii. 24 the Apostle Peter says, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 17-20).

Thus the resurrection of Christ is the proof that God is satisfied, and that every claim of justice has been fully met.

In consequence of these two great facts, viz., the death and resurrection of Christ, the believer *is saved* from the PENALTY of sin (Rom. v. 9), and made a child of God (1 John ii. 12).

Now we come to the second point, or the second aspect of salvation in connection with the word APPEAR in Heb. 9. Verse 24 represents Christ as NOW APPEARING in the presence of God on behalf of His redeemed. This is *constant*. "He ever liveth to make intercession" (Heb. vii. 25). Four times in Hebrews Christ is represented as seated in contrast to Aaron who never sat. The reason is easily seen, viz., Christ's great work of salvation on the cross is finished, and He rests eternally as regards that, and we should also rest. But in another sense His work goes on, for He is our High Priest, thus standing to plead our cause and maintain us by His succour and sympathy.

Let us ponder this work of Christ which goes on *for* us, and is CONTINUOUS.

As regards our standing before God, we are accepted in all the value and worthiness of the person and work of Christ, and are maintained by His continued and eternal priesthood, according to all the requirements of a holy God.

We are sustained before God as worshippers by our Great High Priest, as we are also sustained in the wilderness, and because "He

lives we shall live also." " If, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life " (Rom. v. 10).

Aaron wore over the blue robe the Ephod made of gold, blue, scarlet, purple and fine twined linen, with cunning work (Exod. xxviii. 6). These colours are very suggestive. Gold, divine righteousness ; blue (as we have seen), typical of Christ's heavenly origin and position ; whilst scarlet spoke of His earthly and sacrificial work,* ; and purple (a blending of blue and scarlet) tells us of His Kingly Royal Priesthood as the true Melchisedec. The cunning work, in conjunction with the fine twined linen, might speak of the indescribable mystery of His Person involved in His manhood, as well as of His varied offices (see Heb. i. and ii.).

This robe was bound to the High Priest by a girdle made of the same materials and colours, telling us of the priestly service of Him who came to do the will of God and who Himself said, " I am among you as one that serveth."

Again, the High Priest had upon his heart, in the breast plate, twelve stones bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and two stones on his shoulders, six names on each stone. Thus their High Priest bore them continually upon his heart of love, and his shoulders of strength, and in like manner our Great High Priest bears continually upon His heart and shoulders His own purchased people, assuring them of their safety, as well as of His unchanging love for them amid all the wilderness journey. Lastly, the High Priest wore a mitre and a golden plate upon which was engraven " Holiness to Jehovah," so our greater than Aaron represents us in the Divine presence according to the holiness of God.

From all those beautiful types, and from the New Testament application of them to our risen and glorified Lord, we are assured that our salvation is secured, and by His constant intercession *we are saved* day by day from the *power of sin* and through all the difficulties of the way.

In the 9th chapter of Isaiah and 6th verse we read, " The government shall be upon his *shoulder*," but when the one sheep strayed from the fold, we are told that the shepherd went after it *until* he found it, and when he had found it, laid it on his *shoulders* (both shoulders), and brought it all the way back to the fold. Even so our

* Or, perhaps of His earthly glory, yet future. (*Ed.*)

Almighty Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, takes us, so to speak, upon both shoulders, like the High Priest, in order that He may bring us home safely. In all this, by type and by figure of speech, we learn that not only does Jesus save us from the PENALTY of sin by His death, but by His life *for* us in heaven, He saves us day by day with a present and continuous salvation.

Finally, SALVATION is not only connected with the PAST as regards the death of Christ, it is also a PRESENT Salvation as regards the life of Christ, and FUTURE as regards the coming again of Christ.

Heb. ix. 28 says, " So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall he APPEAR the second time without sin unto SALVATION. Notice it is " without sin " He comes, or apart from sin, it is no longer a question of sin and its atonement. That He came to settle on the cross, and for ever put it away, but He will come to take us from the very PRESENCE of sin. What a day that will be when " We which are alive and remain shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord " (1 Thes. iv. 17). " Then shall these bodies of our humiliation be fashioned like unto the body of His glory " (Phil. iii. 21), and we shall enter upon the joy of OUR PERFECTED SALVATION. Each day we can say, " Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed " (Rom. xiii. 11). We can hardly imagine what it will be, never to think a sinful thought, never to see a sinful sight or hear a sinful word, but to be where there is no sin, no death, no sorrow or pain, and best of all to gaze upon His blessed face, and follow Him without a falter, and go no more out for ever from His blessed presence.

I trust that our meditation on this threefold aspect of salvation may result in a clearer apprehension of God's way of salvation, a deeper gratitude of heart to Him who provided it at such amazing cost, and a more constant faith in Him who ever lives to keep and save all along the way.

We seek to live a holy life not that we may be saved, but because we *are* saved and bound for Glory. " The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again " (2 Cor. v. 14, 15).

Upon a life I did not live,
 Upon a death I did not die,
 Another's life, another's death,
 I stake my whole eternity.

WHAT IS THE DIVINE GROUND OF GATHERING?

IV.

NOW turn to Matt. xviii. 18-20 : “ *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*”

Thus, whilst it was the priest who bound or loosed the suspected leper, it is equally evident that the same authority for binding and loosing was given to two or three gathered in His Name. Tremendous power, if it be real! Surely it is hardly to be wondered at that vain, proud, fleshly man—dark and ignorant—should have seen the mighty powers attached to the priesthood, and have sought to grasp them for himself. It marks his ancestry—his generation—“ ever seeking to be as God.” For the words in Matt. xviii. quoted above, are so evidently connected with our passage,* and the two texts so throw their mutual light one on the other reciprocally, that we may well examine the New Testament Scripture more closely. First, look at the whole setting of that scripture from the beginning of the chapter, and see if the word “ heaven ” and “ earth ” are not especially to be kept before us. It is the correspondence—the communion of heaven and earth. Earth dependent on Heaven—Heaven *then* endorsing earth. This is surely in fitting harmony with this Gospel of Matthew, the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, in which Kingdom we see our Lord has just shown that all the world’s present order is reversed, and he who humbles himself as the little child is the *greatest* (v. 1-6). So, too, the Lord throws Heaven’s guards over His little ones on earth, and teaches that there is representation in Heaven of those on earth: The little one on earth, helpless and feeble, has his “ *Angel in Heaven always beholding the face of my Father.*” So there is to be no despising the least on earth, for Heaven longs for them (v. 7-14). Moreover unity and peace, not discord and contention, are to characterise Heaven’s Kingdom on earth, to be in accord with Heaven’s own blessed law of forgiveness: every step is divinely marked out before an offender is to be considered as “ *a heathen man and a publican* ” (v. 15-17).

* See previous articles.

Then follow the Lord's words as to "*binding*" and "*loosing*" vested in two or three gathered in His Name—the mighty secret of all—the Presence of Him, in Whom the divine and human meet: the God-man. He Who is indeed Heaven's King: the representative of heaven when here, the representative of His people on earth, there. "*For where two or three are gathered to my Name there am I in the midst of them.*" In Him, then, is alone the power, the validity as to the binding and the loosing. It is in the Name, not the number, again be it said: only two or three gathered in absolute dependence on that Name, and Himself surely with them, have the *power*; two or three thousand without Him have absolutely and literally none.

But this does not free us from all difficulty by any means: rather brings us face to face with one at least that has been very real to many of us of late.

What is to prevent any company of people—even conceding them to be truly Christians—from *claiming* that their decisions, having been arrived at when gathered to the Lord's Name, partake of all the virtue and power of that Name, and must be "*bowed to*" by every "*godly conscience.*"

My dear brethren, does not the very spirit of such a *claim*, nay, the very fact of *claiming at all*, deny the very essence of what we have seen the gathering to His Name to consist in? If this be utter and complete dependence it is the very opposite of *claiming* anything. Flesh always, whether in sinner or saint, is much disposed to making *claims*. It finds this both profitable and easy; so the Pharisees of old claimed Moses' seat, with all its authority. Rome to-day makes very exalted "*claims*" under the cover of zeal for the divine glory; and it is exactly the same spirit that under still fairer guise, and still more pious phraseology would *claim* the subjection of all to judgments that often in their very nature outrage the fundamental principles of righteousness: separating between saint and saint, tearing apart evidenced members of the One Body, and spreading discord and unhappiness wherever they come, even to sundering or weakening the ties of nature in the families of Christians.

Mark carefully, then, the easily discerned, because clearly delineated, characteristics of true *priestly* judgment.

1st, Self-judgment: as the result of the application of the word: as Aaron and his sons were *washed* even at the door of the Tabernacle.

2nd, as a consequence of this : confidence and dependence on the risen, living Lord Jesus in the midst. Oh do not suffer this to be admitted as a theory, but practically a dead letter, as if no longer practicable. Better to go forever without any decision than not get it from Him.

3rd, as growing out of these : there will be no haste, no pressure, no clamour, no wrangling, but calm, quiet, patient deliberation, marked by mutual consideration, till unity is attained or opposition is *clearly* evidenced as wicked.

4th, there will be no dominance sought by leader or leaders, nor will the conscience of the humblest be overlooked in the slightest degree.

5th, there will be a strict evenness of balance between the Lord's holiness and consideration for the suspect.

6th, there will be no *claims* following the decision or judgment. This will be left, as all else, to Him on whom the little company is dependent

7th, if the decision does not approve itself to others elsewhere, a constant disposition to self-judgment will at once suggest a re-consideration, with such further light as the objecting brethren may possibly give.

Some of us have known such judgments in our day and never one that did not command the hearty submission of all. But what a contrast are these outgrowths of assumption that have scattered again and again the sheep of the flock, and are still doing so.

To sum up : as surely as it was the priest who bound or loosed the suspected leper, so surely is it the two or three gathered together to His Name to whom the power of binding or loosing is now granted. The priest (human) " taken from among men " but with no confidence in anything outside the sanctuary, figures, it may be, even so few as two or three, washed and clothed in the same way, and dependent entirely upon the same light and the same balances ; in a word knowing nothing but His Name. Or it might be clearer to say that the priest figures the *spirit of absolute dependence* that is indicated by two or three being gathered to His Name. In both cases it is the new man absolutely dependent upon God ; and Heaven then, and only then, endorsing the action on earth. This remains to us even to this day.

(To be continued.)

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE.



ADDRESS TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

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Get thoroughly Clear as to the Sin-Question.—Is there a lurking suspicion in the soul, a shadow across the heart, a quiver of conscience? You are not perfectly clear as to your acceptance with God—Is that it? Now, dear young Christian, you will never grasp the breadth or fathom the depth of God's work for you. The Cross is earth's and heaven's lesson for eternity. But there are two statements which, if you grip, you will doubt no more. First, "When He had by Himself purged *our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). The purging of our sins is part of His divine glory. It was a divine work to create worlds and to sustain them. It was as truly a divine work to purge our sins. He has done it. You may doubt and question the efficacy of the work. When? When the throne of the Eternal totters. When? When the crown falls from the brow of the Mighty One who, in love, grappled with our sins and purged them from before the face of God. Second, "The worshippers *once purged* should have had no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 2). Now, through faith in the testimony of God, the believer is "once purged." This is an act of present and eternal value, never to be repeated. We are conscious of sin within and without. But "once purged" and "no more conscience of sins" is enough to dispel every doubt, and set the most troubled conscience at perfect rest. God's eye on the blood and His word in your heart (Exod. xii. 12)—the former for *security*, and the latter for *confidence*—is a lesson of priceless value for every young Christian to start with. Those two passages in the Hebrews, form a rock, to which if you anchor your soul and conscience you will ride triumphantly over every wave of unbelief. Grip God's Word; get on the rock; all, all then is well.

As to Amusements.—We can prescribe no rule. The buoyancy of youth demands a certain amount of liberty which, if kept under godly limits, and controlled by godly principles, is all right. For ourselves, since we got Christ, and He got us, we have no desire

whatever to visit exhibitions, flower, or other shows, not on the ground that these amusements are sinful—many of them are not—but simply because we *are satisfied*. We find Christ enough for enjoyment. Besides, souls are perishing and eternity is nearing, and we have no time nor inclination to mingle with the world in admiring *its* toys and sharing in its mis-named pleasures. The youngest believer is made independent of the world. He has in himself a well of living water—ever sparkling, perennial, and springing up for his own soul's enjoyment (John iv. 14). “Never *thirst*” and “never *hunger*” is the twofold description of every child of God. Instead, too, of the world ministering to *our* enjoyment, we minister to *it*. “He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John vii. 38). Let the rivers flow and thus serve your generation.

Give yourselves to much Prayer at all times, and under all circumstances. Neglect of private prayer is the certain path to a complete break down. We have followed the course of many servants of the Lord. We have marked the progress and success of some, and mourned over the failure of others, and we can trace, to a large extent, these results to the closet (Matt. vi. 6). The commencement of the Lord's personal ministry was marked by prayer (Luke iii. 21). The ministry of the twelve was preceded by a night of prayer (Luke vi. 12). The mighty work of God in Europe may be traced to a prayer meeting at the side of the river Gangites (Acts xvi. 13). The extraordinary ministry of Elijah—a service in which heaven and earth were made subservient to the Man of God—was due to prayer (James v. 17). The conversion of 3,000 souls followed a united ten days' prayer meeting (Acts i. and ii.). A man of prayer with one talent will accomplish the mightiest results; while the prayerless servant, however highly gifted, is powerless and weak. Young Christian, *begin* and *close* each day with God in prayer. Speak to Him often. Speak to Him at all times. Speak to Him under all possible circumstances. See that you keep short accounts between you and God. Whatever else you may have to lay aside for lack of time, *never neglect* personal, persevering, believing prayer. If necessary, curtail your public engagements; but never your private devotions in the closet. Rest assured that the more you give yourselves to prayer and supplication, your life and service will have a corresponding character stamped upon them. Men and women, characterised by “one thing I do,” are in great demand—people of

purpose. The age is one of ceaseless activity. Much time spent on your knees is regarded by some as wasted moments! It will be found in the coming day of trial (1 Cor. iii. 13), that much now regarded as Christian work "shall be burned," and the workman "suffer loss" (verse 15). It will not be the amount but the *character* of the service that will be in question in the judgment of works. "Well done, good and *faithful* servant" shall be the Lord's word of welcome *then* (Matt. xxv. 21). Work—much or little—if characterised by prayer and carried out according to the Lord's mind, should be the aim of one and all.

Give yourselves to Bible-Reading and Study.—Character is to a great extent formed by the books you read. The artificial culture of the day destroys depth and force of character. Society and light literature are forming a superficial race of men and women; well, the present is a rare opportunity for *individual* character to shine and leave its mark. Multifarious reading, and reading to while away time hanging heavily on your hands, is ruinous to the mind. Thoughts are poured in and run out, leaving no lasting impression—what a waste of time and of mind! As to choice of books no fixed rule can be applied. Doubtful works of fiction and semi-infidel books should never be read by young Christians. Religious novels we abominate. Never read valueless books. Shun, as you would the plague, a literature frivolous in character, or, worse still, one which directly or covertly denies the plenary inspiration, and consequently the supreme authority, of the Sacred Scriptures, and avoid much newspaper reading. A vile and pernicious literature is wrecking the morals of the country. Noble men and women, and a pure minded people, were more general in the past than in the present. Minds and character are formed by the literature of the day. Make your Bible your daily companion. The Bible will grow in interest the more you read and study it. It is the sufficiency of the man of God (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Have the Bible constantly beside you, in your pocket, or at hand for constant reference. Draw your doctrines from *it* and not from a human compilation, whether "catechism" or "confession." It will strengthen and guide you. It will support and cheer you in a lonely hour. It will impress *certainty* upon your life and actions. As you study the Book of Books it will enable you to worship, and serve in intelligence. It will set you head and shoulders morally higher than your compeers. We would strongly advise a systematic study of the Bible.

Be Careful in your Choice of Companions.—Select as friends decided Christians only. See that your companions are out and out on the Lord's side. Give a wide berth to persons of loose opinions and of lax morals. "A man is known by the company he keeps ;" by that you will be influenced either for good or evil. Cultivate the society of persons morally superior, and it will lift you up and raise you in moral power. Above all, commune with the spiritual and godly. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. iii. 16). Repeated, and it may be, informal meetings of this character have the Lord's distinct commendation. Our earnest desire is that you grow up men and women whose moral influence upon your generation will be felt ; an influence which will stamp its own character upon souls on to eternal ages ; for influence—good or bad—never dies. The impress of eternity is upon each of us, whether we realise it or not. Could you not meet as often as possible with your friends and companions for prayer and conversation upon the Lord's things and interests ? This would be a means of strength. The Lord has instituted Christian fellowship as an important help to our spiritual growth and blessing (Jude 20, 21). But we would, again, emphasise the statement : Choose companions who are out-and-out for Christ. Christian young men, we solemnly warn you against the sin of trifling with the feelings and affections of those of the other sex. Be manly and straightforward, and don't be cruel deceivers. God is an observer of your actions and words. We have no desire to say more on this delicate subject ; only this, don't be general lovers. Be *careful* in the choice of a companion whom you mean to make your wife, and be true and constant to her in your love—to her *only*. Young sisters, we greatly desire your growth in spiritual life and in devotedness to Christ. Absolutely refuse all *mere* human attachments. Repulse every attempt ; reject the very thought of a life-long companionship with one not distinctly on the Lord's side. Don't be deceived on this point under any plea whatever. "Them that honour Me I will honour." May the Lord guide the feet of our young friends is our most earnest prayer and wish.

On Behaviour and Conversation.—We wish young Christians would study carefully the first epistle to Timothy and epistle to

Titus. They contain instruction and advice of paramount importance. We want our younger brethren and sisters especially to shine as the Lord's lights in the sphere in which they may find themselves, adorning "the doctrine of God our Saviour *in all things*" (Titus ii. 10). First, "shew piety at home." Disobedience to parents and guardians, and lack of respect to elders is a marked feature of the age. Be obedient and kind at home, and if your presence and help are desired, don't be running every night to meetings. Remember you are Christ's representative and witness in the family circle and in the workroom or other sphere of labour. Your ways and behaviour at home and elsewhere will either prove a help or hindrance. Be modest and respectful. As to the question of dress, be simple. Some known to us put all their stock in the window, all show, all tinsel, and no substance—foolish young men and women! Do they really think that sensible people cannot estimate at their real value these dandies or dressed dolls! Such people only shew their littleness of mind. So-called Christian young man with cane, and cigar, and ring, you only draw upon you the contempt and pity of others! If you only saw yourself as others see you, certain habits, and ways, and articles in dress and behaviour would at once be given up; of course Christ is the great constraining power. When His love gets *in* these things go *off*. Christian intercourse and conversation in general, forms the subject of instruction in Eph. v. 3-6. Punning on the Word of God is a hateful and sinful habit. Some have a propensity in this direction. "Let your speech be *alway* with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. iv. 6). There is the *boasting* tongue—used by the bumptious. There is the *lying* tongue—used by the untruthful. There is the *murmuring* tongue—used by the discontented. There is the *irreverent* tongue—used by the sceptic. Slang expressions are most unbecoming in a Christian. Remarks and conversations, too, of a *light* character weaken the mind and defile the conscience. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips," so prayed the Psalmist, so may each of us, young and old. What you hear and speak leave impressions on the heart and memory which are never effaced. Chatter leads to gossip, and gossip leads to scandal. O, be careful and bridle your tongue! Check the outflow. If it is the outcome, the product of the old nature in you, then strangle the word. If it is the outcome of the new nature in you, then let it flow spontaneously (James i. 26). Words from

the lips of some are as a *sword* (Pro. xii. 18), from the lips of others they are as *honeycomb* (xvi. 24).

Do all the Good you can at all times and to all Persons.—Let yours be a useful life. May the holiest (*worship*) and the harvest (*service*) engage you fully. In with God, in the former; out for God, in the latter. Do not trouble yourself about a distant sphere of usefulness. You will find your work at your finger ends. The world is your parish, and every creature wherever found the subject of your ministry. Let the grandeur of your mission and not the “charmed circle” inspire you in your work. Do what you can, and when you have done that, God may enlarge your sphere of labour; yes, but only when you have glorified Him in the small one. “She hath done what she could” (Mark xiv. 8): higher commendation there could not be. May we each merit *that*! Throw your energies into whatever work the Lord gives you to do—“Do it with thy might.” Be earnest and enthusiastic in every service, in every bit of work. See that your heart is full of Christ, while your hands are full of work. In everyday life be holy and consistent; *that* will preach a far more eloquent sermon, and a more practical one, too, than the tongue can utter. On no account be turned aside or cease the work of the Lord by the sneer or criticism of even Christian friends. Profit by their advice if you can, but solemnly remember that one is your master, even Christ, and to Him *only* are you responsible as a servant. Not even a Paul could control the movements of another of the Lord’s servants (1 Cor. xvi. 12). Individual responsibility to Christ as Lord has to be firmly maintained; do it, of course, graciously. It needs divine wisdom to handle aright the trowel and the sword. We cannot dispense with either (Neh. iii.-vi.). You have no need to *seek* opportunities of usefulness. “Do good unto all men,” but remember that the members of the household of faith have the first claim (Gal. vi. 10). Distinct call to special service at home or abroad require gift, qualification, grace and faith, not common to all. Persons of *marked* gift will not readily fit into a narrow groove; they will find out their own sphere, and create a place for themselves.

“You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are on the verge of destruction, and, for aught you know, you are hearing your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you?”

BEHAVIOUR BECOMING THE HOUSE OF GOD (*continued.*)

III.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF "THE CHURCHES."

ALTHOUGH the Churches have no legislative qualification or power they do possess certain administrative functions, but these are restricted by the apostolic epistles, and anything attempted beyond them is inoperative. The jurisdiction, too, of such functions in their exercise is confined within the borders of each particular Church viewed in its House of God character only, and not as the Body of Christ, since discipline and order attach to the House only, while mutual co-operation of the members attaches to the Church viewed as the body (see 1 Cor. xii. 14-27 for the latter, and 1 Cor. v. for the former). A particular local Church is viewed both as "God's House" and "Christ's Body." No particular local Church or Churches has any administrative jurisdiction over other like Churches. Putting away, is of an individual in a particular Church, hence the power of putting away is vested in and limited to a particular local Church, and not vested in a federated circle or diocese of Churches.*

Furthermore, no particular local Church has even administrative jurisdiction over any one or more of the saints composing it in regard to the soul's invisible and eternal relations to the Lord. The Papal Church has indeed arrogated to herself such jurisdiction, called the power of the keys, claiming thereby authority over the bodies and souls of those in her communion in such wise as to bind or loose their sins in relation to their eternal destiny for heaven or hell.

Neither has any local Church power to create any inward spiritual relation of the saints either to God or to itself, either by Baptism or the Sacrament so called, neither can it vitiate any existing inward relations either by anathema or excommunication, in fact the former, that is, "*anathema*," is outside the jurisdiction and power of the Church altogether, whether viewed universally or locally. Paul had *apostolic* power from the Lord to deliver to Satan for disciplinary purposes (1 Cor. iv. 21 ; 1 Tim. i. 20) ; and in the case referred to in 1 Cor. v. 4 it was the Lord's power in the apostle, exercised concurrently with the Church, that gave effect to this form of discipline. No Church can claim or exercise this power, that is, delivering to Satan, now that she lacks the personal presence of the apostles.

* It follows, as a matter of course, as far as the abstract principle is concerned, that, if an individual is considered unfit for fellowship in one place, he is in all. (*Ed.*)

Paul also would pronounce *anathema* on the perverters of the Gospel (Gal. i. 7, 9) ; but this power has not been delegated to the Churches nor to individuals by the Lord or by His apostles.

The utmost administrative act vested in every local assembly is (1) to receive into its external fellowship or association those who can give reasonable evidence that they have been received by the Lord, and (2) to refuse such external fellowship to any applicants who cannot so satisfy the Church with whom fellowship is desired ; and (3) to reject from such external fellowship any whom scripture enjoins should be so rejected, but in neither of the foregoing acts is there any absolute pronouncement as to the real spiritual relations of such to the Lord, who alone can be final judge in such matters (2 Tim. ii. 19).

External Church fellowship is based upon the mutual recognition of the necessary antecedent possession and enjoyment of the spiritual relations to Christ and His people common to all saints (1 Cor. i. 2). Fellowship with the Churches assumes that such relations already exist. Experience, however, teaches us that it is possible for some to be externally in the fellowship of the Churches who are not truly in the Church of God, and on the other hand there are not a few who certainly possess these spiritual relations and are truly in the Church of God, but who are not found in " the Churches of the saints." These, too, would stoutly maintain that the former class ought not to be in the Churches, and these on the other hand would say that the others ought to be in " the Churches." *

QUALIFICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS AS TO FELLOWSHIP WITH " THE CHURCHES."

The *fundamental* qualification is, as already stated, the vital relation to Christ—" them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus " (1 Cor. i., 1, 2). This must be antecedent to real fellowship with the Churches. Added to this, however, there must be the qualification of a godly life coupled with sound doctrine. Behaviour befitting the House of God in harmony with the true nature of that House as being " the Pillar and Base of the Truth."

Paul's apostleship was according to the faith of God's Elect and the acknowledging the truth which is after godliness (Titus i. 1) ; and this is what he taught everywhere in every Church (1 Cor. iv.

* It is well to note, in view of what some teach, that this fellowship with a local Church is not a different or even an additional fellowship to that which belongs to all Christians as members of " one body." The local is but the expression of the universal. (*Ed.*)

17). So that true Churches should be in moral and spiritual accord with the nature and character of such apostleship.

The maintaining the idea that being "in Christ" is the only qualification scripture requires for reception into the fellowship of "the Churches" is a mistake, because if that were so, those so *received* on that ground only would have to be *retained* also, no matter what their practical life or doctrines might be, and this would necessarily evade all discipline in the House of God (Ps. lxxxix. 7 ; xciii. 5).

The creeping into the Churches of certain men unawares (Jude 4) and the bringing into the Churches "false brethren" unawares (Gal. ii. 4) indicates that the doors of the Churches were well guarded so as to prevent as far as possible any getting in who ought not. These "creepers" could only get in or be brought in by stealth under cover of being true disciples. So Peter also refers to false teachers among "the Churches" who being there would *privily* introduce damnable heresies (2 Peter ii. 1). And their doing it "privily" is proof that had they done it *publicly* they would have been detected and checked. The super-added qualifications for external fellowship with the Churches are scripturally defined as godly walk, and soundness of doctrine, since "the Churches" are the pillar and base of the truth. The normal conditions of fellowship, Church-wise, are as stated in Acts ii. 42, and are supplemental to conversion. Such conditions were continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Three things they *continued* in, (1) apostolic doctrine and fellowship ; (2) breaking of bread, *i.e.*, the external expression of such fellowship (1 Cor. x. 16, 17) ; and (3) prayers, *i.e.*, all spiritual devotions towards God as worshippers. (Compare Luke i. 6 ; ii. 36, 37). Paul writes in a commendatory way to and of those Churches who kept the ordinances he delivered to them, among which the Lord's Supper was a leading one (1 Cor. xi. 2, 23 ; 2 Thess. ii. 15) ; and where there was neglect or abuse, or departure from these he reproveth and admonishes (1 Cor. iv. 21 ; xi. 17-19).

Now the due insistence upon these Scriptural Church-fellowship qualifications, conditions and limitations must not be viewed as narrowness or sectarianism, because such things are essential to the very being both of the Church of God and of the Churches of God as the pillar and ground of the truth. Doctrinal foundations must never be severed from the moral superstructure built upon

them of godliness of walk (1 Cor. iii. 10-15), and this may be easily distinguished from mere sectarian elements or weaknesses in the faith that sadly divide the true from the true. "Great is the mystery of *godliness*." "God was manifest in the flesh" (what a contrast to *sin* being manifest in the flesh), "justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). Christ Himself, so manifested, embodies, and is, the mystery of *Godliness*. He is the sum total of all ethics. He is the complete doctrinal and moral code of the faith of God's Elect (Titus i. 1), and the godliness of saints *individually* as well as of the Churches collectively, is inseparably connected and interwoven with and proceeds from the vital possession and true confession of the Christ of God (John i. 14, 16; Col. ii. 9, 10).

The *Christian* faith therefore includes (1) all that is befitting to *man* as a creature of God in his relation to God as his Creator (1 Tim. iv. 1-6); and (2) all that concerns man as a fallen and sinful creature in his relation to God as a Saviour God as revealed in the Gospel of God's Son manifest in flesh (Titus ii. 11-13). To impugn or deny either of these is to depart from the faith (1 Tim. iv. 1). They are so organically connected as to be inseparable. Hence a *Christian* who does not provide for his own, which as a mere *man* he ought to do, "denies *the faith*" (1 Tim. v. 8), and a *Christian* servant who does not purloin, a thing a mere *man* ought not to do, thereby "adorns the doctrine of God our *Saviour*" (Titus ii. 10). The Church, too, is *God's Building* (1 Cor. iii. 9). The Churches, indeed, are the Churches of God, because God dwells there and is worshipped there as the living and true God—the Creator. They are likewise the Churches of *Christ*, because the Christ of God—the Saviour of the world (John iv. 42), is owned there; and they are also the Churches of the *saints*, because holiness of walk is maintained there. So we read of the Church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. i. 9, 10) "they turned to *God* from idols," and thus their proper attitude to God was recovered so that they worshipped the living and true God—and there they were waiting for God's Son from heaven, even Jesus, their deliverer from the wrath to come, which was the recognition of their sin, and their need of redemption.

(*To be continued.*)

[Answers to questions and other matter are unavoidably left over for want of space.]

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

Vol. 1.—No. 12.

SEPTEMBER, 1909. PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

WILL our friends kindly remember that subscriptions for the coming year are now due, and should be sent before September 20th, to Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co., 8, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., except where ordered through a bookseller. The past year has been one of much encouragement, and many letters of appreciation have been received. We should esteem it a favour, therefore, if as many of our friends as possible, would, in making up their subscriptions, include sufficient for an additional copy to be sent to a friend, or to themselves direct for circulation. We feel quite sure they would earn the thanks of the recipient by so doing. There are many, too, in lonely places, both abroad and at home, who might be cheered and helped by the opportunity of reading *The Faith and the Flock*. Will all interested make it a matter of earnest prayer, and do what they can? In these days when so many forms of error abound, the dissemination of the truth, in such a convenient form, is most desirable. We shall do our best to deserve your increased confidence and support.

In the present issue will be found, in an article entitled "What is the Divine Ground of Gathering," some remarks upon 2 Timothy ii. We have not inserted these because we altogether agree with the interpretation, but rather to awaken thought, and in the hope that it may call forth some remarks from our readers. No chapter has been more discussed and less understood, perhaps, than this one, and if any can throw further light upon an admittedly difficult passage (we refer especially to verses 19-22) it may be a help to many. Contributions may take the form either of a criticism of the above article or an independent exposition of the passage.

* * * *

An important series of tracts issued by the Evangelical Alliance, and dealing with various points of belief raised by the New Theology discussion are well worthy of attention. Amongst them "The Virgin Birth of Christ," by Prof. James Orr, D.D.; and "The New Apostasy," by Sir R. Anderson, K.C.B., LL.D., call for especial mention. Other titles are "The Impregnable Rock Christ Jesus," "Sin and its Consequences," "The Resurrection of Christ," &c., &c. They are published at one penny each, with the exception of the first named.

* * * *

Our study of the Epistles to the Hebrews will be resumed (D.V.) in the October number.

* * * *

"Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." These are the words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Few have been called to suffer more than he. No sooner is he converted than Christ's word concerning him is, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake." In referring to these sufferings, or some of them, he could say, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." The special sorrow referred to in Philippians ii., from which we have quoted, was occasioned by the serious illness of a fellow servant, Epaphroditus. And the Apostle is able to record the mercy of God in sparing this devoted companion, who had ministered to his "wants, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow." In this way, in spite of all his afflictions, Paul often proved the mercy of God. There are always gleams of light amid the darkness. Rifts here and there to relieve the blackness.

Sometimes it does almost seem as if the people of God were called upon to endure "sorrow upon sorrow." The waves of adversity seem incessant. A calamity worse than death itself may befall some loved one; health may go; and friends forsake. The most cherished things in life are snatched rudely away. What are we to do? Where can we find comfort? The heavens seem clothed with sackcloth. The ground beneath our feet seems turned to ashes. Still there is this word: "God had mercy." "Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." Yes, there is the mercy of God. Job, after all his trial, found the Lord to be "very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Says a writer recently, in referring to the difficulties of life, "Perhaps the chief of all things is peace of mind. Peace of mind is harder and harder to keep, and the canker of care seems to eat the life away" Multitudes are proving this. Everything in life is very insecure, and the changes are rapid and continuous. Amidst it all God alone can give us peace. Blessed be His Name, our cares are not too small for His notice. In Psalm lxxviii. we are told in one verse, "He rideth upon the heavens by His Name Jah." In the next, that He is "A Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows." And again, in the next, that He has regard to the solitary. He watched over that often solitary prisoner in Rome; He knew all his trials; and He spared Epaphroditus lest His servant should have "sorrow upon sorrow." He will not do less for any of us.

* * * *

In connection with the foregoing remarks, we may insert here a contribution recently sent us by a correspondent.

* * * *

He is like a refiner's fire.—"He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, and they shall offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Mal. iii., 2-3.

* * * *

A few ladies in Dublin were reading the above passage, when one lady gave as her opinion that the fuller's soap, and the refiner of silver were only the same image, intended to convey the same view of the sanctifying influences of the grace of Christ.

“No,” said another, “they are not just the same image, there is something remarkable in the expression, ‘He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.’” They all said that possibly it might be so. This lady was going into town and promised to see a silversmith, and report to them what he said, on the subject. She went without telling him of the object of her errand, and begged to know the process of refining silver, which he fully described to her. “But do you sit, Sir,” said she, “while you are refining?” “Oh! yes, madam, I *must* sit with my eye steadily fixed on the furnace, since if the silver remain too long, it is sure to be injured.” She at once saw the beauty and comfort, too, of the expression, “He shall *sit* as a refiner and purifier of silver.” Christ sees it needful to put His children into the furnace, but He is seated by the side of it. His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged to do all in the best manner for them. The lady was returning to tell her friends what she had heard, but just as she turned from the shop door, the silversmith called her back, and said that he had forgotten to tell her one thing, and that was, that he only knew that the process of purifying was complete by *seeing his own image in the silver!* When Christ sees His image in His people, His work of purifying is accomplished!

He that from dross would win the precious ore,
 Bends o'er the crucible an earnest eye,
 The subtle searching process to explore,
 Lest the one brilliant moment should pass by
 When, in the molten silver's virgin mass,
 He meets his pictured face as in a glass.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS ON BIBLE STUDY.*

This and the following have been sent to us in connection with the article on “How to Study the Bible,” in our July number.

THERE was a young man in America whose experience in Bible study was as follows:—“He had a godly mother and grew up with a deep reverence for the Bible, but no love for it. He said he admired it as he might some ancient temple, and, indeed, it seemed to him like a temple composed of sixty-six massive blocks,

* To be obtained of R. P. W., 33, Greenholm Road, Eltham Park, London, S.E.
 Price 3d. per doz., or 2/- per 100.

thirty-nine of them in granite with a broad base at Genesis, and twenty-seven of them in alabaster, towering into a lofty dome at Revelation. But this temple of truth seemed cold and lifeless to him, as though it had no tenant. One day—the day of his conversion—he heard the voice of the King who lived within, saying, ‘Study to show thyself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth;’ and he resolved to make a tour of the temple. So with the Holy Spirit as his guide he started through. He entered first the **Portico** of Genesis, and stood amazed at the beauties he saw there revealed. Then he passed into the **Art Gallery** of the Old Testament historical books, where he saw the pictures of David, and other great men hanging on the wall. At length he reached the **Music Room** of Psalms, where the Spirit struck all the chords of human nature, from the low wailing note of the fifty-first Psalm to the high exultant note of the twenty-fourth Psalm. Then he went on into the **Business Office** of Proverbs, where the quick, sharp, business orders were being given. Then into the **Chapel** of Ecclesiastes, where the sound of the preacher’s voice was heard. Then into the **Conservatory** of the Song of Solomon, sweet with the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley; and from that into the **Observatory** of the Prophetic books. In this room he saw telescopes of different sizes, some pointing to far-off stars (events in the future), and some to near-by stars. But they were all brought to bear upon the Bright and Morning Star which was soon to arise. Entering the New Testament, he first came to the **Audience Chamber** of the King, and saw and heard the King from four different standpoints in the four gospels. Then he passed into the **Executive Chamber**, where the Holy Spirit was doing His office work, and from there into the **Correspondence Rooms**, where Paul and Peter, and James and John, and Jude, all sat at different desks, writing the Epistles, and at last reached the **Throne Room** itself, with all its glittering splendours in Revelation.”

“He said after he had made this first hasty tour of the Temple of Truth, he used often to wander back and forth, and linger long in each room until he became perfectly familiar with the contents of each, seeing always some fresh beauty and comprehending more and more the plan, purpose and character of the Builder, God.”

THE BIBLE

- CONTAINS—**
1. The Mind of God.
 2. The State of Man.
 3. The Way of Salvation.
 4. The Doom of the Sinner.
 5. The Happiness of the Believer.
- IT IS—**
1. Milk for babes.
 2. Meat for strong men.
 3. Medicine for sick folk.
- IT FURNISHES—**
1. Light to direct.
 2. Food to support.
 3. Comfort to cheer.
- THE—**
1. Traveller's map.
 2. Pilgrim's staff.
 3. Pilot's compass.
 4. Soldier's sword.
 5. Christian's charter.
- IT WILL—**
1. Fill the memory.
 2. Rule the heart.
 3. Guide the feet.
 4. Reward the labour.
 5. Condemn the triflers.

Sin will keep you from the Bible, but
The Bible will keep you from *Sin*.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE BIBLE.

Know it in the *Head*.
Stow it in the *Heart*.
Show it in the *Life*.
Sow it in the *World*.

1. Read it to be wise.
2. Believe it to be safe.
3. Practise it to be holy.

Dig it up.
Write it down.
Pray it in.
Live it out.
Pass it on.

Read it
Slowly.
Frequently.
Prayerfully.
Reverently.

Oh, that we realised more and more that the Bible is God's love-letter to His children, how we would value and love it until it became a second part of our being. "Have not I written," God says (Prov. xxii. 20), "excellent things."

"Certain things." That thou mightest answer. What answer will we give to Him as to how we have treated this blessed love-letter ?

BALAAM AND HIS PARABLES (*continued*).²³⁷

IV.—ISRAEL A TRIUMPHANT PEOPLE.

BALAK would now be rid of the prophet. He would fain silence the oracle which he had invoked. But Jehovah could not permit this. The enemy having seen fit to raise a serious question in regard to His people, the answer must be rendered in full, and all had not yet been told. Both king and prophet were agreed as to this—that Jehovah had upset their whole arrangement. Accordingly Balak said to Balaam: “I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but lo, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honour” (Num. xxiv. 11; compare xxii. 13). After repeating in his reply the hypocritical statement that no amount of silver and gold would suffer him to go beyond the commandment of Jehovah, the prophet said: “And now, behold, I go unto my people; come, therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.” This fixes beyond controversy the scope of Balaam’s fourth and last parable—it looks on to the world’s last great crisis.

The opening words are inexpressibly solemn as concerning the man that uttered them: “Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, which heareth the words of God, and knoweth the knowledge of the Most High, which seeth the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.” “Heareth, knoweth, seeth”; for so the Revised Version more expressively reads. Balaam enumerates thus his privileges as one peculiarly favoured of God. Privileged, yet lost! We are reminded of Heb. vi. 4-5, where the apostle names five great privileges which men might possess even in Christianity, and yet perish after all. No man could take his place amongst Christians without becoming “enlightened,” and “tasting of the heavenly gift”; no one could have to do with the assembly of God, which is the very temple of the Holy Ghost, without thereby (and in that way) becoming a “partaker of the Holy Ghost”; no one could listen to the sweet Gospel message without “tasting the good word of God;” nor could anyone witness the miracles which characterised the early days of Christianity, and which were samples beforehand of kingdom triumphs, without tasting “the power of the age

to come." Yet a man might thus be favoured of God, and be outside for ever, not one of these privileges necessitating the presence of divine life in the soul, without which everything else is vain.

Having enumerated his privileges (alas! worse than wasted upon his perverse heart), Balaam sees a glorious Person rising up, as it were, before his vision. "I see Him, but not now: I behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of tumult" (compare R.V.). It is not unusual, in the writings of the prophets, to find them speaking of the distant future as though it were being enacted before their eyes. Examples of this may be found in Isa. liii., where the sufferings of Christ are spoken of as though they were then accomplished, or accomplishing; and in Psa. xlv., where the kingdom-power of Christ is described as though it were already being displayed upon the earth.

So in the vision of Balaam. Christ is in view, and that in both His first and second comings. He came as the Star in the day of Matt. ii., and He will come forth as the Sceptre in the day of Rev. xix. Between the two events intervenes the whole period of the Church of God, but this is never noticed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Thus Isa. xl. 3-5 speaks of Christ's two comings as though they were in reality one; Isa. lxi. 2 speaks similarly; and other instances of the same kind could easily be cited.

Christ's appearing means triumph for Israel over every foe. Moab is first named, as being the power then opposing itself to God's elect; Edom is spoken of next. These two powers are to be judged together at the end; both, with Ammon also, are to meet their doom at Israel's hands. When the last King of the North is ravaging all the neighbouring kingdoms, these three, though menaced by him, will escape his hand. Jehovah, thousands of years earlier, having settled for them punishment by other means (Dan. xi. 41). Israel, led on to victory by the Lord Jesus Himself, is destined to lay hands upon these ancient foes (Isa. xi. 14; xxv. 10; Ezek. xxv. 14; Zeph. ii. 8-11). But not these only; "all the children of tumult" (Sheth) will be judged at the same epoch. In Rev. xi. 17-18, where all the results of Christ's appearing are stated right on to the judgment of the dead, among other things we find that Thou "shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Every disturber

of the world's peace will be silenced for ever. When the Lord thus arises to shake terribly the earth, nothing will shield his foes from His wrath. Neither ancient prestige, as in the case of Amalek ("first of the nations"), nor strength of position, as in the case of the Kenites, will avail in the smallest degree. Before Him every proud foe will be laid low.

"Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" So Balaam wailed. It was not joyous to him, but rather grievous, to be constrained to proclaim the ultimate triumph of the people of God. In his second and third parables he had spoken of Israel's King; now he describes His mighty victories on behalf of His chosen. When David sang of the same glorious Person and His achievements (Psa. lxxii), he added exultingly, "Amen and Amen." David's heart was in it, as taught by the Spirit of God; Balaam, on the contrary, had never yielded his heart to the sweet influences of divine grace.

The prophet concludes with the clang of war. "Ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever." It is the battle of Armageddon, the last dread conflict between East and West. "Asshur" and "Eber" are Eastern foes of Israel; "Chittim" is used in Jer. ii. 10 as a general term for the West in contrast with the East, while in Dan. xi. 30 it is unmistakably Rome. "The ships of Chittim" thus represent the last meddling with Israel of the revived fourth Empire. The "he also" who "shall perish for ever," is the last of the Cæsars, "the little horn" of Dan. vii. 8, "the beast" of Rev. xix. 20; who, with his coadjutor the false prophet is destined to be dismissed from the field of battle to the lake of fire; Permitted by God to scourge other offenders at the end, the last proud enemy of His Son must then meet his own doom at His holy and righteous hands.

Then will the God of heaven be known as "the most High." (Num. xxiv. 16). His supremacy will be established before the universe, and His name will be excellent in all the earth. Israel's troubles cannot end until that day; the tribulations of the heavenly people will come to an earlier termination—when the Lord Jesus descends into the air to call them home. Our deliverance from, and triumph over, every foe will in that moment of moments be complete. What a God is ours!

(To be continued.)

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DIVERS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES.

II.—CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

(A LETTER FROM A FATHER TO HIS SON.)

“ I WANTED to acknowledge your letter and express my appreciation of your candour in telling me of your experience with Christian Science. I judged from the tone and wording of your letter that your only interest in the so-called science that appropriates to itself the title of Christian, was a purely business or commercial interest. You wanted something that could be bought for money. You paid your money, and you received what you considered the worth of it. It was, according to the language and intent of your letter, a purely business transaction. So far it might be considered as purely legitimate and harmless in you ; but in me it would be a vastly different thing.

“ It is not that I question the power of Christian Science or its devotees to so psychologically influence certain persons, that physical relief or improvement may for a time result. The whole medical profession admits the power, and uses it. Nor do I forget the fact that a person in poor health—especially one who has not a close acquaintance with God or a deep experience of His power and willingness to bless and heal as well as to afflict for the purpose of imparting a deeper and larger blessing—I say I do not forget that such a one in poor health is ready to accept relief from any source. Nor do I allow myself to forget the perfectly human tendency to believe in the genuineness of whatever affects to produce really good results.

“ The argument runs like this—‘ Can anything that is really and unqualifiedly bad, produce or effect what is really good ? ’ After fifty-seven years of training in the school of hard experience—no little part of which training and experience has been made in coming in contact with all the various cults and ‘ isms ’ of the world—for me to do as you have done in regard to the matter of regaining or acquiring health, would be a vastly different thing than to transact a piece of harmless and legitimate business ; it would be nothing less, and involve nothing less, than giving up the substance of the Christian faith.

“ Assuredly health is essential to our comfort, our happiness and our usefulness, in the earthly and purely human apprehension

of these terms ; but to make a religion of health is, it seems to me, to put health in the place of God. If there were no other considerations than my personal comfort, no higher aim or purpose than my bodily health, it would be a religious matter with me to attain and maintain my health before all other considerations. To sacrifice my health, my life, my strength, my comfort, or the opportunities of securing them would be sacrilege. To preserve them would and should be my religion.

“ That is Christian Science, and there is not one element of Christianity in it. For Christianity is nothing short of an absolute surrender of self and of all that ministers to the spirit of selfishness ; and notwithstanding the weakness of Christians in realising in their own lives the life of Christ, their Ideal is infinitely above that of Christian Science, the boiled down essence of which is nothing but selfishness, and only selfishness. Now, do not think me warm, or biassed, or hasty in this judgment, I have had a little more experience with the world and men, with their philosophies and systems of thought, and their schools of opinion than you have. And I have followed this new cult from its birth to its latest phenomenal growth and development, and I am telling you the truth when I say, that among all the sects of Christendom you will not find one in which the spirit of self is so dominant as in this. Do not be deceived by the semblance of love and self-forgetfulness ; there is no counterfeit so dangerous as that which is made to most closely resemble the genuine.

“ It is not that I wish to condemn the people who have embraced this doctrine ; indeed, I am not now concerned with the character of the professors of this doctrine at all. It has been my experience to find among the adherents of all kinds of doctrines and religions, all kinds of characters, good, bad, and indifferent, and not infrequently to find among people of no professed religion, the most beautiful characters. I never allow myself to be biassed in favour of or against a doctrine or a religion by the kind or character of people who advocate it. No doubt the Lord said, speaking of the children of the true faith, ‘ By their fruits ye shall know them ; ’ but things have become so confused in these days—days that were predicted by the Lord and the prophets as days of great deception (2 Tim. iii. 13)—that true hearts, though deceived hearts, are to be found amid all the wreckage of this modern Babel.

“ But divine, eternal, saving truth is still left us, even amidst so many contradictory voices. But we must look to God and not to man for it. Man indeed may be used by God to bring it to us, but we must earnestly look to God to give us the power to recognise it when it comes. And nothing but an earnestness that exceeds the love of health, or wealth, or life, or happiness in desiring and seeking the truth, will enable us to recognise it, even though it were plainly spoken to us. It will not come to us as a bit of profitable merchandise, nor can it be bought with money, nor can the value of any of its fruits or blessings be measured by money.

“ Read Job xxviii., the whole chapter, especially from the seventh verse to the end. Then read again the chapters the Christian Scientist gave you ; read and see if in these very chapters the one thing to be well rid of is really sickness or bodily ailments, and not rather the sin, the wicked forgetfulness, and departure from God. That is the one thing to be dreaded and to be departed from. The very thing that Christian Science ignores and says does not exist—sin—is the charge in these chapters brought by God against Israel. God says there, ‘ Depart from your sins if you would escape from your diseases.’ Christian Science says, Give up the delusion that there is any sin and disease, if you would be healthy and happy. Which is true ? Why do Christian Scientists quote the Bible ? It is a contradiction of their doctrines from first to last (Exod. xv. 26, Deut. xxviii. 60).

“ If there is no sin, Christ died in vain. Nay, proved Himself deluded and destitute of their supposed light. He who was and is the Light of the world, had not their light, for He taught there is sin, taught there is disease, healed disease. He did not tell the people they were deluded and that there was really no disease. He died for sinners to save them from sin’s curse and shame—not from a delusion they were under as to the awful reality of sin against a holy God. Do not be deceived by their *quasi* recognition of the Bible. I would have more respect for Christian Scientists if they had the candour to speak out openly their utter repudiation of Bible teachings.

“ It is not the insanity of ignoring the existence of disease, of matter, or even of sin, that constitutes the revolting folly and wickedness of this system, but their contorting and twisting the Word of God into a meaningless lie. Of course I cannot hope to change the

bent of your mind if really you have become hypnotized by this doctrine ; but I do earnestly beg of you to pray to God for guidance in the reading of His word, as to what His meaning is in it. And I tell you again, that unless you come to want to know God's real truth, the truth the soul needs not only for time but for eternity, unless you want it more than you want bread, more than you want pleasure, more than health, more than even life itself, you may never hope to find it.

“ In this world—though we may not believe it, in respect to many things, yet it is nevertheless a solemn fact, that we get just what we want, we find what we seek with all our hearts, and so is it in respect to truth. God says, ‘ And ye shall seek Me and find Me when ye shall search after Me with all your heart ’ (Jer. xxix. 13). and again, ‘ Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord ’ (Hosea vi. 3). Be assured, Harry, I want you to be well, if by the possession of good health your present as well as your eternal welfare would be assured, or if bodily infirmity were only an unqualified evil ; but I would rather have you a bed-ridden invalid all your life, yea, much as it would take out of my earthly life, I had rather see your body lowered into the grave, having given evidence of your acceptance of Christ, than see you realising all the counterfeit semblance of blessing held out by a system that subverts every principle and precept of the Christian faith.

“ May God guide you into His precious soul-saving truth. Did you ask Him for health ? Do you say, ‘ Yes, and He didn't give it to me. ’ ?

“ Well, have you health now ? If you have, who, I ask, has given it to you ? Did Christian Science or did God ? Do you mean to tell me that God will do nothing for anyone except through Christian Scientists ? Have Christian Scientists got a monopoly of the favours and blessings of God ? Suppose you asked health of God and He did not give it ? Does that prove that God neither heard nor loved nor cared for you ?

“ Is health the only good, or even the chief good ? Take your own past life's history into account in answering that question. Where or what would you be to-day morally, mentally, or even bodily had not God in any way laid His hand upon you ? What would you know of sympathy, or of God and yourself had you never been disciplined ? Is not the blessing of vigorous bodily health, coupled with unrestrained liberty, often the occasion of ruin to thousands ? How many thousands never knew the love of God

nor the sympathy of Christ till they tasted sorrow, pain or sickness? Are there no divine purposes accomplished by sickness? (see Job xxxiii. 14-28; Hebrews xii. 5-12). The very chapters the Scientists gave you illustrate the purpose and use God has for sickness, disease and even death. Whom He loves He chastens, and are we to run away from His chastening instead of bowing to Him and seeking and securing the blessing He has for us in it? Are they the most blessed and favoured who know no discipline by sickness? I have said quite enough, but I trust not more than you will receive from me with profit."

PSALM 23.

THIS psalm has been a source of much comfort to many a saint, inspiring new hope and confidence in God. As his Shepherd, who cares for him, he will not want for any good thing. His God will supply all his need. He looks *up* and knows this to be so. Any restlessness is subdued, for He *maketh* him to *lie down* in green pastures—a sweet thought of rest and sustenance. He *leads*, too, *beside* still waters of peaceful refreshment. His soul is restored, is revived, is in health. He is further *led* in paths of righteousness—right paths—gentle onward progress towards the better land, and thus linked with His name, not because of the believer's worthiness, but for His name's sake. Now his confidence wells up with "yea"—even though his walk is *through* the valley of the shadow of death, it is with the knowledge that, as with the disciples in the boat, the Lord is with him, and he will pass to the *other side*; and he will therefore fear no evil, though evil may be there on the way; and he enjoys meanwhile the comfort of the rod and the staff. *Before* him, too, and in the presence of enemies, a table is prepared—rich with provision "for the way," as was the case with Joseph's brethren. His head, moreover, anointed with the sweet perfume of the oil of gladness—his cup overflowing so that others know it. Finally, he bursts out with the expression, "Surely," in view of all God's past and present dealings with him, that what will *follow* him will be goodness and mercy all and every one of the days of his pilgrim life; and at last the permanent dwelling place for him will be the house of the Lord, and that for ever. As to this our Lord told His disciples in John xiv. He was going "to prepare a place."

So that *under*, *beside*, *through*, and *before* and *following* him he is cared for, and he looks *above* with definite expectation. Truly the angel of the Lord encampeth "*round about* them that fear Him."

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Extract.

“IT is a truth of the very deepest value to the soul at all times, and very specially in this day of ours, that God claims our immediate confidence in Him, demanding of us that we are fixed enough in Him, without aid from the creature, or carnal provisions, to give entire rest and satisfaction to the conscience. Immediate confidence in God is the result of faith—it is that which faith leads the soul into. True Christianity is immediate, personal, confidence in God.

“Jacob lost the power of the Name of God in Gen. xxxii. He had to enquire after it, instead of using and enjoying it. That Name was ‘Almighty,’ but Jacob had been contriving for himself instead of dwelling under the Almighty’s shadow. He had lost the power of the Name. And do not we often now lose the power of the Name revealed to us—that is ‘Father.’ Such a Name is fitted to give abiding calmness and strength and liberty to the soul. It is fitted to give a dwelling place, a home, to the heart. It is enough to make our joy to be full—as John tells us. If we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, what unlimited blessedness is ours in spirit now! What was the delight of the Father in the Son when bruising Him! His Hand was heavy on Him indeed, as made sin for us; but His delight in Him personally was infinite and immeasurable. And if we be at times under His hand for *discipline*, as Jesus was for *bruising*, still we are to know the full secret unchanged love of a Father. We have—like Jacob—lost His Name if it be otherwise with our souls. It is not God merely, but our ‘Father,’ Who, the Lord tells us, numbers the hairs of our head, and if in any details of human trial we are not in the joy of a Father’s love, we have lost the Name—like the patriarch.”

“We are called, each one, to be a witness of practical Grace, and to suffer with Christ, and for His name. For grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; and the attempt of any Christians to present the truth without grace can only end in total failure—pride, self-righteousness, oppression, and every evil way.”

* * * *

“The man of God must make learning and everything that is of man to be his servant; whereas the mind of man, as such makes learning his master, and becomes its slave. Hence the danger of all such things proving positive hindrances, even to the Christian, save so far as he is led by the Spirit of God.”

WHAT IS THE DIVINE GROUND OF GATHERING? (*continued.*)*

V. ~~44~~⁴⁵

WE have thus seen that Scripture justifies one Circle of fellowship only; and that this is inclusive, not of some peculiarly spiritual, or intelligent, or gifted, or holy-living Christians, but of *all* Christians who give some evidence of not being mere professors, but really members of the One Body of Christ. The different conditions only afford scope for the exercise of those varying ministries of the Spirit that bind us together in mutual love, consideration, and dependence, whilst the recognition of an inner circle of peculiarly clean or holy ones, necessarily results in a loathsome Phariseism that will be spewed out of His mouth.

But it has been strongly urged, and, sad to say, the contention has been, and is still being, acted upon, that Scripture at times (and that apart from discipline on wickedness) insists on a stern separation from those who must be admitted to be true brethren, even to denying them any participation in that holy ordinance that speaks of the unity of all the members of the One Body.

It is hardly necessary to take up all these Scriptures that have been thus appealed to; if we look at the one that is most frequently thus used, and therefore presumably the strongest, it may suffice for all; at least as far as our present purpose goes.

It is to be found in 2 Timothy, chapter ii., vv. 19-21:—“*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but of wood and earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*”

Let us consider this together, first in heart confessing our dependence on the Lord, and our humble yet cheerful confidence in His mercy.

It has been interpreted, or paraphrased, somewhat in this way: as, in a great house there are vessels to honour and others to dishonour, so in the professing Church are there those who answer to

* See Editorial Note.

these two classes ; and a man only becomes a vessel to honour, and thus serviceable to the Master, by separating himself from those people who are represented by the vessels to dishonour. If anyone fails thus to separate himself, he naturally is still a "vessel to dishonour," and must, in his turn, be avoided, or he will as such, naturally, in the same way, injure all who company with *him* ; and so *ad infinitum*.

One can easily see the sorrowful consequences of such an interpretation, pushed to its legitimate conclusion, for I have but to conceive of anyone as being a "vessel to dishonour," and at once not only must I purge myself from him, but from everyone who does not share that conclusion, or act in the same way. The results to which it has led, may be definitely taken as proving its utter falsity, even though we may fail to detect the first error.

This, however, is evident : no separation from anything or anyone will alter what one *is* in the slightest degree, or make one what one is not, as, indeed, the illustration itself clearly shews.

Look at it a little more carefully, and you will note that the materials of which the vessels are made are chosen with divine wisdom ; and not haphazard at all. This has apparently been overlooked. Gold, silver, wood, earth are all used with intense significance through the word of God. The two pairs, too, are in clearest contrast to each other ; the wood and earth to the gold and silver. Nay, this, with that beautiful precision so characteristic of the Divine Word, goes still further, for they are so arranged in order that they respectively contrast, the wood with the gold, the earth with the silver.

"Vessels," of course, are admirable figures of *servants* ; and the gold and silver vessels are figures of true servants, who, by their very being are intended for the Lord's use.

It would be surely the height of incongruity to put a golden flagon or a silver cup to menial uses in the kitchen. These are "vessels to honour," and are recognised as such, simply and solely because of the materials of which they are made. Even if soiled, it does not alter in the slightest degree their *purpose*. They are as much *intended* for honourable use as if quite clean ; but it does shew their need of *cleansing* in order to be so used.

But look closer : of what does gold speak, when used figuratively in Scripture ? It is of the highest commercial value, practically

unchangeable in character, and so the standard of value. The highest and unchangeable. Of what *can* that speak but of the Divine nature? So for example, the Cherubim of Gold are called in Heb. ix. "the cherubims of *glory*," as representing the outshining of God in His essential nature. Thus these vessels of gold are just *servants as born of God*, and so partakers of the Divine nature.

Silver utters no less clear and certain a voice. God's dwelling with men, in days that foreshadowed the present, was founded in silver sockets; its holy curtains hung upon silver; everything was based, or depended, upon silver. How was that silver obtained? By every Israelite, that was counted at all, paying one half shekel of silver for his redemption (Ex. xxx.). It was the *cost of redemption*. Oh, how clearly and beautifully, then, does silver speak of the precious blood of Jesus our Lord. And vessels of silver are those whom grace has vitally connected with that precious blood. They are redeemed ones, and discerned only by a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus gold speaks of the work *in* the believer, and what he becomes in Christ. Silver the work *for* ~~him~~⁶ Him, by which alone he is rendered a vessel to honour at all.

Now turn to "wood" and "earth," of which the vessels to dishonour are made. Wood is one of that trio of *dead* things spoken of in I Cor. iii. 12 as fit only for burning, and thus because it is dead lacks life.* Do you not see what a perfect contrast it is to gold? Wood is *human nature*, dead towards God; yet often, how often, pressing itself into the place of service. It shall have its use, not of honour indeed, but of shame and dishonour even in the burning.

Earth we should now expect to contrast with silver; and it does, for nothing of earth could ever be *redeemed*. It was never to be even cleansed. Of what use, indeed, is it to cleanse earth? It is nothing but *dirt* all through. What was to be done with all such? They were to be *broken*, as Lev. vi. 28, "*the earthen vessel, in which it is sodden, shall be broken.*" And there is another significant Scripture that shews the same striking contrast between redeeming and breaking: Ex. xiii. 13, "If thou wilt not *redeem* it, then thou shalt *break* its neck."

* But in this passage in Corinthians it is no question of life, but of the character of service. And are the words "some to dishonour" intended to apply to vessels of wood and of earth, or do they describe still another class? May not a gold vessel be put to a dishonourable use, and an earthen one to an honourable use? (*Ed.*)

So that as to vessels of wood and earth—whether they be clean or soiled it matters not; they are never intended, either in the figure or in its application, to be for honourable uses.*

Now this has cleared away many misconceptions. Every true Christian who is really born of God, and under the sanctifying shelter of the blood of Christ, is, *ipso facto*, as in relation to the new-birth and redemption, a vessel to honour. He does not make himself such by separating from anyone, or anything, anywhere, at any time. God alone, in a mercy that awakens songs from his hitherto silent heart, makes him a vessel to honour, as Rom. ix. 21 explicitly teaches. It does not follow that the Master is always able to use him, any more than it follows that the lord of the palace can always use those precious vessels. If soiled, they are practically useless in both cases, till cleansed.

But this leads directly to the question, does not the Scripture read, "*if a man purge himself from these he shall be a vessel to honour.*"? We answer, "No, it does not." The Scripture thus quoted is misquoted; and the intent of the writer is lost. The emphasis is on the last words that have been omitted. If a man purge himself from these, he shall be—not a vessel to honour—this does not follow as a consequence of the purging—but a vessel to honour *sanctified*; the purging does not alter the material, but cleanses, or to use the word applied to persons, sanctifies it, separates it from the defilement on it; and then follows in perfect order, because thus sanctified, it is meet for the Master's use; and, finally, the Master does use it for "every good work."

This is intensely practical and important, and we see how thoroughly this interpretation is confirmed by the context. Look in v. 19 at that beautiful seal on all that is of God down to the end of time, with its two sides, the one speaking of sovereign grace, the other of human responsibility.

"*The Lord knows them that are His.*"

That is the divine side, and is in exact line with

"*Vessels of gold and silver,*" or "*to honour,*" for He alone makes such.

"*Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity.*"

That is the human side, and is in exact line with

"*If a man purge himself from these.*"

* Yet the earthen vessel had been used. In the O.T. we find the command, "An altar of earth shall ye make unto Me." And in the N.T., "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." (Ed.)

Is it not clear, simple, and convincing that the "these" of v. 21 bears the closest relation to the "iniquity" of v. 19, and is consequently far removed from the possibility of any application to the true children of God, evidenced, as they only can be evidenced, by holiness and love. It has been made so to apply, but every conscience will surely recognise the iniquity of thus identifying the Lord's people *with* iniquity.

My space for this paper is, I fear, more than filled; we must reserve for another our enquiry as to the means of cleansing, and what the "these" are from which we must be purged.

My beloved brethren, we have but one short life; who that in any feeble measure has been awakened to its worth would waste it? Who that feels how much has already been thus lost would permit a moment of what remains to be equally thrown away? As surely as we are, by infinite grace, born again and redeemed, so surely are we *intended* to be vessels to honour. If we are not used in some way, however lowly may be the sphere, it is not because our Master does not want to use us, but because *He cannot*.

(*To be continued.*)

The Christian's Choice.—I am frail, and the world is fading, but my soul is immortal, and God is eternal. If I pitch upon the creature, either it may take wings like the eagle that fieth toward heaven, or my soul may take its way like the rich fool, and go to hell. But if I choose God for my portion, then "Goodness and mercy shall follow me" while I *live*, and glory and eternity shall crown me when I *die*. I will therefore now leave that which I must soon lose, and embrace that which I shall always enjoy.

* * * *

JOB XVI.—How very wonderfully is Christ's life foreshadowed by this extraordinary chapter and the experiences described or illustrated of his followers who have been wrongfully or too severely judged. Quite a new interest is given to it when so viewed and understood. It tells forth anew the Truth of the Scriptures in a revelation of the sufferings which were to be of God's own beloved Son at the hands of merciless men, and also illustrates with spiritual force the treatment of man to man as a would-be sympathiser or comforter.

SONGS FOR SAINTS.

No. 2.

"YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS!"

"Your Heavenly Father knoweth."—Matt. vi. 32.

Though all my friends forsake me,
 And many are my foes,
 Though trials overtake me,
 My Heavenly Father knows!
 I know that *He* is near me
 Till life on earth shall close;
 This word will ever cheer me:
 "Your Heavenly Father knows!"

Chorus: Oh, yes, my Father knows me,
 He knows my every care;
 Such tender love He shows me—
 None can with it compare;
 And when, in times of sadness,
 His mercy overflows,
 I'll sing this song of gladness:
He knows—My Father knows!

Though Satan may oppress me,
 And cause me many woes,
 Though anxious cares distress me,
 My Heavenly Father knows!
 I know that *He* will shield me,
 And give me sweet repose,
 For He has saved and sealed me—
 Oh, yes, my Father knows!

Chorus: Oh, yes, &c.

Though dark the way before me,
 And darker still it grows,
His watchful eye is o'er me—
 My Heavenly Father knows!
 I know that *He* will guide me
 Through every storm that blows;
 Whatever ill betide me,
 He knows! my Father knows!

Chorus: Oh, yes, &c.

Though health and strength should fail me,
 And every comfort goes,
 Though grim disease assail me,
 My heavenly Father knows!
 Yea, e'en though death should court me,
 And no relenting shows,
 This word will still support me:
 "Your heavenly Father knows!"

Chorus: Oh, yes, &c.

Verses could be sung to 703 S.S. & S. "The Church's one foundation.
 m | m m f m | m - r d | d l s f | m (etc.)
 The chorus to 612 S.S. & S. "Jerusalem the golden." (A little quicker).
 d | r d f m | r - d m | s d ' t se | l (etc.)

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS (*continued*).

IV. 281:310-332

PRIESTLY GARMENTS.

MY intention is not to deal with the various garments, but simply with the fact that the priests were to be clothed with garments that differed from ordinary clothing, and to endeavour to point out what lesson is intended to be conveyed by this fact. "Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty to consecrate him" (Exod xxviii. 2-3). "And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats," &c. (ver. 40), and in Lev. viii. 7-9, Moses puts these garments upon Aaron, and in ver. 13 he also clothes Aaron's sons.

The spiritual significance of this is easily seen: for as the soldier, &c., is distinguished from the civilian by his uniform, and in some families, the servants wear the liveries of the house to which they belong, so, in like manner, by a man's *outward* behaviour can his fellow-men judge of his character as a soldier of Christ, and a member of "the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19).

The writer of Ps. cxxxii., seeing this significance prayed, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness" (ver. 9), and in ver. 16 God responds to this request by saying, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation." God has no pleasure in garments or colours, but He has pleasure in the righteousness of His saints. The high priest's garments, which were said to be "for glory and for beauty" (Exod. xxviii. 2), may set forth the *glorious* and *beautiful* life which adorned the *outward* character of our Lord on earth. Concerning this John said, "We beheld His glory" (John i. 14). Is. lxi. 10 reads, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh as a priest" (R.V.).

The garments of Aaron's sons may set forth the fact that *we* also are *clothed*. How frequently is imputed righteousness spoken of as a garment. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22). The same Apostle also says concerning himself, "That I may

be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness . . . but that which is through the faith of Christ " (Phil. iii. 9). This covering, however, is only *seen* by God, and must be *evidenced* in a practical righteousness by which alone our character can be adorned in the eyes of men (of this statement more will be said later).

As Moses, who stood in God's stead, undertook all the work of consecration, so God alone can truly consecrate any man. All that Aaron and his sons did was to *yield* themselves, so that their consecration needed no effort on their part beyond the simple surrender of themselves to Moses, and through him to God, that He might do with them what He pleased.

In 2 Cor. i. 21 we read, " Now He that . . . *anointed* us is *God*." So also in Is. lxi. 10 we read *He* hath *clothed* me. In all these passages it is *God* that hath done these things.

The priests were never *anointed* again, nor marked with *blood*, for only God can do these, and His work, being perfect, never needs repeating, but they were *washed* and *clothed* every day, and these they did *themselves*.

For washing, a laver was provided (see Exod. xxx. 17-21). At this laver, the *blood-marked hands and feet* must be daily washed, showing that in this manner we need constant cleansing. As the laver was made of brazen mirrors (Exod. xxxviii. 8), it may set forth the word of God in its judgment of our ways (profitable for reproof, for correction, see 2 Tim. iii. 16), while the water it contained represents the *cleansing* efficacy of the Word. Thus while one revealed the defilement, the other *removed* it. And this is just what the Word does. The Apostle no sooner says, " By the law is the *knowledge* of sin " (Rom. iii. 20) than he adds, " But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law," &c. (ver. 21). So, then, the very law which discovers sin, also witnesses to a means of its typical removal. Those sacrifices " could never take away sins " (Heb. x. 11), but they testified of something that could (see ver. 12).

The Apostle also bids us " cleanse ourselves from all defilement " (2 Cor. vii. 1, R.V.), and this because we have " these promises " set forth in ch. vi. 17-18 (glorious promises).

The sum of all this is that we should bring every action and every step in life to *God's word* to be tested.

As this washing at the laver did not depend upon consciousness of defilement, so we may be quite unconscious of anything wrong, yet, as seen by God, there is always defilement in our best deeds.

As the priests were washed every day, so they were to put on their priestly robes every day.

In like manner we are to "put on" our "beautiful garments" (Isa. lii. 1), but there must be a putting *off* in order to a putting *on*. Col. iii. 9 reminds us that we "have put off the old man" (this we did when we first believed and were baptised), so, "Now ye also put off ^{all} these, anger, wrath, malice," &c. (ver. 8). These are the old man's *livery*, and are unsightly garments, not to be worn by God's priests. Then in ver. 10, we are said to "have put on the new man" (we did this at the same time that we put off the old man), and as this "new man" "is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (*i.e.*)² God, we must "Put on therefore . . . hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering," &c., while to bind and keep all together, *love* must be the *girdle* or "bond of perfectness" (vers. 12-14, R.V.). These are the new man's *livery*, and certainly "garments for glory and for beauty," which, if continually worn by us, shall so adorn our character, that we shall "shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Pet. ii. 9); or as many utter week by week, "Show forth His praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives . . . by walking before Him in holiness and righteousness all our days."

In closing this section, may we remark that the consecration did not *make* them priests; for they were consecrated *because* they were priests. It however fitted them "to minister" to God "in the priests' office."

So is it with ourselves. Consecrated lives will not *make* us God's chosen ones, but they mark us as such. In Col. iii. we are told to "put off all these" "as the elect of God," as though the Apostle would say, you are God's "elect" ones—God's "holy" ones—God's "beloved" ones, and so you must "put off all these," and "put on" God's own *livery*.

(To be continued.)

THE CRADLE, CROSS, AND CROWN.

Music : Lord Henry Somerset's " Echo."

Walk with me in the stillness of the night.
Come! see the Saviour, in His lowly bed;
Laid in the manger, see the glory-light
Shine on the Christ of God!
This is the Son of God, the Saviour God,
The heavens answer, " Yes! the Son of God!"

Come with me in the stillness of the night.
See the frail bark upon a raging sea.
A man is sleeping calmly! Shall this sight
Prove He sleeps carelessly?
This is the Son of God—the Mighty God—
And winds and waves re-echo: " Son of God."

Come with me in the stillness of the night.
See! Jesus walks upon a stormy sea.
Lord, bid me come, and coming, sinks in sight
Of Him Who has said " Come!"
He is the Lord of all, Creator—God:
In answered prayer we see the Saviour God.

Come with me in the stillness of the night.
The Saviour eats—yea, drinks—with those He loves;
Take, eat,—yes, drink! His blood shall cleanse them white
Before the throne of God!
And can it be, Thou Holy One of God?
Most blessed Lord, Thou art the Lamb of God!

Lord Jesus, in the silence of the night
Thine agony alone! Thy sweat of blood!
For none could watch, and Angels ever bright
Came then to strengthen Thee!
And hast Thou then been there, Thou Lamb of God?
With joy my soul responds: My Saviour God!

Lord Jesus, Saviour, night has passed away,
And Thou art seen in glory on the Throne.
It is no earthly dream, for soon the day
Shall dawn, Thou Son of God!
At home, and blest we know our part will be
Thy Father's house, our grand Eternity.

Come, then, most Blessed Lord,
That we may be
At home with Thee, in Thine
Own rest above:
And then to know as known,
Abide in love,
Grace for grace crowns that day—
Thy Sun will never set;
It shines—still shines,
Through one unbroken, vast Eternity.

BEHAVIOUR BECOMING THE HOUSE OF GOD (*continued.*)

IV.

IN view of the present broken up and dislocated condition of things in the professing Church, some may ask, is it possible or practicable to have Churches after the New Testament order at the present time? If not, then all Churches lack Scripture authority and are at best of human organisation and constitution. Some adopting this view seek refuge and solace in individualism, and others again are satisfied with sectarianism, both of which are lacking Scripture recognition.

The epistles of Paul are addressed to the Churches of the New Testament, and if we have outlived their application we have no such Churches, and are therefore without chart or compass to guide us, and that too at a time when we most need guidance. These epistles were written to actually existing Churches, and not certainly written to the sects, saving to condemn them.

The advocates of individualism can have no authority for meeting together, because any meetings of such would lack a Scriptural Church status, and so are devoid of helm, chart, and compass also. Discipline could not be exercised or insisted on, and confusion and anarchy must ultimately prevail. Cohesion could not subsist for long.

No doubt the existing state of things is deplorable, and is a loud call to repent, and with it seek to do the first works, which means a return to the original type of the Churches. This is exemplified in the return of Israel from Babylon, who were careful to read the Scriptures, and in a self judged spirit endeavoured to order their congregational relations according to the manner (Ezra iii. 2, Neh. viii. 4). So Malachi iv. 4 enjoins the remembrance of the Law of Moses even at that late and ruinous period of Israel's history. Plainly shewing that they at least had not outlived the Law of Moses, and as an example we have Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke i. 6). Surely if these two faithful ones could do this in their day ought we to do less in our day?

Reviewing the present fallen down and shattered state of things, surely there must be a cause that has produced it, and that cause is not far to seek. We have failed to keep *Christ Himself* before us, and in place of this we have tried to exemplify the *One Body* among ourselves as an objective, with the result that is painfully patent to all. The Staff "Beauty" was broken because Israel failed in their covenant relation to the Lord, and then the breaking of the Staff "Bands" soon followed—which indicated the ensuing dissolution of the brotherhood between the tribes. The binding of brethren together depends upon their being bound to the Lord. Nevertheless the Lord encourages "the poor of the flock," saying, "I will feed (or shepherd) the flock of slaughter" (viewing these as slaughtered by their oppressing brethren) such as we have in Zephaniah iii. 19. These afflicted ones—these "solitary" ones the Lord would set in families (Psalm lxxviii. 6). Sheep are gregarious, they must go in flocks formed up into "gatherings" or churches, without assuming to be anything, and such Churches will seek to be guided only by the Holy Scriptures as to their constitution and order, and will endeavour to carry out Jude 20-25, which will serve them, and safeguard them from the baneful influences that abound on all hands, and then Acts ix. 31 will be made good.

If we take Scripture as our guide we shall find that true edification depends upon saints acting on Scriptural lines according to proper Church order and constitution. (See Acts ii. 42; iv. 23; ix. 26, 28, 31; xi. 26; xiii. 1, 2; xiv. 26-28; xv. 22; xx. 7; 1 Cor. v. 4; xi. 17-20; xiv. 4, 5, 19, 23-35; Heb. x. 25). There is danger of this being disorganised or displaced or over-ridden by an over-doing of Conferences which possess no proper Church status or character, hence the apostolic rules applicable to the Churches cannot be applied to Conferences, and therefore cannot have the moral weight that belongs to the Churches, nor command the unqualified allegiance and fellowship of the saints. The idea of the Lord by His Spirit directing or controlling for the time being is effectually excluded, yea, so much so, that some of these conference meetings are under the control of a leader. Experience ought by this time to have taught us that it is not quantity nor even quality in itself that truly comforts and satisfies, but rather what really has the unctuous power of the present Spirit, who if ungrieved and unquenched, will surely glorify Christ to the true comforting and edifying of the saints.

Concurrently with this there has been and is a growing desire to hear great teachers, popular preachers, and noted evangelists, who often placard their own names to their missions in a most conspicuous and sometimes offensive way, often disfiguring their bills with portraits of themselves, &c., &c. If this is not glorying in men, what is? This kind of thing has done immense damage to the simple and ordinary and unassuming Gospel preachings on ordinary lines.

Some saints, too, only present themselves occasionally at the Breaking of Bread. They are never seen at a meeting for prayer nor at a Bible reading, nor even at a Gospel meeting. Such would not be reckoned by Paul in his day as my "*helpers* in Christ Jesus" (Rom; xvi. 3).

Now where this state of things dominates, there is not the slightest hope of the prosperity of any Church-gathering of saints. A sorrowful contrast to Acts ii. 42, where we read of the first Church at Jerusalem, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." This exemplifies how we "ought to behave ourselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." This ought to be true of each particular local Church, and where the divine conditions are observed divine results will surely follow.

"What marks the gift of an evangelist is love for souls, not love of preaching."

* * * *

"One part of his testimony is to expose the true state of things with regard to the world. How can I use worldly means in serving Christ? I cannot let a worldly man help me to preach, or in any kind of service. I am a witness to the world of its sin. I can only say to it, I stand against you."

* * * *

"I have observed sometimes that caprice, peevishness, jealousy and other evils have stained the old age even of good men. My chief prayer now respecting myself is, that I may be preserved from indiscretion and folly; and that if it please the Lord, my evening of life may be consistent with my profession, and that I may set without a cloud."

AM I READY FOR HIS COMING?

Am I ready for His coming,
 Waiting my dear Lord to see ;
 Should He come at any moment,
 Faithful, watching, shall I be ?
 Do I long for His appearing
 More than morning light to break ?
 Does the thought of His returning
 In my heart an echo wake ?

Am I ready for His coming,
 Should that be at early morn,
 When the sun in all its splendour
 An unclouded sky adorns ?
 Does this thought my soul enrapture
 With a joy no tongue can tell ?
 Oh, to think I soon shall see Him,
 Ever in His presence dwell.

Am I ready for His coming ?
 He is even at the door ;
 Is my candle brightly burning
 On this dark benighted shore ?
 As I gaze with eye expectant,
 Scan the vast horizon far ;
 Am I ready waiting for Him—
 Him my Bright and Morning Star ?

Am I ready for His coming,
 Should that be at evening sweet,
 When the shadows softly stealing
 O'er the scene together meet ?
 All of toil and labour over,
 Hushed in slumber's perfect rest,
 Shall I welcome His returning,
 Do I wait with throbbing breast ?

Am I ready for His coming,
 Ready for the trumpet sound,
 Listening every passing moment,
 For the echo to resound ?
 Are my garments pure unspotted,
 Cleansed daily from all sin,
 Purer as the days grow darker,
 For the presence of the King ?

Am I ready for His coming,
 Seeking nothing but His will,
 As each moment He draws nearer,
 Does this theme my bosom fill ?
 We caught up in clouds to meet Him,
 He receives his blood-bought bride ;
 Then, oh then, we shall behold Him,
 Ever with Him we'll abide.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

C.A.I. Ques. : 1. *Have Spiritualistic Mediums access to an d communication with the spirits of departed unbelievers? If not, what must we understand Deut. xviii. 11 to mean—" A consulter with familiar spirits " ? Are they evil spirits, or the spirits of departed friends? 2. Upon what conditions was the witch of Endor permitted to communicate with and to bring up Samuel the prophet, a departed, but saved man? (1 Sam. xxviii. 11, 12).*

Ans. : 1. Great uncertainty still exists as to the cause of the phenomena witnessed at Spiritualistic séances. One intimately acquainted with such practices writes respecting a very celebrated medium that there was nothing "calculated to strengthen the presumption of spirit communication." Again, there have been those, deeply interested in these studies, who promised when they departed this life, to communicate with their friends. No satisfactory results have ever yet been forthcoming. The fact is the communications of mediums have so far served no useful purpose whatever. The answers obtained, or supposed to be obtained, show surprising ignorance on the part of demons, or whoever they may be. While, frequently, the answers bear a very striking relation to the calling, acquirements, and habits of the medium himself. What part demons may play in it, and what use they may make of it, it is difficult to say. And scarcely less so to tell how far it is purely physical. "It is generally admitted" (says one well acquainted with these proceedings) "that——will use physical means when the conditions permit of her doing so; and that the phenomena recognised as genuine give little support to the hypothesis of spirit intervention. The description of the feats witnessed, in fact, strongly suggests that the medium . . . is possessed of some force capable of acting on material objects at a short distance beyond the limits of her material organism." What power "a consulter with familiar spirits" had in O.T. times it is equally difficult to define. We are inclined to think that the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has made a considerable difference in this respect, in those places where the knowledge of Him has been received. In support of this view it may be mentioned that demons appear to exercise more direct control over people to-day in countries where the light of the gospel has not penetrated.

2. With reference to the witch of Endor, it is worthy of note that when Samuel appears he takes no notice of the woman, but,

addressing Saul, says, "Why hast *thou* disquieted me, to bring me up?" This would seem to imply that it was entirely on the king's account that this was allowed. In corroboration of this it may be mentioned that as soon as the woman sees Samuel she seems disturbed by an unusual occurrence, and *immediately* recognises that the one who had consulted her was no less a person than King Saul.

A.F.C. : *A question is asked as to addressing the different Persons in the Trinity in prayer.*

Ans. : We find in Scripture that God is addressed, and the Father, and Christ, but never the Holy Spirit. In our early Christian experience, the question of which Person to address presented not a little difficulty, but has not now done so for many years. We have for long felt that in all general matters, such as the circumstances of this life, the weather, calamities, &c., it is proper to address God, or the Father. As also in Christian worship, though in connection with the remembrance of Christ, in the breaking of bread, it is very appropriate to address the Lord. The Lord may also be addressed in all matters relating to service, and of course we may at all times speak to Him in prayer, as Paul apparently did, according to 2 Cor. xii., but terms of endearment in addressing either the Father, or the Lord Jesus are, we think, out of place. They never occur in scripture, and are, therefore, best not employed by us. Nor should the singular number be used when praying in public.

W.B. Ques. : *If other books are mentioned in the Bible besides those we have, can the Bible be said to contain the whole word of God ?*

Ans. : In his book, "The Scripture of Truth," Mr. Collett remarks : "When we think of the marvellous career of the Israelites . . . the wonder is, not that there were some half dozen books outside the Bible, containing partial records of that unique people, but, that we have not heard of many more such books. . . A very striking instance of this occurs in Joshua x. 13 in connection with the sun standing still—the writer being none other than Jasher the Upright."

Nevertheless, although such books have not found a place in the canon of scripture, the Bible does contain the whole word of God. The question of which books were inspired was not answered in any arbitrary way, but determined by the intrinsic value of the books themselves. You ask if there is any real proof that inspiration has ceased. The only proof known to us, but which to our thinking is all-sufficient, is that it has ceased—the cessation being self evident.

We should gain no new doctrine, nor any enlargement of our conception of Christianity by the inclusion of other books. It was not until the Council of Trent (1545) that a sort of imprimatur was given to the uninspired books of the Apocrypha. In the early days they were not looked upon as of equal value or authority with the other books.

A.W.J. Ques.: *What is "the word of My patience" in Rev. iii. 10?*

Ans.: It refers to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is waiting at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool. He has been rejected here on earth, and waits for the time when He shall possess the kingdom. But, as He said to His disciples, when they asked Him "wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel"—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power." And so He waits in patience. Blessed are they who keep His word, and wait with Him.

"True Christian character is the rarest of human phenomena, because it must be at once original, spontaneous, human, and divine."

* * * *

"True character is only produced by the sense of responsibility acting freely in the human spirits. It is never produced by devotion to an ideal, or by following an example as mechanically as a school-boy copies a headline."

* * *

"As all real character is produced by a sense of responsibility so all real Christian character is produced by the sense of responsibility to Christ."

* * * *

"The worst of all mockeries is a religion that leaves the heart unchanged: a religion that has *everything* but the love of Christ enshrined in the soul."

* * * *

"Before the Lord can use us in His service, we must have close individual dealing with Himself. He always will have to do in *secret* with that soul that He intends to use in blessing others."

* * * *

"Our boldness for God *before the world* must always be the result of individual dealing with God *in secret*. Our victories over self, and sin, and the world are always *first* fought where no eye sees but God's."

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

Vol. I.—No. 13.

OCTOBER, 1909. PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

IT is with thanksgiving that we enter upon the second year of publication. There has been much to encourage during the past twelve months—the appreciation of our readers, a continued increase of circulation, and above all, the sense of the Lord's support and approval.

* * * *

Volume I. will be ready early in December (D.V.), and will comprise fifteen numbers—October, 1908, to December, 1909, inclusive. The cost will be 3s. per volume, bound full cloth, lettered back. Bound quarter roan, 3s. 6d. Will those who intend ordering kindly write at once to Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co., 8, Paternoster Row, E.C., that we may know as early as possible how many will be required.

* * * *

During the coming twelve months, if we are spared, we will do all that lies in our power to make the magazine profitable and

interesting. Will our friends do all that they can to increase its circulation? Never was there a day when the truth needed more to be maintained and propagated. Not only does every form of error abound, but it finds willing and active agents. Shall those who know the truth sit idle? It has been repeatedly said of late that tract distribution is on the decline. If so, this is strikingly in inverse ratio to the need for it. The issue and circulation of Sunday papers has not declined. Where a few years ago a single individual might be found selling them, announcing the fact in almost muffled tones, half a dozen men and boys may now be seen; and not only seen, but unmistakably heard. While men are thus having temporal matters—not to say evil of every kind—thrust upon their attention, are the servants of God to keep back eternal matters from their notice, and withhold that which is good?

* * * *

In the light of this, can any of our friends order a few more copies every month for gratuitous distribution? In the neighbourhood where each resides there will doubtless be houses with occupants, more or less known, where copies could be left, or to which they could be posted. These silent messengers may obtain a hearing where a personal call would be difficult, and, perhaps, a direct personal appeal misunderstood. People are more interested about eternal matters than we often suppose; and though they may shrink from conversation on these topics, they are quite ready to read about them.

Five thousand copies are printed monthly, but the magazine is issued at such a low price, and so well got up, that this number ought to be increased to ten thousand. The quantity now printed is mostly subscribed for, but there is a margin for free grants to those who are not able, or not inclined, to pay for them. These will be gladly sent on application to the Editor.

In future numbers we hope to include, now and again, articles suited to those who have not yet confessed Jesus as Lord, and address ourselves, as far as possible, to every condition and need. In the present number a series of letters to the young on practical subjects commences. The first subject is Temptation. Valuable articles from different contributors also appear.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:— A Simple Exposition. 316

CHAPTER VII. 1-25, MELCHISEDEC.

“CONSIDER HOW **Great** THIS MAN WAS.”

ALL through the Epistle to the Hebrews the greatness of the Person of Christ is kept in view. It opens with a presentation of His seven-fold glory as the Son—Heir, Creator, and Upholder of all things; the effulgence of God’s glory, and the expression of His substance; the Purger of sins; seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. No wonder He is declared to be better than angels; the object of their worship; whose throne is for ever and ever.

Then as man He is crowned with glory and honour, destined to have all things put under Him. So that in Chapter iii. we are called upon to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Shewing how the inspired writer is fixing attention upon this illustrious Person. And the reason is obvious. It is to show the superior character of Christianity over all that preceded it.

The repeated allusion to Melchisedec is with the same design. A higher priesthood there could not be. A loftier type of the Son of God, the Old Testament does not contain. The introduction of such a subject would appeal to Hebrews with unmistakable meaning, and irresistible power. And so, after a thrice repeated mention of this glorious person (Chap. v., 6, 10, and vi. 20), and after saying at the second mention, “Of Whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered,” he comes at length in the chapter before us (having found it necessary first to make a few pointed references to their spiritual state), to enlarge upon the important truth that was before his mind.

“*For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom Abraham gave the tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was*” * (vv. 1-4).

* In explanation of this mysterious reference to one, who, as to himself, was, as far as we know, an ordinary mortal, it must be observed that he is here introduced in his typical character, “made like unto the Son of God.” These last words explain the statement “without father,” &c. In the account of him in Gen. xiv. no reference is made to parentage or descendants.

The greatness of this person is obvious. He is a King, a priest, he blesses Abraham, who had the promises, and from whom the whole stock of Israel sprang ; he receives tithes ; and to him neither birth nor death attaches. And all that could be said of this person only represented what was true of Jesus the Son of God. An appeal such as this to Jews who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah—an appeal based upon their own scriptures—was irresistible.

But does it come with the same force to us who are Christians from amongst the Gentiles, and have never been in the position of Jews ? It ought to ; and for this reason. The introduction of Melchisedec is in connection with the personal and official glory of the One Who is our High Priest. It must mean a great deal to us to have to do with one so great. In order to understand what it does mean, or if we have already understood it to refresh our minds, let us take a brief glance at Gen. xiv. and Ps. cx.

In the first passage alluded to, Melchisedec suddenly appears on the scene as Abraham returns from the slaughter of the kings. The King of Sodom is also present, but Melchisedec seems to anticipate him. Before the former can offer any reward to Abraham, the latter has brought forth bread and wine, and blesses the victor. In the strength of this Abraham refuses to accept anything from the King of Sodom. All this no doubt has a future bearing which has more to do with God's earthly people than ourselves. It is a royal priesthood that we have here, foreshadowing the time when Christ will sit as a king and priest upon His throne, after the enemies of His people have been destroyed. Nevertheless there is priesthood as well as kingship, and although Christ is not our king He is our priest, and consequently we may find in this incident that which appertains to ourselves.

All priesthood has something in common, whether it is after the order of Aaron or of Melchisedec. A priest is on behalf of God, and on behalf of His people. The fact that the King of Sodom is introduced here as well as the King of Salem is surely very suggestive. What does it suggest, but that the Christian does not get his support from the world, but from Christ. The first thing Melchisedec did was to bring forth bread and wine. So of our Melchisedec it says " He is able to succour them that are tempted " (Heb. ii. 18). And again, because He is our great high priest, it says, "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and*

find grace to help in time of need " (ch. iv. 16). If it was so happy for Abraham to meet this distinguished person, who was both king and priest, as he returned weary from the fight, is it less happy for us that we have One in the presence of God, greater still, to think of all our needs and send us down help? We have to come for it, of course, but there it is for us.

Then Melchisedec blessed him—but from God. It is important to notice he did so as coming between. "Blessed be Abraham," he says, "of the most high God." So with us. It does not say anywhere in the epistle to the Hebrews we come unto the priest, but we come unto God by Him. "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Ch. vii. 25).

"Consider how great this man was." Consider his greatness with a view to the understanding the greatness of our Melchisedec; and that it may encourage you to come to a throne of grace to obtain help. As we realise that He is Melchisedec we shall come. As we think of the "bread and wine" and the blessing, they will constrain us to come. And to what do we come? To a throne, to God, to the presence of the Majesty in the heavens, where sits the true Melchisedec who is able to obtain blessings for us. This will refresh you for your journey. This will make heaven seem home to you. It will be as if you had fed upon "bread and wine." The strength and joy of heaven will be yours. Try to realise what your privileges are. Oh, the luxuries that are ours if we would only enjoy them.

Let me ask you to think of the salvation that is ours in connection with this order of priesthood. To be a priest after the order of Melchisedec is an honour that belongs only to the Son. Yet He is such on your behalf. And, though He were a Son, He qualified Himself, so to speak, by passing through suffering, having never, of course, experienced such a thing before. "*Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His piety; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec*" (ch. v. 7-10).

Notice how the thought of salvation is introduced here in connection with Christ being a priest after the order of Melchisedec.

“ Being made **perfect**, He became the author of eternal salvation ;” that is, having become fully qualified by passing through suffering and death, and reaching the place of power and glory at the right hand of God as the true Melchisedec, a salvation has been inaugurated which becomes the possession of all who own Him Lord. It is not so much here a question of the forgiveness of sins, but of succour and grace bestowed. Having in the days of His flesh being confronted by every power of evil, and overcome it—for every want and woe were His—now in the place of exaltation in the very presence of God, with all divine resources at His disposal, He is not only able to feel what we are passing through, “ for He has felt the same,” but He can send us down the “ bread and wine ” and the blessing. In other words, the needed help.

Chapter vii. 24-5 makes this additionally clear. “ *But this man because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*” What a salvation ! “ Evermore,” or “ all the way through.” It only needs to be remembered that it is for those who “ come unto God by Him.” Now this must not be confounded with our first coming to God at our conversion. That was for the forgiveness of our sins. This is for continual needs, and is a perpetual coming. Every day, and if necessary, every hour we are to come unto God by Christ. The other was once for all. Then what took place between Melchisedec of old and Abraham will take place as regards us, though of course in a purely spiritual way. “ He was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth ; and blessed be the most high God.” So of Christ—the true Melchisedec—it is said, “ He ever liveth to make intercession.”

Is it any wonder the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews should say, “ Of Whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered.” A brief reference to Ps. cx. will help to emphasise this, and enable us further to consider how great this One is. In verse 4 we find a reference to Melchisedec. In connection with this in verse 1 Christ is addressed by Jehovah, and invited to sit at His right hand until His enemies are made His footstool ; and the entire psalm is occupied with the subjugation of His foes. The rod of His strength will go forth from Zion ; He will rule in the midst of His enemies ; He

will strike through kings in the day of His wrath. Now all this has a future bearing, except the fact of sitting at God's right hand. It is in keeping with Gen. xiv. There it is as Abraham returns from the slaughter of the kings Melchisedec meets him, and speaks of God having delivered his enemies into his hand. Here it is the same. It is all in view of the enemies of Christ being made His footstool. How it all enhances His greatness. Is there a more wonderful sight for the eye of faith to rest upon than Jesus—the once lowly and obedient Man—sitting at the right hand of the throne of God—the place of supreme power—waiting for Jehovah to give Him His rights ?

But is He inactive while waiting there ? No. He intercedes for those who have been made willing to come to Him in this the day of earth's rejection of Him. It says in the psalm under consideration, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (v. 3). This refers to Israel, and is yet future. But Christ has a people who are willing now. And these get the advantage of His being a "priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

What a lovely comparison may be made, too, between verse 7 of our psalm and verses 7-9 of Hebrews v. "He shall drink of the brook in the way ; therefore shall He lift up the head." Surely this means that all the exaltation and glory of verses one and on were to be reached through humiliation and suffering. "The brook in the way" was surely Gethsemane, with all that led to it and all that followed. So Hebrews v. 7-9, and Ps. cx. 7 may be linked together. But what a lifting up of the head followed. "God hath made this same Jesus Whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ."

"Glory, honour, praise, and power,
Be unto the Lamb for ever !
Jesus Christ is our Redeemer !
Hallelujah, Hallelujah."

"Now consider how great this man was." And as you consider will you not ponder for yourself the chapter which has been before us (Heb. vii.), and see for yourself in various ways how the contrasts are brought out between what was of old and what is now. Verses 4-7, 8, 9-10, 11-19, 20, 21, 23-5 give the different sections. Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec, and received blessing from him, therefore the latter was greater. He is the living One in contrast to those who die. To him tithes were paid even by those who under

the law received them. Perfection not by the Levitical law, but in connection with Melchisedec. The latter made a priest with an oath, the others without. Christ has an unchangeable priesthood, in all other cases they did not continue by reason of death.

It is by this One—this great One—we now draw near to God (v. 19), and as we do so we are saved to the uttermost. *w 19*

SONGS FOR SAINTS.

No. 3.

“THERE NEVER WAS A FRIEND LIKE JESUS.”

“A Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”—Pr. xviii. 24.

Oh, I love to *hear* of Jesus,
 How He died upon the tree,
 Of His wondrous love and mercy
 To a sinner such as me.
 I have found in Him a Saviour,
 And a never-failing Friend ;
 Having loved me unto Calv'ry,
 He will love me to the end.

Chorus : There never was a Friend like Jesus,
 There never was a Friend so true,
 He gives me such a joy,
 And a peace without alloy,
 And He waits to do the same for you.

Oh, I love to *sing* of Jesus,
 For He fills my heart with song,
 And He makes me feel so happy,
 I must praise Him all day long.
 When the clouds begin to gather,
 And there comes a time of need,
 Then I look away to Jesus,
 For He proves a Friend indeed.

Chorus : There never was, &c.

Oh, I long to *be* with Jesus
 In the glory land above,
 With the angel host to praise Him
 And the wonders of His love.
 Oh, the rapture of that moment
 When He calleth us away
 From the earth and all its sorrow,
 To the realms of endless day !

Chorus : There never was, &c.

BALAAM AND HIS PARABLES (*concluded.*) 237

THE SEQUEL.

ALL the parables having been delivered, with their marvellous unfolding of the grace of God towards His redeemed people, "Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way" (Num. xxiv. 25). But this did not end the matter. Before his departure for Mesopotamia, or more probably as the fruit of reflection after his return thither, Balaam proffered a vile suggestion to the King of Moab, which had the most disastrous consequences for the people of Israel. No movement of the enemy, whether covert or open, could affect the *grace* of God towards them, for His purposes stand for ever, as we have seen; but the enemy, through the unwatchfulness of the people, was well able to arouse the *government* of God against them. Accordingly we read in Rev. ii. 14: "Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." Num. xxxi. 16 speaks similarly of "the counsel of Balaam."

The people of God in all ages have had far more to fear from the craft of Satan than from his hostility, open and avowed. Hence the warning in Eph. vi. 11 as to "the wiles of the devil." It would seem that Balaam, having proved by experience that nothing could turn God away from His people, suggested to Balak that possibly the people might be turned away from God. Diabolical conspiracy! Alas, it succeeded only too well. The women of Moab laid snares for the men of Israel, into which they readily fell. Fornication and idolatry soon became rampant among them. The people who were to dwell alone, and not be reckoned amongst the nations, were presently found participating in the high festivals of heathen gods. Oh, the pitifulness of such a spectacle!

Let us not forget that it was to the angel of the Church in Pergamos the words in Rev. ii. 13 were addressed. "The doctrine of Balaam" has there been preached in Christianity! This it is that accounts for the utterly worldly character of the bulk of what calls itself "the Christian Church." The world and the Church

have joined hands, to the incalculable injury of the latter. The heavenly calling has become obscured, and the blessed hope has been lost as the result of it. Reader, let us, with all the energy of our spiritual being, reject "the doctrine of Balaam." Let us shake ourselves free from even the smallest taint of worldliness, that our hearts may have full leisure to be occupied with Christ, and the glory into which He has gone.

"The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel." Why? They were doing no worse than others! True, but Israel was a people in special relationship with God; hence God in His governmental dealings would not tolerate for a moment in them what He would pass by for the time being in others. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). Nothing is more blessed than to be near to God, but nothing is more solemn, if our ways are evil.

The Corinthians proved the truth of this to their cost. They were indeed the "sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling," but such was their disgraceful behaviour that the hand of God lay heavily upon them when Paul addressed to them his first epistle. With the full light of Christianity blazing upon them, they were guilty of the very sins that were committed by Israel at Baal-Peor. Thus many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept (1 Cor. xi. 30). Divine judgment begins, not with the heathen, but at the house of God (1 Pet. iv. 17). "This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified'" (Lev. x. 3). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psalm lxxxix. 7).

Let us walk humbly before our God. Our hearts may be well assured that nothing will ever cause Him to change in His affection to us; but our hearts know only too sadly how easy it is for us to change in our attitude towards Him. The knowledge of these things should deliver us from all confidence in the flesh (our own especially), and should serve to cast us in simple-hearted confidence upon God. All the purposes of His love concerning us rest upon the immutable foundation of the precious blood of Christ, and are thus stable for evermore.

LETTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

“TEMPTATION.”

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

It has occurred to me that some letters on practical subjects, such as the above, might be a help to you. I am thinking of those who, in some measure, have begun to realise what life is. We do not live long in this world without experiencing temptation, and knowing what it means; and the older we grow the more real it becomes. In one way or another many fall. Some through weakness, others through ignorance, not a few through carelessness; and some suddenly, others, again, after long conflict. In any case it is a matter which concerns us all, for no one is free from it. It cannot therefore be out of place to utter some warnings and suggest some safeguards.

In the Bible the word *temptation* is used in two senses. Sometimes it means just ordinary trials, on other occasions it has reference to direct inducement to sin. But inasmuch as under trial we are specially liable to commit sin, the one word covers both conditions. For instance, hunger is a trial, and not a direct temptation to sin, but a hungry man might be induced to steal who otherwise would not think of doing so. These two kinds of temptation are mentioned in the epistle of James. “My brethren,” he says (verse 2, Chap. i.), “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” Here, undoubtedly, the Apostle has before him more the ordinary trials of life—persecutions, afflictions, necessities, poverty, sickness, &c. In verse 13, however, we come to the other aspect. “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

It is, dear young friends, this aspect of temptation I propose to deal with in this letter.

First, a word as to the existence of temptation. Why should it exist at all, some may ask. You know it existed from the beginning. Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden. "But why," you ask again, "should they be tempted?" It seems to have been a necessity of the case. When God made man, He did not make a mere machine. We read He made man in His own image. Man was to be a free being, able to show his loyalty, or the reverse. Had God hedged him round so that no test could be applied, and no assault be made upon his fidelity, where would have been any proof of his obedience. No! God did not want a compulsory homage and allegiance. And so man's creation involved powers and possibilities that would do honour to him and to his Creator if rightly used, but if abused, would plunge him into sin and shame.

Let us learn from this that temptation is not in itself a dishonour, but only the yielding to it. In temptation we may gain our greatest present triumphs, as well as future reward. This is the way scripture regards it. So we read, to quote again from the same chapter as before, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

Thus our Lord, Himself, was tempted. Before entering upon His public service, He had to confront the wiles of Satan. And what was the result? After it was all over, "angels ministered to Him," we are told; and again, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."

From both these cases we learn who *the* tempter is. The same one who entered that peaceful garden, and became the means of dragging our first parents from their seat of bliss, and who afterwards assailed the Saviour of Mankind, if possible to keep all men within his grasp, is still the one with whom we have to reckon, for he blinds "the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should shine unto them," and in various ways leads people away from God and good.

Do not let us forget, however, that there is something else which makes us liable to temptation. We must not lay all the blame upon Satan. There is our own evil heart. "Every man is tempted," says the Apostle James, "when he is drawn away of his *own lust*,

and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Now, ought not these two things to make us very careful ? There is Satan, our wily foe, outside of us ; and a heart within us ready to do evil, without any suggestion from Satan at all. And then there are various forms of sin enticing us (as well as our own lust), often so attractive and alluring, and far from appearing hateful and ugly, for we have to remember that sin is described in the Word of God as deceitful. Eve was "deceived," we are told (1 Tim. ii. 14). The fruit itself looked so good, and so pleasant, and so much to be desired, that her eyes became completely blinded to the consequences. She forgot God, she forgot His command, she forgot everything, except that she could in some way minister to herself, and in this way she was deceived, and never saw the sin, and its dreadfulness, until her eyes were opened, and it was too late. Yes, sin is *deceitful*. This is one of the most awful things about it. We can never see it in its true light until it is done.

But, dear friends, it is time to touch upon the safeguards. There is no need to mention all the temptations you may be subject to, they are so various. With some it may be pride, with others selfishness ; there may be those who are inclined to be vain, avaricious or slothful. And there are darker sins of untruthfulness, lust, hatred, and dishonesty, to which we may not be altogether strangers. God knows, and you know, though, perhaps, no one else does, unless it be Satan, what are your peculiar difficulties, besetments, and liabilities. If I can say anything to help you I shall only be too glad and thankful.

What will safeguard us, then, under temptation ? I have already in passing alluded to one thing that it is safe to be assured of, and that is, not only our liability to sin, but the true character of sin, its dreadfulness, and its deceptiveness. It is only when the apples of Sodom are eaten that the ashes within are discovered. But I want now to refer to a more positive safeguard ; and it is suggested by the passage we have more than once made the basis of our remarks. I allude to the epistle of James. In Chap. i., v. 17, he says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning." And he prefaces this statement by telling us not to make any mistake about it. "Do not err," he

says. Because it is just where we do err. We err in two ways. First by forgetting that "every *good* gift and every *perfect* gift is from above"; and next by being inclined to blame anybody else but ourselves when we have done foolishly. Had Eve remembered that every good gift was from above, and that if God had prohibited the eating of the fruit, therefore it was not good for her, she would have remained unscathed. While as a result Adam blames his wife—and by implication God—and Eve blames the serpent. But we are never tempted of God, "for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

Here, then, we have a double safeguard furnished by the Apostle James. He puts side by side, in order that we may take a careful look at them, the dreadful character of sin and its consequences and the fact that God, the Father of lights, is the source only of what is good and perfect. Could there be a stronger contrast than is presented by these two verses? One a description of what comes from sin; the other of what comes from God. In order that this may be more clearly seen we place them side by side.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

"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."

In the light of this to which shall we yield ourselves? Oh, that the awfulness of the one, and the inconceivable blessedness of the other might arrest the attention of every reader, and the Holy Spirit convey the lesson to every heart with convincing power! May each one, standing on the threshold of life say over to himself and herself until the truth is firmly fixed in the heart, "**every good gift and every perfect gift is from above**" (therefore whatever God forbids must be bad, and whatever He withholds cannot be for my good) "**and cometh down from the Father of lights**" ("so that it is not a question," you can say to yourself, "what my own heart may suggest, or Satan, for it is not what comes from within, or from beneath, but from God,") "*with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*"

I have more safeguards to mention, and something to say about sudden temptation, but these must be left for another letter.

Your friend,

THE EDITOR.

SATANIC AGENCIES, ETC., AND THE DIVINELY PROVIDED SAFEGUARDS.

Notes of an Address.

EPH. i. 3, 15, 23; ii. 4-7; vi. 10-18.

I DO not wish in any degree to draw attention away from the valuable and instructive warnings given to us in the earlier part of the day, but to present to you the positive truth as being the great safeguard against Satanic agencies and subtlety. We must bear in mind that in order to engage in the conflict detailed to us in Eph. vi. we must be in the place where the conflict rages. There are three kinds of conflict spoken of in the Epistles. They are found in Gal. v., Eph. vi., and Rom. vii. The last one is between the two natures—the old and the new. In Gal. it is between the flesh and the Spirit. In Rom. the bad gains the day every time; but not so in Gal., for the Spirit of God is superior to the flesh, and consequently we do not do the bad things that we would; but neither of these is of the same character of conflict as Eph. vi. They are within, whilst *this* is without, and is against “spiritual powers of evil in the heavenlies.”

It is of the utmost moment that we should realise our association with Christ as quickened, raised up, and made sit together in heavenly places in Him. The power put forth by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ has been exercised towards us in giving us our place in Him *there*, beyond every principality and power. We must put our foot down and make it our own. This prepares for the conflict: we *are* a heavenly people, and until in some measure we realise it, we shall fail to enter into the conflict proper to it. Each Scripture has its own special line of instruction and standpoint. In Romans we have life in Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit; in Col. we are said to be “risen with Christ”; whilst in Peter we are viewed as in the wilderness, but travelling to the heavenly inheritance, and kept by God’s power for it. In Eph. the counsels and power of God are in evidence—let us see to it that we not only “*look* from the place where we are,” but “*walk* in the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it”—it is thus that experimentally it becomes ours, then are we not merely heavenly men in name and title, but our souls are practically in the good of what is our own. Abraham,

the type of the heavenly man, failed to traverse as far as we are informed, the "length" of the country, until Lot was taken prisoner in order to rescue him; the Patriarch "pursued them to Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus," far away to the north. Thus the trouble was made the means, however unconsciously, of making Abraham take possession. It is often thus with the believer now to whom every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies belongs—adversity, sickness and trial in various ways lead him to the appropriation of what is his own. "Ephesian truth" may be very flippantly spoken of, and the terms of the divine purpose may be very fluently on the lip, but nothing save the possession of the land, will produce any present practical fruit; it is not going to heaven at last, but as a simple country Christian, when asked if he were going to heaven when he died, replied "I *live* there!"

But now in chapter vi. it is God's power acting *through* us, as in chapter i. it was His power *towards* us, that the Apostle prayed might be known as manifested in Christ—"the exceeding greatness of His power *to usward* who believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, etc." In the third chapter: "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh *in* us." Lastly we are told to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Behind all the frightful state of things around us, to-day, is the power of Satan, the Devil's wiles and machinations, and it does not matter how bland a person's manner may be, nor how polished his utterances or appearance, the matter is, how does he touch my Lord? Does he take Him away? Do his doctrines affect His atoning work? Do they undermine the very foundations of the faith? O friends, what we want, surely, is more loyalty to Christ, more devotion to Him and to cleave to Him with purpose of heart.

Young believers! accept a word of warning, "take heed *what* ye hear," and "take heed *how* ye hear," and from all that detracts from Christ, turn away. There are three things that make us "strong in the Lord." The first is, our *personal state of soul: personal condition* (vv. 14, 15), "your feet shod with the *preparation* of the gospel of peace." What is this? If the christian only walked before God and with God, that would prepare people to receive the Gospel: it is "the *preparation* of the Gospel of peace"

that is the life. O! these lives of ours! we may talk to people and preach to people with all our hearts, but we need to prepare them by our ways, our walk; for they are keen to detect inconsistencies; they know our feet—watch them with greedy eyes. The various things spoken of—righteousness, truth, peace and so on, what do they all refer to but to the characteristics of the heavenly man? His behaviour? You are to be righteous—to pay your debts. What debts? The debt of deference, the debt of a Christ-like spirit towards all; the debt of love and, of course, money debts as well. O let this question of debt, this question of practical righteousness go down deep. Where are we at this moment? What are we behind the curtain? What of our literature? Who are our friends? I take it, in a certain sense, our personal state of soul is the first thing to be exercised about before God and that which will make us “strong in the Lord”; we may hold doctrines, believe every word of Scripture; we may preach, too, and be only as sounding brass, if there is not a moral condition that corresponds with what we preach.

Beloved friend! is your soul enjoying Christ? Does His will enter into your life? Is that blessed One more to you to-day than ever before? Is He growing before you? Spurgeon has said: “Scripture is not like a lozenge, which the more you suck the less it becomes, but the more you taste the greater it gets.” The Scriptures will put you in connection with the living Christ, and we are to feed on Him. You remember in Joshua that the Israelites fed on the old corn of the land, and then went forth to conflict. The second thing, in order to be “strong in the Lord,” is to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” It is not your sword, nor my sword, it is a sword without a handle, and cuts both ways. It is the *Spirit's* sword. Beloved friends, we cannot part with one iota of the Word of God, we must take the Sword of the Spirit, and take it as we never did before. The more it is attacked, the more must we cleave to it; if others relax their grip, let us grip it the tighter, for the more you grip it, the more it will grip you. There must be more reality, more set purpose, more steady, genuine whole-hearted surrender to the truth of God; that truth must master us; we cannot master it in the same way as we master the writings of mere men. How shall we study the Bible? Topically? You may; but wait on God that the Holy Ghost may illumine your heart

with what is in His blessed Word.—“That is His sword”—take hold of it all—every word in that Book is inspired, and I hold it tenaciously, and may I say more so now than ever ; it is to me God’s own changeless, infallible, blessed, eternal Word, written by the Holy Ghost. May we hide it in our hearts.

Then, beloved, “*praying always.*” Three things will make us “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” First, a vigorous, spiritual condition of soul ; then taking the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God ; and then, “*praying always.*” You say, am I to drop on my knees on the battle-field ; would it not be waste of time ? No ; the enemy cannot hit you when low down.

It has often been said that no armour is provided for the back. “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,*” to withstand, to *stand*, to *stand fast*, with your face to the foe, by the grace of God, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and then drop on your knees, and say, “My Lord, the conflict is too fierce for me, the journey is too great for me, the opposition is too much for me, take my trembling hand in Thine, for Thou art my Hope, my Strength, my Refuge, and my Deliverer.” We must learn to *pray*, to pray more, to pray without ceasing. Then by the grace of God we shall come off victorious in some little degree ; as our Lord did in infinite perfection in all His battles, and in our measure shall be able to say, “Thanks be unto God, Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ !”

“When once a sheep has wandered from the flock, it can never find its way back again. In this respect, it differs from most, if not all, other animals. It will go on and on, further and further from the right path. If it is to be restored, it must be sought. The shepherd must go after it. It will never return of *itself*. It must be *brought* back. Hence, in the East, when the sheep have strayed, the shepherd leaves the flock in a place of security, and goes after the wandering one. He follows it over hill and dale, through waste and thicket, till he finds it. Then he lays it on his *shoulders*, the *strongest* part of the body. In this place of strength and security he carries it across the desert, and deposits it safely in his fold.”

HAST THOU ?

Hast thou gone forth alone into the night,
 Leaving the inner circle of delight ?
 Thou, in the darkness wilt behold God's stars,
 The flashing wheels of His swift mercy-cars.
 Thou wilt not be alone : beside the gate
 The Lover of thy soul for thee doth wait.
 Thou wilt the better hear His voice alone :
 Learn His sweet secrets, catch His gracious tone.
 Fear not, go forth, the river of His grace
 Has sweeter music than earth's brightest place :
 And He is there, unseen, yet calling thee.
 Go, and thy Lord will thy Companion be.

Hast thou laid down some treasure of thy heart,
 To take from God some brighter, better part ?
 And does that better part appear to slip :
 The cup, the draught, but mock thy thirsty lip ?
 Does Satan tempt thee to put forth thy hand,
 And grasp again the clusters of earth's land ?
 It cannot be—the wine of death is there :
 Ask not the clusters that sins' vineyards bear.
 Lay down what thou hast gathered : better go
 With empty hand than gather grief and woe :
 Lay all aside : fear not, God will make up
 All loss, and fill Himself thy golden cup.

Hast thou received a load, a heavy cross,
 A burden hard, to bear ? Nay, do not toss
 Or seek to cast it off. The load God gives
 He helps us carry : strength the back receives
 According to the burden : shoulder it :
 And cross and shoulder will most strangely fit.
 Lay down thine own fair will—go forth alone—
 Take up what God appoints, and thou wilt own
 The loneliness sweet company—the loss
 Eternal gain—the burden and the cross,
 Steps up to Heaven : go forth : resign or take :
 All will bring blessing done for Jesu's sake.

SUPERLATIVE.

“ God has good, and He has better
 Blessings for us here below ;
 Thou canst choose to be His debtor,
 Thou canst much or little owe.
 Trust Him wholly. Break the fetter
 That now binds thy spirit, lest
 Getting good, or even better,
 Thou shouldst miss His very *best*.”

"THE HARMONY OF THE PROPHETIC WORD."*

A REVIEW.

WE have read this book with deep interest. It is just what it professes to be, a harmony. That is, it brings together passages from various parts of scripture foretelling the same event ; thus shewing how the prediction of the prophets harmonise. This method is both instructive and interesting. As passage after passage is referred to, the mind becomes impressed by the weight of evidence, and the combined testimony is irresistible. It is seen at once what coherence there is in the word of prophecy. That we are not asked to give an isolated prediction undue place, or called upon to credit some event still future, and upon which the destiny of the world is supposed to hang, upon the authority of a single text of scripture. On the contrary, the passages foretelling and describing "The Day of Jehovah" ; "The Visible and Glorious Manifestation of Jehovah" ; "The Conversion and Restoration of Israel," &c., are too numerous and lengthy to be all recorded in detail.

The passages are linked together and made intelligible by a running commentary, and it is our opinion that if these are carefully studied in conjunction with the texts quoted, the Bible will become a new book to some. Especially does this remark apply to the Old Testament. It will be seen that this section of the sacred canon, far from being obsolete, or out of date, is still *the book of the future*. Though hoary with age, its eye is not dim nor its natural force abated. In spite of being the oldest book in the world, it knows more about present things and things to come than the latest production of the age. Dating back thousands of years, it yet does what no other book does, it reveals the future. Some of its predictions have been fulfilled though written down hundreds of years before the event transpired. Others equally old yet remain to be accomplished. Could any other feature make a book more interesting, or more worthy to be had in the highest reverence.

* By A. C. Gaebelien. Published by Fleming H. Revell Co., New York and London. Price 4s. 3d.

These facts will be more than ever impressed upon the reader of "The Harmony of the Prophetic Word." It will convince him that the Bible must be inspired, that it alone is the Book of God, containing as no other does, a divine message for man.

We may, perhaps, be allowed to quote a very interesting footnote, found on p. 67. It is interesting both in connection with the book we are reviewing, and also as shewing how the future course of the nations lies open to the Bible student. "It is a most interesting fact," says the note, "that Russia is aware of this prophecy. Many intelligent Russians believe Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. to mean their land. When the first edition of this volume was published, a Russian Princess ordered a copy. It was returned to the publisher, being refused by the Russian censorship, the above passage (the passage in question speaks of Russia being the land of the north) being the objectionable feature. Russia is the great Jew-hating country."

A book such as this must inevitably awaken an interest in God's ancient people, the Jews. They are yet to be the centre of the whole earth and the glory of all kingdoms. Christ is to be their King. Before this comes to pass, however, unexampled tribulation awaits them. They must be purified and made white, and thus prepared for their great position. All nations will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle, but only to be overthrown. Then shall the Lord of Hosts reign in Mount Zion and before His ancients gloriously. All this, and much more, is fully set forth in this book. The three great enemies of Israel are referred to, and the prophesies concerning them explained. They are the head of the revived Roman Empire, the King of the North, and Anti-Christ.

Having stated our unqualified appreciation of the book, and expressed our opinion as to its value, the author will, perhaps, allow a word or two of criticism. In dealing with the subject of the Kingdom (pp. 160-1) he seems to confine it to the future, without any reference to its present aspect. No doubt the Kingdom promised in the Old Testament scriptures is not yet established, and cannot be until the Lord's return; nevertheless, Paul constantly speaks of the Kingdom of God as a present thing. It filled a large place in his ministry. "And now, behold, I know that

ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God," he says to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 25). And in writing to the Romans, he describes the moral characteristics of that Kingdom: "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Again, to the Colossians he can say God had "translated them into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Now, we do not say for a moment that Mr. Gaebelein does not believe all this, all we affirm is that what he says, or rather, what he does not say, gives the impression that the word Kingdom has little or no reference to the present moment. We feel sure he believes the Kingdom is in mystery, established in the hearts of Christ's people, according to Matt. xiii. Perhaps in a future edition he will make this distinction plain.

If that happy event takes place, as no doubt it will, we trust he will also improve upon his brief exposition of the fourth chapter of Romans, given on page 120. We do not see that the Jew is there left out of sight any more than in the previous chapter. We should say he is very much before the Apostle's mind. Nor do we think it correct to say "we read only of . . . the place He gives in Him to every believing sinner." The place God gives us *in* Christ does not come into that chapter at all. Chapter iii. gives the *ground* on which a sinner becomes righteous before God. Chapter iv. the *means*. Consequently, the subject of it is *faith*. And Christ is raised again for our justification, and righteousness is imputed to *us*, but there is no word as to our being *in* Christ. This comes later in the epistle.

There is an expression on page 99 we should also like to see altered. We read, "out of these opened heavens coming forth with unspeakable glory a Divine Person *in the form of a man*" (italics ours). Why in the *form* of a man? He was on earth, and is now in heaven, a true real man, scripture never speaks of Him in the way this passage does. On page 186 it is stated, "Our prayer is not 'Thy Kingdom come.'" For ourselves we cannot see why the Christian should be denied this prayer. While on pp. 91-2, ninth chapter of Daniel occurs twice, whereas, evidently it should read eleventh chapter. This is the only slip of the kind we have observed.

But these few defects do not touch the essential character of the book, and it is with the heartiest commendation we introduce it to the notice of our readers.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS (*continued*).

V. 281-310-332-374

NO INHERITANCE.

ONE very remarkable and important feature that distinguished the Priests and Levites from all the rest of Israel was the fact that they were to have "no inheritance in the land" of Canaan, "among their brethren" (see Num. xviii. 20, Deut. x. 9 and xviii. 1, and Josh. xiii. 33). When we consider the favour God had shown to this tribe, and the position which it occupied (read carefully Num. i. 47-53), it seems at first sight strange that it should "have no part" in this "good land" of promise. God would, however, teach the Levites not to set their hearts on the *good land*, but upon the *good God* who gave it. While He is pleased to give us the good things of the world for our support and comfort, He yet knows that we are all too apt to set greater value upon His *gifts* than upon the Giver, hence the warning against the terrible idolatry of "Worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. i. 25). Thus the Apostle charges the Corinthians that if they "buy" it should be "as though they possessed not" (1 Cor. vii. 30). The Christian is God's steward, not only with regard to gifts and graces for spiritual work, but also in regard to earthly goods, and, unless we are cautious, we may waste our Master's substance.

This is, however, only one side of the truth, as all the Scriptures referring to the condition of the Levites add, "The Lord is their portion and inheritance," and if the good Lord was theirs, they would not want although the land itself was denied them. "The Lord is the portion of *mine* inheritance," says David in Ps. xvi. 5, and he was neither Priest nor Levite, but he had grasped the spiritual significance of this truth.

The Book of Lamentations shows the dreadful distress that had come upon the Jews, and especially the heart-rending experience of the prophet himself, yet in ch. iii. 24 we read: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul," as though a voice spoke from within, assuring him that although all else might fail, God could never forsake him, so his *soul's* portion was secure

Again, in Hab. iii. 17-18, the prophet supposes an utter deprivation of all earthly sustenance, but to all this he adds a "yet," and this to the unfailing faithfulness of God.

When Judah went into captivity, the people left their inheritance behind them, but men like Daniel could not be disinherited, as *God* was their portion, and He was with them. Therefore, inasmuch as the Creator is more enduring than the creature, the priests and Levites had the more lasting portion; and as *we* too, are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17), we should "set" our "affections on things above" (Col. iii. 2).

What a contrast is drawn in 2 Peter iii. 11-13 between earthly and heavenly things. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved" (that is, the earth and all its works, &c., verse 10). "Nevertheless, *we* according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth"; and in Heb. ix. 15, "They which are called . . . receive the promise of *eternal* inheritance." So, then, our portion is *God*, our inheritance is *heaven*, our home is the "*Father's house*," and our spending money during our minority is *tried faith* (see 1 Pet. i. 7). For as pocket-money procures young gentlemen little necessaries during their school terms, so, while we are absent from our "*Father's house*," faith is our current coin. Not that faith has any merit in itself to *purchase* God's benefits, but as money is a means of purchasing by agreement among men, so faith is the condition on our part upon which God promises His benefits. It is His promissory note.

One scarcely needs to be told not to *despise* earthly things, for we are not likely to do so; yet it is well to note what the Apostle says upon this side of the question. After telling Timothy to "charge them that are rich in this world" not to "trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God," he adds, "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. vi. 17); and he shows how they may best enjoy their riches, viz., by communicating to those who are in need (verses 18-19). Thus shall Prov. xix. 17 be verified, "He that hath pity on the *poor* lendeth unto the Lord." Jehovah Himself will be our *banker* when our gifts are so deposited; and therefore it is added, "That which he hath given will He pay him again." God sustained His people in the wilderness with "bread from *heaven*," but when they reached Canaan, "The manna ceased,"

because the *earth* yielded bread; and this, even the Priests and Levites would need, and as they devoted their time and strength to spiritual duties, provision should be made for their temporal wants. Thus in Num. xviii. 20-32, we find that the eleven tribes must give a tenth of all they had to the Levites, and they in their turn gave a tenth of their tithe to the Priests. In this manner God took care that they who served in holy things on behalf of the nation would not want bread to eat, so our Lord, after having cautioned His disciples against undue care in earthly things (Luke xii. 22-29), says, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (ver. 30), and assures them that if they "seek the Kingdom of God, all these things shall be added unto you" (ver. 31).

Well might the Apostle remind Timothy that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

This is really "making the best of both worlds," as people are fond of saying. Thus God gives "grace and glory," and promises to "withhold" no good thing from them that walk uprightly." (Ps. lxxxiv. 11).

The Apostle gives the New Testament exposition of this subject in 1 Cor. ix. 1-14, where, speaking of the way in which he and Barnabas had laboured to support themselves, though they had perfect authority to "forbear working" (ver. 6), he enforces his remark by asking, "Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not the fruit thereof?" (ver. 7). And in ver. 8 he asserts that "the law saith the same also," and in ver. 9, "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn" (see Deut. xxv. 4). Then he declares that it was not for oxen that God cared so much, but "For our sakes, no doubt, this was written: that he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking" (ver. 10 R.V.), showing that although the ploughing takes place a long time before the reaping, yet the plougher and the thresher partake of the same harvest.

Then, applying this to himself and other labourers, he says, "If we have *sown* unto you *spiritual* things, is it a great thing (or matter) if we shall reap your carnal things?" (ver. 11). Then in ver. 13 he points out that "they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple" (R.V.) (referring to the Priests and

Levites), and adds, " Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel " (ver. 14 R.V.) His conclusion is, that while the question of tithes is not commanded in the New Testament, and the gospel preacher, or Christian minister, should not act upon the principle of " so much work for so much money," yet, if he has no independent means, and is evidently called of God to the work, he should be maintained by those who attend his ministry, seeing he devotes all his time and strength for their good to edification. So Paul sums up the subject with the words in 1 Tim. v. 18 (R.V.) " The labourer is worthy of his hire."

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(To be continued.)

HEAVENLY PLACES.

No limit has the upward path
To Heaven, that bright abode,
Though on the earth, the gate is strait,
And narrow is the road.

If we would taste the purer joys,
The fulness of God's love,
Then we must rise on wings of faith
To clearer heights above.

Above the fret, above the strife,
Entwining all below ;
Above the world with all its change,
Its fashion and its show.

God's ways are high, and 'tis as we
Love them and walk therein,
We turn from earth, its fading joys,
Its turmoil and its din.

We leave them, as the wanderer leaves
Some distant foreign strand,
And turns his eager face towards home,
His own, loved native land.

Our native land is where Thou art,
Our birthplace is above.
Oh, fix our eyes, dear Lord, on Thee,
And that bright land we love.

" Our life is made up chiefly of *littles*, and it is in these *littles* that Christianity is often so sadly lacking. And think as we will of it, it is by these that the character of our Christianity is determined."

REMARKS ON 2 TIMOTHY II. (*concluded.*)

(See previous article September, "What is the Divine Ground," &c.) 368

LET us then ask who, or what, the "these" are, separation from whom or which, will result, beyond the slightest question, in being used by the Lord for every good work; whilst a failure so to separate must with equal necessity condemn to real uselessness?

We must not overlook, or minimise, in the slightest degree, if we would reach a clear true answer to this question, the significance of this absolute *certainty*. As surely as any result can follow cause, as surely as fire burns, or water cleanses, so surely will all who purge themselves from "these" be used of the Master. And further, no one who does not so purge himself will be so used.

Now, let me ask another question, the answer to which is, as a matter of fact, so clear as to be beyond argument; "Are those who have separated themselves from their fellow believers (and this is the point under discussion), whether in the hermit-seclusion of the early ages, or in the monasticism of the dark ages, or in the exclusivism of the day in which we live—are these, and only these, used of the Lord in every good work?"

Can there be a too emphatic "No" to such a question? And does not that answer destroy in a moment that false interpretation that has forced this scripture into the service of separating saints, instead of bringing them together?

What are the "these"? Looking at it simply and according to the customary use of language, we should say it demanded a purging from whatever is meant by "*vessels of wood and of earth,*" or whatever is fitted only for dishonour.

Let it be assumed that this must set us to work to separate from evil men, such as Hymenæus and Philetus. But then it is surely simple and plain, that if it does refer to such, it can refer to *none but such*, and that if we separate ourselves from any who are not clearly "vessels to dishonour," we can find no justification whatever in this scripture. That wicked persons must be put away from the company of the Lord's people is as clear as the plainest words can make it (1 Cor. v. 12), and in nothing that is here said, or may yet be said, is there the slightest thought of weakening the force of this solemn fact; but any interpretation that results in "vessels" equally "to honour" separating from each other is

so manifestly false, that one can only marvel at the honoured names that are pledged to its support.

But is it a call simply to judge others? Does judgment on others inevitably result, and alone result, in divine usefulness? If it did, what a glorious time of revival we should have had during the last fifty or sixty years, should we not? But the only answer possible makes us question most seriously whether we have not a wrong idea from the very start.

Permit me the liberty of asking you a question or two, my reader, as if we were face to face. "Are you a child of God?" "Yes," you answer, "through infinite grace, I am." Then, as we have seen, you are, on that account alone, a "vessel to honour." But are you not also a child of Adam? Have you not still within you a nature as clearly derived from Adam by your first birth, as you have a nature derived from God by your second, or new, birth? Surely you have; and all that is of the first, or old man, is as surely wood and earth as all that is derived from the second is gold and silver. Now is not that fact recognised here? It is a call to purging yourself of all that is of the flesh. It is not merely a call for you to judge evil elsewhere, but most of all in *yourself*; to purge yourself of all that is of the flesh; of the Adam-life within you—of all the wood and earth that would hide or dim the lustre of the gold and silver, the new life *in Christ*.

Now this interpretation is in harmony, first with the immediate context; second, with all scripture; third, with the teachings of nature or reason.

First, as to the context: no one whose judgment is of any value will dispute that if a man does judge, condemn, purge himself from all that is of the flesh, he will be—necessarily be—as clearly and surely as if he washes in water he will be clean—"sanctified and meet for the Master's use." And further, that practically, and as a matter of experience, this is exactly the kind of people, and the only kind of people, that the Lord does normally use.

Look at Gideon's three hundred; they each have a light, but it is hidden by the "vessel of earth" surrounding it. Let them "purge" the light *from these earthen vessels*, by breaking them, and the battle is over. What did breaking the pitchers signify? That they had "no confidence in the flesh," as the blowing the trumpets spoke

of "rejoicing in Christ Jesus." Then the Lord uses them, darkness flees, error is defeated, the hosts of Midian, that spirit of strife (as the word means) under whose heel we too have all been so long, is crushed.

Nothing hinders usefulness like some misplaced confidence in the "vessel of earth," or some defilement which is of the "wood." Is not this true?

Secondly, this interpretation has the advantage of being in perfect accord with all scripture. We get the same idea that is contained in the word "vessels" in Rom. vii. 25, where the Apostle sums up his argument with the words "*So then, with the mind I myself 'serve' the law of God*"; "the mind" is here parallel to the gold and silver of 2 Tim. ii, "*but with the flesh the law of sin*" the flesh is parallel to the "wood and earth" of 2 Tim. ii., and in the later words, "*if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body,*" we have the parallel to the "purging," although in a different connection. Many other kindred scriptures will suggest themselves to the thoughtful reader, that space will not permit me to refer to in detail.

Without any pretension to profound scholarship, anyone can learn the force and scope of the word translated "purge" from its use in the New Testament. In its simple form it is "*katharize,*" and is applied to lepers and leprosy (Matt. viii. 2), but not as separating others from them, but *cleansing them of their defilement*; to cups and platters (Matt. xxiii.); to the heart (Acts xv. 9); to the Church (Eph. v. 26); to the Lord's purifying His people (Titus ii. 14); to the power of the blood of Christ as to the conscience (Heb. ix. 14); to the power of the blood of Christ as to all sin (1 John i. 7). In not one of these cases, nor as far as I am aware, in any other, is it applied merely to a separation from men.

But the exact form here in Timothy is "*ek-kathairo,*" and is found elsewhere only in 1 Cor. v. 7,* "*Purge out* therefore the old

* It is true that this text is very commonly applied to the evil person in Corinth. But, without being able to go into this interesting question in detail here, I would say that the context is all against this: there was evil within them; they were *puffed up* (ver. 2), and that is exactly and admittedly what leaven does. Their "glorying" which was "not good," was the leaven affecting them (ver. 6). Until they were humbled, they were in no condition to act towards others; and it is not by "putting away flagrant wickedness merely, that they would be "a new lump even as unleavened" in Christ; but by keeping in the place of death, or purging out, all that was *not of Christ*. The evil doer is dealt with in ver. 12. It is exactly the principle of Matt. vii. 5 again.

heaven." The particle *ek* clearly adds the sense of "out," purge out; or, as we may say, intensifies the force of the simple verb, giving the idea of "get clean riddance of." "*Apo*," from, still further intensifies the idea; there must be a *complete* separation—a putting ourselves far away—from all that is of wood and earth.

Thus the words "purge, out, from," point to a far more close personal work, than the external separation from anyone, however evil, without, of course, affecting the necessity of this.

Thirdly, look at the illustration: are vessels cleansed, let alone changed as to their material, by being separated from other vessels? Do housewives make their soiled dishes clean simply by separating them from each other? For one so to act would involve a question of sanity. Yet has it been contended that people are made clean simply and solely by separating from other people!

No one should separate in *spirit*, in *principle*, in *heart* from their fellow believers, but *from what separates them*, by its very existence, from one another, and is in itself, therefore, the "iniquity" to be departed from. This is very important, or the very separation only results in another sect.

Then for a last practical word on this subject. You and I will be surely used of our Lord, dear reader, not merely because we judge others, and separate from them, but because we judge *ourselves*, if we in truth recognise that we, as earthen vessels, have been broken to pieces in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, as vessels of wood have been consumed in the judgment there endured by Him; that only as *in Him* risen from the dead are we of gold and silver. No matter what our position in the world, whether as the cedar-wood, we be "men of high degree," or as the hyssop we be "men of low degree"; all has gone for ever with the glory of earth (the scarlet) in that awful *Fire*.

With no confidence in the broken thing, with no hope of the consumed thing, purging ourselves then of all that is of wood and earth, and thus "bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus," the Life of Jesus will be made manifest in our body." Surely that, if anything, means "*every good work*," for He "*went about doing good*."

May God grant it, in His mercy, to both readers and writer, for His dear Son's Name sake.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. Walter Scott writes us:— 441

Dear Mr. Editor,

In pp. 368-371 of last month's issue of the *Faith and the Flock*, we are furnished with an exposition of 2 Tim. ii. 19-22, which, in our judgment, is not quite satisfactory. A few remarks may help. There are mentioned:—

Vessels of gold,	Vessels of wood,
Vessels of silver,	Vessels of earth.

Then a supplementary statement is added: "*and some to honour, and some to dishonour.*"

We agree with the writer in regarding the vessels of gold and silver as true saints of God, but viewed in servants' character, and the vessels of wood and earth as unsaved, but professed servants of God.

But it seems to us that the main question is: How does one become a vessel unto honour? Verse 21 seems to answer the question, and also negatives the thought that a vessel of gold is *necessarily* one of honour. "If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." Observe the text does not say "he *is* a vessel unto honour," but "shall be" *that*, sanctified as well. It seems to us that both the "honour" and "sanctified" are dependent upon the gold or silver vessel clearing himself *from these*, *i.e.*, vessels unto dishonour. We take it, therefore, that godly conduct in the one case, and ungodly conduct in the other constitutes persons of honour or dishonour. This is not only borne out by the reasoning and arguments of verse 21, but also in the wording of verse 20, "*some to honour, and some to dishonour.*" It does not say vessels of honour, but to honour. Thus, we repeat, a vessel of gold is what a Christian *is*, a vessel of honour is what a Christian *becomes*. A just application of the scripture on the lines we have indicated need not alarm the writer (p. 369). His fears are groundless.

We take exception to his statement in p. 370, "How was that silver obtained?" By every Israelite, that was counted at all, paying one half shekel of silver for his *redemption* (Ex. xxx.). We

would remind our brother that the truth in Ex. xxx. is not that of redemption, but of atonement. Twice it is said the half shekel was "to make an *atonement* for your souls." It was the atonement money of the children of Israel that was appointed for the service of the Tabernacle (verse 16). *Atonement* was by one half shekel of silver (Ex. xxx. 13). *Redemption* was by five shekels (Num. xviii. 16). The truths of atonement and redemption are frequently confounded. But the silver, as our brother rightly observes, points to the precious blood of Christ.

2 TIMOTHY II., 19—21.

C.M. writes:—

Is it not a mistake to regard "*a* great house" as though it were "*the* great house"? I take it as a parable. Any great house, and consequently the vessels mentioned therein may have no typical significance whatever, but be simply mentioned as from the highest to the least, and any one of them might be to honour or to dishonour, according to its usefulness or the preference of the owner.

The spiritual application begins in the next clause, "these" referring to the last mentioned class—not wood and earth—but vessels to dishonour.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners," therefore to be a vessel unto honour meet for our Master's use we need to be not cleansed only, but sanctified, set apart from the vessels to dishonour; and are here called to purge ourselves out from them. The practise of the precept being exemplified in chap. iii. 5.

The materials in I Cor. iii. doubtless have typical significance, for there it is definitely *the* foundation and building thereupon, and it may be worthy of note that earth is not mentioned there.

"It is what the Christian himself *is* that gives a savour to the testimony of his lips. And the day of God will alone declare, whether Christians have not kept more souls in the broad road to destruction by their unholy lives, than have been saved by the direct testimony of their lips."

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

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EDITORIALS.

WE beg to call the attention of our readers to the article in present issue under the heading "Divers and Strange Doctrines." The number of these that have come under our notice of late is quite extraordinary, and some of them we hope to notice in future issues.

* * * *

Quite a number of our friends have responded to the request for remarks upon 2 Timothy ii., and their contributions (or nearly all of them) will be found in the current number. For ourselves, we have been greatly helped by the perusal of these, and we trust the experience of our readers will be the same. Our hearty thanks are hereby given to those whose response to our appeal will, we are sure, prove a great help to many.

* * * *

The Annual Meetings in connection with the Monthly Missionary Prayer Meeting usually held at Devonshire House, are announced

to take place (D.V.) on the 28th and 29th October, and we trust they may be seasons of real waiting upon God, and renewing of strength. "They that wait upon the Lord *shall* renew their strength." This is the promise, and as our brethren are returning to take up their work in heathen lands they must in a special way feel the need of being strengthened. Doors are opening on all hands, barriers are being removed, and prejudices broken down, and it needs wisdom, courage and strength to take advantage of these opportunities. The gospel is being preached among all nations as never before. Surely one indication, amongst many, that the Lord's return is imminent. "Watching and ready may we be, as those that wait their Lord to see." In the meantime may those who are being sent forth, realise, as never before, by Whom they are being sent, and go joyfully and triumphantly as sent by Him, Who is Lord of the harvest. Though as they remember the need—the spiritual darkness and destitution that will confront them—they will doubtless go forth weeping. May they in due time come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

* * * *

As we go to press, we remember, too, the important Prophetic Conference at Reading just beginning. We pray that light and help may be given. That the many, doubtless, who will gather there, may be of one mind and one heart (and it is possible to be of one heart, even when we are not of one mind), so that the Christ, Who is the centre of all God's counsels, may dwell in the hearts of all who are privileged to be present. As we are reminded that we are "called in one hope of our calling," what an incentive this becomes to be dwelling together as brethren in unity, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

ABSOLVO TE.

One Priest alone can pardon me,
Or bid me "Go in peace";
Can breathe that word, "Absolvo Te,"
And make these heart-throbs cease;
My soul has heard His priestly voice;
It said, "I bore thy sins"—Rejoice!

"Absolvo Te," *I absolve thee*, are the impious words of the Romish Priest when he assumes God's own and special prerogative in forgiving sins. "Who can forgive sins BUT GOD ONLY?" (Mark ii. 7).

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition. 357

CHAPTER VII. 26; VIII. 3.

“THIS IS THE SUM: WE HAVE SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST.”

THE above quotation makes abundantly clear what has been before the writer's mind in the foregoing part of the epistle. The sum of it, or the “chief point,” as it might be translated, is that “We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

Now He must be there for a purpose. A purpose which necessarily involved momentous issues for the Hebrews, for they knew well the exalted character of the position held by the High Priest in Israel, and that he was a representative person. His office had a double character. It was first of all “ordained for men *in things pertaining to God*, that he may offer forth gifts and sacrifices.” And, secondly, he must “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

So far the inspired writer has dealt with the second of these two aspects. For this is the side we first of all apprehend. Thus we have been considering such statements as “He is able to succour them that are tempted” (tried). “We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, sin apart.” Again, we have had reference to the days of His flesh and His agony in the garden, to show how qualified He had become to have compassion. Then lastly, as we saw last month, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

As we read the foregoing we may well exclaim, What a wonderful provision God has made for His pilgrims on their way home! Is there indeed One—and that One the Son of God—Whose business it is to intercede for me? Is there One at the very right hand of the Majesty in the heavens Whose office it is to succour, sustain, and comfort me? Yes, it is marvellously true. And you can ever go to God by Him and obtain all the help and sympathy you want.

But do not let us forget that He is also there as the One by Whom we approach God as worshippers. This touches the other aspect of His priesthood to which reference was made just now. And it is to this aspect we are introduced in the passage we are now about to consider.

“ For such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people’s ; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, Who is consecrated (or perfected) for evermore ” (vv.26-28).

What this means is that, if we are to approach God in the holiest, we must have a High Priest who is “ holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” No other will do for God, and therefore no other will do for us. Notice this difference. When Christ is spoken of in relation to us, able to succour, to sympathise, and save, it is His trials and earthly experiences which are dwelt upon. When, however, He is referred to as our representative, and the One through Whom we approach God as worshippers, it is His holiness and separation from men that become prominent.

Now just as we realise the blessedness of obtaining grace **from** God through Christ our High Priest, so we ought to avail ourselves of the privilege and blessedness of offering something **to** God through Christ. It is for this cause that Christ is “ A minister of the sanctuary.”

“ Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum : We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices : wherefore it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer ” (vv. 1-3). From these verses we see to what point we have been conducted. It is no longer now a question of our infirmities and our needs along the road, but a question of what is to be presented to God. Christ is not only on high to obtain help for us, but to offer gifts and sacrifices to God. **But it is we who bring these gifts and sacrifices.** Of old the service

of the high priest was to present to God what Israel brought (see Deut. xxvi. 3, 4). Our High Priest now waits in the presence of God to offer what we bring. He is a "Minister of holy things." We are thus made acquainted with what passes in heaven. For Christ's ministry is in connection with "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." The tabernacle in the wilderness being only a figure of this world and the heavens. What a scene, then, opens out before us. Christ, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," presenting to God what His people bring to Him on earth. **Do you bring anything?** *Do you fill those hands?*

"It is of necessity," it says, "that this Man have somewhat also to offer." *A necessity;* Do we feel the necessity of it?

If the question is asked, What are the gifts and sacrifices we are to bring? we may turn for answer to a passage further on in this epistle. In Chapter xiii. 15, we read, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks (or confessing to) His Name." The gifts and sacrifices are spiritual. We are "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." This is why Christ is our High Priest. We need no mere man to come between us and God, but we do need the Son of God, in order that none of the imperfections of our worship may appear before God. For, alas! imperfection marks our very best efforts. Christ presents all according to what He is. Just as the cloud of incense covered the mercy seat of old, and shut out all the imperfections of Aaron, so Christ's merits fill heaven and cover all our shortcomings.

"To all our prayers and praises
Christ adds His sweet perfume;
And love the censer raises
Those odours to consume."

"By Him, therefore, let us offer the *sacrifice of praise* to God **continually.**" It is to be a constant employment. We cannot be actively engaged with this every moment, but we might at least set apart one period of each day especially for praise, and approach God by Christ, not simply with petitions but as worshippers. The altar and the tent ought ever to be the two marks of our Christianity.

☞ In order that there may be no mistake as to this sacrifice, it adds, "That is, the fruit of our lips." While in the next statement the nature of the praise is implied: "Confessing to His Name."

If we only breathe out the Name of Christ from a heart touched with a sense of His worth and merits, it becomes an act of the highest worship.

May the gifts and sacrifices that Christ offers now in the presence of God never be wanting either in public or in private as far as we are concerned. And while we prove on the one hand how sufficient is His succour and sympathy in all the exigencies of the path, may we on the other find ourselves treading, in spirit, those heavenly courts where Christ ministers, and the soul enters upon its highest and most blessed experiences.

THE DELIGHT OF CHRIST IN SAVING.

THERE is a phrase used by Paul the Apostle that conveys the idea of a person so dominated by a controlling and subordinating affection that words fail him with which to express the depth of his devotion to the Being that had drawn round Himself all the loving fibres of his soul.

In that writing in which more than any other he unfolds the motives that govern his innermost existence—the Epistle to the Philippians—he speaks of the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” He describes it as so supremely desirable an attainment that for it he gladly surrenders every property and every advantage, physical or moral, he ever possessed, and so far from considering the price excessive, his sober and settled opinion after many years of experience was that the bargain on his side was so eminently advantageous, that, comparing what he paid with what he obtained, the sum total of all he gave with every merit that could possibly be ascribed to it was worthless rubbish in comparison.

This was of necessity the inevitable effect of the revelation of Christ to a man. I say revelation, because, thousands of people saw Him, and the sight produced no greater effect than that of any other worthy man. But to any one to whom the invisible veil was ever so little drawn aside, the result was the recognition of a Personality that ever after was dominant over the soul. At the moment of unveiling, the soul underwent an extraordinary

revolution. Witness Peter when first it dawned upon him that the benignant and wise person who sat in the stern of his boat was One who, whatever He might be, veiled Divine Majesty in human form. Think of Mary, who in a hospitable age and country, was oblivious of the common duties of hospitality, and seemed to neglect the guest she would gladly honour, because the inexpressible sweetness and power of His words falling on her ears and dropping into her soul, rendered her blind and deaf to any other influence. Again, Zaccheus, apparently a greedy and extortionate man, who existed for no other object but to fill and overflow his bursting coffers, to whom life was only worth living as it enabled him to approach the status of a millionaire. Jesus crosses his path, he sees Him with the eyes of an ordinary curiosity; but suddenly, unseen by anyone else in the thronging crowds, the veil is lifted, and in a moment Zaccheus is transformed. His idolized wealth becomes like dirt beneath his feet, he had tasted that with which no created thing could compare. He had looked upon the face of Christ, and his soul knew its Lord for ever more. A man once saw or believed he saw Jesus for an instant, and though at first he thought it was his fancy, he instantly realised that no fancy could give him that sense of measureless wealth that caused him to feel, poor man as he was, and to whom money was an object, that if he was wading ankle deep in sovereigns he would not for scorn's sake put down his hand to pick one up. He had seen that that would content him for eternity.

It is distressing to think how little this "excellent knowledge" dominates our souls.

In this degenerate age, in this blasé, decadent, pessimistic, fag end of the Christian dispensation, when science reigns and faith dies, when Jesus and His life are a common-place, when His personality, His words, and His deeds are canvassed and criticised, and mere historical belief is grudgingly accorded to the record of His existence and His actions, it is hardly to be wondered at if our thoughts, even ours who owe, and know we owe, everything to Him, get coloured, or rather tainted, unconsciously to ourselves by the prevailing scepticism, and He who should be to us the most living, most instant, most present Person, who should enter into all our plans, and all our thoughts, and judgments, and whose commands should be our governing principles, becomes to us a

remote Being, "Christ in Glory," a glorious abstraction, honoured indeed in word and sentiment, but scarcely in act and deed. Not the immediate present Despot, the supreme rightful Lord.

The only thing I can think of to counteract this miserable tendency is diligently to follow the footsteps of the Lord, and stay upon each narrative of His words and actions, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, whose special object it is to bring Christ's words to our remembrance, to get His gracious image formed upon our minds. To sit with Nicodemus, with Mary, and on every other occasion, to listen attentively to His words, and seek to understand their purport and intention, and what He purposed to convey to those who heard them, and what in His deep wisdom He meant for us remote outcast Gentiles "them also that believe on Me through their word." Thus imperceptibly the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus *our* Lord" will dawn upon our souls, and He will become to us actually and really and truthfully and in faith "the chiefest among ten thousand," and what He was to Paul, the supreme Lord and arbiter of his soul and innermost being. And what wonder. Has He not Himself said, "he that hath seen Me hath seen the *Father*"? Learning and knowing Him we are not only learning and knowing the ever adorable man Christ Jesus, but in the same moment the Living Eternal God, our Maker, who had such "regard to the work of His hands" that He gave His only begotten Son that *I* should not perish, but have eternal life. Everlasting Glory be to God, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

(To be continued.)

"Believers may be divided with reference to their spiritual condition into three classes. There are Christians in a decidedly careless state; there are those who, while in the main walking wisely as to their practice, are yet indifferent to the solid growth and progress of their souls in Christ; there are, lastly, some who truly walk *in Him*, with desire only to be well pleasing to Him in all things, and to increase in the knowledge of God—to be sincere and without offence *until the day of Christ.*" Which class are you, reader, in the sight of God? If of the last, you can take on your lips and truthfully to your heart the 63rd Psalm *and not otherwise.*

DIVERS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES.

III.

DR. BULLINGER AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

IN a book entitled "The Rich Man and Lazarus," Dr. Bullinger maintains that the generally accepted view of an "intermediate state" is entirely erroneous. He seeks to prove that it is wrong to think of believers departed this life as having any conscious enjoyment of the Lord's presence; and he explains such well-known passages as, "To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better"; and, "Absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," in quite a different way to the usual interpretation. In fact, one feature of the book is, that, in order to maintain his theory, Dr. Bullinger has to put a new construction upon almost every passage he deals with.

Another remarkable feature of the book is this: It consists of fifty-two pages, its title is "The Rich Man and Lazarus," yet this subject is not touched until page 34 is reached. That is to say, it takes two thirds of the book to lead up to its main subject. The reason of this becomes obvious as one proceeds. The writer wishes to put a certain construction upon this particular narrative. His whole theory depends upon this. Accordingly he first takes up various passages from the Old and New Testaments, puts his own meaning upon them, and then says, Now this is what scripture teaches about death, therefore, you cannot accept the usual interpretation of Lazarus being in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man begging for a drop of water, and appealing for Lazarus to be sent to his father's house, for, if you do, you would make the Lord contradict scripture.

Now this is very ingenious, and Dr. Bullinger, of course, seems to carry his point, because in his book he has all his own way. But is he right, to begin with, in what he says about death? Everything depends upon this. If he is not, then the usual interpretation of Luke xvi. would not make our Lord contradict scripture. We maintain that Dr. Bullinger's view of death is wrong. Let us examine what he says.

On page 2 he asks, What is death? A number of texts are quoted from the Old Testament. "His breath goeth forth, he

returneth to the earth, in that very day his thoughts perish." Again, "The dead know not anything." These and such like passages are brought forward to prove that after death, whether it be in the case of a believer or unbeliever, there is no consciousness, nothing but an absolute blank, until the resurrection.

Dr. Bullinger's literalism is truly appalling. Is it not possible to speak of perishing without meaning ceasing to exist? And cannot the expression "know not anything" mean as applied to this life, without any reference to a future state of existence? The fact is, Dr. Bullinger carries the effect of such words far beyond anything the writers themselves ever intended. There was no complete revelation given in Old Testament times as to what was after death. The blessing proposed was blessing in this life—"this do and thou shalt live," live on earth—and all reference to death was with this in view. If I look at a dead man solely from the point of view of life here, I should truly say his thoughts have perished; and equally, that the dead know not anything. Those who penned these expressions never dreamt of determining what the condition of such was as regards another life. Blessing and life were all connected in their minds with blessing and life on earth. Judgment, in those days, also came upon men here. While Dr. Bullinger himself proves that the Jews did not think their scriptures meant what he affirms they mean, for he says the picture given in Luke xvi. of the rich man and Lazarus was largely in accordance with Jewish conceptions. We should no more think of going to the Old Testament scriptures to learn about the present condition of a Christian departed this life, than we should think of going to an old coach driver to learn about aviation.

There is nothing in scripture to warrant one believing that death means extinction, or a ceasing to exist, or a cessation of all consciousness. It is a ceasing to exist *in a certain condition*. God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (or, "dying, thou shalt die"). This sentence was carried out, for Adam's relationship with God was there and then broken—the whole condition of things being changed—though the actual separation of soul and body did not take place until long after.

We submit that Dr. Bullinger's whole method of procedure is wrong. He starts with the Old Testament, and, having formed a

conception from its teaching of what death is, he tries to make the teaching of the New Testament bend to it. It is pouring new wine into old bottles, and will not do.

Let us see how he does this. He takes five passages: (1) Matt. xxii. 32; (2) Luke xxiii. 43; (3) 2 Cor. v. 6, 8; (4) Phil. i. 23; (5) Luke xvi. 19-31. With reference to the first, he says, "In these scriptures it is stated that 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' But traditionists, believing that the 'dead' are the 'living,' make God the 'God of the dead,' which He distinctly says He is not." Could there be more specious reasoning than this? This is a sort of conjuring with words. If the dead are living, how can we make God the God of the dead? They are not dead in the sense Dr. Bullinger means. If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead in the sense his book teaches, then God would indeed be the God of the dead, for he declares himself to be the God of Abraham, &c. They were not raised when this declaration was made at the burning bush, therefore, in God's account they are living ("for all live unto Him") though dead as regards this world.

NO LIFE FOR THE DEAD WITHOUT A RESURRECTION.

On p. 25 we read, "But there is no life for the dead without a resurrection." Thus, if this teaching be true, the dead at the present moment are all in the same condition. The saved have no advantage over the unsaved. All are alike unconscious, "they know not anything," their thoughts have perished, indeed *they* have perished until resurrection.* Do we believe this? Does the forgiveness of sins—the gift of the Holy Ghost—life in Christ—does all this make no difference? Then better to remain on earth, for the believer has some advantages over the unbeliever, here. But does it not say, "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better?" But we shall see presently how Dr. Bullinger gets rid of this idea. In passing, we may observe that the dying malefactor—to notice the second passage to which reference is made—is no longer any help to us, for henceforth the passage is to be read, "Verily, I say unto thee this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Thus post-dating the thief's joy some thousand years.†

* This really underlies the whole truth of man's responsibility, for if a person has perished in the sense of ceasing to exist, *that* man cannot be raised.

† This translation of Dr. B.'s—or mis-translation—really does away with the very point of the passage. The thief asks to be remembered when Christ comes in His kingdom. The Lord offers a blessing more immediate than this, and says, "To-day shalt thou be with Me."

We come now to the well-known statement of Paul's, "Absent from the body . . . present with the Lord," upon which believers ere departing, and their friends after their departure, have built so much. Dr. Bullinger says this "could be realised only in *resurrection*. Resurrection (and not death) is the subject of the whole context." All we have to ask in regard to this is, Will the Apostle be absent from the body in resurrection? Therefore, it cannot mean what Dr. Bullinger says it means. Anyone can see on reference, that "absent from the body" in ver. 8, is the contrast of being at home in the body, in ver. 6. This method of Dr. Bullinger's seems to us something near akin to wresting the scriptures, in order to support a preconceived idea.

We notice very much the same thing when we come to the consideration of the equally well known passage, "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Dr. Bullinger turns this inside out, and makes it a "desire for the return of Christ." But this makes nonsense of the context, for the very next clause reads, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Which makes the Apostle affirm (if Dr. Bullinger be right) that Paul's continuing in the flesh was more needful to the Philippians than Christ's coming. Who could accept such a proposition? Whereas, if we accept the usual interpretation, all is in perfect sequence. "To depart and to be with Christ," would indeed have been far better for him, it would have meant release from prison and all his toils; but in the largeness and love of his heart he thinks of his beloved Philippians and their need, and adds, it is more needful for you for me to abide in the flesh. But that departing, of which the Apostle can speak so exultingly, is surely robbed of all its value if it meant passing into a state of unconsciousness, "knowing not anything." How could to die be gain under such circumstances? To introduce the thought of the Lord's return into ver. 23 is to do violence to the context. Both the verses that precede and the one which follows refer to living and dying in the ordinary acceptation of these terms.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

We now arrive at the main topic of the book, viz., the Rich Man and Lazarus, and we find this assertion, "It is absolutely impossible that the traditional interpretation of this can be correct; because, if it were, it would be directly opposed to all the other teaching of scripture." But we think it has been shown already

that what Dr. Bullinger takes to be the teaching of scripture, is, after all, only his own fanciful exposition of it. The "dead" he tells us are the dead (*i.e.*, they have ceased to exist for the time being in any conscious state whatever). When people die, he goes on to say, "their 'thoughts perish'; and they 'know not anything.'" He will say, of course, that he is quoting scripture, but, as we have shown, (1) the bearing he gives to these passages is something beyond the ken of the writers—the veil that hung over the other world had not been lifted; (2) their thoughts were limited to life here, which accounts for the language used; (3) other scriptures make plain that the dead are not unconscious, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Now these people had been raised, they were living, conscious beings; moreover, it is said they "stand," and yet they are spoken of as dead. It is not "them that were dead." Four translations to which we have referred, give "I saw the dead." And this shews us the scriptural idea of death. It is separation from God: from a former state: a condition—but, not extinction, or ceasing to exist, or the condition of not being able to think, or feel, or know anything. The "dead" before the great White Throne are most likely doing all three. Was not the prodigal son in the far country existing and conscious? Yet the father speaks of him as "dead."

This being so, and death not being what he asserts it is, we cannot accept Dr. Bullinger's dictum, that our Lord, in lifting the veil, as He does in Luke xvi., was only giving "another example from the traditions of the Pharisees." That "He knew their traditions were false," yet He adopted them. Dr. Bullinger affirms that He did it in order to convey a lesson. If so, the method seems extraordinary. The mass of it—the whole framework and every incident—is simply tradition, with no truth in it, and thus we have got to swallow half a dozen errors in order to imbibe one truth. Dr. Bullinger, however, seems to contradict himself. He makes out that the Lord adopts the idea of the Pharisees, yet on page 43, he says, "He knew that their traditions were false, *and in this very parable He corrects them*" (italics ours). How can He adopt them and correct them at the same time? If He corrects them, then surely what He leaves uncorrected we may safely accept. And one thing the Lord certainly leaves untouched. He utters not one word that indicates that there is no consciousness after death. Every word tells the other way.

Such is Dr. Bullinger's argument. He forms a preconceived idea of death—forgetting altogether that death in Old Testament times was viewed simply in relation to life on earth—and then he is determined that every New Testament scripture that seems to militate against his view shall be retranslated, and made to fit into his scheme, somehow or somewhere.

One instance of the remarkable shifts to which he is reduced in such an attempt is, that he is obliged to give Moses a resurrection all to himself (see page 26). Moses, of course, stood in the way of his theory. He appears on the Mount of Transfiguration, and manifests a great deal of consciousness. The resurrection, as a general fact, had not as yet taken place. How is this difficulty to be got rid of? Dr. Bullinger makes Jude 9 into a resurrection. Now we are not saying what this passage particularly refers to. That is not the point. Dr. Bullinger's contention is, there is no consciousness, or anything, apart from the general resurrection of the dead. Therefore, he says Moses has been raised. If so, then Paul's words recorded in Acts xxvi. are not true, "That Christ should suffer, *and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead.*" Dr. Bullinger seems to feel this difficulty, for he remarks: "Christ was the first who 'rose' (*i.e.*, of His own Divine power) but not the first who was 'raised' by the power of God." Now, will the reader notice how such reasoning actually makes scripture teach error. Scripture says, "Christ should be the *first* that should rise from the dead." That means that others should follow. Dr. Bullinger's qualification of this is: "*i.e.*, of His own Divine power," thus making scripture assert that others beside Christ are to rise by their own divine power!! So that if Dr. Bullinger's words are to be taken seriously, the passage in question should read: "Christ should be the first that should rise from the dead of His own Divine power."

Thus, by all this process of reasoning, the plain teaching of scripture is falsified; and in addition, Christ robbed of His glory. For if someone else rose from the dead, and entered the glorified state before Him, Christ has not in all things the pre-eminence. We do not say that Dr. Bullinger means to do this, we are only dealing with the effects of his teaching. And what other effects would such teaching have? Supposing we accept the teaching as descriptive of our departed, that the dead know not anything, what a gloom

it seems to cast around the grave. The "dead in Christ" have simply gone to unconsciousness. What a poor triumph Christ has won that He cannot have his own with Him in any other state but "dumb forgetfulness." Is this the result of His redemption, of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, of the joy of knowing on earth the forgiveness of our sins and acceptance in the Beloved, that when we die we lose it all for the time being? Who can believe it? Who will believe that when Stephen said "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," he had nothing better before him than this? Or Paul, when he exclaimed so exultingly, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand"? No! we still believe with him, that "*to depart and to be with Christ is far, far better.*"

SEVEN FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE CROSS.

WHEN reading in 2 Kings v. 14 that Naaman dipped seven times in Jordan, I began to consider how many looks I had had of the Cross, and I found they numbered seven. I saw:—

1st.—A dying Man—the Son of Man."

"Holy, harmless, undefiled."

2nd.—God the Son,

for they Crucified the Lord of Glory,

Killed the Author or Prince of Life.

The first and the last, The Living One, said

"I died." (N.V.)

3rd.—The bearer of my sin.

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24).

4th.—My old sinful self.

"I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20). (N.V.)

5th.—The world crucified to me (Gal. vi. 14).

6th.—An empty Cross.

No crucifix is a true representation of Christ, *now* He is risen.

7th.—A Link between the Cross and Him Who, in virtue of His work on the Cross, sits on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens.

Oh, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge!

FROM AN INVALID IN A FAR COUNTRY.

“ I AM not nearly as well as I was when in England—and that was nothing grand—I can never sit up now, nor walk at all, but ‘ God is good and doest good.’ He is over all, bringing blessing out of it to me and mine. He never alters my circumstances. I don’t find them alleviated at all—rather otherwise—but I do prove His grace sufficient, and am ‘ marvellously helped ’—there is such heart rest through all, and I realise that indeed when my need is great His grace is greater, and there is a deeper consciousness of His presence both with and for me.

“ I find He never fails me, He gives the daily strength for daily need, and when one realises this, life is full of rest and comfort, for we need never be desiring to do what we can’t, or *be* what we cannot, either. To do His will is the very highest thing. I do pray that in all, and each, His purposes may be fulfilled, and His name glorified.

“ I get happier *in Himself* as the years go by, realising that ‘ the joy of the Lord is my strength,’ and ‘ the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’ He will change these bodies of humiliation like unto His own glorious Body ; and *we know* that all things work together for our good ; and that God our Father has our eternal welfare at heart. He is training us for eternity. I ordered six copies of the *Faith and the Flock*, I think it such a good name. I like it—the Magazine—more and more, and seek to make it known. It will fulfil God’s purpose, and that is all we must look for ; success is not in the numbers sold so much as in the *heart* work accomplished.

“ What a wonderful truth is brought out in Eph. iii. 10. By *means of the Church*, God is making known to angels what He can work in grace through poor saved fallen man ! Teaching angels through us ! Oh, to lean more heavily upon Him, in all distrust of self, and fullest trust in Him, that He may be glorified in and through us *always*. I love that verse in 2 Thess. i. where we are told that He shall come to be glorified in us all. No mistakes then, no weakness and carelessness, nothing of self, but *all Christ*. Oh, may He now be all in all to us—honoured in every way, and in the smallest details of our lives. We live to do His will, and that will

is the very best for us ; we love to do it, and would not do our own if we might. ' Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight ' softens everything, and we know there can never be one drop too much in our cup of trial—is it such ?—nay, it is the cup of blessing. All the bitterness is gone. He drank the cup to its very dregs, and there was no other way to meet our need. Neither can there be any other way for us than the way He leads, and we know ' His way is perfect.' Faith asserts it, though all may seem to contradict it."

" APART FROM THEE "

Oh Lord, until I see Thy face,
How dark and drear the clearest morn.
Apart from Thee—Thy felt embrace—
The night still throws her veil o'er dawn.

For Thou to me art life and breath,
And Thou to me art very light.
Apart from Thee, I live in death,
And noonday is but dreary night.

Thy grace and love my heart enfold,
And warm me with their gracious beams.
Apart from Thee, the sun is cold,
And summer as the winter seems.

I break my fast on that alone
Which in Thy Heart for me is stored.
Apart from Thee, my board may groan—
I famish at that groaning board !

Though springs of cool, clear waters burst
Around my feet placed on their brink ;
Apart from Thee, my Lord, I thirst,
O bid me come to Thee and drink.

My eye on Thee—my sure straight Way—
I laugh at fog and mist and haze.
Apart from Thee, a babe I stray,
Bewildered in a tangled maze.

Life's billows lie within Thy Palm—
Thou call'st—I come, and firmly tread.
Apart from Thee, or rough or calm,
Those waters surge above my head.

* * * * *

Thou lov'st me ? Then let hell despair—
Wrench sun from sky, rend rock from sea,
Turn Cosmos chaos—naught can tear
My helpless soul *apart from Thee* !—F. C. J.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

AS we are living in a day when the Scriptures are being attacked, and the Foundation Truths of the Gospel are most insidiously undermined and destroyed, it behoves us to examine that which we have been taught, so that we may stand firm in the faith, and hold fast those things we have believed, despite all the winds of doctrine in these last days. It is well to begin at the beginning, so as "to be ready to give an answer to everyone that may ask us a reason of the hope that is in us." We will, therefore (specially for the sake of young Christians) look briefly at the Bible itself, and then consider some of the fundamental truths taught in the Book.

There are vital questions which arise in every thoughtful mind, "Is there a God?" "Can He speak?" "Has He spoken?" "Does the Bible give a faithful record of that which He has said?" We believe in one Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the first verse of the Bible we read "In the beginning God (plural) created (singular) the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). Here we find a *plural* noun linked with a *singular* verb revealing Trinity acting in Unity. A Unity of *Action*, joined to a plurality of *Persons*, and this is true not only in the work of creation, but in Redemption, in Salvation, and in Sanctification.

Not only has God revealed His Being, and made manifest His eternal power and Godhead in the things which He has made, but we hear Him speaking and commanding His servants to write the very words which He uttered. Over nineteen hundred times we find the assertion made in the scriptures that "God has spoken," and He demands *acceptance* on our part of that which He has said (Jer. xxxvii. 17; Hosea xii. 10; Heb. i. 1, 2). He demands our *attention* also (Isa. i. 2; Jer. xiii. 15, xxii. 29). He holds us *responsible* for that which He has uttered and recorded (Ezek. ii. 5; Luke xvi. 29; John xii. 48; Heb. ii. 1-3; Heb. xii. 25-26).

The Bible thus claims to be "The Word of God," and as such it expresses His mind, unfolds His love, and makes known His future plans and purposes.

In itself, the Bible is a marvellous production, it is old, yet ever new, it contains endless variety and yet reveals perfect harmony.

It contains sixty-six separate books, which were written by about forty different writers, and appeared at different periods through some sixteen hundred years. Moses, the first of these writers, lived a thousand years before Herodotus, "the Father of History," and at least five hundred years before Homer, "the Father of Poetry," and John, the last of these writers, died nearly one hundred years after the birth of Christ. These writers embrace every class of society, every condition of life, and every degree of culture. Among them we find kings and legislators, priests and prophets, a prime minister and a publican, learned scholars and humble shepherds, a lowly herdsman and Galilean fishermen.

It has two great divisions, the Old and the New Testaments. And the manner in which the writers of the New Testament used the writings of the Old shews their high estimate of its importance and truthfulness. They quote from it over three hundred times, besides alluding to it on many more occasions. Thus, in the Old Testament the New lies *enfolded*, and in the New Testament the Old lies *unfolded*. These two divisions dovetail together in a marvellous manner, although four hundred years lie between them, and, as a whole, they form a complete circle as seen by comparing the last two chapters in Revelation with the first two chapters in Genesis. In the Old Testament there are thirty-nine books, and the New Testament contains twenty-seven. Each of these sixty-six books contains its own special subject, and pursues its own distinctive line of teaching, and yet together they form one organic whole.

As we read its pages we find that not only is God the *Author* of the Book, but that He is also the *Divine Editor*, and He has arranged these sixty-six books in His own perfect way. He does not always follow the chronological order, but oftentimes a moral and spiritual order. This is seen by comparing the Book of Job and the Pentateuch in the Old Testament, and Thessalonians and Romans in the New. To a mere cursory reader these various books may have the appearance of confusion and want of system, but as we carefully and prayerfully study them we discern Divine perfection everywhere, and have to exclaim, "This is the Finger of God." A casual observer of the starry Heavens may fail to detect any order or systematic arrangements of those heavenly bodies, but how differently does the trained eye of the astronomer

behold that star-bespangled sky? He detects marvellous systems and the most perfect order everywhere. The Bible is like a tree, it has its root in God, Christ is its stem, and the Holy Spirit is the life-giving sap imparting life and beauty to every branch and tiny twig. From this we learn the importance of reading the Scriptures consecutively, and in prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, who alone can unlock its truths, reveal its deep mysteries and make its words spirit and life to our souls.

These Inspired Writings are called "*the Word of God,*" because they are a revelation *of* God and *from* God (Isa. xl. 8; Mark vii. 13; 2 Cor. iv. 2; Eph. vi. 17).

They are also called "*the Scriptures*" (or writings) (John v. 39). Thus setting forth their eminence, yea, their *preeminence* above all other writings. The Bible is the Book of books; the Oracle of oracles, it stands alone in the realm of literature. It teaches men how to live, and how to die; how to be holy, and happy, for time and for eternity.

They are called "*the Holy Scriptures*" (Rom. i. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 15) to distinguish them from all other writings, and on account of their source and object. God is their *source* (2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21). Hence their immutability (Matt. v. 18), their marvellous accuracy, as seen in a *tense* in John viii. 58; in a single *letter* in Gal. iii. 16, and in a remarkable *omission* in Heb. vii. 3. Their *object* is to make men holy (Psa. cxix. 9; John xv. 3; Eph. v. 26).

They are called "*The Scriptures of Truth*" (Dan. x. 21). From this we learn that we may rely upon them for all eternity, for "the Word of the Lord liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23-25; Heb. vi. 18).

These God-breathed pages *testify of Christ* (John v. 39), hence we read "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10). There are over three hundred prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament, which are like three hundred fingers pointing to Him, "to Him give all the prophets witness." This Heaven-sent Treasure is the Unerring Guide for the *sinner*, leading him into "the Way of Salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15), and it is the Inexhaustible Storehouse which furnishes the *saint* "unto every good word and work" (2 Tim. iii. 17).

LETTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

TEMPTATION.

II.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

In a former letter I dwelt upon some aspects of temptation, and pointed out the double safeguard of understanding the evil consequences of sin, and that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Now let me mention some more.

1. *Do not put yourself in the way of temptation.* People do this sometimes in their choice of companions. Choose those whose aims and inclinations are right. Ask yourself whether you feel the better or the worse for their company. You can soon tell by their conversation and ways, whether they are likely to do you good or harm. Are they fond of talking about doubtful subjects? Do they speak disparagingly of what is good, and true and noble? Are they fond of questionable company themselves, and do they frequent places from which they can get no good, but may get much harm? Then do not make them your associates. You may of course try to do them good, but shew them plainly that you discountenance everything of a different tendency. Then, again, certain places, amusements, and books may be a temptation to you. Do not say they are not a temptation to others, and that you know people who derive no harm from them, and therefore they must be right for you. This does not follow. What is not a temptation to one may be to another. You have to judge for yourself, and not for other people. Has a certain thing power over you? Is it occupying time which ought to be given to other things? Does it cost more time, or strength, or money than it ought? Then, if you have to answer these questions in the affirmative, keep out of the way of them.

2. *When you discover anything to be a temptation do not go further.* How many might have been saved if they had made a stand. It is tempting God to go on with that which we know may lead us into evil. Besides, how can we pray the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil," when we allow ourselves to stand in the way of it.

Someone may ask here, But what am I to do when my position in life, or my business, brings me into temptation? If you are

there apart from your own choice and inclination, God will keep you if you commit yourself to Him. If, however, you feel unhappy, and that God is not near to you, it is time to leave at whatever cost. Only take care that your unhappiness springs from the right cause, and not from mere desire for a change.

3. *Avoid idle habits.* "Idle people," said a preacher once, "tempt the devil to tempt them." Which is only another way of saying that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." To keep well employed—hands busy and thoughts occupied—is one of the surest safeguards against temptation.

These are some safeguards, dear young friends. You will see I am dwelling more upon the practical aspects of the subject. You scarcely need to be told, perhaps, that prayer and reading the Bible are absolutely necessary if you are to be kept. And may I ask you to remember in connection with this subject that every temptation resisted leaves you stronger to face the next, and contrariwise, every time we yield we become weaker, and more liable to give way. Some have lived with Christ so many years, and turned such a deaf ear to temptation, that things do not appeal to them now like they used. It is the one who is living on the borderland between right and wrong who is always open to attack, and always liable to be overcome. If you know a thing is a temptation do not trifle with it. You may be inclined to say, Why cannot I do as I like? Because it is not for your good. *Character grows in the soil of self-restraint.* The meanest and most miserable of people are those who live simply to gratify themselves. The other day a man, who had been one of the wealthiest merchants in the town where he lived, had to enter the workhouse. He had once been a Parliamentary candidate, and served on the Town Council, but he squandered his money recklessly, and took to drinking. "A constable had found him helplessly drunk in the gutter, and the irony of fate caused him to be brought for judgment before a bench of former colleagues. Speaking with emotion, the Mayor told him that he would have to be sent to prison unless he consented to go to the workhouse." This downward course had a beginning. What need of watchfulness with us all!

In my last letter I promised to say a word about sudden temptation. How is that to be met? *Only by a constant preparation against it by the habitual judgment of sinful thoughts and desires.* A

person may be under sudden temptation to take something that does not belong to him. The opportunity is unexpectedly afforded, no one is looking, and the deed is done. In nine cases out of ten the person who does such a thing as that is a thief in his heart before he is with his hands. That is, the thought has risen up in his heart, and been allowed to remain, and been pondered, instead of being instantly refused and condemned. The other day a man went into a hairdresser's shop, took off his coat, and out of it dropped several five pound notes. These were picked up by a lad in the employ of the hairdresser and retained. In a few days he and a companion went off to London, and made use of the money for their own enjoyment. They travelled about until at length the one who had committed the theft was apprehended. In one sense this was a sudden temptation, in another it was not. It was sudden in the sense that the boy did not know an hour beforehand that those notes were going to be dropped, but all the after circumstances seem to point to the fact that he had often contemplated what he would do if the opportunity came in his way. Every evil thing proceeds first of all from the heart, and I cannot urge upon you too strongly, my dear young friends, to judge evil *there*, constantly and unsparingly, in order that you may never have to mourn over deeds that have been done and can never be undone.

Even if you do constantly reckon yourself "dead unto sin" and allow it no harbour in your breast, you may still be suddenly assailed, and be hard put to it. The temptation to say an unkind thing about others, or an untruthful thing to shield yourself, or to do something dishonest, or immodest, may sometimes seem as if it were going to prove too strong. What are you to do? Send up a prayer—a strong cry, though perhaps a silent one—that God would keep and deliver you for His own sake. This was the experience of the Psalmist, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for **His Name's sake,**" and you will find it to be yours. "Sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under the law, but under grace," if only you count upon God for it. And He who has *preserved* you will one day *present* you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. "May He keep us from falling until that day" (Jude 24).

Your friend,

THE EDITOR.

CORRESPONDENCE.

With reference to the question "Why was the napkin found apart from the linen clothes, &c.," in the May number, the explanation I have read in a book is this:—

The tomb in which our Saviour's body was laid was a rock-hewn tomb. At that period, the rocky resting place was roughly scooped out into two cavities, one to receive the recumbent body and the smaller cavity to receive the head ("a place by itself").

"Wrapped together" signifies that the napkin retained its original turban-like (twisted together) shape which it had worn round the head, *undisturbed* as the swathing death-clothes out of which the Saviour's body had risen. It was just the undisturbed state of the turban for the head, and the clothes for the body, which convinced the disciples of the resurrection.

At the base of the rock of precipitation outside Jerusalem (the spot which Gordon and many of us believe to have been the scene of the Crucifixion) there is a garden. Adjoining this garden are some grounds where a very ancient catacomb was discovered some time since. One of the inscriptions in this catacomb has been translated "Buried near his Lord." This led to excavations on the other side of this rock tomb, the other side being in the garden at the base of "Golgotha." Another rock tomb was discovered with one finished and one unfinished resting-place for the dead ("Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden *a new sepulchre*, wherein was never man yet laid.") The marks of the mason's tools are still on the unfinished tomb. Débris has raised the ground all round Jerusalem, but the tomb lies so far below the original level of the garden, that one needs to stoop down to gaze into the tomb ("and he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying.")

One wonders if that were not the very tomb of the Saviour, hidden away all these years beneath the rubbish of the city He wept over.

"There is, there can be, nothing penal in God's dealings with His people now. All *that* is past and gone for ever. Correction there may be, but not judgment. Chastisement there may be, but not punishment."

SYMPOSIUM ON 2 TIMOTHY II.

Will the reader of the following contributions from various writers bear in mind that they are general remarks upon the passage as well as being criticisms upon a former article dealing with the same subject.] 478

By S. L. J.

LET us enquire how Timothy and men of God who were overcomers would be affected by this chapter. It is a matter of history that the visible Church maintained, in the main, an outward unity for some 1,500 years, and that the godly, *e.g.*, John Huss, did not believe that it was the will of God for them to entirely sever themselves from the outward communion; yet 2 Tim. ii. was, of course, applicable to them.

We are thus confronted with one of two alternatives. Either *all* the godly ones failed to carry out the precepts enjoined in this chapter, or else it was not God's will for them at that time to make a complete severance. Who can doubt that the first alternative is not to be entertained for a moment? And therefore we ask, "How did the godly obey those injunctions?"

* * * *

It is worthy of note that all the instructions in this chapter are for the individual, and the verbs are all in the singular, *i.e.*, "flee thou," "follow thou," etc. The Church is not mentioned in the Epistle, though its utter failure is often indicated, *e.g.*, i. 15, ii. 16-20, iii. 12, etc.

The only verse which speaks of having the company of others is that in which it speaks of him who follows righteousness, faith, love, peace, that he is to do it with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It assumes there will be some such.

This, however, cannot mean we are to make a formal company of such. As to this there is not a word. Moreover, does anyone think that *all* with whom he breaks bread call on the Lord out of a pure heart, or *none* call on the Lord out of a pure heart except those who break bread with him in this day of confusion? If, then, this cannot be maintained for a moment, it is evident that our fellowship cannot be coterminous with the company with which we break bread.

The exhortation here is to follow certain moral qualities and nothing else, and to introduce into this the thought of breaking bread, the formation of a concrete company, assembly ground, or any such thing is to leave the ground of sober truth for pure imagination. Let us not assume that *what should be*, is the same as what is, for this is the ground of Rome.

By H. M. M.

I do not regard the instructions given to Timothy as in connection with the breaking of bread at all. Still I fully recognise that collectively, as well as individually, we are responsible to "depart from iniquity." But it should be noted that it is a *thing* we have to depart from, not NECESSARILY persons. I regard sectarianism as "iniquity." But I do not, neither does anyone else that I know of, regard all Christians in the various sects as "iniquitous persons." Hence I depart from the iniquitous thing sectarianism, but I do not depart from the persons connected therewith in matters *outside their sectarian position*. The distinction is most important in practice.

I cannot, however, accept v. 22 as a guide in any way as to those with whom I may break bread, because I do not believe this is the subject of the passage at all. It is repeatedly said that this Scripture furnishes guidance for the present evil day. No doubt it does, very valuable guidance, too. But it was written to furnish Timothy with guidance in *his day*. Are we to understand that on receiving these directions, Timothy forthwith brought about a division in the Ephesian meeting? Seeing how much hangs on this, and that if he did not, there is no ground for basing division in *our* day on this passage, I cannot help feeling that the silence of Scripture on the point is eloquent. Judging from the whole tone of the epistle, one would think that it was written to furnish him with instruction and encouragement when labouring in the midst of a company opposed to him.

Do I then deny the present application of 2 Tim. ii. 22? No, indeed I do not. But I seek to obey it in the connection in which it was written. It is an exhortation to an *individual*, not at all to a *company*. It is an exhortation to do a certain thing, viz.: follow righteousness, faith, charity and peace. It is an exhortation to do

this with certain associates, viz. : those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. There is not a word in the verse about breaking bread, or about those with whom we should break bread. With all respect, I decline to introduce into this verse any ecclesiastical idea or guidance whatsoever, but I would seek to heartily obey it in my individual capacity.

By W. H. D.

It appears to me the Apostle is writing of the Church as an institution founded by God for a specific purpose. In 1 Tim. iii. 15-16 he writes from the same point of view and states the purpose for which the institution was founded.

At the time the first Epistle was written the Institution stood in its pristine purity and goodness, but that it would not remain so was foretold by the Lord Himself (Matt. xiii. 25). By the time 2 Tim. was written the tares had become apparent and guidance was needed by faithful saints under the new and adverse but not unforeseen circumstances.

Teachers of evil doctrines had crept into the Church and were making mischief among its members. Paul warns Timothy not to be disconcerted but to remember in the first place (v. 19) that the institution founded by God for His own ends stands unassailable but it bears two inscriptions—the one telling that the Lord and He alone can discern the tares from the wheat, the other that where the *appearances* are those belonging to the tare character—the faithful must avoid everything bearing that stamp. In the second place (v. 20) that in an institution intended to serve great and slowly evolving purposes on earth various vessels would be required to carry out special ends, and some of these vessels are for honourable purposes, and others for those base uses to which the vessels for honour would not be put. The one class are vitally connected with God and heaven and possesses eternal life. The other carnal and merely connected with earth and serve earthly and providential purposes, and are destined for ultimate destruction. There is nothing new in this—how many merely ungodly instruments were used of God for the chastening of Israel, and then cast aside in judgment. This (v. 20) is a statement, not a guide to conduct at all, but a sustentation to faith in circumstances so different from those one as a Christian might be led to expect. In verse 21 the instruction is to the godly saint.

The object of every faithful saint must be to be such that the Lord can use him for His own cherished objects that He has at His heart—not like any of those employed in His strange work. Now if a man purges himself out from these, that is to say those whose evil conduct gave occasion to this admonition, and indeed from all unrighteousness (v. 19), he shall be a vessel for the Master's honourable objects, holy, fitting for His use when He might want him (v. 21). It does not follow that He will use him, that is not the point, but he is acceptable to his Lord, ready and fit if called for.

Now there follows direct instruction for those who purge themselves, as to how they are to go on. They must in the first place refuse all fleshy and worldly desires, and next they will merely find those (God will take care of that) who are animated by the same single-eyed desire to obey the authority and teaching of the Lord, and with them they will practice all godliness, "righteousness, faith, love, peace" (v. 22).

The bearing of it all on the breaking of bread is simply this. That rite is the expression of the closest association, and if we are to "depart from unrighteousness" as a general thing it is certain we are not to admit it to the nearest communion. It is not a question of discipline, but of shunning that which is evil.

In trying to act upon this scripture we must not lose sight of all those other precepts that instruct us as to Fellowship, the Unity of the Church, etc., which all demand our faithful obedience.

By W. H.

These verses do not at all treat of the fellowship of the Church of God as a whole, nor of any local expression of it, as Ephesus, **where** probably Timothy received the epistle.

The aged apostle simply seeks to encourage his son Timothy as *a servant of Christ*, and exhorts him to (a) "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (ii. 1); (b) "endure hardness as a good soldier" (ii. 3); (c) profit by Paul's own example as to "doctrine, manner of life," etc. (iii. 10, 11); (d) continuance in the things he had learned, and loyalty to the Holy Scriptures (iii. 14-17); (e) self-control and diligence in evangelising (iv. 5); (f) watchfulness against apostates and other evil-doers (iv. 14, 15). These exhortations are supported by illustrations from the ordinary avocations and pursuits

and athletics of the time, viz., the soldier (ii. 3, 4) ; the athlete (v. 5) ; the husbandman (v. 6). In addition, a further lesson in service is drawn from the verses under consideration—" a great house " with its many vessels for the service of the master of the house, some of gold and of silver, for honourable use, but others, of wood and of earth, for less honourable use, but *all* for use, whether of gold, silver, wood or * earth.

" If a man therefore purge himself from these " does not mean one or more servants of Christ separating from other servants, for that would tend to fill with pride and conceit the separatists, besides contravening Rom. xiv. 4—" Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? to his own master he standeth or falleth." Neither does it mean one or more or many children of God separating themselves from other *children of God*—the subject of fellowship or association of *persons* not being under review in the context. What is reviewed, however, is the servant of Christ's own moral and spiritual *condition*, as in 1 Tim. v. 22—" keep thyself pure," and as in the context, " shun profane and vain babblings " (v. 16).

I can understand v. 22 being construed as bearing on fellowship owing to the presence of the word " with," though it presents no difficulty whatever to my own mind. Whilst Timothy, as the Lord's servant, was accountable only to his Master, yet he had " a fellowship of hearts to keep and cultivate " in all that was vital to, and promotive of godliness as indicated by the word " but "—" Flee also youthful lusts, *but*," etc. Timothy is not herein and hereby appointed a judge of the purity of heart of others, but this being *the normal condition* of the Lord's people, he is readily and gladly to acknowledge all such in their efforts after holiness of life. I conclude then that the verses under review deal with Christian *character*, which alone counts with the Lord—" *meet* for the Master's use." Whilst I have greatly appreciated some of the sentiments of the writer of the article on " The Divine Ground of Gathering," and especially those expressed in the August number, I regret that I cannot at all follow him in his interpretation of these verses, for which the context affords no warrant whatever.

* It is worthy of note that the word rendered " earth " (*ostrakinos*) in v. 20 only occurs once more in the N.T., viz., in 2 Cor. iv. 7, where Paul speaks of himself as an " earthen vessel," so that your contributor is altogether incorrect when he says " as to vessels of wood and earth . . . they are never intended . . . for honourable use." The noun *ostrakon* is literally *burnt clay*.

By COL. O. B.

In the September number of the *Faith and the Flock* suggestions are invited as to the meaning of 2 Tim. ii.

Special attention is called to vv. 19-22.

Perhaps we read difficulties into passages of scripture by not considering the context.

Take the whole chapter and note that the letter is addressed to an individual, "Thou, Timothy, my son," it is not addressed to a Church.

Among other instructions, very special stress is laid on the necessity of avoiding vain babbling, words to no profit, false teaching, as not only harmful, but increasingly so, and sure to gender strife.

The false teaching is indicated, and the false teachers named.

This is, without doubt, the subject of the chapter from ver. 14 onward.

Now I would ask your readers to cover up ver. 20 and read the passage through without it, and, in my judgment it is very plain and needs no comment.

What Timothy, and you and I, are to do is to purge out from ourselves the false teaching, &c. The "from these" refers to the vain babblings, &c., and not to a brother or vessels.

Ver. 20 is simply a parenthesis to explain the metaphor used.

If "a man" purge "himself" from these, the "man" and "himself" are both in the singular, as also is "a good soldier," ver. 3, "a man," ver. 5, "the husbandman," ver. 6, "a workman," ver. 15.

The word purge should be purge out, and is only once used in scripture beside this instance, purge out the old leaven (1 Cor. v. 7).

Now the injunction to purge out must refer to something within, and I suggest it would be impossible to have a literal or metaphorical vessel in one, and it could not, therefore, be purged out.

Further, the vessels to honour and the vessels to dishonour are coupled together, and if the "from these" refers to one it refers to both; but surely it refers to neither.

Those who take this passage as an injunction to put away a brother, have need of the caution to rightly divide the word of truth.

The sword is a lethal weapon, and it is a dangerous matter to handle it by the point instead of the hilt.

[We are exceedingly thankful to be able to present to our readers in the foregoing comments such a varied and yet lucid exposition of a passage of scripture which has often been sadly misinterpreted and misapplied. In our opinion, the following points are made clear:—

1. That verse 20 is only a figure (though, of course, a figure of something) and we must not treat it as if it contained a doctrinal statement. As one correspondent points out, it is helpful to read the passage first of all as if that verse did not occur. 2. It is important to observe the wording of this verse when referring to the vessels. "*To*" honour and "*to*" dishonour not "*of*" honour, etc. It is their *use* here, and not what they are. A vessel of wood or earth may be put to just as honourable a use as one of gold or silver. 3. It is not so much a question of conversion (new birth, justification, etc.), for as to that the passage declares: "The Lord knoweth them that are His"; but of conduct and service. And we cannot follow with all who may, nevertheless, be found at last to be children of God. So in verse 21 it reads "he shall be a vessel *unto* honour." Not "*of*" honour, as if every child of God were that. Therefore, the material of which the vessel is made, whether of gold, silver, wood, or earth does not in itself decide whether the vessel is *unto* honour. So with persons. A man being *unto* honour is decided by whether he purges himself.

Next, 4. What it is to purge himself is made clear. This has often been taken to mean the outward separation from other persons. It means just the reverse. The man is exhorted to purge *himself* out. The very language determines that this must refer to something *within*. That this is the force here is corroborated by a reference to 1 Cor. v. 7, the only other place in scripture where the expression is found, where the meaning is that the Corinthians were to purge themselves from the old leaven, and this refers to a good deal more, as the context shews, than merely getting rid of the wicked person. *Their own state was in question.* "Your glorying is not good," says the Apostle. And again, "ye are puffed up."

5. Some light, too, is thrown upon what it is we are to purge ourselves out from if we are to be vessels *unto* honour. The "these" can hardly refer to the vessels, for if so (as has been pointed out) grammatically it would include the vessels to honour as well, besides being rather a mixed metaphor. It surely means the *individual* separation from all that is covered by the word "*iniquity.*" "Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from *iniquity,*" and includes the "*profane and vain babblings,*" *evil doctrines,* etc. Timothy, for instance, is exhorted to flee youthful lusts. These are *within*, surely.

6. Then having thus purified himself, he is to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace," and this, first of all, for himself; and in addition have as his associates those who call on the Lord *out* of a pure heart! Here again it is a question of what is *within*. In fact, the whole passage is intensely moral and ethical. To make it primarily ecclesiastical (whatever *remote* bearing it may have upon Church relationships) is to miss the whole point.—*Ed.*]

“ A phenomenon singular in its kind is the striking difference between the writings of the Apostles and those of the apostolic fathers, so nearly their contemporaries. In other instances transitions are wont to be gradual, but in this instance we observe a sudden change. There is no gentle gradation here, but all at once an abrupt transition from one style of language to another—a phenomenon which should lead us to acknowledge the fact of a special agency of the Divine Spirit in the souls of the Apostles and of a new creative element in the first period.”

* * * *

“ In those things wherein the people of God are agreed, I will spend my zeal ; and wherein they differ, I will endeavour to walk according to the light that God hath given me and charitably believe the others to do so.”

* * * *

“ Confessions of faith and creeds have their place. Unfortunately they are valuable precisely when stripped of that in which to most lies all their value, as authoritative expositions of doctrine they substitute human authority for divine ; the confession, with all its admitted liability to error, in place of the unfailing infallible Word, by which the Holy Spirit, the sure and only Guardian of the Church in the absence of Christ, its Head, works in the hearts and conscience of men. Stripped of the false claim, and left as the witness of what individual faith has found in the inspired Word, they may be used of God as the voice of the living witness.”

* * * *

“ When we take up in our hands His blessed Word this should be our chief aim—to know Him. I do not mean *head* knowledge. Oh no ; there is so much of this all around us. . . . I do not mean that we should desire *this* knowledge of Christ ; but that which, like the disciples of Emmaus, will make the heart burn within—burn with holy peace and joy—burn with delight when that Saviour’s name is uttered. That knowledge that will burn out all self-righteousness, self-pleasing, and self-love, and lay the soul broken and humbled at the Saviour’s feet. That knowledge that will burn out the love of sin, of self, and the world, and make the heart a meet dwelling place for Jesus. This is the knowledge of Christ we should aim at. This is the Spirit’s teaching : and this it is that will glorify the Saviour.”

THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK

Vol. I.—No. 15.

DECEMBER, 1909. PRICE—ONE PENNY.

EDITORIALS.

Vol. 1 of "The Faith and the Flock."—We would again call the attention of our readers to the fact that Volume I.—comprising fifteen numbers, Oct., 1908, to Dec., 1909—can be obtained early in December from Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co. Prices, bound full cloth, lettered back, 3s. ; quarter roan, 3s. 6d. Kindly order early that we may know how many to prepare.

* * * *

We also wish to announce that a very interesting and comprehensive chart explanatory of The Book of Revelation is being prepared, which we hope to insert in the February issue of this magazine. It is a reduced facsimile of the one used at the recent Reading Conference. On that occasion great interest was manifested, and many desired to possess a copy. This will now be possible. Helpful articles by Mr. Walter Scott will appear month by month elucidating the subjects represented on the chart.

A correspondent writes, referring to the November issue:—
 “ ‘ Divers and Strange Doctrines ’ ought to be printed separately. Such a paper is much needed. I am sending a lot of ‘ The Faith and the Flock ’ away by post to many, and perhaps they in their turn will do the same.” As we have a number of copies still on hand containing the above article, we are not yet taking steps to have it printed separately, but if any of our readers share the convictions of the writer whose letter we quote above, we shall be prepared to make special terms to any ordering 50 or 100 copies at a time. Please communicate direct with the Editor.

* * * *

We have received a number of small books from Mr. A. C. Gaebelein, editor of “ Our Hope,” and author of “ The Harmony of the Prophetic Word,” which we reviewed in a back number. “ His Riches—Our Riches,” 25 cents, we can specially recommend. It is a rich unfolding of 2 Cor. viii. 9. Other books are: “ Meat in Due Season,” “ The Olivet Discourse,” &c., &c. Any of these can be obtained by application to 80, Second Street, New York.

* * * *

It is said of George Whitfield’s preaching that there was no “ perhaps ” in it. It was this note of certainty that gave to his message such extraordinary effect. And the same element pervaded the preaching of John Wesley and his contemporaries. It may with equal truth be affirmed that it is because the opposite element has entered into the preaching of latter day ministers of the gospel that the effect produced is correspondingly small. Uncertainty is the keynote of much of the evangel of the present day. That uncertain word “ perhaps,” pervades far too many utterances. It has been allowed to touch the inspiration of the Bible and its authority, and the doctrine of eternal punishment. Only when the note of certainty is regained, and the “ perhaps ” vanishes, will the complaints as to indifference, and retarded progress cease likewise. None have been more guilty than the higher critics in this matter. They have succeeded in attaching an element of uncertainty to the Bible. “ Perhaps ” some of it is not true is the general impression that has been given, and many have become tainted by this semi-scepticism. Let us imitate George Whitfield and have no “ perhaps ” in our belief.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:—

A Simple Exposition.

CHAPTER VIII. 4-13.

“ A BETTER COVENANT.”

A CAREFUL student of the Epistle to the Hebrews will have noticed how all the principal features of Israel's religious system come before us, and are displaced by something of a sublimer and more permanent character. Prophets had spoken to Israel; God has spoken to us in His Son. Angelic ministry had been one of their privileges; Christ is said to be, and shown to be, better than angels, and indeed the object of their worship. God's throne was in Israel, but it had passed away; “ But unto the Son He saith, ‘ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,’ ” The same applies to those who in former times had been the leaders of the people, Moses and Joshua; and now it is seen to apply equally to the priesthood and the covenant. And the reason for all this is one and the same. It is because the Son Himself has come, and taken up everything according to the rights and glory of His own Person. Everything is established in Him. And this gives Christianity a wonderful character. All is connected with One Who is “ made higher than the heavens,” and “ perfected for evermore.”

The quotation just made serves to show the unique character of the priesthood of Christ. “ *For if He were on earth,* ” it says, “ *He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law; who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount* ” (Vers. 4-5). Christ did not take up priesthood on earth. He did not come of the priestly family, and consequently we never find Him ministering as a priest in the temple. Had He done so there would have been no change in the priesthood, and therefore no change of the law. All that was connected with man after the flesh must go. Christ is a priest after the power of an endless life. And we are according to Him, for, as chapter ii. 11 tells us, we are of the same stock.

We belong to the priestly family of which the **Son** is the head and representative. And we minister in connection with the heavens because Christ is there. The whole epistle is leading up to this point, step by step, and so in chapter x. 19 we read, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . and having a **Great Priest** over the House of God ; let us draw near."

But, as we have said, the writer of the epistle is shewing how everything enjoyed under the old dispensation is being supplanted by something better. And so he turns aside to notice the contrast in the covenants. "*But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry by so much as He is mediator of a better covenant, which is established on the footing of better promises*" (ver. 6 N.T.). That is to say, Christ's ministry is more excellent because connected with a better covenant. A covenant is the ground or basis on which God acts at any time towards His people. The old covenant, which was the one established at Sinai, was one of works. Certain blessings were promised on the ground of the people's obedience. Its principle was contained in the words, "This do and thou shalt live." Under this covenant the people utterly broke down, and were eventually carried captive to Babylon. But God had, before the introduction of the law, given unconditional promises to Abraham, and these He intends to fulfil. And it is very affecting, as shewing the unspeakable mercy and faithfulness of God, that in Jeremiah xxxi. 31-4 at the very time of Israel's apostacy we have recorded the declaration of the new covenant God would make with His earthly people. It is this covenant which is referred to and quoted in the passage we are considering (see vers. 7-13).

Two things must be borne in mind with reference to this covenant. First, it will be a literal covenant made with the literal house of Israel and house of Judah. And second, while it is not directly made with Christians (whether Jew or Gentile by birth) yet we get the spiritual blessings it conveys.

The Apostle Paul shows this in that remarkable chapter (2 Cor. iii.) in which he sets forth the difference between the old covenant and the new. He ministered the *spirit* of the new covenant in showing what God undertook to be to the one who came to Him through Christ, viz., all that is now declared in Christ ; and he also shewed that this all rested upon a basis of divine righteousness.

These are the two main points of the covenant that will eventually be made with Israel and Judah. There will be a writing upon the heart by which they will really know the Lord, and their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more, which will be on the basis of the atoning work of Christ which is unfolded in chapter ix. of our epistle, and which we hope to consider next time.

THE DELIGHT OF CHRIST IN SAVING.

(Concluded).

IT is only a little at a time and a few at a time that we can take in rays of the glory of this "excellent knowledge."

One of the things that has appealed to my mind very tenderly of late, and commanding my most worshipping affections is the manifest personal delight of Christ in *saving*.

The Prime Mover in the whole work of salvation was the Eternal Himself, "God so loved the world" is the pivot upon which everything turned. Christ came to do His Father's will—"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." For this He rendered matchless, flawless obedience. For this He suffered being tempted. For this He took that cruel bitter cup at His Father's hand—why? because "God so loved the world." The Father's will was everything to the Son: "I delight to do Thy will, O God, Thy law is within my heart." And the centre round which all this was turning, what was it? Poor, wretched worthless us, that we might have Eternal Life. Is it not past all comprehension, beyond all imagination, could a man ever have even dreamed it?

But beside the sublime glory of His doing of the Father's will, and all the devoted delight with which He gave Himself to it, yet there was room for another motive, not indeed athwart the first, but sweetly coincident. Of Him it was written "My delights were with the sons of men," and He shewed most lovingly His own pleasure in saving.

Towards the end of John xii., after Jesus had finally withdrawn from the Temple and public ministry, the Holy Ghost, through John, presents in a few most pregnant sentences a review of His now closed mission, and at the end of it, in verse 50, this personal element comes into view. All the wonderful and tremendous

characteristics of His errand among mankind are rehearsed, and awful emphasis being laid upon the fact that the whole mission and all the message, word for word, emanated directly from God Himself. Then come the words "And I know that His commandment is life eternal, the things therefore which I speak as the Father hath said unto Me so I speak." Beyond the faithful exact ambassador, the only Begotten, the mirror of the Father's mind bent upon performing with exactitude the duty put upon Him, there is His own pleasure in speaking the words of eternal life; else why this "*I know, therefore I speak.*" It is as though He had said, "I announce to you the message with which I am charged, a message sent to you by no other than God Himself, and of which it is of unspeakably deep moment to you whether you hear or whether you forbear. But I know the eternally blessed effect of it for every one that listens to it, and for that reason I speak it incessantly that it may find here and there ears to hear. Eternal life is so wonderful a boon to the lost and wandering sons of men that I spare neither labour nor pains, nor ceaseless endeavour to bring words of such miraculously blessed power home to them—whose forlorn and miserable lot I most deeply pity."

This Divine resumé gives the summary of His teaching from the day He preached His first discourse in the Synagogue at Nazareth to the Wednesday afternoon when he bade His auditors seize the last few remaining moments before the fast hastening darkness descended upon them.

And on an earlier occasion, with what evident gracious pleasure He broke the silence of thirty years in the words "To-day is this scripture fulfilled in *your* ears." "I am sent to bring help, relief, healing, comfort to all in need, and in distress, and suffering, and to declare that it is the long expected time of the blessed favour of God," and the way He spoke so charmed His hearers that they one and all exclaimed with wonder at His "*gracious* words." When they recovered from the admiration His matchless kindness surprised them into, their envy and hardened incredulity drove Him away from them.

Next we find Him at Jerusalem. He had presented His credentials and delivered His message, which to have received would have brought unmeasured blessing. His reception was neutral, still there were those who were deeply impressed, and one of them found his way to Him, though under cover of night,—with

what readiness Jesus received him. And though He had to convince him of the hopelessness of his own case, conveyed in the words "Ye must be born again," how gladly, with how much earnestness, Jesus turns from "earthly things" to unfold to him the hidden secrets of "heavenly things."

In the most plain and simple words, He proceeds to unfold a revelation the most inconceivably stupendous that ever had been uttered since the foundation of the world. Nothing less than that the Almighty—the Creator, in whose supreme hands lies the existence of all beings, was related to Himself as His Father, and that from the intimacy of that closest of relationships He could say that God felt such kindly regard to the works of His hands that He had made the greatest sacrifice, even that of His only begotten Son, in order that every individual man that believed on Him should not perish but have eternal life. And He represented to His astonished auditor that He, the speaker, was sent to be set up as the object of general faith, just as the brazen serpent was set up by Moses among the serpent-bitten Israelites for recovery and health.

To Nicodemus the idea of Jehovah's judgment was familiar enough, and prophets and seers, many in number, had borne witness to it; as Jeremiah said to Hananiah, the mission of a long succession of prophets had been of evils to follow, but so rare was the message of peace that the prophet who delivered it could only be believed when the event proved his words. And now Jesus tells Nicodemus that God Himself had reversed the order, and His chosen messenger, His Son, was sent with not a word of judgment, but instead, of peace and blessing and eternal happiness, and that far more than the prophetic scriptures, speaking from an earthly standpoint, could ever have led Nicodemus to hope for. In a word, He was sent not to judge, but to *save*. He on the part of God His Father was prepared at once to impart eternal life as the simple result and expression of God's extraordinary love to man, conditioned only on faith in Himself. One can imagine oneself an unseen auditor at that happy interview, and mark the heartfelt delight with which the Only Begotten poured out His matchless revelation of His Father's heart and thoughts. I confess that though these words have been familiar to me from my earliest memory, I cannot even now read them without awe stealing over my spirit at the thought of being brought so near to God my Maker, and of how thankfully I will not speak.

Of the reception the Lord met with during the next eight months of His ministry we know nothing. The Galilean disciples do not seem to have been with Him in Judea, for when He ultimately returned to Galilee He found them pursuing their ordinary callings. But the first thing we hear of Him is that He was found at a well-side hungry and thirsty, weary and travel-toiled, then suddenly, without visible adequate cause refreshed and strengthened, and all His wants satisfied, His heart uplifted, joy beaming from His countenance as He pointed over the fields to the neighbouring town. What could have wrought this miracle? He had saved a bad, sinful woman; and foresaw that, through her, many more sinners on the way to perdition would be saved, and, instead of perishing, get eternal life. It was a delight to Himself, and the joy of it was that it was the pleasure of His Father, who, as He afterwards told, loved to fall on the neck of His returning lost ones.

These two instances show this lovely adorable trait in the character of our ever worshipped Lord in the most brilliant light. But again and again we see it breaking out. From a full heart He exclaims to those surrounding Him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He knew what that faith meant to that uncovenanted Gentile soldier, and His whole soul went with the gift of eternal life. At Tyre a similar scene took place, an outcast Gentile woman threw herself on His divine compassion, and there burst from Him a cry of joyful satisfaction. "O woman, great is thy faith, *be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*" She gained her longed for boon, and with it another incomparably greater, no less than eternal life. How often does He not interpose with manifest pleasure with the words, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in *peace,*" as though He would say, "Never mind what they say, I shall stand up for you."

A crowd of publicans and sinners gathered round Him. The church and chapel goers of that day and the respectables grumbled at His keeping low company—and He told them three stories to explain and justify His conduct. And what was their dominant note? Why the joy there is among the inhabitants of heaven over repentant sinners. There was the happiness of the Shepherd over His recovered sheep. Then there was the delight of the woman over finding her lost coin. And do you not think there was "a tear in His voice" as He described the joy with which the

Father threw His arms around His repentant, profligate son, and "covered him with kisses." Does not every word of that blessed narrative speak of the profound sympathy of Jesus Himself with that which gave joy to the heart of His Father, the eternal God?

In many another instance this most blessed characteristic can be traced in the record, scant as it is, of the Lord's words and actions when down here. I do not know anything that can give a man who loves the Lord more real pleasure than to follow Him step by step, and watch his actions, and listen with most attentive ears to His every word.

"When faith and hope shall cease,
And love abide alone,
Then shall we see Him face to face,
And *know* as known.

But we do not want to wait till then. We want the "excellency" of that knowledge now while we are here on earth. How can we know how to please Him if we do not study His ways, and treasure up His words. If we take no care to please Him what shall we say to Him when He asks us of our earthly way; for Paul says, "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my *Lord*." The thing that makes this studying of the man Christ Jesus in all His earthly pathway so full of delight, is that just what we find Him to have been on earth, that is exactly what He is now. "Christ in Glory" is Jesus in every feature of His character down here, but glorified. When on Sunday mornings we gather to His Name, we know whom we are going to meet, Jesus! but not only the One who loves us, and who has loosed us from our sins, by His own blood, and possesses all our worship and thanksgiving, but also the lovely and majestic and awful Person with whom we have been becoming, little by little, better acquainted during the week.

However our hearts may be moved by the contemplation of any one of the many sides of His ever honoured Personality, there is one result that must accrue if the effect is more than sentimental (that is to say, superficial and on the feelings only). That result is the earnest desire to do the things He has said. We call Him Lord. We own Him Lord. If that profession is real He must be *Master* over our hearts and wills and His words must be law to us.

"Have faith in God, the sun will shine,
Though dark the clouds may be to-day;
His heart hath planned your path and mine,
Have faith in God, have faith away."

DIVERS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES.

IV.

AS TO THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

“What wilt thou say when He shall punish thee”?—Jer. xiii. 21.

MAN resents the thought of punishment. He would like to think he is not responsible to anyone, or accountable in any way for his sins. This has always been more or less the case, but in the present day the feeling seems to have become intensified, and even few preachers are to be found who dare to proclaim plainly and unequivocally the eternal duration of the sinner's punishment. Such plain speaking, and upon such a discarded subject, is out of fashion, and contrary to the whole trend of thought and feeling at the present time.

Man has become too exalted a creature (at least in his own estimation) to think of submitting to anything so degrading as punishment. His inventions which are changing the very face of the globe and his whole environment—his ability to travel at enormous speed and to communicate with those at a distance, whether on sea or land, without visible means—and his latest achievement, excelling all others, that of being able to fly, lift him, he would fain believe, far above the mean creature that is to spend his eternity in a lake of fire. In fact, he is too refined—too splendid—to think of such a thing for a moment.

“Why should God speak of punishing me, I should like to know?” he asks. We do not know that God does speak of punishing you, we might reply. He speaks of punishing the *wicked*. Is not that a right thing to do? Surely you will agree that it is. If a man has injured you, do you think he is to get off scot free? No, you are perhaps the very man to move heaven and earth to get him punished. You believe in upholding the laws of the country. Has God, then, never been wronged, and has He no laws? Do you think of what is due to Him as much as you think of what is due to yourself? You believe in law courts, don't you? You believe in justice between man and man? Why not, then, between man and God? God punishes the *wicked*. If you are not wicked God will not punish you. You would not like to live in a country where the laws were not enforced. Then why do you wish God to do what

you would not for a moment allow man to do ? How you would cry out if thieves and murderers went unpunished, and criminals were allowed to roam the country instead of being kept in prison. So that, to start with, you are inclined to condemn your Maker for doing what after all you really want done when it is a question of protecting yourself.

But granting there must be punishment, should it be eternal ? Who must decide that ? The culprit himself ? You have often, it may be, followed some case in the law courts, and you have, perhaps, along with others speculated as to the nature of the sentence should the prisoner be brought in guilty. Supposing quite a number of people thought they ought to decide this according to their own fancy and idea of justice, what different sentences would be given. But the judge decides the sentence, and he does so in accordance with the law. So it is in this case. God is the judge, and He alone can determine the sentence. For He alone knows what sin is, and the punishment it deserves. One thing, however, we may be quite certain about, God will never punish one man for sins committed by another ; nor will He punish anyone for sins he has not committed. But if you have committed sins, why should you go unpunished ?

God alone can decide whether punishment should be for ever. We are in a region here where man can have no voice. He has none in deciding what punishment he shall bear if he transgresses the laws of society. If he commits murder he is hanged. The law—possessing no doubt a divine sanction—decides that never again shall he enjoy life on earth. Why should not God decide with regard to sin against Him (and we can form no conception really of what sin is in His sight) that the sinner must be eternally banished from His presence ?

Human views as to the punishment of sin are varied, and a book having been sent to us entitled :—

“ WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT HELL ? ”

we propose to consider its teaching, and show how little its contents are true to its title. It might be thought of little consequence what a person believed on such a subject, but it is in reality a most crucial point in two ways. False views as to it mean false views as to the atonement, on the one hand, and manifest a disregard of God's Word on the other.

The first thirty-seven pages of the above book are occupied with the discussion of the word "hell," and may at once be dismissed as being beside the point. For even if it is true that the word in the original, which the translators of our authorised version have rendered hell, sometimes means "grave," and at other times *hades*, this does not do away with the clear and repeated statements in other parts of scripture which speak of "everlasting punishment," "everlasting destruction," "the lake of fire," &c., &c., all of which to us are represented, to-day, by the word *hell*.

The rest of the book reveals the fact that the author (1) does not believe in conscious existence after death; (2) that every man will be raised and receive another chance during the Millennium when his eternal doom will be fixed according to whether he chooses good or evil; (3) that that punishment is to be eternal death in the sense of utter destruction, *i.e.*, no conscious being whatever; (4) that Satan himself will share in this complete and absolute extinction of being. Let us briefly consider whether this is the teaching of scripture.

1. *Does all conscious existence cease at death?* As this has been fully considered in an article which appeared in last month's issue, dealing with the intermediate state, we need not spend much time over it here. The writer whose views we are now considering relies, as did the other, upon Old Testament scriptures to support his theory. As we pointed out, such statements merely regard the dead in relation to this life, for the simple reason that the O.T. has very little, if anything, to say to us about life in another world. And it is remarkable that those who maintain the theory in question all base their conclusions upon the O.T. Since it is stated that Christ "brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel," and that nothing could be known of an after-death state until He rose from the dead, (at least it was not revealed), we should have thought that the New Testament would have been the text-book in such matters. But this is scarcely referred to, for the simple reason that its statements are opposed to the view we are considering. Moreover, "if the dead cannot" as this writer asserts "lift up their eyes, nor see either near or far, nor converse; for it is distinctly stated, 'There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave,' and the dead are described as those who 'go down into silence,'" by which the writer means to imply a

complete cessation of all being, then it would be equally true of Christ—also of “saints” departed this life. Yet Christ said to the dying thief, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” Further in Rev. xx. 12 it is distinctly stated “I saw the *dead*, small and great, *stand* before God.” Here the *dead* are said to stand. This is merely mentioned to shew that the scripture use of “death” or “dead” does not imply total cessation of being or final extinction. But more of this when we come to the consideration of the *second* death.

2. The pet theory of the writer of “What say the Scriptures about Hell?” is that every man will receive a second chance. Let us state it in his own words. Referring to the parable of the sheep and the goats recorded in Matt. xxv. 31-46, he says on p. 46, “In the dawn of the millennial age, after the ‘time of trouble,’ there will be a gathering of the living nations before Christ, and, in their appointed time and order, the dead of all nations shall be called to appear before the judgment seat of Christ—not to receive an immediate sentence, but to receive a fair and impartial, individual trial under the most favourable circumstances, the result of which trial will be a final sentence, as worthy or unworthy of everlasting life.” And again, “This work of separating sheep and goats will require all of the millennial age for its accomplishment. During that age, each individual, as he comes gradually to a knowledge of God and His will, takes his place at the right hand of *favour*, or the left hand of *disfavour*, according as he improves or misimproves the opportunities of that golden age. By the end of that age, all *the world* of mankind will have arranged themselves, as shown in the parable, into two classes” (p. 48). On page 62 he adds: “But that *many* of them will *choose* evil and disobedience, with past experience before them, and unhampered by present weaknesses and blinding influences, we do not suppose.” On page 66: “The millions awakened will be still under condemnation, still in death; but the opportunity then given them to accept perfect life under the New Covenant of God’s grace will, if rejected, subject them to the second death as wilful sinners.” With regard to the rich man in hell (Luke xvi.) we have this remark: “Though the parable mentions no bridging of this ‘great gulf,’ other portions of Scripture indicate (though the writer is very careful not to indicate where), that it was to be ‘fixed’ only throughout the gospel age, that at its close the ‘rich man’

having received the measure of punishment for his sins will walk out of his fiery troubles over the bridge of God's mercies yet unfulfilled to that nation."

Such is the teaching of this book, or in other words of

THE LEADER OF MILLENNIAL DAWNISM.

Will the reader believe with such novel and astounding statements before him that not one reference to the New Testament is given in support of them? They are absolutely gratuitous assertions without one vestige of authority or proof attaching to them. Yet the title the author gives to his book is "What say the Scriptures?" And under cover of this disguise he tries to engraft his own ideas upon the reader's mind. Is it not manifestly a trick of the Evil One?

In refutation of the above fabrications we may observe: (1) The work of separating the sheep and the goats will not require all the millennial age for its accomplishment. To begin with the word of Christ addressed to the sheep and goats will have no application in the millennium. His brethren will not be hungry then, or in prison. It will be the time of their fulness and prosperity. Nor will that judgment include the "dead of all nations," as he asserts. (2) He includes in this second offer all who have heard the gospel and rejected it. They are to hear the gospel again, and he presumes to think that the vast majority will "accept perfect life under the new covenant of God's grace." The evil of this teaching is that it holds out a hope that is as fallacious as anything could be, for the simple reason that not one single hint of it can be found in the New Testament. If it can, let it be produced. Then, again, *it separates man's condition in the next life entirely from his life here.* He is to have a second chance whatever he has been or done. The life beyond and the life here have no connection and no relation. This is false not only to the plain teaching of God's Word, but to all practical experience. "Whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap" is true now, and will equally be true then. This being so, the system that teaches otherwise is condemned at once. Were such a system true, the longsuffering of God, which in scripture is spoken of as a present thing, would have no meaning. He that does not believe is not condemned already, if men are to have a second chance. Further, what an excuse it would offer to men to continue sinning, and in their opposition to God's will, if all this can be rectified in another world.

On the contrary, the scriptures are clear that the wrath of God will rest upon men because of their deeds done in the body. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of *these things* cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Is it not clear as daylight from these scriptures that all this has reference to life here?

What words are strong enough in which to condemn teaching which offers men a false hope of escaping the wrath of God? But the unscripturalness of this system is only equalled by its grotesque nonsense. Think of "the rich man having received the measure of punishment for his sins walking out of his fiery troubles over the bridge of God's mercies yet unfulfilled to that nation." Yet on page 69 he says, "Death is a cessation of existence, the *absence* of life. There is no difference between the *conditions* in the first and second deaths." Thus one who has ceased to exist is said to have received "the measure of punishment for his sins, and is to walk out of his fiery troubles." What punishment, we should like to know, does one feel who has no existence, and what to him are "fiery troubles?" Further, the conditions of the first and second deaths are said to be the same. Of the second death he states a little earlier, "It is to be the end of existence"; and again, "But in it there can be *no suffering*" (italics ours). These two conditions the same, and yet in one case he speaks of "fiery troubles," and in the other states plainly "there can be no suffering." Who but one blinded by prejudice, if not something worse, could accept such contradictory teaching as this?

· We now come to

THE THIRD ERROR

that pervades this teaching, viz., the nature of the punishment to be inflicted. The second death is to be the end of all those who remain impenitent. Of this second death he says, "The second death

should be dreaded and shunned by all, since it is to be the end of existence to all those deemed unworthy of life. But in it there can be no suffering. Like the first death it is the extinction of life" (p. 69). What there is in this so-called punishment for the wicked to dread, we are at a loss to understand. No suffering, only total cessation of being. There are millions on the earth to-day who would welcome such views with avidity. They are enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season, they care absolutely nothing for God, and if it only means extinction at the end, and no suffering, then they need not care. Thus the Devil would lull his captives to sleep, and do it by one who poses as one of the most enlightened Christian teachers of his age.

It has been proved from scripture that the first death does not mean extinction, then why should the second? Death is ceasing to exist *in a certain condition*, but not ceasing to exist altogether. When death comes to anyone in this life, spirit, soul and body cease to dwell together. In the second death man is separated from God. If the first death meant extinction, then man would be no better than the brutes. His responsibility would be gone, for how can you hold a being responsible that does not exist? It will be said, "He will be raised again." But you cannot raise what does not exist.

4. The climax is reached when it is asserted that Satan himself will share in this complete and absolute extinction of being. These are his words:—"Concerning Satan, the arch enemy of God and man, God expressly advises us that He will be *destroyed*, and not preserved in any sense or condition" (p. 64). In confirmation of this, Heb. ii. 14 is referred to. What this passage teaches is that through death Christ *annulled* him "that had the power of death, that is the devil, in order to deliver those who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage," but it says *nothing* as to Satan's destruction in the lake of fire. What scripture says as to this is, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be *tormented* day and night for ever and ever." It is clear from this that Satan continues to exist, for you cannot torment a non-existent person. Yet the author of *What say the Scriptures?* has the effrontery to say "God expressly advises us that he will be destroyed *and not preserved in any sense or condition.*" Moreover, two men (and they are *men* although Mr. R. is pleased to

call them "systems") at least, are with him. These have not ceased to exist. Then why should others who are said to be cast into the same place?

Space forbids us to pursue the matter further. We have called attention to the character of the teaching that would substitute human inventions for God's truth, and we would warn everyone of that strong delusion which is coming so that men will believe a lie instead of truth. It is evident that this delusion is abroad to-day. Let everyone beware.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote the words of one who had a thorough knowledge of the force of Greek words, and who in his day gave special attention to the subject we have been considering. "Now, to a plain man," he says, "the statements of his English Bible leave not a doubt on the mind, that the punishment of the wicked is eternal. . . . And it is quite evident to me . . . that God *meant it to produce on the mind of the reader* the conviction that eternal misery was the portion of the wicked, and I do not believe that *He meant to produce the conviction of a lie*, nor frighten them with what was not true. Now, I shall quote many plain passages, adding my unhesitating conviction that the attempts to undermine this doctrine of scripture (and I have been compelled to examine a good many) have entirely failed, and that the arguments used are either dishonest, some of them flagrantly so, or contradictory and fallacious, and that all of them subvert other fundamental truths. And I declare also my conviction, that a sound knowledge of Greek confirms the plain man's scriptural faith. I give a body of texts . . . so that, if the mind be solidly imbued with these passages, the error is confuted, and lastly, some of them show that the doctrine of scripture is, that there is wrath, and that everlasting misery and punishment is the portion of unbelieving and rebellious sinners." Matt. iii. 10, 12; v. 22, 29, 30; vi. 15; vii. 13, 23; viii. 12; x. 28, 33; xi. 22; xii. 31, 32; xiii. 40, 41, and 49; xviii. 8, 9; xxii. 13; xxiii. 33; xxv. 46; xxvi. 24; Mark iii. 29; viii. 36; ix. 43; xvi. 16; Luke xii. 4, 5, 9, 10; xvi. 19-31; John iii. 3, 15, 36; v. 29; vi. 53; viii. 24; Acts i. 25; Rom. i. 18; ii. 5-16; ix. 22; 1 Cor. i. 18; iii. 15; Phil. i. 28; iii. 19; 2 Thess. i. 8-10; ii. 10-12; 1 Tim. vi. 9; Heb. vi. 6; x. 26-31; xii. 25; James v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 9, 17, 21; iii. 7; 1 John v. 12; Jude 13; Rev. xiv. 9-10; xx. 10-15; xxi. 5-8.

MOMENTOUS QUESTIONS.

Once a question was asked by the Saviour of men :

Oh, reader, give heed to it—ponder it well ;
For to you, as to sinners of old, is it said :

“ **HOW** can ye escape the damnation of hell ? ”

Are you striving for pleasure, for honour, for power ?

Seek you to make riches your ultimate goal ?

Let me ask you the question once put by the Lord :

“ **WHAT** profit are these if you lose your own soul ? ”

Oh, how sweet is the message of pardon and peace,

That Jesus loves sinners—I cannot tell why !

He is waiting to save you, and make you His own,

Then “ Turn ye, Oh, turn ye, for **WHY** will ye die ? ”

You may think you are better than those who “ profess,”

Although many sins you are holding so dear.

Listen, reader : “ If righteous folks **SCARCELY** be saved,

WHERE shall the ungodly and sinner appear ? ”

There’s a judgment appointed—oh, sinner, beware !

For mercy is waning, and doom is at hand.

Then the grace of our God will give place to His wrath,

And “ **WHO** in that day shall be able to stand ? ”

It is madness to think there is time enough yet,

’Tis folly the message of love to despise,

For the angel of death may be **NOW** on your track,

“ Ye fools,” saith the Scripture, “ **WHEN** will ye be wise ? ”

—W. T. R.

“ WITHIN THE VAIL.”

Cease, my soul, life’s woes to ponder,

Give thyself to prayer,

Bow before the Lord, adoring,

Rest of soul is there.

Oh, how soon all troubles vanish

When within the vail ;

Fears which rise, the soul distressing,

In communion fail.

Rolling all one’s cares on Jesus,

How it lifts the soul !

Not one trouble left to grieve us,

Faith has reached its goal.

Peace, e’en passing understanding,

Joy, unspeakable,

And the soul’s triumphant language

Is, that “ *All is well.* ”

Soul-communion, oh, how precious !

More than angels know ;

“ *Saved by grace,* ” they cannot utter,—

Oh, ’tis heaven below !

“NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER.”

HEBREWS x., 25.

THE thing spoken of, “the assembling of ourselves together,” is not the Church-state absolutely, but the actual assemblies of believers walking together in that state, which the apostle intends. These assemblies were of two sorts (1) *Stated*, as on Lord’s day, or first day of the week (1 Cor. xvi. 2; Acts xx. 7); and (2) *Occasional*, as the duties of the Church require (1 Cor. v. 4).

The end of these assemblies was two-fold. First, the observance of solemn, stated, orderly worship. Secondly, the exercise of discipline, or the watching over the members with respect unto their walk and conversation, that in all things it be such as becomes the Gospel, and giving no offence. Such assemblies were constantly observed in the first Churches; how they come to be lost is not unknown, though how they may and ought to be revived is difficult.

Two things are evident herein (1) that those assemblies, those comings together in one place, were the only way whereby the Church as a Church, made its profession of subjection unto the authority of Christ in the observance of all those duties of sacred worship whereby God was to be glorified under the Gospel; (2) that those assemblies were the life, the food, the nourishment of their souls, without which they could neither attend unto the discipline of Christ, nor yield obedience unto His command nor make profession of His Name as they ought, nor enjoy the benefit of evangelical institutions. Whereas in a due observance of them consisted the trial of their faith in the sight of God and man.

For as unto God, whatever reserves men may have in their minds that they would still continue to believe in Christ, though they attended not unto His discipline in these assemblies He regards it not, because therein men do openly prefer their own temporal safety, before His glory. Wherefore believers in all ages have constantly ventured their lives in the observance of them, through a thousand difficulties and dangers, esteeming those always aliens from their communion by whom they were neglected.

There is a two-fold forsaking of these assemblies (1) That which is *total* which is the fruit and evidence of absolute apostacy; (2) that

which is only *partial* in want of diligence and conscientious care in a constant attendance unto them according as the rule and their institution do require. It is the latter the apostle here intends. And these assemblies are usually thus forsaken on some of these accounts.

First, from fear of suffering, these assemblies were those which exposed them unto sufferings, as those whereby they made their profession visible and widened their subjection to the authority of Christ, whereby the unbelieving world is assuaged. This in all ages hath prevailed on many in times of trial and persecution to withdraw themselves from those assemblies. In such a season, all the arguments of flesh and blood will arise in the minds of men and be promoted with many specious pretences; life, liberty, enjoyment of this world will all put in to be heard. Notwithstanding all these vain pleas, the rule is peremptory against these persons. Those who for their houses, land, possessions, relations, liberty, life, prefer them before Christ, and the duties we owe to Him and His glory, have no interest in the gospel promises. Whatever men pretend that they believe, if they confess Him not before men, He will deny them before His Father, which is in Heaven.

Secondly, spiritual sloth, with the occasions of this life, are the cause in many of this sinful neglect. Other things will offer themselves in competition with the diligent attendance unto these assemblies. If men stir not up themselves and shake off the weight that lies upon them, they will fall under a woeful neglect as unto this and all other important duties. Such persons as are influenced by them will make use of many specious pleas, taken for the most part from their occasions and necessities. Will it be accepted with Him, if in a neglect of that, we should say to Him we would have done so indeed, but that one thing or other, this business, this diversion, this or that attendance in our walkings would not suffer us? This may indeed fall out sometimes where the heart is sincere, but then it will be troubled by it and watch for the future against the like occasions.

Thirdly, unbelief working gradually towards the forsaking of the profession. This is the *first* way for the most part, whereby an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God doth evidence itself, which the Apostle on this consideration warns the Hebrews

of (Chap. iii.). I say hereby, usually it first witnesseth itself. It hath unquestionably put forth its power before, *within* and in a neglect of private duties, but hereby it first evidenceth itself to others. And if this course, from this principle, be persisted in, total apostacy lies at the door, whereof we have multiplied instances!!—*Extracted.*

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS (*continued*).

KEEPING THE SANCTUARY. 281

IN Num. iv. 5-14 God gives full instructions to Moses as to the taking down and setting up the Tabernacle, and especially with reference to the holy vessels. He begins thus: "And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come and his sons." And the most minute instructions are given as to the covering of the holy vessels; and no less than twelve times the word "they" occurs, showing that all the work must be done by the *priests*. The three families of the Levites each had their own particular task set them (see Num. iii. 25-37), and although the Kohathites had the honour of *bearing* the holy vessels, yet, even they must not *touch* them (Num. iv. 15), or even *see* them (vers. 18-20). I question whether even Aaron's sons saw the *Ark*, as ver. 5 suggests that the veil was unhooked and lowered over the Ark before anything else was touched. So sacred was "the most holy place," that Aaron might only enter it once a year, and he could only see the Ark by supernatural light, as even the golden candlestick never sent its light into that holy and "secret place of the Most High."

This brings us to the question of what the Tabernacle was intended to represent. The most holy place we know set forth "Heaven itself" (Heb. ix. 24) with which the Church is associated in its calling and service (Heb. iii. 1, ix. 14, and x. 19). The sanctuary portrayed what is more immediately connected with Israel, but finding its counterpart too in the Church in connection with its testimony (the light) and God's people, ever being before Him in all the fragrance of Christ (the table, the loaves, and the incense). In 1 Cor. iii. 16-17 we read, "Know ye not that ye are the sanctuary of God," &c. (R.V.) (see also Eph. ii. 20-22, R.V.). Each individual Christian is also a sanctuary, for in 1 Cor. vi. 19 (R.V.)

we read, "Your body is a temple (or sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit." If then, our *hearts* are God's sanctuaries, and we as *priests* are appointed to guard them, Prov. iv. 23 comes home with force, "Keep thy heart above all that thou guardest, for out of it are the issues of life." (R.V.).

While every Christian should do his utmost to shield the *Church* from error and corruption in either doctrine or practice, yet, if each one were to guard his *own heart*, this desired result would necessarily follow.

As Aaron was to superintend the arranging of the holy vessels (Num. iv. 5), so, in like manner, our High Priest, Jesus, must superintend, not only our *work*, but also our *worship*. No mere man should pry into the secrets of our hearts, for this is *Priestcraft*. Alas! there is plenty of it in our very midst, and unstable souls, yea, and sincere souls also, being unenlightened upon this subject, submit themselves to the debasing system, whereas, if the fact were seen that there is no priestly order of men, these tricks would be detected and exposed, to the shame and confusion of those who work them. When these men can read the thoughts of our hearts without being informed by confessions, we may, perhaps submit to them. But there is only One who can do this, viz., our "Great High Priest," and to Him only will we confess, for "All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. Having then a Great High Priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our *confession*" (Heb. iv. 13-14, R.V.).

It may, perhaps, help the reader in this matter briefly to notice the downward course of the ancient Jewish Sanctuary, resulting chiefly from the laxity of its *priests*.

In 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-20, we find "Azariah the priest; and with him fourscore other priests of the Lord" withstanding King Uzziah when he "trespassed against the Lord," by going into the temple to "burn incense upon the altar," and the Lord honoured their *zeal* by smiting the King with leprosy, and honours *them* as "valiant men" (ver. 17). Then in Chron. xxviii. 24 we find Ahaz destroying the holy vessels, &c. Where were the priests to allow this? Surely God would have taken sides with them as with their predecessors if they had "withstood him."

Again, in Chron. xxxiii. 7, King Manasseh "set a carved image" . . . "in the house of God," and in Chron. xxxvi. 14, "The chief of the priests" themselves "polluted the house of the Lord." Yet God sent messengers to them, "because He had compassion on the people." "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words" . . . "until there was no remedy" (vers. 15-16, R.V.), and in vers. 17-19 final judgment came upon them, their sanctuary was burned, their palaces destroyed, and the people carried away captive.

Is not this a solemn picture of a God-forsaken, apostate Church, setting up idols, despising God's words, and mocking His faithful witnesses who are constantly warning them of such practices? Are not some of our so-called Churches as full of idols as Babylon itself; and this by reason of the corrupt practices of idolatrous priests? Let us, however, come closer home, for this downward course of the ancient sanctuary also portrays the individual backslider, who first loses his zeal, and then ceases to keep watch over his own heart, till his holy purposes are *broken* in pieces, and some idol is set up, so that he pollutes his own heart, and often mocks when faithful witnesses warn him, till there is no remedy—he "is joined to his idols." I am not discussing here the possibility or impossibility of a *Christian* coming to this, but it behoves us all to see if any of these symptoms are found in either writer or reader, so that if Rev. iii. 15-17 describes us, the Saviour's counsel may be heeded (ver. 18). It is in *love* He "rebukes" us, so that we may "be zealous and repent." May His tender pleadings in ver. 20 prevail with us in order that we may lay seriously to heart the words in 2 Cor. vi. 14-17, "What agreement hath a sanctuary of God with idols? for we are a sanctuary of the living God" . . . "wherefore come ye out . . . and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you" (vers. 16-17 R.V.).

(*To be continued.*)

"All the circumstances of life, however insignificant or great, are under His control, from the falling of a leaf to the crushing of a dynasty."

* * * *

"Before we can *gain the soul* we must *win the heart*. Terror may *drive*, but only love can *draw*."

WHAT THE CHURCH IS TO CHRIST.

IT is difficult to realise that the hand which wrote the book of Ecclesiastes penned also the Song of Songs. The one is the language of disappointment bordering on despair; the other is the language of rapture. The reason for this difference is not far to seek. Ecclesiastes tells us of the writer's search for satisfaction in things "under the sun." King though he was, and the most glorious monarch of his time, his search yielded him nothing but "vanity and vexation of spirit." In the Song of Songs a Person is present to his mind—He who has "ascended up far above all heavens," after having first "descended into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 9-10). Solomon, like David when he wrote Psalm xlv., was enraptured as he wrote of Him.

We learn that Solomon produced in all a thousand and five songs (1 Kings iv. 32), but the Spirit of God has seen fit to preserve but one of them. Only that which is redolent of Christ is worthy to be held in lasting remembrance. Everything else indeed is destined to perish.

In reading the Song of Songs we need to remember that in its proper interpretation it belongs to Israel. It looks forward prophetically to the time when Jehovah will once again take Israel to His heart. "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. lxii. 5). It has been truly remarked that in the Psalms we have the work of God in Israel's *conscience*, and in the Song of Songs His work in their *affections*.

But scripture has many applications. Accordingly at this time, we will examine Song iv. 12, v. 1, with Christ and the Church before our minds. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse: a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." Christ then hath both a garden and a spring in this world as His peculiar possession and joy. The world, as such, yields nothing for God and Christ. Morally, it is a desert. Barrenness is everywhere. In Noah's day it was said: "It repented Jehovah that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. vi. 6). In David's time, "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are together become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psa. xiv. 2, 3). A dreary fruitless waste is all that meets the divine eye in the world of the first man.

But the Church, though yet in the world, is a company called out and separated from it. It is the one little green patch in the midst of the universal barrenness. It is something for Christ here, the one thing in which his heart can find satisfaction and joy. How little has the Church realised its unique calling and position! It has been Satan's unceasing aim to prevent its heavenly character being understood. To the famous Hooker the Church was "the nation in its religious aspect," which is only another way of saying that "the Church" and "the world" are one and the same thing. But scripture speaks otherwise. The Church is the body of Christ, united to its exalted Head by the Holy Ghost. Its members have been gathered from amongst both Jews and Gentiles to enjoy heavenly associations and blessings. The Church is also the temple of the Holy Ghost, who has come from heaven, not merely to form it, but to hold it for Christ during the term of His absence on high.

To return to our scripture portion. The Bridegroom says: "A garden enclosed is my sister, My spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." The idea of the garden may be found also in the New Testament, in 1 Cor. iii. 6-9. There we learn that the Church is God's husbandry, in which Paul, Apollos, and others were planters and waterers. A garden is an enclosure, a place of delight for him who owns it. The common may be public property, but the garden is the reverse of this. Do we realise that we are absolutely and only for Christ? The Psalmist delighted in the thought "that Jehovah hath set apart him that is godly for Himself" (Psa. iv. 3). Several times in His parting prayer (John xvii.) the Lord Jesus made mention of His own as "the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world."

The Song speaks of both flowers and fruits. "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits," etc. Frequently in the Song the saints are likened to lilies. This little flower was specially quoted by the Lord in Matt. vi. 28, 29. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Lowliness and purity are suggested by this simple emblem; two precious features which the Lord delights to observe in His own. In Isa. lxxv. 1-5 we have the opposite to this. Men committing evil in secret, while saying in public to their fellows: "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou." The divine indignation is expressed in the words that follow: "These are as smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day."

God looks for both flowers and fruits from the plants which His hand has planted (Matt. xv. 13). Christian fruitfulness is spoken of in a threefold way in the New Testament: The fruit of the light (Eph. v. 7, 8); the fruit of righteousness (Phil. i. 11); and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). (1) As those who have been called out of darkness into the marvellous light of God, now to walk by His full revelation of Himself in Christ, it is expected that the fruit of this should be displayed in us "in all goodness and righteousness and truth." (2) As those who now stand before God in divine righteousness (compared with which the fairest productions of the flesh are but "dung"), it is seemly that practical righteousness should mark our every action. What more humiliating than to hear men proclaiming divine righteousness in the Gospel while careless of righteousness in the common details of life? (3) As those who have received the Holy Spirit God looks to see developed in us the Spirit's precious fruit in all its variety as detailed in Gal. v. 22, 23.

The Bridegroom not only likens the bride to a garden, He speaks of her also as "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." That we should find our spring of satisfaction and delight in Christ is no marvel; indeed faith cannot but say: "All my springs are in Thee" (Psa. lxxxvii. 7). But it is indeed a wonder of wonders that He should find a spring in us. What is this but His gracious appreciation of our heart's affection, poor and feeble though it be? To look down from on high, and find those in this world who love His name, who value His atoning blood, and who are prepared to let the world go by in any measure for His sake, is joy indeed. Oh, that there were more in us to gratify the heart of Christ!

To His loving words the bride responds: "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." The north wind speaks of adversity ("cold cometh out of the north"—Job xxxvii. 9) yet she welcomes it. The south wind speaks of prosperity. "How thy garments are warm when He quieteth the earth by the south wind!" (Job xxxvii. 17). Adversity and prosperity have each their place in the formation of Christian character. Each plays its own part in producing fruit in us for God. Too much of either the one or the other would not be well for our souls. The "waterspouts"

and the "waterbrooks" are nicely proportioned for us by the all-wise hand of our God. Too much of the north wind would fill us with despair; too much of the south wind might seduce us into a false security, to our hurt. It was "when the south wind blew softly" that Paul's vessel loosed from Crete, with what disastrous result is known to us all (Acts xxvii. 13). The Spirit's aim is to form Christ in us, and to this end He uses with divine skill all the circumstances through which we are called to pass, be they pleasing or painful, dark or bright.

The Bride invites, the Bridegroom hearkens, and replies thus: "I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse: I have gathered My myrrh with My spice; I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey; I have drunk My wine with My milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." The eye of Christ is ever upon His saints. His watchful love notes every detail in connection with them. In Rev. ii., iii., we hear Him saying repeatedly, "I know Thy works," the works being so frequently offensive in His sight that He was constrained to follow with His rebuke. But oh, the delight to His heart when He is able to come amongst His people, and gather His myrrh and His spice, precious fruits of the gracious work of His blessed Spirit! Even when administering rebuke to the seven assemblies in Asia, He first noted and commended that in them which was pleasant in His sight.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

C.E.B.C. Ques.: *As regards Rom. viii. 20 (1) What is the "creature" referred to who "was made subject to vanity?" (2) To whom does the him refer "who hath subjected the same in hope"?*

Ans.: (1) The creature referred to is the lower creation, animals, trees, &c. (2) It was God who subjected all to vanity on account of man. The head of this earthly creation fell, and he brought everything down with him. But just as creation had no will in the matter of Adam's transgression, but nevertheless shared the consequences, so it is destined to share in the glorious fruits of Christ's redemption, and therefore "gazing eagerly with outstretched neck, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God" (Trans. R.F.W.).

M.E.R. Ques. : *Is it possible for a man "not to offend in word?"* (James iii. 2). *Someone recently said in public he was perfect. Was he justified in saying this?*

Ans. : The point in the above scripture is that if any man offend not in word he is a perfect man. Implying that if a man can so govern himself as never to err with his tongue he would be able to govern himself in every other respect. Each must test himself by this rule. And it should be remembered that "perfect" in this sense is rather relative than absolute. The individual who could state in public that he was perfect would appear in the eyes of most people to sink by that very act far below the standard of perfection. He should have waited for someone else to say it. No doubt there are some people very nearly perfect in their own estimation, but very few perfect in the estimation of others.

(2) *Will the great multitude seen by John be the mass of people who are left behind at the Lord's coming? or will they all be given over to a strong delusion? Who do the four living creatures represent?*

Ans. : (a) We presume you refer to the vision recorded in Rev. vii. 9. It tells us they are out of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," and in the explanation of the vision we are informed "These are they which came out of the great tribulation." This last statement makes it abundantly clear that this company forms no part of the Church, and is not the saved of this dispensation. It constitutes the great gathering from amongst the nations during the events which will transpire between the rapture and the appearing of Christ. Their theme is "Salvation to our God," because He has saved them out of all the persecution incident to the times of the Anti-Christ. (b) The four living creatures represent God's attributes as set forth in creation and government.

J.O. Ques. : *Is the city in Rev. xxi. 2 different from the city in v. 10? Does the latter mean the Church and the Church only, or does it include the Jewish saints also?*

Ans. : It is one and the same city, but in different relations. In v. 2 it is as a bride adorned for her husband, and as the tabernacle of God; whereas from v. 10, and on, the city is viewed in relation to the earth. First of all we are informed as to the city itself, and then we are told, "And the nations shall walk by its light" (N.V.). It is a constantly recurring practice in Revelation to be carried by the

writer up to a definite period in the narrative, and then to return to some former point for the sake of unfolding additional details. So here. The city is first mentioned in connection with the eternal state, and we are conducted to the terminus in v. 8. Then we return to look at the city itself, and the place it will fill in the millennium. In v. 3 it says, "The tabernacle of God is with *men*." In v. 24 it speaks of "nations" and "the kings of the earth." These distinctions will not exist in the eternal state, for then God will be all in all. This at all events is the way in which we regard it, but we should certainly decline to make difference of opinion on such matters a test of fellowship. Further, we take it that the reason the city is to some extent identified with Israel is on account of its earthward aspect. Thus we find the names of the twelve tribes on the gates. This is in harmony with the rest of scripture. The Church occupies the innermost circle, next comes Israel and the nations beyond. It is quite possible that Abraham, and others like him, may have some part in this heavenly city.

FOR WEARY ONES.

"Rest in the Lord." "Sing unto Him."—Psalm xxxvii. 7, cv. 2.
 "He will rest in His love: He will joy over thee with singing."—Zeph. iii. 17.

Too weak to think, or speak, or move,
 Oh rest on His unchanging love,
 Thy Saviour, Christ will be to thee
 Thy Might, thy Melody.

When earthly lights grow pale and dim,
 Thy heart can sing her own sweet hymn,
 For well she knows that He will be
 Her light eternally.

And should she lose the power to sing,
 Or soar aloft on lightsome wing,
 Then He will sing thy soul to rest
 Upon His faithful breast.

His tenderest love-songs had their birth
 Amid the shades of this poor earth,
 And flowing down to hearts in pain,
 They live on earth again.

And when life's sands at last have run,
 The melodies on earth begun
 Shall float in music round His Throne,
 Their meaning fully known.

Then rest thee, heart, oh, sweetly rest,
 Sing, if thou canst, upon His breast,
 And if thou canst not sing, then He
 Will sing His songs to thee.—A. W.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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To the Editor of the "Faith and the Flock."

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your invitation to reply briefly to the comments on my paper on 2 Tim. ii.

To disprove my statement that vessels of gold and silver, wood and earth, are those subsequently spoken of as to honour and dishonour respectively, two texts are appealed to. First, "*an altar of earth thou shalt make to Me,*" therefore "an earthen vessel had been used." But where do we learn that an altar is a vessel? Scripture constantly and consistently distinguishes them: the altar *and* its vessels. Ex. xxx. 28, &c., &c. And again, the altar of earth in Ex. xx., and indeed everywhere in scripture, figures, not the first man at all, as do the vessels of earth, but primarily Christ.

As a further proof of the divine usefulness of an earthen vessel, 2 Cor. iv. is quoted: "*we have this treasure in earthen vessels.*" But this is universally admitted by all intelligent students of scripture, to be a reference to Gideon's lamps and pitchers. How then did the Lord use those earthen vessels? Exactly in the same way as they are used now; they were, they are, to be broken, and put away, for they do nothing but hide the light till then. I apprehend that in the context of this scripture, we may see the earthen vessel broken in the cross, once for all to faith in v. 10; whilst the practical daily path of putting it aside as broken (exactly corresponding to the "purging" of 2 Tim. ii. 20) may be seen in v. 11.

But I quite agree with our brother W. Scott that the main question is "How does one become a vessel to honour?" Do we make ourselves such by something we do, or is it beyond our own power? Is it a divine or human work? That is really the question. Your correspondent answers that it is our own work, and this scripture under consideration in v. 21, is itself taken as proof of it. My own strong conviction is against this, and for these reasons. If this scripture had read: "if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel to honour," and stopped there, no discussion might have been possible; the question would have been settled at once. But it does not; and I conceive that evident fact makes a vast

difference ; for we may quite justifiably, if not opposed by other clear scriptures, paraphrase, or fill out our verse thus : " If a man purge himself from these, he shall be not merely a vessel to honour, but because purged, a sanctified vessel, because sanctified, a serviceable vessel to the Master ; because serviceable, a prepared vessel for every good work." In other words, what is necessarily consequent on the " purging " is what the simplest would suppose it to be, not the *making* of a vessel, but the being clean or sanctified, serviceable, prepared.

But secondly, not only does no scripture that I am aware of oppose this, but all other scripture necessitates it. Look at Rom. ix. 21 : "*Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour.*" Who is this Potter ? Surely it is God, and His unrivalled prerogative that is here insisted upon. But it is replied, " Would not this scripture equally teach that God makes, and uses, dishonourable vessels ? " Certainly, in a sense ; for such are made to serve His purpose. But in what way ? To make His " wrath " and " power " known. This is ever the dishonourable use of such vessels. Whilst as to the vessels to honour, He alone makes and alone prepares them for glory.

Again, Eph. ii. : "*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*" (as in 2 Tim. ii. 20 " to every good work ") that the end and purpose of His workmanship is to fit us for good works—this is the path in which we are all to walk ; would that we all walked in it. But, at least, what can the scripture mean but that we do not become vessels to honour by anything we *do*, but we are to do because He has made us vessels to honour ? We can hardly be more safe against a fanciful interpretation than by being governed by clear scripture.

But thirdly, if we make ourselves vessels to honour, what are we till we do so ? Vessels for dishonour surely : nor can that be anything but unregenerate ; do we cease to be so by our doing ?

Surely these should settle our discussions, and convince us that a vessel to honour is a divine, and not a human work. Human responsibility consists in keeping those vessels clean, exactly as the other side of the seal " depart from iniquity," v. 19.

The question as to what the "*these*" are, separation from which is to have so blessed an effect is of the greatest importance, and to

say that this means "godly conduct" can hardly be quite satisfactory even to the esteemed writer. This is altogether too vague and indiscriminate for so specific an injunction. I must not, of course, do more here than beg the reader's reconsideration of what I have already written. But I would ask if the vessels of gold and silver representing "saints of God," are not the same in every sense as the vessels to honour. If a vessel of gold is not intended to be of honourable use simply because of its material, exactly as a saint of God is intended to be of honourable use simply because of what he thus is; in what way do the two parts of the illustration touch each other, and why are these various materials introduced at all? Why would it not have sufficed to have said simply "in a great house there are vessels both to honour and dishonour"? I must still venture to maintain that gold, silver, wood, earth are divinely selected, and are of intensest significance as pointing out *in themselves*, the various uses for which the vessels made of them are intended.

There are several other points calling for answer; but I must not trespass further upon your space, beyond thanking our brother Scott for his correction of my reference to "silver for his redemption" in Exod. xxx. 12, which should have read: "silver for his ransom"; this is quite just, but it does not affect my argument in the slightest degree, as he, and all, will admit.

Yours, &c.,

PLAINFIELD, N.J.,

F. C. JENNINGS.

5th October, 1909.

We gladly insert the above letter, though we still think the distinction the writer draws between vessels of gold and silver on the one hand and wood and earth on the other, not in the passage. An earthen vessel *may* be "unto honour," as well as one of gold or silver. And his own reference to Romans ix. proves this. "Hath not the potter power over *the clay* of the *same lump* to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour." Here all the vessels are of clay—surely this settles the question.—*Ed.*]

"The primeval epoch is nowhere in scripture styled a dispensation (*ἀἰών*) or anything equivalent. It was not a course of time, marked by a certain specific character, and ruled by divine principles on the part of God; and this is the true meaning of a "dispensation" save where the word is used in the wholly different sense of a stewardship or administration (*οἰκονομία*) as in 1 Cor. ix. 17; Eph. i. 10; iii. 2."

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