

THE MASTER'S TOUCH*

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose and ministered unto him" (Matt. 8:15).

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."
He touched her hand, as He only can,
With the wondrous skill of the Great Physician,
With the tender touch of the Son of Man.
And the fever-pain in the throbbing temples
Died out with the flush on brow and cheek,
And the lips that had been so parched and burning
Trembled with thanks that she could not speak.
And the eyes where the fever-light had faded
Looked up, by her grateful tears made dim,
And she rose and ministered in her household,
She rose and ministered unto Him.

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."
Oh, we need His touch on our fevered hands!
The cool, still touch of the Man of Sorrows,
Who knows us, and loves us, and understands.
So many a life is one long fever!
A fever of anxious suspense and care,
A fever of getting, a fever of fretting,
A fever of hurrying here and there.
Ah, what if in winning the praise of others
We miss at the last the King's "Well done" ?
If our self-sought tasks in the Master's vineyard
Yield "nothing but leaves" at the set of sun?

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."
Oh, blessed touch of the Man Divine!
So beautiful then to arise and serve Him,
When the fever is gone from your life and mine:
It may be the fever of restless serving,
With heart all thirsty for love and praise,
And eyes all aching and strained with yearning
Toward self-set goals in the future days.
Or it may be the fever of spirit anguish,
Some tempest of sorrow that dies not down,
Till the cross at last is in meekness lifted,
And the head stoops low for the thorny crown.
Or it may be a fever of pain and anger,
When the wounded spirit is hard to bear,
And only the Lord can draw forth the arrows
Left carelessly, cruelly ranking there.

Whatever the fever, His touch can heal it;
Whatever the tempest, His voice can still;
There is only joy as we seek His pleasure;
There is only rest as we choose His will.
And some day, after life's fitful fever,
I think we shall say, in the home on high,
"If the hands that He touched but did His bidding,
How little it matters what else went by!"
Ah, Lord! thou knowest us altogether,
Each heart's sore sickness, whatever it be;
Touch Thou our hands! Let the fever leave us,
And so shall we minister unto Thee.

Edith Gilling Cherry.

"LET THE OTHER JUDGE."*

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" (1 Cor. 14:29).

This exhortation is found in the epistle of Church order, or "the commandments of the Lord," by the hand of Paul, His servant. What do these words mean? In order to discern their bearing more clearly, let us place them beside some other exhortations of the same chapter as being part of one whole, and as witnessing that "no Scripture is of any private (or separate) interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20). It has been well said that 1 Cor. 12 presents the **Body of Christ** as indwelt and controlled by the Holy Spirit, giving and working the gifts of that body. Chap. 13 presents "Love as the uniting bond of peace" in the members of that body, and chap. 14 the Divine ordering of that assembly, in "coming together"; the three presenting our "Magna Charta" of precious privileges and sacred responsibilities in the Church. In chapter 14 two gifts of the Spirit are put in contrast, as illustrating all the others, whether special, as in Eph. 4, or general, as in Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12. These gifts are prophesying and tongues, the former for the edifying of believers, the latter for a sign to them that believe not. Prophesying, being a gift for the nourishment of the Body of Christ, continues to the end of its history on earth; "tongues," being a gift of display, fulfilled its purpose in establishing Christianity on earth, and so passed away with the foundation. All claims to possess this gift of tongues now we regard as delusions, if not worse, and none who follow them ever have any clear knowledge of the truths of Holy Scripture.

Our text is found, then, amid 21 exhortations, and of these, 14 distinct "Lets," which are not to be taken as permissions merely, but injunctions, as a concluding one of them plainly shows: "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (ch. 14:37). What, then, are these "Lets" or commands of our Lord, that we, who love Him, may prove it

by keeping them. They are as follows (given, of course, when both sign and edification gifts existed):—

1. "Let one speak in a tongue, pray that he may interpret" (v. 13).

2. "Let all things be done unto edifying" (v. 26).

3. "If any speak in a tongue . . . let it be by two or three" (v. 27).

4. "Let one interpret."

5. "If no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church" (v. 28).

6. "Let him speak to himself and to God" (v. 28).

7. "Let the prophets speak two or three."

8. "Let the other judge" (v. 29).

9. "If a revelation given, let the first hold his peace" (v. 30).

10. "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (v. 34).

11. "Let them ask their husbands at home" (v. 35).

12. "Let him acknowledge these commandments of the Lord" (v. 37).

13. "Let him be ignorant" (v. 38).

14. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (v. 40).

Of these "Lets," or Divine commands, Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 were given to regulate the sign-gift of tongues, while it existed, and were these faithfully applied to-day to so-called tongues, the result would be "silence in the church," instead of a babel of confusion and delusion.

Nos. 2 and 14 are general, and every assembly of God's people that is regulated by them will be both a growing and an orderly assembly, as edification and order are maintained by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

Nos. 7 and 8, another pair, enjoin both the exercise of prophesyings and the recognition of them by others. Let it be noted that one needs to be a prophet in order to prophesy, for we are told plainly "Ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and that all may be comforted" (v. 31). This establishes the mutual interdependence of the saints, all prophesying, all learning, and all comforted. Alas, that we see so little of this blessed ministry of but "five words" to the edifying of the Church! But if the prophets, or those prophesying, are to be by "two or three," as in the case of tongues, what is the force of "let the other judge?" It may help to first note what it is not, in four contrasted passages:—

1. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," in contrast to "By their fruits ye shall know (or judge) them" (Matt. 7:1-20).

2. "Who are thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more, but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling block or occasion to fall in his brother's way," in contrast to "He that doubteth is damned (judged) if he eat . . . for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:4, 13, 23).

3. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God," in contrast to "Do not ye judge them that are within?" (1 Cor. 14:5, 5:12).

4. "He that speaketh evil of his brother and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law. . . . Who art thou that judgeth another?" in contrast to "Ye rejoice in your boastings, all such rejoicing is evil" (James 4:11, 12, 16).

The first pair plainly forbids the meting out of judgment, as imputing motives, for only "God seeth in secret," in contrast to judging profession by what fruit it produces. Hence, the readiness to charge upon others what they thought or felt, or to read their hearts is an evil thing, while the judging of fruits is a plain duty.

Next, the judging of all questions of faith and conscience is another evil to be avoided, for God's rule is: "Hast thou faith, have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom. 14:22). This does not touch the fact of being weak or strong "in the faith," but emphasizes the need of "walking charitably" and "following the things that make for peace."

The third pair contrasts the times of judgment, present and future; now we are to "judge those within" as to their plain conduct, while we must await the solution of many hidden things when our Lord shall come. Where actions are not

clear to us, waiting upon God is our only path, despite all suspicions.

The final pair is a warning as to being law executors, instead of **doers** of it, and all who indulge in it prove its serious reality in being judged by the law. Exacting of others neither helps them nor preserves ourselves from harm.

Returning, then to "let the other judge," as we are to "despise not prophesyings," it first implies a readiness of mind to recognize whatever little the Lord sends by one and another, and also our need of it, as being both "set in the body," and "**tempered together**" by the Holy Spirit's dealings with us. If our need is not directly met by such ministry, but our souls stirred to exercise by it, this, too, has its profit, and we shall be ready to own it, even when humbled by it. Further, if all is not felt to be helpful, yet "the acknowledging of every good thing" in it will increase the measure of it, and the "fine art" of finding grace in another increases it in ourselves. In judging as to doctrine also, "for the ear trieth words as the mouth tasteth meat," we need ever to weigh with just balances, and not make each other "offenders for a word," for oftentimes there is sound doctrine back of very faulty expressions. This calls for the love that "hopeth all things," and guides the skilfulness of the hands to save all we can, saying: "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it." Where faulty and unedifying ministry is given, after waiting on God that we may first learn His lesson by it, let a brother be waited on with a lowly mind, and how often it results in a blessed recovery.

In closing, Nos. 5, 9, 10, the lack of an interpreter, where a revelation was given, and as to women, the apostle enjoins silence. Nos. 12 and 13 are in contrast—those who bow to Divine authority are "spiritual" those who refuse it remain "ignorant." If we but realize that the House of God is a sphere where none have rights but Him, whose house it is, and who has laid down these Divine regulations for our behavior in it, we shall then prove that our privileges are great and many. "The edifying of the church" is to be sought by

us, because we are one body in Christ. The maintenance of "order" is to be sought, because "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" (Ps. 89:7). May we who are such debtors to His grace learn to walk more in its enjoyment and exercise toward others, for our own blessing and His glory and praise!

B. C. G.

THE INHIBITIONS OF THE SPIRIT.

"They assayed to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:7). They had, as the Friends say, "A stop in the mind." Their path was blocked. Their affirmative was frustrated by the Divine negative. A providential "No" came sounding along the road. "They assayed to go into Bithynia," but the Guide into all truth interposed, and their plans had to be laid aside. The Spirit sometimes guides us by a closed door.

It needs a very discerning sense to apprehend and appreciate the Divine inhibitions. Our desires are often the ministers of the Divine will. But they must be kept quiet, lest they hustle us into premature action, before the final guidance of the Lord has been given. And our spiritual senses need to be kept very refined, if we are to readily apprehend the assents and dissents of the Spirit. These senses are easily dulled. The neglect of a few days exposes them to a very subtle destructiveness. To force our judgments is to impair them; it is like forcing the needle of a compass by some extraneous influence. The instrument is perverted, and all its registers are untrue. And so it is that the apostle urges us to have our spiritual senses "exercised to discern," and this is done by ceaseless prayer, and by constant watching, and by ready obedience to God's revealed will.

The Holy Spirit who closed the way to Bithynia opened the way to Europe! Bithynia was inhibited; there came a voice from Macedonia. And this is often the way of the Lord. The inhibition seems to be contracting our ministry, but it brings our feet into a large place. We lose our way; we find a better. The better sphere

is not always a larger sphere, in the sense of material scale and public honor. It may be less extensive, but it will be more intensive. God's Europe is always better than our Bithynia. When the Lord closes one door He opens another. J. H. J.

LIFE THROUGH PERSISTENCE*

"A strange expression, this!" we exclaimed, on seeing it on a church bulletin board recently, and neither our Christian companion, of whom we enquired, nor anyone whom we consulted since, was able to tell us its exact meaning. Let us fairly consider it, and if we are not sure what it does mean, let us, at least, make sure of what it cannot mean, as to being true at all.

I. Our life as creatures of God.

First, it cannot mean our natural life, for of this we read in Acts 17:25, as to God, that "He giveth to all life and breath and all things." Plainly, then, our natural, human life is not through persistence, for it is God's gift to us as the Creator, and thus as to our very existence in this world "we are all the offspring of God," being created by Him.

II. Our life as children of God.

"Christ who is our life," "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (Col. 3:4, 1 John 5:12). This makes equally plain that the Divine and eternal life, which we have as born of God, is not gained by persistence, but by receiving it, for if God gives, of necessity we must take, and that is what faith does. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

III. Our practical lives as Christians.

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

Here, again, life is not by persistence, but by the Holy Spirit, for "the mind of the Spirit is life." He first attracts the sinner's heart to Christ as the source and fountain of life. He further sustains that life by communion with Him, as our Lord Jesus has said: "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John 6:57). As an example of this, the Apostle Paul wrote in Gal. 2:20: "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Let us, then, give good heed to these "true sayings of God," and learn that neither our natural nor spiritual life do we gain by persistence, and in the very way in which we received either or both as the gifts of God do we live them out practically. Thus we are exhorted: "AS ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. 2:6).

There is but one principle, by which men become just with God, or possess eternal life, and on that same principle, and no other, do they live the life of the just, or "the life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh." That principle is FAITH, and while it produces works, for "faith if it have not works is dead being alone," yet it cannot be misplaced by works, for both "dead faith" and "dead works" are delusions of the enemy. "It is written" and written four times over, "the just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:5, Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38). This in no sense means "life through persistence." B.C.G.

ARE WE GIVING THE ENEMY "WATTS"??*

The great Dr. Johnson, of dictionary fame, once said of the greater Dr. Watts that he was a man to be imitated in everything but his nonconformity to the Church of England. This is a very good testimony to have "from them that are without." It reminds us of the enemies of Daniel, who were compelled to acknowledge: "We shall not find anything against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." At a charge in the American Revolution, when for want of better wadding the colonials had to ram their flint locks with leaves from old Watts' hymn books taken from his nearest meeting house, the commanding officer cried, as they approached the enemy: "Now then, give them Watts, boys." And, fellow soldiers of Jesus Christ, as we daily meet the enemy, let us, in a spiritual or parabolic sense, "give him Watts"; let us meet his accusations false and charges unjust with the testimony of a good conscience, the recoil of a blameless life. This is what Scripture means by the practical, godly life, "known and read of 'breastplate of righteousness.'" It is all men." C. Knapp.

"FIRE" IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The first mention of "fire" in Scripture is highly significant of one character which it bears, its power to subdue as well as to destroy, for it is—

I. The fire of the furnace and the lamp.

"When the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" (Gen. 15:17).

These two diverse symbols, of God's government and of His grace, were the form in which God gave His oath unto Abram, after he had given Him His word, saying: "So shall thy SEED be," and "I give thee this LAND." These are the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, "His word and His oath," mentioned in Heb. 6:18, by which "we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Both the furnace of testing and trial and the lamp of promise and testimony were in the covenant then, and so are they still, for ourselves.

II. The fire of Divine Judgment.

"The Lord rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom" (Gen. 19:24).

In this we have the plain witness that "God is light," and as He is a Sovereign, He cannot, consistent with His own nature and with the dignity of His throne, allow sin to go unnoticed or unpunished, while He may, in patient grace, bear long with His poor rebel creatures in view of their recovery, or in the display of other attributes of His character. Ere He struck this judgment blow, we find His record: "The men of Sodom were sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Gen. 13:13), and He had also allowed them to be smitten by the northern kings in chapter 14. Added to this Abram had recovered both the persons and spoil, and thus they were started afresh. Then Abram's refusal to take from "a thread to a shoe latchet" from the King of Sodom was God's witness against them. But, alas, there was no repentance until "the cry of it was waxen great before the face of the Lord" and "the fire came from the Lord out of

heaven" (Gen. 19:13-24). And our Lord has warned us that so shall it be again at His second coming (Luke 17:29).

III. The fire of God's altar—sacrifice.

"And Abraham took fire in his hand," etc. (Gen. 22:6).

This third mention links the two former ones, of grace and of judgment, which faith owns and recognizes both in approaching God on the ground of sacrifice, and also in offering up to Him what He claims at our hands. Abraham had long since met God at his altars at Shechem (obedience), Bethel (the house of God), Hebron (communion) and Beersheba (well of the oath). And now he is bidden go out to a mountain "which God would tell him of." He goes forth, "under sealed orders" as to the place, and to offer his only son, Isaac, but he says: "to go yonder and worship and come again." Triumphant, blessed faith it was.

IV. The fire in the burning bush.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" (Ex. 3:2).

This truly, as Moses exclaimed, was a "great sight," and he did well in turning aside to see it. In fact, he heard no voice from God and received no revelation from Him until "the Lord saw that he turned aside to see." In this fact, Moses' spirit rose to the top, for he made this investigation the sole business of the hour, and in turn, "God called unto him." He met God there, first in worship and later in service, and that burning bush was the mode of God's revelation, symbol of His dwelling in the midst of, and yet not consuming, His people—God in grace and government.

V. The fire of God's plagues.

"The Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground" (Ex. 9:23-24).

This was not merely an arbitrary display of despotic power, but the appeal of a patient God to a guilty people. Pharaoh, God had foretold to Moses, would not re-

pent; he would both harden himself and God would harden him. so his doom was settled. But there were others, thank God, that would "hear the rod and who had appointed it," as we read: "He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh," and to all such these plagues were the exhibitions of God's mercy as well as the display of His power in judgment. Even so, the seal and vial judgments of Revelation in a future day have in them the witness that until the final judgment, "God, in wrath, remembers mercy" (Ps. 18:8-13, 105:32, 148:8, Is. 30:30, Ez. 38:22, Rev. 8:7).

VI. The fire of the Paschal Feast.

"They shall eat the flesh in that night roast with fire" (Ex. 12:8).

In due order the Lamb, the central figure of the feast, was "taken, kept up, killed, its blood sprinkled and its flesh roasted," and finally, if ought "remained of it to be burned with fire."

In this we have the sweet and holy reminder that if judgment did not touch God's redeemed ones, it was because it had already spent itself upon their **Substitute**, the spotless, chosen lamb, whose blood upon their doors sheltered them from the Destroyer. The fire had spent itself upon the lamb, whose flesh was their food, thus witnessing that not our Lord's words, nor works, nor tears, nor example, but His **sacrifice**, is the central element of the Feast we are bidden to keep (1 Cor. 5:8).

VII. The fire of God's covenant (Sinai).

"The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai in fire" (Ex. 19:18).

The Lord's descent in fire upon the mountain of His "fiery law" witnessed that whatever the display of His character in grace in Israel's redemption, He must now put them to school, to learn His righteousness, and also in contrast to realize the little worth or true nature of their own. This "fire" is said to be like "devouring fire" on the top of the mount, and called "His great fire." Israel were "afraid by reason of the fire," so that Moses stood between them and it, and they also begged that they might see it no more, which the Lord said was "well spoken." They had

learned what many have not now, that God's law has its penalty and curse (Deut. 4:11, 12, 36; 5:5; 18:16; Ps. 18:12-14; 2 Sam. 22:13).

VIII. The fire of the golden calf.

"They gave it (gold) me, then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (Ex. 32:24).

What fire Aaron referred to we are not told, but his excuse of himself to Moses for the sin of the golden calf is not only manifested as folly and weakness, but rebellion against God and lying to his brother. Whereas he says: "There came out this calf," God says that "he fashioned it with a graving tool." But Moses "burnt it in the fire and ground it to powder and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." Its bitter taste long was in their minds, if not in their mouths.

IX. The fire upon the Tabernacle.

"Fire was on it by night in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys" (Ex. 40:38).

The first mention of this fact was in Ex. 13:21-22, when the Lord, redeeming His people from Egypt's judgment, also led them out of its bondage. Lovely picture it is of the Holy Spirit's presence based on Christ's sacrifice, as leading us on with God. Though "in the sight of all Israel" they tempted Him by saying: "Is the Lord among us or not?" and thus had war with Amalek which they might have escaped (Ex. 17:7-8). This symbol of God's presence is to be renewed in Israel's restoration in the land in a wider way, over all their dwellings (Is. 4:5; Zech. 2:5).

X. The priests' fire upon God's altar.

"The priests shall put fire upon the altar" (Lev. 1:7).

The sons of the priests were to put fire upon the altar and the wood in order upon it. No stranger should come nigh God's altar under pain of death, and all who did approach it were to do so with reverence and godly fear, lest the very fire which consumed the sacrifice would consume them if God was not sanctified in their hearts (Lev. 1:7, 8, 12, 17; 3:5; 6:9-13; Num. 6:18).

XI. Jehovah's fire on His altar.

"There came out a fire from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering" (Lev. 9:24).

Not only was the fire to be maintained by human hands in the daily offering, but God witnessed by His fire His acceptance both of the holy sacrifice and of its offerer. This is presented in various ways "from before the Lord" (sanctuary), "out of the rock" (altar), and from heaven (God's throne) (Judges 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chron. 21:26; 2 Chron. 7:1-3).

XII. Fire in the priests' censers.

"And Nadab and Abihu took censers and put incense therein and offered strange fire before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1).

This priestly act, by duly ordained priests, in censers appointed by God and offered to Him, yet brought their instant death, for it was "strange fire," or not taken from Jehovah's altar. Aaron, in happy contrast, doing the same act in God's way, stayed the plague and saved many in Israel (Num. 16:7).

XIII. Fire upon unholy priests and princes.

"There went out a fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2).

Just as fire fell from heaven upon Sodom, so here it fell upon God's priests, and this in sharp contrast to the fire upon the burnt offering just before (9:24). This was repeated in the case of Korah (a Levite), Dathan and Abiram (Reubenites), and 250 princes (men of renown), whom God had not appointed to this service (Num. 16:35-48). So later on, in the case of the Captains and their fifties, by Elijah (2 Kings 1:10-12).

XIV. Fire to Molech and other idols.

"Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech" (Lev. 18:21; 20:2; Deut. 18:10; 2 Kings 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; Jer. 19:5; Ezek. 20:31; 23:37-39).

This cruel and abominable act, like many of Satan's counterfeits, had a display of zeal and devotedness that eclipsed what was genuine, in "giving their firstborn for the sin of their soul," but it was **will-worship**, heartless and degrading, and an abomination in the sight of God.

XV. Fire of the Lord upon Israel.

"And the people complained . . . and the Lord heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And when Moses prayed, the fire was quenched" (Num. 11:1-2).

The same fire that fell upon Sodom, burnt up the priests and consumed 250 princes, here burnt in the camp of Israel. The sin was a common one, complaining about their food, their judgment was summary and awful, "the fire of the Lord burnt among them."

XVI. Fire out of Heshbon.

"There is a fire gone out of Heshbon" (Num. 21:28).

Though this was a mere proverb, celebrating Sihon's conquest of Moab, it witnesses that if proud nations crush others from love of conquest, their day will surely come, and God gave him up to judgment, and "Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites" (21:31).

XVII. Cleansing by fire of God's spoil.

"Everything that may abide the fire ye shall make it go through the fire and it shall be clean" (Num. 31:23).

Such was God's ordinance as to "the spoils of war." He had commanded the war, as a final act of Moses, to exterminate the social evil in Midian, who had by it corrupted His people, at Baalpeor. He, too, decreed what was to be done with the spoil, and "all His ways are judgment, just and right is He." If any think they know better ways, let them walk in them to their own destruction.

XVIII. The fire of God's anger in government.

"For a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn unto the lowest hell" (Deut. 32:22).

Such was God's solemn threat of judgment upon apostate Israel, who "provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods." And in the twenty centuries of their scattering how plainly has it been executed, until now His set time to favor Zion is near at hand. Strong as the language is, it describes His governmental dealings rather than eternal,

which the Old Testament does not clearly present.

XIX. The fire of assembly discipline.

"And all Israel burned Achan with fire" (Josh. 7:25).

Achan had trespassed in the accursed thing, in taking as his own what belonged to Jehovah, of the spoil of Jericho. He had also "troubled Israel," causing them to be smitten before their enemies, and God charged them: "Israel hath sinned." And not until they had searched out the evil and put it away in stoning and burning Achan, did He go forth with their armies for victory.

XX. The fire which God was not in.

"After the earthquake, a fire, and God was not in the fire" (1 Kings 19:12).

This unexplained record of God not being in the wind, earthquake and fire, but in "the still, small voice," while not settling that He is not in any wind, earthquake or fire, doubtless was meant that the prophet of judgment might learn that God had varied forces at His command, and used them at His own will, for He was "Jehovah of Hosts."

XXI. Chariot and horses of fire.

"There appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire"; "The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 2:11, 6:17).

The very symbol that divided Elisha from his beloved master in the one case were his strong bodyguard in the other; the first causing Elisha to rend his clothes in sorrow, the second causing him and his servant to rest in peace and safety in the midst of hostile armies. Well might they, for "the chariots of God are twenty thousand" sang the Psalmist (Ps. 68:17).

XXII. The fire of communion with God.

"While I was musing the fire burned" (Ps. 39:3).

The above shows the value of not only reading and searching, but meditating upon the Holy Scriptures, for "it is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the honour of kings to search it out." Thus God honors the faith that as many ponders His things in the heart, for "it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, they shall withal be fitted in thy lips" (Prov. 22:18). Jeremiah so speaks of it,

saying: "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9).

XXIII. The fire of Tribulation.

"We went through fire and water, but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Ps. 66:12).

This aptly illustrates the tribulations of the way, and their appointed end. For if God "chooses His people in the furnace of affliction," He comforts them with this assurance: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Is. 43:2). Though we are "appointed unto tribulation," yet He has appointed it, to work patience, and while "in the world we shall have tribulation," in Him we shall have peace. God's object is given in Zech. 13:9: "I will bring a third part through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined."

XXIV. The fire of man's lips and tongue.

"In his lips there is as a burning fire" (Prov. 16:27). "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity" (James 3:5-6).

Here both the book of wisdom in the Old Testament and its counterpart in the New, witnesses to the evil, as of a spreading fire, of man's lips and tongue. "The tongue can no man tame, it is set on fire of hell," is an awful indictment, and should warn us to "bridle our tongues" continually.

XXV. The fire of Israel's exaltation.

"The light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame" (Is. 10:17).

In the day when Israel is restored, and the Lord alone is exalted, He will make them the head of the nations. Then the Assyrian "princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Is. 31:9). So as to Edom, we read: "The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau" (Obadiah 18 v.).

XXVI. The fire of God's wrath and jealousy.

"For Tophet is ordained of old, the pile thereof is fire and much wood" (Is. 30:33). "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?" (Is. 33:14).

(To be continued.)

"FIRE" IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

(Concluded from last month)

God had pronounced: "Woe to thee that spoilest," etc., warning them, "thou shalt be spoiled." He also bids those that are far off, "Hear what I have done," and "Ye that are near, acknowledge My might." Thus He presents His way of escape, while He warns them of "the wrath to come," and raises the enquiry which will be their choice. In repentance men give God glory, in judgment He maintains it even when they have denied Him His rights (Is. 66: 24, Ezek. 21:31, 22:31, 36:5, 38:19).

XXVII. The fire of self-righteousness.

"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire . . . walk in the light of your fire. This shall ye have of Mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Is. 50:10, 11).

This is in direct contrast to the one "that feareth the Lord, and that obeyeth the voice of His servant," and is a challenge to them to consider the worth of their own righteousness, in view of its end, in abasement and sorrow. Later, the evangelist-prophet witnesses to this truth: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Is. 64:6).

XXVIII. The fire of the Lord's Coming.

"Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh" (Is. 6:15, 16).

This refers to our Lord's coming in judgment upon the living nations, "in flaming fire, upon them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel" (2 Thess. 1:8). The beast and his armies are thus judged, before the sessional judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3, Zech. 14, and Matt. 25:31-end).

XXIX. The fire of God's Word.

"Behold, I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them"; "Is not My word like a fire?" (Jer. 5:14, 13:29).

The Lord gave Jeremiah a power greater than all that was arrayed against him, and while many refused obedience to it, and perished at the hand of the enemy, yet his witness was proven to be true and faithful, even in the judgment that befell them. The Lord charged him: "He that hath My word, let him speak it faithfully," and the prophet declared: "His word was in mine heart, as a burning fire, shut up in my bones" (20:9).

XXX. The fire of God's throne.

"Behold . . . a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. . . Out of the fire went forth lightning" (Ezek. 1:4-13).

The fire, ever there, because God's throne is established in righteousness, yet was not always seen as "burning coals" and "lightning." God warns men, however, saying: "I will blow against thee in the fire of My wrath" (21:31, 22:21). In Dan. 7:9: "His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire." In Nah. 1:6: "His fury is poured out like fire."

XXXI. The Baptism of Fire.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire . . . burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11-12, Luke 3:16-17).

This is neither the baptism of believers with the Holy Spirit, nor with suffering, nor is it the final judgment of the wicked, but the clearance of the earth for the Kingdom of the Messiah, as given in Ps. 21:9-10, Mal. 4:1, and other Scriptures. A general error is to link it with the baptism of the Spirit. Christ gave the one at the descent of the Holy Spirit. He will give the other at His appearing, when He cuts off the armies of the Beast, and "casts him and the false prophet into the lake of fire" as an exception.

XXXII. Everlasting fire—God's wrath.

"To be cast into everlasting fire" (Matt. 18:8). "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

These two Scriptures, of many, witness that Divine judgment is everlasting, that it is figurative, and that it is both present

and eternal. Sodom and Gomorrah are now "suffering" it, and this cannot mean either the literal destruction of the cities, or the inhabitants in their final abode, but as the rich man "in torment," before the day of judgment, and death and Hades have been cast into the lake of fire (Mark 9:43-48).

XXXIII. The fire of separation, now or hereafter.

"Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (Mark 9:49). The Lord's words are absolute, in the first case, "every one," and in contrast to the second. Every soul of man must either bow to the judgment of God in repentance, or else realize its awfulness in the future, for repentance gives glory to God, which all must do now, or in the day of judgment. "Every sacrifice" applies only to believers as those who are seasoned and separated by the action of the truth (Rom. 12:1, 15:16, Phil. 2:17, 2 Tim. 4:6).

XXXIV. The fire of persecution.

"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Luke 12:49).

Here we have, not the aspect of our Lord's coming to earth (to give peace), but its result, because of His rejection by men, so that all who love and follow Him must needs be sufferers. From this there is no escape, as our Lord forewarns us (Jno. 15:20, 16:3, Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim. 3:12).

XXXV. The fire of testing for rewards.

"It shall be revealed by fire, for the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13-15, 2 Cor. 4:5).

The context shows that this is not a judgment of persons, but of a believer's works for reward, so that if the works are burned, the person may yet be saved. This must not, however, be taken to apply to "fruit-bearing," which is the sign of life, and the test given us to discern what claims to be of God (Matt. 7:20, John 15:1-8).

XXXVI. Angels, a flame of fire.

"Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire" (Heb. 1:7).

The elect angels are unlike men, of

"flesh and blood," needing food and rest to sustain life. They are "sons of Elohim," sons of might, who excel in strength, and are God's ministers, to do His pleasure and serve the need of His creatures. There are myriads of them, "an innumerable company," and yet they are not isolated units, but a general assembly, and we read of but one Archangel, Michael (Heb. 11:22-23).

XXXVII. "The heavens and earth, which are now, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment. The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved" (2 Peter 3:7-12).

Here is plainly, not the mere purging of the millennial heavens and earth, but at the close of the day of the Lord in their destruction, to introduce "the new heavens and earth" of the eternal state. They are reserved unto the day of judgment, which introduces "the Day of God" or Eternity, beyond all chance or change forever.

XXXVIII. "I saw a sea of glass mingled with fire" (Rev. 15:2).

This sea is occupied by the victors over the Beast, who have the harps of God and celebrate God's praises. The "sea of glass" show its fixed and transparent condition, "the fire" that they have come out of tribulation, and have been purified and made white and tried. And while a special class of the godly remnant of Israel are here seen, no less blessing is in store for all God's redeemed at the end.

XXXIX. Fire after the Millennium."

"Fire came down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 20:9).

This closes, with one exception, earth's sad drama, in God's direct judgment upon the last rebellion. On the loosing of Satan he again deceives the nations, and gathers them against God and His city, when fire from God devours them. Then Satan is cast into the lake of fire, as the third person in it, the Beast and false prophet being put in a thousand years before.

XL. A lake of fire, final and eternal.

"These (beast and false prophet) were cast alive into a lake of fire" (Rev. 19:20). "The devil was cast into the lake of fire," etc. (20:10). "Death and hell (Hades)

were cast into the lake of fire" (no righteous there) (14 v.). "Whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (15).

Four distinct classes are seen, as having their final and eternal abode in this lake of fire—the Beast, Head of the Latin Empire, the false prophet or Antichrist, the Devil, and the wicked dead, out of Death and Hades, body and soul. No human words can add any weight to the solemn picture, but as they are God's words, "faithful and true," it is the mark of His people that they are "of a broken and contrite spirit and tremble at His word." B. C. G.

A LESSON IN TRUST.*

A young mother sat plying her needle in the twilight for her wee Willie, whose ringing laugh from the little garden told its own sweet tale. The husband sat near after a hard day's toil.

"How shall we ever get on when Winter comes, George? 'Tis hard enough in Summer; what will it be then?"

The question awoke something within the husband's soul that sent a glow through him.

"Mary, lass, what art making, then?"

"A warm coat for our Willie, George."

"I guessed as much. Does he know about it?"

"Not he, dear lamb."

"Won't you tell him, to hinder his worrying about Winter?"

"He worry! Why, hearken to him, George. He's as happy as the day is long; and even if he had the sense to think about Winter, he'd trust mother to keep him warm."

"Aye, lass, and I vow the lad is wiser than his mother."

Mary's eye filled as she caught her husband's upward look, and the cloud of distrust was rolled away by their child's trustfulness.

How many may well learn a lesson from the above, and fall back on this: "Our Father cares for us." This is ever true, and while there are rough roads and stormy skies on our way to glory, yet "He giveth grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly" (Ps. 84). B. C. G.

"I'M A CHRISTIAN, SIR!" Incident in a Chinese Camp.

I was endeavoring to arrange a united weekly service for the Chinese Christians in my area in France. But this meant that I had to see no fewer than four commanding officers of the Labor Battalion in order to secure for the men permission to leave their own compounds. I had received the cordial consent of three of them, but when I approached the fourth I was confronted by a somewhat different attitude.

"I don't think there are any Christians in this camp," said the commanding officer.

"Oh, yes, sir," I remarked; "I know of a few. But perhaps you have not looked for them as I have."

A young lieutenant standing by, who was appealed to on the point, replied with some heat that "he had no sympathy with Christianity; that, indeed, he was antagonistic to it."

"That, sir," I said, "is not the point. All I ask is that Chinese who are Christians be allowed to attend the weekly service I am arranging for them. You will, I trust, allow to others the liberty you seem to claim for yourself in such matters."

Addressing the lieutenant, the C.O. said:

"Go with Mr. Miller Graham, and find out if there are any Christians in the camp. Ask the interpreter; if anyone knows, he will.

(Saluting) "Yes, sir."

So off we set in our search, the two of us.

He called for the Chinese interpreter. "Have we any Christians in camp, Mr. Wang?"

Clicking his heels and saluting, he said, with a radiant smile: "I'm a Christian, sir!"

If the lieutenant had been struck a blow in the face he could not have shown greater astonishment. He was completely taken aback. I did not myself know at the time that the interpreter was a Christian. It seemed like Providence taking the situation in hand, and, through the mouth of this Chinese Christian, administering to that officer a rebuke for his attitude to Christianity.

To cover his confusion, I inquired of the

interpreter in Chinese how many Christians there were in the camp, and he informed me he knew of seven besides himself, but that there might be more.

"Why," said the lieutenant (rather crestfallen), as we walked back to the C.O., "that's the best man we have. We couldn't get on without him. He runs the camp."

"You will generally find that the case with the Chinese Christians," I remarked. —Record of U.F. Church of Scotland.

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND."

Psa'm 31:15; 2 Cor. 4:18.

Father, I know that all my life Psa'm 31:15.
Is portioned out for me, Job 14:1.
And the changes that will surely Prov. 14:26.
come,
I do not fear to see; Deut. 5:29.
But I ask Thee for a present Psa'm 119:38.
mind
Intent on pleasing Thee. Psa'm 116:1.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love, 1 Thess. 5:6.
Through constant watching Rom. 12:15.
wise,
To meet the glad with joyful 1 Cor. 12:26.
smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes; 1 Cor. 13:5.
And a heart at leisure from it- Job 29:11-18.
self,
To soothe and sympathize. Isa. 57:20.

I would not have the restless will Prov. 19:2.
That hurries to and fro, Rom. 12:16.
Seeking for some great thing to Deut. 29:29.
do,
Or secret thing to know; Psa'm 131:2.
I would be treated as a child, Psa'm 78:24.
And guided where I go. Psa'm 87:23.

Wherever in the world I am, Phil. 4:12.
In whatsoe'er estate, 1 John 1:7.
I have a fellowship with hearts Eph. 4:8.
To keep and cultivate; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.
And a work of lowly love to do Psa'm 26:5.
For the Lord, on whom I wait. Deut. 83:25.

So I ask Thee for the daily Matt. 7:7-8.
strength,
To none that ask denied, John 17:15.

And a mind to blend with out- Psa'm 87:24.
ward life,

While keeping at Thy side, Psa'm 84:10.
Content to fill a little space, John 15:8.
If Thou be glorified. Eph. 3:20.

And if some things I do not ask Psa'm 23:5.
In my cup of blessing be, Ps. 116:12-13.
I would have my spirit filled the Psa'm 108:2.
more

With grateful love to Thee— Micah 6:7-8.
And careful—less to serve Thee Col. 1:10.

much,
Than serve Thee perfectly. Job 5:7.

There are briers besetting every Heb. 10:36.
path,

Which call for patient care; Eccles. 7:14.
There is a cross in every lot, 2 Sam. 22:7.
And an earnest need for Cant. 8:5.
prayer;

But a lowly heart that leans on Isa. 26:3.
Thee

Is happy anywhere. Rom. 12:1.

In a service which Thy love ap- 2 Cor. 8:17.
points

There are no bonds for me; John 14:17.
For my secret heart is taught John 8:82-86.
"the truth"

That makes Thy children Matt. 16:24.
"free";

And a life of self-renouncing love Gal. 5:1.
Is a life of liberty!

NONE NEED PERISH.

The work of our Saviour on the cross was a finished and complete offering made for sinners. Now whosoever will may take of the water of life freely.

THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE.

Now is the day of salvation—do not leave it until it is too late and the door of mercy is shut.

Home Friend, any address, 75c. year, containing Our Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Grass for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 20c. year. Home Friend Office, Church and Ann Sts., Toronto, Canada. Sower, are marked by a star.

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SOME BOOKS IN SCRIPTURE.

I. God's FAMILY RECORD Book.

"The book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. 5:1).

This means a family record, that of Adam with nine descendants. It contains a notice of the birth, life, family and death of eight, and then in vivid contrast the birth, life, family, and translation of one, Enoch, whom "God took," and whom men could not find, because of his translation to Heaven without dying. We have known of a hardened sinner being converted to God by a sermon on these "eight old men who died," and this exception who did not die at all. We also know of two young women who received much light as to our Lord's second coming by considering Enoch's brief history, for his life and its end here illustrated both the present practical effect and the future result of "that Blessed Hope," and his prophecy also was: "Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14).

II. Israel's MEMORIAL Book.

"Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (Ex. 17:14).

Such are God's own directions as to an event that happened to His people Israel on their journey from Egypt to the promised land. It was that of Joshua's victory over a very mean enemy, who attacked them as they went through the wilderness of Rephidim, where "there was no water for the people to drink."

Had this dastardly enemy, Amalek, made war with Israel on even terms, or regarded any rules of war, we might never have had the record, but he is here held up to shame and contempt. God's record is of a mean attack, of a heroic stand, of a signal victory, and of a memorial written for future use. Some things are best forgotten in a moment, if possible, others be safeguarded against and the Lord's must not be, such as this, of an enemy to way of victory.

III. The book of GOD'S COVENANT.

"He took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of the people" (Ex. 24:7).

God, in entering into covenant with His redeemed people, wished them to be fully alive to what it involved on both sides. He would not forget to fulfil every word of His good promise, but also His people, as the sequel shewed, "forgot Him days without number." Here, Moses, their mediator, read the book to them, and then consecrated it to God by sprinkling it with the blood of atonement. Later on He refers to this, saying: "Gather my saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:5). The references to this book of the covenant are very many, such as: Deut. 28: 58:61, 39:10, 31:24-26, Jos. 1:8, 8:31-34, 23:6, 24:26.

The time of writing it we are told in Ex. 24:4, the place where it was kept, Ex. 25:18, that it was made with Israel alone, Amos 3:2, and the sabbath was the sign of it, Ex. 31:13.

IV. God's BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE.

"If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book."

"And the Lord said: Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book" (Ex. 32:33).

Moses, as Israel's devoted mediator, when pleading with God for them to be spared in His mercy, finally presses his suit in these impassioned words: "If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." God's answer, however, was that the sinner must be judged for his own sin. The decree of Law is that God "can by no means clear the guilty." But this, as the sequel shows, applies only to the righteous government of God, and not to His grace. Grace is the sweet story of One "who suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." Government is here, as plainly stated, in the words: "I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made" (Ex. 32:34-35).

Here is plain witness that sin must have its judgment, first in the governmental sentence: "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and second in the eternal one: "After death, the judgment." The acceptance of the one, however, is the prelude to the

cancelling of the other, for all who believe in Jesus.

V. The book of CURSES.

"The priest shall write these curses in a book" (Num. 5:23, also Deut. 29:20, 21, 27).

The instalment of this book was on the occasion of the jealousy offering, and it contained the record of "the water that causeth the curse" to a defiled woman, an oath of cursing, and the woman who became a curse. This was to settle the grave question of whether or no a woman had been unfaithful to her partner in life, for Jehovah could not leave such under suspicion of having lost the dearest jewel of her womanhood.

Later on, Deut. 28, we have four curses pronounced upon 10 things, and 14 threats of Divine judgment involving 82 things, in which for their persistent disobedience Israel would suffer. These are termed in chap. 29:21 "the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law."

The law was said to be Israel's "life" and "righteousness" (Deut. 32:47, 6:25), and yet, while it was ordained to, or promised life, it was found to be unto death, for "cursed is every one that continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. 27:26). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). How many seem to recognize a law without a curse, and a sacrifice without redemption.

VI. The book of WARS.

"In the book of the wars of the Lord" (Num. 21:14).

This indicates that while the Lord is both termed the Lord and Prince of Peace, yet He is not at peace with evil, nor with Satan, nor does He expect His people to be. In fact, as He gives us peace as to our souls, He puts us into war, bidding us to "fight the good fight of faith," to "war a good warfare," to quit us like men. The occasion of this mention of such a book existing was after Israel was smitten by King Aran the Canaanite, and Israel vowed that if the Lord would give them victory they would make no compromise. He did so, and the next record is that they spake against God and against Moses, and

He sent fiery serpents, and many died. They confessed their sin, and God gave them deliverance by the brazen serpent, and while we read of no war in their next movements, yet "it said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what He did in the Red Sea and in the brooks of Arnon," etc. That is, He gives defeat or victory as it pleaseth Him.

VII. The king's book of WARNING.

"Write him a copy of this law in a book" (Deut. 17:18).

"This law" is exceedingly brief, only seven verses, and yet it contained three injunctions to Israel as to choosing a king, and also three others to their king, not to multiply horses, wives and riches. As to the first, they did not wait until God's time and choice for them had come, and as to the second, their third king did the very three things which God had placed a ban upon. Such is the perversity and depravity of human nature—it makes the very warnings of a gracious God against evil to be the occasion to disobey Him and despise His law. We cannot but believe that Solomon in all his wisdom did not have this copy of the law, but yet we know from his sorrowful dejection that he did not heed it, nor continue in the Lord's ways.

VIII. "The book of JOSHUA" (Jos. 10:13, 2 Sam. 1:18).

This book, mentioned twice, and as containing the account of "Joshua's long day" and David instructing "Judah in the use of the bow," we do not now possess. Evidently God did not count it a part of that needful revelation by which a child can be made wise unto salvation, nor the man of God made perfect, and so has not preserved it for us. We might have been interested in it, but inasmuch as it has been both a miracle of God that gave us the Holy Scriptures, and also one that preserved it for us, we must conclude that He did not exercise it for a purpose which He has not made manifest. "He giveth not account of any of His matters," and as His Word itself is to be our "Higher Critic," we must neither criticize Him nor it, for the Scripture is complete and cannot be broken.

IX. A LAND SURVEY book.

"Describe it by cities into seven parts in a book" (Jos. 18:9).

God had brought His people into the land of their possession, and it "was subdued before them, and there remained among them seven tribes which had not received their inheritance." Joshua upbraids them for their slackness, and asks them for three men from each tribe to "describe the land, that he might cast lots for them." They did so, "and described it by cities into seven parts in a book." The Lord could just as easily have marked out their boundaries in another way, but He chose one that put responsibility upon them "to go over the land and describe it," and then, as the whole disposal of the lot is of the Lord, "He would set upon it His seal of approval and of certitude. Let us note this, that we may not expect Him to do what He has told us to do for ourselves.

X. The BOOK OF THE KINGDOM.

"And Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book" (1 Sam. 10:25).

This book also seems to have had only a temporary place and value, and hence, although it was "laid up before the Lord," it is no more to be found than the pot of manna, tables of the law, nor Aaron's rod, that were all treated in the same way. Samuel, however, had already told Israel "the manner of the King," and striking it is that he warned of 10 things that he would take of them, and for 18 personal uses. But no warning weighed with them, and they said: "Nay, but we will have a king over us," and reasons for it they have plenty, that they might be like the nations, that he might judge, and fight for them. This may serve to impress upon us the fact that Samuel gave them in this second case "black on white" to be a reminder that their privileges and responsibilities must go together.

XI. Book of the ACTS OF SOLOMON (1 Kings 11:41).

This is the third book mentioned in the Sacred Word, which God mentions, but has not kept for us; yet we are assured that "He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deut. 32:4). "Acts of Solomon" might

have been interesting reading, but had it been part of the "all Scriptures inspired of God," it would have been in our hands, no doubt. We have a warning also in the use that many make of the record in the Book of Maccabees of a sin offering and prayers for the dead, when Scripture in its entire compass gives no hint of it, and hence we must regard it as "superstition and not faith," for "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

XII. The RECOVERED book.

"And Hilkiyah, the High Priest, said unto Shaphan, the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chron. 34:16 and 24).

This, surely, is a striking record—the very covenant which Israel had subscribed to, they had lost, and lost in the house of the Lord, where prayer and sacrifice were ordained to go on night and day. But so it was, and so we may truly say it is, over again, for how many in the midst of Christian privileges are as ignorant as heathens of either their privileges or their responsibilities. Not so, however, did it remain with either Israel's scribe or king, for Shaphan both showed and read it to the king, who, on hearing it, "rent his clothes" and sued for Divine mercy, "and God promising him that his end should be peace, he did what was written in it" (Ch. 23:24).

XIII. Book of THE KINGS.

"The book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (1 Chron. 9:1, 33:18).

This we have, commencing with David, settling the kingdom upon Solomon, as owning God's sovereign grace, and ending with Jehoiachin, king of Judah, finding mercy from the king of Babylon. Its collateral, the Book of Chronicles, commences with Adam's genealogy, and ends with the decree of Cyrus to build God's house at Jerusalem. In this story of the kingdom we have a sample of later teaching of the kingdom as it is now in men's hands in contrast to what it will be in the future. The first four parables of the kingdom are in contrast to the last three in this way.

XIV. The book of NATHAN the prophet.

"The book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite,

and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam" (2 Chron. 9:29).

Three prophets had recorded "the acts of Solomon, first and last," and we may be assured that they were faithful records of both his wisdom and his folly. And yet an all-wise God has simply named them, and their character, and preserved in those of Kings and Chronicles all He intended for us to know, save from Solomon's own pen, as writing his own diary in Ecclesiastes. It is to be noted, however, that Solomon's acts and his servant's who rose up against him, are recorded by the same faithful penman, Iddo the seer. Thus it is witnessed that "God is no respecter of persons."

XV. The book of SHEMAIAH.

"The book of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies" (2 Chron. 12:15).

These are said to contain "the acts of Rehoboam, first and last," but Chronicles records "he did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (v. 14). What he did in seventeen years' reign was generally evil, and one reason alone is given for his sad course, "he prepared not his heart." Despite this, however, Shemaiah bore him a message of but 30 words, which turned him and 180,000 warriors back from war against Israel (1 Kings 12:24). Later he told them why God had humbled them through Shishak, and he and the princes humbled themselves and said: "The Lord is righteous," so the Lord said: "I will grant them some deliverance" (2 Chron. 12:5-8).

XVI. The book of JEHU the prophet.

The rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, are written in the book of Jehu, the son of Harvani, who is mentioned in the book of the Kings of Israel" (2 Chron. 20:34).

Sad mention, too, it is, for it is Jehu's scathing message against Baatha for his sins, of God's utter extermination of his house (1 Kings 16:1-12). But Jehu had other sad work to do, for when "Jehoshaphat returned to his house in peace" from his unholy compact with Ahab, John the seer went out to meet him, with the pertinent enquiry: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord, therefore wrath is upon thee

from before the Lord" (2 Chron. 19:2). Two solemn messages of judgment to sinner and saint alike and the writing of a book which God places on His honor list as a faithful witness was Jehu's record.

XVII. The book of RECORDS OF PERSIA.

"So shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city, Jerusalem, is a rebellious city," etc. (Ezra 4:15).

More than ten nations who termed themselves the king's "servants on this side the river" charged great evils against the builders of Jerusalem, and advise a search in the records in proof of it. This done, the king commanded the work to cease, which it "did unto the second year of Darius, King of Persia." Then, although the records of Persia read as before, and their enemies were as hostile as ever, when "Haggai and Zechariah prophesy to the Jews, they began to build again, the prophets of God helping them." This shows that the progress or failure of the Lord's work is never wholly governed by circumstances, but the state of those engaged in it.

XVIII. The book of JOB.

"Oh, that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book! . . . For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:23-25).

"Oh, that one would hear me! Behold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder and bind it as a crown unto me" (Job 31:35-36).

The poor, afflicted patriarch seems to have had his desire answered, for both his own words, and those of his adversary, Satan, and also of his reputed friends, of his true one, Elihu, and above all, of his patient, gracious God, are recorded in the most ingenuous fashion. Up to Chap. 2:10 God's record is: "Job sinned not with his lips." Then his friends failed him and attacked him, and Job held his own against them, but justified himself and unjustly accused God. Then God charges him with folly, using "words without knowledge" (32:21, 33:12, 38:2). God closes the book, and it is manifestly inspired of Him. (To be continued)

SOME BOOKS IN SCRIPTURE (Concluded from last month)

XIX. A NOTE book.

"Now go, write it before them in a table and note it in a book, that it may for the time to come for ever and ever" (Is. 30:8).

This, no doubt, has reference to the prophet's records against Israel, as a rebellious people, but it may also well impress upon ourselves the importance of making careful records of passing events. Human memory cannot be trusted, and verbal testimony, important as it is, is not the equal of "black on white," where accuracy and stability are in question. All we have of importance in this life, and for the next one also, is associated with records, therefore it behoves us to make them with precision, keep them with care, and guard them sacredly. Let us not despise any record of God or men as "a mere scrap of paper," for by our own words we are judged or justified, and by His Word we are the same.

XX. The book OF THE LORD.

"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read" (Is. 34:16).

This book, doubtless, is the book of His Revelation, or, as in Ps. 45:7, Heb. 10:7, "the volume of the book." While yet in the process of making in David's and Isaiah's day, it was both "the book of the Lord" and "the volume of the book." For while God's revelation of Himself was incomplete until Paul fulfilled or filled it up in his day (Col. 1:25), yet when there was but one book it had in it the vital elements of all the later ones. God may vouchsafe but partial light to some of His creatures, but it being His light, it is ever sufficient to lead to Himself, and make known His heart and mind. Let us, then, heed the word: "Seek ye out and read." How much may be done with the other on both sides. Searching implies earnestness, and reading involves contemplation (Is. 29:18).

XXI. Book of JEREMIAH'S PURCHASE.

"I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son

of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel, mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison" (Jer. 32:12).

Just as God was delivering his land into the hand of the Chaldeans He bade Jeremiah buy a field, and we read: "And I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver," etc. (Jer. 32:6-9). Prompt was his obedience and simple his faith, for he believed God, yet he tells the Lord: "They are come into the city to take it, and Thou hast said: 'Buy thee the field,'" etc. And God answers him with Jeremiah's own word: "There is nothing too hard for thee."

FROM THE FIRST DAY*

"Your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now" was what the aged apostle Paul thanked God for on behalf of the Philippians, and a case of a dear departed young sister doing likewise moves one's own heart to the same. We had been spending a few days with a dear mother and two daughters in a quiet retreat in the mountains of Pennsylvania. The widowed mother's strenuous labors in a large city, as well as her daughters' taxing studies made this a necessity, but the thought of their neighbors, and the darkness in which many souls were, nerved them up, and every day we were in some new direction, trying to spread the joyful sound.

At last our time came to leave, and the dear young sister referred to took us in to a neighboring town for our train. As we walked through it we asked her: "So you are choosing teaching, Miss M.; are you fond of it?" "No," she answered promptly, "it is not that, but I think of mother, how much she has done for us, and how hard she works, and I want to show how much I appreciate it, and this is all I can do." She had no burning passion for her vocation, such as sustains so many in it. And more, as the dear mother now writes to us:

"She had a leaky heart, and she couldn't do as other girls did, so we were always together, good chums." We must add to this that after we had parted we soon received a brief note, with a few dollars in it, saying: "This is my first real earnings, and I send it from love to my Saviour, to help in your good work." It did touch our heart, the simple sincerity of these two strong motives. From love to her mother she worked at what was not congenial to her, and from love to her Saviour she sent us her first earnings. Dear, matter of fact Mirim, her guileless face comes up as we pen this, and as we are assured, it now beams with glory above. But what adds to its charm was that it lasted.

The sore-stricken mother now writes: "Do you remember how interested both Bessie and she were in your lessons at M.? Well, I know that my heavenly Father never makes a mistake, and may it make it keep me closer to my Bible, and give me more love to souls till He comes. I am going to send you her last pay. Miriam would have liked you to come and get the last few dollars she earned. She was one of the dearest daughters a mother ever had, and while my heart is aching, I know that it is all right. She said she was trusting in the finished work of her Saviour. Thank God for His love. Please use this amount; Miriam would like it so."

We have had many years, through God's grace, in "the path of faith," wherein His salvation lay at the very threshold. We have proved its blessing, further, in learning separation unto His name, whom we rightly call Master and Lord, and we have known also the further joy of being "separated unto the Gospel of God," and of "going forth for His name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles." In so doing, we have had abundant opportunity to both preach and practice faith, and for all the testings of the Lord's way with us we give Him thanks. On the human side of it, it has had many painful experiences, and at times, when "spending and being spent" for the Gospel's sake, we have received a car-fare, a meal, or a "Come again" from some who had "full and plenty." How grateful to one's heart, then, has been such

a fruit of grace working in the soul as the above case of this dear young sister! Its reflex action, too, is not to be despised—to know that some give "out of their poverty" even "beyond their means," and that there are others' mites, beside the widow's of old, stirs one's own soul to a greater measure of devotedness to our Lord, and puts one on their honor to use aright all such "consecrated means." In our day we have had to say "No" to some good offers, both of "the world" and of "the worldly." Some are ready to give from a merely generous mood, others from a desire to "salve their consciences" because of lack of obedience to God, or unholy alliances, and as it is one's plain duty to "take nothing of the Gentiles," God is honored by the refusal of all such. Thus Abram refused the goods of the King of Sodom, but how promptly, then, upon the heels of this, came the blessing of Melchizedec, and God's heartening word: "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward" (Gen. 14 and 15). We, too, have found such in the cheer afforded by some "offering unto the Lord" that came to us, when it was "ministering to our necessity," and have realized that God remembered us, and that all hearts were in His hand, and so were led to "thank Him and take courage" afresh for the pilgrim way. to Him be praise.

B. C. G.

STORY OF THE "EVANGEL."

During a trip to Andros Island (R. S. Stratton and Leon V. Russell) in May, 1918, we found the expense of hiring a boat was too great to consider—£9 for a ten days' trip, beside the keep of four parties to run it, so were brought to exercise of heart and prayer that God would do still more for us, and give us a boat for the purpose.

Besides this matter of the expense, also boats were seldom available, except in the hurricane months, when we could not use them. Another difficulty was that of a place to stay in when we went to where we were unknown, which we desired to do. On those grounds we decided to build a vessel that would serve for both house and boat combined. Having at the time

but a single pound, we bought some timber, and brought it back to Marsh Harbour, not knowing when next we would be able to do more. After returning, one of us (A. V.) invested \$100 in the matter, and a brother in the U.S. sent us another sum, and since from time to time others did likewise, without solicitation on our part, though acquainted with our purpose and desire, until the vessel was finally launched in September, four months from the time of our first venture at Andros.

Though it was built in the Out Island of Abaco, we had the advantage of a first-class boat builder, living close by, and his son, who was converted about that time, has a vital interest in the "Evangel." The former workman cost us \$2 a day, the latter \$1.25, and other helpers \$1.50. This enabled us to help in it ourselves, and all told, it was completed in three months, despite much broken weather. The cost of labor was \$275, and through the high war cost of material, the total of it was \$1,000. Thus the main needfuls have been provided, and while a much larger engine is necessary for any extended trip, the present one, which was put in as the only one available through the war, an auto engine, has been thankfully used, and has been a help.

Completed in September, 1918, we have gone in the "Evangel" to the places near us, Sweeting's and Cherokee, Man of War and Hopetown, and on learning of Mr. Greenman's arrival, were all ready to cross over to Eleuthera, but with entirely adverse weather, and the sickness of Bro. Lawrence Sawyer's wife, who offered to help as our sailor, we had to give it up, as the present engine could not be relied on for such a trip. First, we had two days' calm, then head winds as far as Cherokee, when Bro. S. being unable to go decided the matter. Brn. J. G. Roberts and A. Van Ryn went by the mail boat to Nassau, and R. Stratton returned to Hopetown and commenced meetings there. At Nassau, as brethren had come in from all the gatherings but one, Spanish Wells meeting was arranged for Feb. 14-18. Meanwhile, after many trying experiences, Bro. Greenman returned with us to Marsh Harbour, and

later on, we conveyed him to Great Guano and Green Turtle Cays, then Hopetown, Sweeting's and Cherokee Sound. After a return to M. H., we set out, with 17 aboard, and trunks and bundles, etc., for the Spanish Wells meeting, and by God's mercy reached safely. Landing all but our crew, we set out to bring brethren from several places to the meeting, and after it, 25 of us went in it to Harbour Island. Thence, went to Current with Bro. Cross, and returning, took in Bro. Greenman and others, and came there, and next to Governor's Harbour. While meetings were going on there, had two trips to Tarpum Bay and Rock Sound, and then returned to Current for a longer visit, and thence to Nassau in hope of reaching Andros Island. Being unable through bad weather, after a week's waiting returned home to Marsh Harbour, and now are using the time here and about, until able to return to Rock Sound, where meetings were commenced, and since have been continued through Brn. Hall and Thompson, who have taken a hall there in view of it. Having, however, seen a little of the gross darkness in which many of the further off islands are, we cannot rest content until we get them. Remembering our Master's word: "In all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," and also the apostle's that "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ," we yearn to reach "the regions beyond." While we have, generally speaking, been well stocked with tracts, we can use many children's, and of a simple Gospel nature. Any enquiries as to this work will be gladly responded to.

R. S. Stratton, A. Van Ryn.

"FREEDOM AND RIGHT."*

Ferdinand Freiligrath's great poem, "Freedom and Right," in 1848, drove Crown Prince William (afterward William I., the Kaiser's grandfather), disguised as an express driver, out of Berlin, and labelled his residence public property. But this same poem drove poor Freiligrath into exile upon the failure of the Revolution and the return of Emperor William. This is the tenor of it:

Oh, think not the twain have gone down
to their graves!

Oh, say not that mankind should basely
despair,

Because earth is yet trodden by tyrants
and slaves,

And the sighs of the noble are spent on
the air!

Oh, no, though the Pole, from the swamps
of the North,

Sees trampled in shreds the bright banner
he bore;

Though Italy's heroes in frenzy pour forth
The rich blood of their hearts on the
dark dungeon floor,

Still live—

Ever live in their might,
Both Freedom and Right!

These closing lines are true, thank God,
because God has not only "made of one
blood all nations of men, but determined
the times before appointed, and the bounds
of their habitation." But while this fact
alone will ever secure to any either Free-
dom or Right, how many refuse the
divinely appointed object of God's wise
and righteous government that "men
should seek the Lord, if haply they might
feel after and find Him, though He be not
far from every one of us" (Acts 17:26-27).

Oh, that the world's poor, oppressed
peoples, who are vainly seeking from other
hands than God's these great twin bless-
ings, "Freedom and Right," might realize
that He "executeth judgment for all that
are oppressed," and if "the Son shall make
us free, then are we free indeed."

The poem quoted, however, proves how
deep-seated in the human breast is the
element of hope, so ordained of Him, who
is "the God of hope," and who would fain
translate His poor creatures from hopes
which are a spider's web to one that is "an
anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast."

B. C. G.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY*

A Christian lady was telling a friend,
who had just called, of the death of her
brother, whom she had nursed in his ill-
ness.

"And was he saved?" anxiously inquired
her friend.

The sister shook her head sadly.

"But did you put the way of salvation
before him?"

"Well, you see, I did not like to disturb
his last days!"

And so the brother passed "undisturb-
ed" into a lost eternity, his sister thinking
it better that he should die a lost soul than
that his last days should be "disturbed"
by his being urged to accept the salvation
Christ had died and shed His blood to
bring to him, and thus saving him from
an eternity of endless woe!

F. A.

CHILDREN OF THE DAY*

(1 Thess. 5:5)

We're children of the light, and the chil-
dren of the day,

All the darkness of earth's night has for-
ever passed away;

Faith and love compose our breastplate,
Satan's fiery darts to stay;

We are watching for the Bridegroom,
For we're children of the day.

We're children of the light, and the chil-
dren of the day.

Once we stumbled in the darkness of the
broad, destructive way;

Chained by sin, the Saviour found us strug-
gling in the deadly fray,

Snapped earth's fetters all asunder,
Made us children of the day.

We're children of the light, and the chil-
dren of the day,

No more we sleep as others, but watch, and
hope, and pray;

We're waiting for the Day Star, e'en now
we see His ray;

E'en now the dawn is breaking

For the children of the day.

We're children of the light, and the chil-
dren of the day,

The heavenly path grows brighter as
earthly hopes decay.

Our eyes are fixed on Jesus, nor would we
let them stray

Upon this night of sorrow,

For we're children of the day.

We're children of the light, and the chil-
dren of the day;

To those who long for morning the Lord
will not delay;

The night's far spent, its darkness our
hearts cannot dismay;

We wait for our Redeemer,

For we're children of the day.

THE THREE GRACES.

Faith, hope and love—these three abide,
And hold an endless sway,
When tongues shall cease and prophets fail,
And knowledge pass away.

Faith is the first in time—the root
From which all fruit doth grow,
The hand that grips the unseen Christ,
And will not let Him go.

Hope is the anchor of the soul,
That holds the vessel fast,
'Mid all the storms of life's rough sea,
Till the haven's reached at last.

Love is the greatest grace of all,
Because it's likest God,
Who neither can believe nor hope,
For love is His abode.

Love is the bond that binds in one
The Church below, above,
In Him, who is the Triune God,
Whose name and nature's Love.

Oh, may we now have faith and hope,
While in the dark we steer,
And ever seek the perfect love
That casts out every fear.

PROVIDENCE AND FAITH*

The believer is called to walk by faith, not by sight. "We serve the Lord Christ." It is a comparatively easy thing to act as circumstances seem to prompt; and if these circumstances become a supposed divine rule of action, into how many ditches will not this blind guide lead the unwary or the unfaithful Christian?

Even the world likes to talk of "Providence" in the abstract. It demands no faith; it shuts out a present, acting, faithful God, who condescends to lead His children with His eye. They prefer to have an abstraction of their minds to discuss rather than to be brought so close to the living God. "Providence" is a familiar and palatable word, where the Lord Jesus,

"God manifest in the flesh," would sound strange and unwelcome.

So, practically, it needs little spirituality to see the hand of God in circumstances, but it requires no small power of the Spirit to understand their bearing, and to discern the path of Christ in their midst. What is unseen, not what is seen, ought alone to guide the faithful. And hence the need of an undivided heart and single eye. Only thus is the body full of light. If the circumstances fill my eye, instead of Christ, I am sure to go astray. It is not that one denies the providential dealings of God, or that a Christian can overlook them without a loss. What is affirmed is that no circumstances can rightly be the guide for Christian action, and that all circumstances ought to be judged in the light of the perfect word of God. Nay, I believe that while God, on the one hand, frequently overrules circumstances in default of our faith; on the other, He often orders circumstances so as to be a test of fidelity, or, alas, of its absence. In other words, a Christian may find himself in a position, not of his own seeking, but of God's superintendence; which, nevertheless, faith has to relinquish, and not to abide in, though divine providence may have placed one there. Of this the scriptural history of Moses furnishes a striking example. I do not speak now of the faith which marked the parents of Moses; though faith it was, and not mere parental affection, which led them for three months to hide their child; "they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Heb. 11:23). Nor do I allude to the sovereignty of God in meeting their faith and so arranging events as to accomplish His future purposes respecting His people. It is the conduct of Moses himself which is so full of instruction to all who would learn the true relation of faith to providential circumstances.

"By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater

riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Now, here we learn that as surely as providence carried him into the house of Pharaoh, faith led him out. Never was a providential dealing more strongly imprinted with the finger of God. In spite of the royal ordinance, Pharaoh's daughter took up the outcast Moses and nourished him for her own son. The providence of God had placed him in an illustrious position, unsought, unexpected. Educated, too, as became it, he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Why not use his ability and his wisdom? Why not use the influence which his exalted rank gave him, and his nearness to the most princely personages in the realm? Why not wisely and thankfully turn such evident gifts of providence to the service of God's people. What a blessing it would be to see Pharaoh the tyrant transformed into Pharaoh the patron of Israel! And what enterprise more worthy of one who, without a wish or effort of his own, had been so strangely brought into the circle of the throne of this world? What return would he make to that august person who had lavished such kindness upon him? And for what end had God wrought so wonderfully, if not that Moses should employ Egypt's centre for the emancipation and advancement of God's people? But, no! faith disposes of all such reasonings founded on providences. "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. To him the simple question was: **Will it please God, and glorify Him?** Where are God's affections? Are they not with His people? The people may be discreditable, wretched, suffering. They may little understand, and ill requite the love and faith that could renounce all. They might greatly prefer the patronage of the son of Pharaoh's daughter to a self-sacrificing Moses, who refused such a place, choosing rather to suffer with them. But it was enough for Moses that the poor captives were God's people. It was not enough that his heart was with them, and himself far away in the

splendid court of Egypt. His single eye judged all that Pharaoh's daughter could offer to be the pleasures of sin. He deliberately resigned the glittering honors and the worldly influence which providence had strewn around him, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. With whom was God identified? With Pharaoh's palace, or with Israel in the iron furnace? Had he followed **providences**, he would have sought to succour and relieve, and perhaps, ultimately to deliver Israel, through the advantages which his position furnished; but it was **faith** which led him to estrange himself from the world, and identify himself with the people of God. The world hates God's people, and may be permitted to enslave them; but can the world bless God's people? Surely not. And Moses, as a man of faith, would have shrunk from the thought of yielding to the world such a place. It would be to allow that the world is greater; for, beyond all question, the less is blessed of the greater. Therefore it was that Moses gives all up, and rests only upon God. His desire was not save himself from loss, suffering and reproach; he chose it rather because God was there, and Moses desired to be where God was, and with those whom God loved. How the actings of Moses only reflected, in their measure, the feelings of God to His people, may be gathered by reading Exodus 3:7, 8, 9.

Thus we see that **providence may place in a position, which the word of God would have us not use, but leave.** It may seem the most favorable in outward things, but faith judges the contrary, because it looks not to our honor, but to God's; not to our ease, but to His deliverances. Faith rests on the promises of God to His people, and has "respect unto the recompense of the reward."

THE BLUE SKY ABOVE US.

Death had taken the father, and the mother, with her little boy, was leaving the old home. They had gone a long and weary way. The dear, familiar sights had long been left behind. Suddenly the boy looked up, and noticed that the sky was

the same lovely blue, the same fleecy clouds. "Oh, mamma," he exclaimed, "the sky goes along with us," and his mother looked to God above it.

Another boy, born in the slums of a great city, his home a dark room in a tenement house in a narrow alley. One day he found himself in God's great out of doors, and he cried out: "Why, how much sky there is." There is a great deal of it for those who will look up to God, and the "blue" is always there, whether it is seen or unseen by us, so let us encourage our hearts, trust in God, and do the right.

B. C. G.

HOW PEARLS ARE MADE*

When the Lord Jesus "dwelt among men," His teachings were constantly enforced by a reference to His own handiwork in nature. He drew illustrations from tree and flower and bird. He "used similitudes" to impress and deepen the lessons of mercy and love which fell from His gracious lips. I think the same tender teaching is still continued, though He has passed away to heaven. I often stumble on a message to my soul in unlikely and quaint places, and this morning I found in the columns of a daily paper a revelation of one of nature's secrets, from whence I drew and took to my heart a most precious suggestion, touching the "sweet uses of adversity." The writer of the article in question tells the facts, long disputed, but now fully assured, bearing upon the production and formation of pearls, and though, perhaps, such a result of his labor never presented itself to the mind of the journalist, yet from his words one soul, at least, discovered a new way of treating troubles, and thanked God for thus revealing "under what ugly conditions the most exquisite results may be obtained."

He writes: "In some unlucky moment the oyster has admitted into its shell a grain of sand, and the sharp-edged atom irritates the tender creature—so tender, indeed, that it will only live within walls of mother-of-pearl, and, to defend itself against the obnoxious intruder, which it can neither eat nor expel, it covers the grain of sand with the substance we call

"pearl." The eccentric magician who thus, returning good for evil, endows with priceless value the vagabond atom, so incomparably worthless before, does not, however, remain content with having rendered its annoyer harmless, but continues to heap coals of fire on its head—continues, that is, to lay on film after film, smothering the wretched grit deeper and deeper in the precious substance, until the speck, once only a grain of sand upon the seashore, grows into the fascinating gem, against which divers stake their lives, and which the east and the west compete to buy."

We may learn, I think, from its example, to turn our troubles into treasures. Have we a "thorn in the flesh," a fretting, wearing ailment, either physical or mental? By God's grace let us seek to cover and overlay it with the radiant loveliness of patience, meekness, and cheerful resignation! Our gracious Lord will teach us the wonderful alchemy whereby our pains may be transmuted into the pearls of sweet obedience. Think of this, tired and afflicted child of God! Every pain borne meekly for His sake; sorrow and suffering endured without murmuring; bitter words restrained from love to Him; wicked tempers checked and bridled, lest His Spirit should be grieved—all these efforts are, by His potent grace, gradually covering and concealing the distressing cause of your pain, and developing treasures fairer and more priceless than the "pearl full white and orient," which might worthily prove a "king's ransom."

"Ten years of my life."—Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon.

THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

The theme of Romans is the Gospel of God. It presents to us God's righteousness and our salvation built upon it, so that God, in whom it is our privilege to joy through our Lord Jesus. That we may have a general view of the teaching of the epistle, we may divide it as follows:

Cha. 1:1-17.—The introduction, giving very briefly the subject of the epistle.

Cha. 1:18.—3:20.—Man in his hopeless condition of sinful opposition to and conflict with God, in the presentation of which we get principles which govern in God's dealings and judgment.

Cha. 3:21—8.—The revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel, bringing redemption, deliverance and glory so that we know God for us and nothing against us.

Cha. 9-11.—God's dispensational dealings as relating to Israel and His present grace.

Cha. 12-16.—The fruit in the child of God to be brought forth in the power of the truth presented.

In the introduction the Apostle speaks of being separated to the gospel of God. This defines the subject before him in writing to the saints, and it was this which he purposed to minister in his contemplated visit (ver.13-16) to Rome. Often hindered, now he writes to unfold the gospel to them.

This gospel is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord," for while much may be said in connection with it of man's condition and his awful ruin, the essence is found in the blessed truth of His person and work upon which all is founded. Thus the apostle says in Gal. 1:16 "that I may announce Him as glad tidings among the nations." (N.T.). He came, then, of David's seed according to the flesh, and in Him as thus come we see the One with whom is connected the fulfillment of all past prophetic utterance, from the first promise made in the garden, on through its enlargement as given to patriarch, priest and king—the hope of the world, the blessing of all nations, bound up with the coming of Him who, though David's Son, was David's Lord. But more, the Son of God in power, marked out to be this according to the spirit of holiness, that is, the perfect, absolutely holy character of His life was evidence of His sonship for who but such an One could so live; and then, by the resurrection of the dead (not by His resurrection from among the dead), that is His word, the word of power, shown effectual to bring back to life those who

had died. Thus, was He manifested as able to set aside the very judgment under which man had fallen because of sin. This clearly pointed on to the cross, for only through the accomplishment of a work which fully answered God's claims could there be the power to bring out from the judgment holiness required. He who displayed this power was also marked out as the spotless, unblemished Lamb of God by the descent of the Holy Spirit. He takes away the sin of the world and His voice has power to call from the grave. It is of this blessed One that God's glad tidings speak with no uncertain sound—"the gospel of His Son." (ver.9).

Now, this gospel is God's power unto salvation, to every one that believes (ver. 16). And here let us think of salvation in the full way in which this epistle presents it. It is not simply salvation as obtained through believing, but salvation as it is to be known by those who are believers, not simply meeting the past, but salvation as known in present, progressive deliverance, and in future final accomplishment. **Justification** deals with the past, **deliverance** is for the present; **the liberty of the glory** is for the future; but all are comprised within the meaning of salvation, and the future final form of it is referred to in the Word: "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11).

The reason why the Gospel is God's power in this way finds explanation in the fact that "the righteousness of God is revealed therein." God's power to effect salvation could only proceed upon the basis of righteousness; it is His character. This is perfectly revealed in the Gospel. The way in which it has been revealed is very largely the subject of this epistle. As to the apprehension of it, it is "on the principle of faith, to faith." It is apart from, indeed impossible, on any principle of works of law. The manner, or order, of knowing it is by faith, and it is to the one who has faith, "to faith" as the recipient power in man. For "the just shall live by (or on the principle of) faith."

J. Bloore.

"THE LAST ENEMY."

The war is over, the fearful four years' struggle ended, and what more could arms and the valor of determined men accomplish? For this we should be profoundly thankful; and every righteous soul is grateful for the defeat and overthrow of the merciless militarism of the Central Powers. "The enemy" is no more, and the defeat of despotism complete. But, reader, there is yet an enemy unconquered; a more fearful despot still remains than ever disgraced a throne or terrified a subject people. In a day when kings are being shaken out of their thrones, and tyrants laid low, this king continues to hold sway, and reigns as absolutely as any power known to history.

"Who and where is he?" you ask. He is the "king of terrors," and is everywhere; nowhere on earth are men free from his dominion. He inspires terror in the hearts of the bravest; the strongest quail before him. He is called in Scripture "the last enemy," and no "league of nations" can rid the world of his unwelcome presence or of his power. His sinister influence is felt even in the "peace conference," and the execrated Kaiser was, in comparison with him, but "a reed shaken with the wind."

The force of arms, coupled with unlimited resources and the bravery of liberty-loving men, forced the hated exponent of absolutism to abdicate and flee to a foreign land; but what combination of forces shall rid the world of this Nero of the spirit-world, this scourge of humanity, and the destroyer of men.

Consider how great and how universal the power of this "enemy" is. He has arrayed against him all the resources of science and the forces of all the nations of the earth, yet these, united and in perfect harmony of purpose, are unable to make the least impression upon him. In his latest "drive" his opponents have fallen before him like waving grain before the reaper. None can tell even the name of the deadly missile used by him in this

onslaught, nor is anyone able to suggest the means to avoid his unerring aim. Even the range of this latest device is unknown, nor do any know even by what manner it is projected. It is commonly called "the flu," but there is cold comfort in knowing the name of the dread weapon, when there is no certain safeguard against it. One of its peculiarities is that it appeared to pick off those we should expect to be the least liable to fall before it.

And fearful to contemplate, what other resources and devices he may have in reserve nobody knows. "There is no new thing under the sun," the Book Divine declares; but this dread enemy belongs to the nether regions, and his domain is darkness, far removed from the light and influences of the heavenly sun. Reader, what say you to these things? Do you exclaim, like one of old: "Thou scarest me with visions"? Visions! No; these are neither visions nor imaginations, but facts, facts stern and undeniable. Death is here, and here to stay. How long? A thousand years and more. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses," and from Moses to Christ. By this last, in the fearful conflict on Calvary's hill, he suffered a complete defeat, so far as believers are concerned. For all others, Death has been ruling as despotically as ever, and will never know a final defeat until after the millennium, or thousand years' reign of Christ (see 1 Cor. 15: 25-26). There we read the foredoom of this frightful monster. It is written there: "For He (Christ) must reign till He put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death." It is written again, in Hebrews 2:14-15, that "through death (that is, by dying) Christ destroyed (or annulled) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and that by so doing He might deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hallelujah.

Reader, would you share this victory, and enjoy the fruits of the overthrow of this fearful foe, this merciless enemy, Death? Then trust in Christ, range yourself beneath His protecting banner, and you will have peace — not a patched-up

peace, based on compromise, but an eternal peace, made by "the blood of His cross."

C. Knapp.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS*

1. In HIS CALL.

"Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24).

"God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son" (1 Cor. 1:9).

2. In HIS CARE.

"The Lord is faithful, Who shall stablish you and keep you from evil" (2 Thess. 3:3, Phil. 1:16, 1 Peter 4:19).

3. In HIS PITY and COMPASSION.

"God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape" (1 Cor. 10:13).

4. In HIS FORGIVENESS.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

5. In HIS DISCIPLINE.

"Thou in faithfulness hath afflicted me" (Ps. 119:75, Lam. 3:22-23, Heb. 12:1-11).

6. In HIS ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

"In faithfulness answer me" (Psalm 143:1).

7. In HIS PROMISES.

"He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23, 11:11).

"All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, to the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20).

8. In ALL HIS WORK.

"All His work is done in truth or faithfulness" (Ps. 33:4, Job 33:28, 37:14, etc.).

IMPORTANT AS TO "FELLOWSHIP."*

"When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." God did not clothe him with such overwhelming influence that doors were thrown open to him,

though the greatest of the apostles. Oh, why should any confessor of Christ, why should any child of God shrink from rendering godly satisfaction to those who seek it? Why so much haste and impatience? Why should there be unwillingness to meet and submit to others when it is a question of reception? What earnest desire should there not be to bow to all that which is due to the Church of God? Here we find that not even the Apostle Paul was above it. Not, on the other hand, that there ought to be a spirit of suspicion or distrust in the Church or any Christian. I am far from saying that it was comely on their part to indulge in hesitation, touching this wonderful display of divine grace. But what I want to press for our profit, beloved brethren, is that at any rate he who is the object of grace can afford to be gracious. Nor is there a more painful want of it than that kind of restiveness which is so ready to take offence at the smallest fear or anxiety on the part of others. Surely to shrink from their enquiries is nothing but self on our part. If Christ were the object of our souls, we should bow, as one did called of God with incomparably better tokens of the Lord's favor than any other—this blessed man, Saul of Tarsus. But if the Church were distrustful, the Lord was not unmindful, and knew how to give courage to the heart of His servant. Barnabas declares "how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus, and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." Grace can credit grace easily, understands the ways of the Lord, and disarms suspicion. It is beautiful to see how the Lord thus, even in the history of that which was unprecedented, and might seem to lie outside Christian wants, provides in His blessed word for the everyday difficulties we have to prove in such a day of weakness as ours. (Lectures introductory to the Study of the Acts.—W. K.).

UNITY OF TRUTH*

Truth is one. It never contradicts itself. One truth cannot contradict another truth. Hence truth is a bond of union. But error

not only contradicts truth, but may contradict itself. Truth is therefore of necessity an element of harmony; error as necessarily an element of discord. Men cannot agree in an absurdity; neither can they agree in a falsehood.

Geo. Bancroft.

The Holy Ghost suggests thoughts, supplies courage, and gives wisdom as to what is to be done; and this is power.—W. K.

GOD'S WISDOM AND OURS.

It is wise and good, yea, the only sound wisdom for us, and that which pleases our God, to set it down as a fixed maxim that God is always right, that His word never says a thing in vain, that if He appears to repeat, it is in no way repetition after a human, infirm sort, but with a divine purpose.

W. K.

THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Chap. 1:17 to 3:20.

This section of the epistle presents a perfect unfolding of the world's condition through departure from God, a perfect witness to its entire guiltiness; and hence, subject to the righteous judgment of God. The whole forms a very important link between the close of the epistle's introduction (ver. 17) and the taking up again of the thought concerning righteousness in chap. 3:21, from which point it is expanded to show its full bearing in relation to the Gospel. Its importance consists in that it shows man in every aspect as subject to the judgment which that very righteousness of God demands, hence helpless, hopeless and without strength. Man, then, is shut up to what God may bring in. If it be judgment according to righteousness he must perish. This being so, how wonderful the Gospel which makes known that righteousness as for instead of against, through faith and to faith. Thus, to clearly see the utter ruin and sinfulness of men only enhances the glory of the Gospel which makes known such a result as being possible for them through faith, based

upon the truth of the person and work of Christ.

The subject matter of this section we may divide as follows:

1. Chap. 1:18-32. Men, giving up the light and knowledge which God granted to them (apart from any written revelation which He only afterward brought in), are given up by God (v. 24, 26, 28) to reap the recompense of their error. Refusing to glorify God and be thankful when they knew Him, the result is that the foundation of their own knowledge becomes corrupt, they lose all true guide for reason and heart (v. 21). Then are they beguiled into making their own vain reasonings the wisdom in which they boast, and so become fools. It is ever so. The rejection of the light and knowledge which God has granted leads man to make his boast in himself and his own thoughts, and so become a fool to his own undoing. This principle of retributive judgment, the allowing of a given action to produce its result, which in themselves constitute a form of judgment upon those guilty of the action, is manifest in this first portion, and is a principle which holds good in all of God's dispensational dealings. Thus men changed the glory of God into an image made like man or beast. They debase God; the result is their own debasement; their own bodies, their forms, dishonored among themselves as they had dishonored the form of God. So, too, changing the truth of God into a lie, their whole manner of life partakes of this character; they turn the legitimate into the illegitimate, they live a lie in all their relationships. Then, since they did not think it good to have God in their knowledge, to be safeguarded by knowing what became Him to whom they were responsible, the result is a reprobate mind, a mind void of judgment, for that which would give sound judgment they have refused to retain. The fruits of this are given in the unvarnished statement of ver. 29-32.

2. Chap. 2:1-16. Here we get the Gentile moralist, who, though sitting in judgment upon his fellow, is shown equally guilty with those upon whom he passed judgment. Reference to man's judgment

of his fellow is made the occasion for showing the character and principles of God's judgment, to which men are subject in view of what he has shown to be true of them. God's judgment, then, is according to truth (from this, man in his judgment is far removed); it is righteous (this man's is not, for he does not judge himself for evil, but pronounces judgment upon others for the same kind of evil of which he is guilty); and from it, moralist though he be, he cannot escape (ver. 2, 3, 5). The sevenfold character of God's judgment is then presented to us (ver. 6-16). 1. It is according to man's deeds. 2. If patient continuance can be shown, eternal life will be rendered. Who, but One, could stand upon this count? 3. To the contentious, evil worker, indignation, anguish. All, but One, must stand here according to responsibility as in the flesh. 4. To the worker of good, glory, honor and peace. Only remember it is good according to God's estimate, for He is judging (ch. 3:12). "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is God"; and this must be the standard in His judgment. 5. Perfect equity—no respect of persons. 6. Environment will be given full consideration, but this will not afford any possible escape—the many without law will perish without it, and those who, having sinned in the law, and must therefore be judged by it, can expect only condemnation. The following parenthesis (ver. 13-15) is explanatory of ver. 12, showing how the Judge will proceed upon the sixth count. 7. There is an appointed day for God to judge; the matter judged will be the secrets of men, for there is nothing hidden but shall be revealed in the light that will then shine from the Judge—Jesus Christ; and the truth revealed in Paul's gospel will furnish the basis upon which all procedure will be taken.

3. Chap. 2:17-29. Since in the close of the preceding section the Jew was placed first as to responsibility (ver. 9-10) in relation, the Apostle now shows why he belongs in the first place. It is due to the place he filled as called a Jew (ver. 17-20; note the seven features). Then by the seven questions which are asked (ver. 21-27) we get a perfect witness to how the

Jew had utterly failed to fill his place. In ver. 28-29 we see that God looks upon the heart, and deals with what is inward, in contrast to man's boast, and the Jew's in particular, in that which was outward, the making of a fair show in the flesh. God demands reality.

4. Chap. 3:1-20. In view, then, of the Jew being entirely without advantage over the Gentile, in God's judgment of things—rather is he at a disadvantage because of the superior place he was in by reason of his privileges, to which he utterly failed to answer except with outward show—the question naturally is raised as to what is the superiority of the Jew, or the profit of being in the place signified by circumcision? The answer is: "Chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Further than this the Apostle does not now go, but chap. 9 supplies a complete answer. However, of first importance is the fact of their having the Word of God. And of more importance than stating in full the Jew's advantages and privileges is it at this point to make him hear the searching testimony of that very Word against himself, as well as the Gentile. Hence, in ver. 9-18 this testimony is produced in 14 articles of condemnation, and the solemn result deduced from this testimony is given in ver. 19-20. The whole world is shut up under judgment to God. No flesh can be justified in His sight by works of law, for by it sin is put into account, accurate knowledge of it is given, instead of it enabling man to stand acceptably before God. Thus are we absolutely shut up to whatever God, the righteous and true, may bring in. If in His righteousness He enter into judgment with us, our case is hopeless, for as the Psalmist declares, no man living can be justified in His sight (Ps. 143:2).

John Bloore.

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A REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCE*

Coming from a religious meeting some time ago, a nobleman stepped into a private circle of friends, one of whom said to him:

"Your Lordship promised you would tell us about your son who died in Africa."

He then narrated the following incident:

Our boy was the darling of his mother and his father's favorite child. We could not but love him. But he left us and went to South Africa. When he left he was unconverted, and this was our chief sorrow. Soon we received a letter to the following effect:

"My dear father,—You will be sorry to hear I have met with an accident. I am unable to write much. The doctor hopes that in a day or two I shall be better. I will let you know in a day or two if I am able."

The father read it with a heavy heart, and scarcely dared to hand it to the mother. "Oh," said he, "if there had only been in it one such expression as 'by God's providence,' or 'if the Lord will.'" But there was no recognition of God, and the father grieved lest his son should die in the unconverted state in which he left home. Time rolled on, and another letter came. The postmark was the same, but the handwriting was different. It was written by the physician, as follows:

"Your lordship will be grieved to hear that your son died by the accident to which he referred in his last. He lingered but a few days. He suffered greatly." The physician added a word or two to the effect that everything that could be done was done, and that respect was paid at the funeral suited to the rank of the deceased. Said the nobleman: "When I read that letter I took it away with me, and laid it before the Lord, and said, 'O Absolom, my son, my son! would God that I had died for thee, my son, my son!'" He said: "I dared not hand the letter to his mother. Broken-hearted, I took it to God, and afterwards told it to his mother. But there was not a word of God, or providence, in the letter, and it was bringing my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave: I felt as if I should never lift up my head again."

A few weeks again elapsed, when a third letter was brought, and the nobleman knew the handwriting. It so happened that there had gone from this country a gentleman whom I understand his lordship had assisted in Southern Africa. The nobleman opened this letter with trembling. It read thus:

"Your lordship will grieve to learn of the death of your son. The moment I heard of his illness I resorted to his bedside, where I found him in the deepest anxiety about his soul. He was laboring under a sense of guilt—a deep load of sin. I pointed him to the dying Lamb; told him of the one Sacrifice—the one Saviour; and your lordship will be delighted to know that on the day before his departure light broke in upon his mind, and he died rejoicing in sin forgiven. His last words were these: 'Tell my father that I die in Jesus, and that I shall meet him in heaven,' or words to that effect."

O fathers and mothers! are you asleep over your children? It may be some of you have a son, a daughter, at the antipodes, or in some distant country. Oh, pray, pray without ceasing, that God may touch their hearts, that God may save them, lest they die in that far-off land, without God and without Christ.

His lordship, after telling this affecting story, wiped the tears from his aged and noble face, and, turning round to his auditory in that private circle, said:

"Can I ever doubt my God again? Can I doubt His promises? I have always believed the Saviour's promise: 'If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it'; and 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

WALK IN EPHESIANS*

Our past walk as sinners—

(1) "According to the course of this world (2:2).

Our present walk as saints—

(2) Good works walk in them (2:10).

Our collective walk as

(3) "Worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (4:1).

Our walk in separation—

(4) "Walk not as other Gentiles walk" (4:17).

Our walk in following Christ —

(5) "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (5:2).

Our walk in the light—

(6) "Walk as children of light" (5:8).

Our walk in watchfulness—

(7) "Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (5:15).

"INCHING ALONG."

A quaint message comes to me to-day across the sea from Africa. It stirs pleasant memories, and well fulfils the loving commission given to it to encourage and strengthen my heart. Thus it runs: "Tell dear Mrs. — to 'keep inching along, for Jesus'll come by-and-by'!" When our two colored brethren, Johnson and Richardson, were on the eve of departure for missionary work in Africa, they came, with their wives, to bid us farewell. A very pleasant and memorable time we spent together, their pastor encouraging them in the work to which they had devoted their lives, and their love and their sympathy overflowing to him and to me (then very sick) in return. They sang to me some of the strange, sweet songs of their captivity, for they had once been slaves, and all who heard these plaintive melodies sung in the Tabernacle at their farewell meetings will agree with me that sweeter, yet sadder, melodies could scarcely be imagined. My heart was specially attracted by a peculiar air to which they sang, as a refrain, these most curious words:

"Keep inching along, keep inching along,
Like a poor inch-worm;
Jesus Christ'll come by-and-by!"

It is impossible to describe the weird pathos with which they invested these few sentences, and my interest was so aroused that I asked if some special history attached to this strange song. Then they told me how, in the sorrowful days of their bondage, they would stealthily gather together, night after night, in one of the low, miserable huts they called their homes, and sitting crouched on the floor, hand clasped in hand, in darkness and terror, they would pray with one another, and in

muffled tones would whisper this very song. Sing it aloud they dared not, for fear of their master, who would have exacted full payment by stripes for such an assertion of nature's rights, but, rocking to and fro in time to the wailing melody, they found a "fearful pleasure" in the disobedience which brought spiritual comfort to their oppressed souls. The "poor inch-worms" are now free, noble, educated men and women. They can sing and pray and preach as long and as loudly as they please, and are bound for the land of their fathers, to make known the Gospel of the grace of God to their kindred according to the flesh. The Lord go forth with them and prosper them.

Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon.

THE TONGUE, AS SHEWN IN JAMES.

1. A Rash Tongue (James 1:13)—"Let no man say: I am tempted of God."

2. A Controlled Tongue (James 1:19)—"Be swift to hear, slow to speak."

3. An Unbridled Tongue (James 1:26)—"If any bridle not his tongue, his religion is vain."

4. A Partial Tongue (James 2:3)—"Says to the rich, Sit thou here; to the poor, Stand."

5. A Conscientious Tongue (James 2:12)—"So speak ye, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

6. A Boastful Tongue (James 2:14)—"What doth it profit, though a man say he has faith?"

7. A Spirit-taught Tongue (James 2:18)—"A man may say: I will shew thee my faith by my works."

8. A Selfish Tongue (James 2:16)—"One of you say unto them, What doth it profit?"

9. The Divine Tongue (James 2:23; 4:5)—"The Scripture was fulfilled which saith: Abraham believed God."

10. A Disciplined Tongue (James 3:1-2)—"If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."

11. A Boasting Tongue (James 3:5)—"It boasteth great things."

12. A Defiling Tongue (James 3:6)—"The tongue defileth the whole body."

13. An Unruly Tongue (James 3:8)—"It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

14. **An Unstable Tongue** (James 3:9)—
“Therewith bless we God and therewith
curse we men.”

15. **A Wise Tongue** (James 3:13)—
“Shew out of a good conversation his
works.”

16. **A Lying Tongue** (James 3:14)—
“Glory not and lie not against the truth.”

17. **A Deceiving Tongue** (James 4:3)—
“Ye ask and receive not because ye ask
amiss.”

18. **A Slandorous Tongue** (James 4:11)
—“Speak not evil one of another, brethren.”

19. **A God-ignoring Tongue** (James 4:
13)—“Ye that say: To-day or to-morrow
we will go,” etc.

20. **A God-honoring Tongue** (James 4:
15)—“Ye ought to say, If the Lord will,
we shall do this or that.”

21. **A God-appealing Tongue** (James 5:
4)—“Their cries are entered into the ears
of the Lord of Sabaoth.”

22. **A Complaining Tongue** (James 5:9)
—“Judge not one against another, lest ye
be condemned.”

23. **A Yea and Nay Tongue** (James 5:12)
—“Swear not, but let your yea be yea and
your nay nay.”

24. **A Praying Tongue** (James 5:13-15)
—“Is any among you afflicted? let him
pray.”

25. **A Praising Tongue** (James 5:13)—
“Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”

26. **A Chastened Tongue** (James 5:14)
“Let him call for the elders of the
church.”

27. **A Confessing Tongue** (James 5:16)
—“Confess your faults one to another.”

28. **A Converting Tongue** (James 5:
20)—“He which converteth a sinner from
the error of his way.”

The similitudes used as to the tongue
are sevenfold:

1. The horse and his bridle (James 3:3).
2. The ship and its helm (ver. 4).
3. The fire that burns a great matter
(ver. 5).
4. The taming of beasts, birds, etc.
(ver. 7).
5. The effects of a deadly poison (ver. 8).
6. The fountain and its waters (ver. 11).
7. The trees and their fruit (ver. 12).

B. C. G.

THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Chapter 3:21; 4; 5:11.

The opening verse of this section takes
up the truth mentioned in the closing verse
of the introduction to the epistle (ch. 1:17):
the righteousness of God revealed in the
Gospel. This the Apostle now develops as
being the foundation of the whole struc-
ture which he is going to build. We may
divide the section as follows:

1. Ch. 3:21-26: The righteousness of
God—its character (v. 21), the application
of it (v. 22-23), and the accomplishment
of it (24-26).

2. Ch. 3:27-31: It is “without law.”

3. Ch. 4:1-8: This fourth chapter is a
demonstration of how the righteousness of
God was “witnessed by the law and the
prophets,” two conspicuous examples being
taken to bear testimony—Abraham and
David—that in the mouth of at least two
witnesses the truth may be established.
Thus we see in the case of Abraham the
principle upon which we are accounted
righteous or justified, that of faith; and
in David the moral class who are justified,
even the ungodly.

4. Ch. 4:9-12: The argument here proves
that the blessing does not come to those
who are in a previously established rela-
tionship as under law, as expressed in cir-
cumcision, and because of occupying that
place, for it was apart from any such thing
and on the ground of faith that Abraham
was accounted righteous.

5. Ch. 4:13-22: Then as to promise, the
Apostle argues that it was God giving His
Word, man believing it, grace accomplish-
ing it, for it was God acting in His own
sufficiency, man being without any as in
Abraham's case. Clearly this is apart
from law which requires power in man to
accomplish its demands.

6. Ch. 4:23-25: The character of faith,
in virtue of which we are accounted right-
eous, is shown all through in Abraham's
case, while the moral character of those
who receive the blessing is seen in David's
testimony. Now, in these verses we get
that upon which faith is to lay hold, in
doing which we are assured of having im-
puted to us what Abraham had imputed
to him. Walking thus in the steps of His

faith, we are blessed with faithful Abraham. The resurrection of Christ is here introduced as the testimony to be believed, and this brings in very blessed meaning as to the place we enter on the principle of faith. For He was raised out of the place He had gone into because of our offences for which He was delivered. Hence they have been fully dealt with, removed, and as He is beyond them and their consequences, so are we who believe that God raised Him up. Our justification is involved in, and founded upon, His resurrection.

7. Ch. 5:1-11: Here we have the conclusion of the matter, showing how past, present and future are all met for us in connection with that place which we have by faith, resting upon the manifested righteousness of God in the Gospel. Justified, and so peace established, present access into the blessing and the glory of God in the future, in hope of which we have our present rejoicing. As to our present path, we have its character, all contributing to the producing of hope connected with the realization of the love of God in the power of the Holy Spirit who is given to us. Love commended to us in the death of Christ, so that being justified in the power of that which perfectly met our guilty state—the blood—we are secured from all wrath through Him who died for us. Now we are reconciled, and salvation for us is measured by the life He possesses in glory, and this brings us to God as our joy and portion. What blessed reconciliation to know and enjoy! It alone could be through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having given this brief outline, we may turn to consider the meaning of righteousness with which we began. It is not to be thought of as referring to an attribute of God; that is what is essential to His being and nature; but it is used relatively, and is called "of God" by contrast with what would have been of man, if such had been possible, by fulfilling the requirements of law. Thus, the expression, "righteousness of God" is characteristic in its bear-

ing, indicating the kind of righteousness which is through faith in Christ and His blood. It is "of God" as apart from all of man and his efforts, and connected with Christ, His sacrifice and faith. Hence it is "without law," apart from its claim and requirement, in connection with which only condemnation could be known. If the expression had referred to an attribute of God, to speak of its manifestation apart from law would be meaningless. But when we consider it as a relative, characteristic expression describing the standing into which we come by faith in Christ and His blood, it is of great importance that this can be called "of God"—it is what we must have to fit us for God's presence and acceptance by Him. It is the kind of righteousness which alone could suit Him. The righteousness of man would be an expression of quite different meaning, and if such could be, it would be the result of his own efforts—the deeds of the law. What, then, is this righteousness which is according to God and is now manifested, and which is upon all who believe? It is that, though we are ungodly, we are now justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and being righteous in his way means having the only form of righteousness which can be said to be "of God."

Now, further through the redemption in Christ, and His being set forth as a mercy seat through faith in His blood, we have a declaration that God is righteous, that is, that what He has done with Christ displays Him as One who has righteousness as an attribute of His being and nature, according to which He ever has and must act, whether it be as to sins in the ages past which were passed over in His forbearance, or the present justifying of the believer in Jesus (ver. 25-26). Thus, we have in Christ and His work what shews forth God as being righteous, and also what, since we trust in Christ, brings us into a righteous standing before God and perfectly suited to Him—"righteousness of God"—now manifested after law had done its dispensational work of proving man to be ungodly and without strength and having no righteousness of his own.

John Bloore.

THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Chap. 5:12; 8:39.

The previous part of the epistle has dealt with what we had done, or were guilty of, and so justification from sins is the truth there presented. In the part we are now to consider it is what we are as fallen children of Adam, the answer to which is that, as believers, we are in Christ. What this involves, the blessing and power of which we are to learn and act upon, is unfolded in this section of the epistle. We may divide its subject matter into seven parts:

1. Ch. 5:12-21—Under new headship.
2. Ch. 6:1-11—Alive to God in Christ.
3. Ch. 6:12-23—Servants of God, freed from sin.
4. Ch. 7:1-23—United to Christ for fruit-bearing, and through death free from the law.
5. Ch. 7:24; 8:11—Delivered as being in Christ, and in the Spirit.
6. Ch. 8:12-27—Led of the Spirit.
7. Ch. 8:28-39—God's purpose and love in Christ for us.

First, we have the contrast between the two heads—Adam and Christ; their acts and the results. Ver. 13-17 form a parenthesis, and it may help, to read ver. 12 and 18 together.

ADAM

CHRIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The one offence. 2. The many have died. 3. Death reigned. 4. The judgment was of one condemnation. 5. By the disobedience of the one the many constituted sinners. 6. The law came in to show that sin abounded. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The grace of God and the free gift. 2. Abounded to the many. 3. They reign in life. 4. The act of favor is of many offences unto justification. 5. By the obedience of the One, the many constituted righteous. 6. Grace has over- |
|--|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Sin has reigned in the power of death. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life. |
|---|--|

As being those who boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom now we have received the reconciliation, we are of the many ranked under Christ. We share the blessings which result from His one act of righteousness, through which the grace of God and the free gift in grace abound unto us in life to which justification attaches. The law manifested that sin abounded, but grace triumphs over all through Christ and His obedience.

Since abounding sin has been answered by over-abounding grace, shall we not continue in sin that grace may abound? The answer to this is found in the truth of our new headship, for what is true of the Head is true of those under Him. Christ died to sin once for all, but also now lives to God (6:10). He died to the whole scene in which sin reigned, and in resurrection entered upon another, a new and heavenly sphere. Hence we are to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God "in Christ Jesus." Faith is to take its stand on this truth. Then "We who have died to sin, how shall we still live in it?" Is not our baptism unto Christ's death? and this is in view of our walk in the power of a new kind of life which finds its full expression in Christ alive unto God in resurrection glory. He was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father. We are alive unto God in Him. This defines the character and power of life for us. But there is more than the application of this truth to our practical walk; the future also is in view. If we are identified with Him in the likeness of His death, which means that as He died to sin once, so we, then also we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Hence the blessed statement of ver. 8-9. But what does this identification with Him in death mean? That "our old man," the whole of our place and relation by nature as in Adam, has been crucified. So we have put off the old man (Eph. 4:22, New Trans.). This is what God reckons true of us.

Knowing this, and acting upon the truth of it, the result is that the body of sin is annulled, and we are no longer slaves to sin—sin in us and identified with the body, so much so as to characterize it, for it is the instrument used to show and gratify the lusts and passions, hence "the body of sin." In the power of this we were as unconverted; but this power is broken for us through faith's apprehension of "our old man" having been crucified, an end made of all our former place and relation as of Adam. Thus we become free, slaves of sin no longer. "For he that has died is justified (cleared, discharged) from sin." "Let not sin, therefore reign in your mortal body to obey its lusts." Sin, then, is still with us, and it will seek to exercise its power to use our members as instruments of unrighteousness. But we are not to let it reign. How prevent it? Maintain in the heart the truth of our place as just made known, and since we are alive to God in Christ, we are to yield ourselves to God as alive from among the dead. We have become servants of God, being made free from sin, having fruit, results, leading to holiness, and the end eternal life.

Thus we see the end of sin's dominion, and now the question is raised as to the law's dominion, for the Apostle has just said we are not under it, yet that we have fruit. How this apart from the law, and it governing us for holiness? The Apostle uses the illustration of a woman bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. Death must come in to dissolve the bond. This applies to us bound by the law to sin as a husband; that is, it shows us bound to or under sin's dominion. We were servants to uncleanness and lawlessness. But death has come in, as chap. 6 teaches, and we are not under sin's rule any more, because we have died, not sin. Then law can have nothing to do with us, and its dominion is also ended. If the woman died, manifestly all relation to law and husband ended. This is true of us. "We have been made dead to the law by the body of Christ." So neither sin nor law have any dominion over us. But we are alive unto God; we have a new kind of life, which manifestly is not within the sphere of law's rule. What then? We can be married to

another, to Him who is raised from among dead; One who died both to sin and law, with Whom we have died, and Who, being raised up, we, too, are looked at as united with Him in that life beyond death, to the end that we should be fruitful through this new relationship.

Now, when we were in the flesh, that is, when, as unconverted, we lived a life the springs of which were all in the sinful scene around us, the relations of which were all formed in that scene, then the passions of sin which were by the law, that is, were brought into evidence by it, as ver. 7 shows, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. Hence, they that are in the flesh cannot please God (ch. 8:8). But now we are delivered, received full release, from the law, having died to that in which we were held, that is, to what we were bound to, as the woman to her husband during life. This places us where we can serve as in new life, and its new relation, of which Christ is the full measure. The remainder of ch. 7 deals with a soul's experience as passing from ver. 5 into the blessing of ver. 6. The statement of ver. 5 as to the law and sin raises the question of ver. 7, "Is the law sin?" The Apostle shows it rather detects sin, manifests it; but of itself is holy, just and good. Sin takes occasion by reason of the law's prohibition, to show its true character, that of inherent opposition to what is good, hence the constant doing of the opposite of what is required by the law that is good. We Christians know that the law is spiritual; but as to individual experience, "I am fleshly, sold under sin." Then we have the warring elements of the man distinguished and his powerlessness expressed in the cry for deliverance. This is found through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is not through our efforts or work, but through Christ. The meaning of being delivered is opened up in the first part of ch. 8. First, there is no condemnation, and because of being in Christ. This we may connect with the truth of headship (ch. 5:12-21). Secondly, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes free from the law of sin and death. We are alive unto God through Christ, and the life we have is connected with Christ

as the One who died to sin once for all, but now lives unto God in the new place introduced to us by resurrection. Thus we are free, identified with Him in that new place. Thirdly, the righteous requirement of the law finds fulfilment in those who walk after the Spirit, which means that our practical lives are governed by the Spirit's law, namely, life in Christ, of which He is the full and perfect expression. Now, the law could not get its righteous requirement fulfilled because of the flesh, so that only the sentence of death resulted for us. But the law's demand that we be judged has been fully met in the sacrifice of Christ, by which sin in the flesh is condemned. And now its righteous requirement is accomplished in us who walk after the Spirit.

There follows (ver. 5-11) the contrast between being in the flesh, which is true of all those not justified by faith, and being in the Spirit, which is true of all who, as believing God, are justified. This being in the Spirit is connected with the indwelling of the Spirit, already spoken of as given to us in ch. 5. If we have not this Spirit, we do not belong to Christ, the Head of all blessing. Having it, Christ is in us, and as a result, the body is kept under the sentence of death, and practical righteousness is the display of the Spirit as life. In ver. 11 we get the great final deliverance connected with the Lord's second coming, when we shall be changed into His likeness, and here connected with the indwelling of the Spirit, "quicken your mortal bodies on account of His Spirit, which dwells in you."

John Bloore.

LINKS OF WORSHIP IN GENESIS*

1. ACCEPTANCE AND ACCEPTABILITY.

"The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering" (4:4).

2. DELIGHT AND COMPLACENCY.

"The Lord smelled a sweet savour, and said I will not again curse" (8:21).

3. STRENGTH AND BLESSING.

"Melchizedec brought forth bread and wine and blessed Abram" (14:18).

4. THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE AND REVELATION.

"I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again" (22:5).

5. A SACRED TRUST AND PROSPEROUS WAY.

"And the man bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord" (24:26).

6. GOD'S FAVOR AND GOOD SUCCESS.

"Abram's servant worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth" (24:52).

7. FIDELITY TO GOD AND HIS PROMISE.

"Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head (worshipped, Heb. 11:21) (47:31).

The blendings of faith in this holy exercise, which is the highest bliss of a creature, are both precious and suggestive. First, God's attitude toward the believer who offers unto God acceptably, and next, His attitude toward a guilty world. Then the soul's enjoyment, out of which worship grows, and its testing, which increases the measure of it. Next, the recognition of God's leading, and of the success which it results in. And finally, the pilgrim, who moved by both prospect and retrospect, and so is "called by both glory and virtue," thus "worships, leaning on the top of his staff." May we thus both worship at the beginning and ending of our Christian career, "resting in the Lamb" and "waiting for the Son of Heaven." B. C. G.

LOVED SO WELL, AND LOVED SO LONG.

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

Master! Thou hast never failed me;

And when Satan's spite assailed me,

Broke my harp and stilled my song;

As I fell in fear before Thee,

Sweet Thy whisper floated o'er me—

"Loved so well and loved so long!"

Sharp the thorns that rise around me;

But the love that sought and found me

Stills the sigh and wakes the song:

Can He fail me? Never, never!

I am His, and His forever,

Loved so well and loved so long.

IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.

What are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves, and those who call them
friend?—Tennyson.

"In the day when I cried, Thou answeredst me,
and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul"
(Ps. 138:3).

The soul that waits on God finds out, sooner or later, that the prayers which seem to be unanswered are those which may be most truly answered. For what is the answer to prayer which the praying heart looks for? There is no true prayer without the proviso: "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." In other words, there is no true prayer without reliance upon the greater wisdom and greater love of Him to whom we pray. Thus it is that God's answer may not be the answer as we looked for it. The least-answered prayer may be the most-answered. It is the realization that experiences fit us for the duties of later life which yields to us the assurance that in the deepest sense our seemingly disregarded prayers have been most abundantly remembered before God. Thus, indeed, we can enter into the spirit of familiar words and acknowledge concerning each prayer that it is

"Goodness still

Which grants it or denies."

Our petitions may become fewer because the prayer is deeper and truer.

"Not my weak longings, Lord, fulfil,
But rather do Thy perfect will,
For I am blind, and wish for things
Which, granted, bring heart-festerings.
Let me but know that I am blind,
Let me but trust Thee, wondrous kind."

All of God's mighty men have been mighty in prayer. But what is prayer? Has every prayer power with God? Genuine prayer is a believing soul's direct converse with God. The first characteristic of the prayer that has power is: "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart." A great many prayers are born of selfishness, and are too much like dictation or command. None of God's promises are unconditional; and we have no such assets to our credit that we have no right to draw our cheques and demand that God shall pay them. The indispensable quality of all right asking is a right spirit toward our heavenly Father. God loves to give to them who love to let Him have His way; they find their happiness in the chime of their own desires with the will of God.

2. Prevailing prayer aims at a mark, and knows what it is after. The model prayers of the Bible were short and right to the mark. Rowland Hill used to say: "I like short, ejaculatory prayer; it reaches heaven before the devil can get a shot at it."

3. Prayer that has power with God must be prepaid prayer.

All of God's promises have their conditions; we must comply with those conditions, or we cannot expect the blessings coupled with the promises. There is a legitimate sense in which every Christian should do his utmost for the answering of his own prayers. A venerable minister, before prayer at a missionary convention, first went down into his pocket, and put a coin into the plate, saying: "I cannot pray until I have given something." He prepaid his prayer. God has but few blessings for stingy pockets. God never defaults; but He requires that we prove our faith by our works, and that we never ask a blessing that we are not ready to labor for, and to make any sacrifice to secure the blessing which our souls desire.

4. Another essential is that our prayer be the prayer of faith, and be offered in the name of Jesus Christ. " whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The chief "wrestling" that we are to do is not with any reluctance on God's part; it is with the obstacles which sin and unbelief put in our pathway. What God orders we must submit to uncomplainingly, but we must never submit to what God can better. Never submit to be blocked in any holy undertaking if with God's help you can roll the stones out of your pathway. The faith that works while it prays commonly conquers; for such faith creates such a condition of things that our Heavenly Father can wisely hear and help us. The firmament of Bible story blazes with "answers to prayer," from the days when Elijah unlocked the heavens on to the days when the petitions in the house of John Mark unlocked the dungeon and brought Peter into their presence. Find thy happiness in pleasing God, and sooner or later He will surely "grant thee the desires of thy heart" (Cuyler).

THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Chap. 8:12-39).

In the sixth part (ver. 12-27) of the section of the Epistle we are considering we get as a principal thought the leading of the Spirit. First, as to present power, for if the Spirit is now life (ver. 10), and as to the future our quickening is on His account (ver. 11), then we are debtors, not to flesh to live after its dictates, nor exactly of the Spirit as enforcing some legal obligation, for all such thought the Apostle would have removed from our hearts, though I doubt not that the very introduction of the word implies the thought of duty; but the Spirit leads by the affections, not by imposing obligations. Hence, the Spirit is present power for us, for by Him we alone can put to death the deeds of the body, to allow which, since it is a body of sin, would be to live according to flesh. Thus, while evil is present with us, there is power to overcome it. Death or life follows in effect the being subject to flesh or the Spirit. In this way the Spirit leads to the putting to death of the body. Secondly, His leading is connected with our position of sonship (ver. 14-15)—a position in which all fear has gone, for it is not a legal spirit which only produces fear which we have received, but a spirit of adoption, for the sense of our place before God is given by the Holy Spirit, and this leads us to cry, Father. Thirdly, it is not only position, but also relationship, the Spirit witnesses with our spirits, makes us intelligent, that we are the children of God—in the place of affection and intimacy with the Father. Fourthly, as in this place we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. A most wonderful position, into the present realization of which the Spirit is present to lead. This involves present character as well as future glory. For the present, suffering as bearing rejection for His sake, to whom we are to be faithful in life and testimony; glory when He shall be revealed and we with Him. Thus we learn what is implied in being children.

In the fifth place we learn the condition of the creation in the midst of which those who are children find themselves, and in connection with this the Spirit's sympathy with them in their experiences which are known by us as being in the body through which we are in touch with a groaning creation. Hence, we have reference made here to the redemption of our bodies, the blessed change for which we wait, and which will take place at the Lord's coming. So, too, for the groaning creation there will come the time of deliverance from present bondage to corruption. But this will only be accomplished in connection with the revelation of the sons of God, that is, when we who are in this position are fully displayed as such, which is not at present true of us; and then shall the creature be brought into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God." That is, that the glory which we shall have as being of God's family, and which has not yet been manifested (1 John 3:2), will be complete liberty from all present condition and circumstances, for we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and into liberty after this order, which is only connected with glory, and is not at all the liberty into which grace now brings, shall be the portion of the creature when the heirs of God and Christ's joint-heirs are manifested in their proper condition of glory. Meanwhile we share in the present groan of a travailing creation; but we have, while awaiting the glory, the firstfruits of the Spirit, that is His present ministry to us of the knowledge of our position as sons and the affections and intimacy of relationship as children, which brings in the rejoicing in hope of God's glory, connected as that is with the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We have been saved in hope. Clearly, then, there is that which is not yet seen which is connected with our salvation. It is the glory of which we have spoken. "We expect in patience." The time of actual manifestation is in the future.

Now, sixthly, we have "in like manner the Spirit joins also its help to our weakness." In like manner to what? To our

'being joined to a groaning creation. As in the body we share in its present misery, so the Spirit joins with us in our present weakness, giving help, and this in particular through intercession which meets the need caused by our ignorance. Thus He takes part in our experiences. How blessed to think of Him being with us in this way, and it is just as real as our being in and identified with the groaning creation. And then this is connected with our hearts, our affections. The condition of the creature and our connection with it is felt and realized in the heart as governed in its feelings by the Spirit who enters into all according to the mind of God. How precious to think of the Spirit entering into all and presenting the need in intercession, and that He is with us in such manner that God links it with our hearts in which He finds the Spirit's affection and groan.

In the seventh and last part of this section of the Epistle we get God's purpose and love in Christ for us—that which is apart from ourselves or our experiences, and so is the basis of full assurance. First, in ver. 26 there is what we do not know, but we begin here with what we do know (ver. 28). "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose." Our love of God connects with the Spirit's place in and leading of the children, while the call according to purpose is connected with the sovereignty of God, His will in exercise on our behalf, but outside of ourselves. To this the Apostle goes on, so in the second place (ver. 29-30) we have the blessed certainty of all as established in divine counsel. How marvellous the destiny! We are to be conformed to the image of Christ! All is a matter of predetermined counsel. He has foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified.

Then, manifestly, there is only one thing to say: God is for us and none can be against us! The assurance that all these blessings of grace and glory shall be ours also comes in from another side, that of God's action, as well as counsel. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. This raises a question in connection with the cause for delivering up the

Son. He was delivered for our offences. Can any accusation be brought against us? No; God it is who justifies. We are established in righteousness; imputation of guilt is impossible. But another question: "Who is he that condemns?" How could there be any one? Has not Christ died, also raised up, and seated at the right hand on high, and there intercedes? No voice of condemnation dare be raised against us, for it must touch Him first. He is above every principality, authority, power, dominion, and every name named. In that which Christ has done, and the place He now fills for us on high, we get His love in full display, and to the activity of His love we owe all, both now and forever. But may not separation from this love come in? Shall any feature of the experience through which we pass in this groaning creation, or any power of enemies avail to separate? Nay, we are conquerors through His love! the love He ever exercises toward us as in the place of power and intercession on our behalf. Blessed, all-sufficient Saviour. Finally, and in the seventh place, the Apostle ranges through the universe, and triumphantly assures us that there is nothing "able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." John Bloore.

FOUR "DOWNS" OF OUR LORD*

I. He LOOKED DOWN.

"The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the children of men" (Ps. 14:2).

First, what did He see? "They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (v. 3).

"And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt" (Gen. 6:12).

But if God had only taken a look down from His throne in heaven, could we ever have been saved? Our next text answers NO.

II. He CAME DOWN.

"Jesus said, I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6:38). And He adds:

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath

given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

"This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life" (vv. 39-40).

Three things He came down from heaven for:

1. To do His Father's will.
2. To gain forever His dear people.
3. To save all who believe on Him.

But while God's look reminds us of His throne above in heaven, and His advent reminds us of His love and grace, we have another down to remind us of its cost.

III. He LAID DOWN.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16).

So our Lord Jesus once said:

1. "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:15).
2. "I lay down My life that I might take it again" (17 v.).
3. "I lay it down of Myself; I have power to lay it down" (18 v.).

He laid down His life—

1. In love for sinners.
2. To purchase His redeemed.
3. In obedience to the will of God.

But there is another down, and it is not in the depths beneath, but the heights above, for

IV. He SAT DOWN.

"This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12).

"When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

Yes, such is the glory of the Man whom God delights to honor. "He hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name above every name" (Phil. 2:9-10). "He hath crowned Him with glory and honor, who tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9-10). Let us who were so far down by reason of our sins, then own Him by faith in these several "downs," and rejoice. B. C. G.

PRAYER ABOUT ALL THINGS.

"If I pray, God will help me to do what is right," said a young Christian.

"Pray about a love letter" exclaimed

my cousin, looking shocked. "Pray about it! You surely would not do anything so profane."

"Surely I may pray God to help me to do right," I said "about everything. Nothing in which there seems to be a question of right and wrong can be out of His care."

She looked at me and said, gravely: "Kitty, I believe you really do believe in God."

"You don't think that any wonder?" I said.

"I do," she said, solemnly. "I have been watching you all this time, and I am sure you really do believe in God and love Him. I have never met any who did since my old nurse died."

"Never met with any religious person!" I said.

"I did not say that. I have met with plenty—Uncle and Aunt, who almost shed tears over their cards, while they talk of 'Heavenly sermons.' I have met all kinds of religious persons, who pull their neighbors to pieces, and thank God they are not like others."

"How do you know that they are not praying for you even while you are laughing at them?"

"I don't want them to pray for me," she replied, fiercely. "They would tell God I was in the gall of bitterness, and thank Him for making them to differ, and hope I might see the error of my ways."

I endeavored to say a word in defence, but she exclaimed: "I am not at all happy, and I believe if I loved God I should be. I have tried to confess my sins to God, and the more I try the harder it is. It is not the things only that are wrong; it is I myself, and what can alter me?"

"Looking to Him must be turning to Him, and that must be conversion. We then read the Bible together. We read of the Cross, of Him who bore our sins there in His own Body on the tree. This is the true balm for soul distress.

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

"What profit should we have if we pray unto God?" (Job 21:18). This question, long since raised by the trafficking mind of sinners, who say unto God: "Depart from us," is answered in several parts of His

holy Word. Without any studied order, we call to mind a few:

1. "It is good to draw near unto the Lord." Hence it is always associated with blessing from God, for He rewards both faith and prayer.

2. Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1) our Lord Jesus once taught His disciples. Hence it is our simple duty.

3. It is wise, for if we have needs, both great and many, and our Father knoweth what things we have need of, prayer is the soul's plea for them.

4. It is relief to the burdened heart, for if we "make our requests known to God," His peace will keep our hearts and minds, regardless of what further answers we may get from His good hand.

The very thought of true prayer implies nearness to God, or a relationship which He has established between the soul and Himself. The very first sign of a redeemed soul is given as "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9:11). So all God's people pray, to a greater or less extent, for even the sigh or groan of a burdened spirit is prayer, as the sacred Word assures us, as to our Lord Himself, when working His miracles, or going to the grave of Lazarus (John 11:33, 38, 41).

Whatever God may be pleased to do, in the sovereignty of His grace, He makes no promise of answering the prayers of those who go on in their sins, in rebellion against Him. The blind man of John 9 stated a truth when he said: "God heareth not sinners." This our Lord emphasizes also when He says: "The altar sanctifieth the gift." Without Him as our altar, then, either our gifts or our prayers are in vain.

But if we can pray at all, "Our Father," then we can come with our petitions, which our needs and His grace jointly lead us to present to Him. And yet, while our ground of approach to God is through His dear Son, for "through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father," the terms of effectual prayer are described thus:

1. "According to the Father's will" (1 John 5:14-15).
2. In the Name of His Son (John 14:13).
3. In the Holy Spirit (Jude v. 20).

These terms raise with us the old-time question of the prophet (Micah 6:6): "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" The attitude of the Christian soul in prayer is not that of the repentant sinner who sues for mercy for his sins. True, he has sins, and is still in need of mercy, but he is no longer "in his sins," nor is he "tied and bound with the chain of his sins," but is invited, both as a pilgrim and a priest, to come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). But how grave would be the mistake of supposing that the mercy which the Christian needs is the "salvation of his soul"! This the Apostle Peter writes we "have received" (1 Peter 1:9). This, then, is the start of our Christian path. Another Apostle, Jude, presents the end of it, saying: "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude v. 21). But between these points, what need we have of mercy, aye, "mercy, full and free," to keep our fickle hearts, mercy to restore our wandering souls, mercy to keep our eyes from tears and our feet from falling. In view, then, both of all this, our great and constant need, "let us pray."

B. C. G.

SEVEN "I WILLS" IN JOHN.

1. Of SALVATION.
"Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).
2. Of CLEANSING.
"I will, be thou clean" (Luke 5:3).
3. Of CONFESSION.
"I will confess before My Father" (Matt. 10:32).
4. Of SERVICE.
"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:17).
5. Of COMFORT.
"I will come to you" (John 14:8).
6. Of RESURRECTION.
"I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).
7. Of GLORY.
"I will that they may behold My glory" (John 17:24).

THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Chap. 9-11.

In this division of the epistle the Apostle treats of God's dispensational dealings as relating to Israel and His present grace. We may divide it in the following manner:

1. Chap. 9:1-13—God sovereign in His ways.
2. Chap. 9:14-18—God righteous in His ways.
3. Chap. 9:19-23—God absolute in His rights.
4. Chap. 9:24-33—God exercising these attributes in mercy.
 1. Chap. 10:1-4—God's righteousness.
 2. Chap. 10:5-13—It is obtained alone by faith, the Old Testament being the witness.
 3. Chap. 10:14-21—The proclamation of the Gospel justified from the Old Testament.
 1. Chap. 11:1-10—The election of grace, proof that God has not cast away His ancient people.
 2. Chap. 11:11-25—The call of the Gentiles, and their introduction to the place of promise.
 3. Chap. 11:26-32—Israel's salvation.
 4. Chap. 11:33-36—An ascription of praise.

The truth of there being no difference in the way God now treats both Jew and Gentile raises the question of Israel's special place, and the righteousness of God in His dealings according to grace. The Apostle gives expression to his ardent desire on behalf of his brethren, and recounts the features of their special place. However, it is not as though the Word of God had failed, for not all are Israel which are of Israel, as shown in the case of Abraham's family. Isaac, not Ishmael, was the seed according to God's word. God in this showed Himself sovereign. This displayed itself still more fully in the case of Jacob and Esau, for they were born of the same mother, yet Jacob was chosen. Moreover, nothing of works enters into the question; it is entirely "of him that calls." All rests upon the sovereignty of God.

This brings up another question: is God, then, unrighteous in so acting? The

Apostle shows that the only ground upon which God could bless was that of mercy, for none had any claim upon God. It was not a question of God being righteous as responding to some claim which others had. This is proved in the case of Israel's sin in connection with the golden calf, for then God must have judged all, or act on the ground of His sovereignty, which He did, saying: "I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will feel compassion for whom I will feel compassion." By way of contrast the same truth is emphasized from the side of judgment in Pharaoh's case. He shows himself the enemy of God, and God deals with him according to his manifested state. God might have done this with Israel, but He chose to show mercy. He acts as sovereign, and shall be fully justified in all.

Is it not His right so to do? As much so as that of the potter who moulds the clay according to his own purpose. God's right is absolute, none can question it. God endures, when He might summarily judge, vessels fitted by their own ways for destruction. And who among men have not so fitted themselves? The Jews are no exception, hence, dependents on mercy like the Gentiles. So, then, God must prepare vessels of mercy to make His glory known. It is this which is shown in the call of grace, which has included both Jews and Gentiles.

The Apostle now brings forward several Old Testament Scriptures which show God acting in mercy toward Israel, notwithstanding the fact that they were disowned, had no claim by reason of their evil, and would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah but for that mercy. That being the case, they are no better off than the Gentiles, but then, if they are to have mercy shown to them, this opens the door to the Gentiles, and God, to be righteous and consistent, must call them as well as the Jews, hence the no-difference character of the Gospel.

The question may now be raised concerning Israel's zeal for the law and its righteousness, in contrast to the Gentiles who did not follow after righteousness, and yet

now under the Gospel they have attained to righteousness on the principle of faith. How is it that Israel did not also? They sought it on the principle of work and not of faith. They had stumbled at Christ in connection with whom the principle was: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed."

This question is taken up largely in the tenth chapter. First, after expressing his earnest desire for Israel's salvation, he speaks of the zeal for God which they had, that following after a law of righteousness to which he had referred at the close of chapter nine. In this they had sought to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant, and then when Christ came, in connection with whom it was faith and not works, they would not submit to God's righteousness, that which He would give to them in that way instead of on the ground of their boasted zeal. "Christ is the end of the law for (i.e., as a means to attain the desired object) righteousness." But only is He the end of it in this connection to the one who believes, to faith. This Israel failed to recognize and bow to before God. Thus alone is God's righteousness obtained.

The Apostle proceeds to prove this from Moses (ver. 5-13). The passage from Deuteronomy presents what is Israel's only hope in view of the broken law and the impossibility of blessing on that principle. It is another principle, brought in by God in grace, and announced by the lawgiver himself. Israel as driven out of the land was not where they could possibly keep the law. To keep it according to God, they must be in their inheritance where God had established His centre for them. As driven out of the place of relationship, the only hope they had was that of turning in heart and confession to God as scattered among all the nations, being without land, or city, or temple. Thus without either the possibility or ability to keep the law, if they turned with the heart to the Lord, He would in grace turn to them and bring into blessing. But, then, this manifestly could alone be connected with Christ, and hearing Him, as Deut. 18:15-19 shows. In this way the Apostle interprets the passage

from Deut. 30. It is not a matter of man, his power and accomplishment, as suggested in the questions asked. How could it be when the coming of Christ and His resurrection are involved, upon both of which blessing entirely rested, and this is shown by the way Paul introduces Christ into the quotation. Hence it is a matter of mouth and heart in contrast to works—the confession of Jesus as Lord and the believing that God had raised Him from among the dead.

The condition of the Jew places him in the same position of need as the Gentile, as Deuteronomy fully shows; all then can alone be found in Christ, and those believing on Him shall not be ashamed. He is Lord of all, rich toward all, and whosoever calls upon Him shall be saved. Israel's hope now, as also in the day of which Deuteronomy speaks, is in calling out of a heart which had turned in helplessness to the Lord, not in seeking to establish their own righteousness by law-works. This applies in principle to all men, for there is no difference of Jew or Greek.

Since, then, for both Jew and Gentile it is a question of calling and believing on the Lord, how shall they do either unless they hear of Him, and for them to hear there must be the preacher, and the preacher must be sent. Again, the Apostle brings forward Old Testament Scriptures to show that this was God's mind and purpose, and that also, as Moses witnessed, this testimony would embrace the Gentiles, Isaiah giving strong evidence of the same fact. But along with this, the enmity and opposition of Israel to God acting in grace was equally made known.

The close of chapter 10 raises the question of chapter 11: "Has God cast away His people?" This is answered in a three-fold way. First, the Apostle himself is a witness to the contrary, and this is after the example of God's way in Elijah's day. So there is the remnant according to grace. Secondly, the introduction of the Gentiles to the place of privilege had in view the provoking of Israel to jealousy, not their rejection. Thirdly, Israel would be saved when the Lord came out of Sion.

Now by the figure of the Olive tree the

Apostle shows the relation of Jew and Gentile to the place of privilege and promise of which Abraham is the beginning, the root of the tree, Israel the natural stock and branches, the Gentiles the wild olive tree which was grafted in among them on the principle of faith, by which alone they stood. Hence, there was no ground for Gentile boasting, even though some of the natural branches had been broken off because of unbelief, for God would no more spare them did they fail to abide in His goodness. And, furthermore, when the natural branches turned from unbelief, their hearts turning to the Lord according to Deut. 30, then shall they be grafted in again. The Apostle proves that this will be the case in the future, and all Israel shall be saved. The Apostle concludes by showing how all rest upon the mercy of God, because all were shut up in unbelief.

The review of all these ways of God brings out His closing ascription of praise and glory.

John Bloore.

A CHRISTIAN WORSHIPPER.

Read Luke 2:25-35.

"What!" some may exclaim, "a Christian worshipper, when Christianity was not yet established, and none were yet known in this world as Christians. Impossible!"

But we repeat it: "A Christian worshipper!" and we aim to shew that many another so-called Christian worshipper might well learn of our old-time one, the secret of and power of his simple, and heaven-delighting worship. What was it but this? In one word: **Jesus, our Lord, had come.** Angels had announced the blessed fact, shepherds of Bethlehem had verified it, and both in their distinct spheres had worshipped—"praising God" (Luke 2:13-20).

But now we have another, and yet another—a man and a woman. Of the first we read but eleven verses, his whole life-history in so short a compass, and the chief element in it, "Christian worship," as we have termed it. Let us note the simple story:

1. "There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon."

His was a common name, but whenever a man was true to this name, it had a most

uncommon result. "Simeon" means hearing, and God had long since said: "Hear, and your soul shall live," and our Lord Jesus only emphasized it in saying: "He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me hath everlasting life" (John 5:24).

This, then, suggests the first step in true Christian worship. We hear "the words of eternal life"—we believe them, and we possess it, even now, and that to all eternity. Hearing and believing, then, means "having." And this must be our start in life in order to be Christian worshippers—Christian possessions ever precedes Christian worship.

2. "The same man was just and devout."

The first denotes how he stood with his fellow-men—"just," and the second his relation to God—"devout." These were good marks, witnesses truly of Divine life within this "man of Jerusalem," and yet we read that he was

3. "Waiting for the consolation of Israel."

True, our Lord had been born into this world but forty days, and only one event, a very ordinary one, had happened in his outward life—"the circumcising of the Child when His name was called Jesus" (Luke 2:21). But no life-sufferings of our adorable Lord ever made an atonement for our sins, and as no halo crowned His sacred brow, nor pomp or glory attended His way, Simeon, perhaps, had not heard of the fact of either His birth or circumcision, and so we read:

4. "The Holy Ghost was upon him."

This marked him out as an object of Divine favour, and this being associated in those olden days with prophets, priests and kings, we would ask, which of these was Simeon about to become? Many, nowadays, preach the Holy Ghost for salvation; many more claim that, in a special way, they possess Him, and an infallible test is given us as to all such claims. - Here it is:

"It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost." We are not told here of the manner of this revelation, but we are of the matter of it. It concerned, on the one side, this waiting man, Simeon, "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and on the other,

"a Saviour" who had come, heralded by John the Baptist, announced by holy angels, and now to be presented in the temple according to the law of Moses.

5. "He came, by the Spirit, into the temple."

God drew him, by His Spirit, to the very spot in the temple where the Word of God brought them at the same moment, as if to witness that His Word and His Spirit always agree and lead to the same blessed result, the finding of the Saviour, of salvation in Him and as a result Christian worship in the joy of salvation known and possessed. But it was not enough to be where Jesus was. Read further:

6. "Then took he Him up in his arms."

He laid hold of Him, embraced Him, clasped Him to his heart, and as his aged eyes beheld the infant Saviour, the Child Jesus, his heart could not contain all that surged into it of peace and rest, of joy and satisfaction, to which he gave utterance, saying:

7. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." He has had enough, his cup is running over, he can contain no more, so reminds God of His promise to take him after seeing the Messiah, the Lord Christ. And now, mark how this one sight of Jesus looses his tongue in worship:

8. "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Christ was to be Israel's consolation and salvation, the prophets had long since announced. The angels had celebrated His advent, saying: "Which shall be to all people," but it was still limited to the elect nation: "Unto you is born," and so it was all people of this nation. But now comes further light, and a fuller revelation, for old Simeon sees in "God's salvation" more than even this great blessing.

9. "Thou hast prepared before the face of all people," literally, "all the peoples" or nations.

Yes, it was indeed true; God's salvation, because it was His, could not be bought nor sold, neither earned nor lost, and also could not be limited to one people, but extended to all peoples, so that it might be both "unto all and upon all them that believe."

10. "A light to lighten, or for revelation of the Gentiles."

This remarkable statement from "a man in Jerusalem" would never have been made by a casual study of the Scriptures of the past, which in their utmost limits of grace, witnessed in the Song of Moses: Deut. 32:43: "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people." This the Apostle Paul quotes along with Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:10, in Rom. 15:10-12. But old Simeon sounded this further note of the precedence of the Gentiles in this dispensation, to which he added:

11. "And the glory of Thy people, Israel."

Yes, they were not left out, nor set aside, as now, but brought in upon the same ground as that on which God blessed the Gentiles, that of sovereign grace, God's abundant mercy. Thus Simeon's worship was linked up with the Holy Spirit's leading, looking upon the Lord Jesus, and entering into God's revelation as to Him and all associated through grace with Him.

B. C. G.

SOWING AND REAPING.

We shape ourselves, the joy or fear

Of which the coming life is made,

And fill our future atmosphere

With sunshine or with shade.

The tissue of the life to be

We weave with colors all our own,

And in the fields of destiny

We reap 'as we have sown.

We sow a thought, we reap an act;

We sow an act, we reap a habit,

We sow a habit, we reap a character;

We sow a character, we reap a destiny;

We are the very creatures we make ourselves to be.

Double heart (1 Chron. 12:33).

Double mind (James 1:8).

Double tongue (1 Tim. 3:8).

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THOUGHTS INTRODUCTORY TO THE
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Chap. 12-16.

In this closing division of the Epistle we have practical truth presented, bearing upon various relationships in life. The Apostle bases his exhortation upon the mercies of God. We may think of those mercies as displayed to us in the great truths of the preceding chapters. May their blessing and power so possess us that we shall indeed present our bodies a living sacrifice. The lesson of death is to be apprehended on the one hand as the Apostle has taught us; but we are to walk in newness of life, as alive unto God in Christ Jesus. He is our life, and He it is who is to be seen as living in us. Now, our bodies, through which the action of life is expressed, are to be devoted as a sacrifice to the exhibition of that new life which is Christ Himself. If presented in this way, the sacrifice is holy and acceptable to God—Christ alone could be both to Him. This is our intelligent service. Being made intelligent as to the mercies of God through what the Apostle has unfolded, such service alone becomes us.

We are not to be conformed to this world—that is, the system of things which man, instigated by Satan, has built up and maintains according to the desires of the flesh. We are to be transformed. The time past of our lives, pre-converted days, may suffice us to have lived according to the world. We are no longer to live in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God (1 Pet. 4:2-3). To this will Paul also refers in the portion before us.

Now, this transformation is effected by the renewal, or change, of our minds. This is alone accomplished through the work of the Spirit and by the Word. We thus prove, through increasing spiritual intelligence and experience connected with the varied circumstances of life, "what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This will we trace in the unfoldings of the succeeding chapters in a seven-fold way:

1. As to the Assembly (ch. 12:3-8).

2. As to daily life (ch. 12:9-21).
3. As to human government (ch. 13:1-7).
4. As to all men (ch. 13:8-10).
5. As to individual behaviour (ch. 13:11-14).
6. As to individual judgments and our attitude toward one another (ch. 14).
7. As to the character of our service—Christ and Paul are the examples (ch. 15).

In ch. 16 we have the honor roll, in which features of Christian character which we may well emulate are brought to our notice, and then the final word of commendation of all to God and His truth.

Through all this practical portion we see that it is love which is to rule—the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This is love which takes the divine view of things, and then shapes our conduct. Thus we will think soberly according to God, and not be busy putting ourselves forward, thinking more highly than we should. We are to have respect for one another, not minding high things, but going along with the lowly, or with what is lowly (ch. 12:16 N.T.). All the injunctions are so simple and beautiful that what we need is to meditate upon them, that they may become guiding principles in our daily lives as being wrought into the very fibre of our hearts and minds.

The recognition of individual responsibility before and to the Lord on the one hand, and on the other mutual consideration of one another in such matters as referred to, occupies ch. 14. The spirit which is to animate us in all is shown in Christ, and in Paul and his ministry as presented in ch. 15. How beautiful the closing verses of this chapter (ver. 30-33).

We close this very brief and merely suggestive outline of this wonderful Epistle with desire that its precious truth in all its bearings may be better apprehended by all, and our practical Christian lives be elevated to a higher plane by reason of such increased apprehension. More detailed, individual study of this Epistle will richly repay the diligent soul. May the

Lord stir up many to be such. The time is short, and hence increasingly precious in view of eternity. John Bloore.

THE LORD'S LEADING.

The leading of the Lord, or the guidance of the Holy Ghost, in our daily lives, is a matter that exercises all upright hearts, and calls for true humility of mind and sincerity of purpose, for the Lord hath promised that "the meek will He teach His way," and assures us that "the way of the Lord is strength to the upright." Many true-hearted followers of the Lord, however, differ so widely as to how we are to obtain "daily light," that some believe that we can have but little assurance as to it, and must simply seek God's guidance in a general way, and then use our common sense as the affairs of the day come up. Others believe we should seek it in every detail, and some also claim that they have it constantly. This, too, is found when they have no Scripture warrant for their course, or use some very strangely applied passages for their often very extraordinary conduct.

The first mention of the Lord's leading in the sacred Word is the case of Abraham's servant, who, pledging himself to carry out his master's will, set out upon a long journey to do so. His errand was successful, and he thus reports it: "I being in the way, the Lord led me" (Gen. 24:27). He further adds: "He hath led me in the right way (48 v.). As the sequel confirms his statements, we may rightly conclude that this initial case has in it some sound principles as to this blessed and yet serious subject.

First, note carefully the line of distinction between what he had direct guidance about, and what he had not. Abram had said: "Go unto my country," and "he went unto Mesopotamia," which was that. But having come there, and lacking any further word as to how to find the desired wife for Isaac, he then acts on his own initiative, and shews good judgment and sound sense. "He made his camels kneel without the city by a well," thus getting into position for God's further guidance, or, as he says: "I being in the way, the Lord led me."

This emphasized the fact that faith which ever trusts in God and obeys Him in all His revealed will, also uses all the means and abilities which He has blessed us with. This fits with the Apostle's word: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

If Abram's servant had not acted thus wisely, his success might have been much delayed, if not defeated. But obeying the word of his master in the general way, he now acts sensibly both as to time and place, and so was "by a well," and "in the evening." He knew that there and then the women came, and so acts upon it, and at this juncture prays for good-speed. His proposal to God so that he might have certainty as to his course was a striking one, and a very crucial test for the maiden in question. He would ask one for a drink of water, and if she said "Yes," and added "I will give thy camels drink also," she should be his answer from the Lord. So it came to pass, for faith that honors God is, in turn, honored of Him. Had he chosen another position, or made no choice of one at all, while faith might seem to be even more in evidence, yet it would be but a superstition, and not faith. He acted both in prudence and dependence, and faith ever combines both in its activities. But when this dear man got the answer to his prayer so promptly, his mind is filled with wonder, and his speech fails. He acts, however, and promptly secures the advantage granted him of God by the jewels given to the damsel, and his enquiry as to a lodging. The answer so greatly confirms his faith, and even exceeds his request, that ere he goes further, he bows and worships God, while the damsel ran with the good news, and her brother finds the man still at the well. No excitement marks him, and he puts on no superior airs, but tells his simple tale, charming alike as to the wonderful guidance of the Lord, and as to the simplicity of faith in finding it. He is not carried away, however, by his "wonderful experience," for he "would not eat until he had told his errand." So also, next morning, he says: "Send me away to my master." He who had gained faith's victory did not lose it

through carelessness, as its sequel. Thus being "in the way" is our side, and to be learned from the Master's Word, and "the leading by the right way" is His side of it, and follows the other as its happy result. The first calls for obedience and dependence, and the second is proved in dependence and obedience, so that our steps can be with confidence of heart, for God hath said: "I will guide thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go" (Ps. 32), and "He is faithful that promised." May we prove it so. B. C. G.

GOD'S CALLS TO PERFECTION*

To Abraham, God said: "Walk before Me and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1)—in the power of His Name, Almighty.

To Israel, He said: "Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah, thy God" (Deut. 18:13)—consistent with their relationship to Him.

To Christians He says: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). We ought to manifest the Father in our ways among men.

Faith is always sure. It has set to its seal, by grace, that God is true, and "We have the earnest of the Spirit, therefore we are always confident" (2 Cor. 5). We have no business to think when God has spoken; our business is to believe, for God has said it. Humility always receives from God. What right have we to reason when His Word is that we shall be like His Son? We never get the counsels of God brought out till Christ died (Eph. 1:4). It is not God choosing before the world that constitutes the sovereignty of grace, because it would be just as sovereign if it chose us now to-day (2 Tim. 1:9-10). Our place in Christ—the sovereign calling was given to us before the world began, but was not manifest until He came (Titus 1:2-3). This counsel of God—that which was in God's mind connecting us with Christ before the world existed—came out in the Gospel after Christ had made atonement. J. N. D.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

The fear of the Lord was always the beginning of wisdom. His earliest worshippers bowed down before a Being towards whom they felt awe and dread. They may have expressed wonder and delight at the world they saw around them; but it began in something deeper—in humble reverence for the unseen Power above them and about them, the mighty Ruler and Controller of them all. The patriarchs paid homage to Him who laid hold of them by His warnings and His promises; they trembled and obeyed Him, as He called them and claimed them to be His own. Abraham is distinguished as God's friend; but the Friend of Abraham becomes the Fear of Isaac, and Jacob swears by his father's Fear. The revelations given at the bush that burned and at the mount that trembled were such that Moses himself said: "I do exceedingly fear and quake." And the whole drift of the Hebrew Law is summed up in Deuteronomy: "All these words are written that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God." Throughout the Old Testament a religious man meant a man who feared God; this was his ruling motive, the dominant note in his character. And it remains the root of our Christian graces and virtues; it is the beginning of perfect wisdom.

When we ourselves first began to have a serious spirit, did we not grow conscious of the fear of the Lord? To realize, even dimly, what God is, strikes the soul with instinctive awe. The sense of feebleness and insufficiency before the Almighty shatters our self-confidence. The sense of evil and impureness before the All-Holy smites us with shame. We know ourselves frail and guilty creatures, unclean in face of our Maker. And wisdom begins in this knowledge. The first need of any man is to discover his proper place of humility before God. To shrink from His heart-searching scrutiny, to quail before the light of His awful holiness, is an experience which pierces deeper than most pious emotions. The first of all beatitudes belongs to "the poor in spirit."

The close of the Bible completes but does

not contradict its beginning. The angel of the Apocalypse flying in mid-heaven, having the everlasting Gospel, cried with a loud voice: "Fear God, and give glory to Him." There are modern teachers who deny that the fear of God has any proper place in the Gospel. They represent fear as the shadow of ignorance, the survival of superstition, something which an advanced spiritual experience must outgrow. Did not St. John write: "Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment?" Yes, the love of God does forbid us to cringe and cower before Him. It expels fear in the pagan sense, the criminal's dread of his executioner, the terror of a slave at his tyrant. The Christian who is made perfect in love does not shudder before physical Omnipotence. But he bows and worships the unutterable holiness of the Father. To any imperfect creature there must always be something awful about perfect Purity. And the Christian's love of God is stifled, it cannot breathe, save in the air of humility and reverence and godly fear.

"They love Thee little, if at all,
Who do not fear Thee much.

If love is Thine attraction, Lord,
Fear is Thy very touch."

To love our fellow-men properly, we must first respect them. To love God as we wish that adoring self-abasement which makes the angels hide their faces and the throne as they cry: "Thou art worthy, redeemed cast down their crowns before ought, we must have some due sense of our own characters. We must be filled His character, and of its difference from and Thou alone."

Often we are exhorted to make holiness perfect in God's love; and our hearts say "Amen." Yet we somehow miss from such teaching a certain note—lofty, penetrating, austere—which rings through the Bible, whose echoes roll down all the generations of the saints. For a saintly Christian means a man living consciously under the eye of God, who searches his heart day by day. And so St. Paul bids us make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

When we read the Gospels we find that the figure of Jesus Christ Himself, so over-

flowing with compassion, has a terrible purity which quells and appals and subdues the very souls whom He charms and attaches. He who came from the Father's bosom and revealed the Father's love made men aware that God is something more than infinite good nature. How can we drop out of Christ's own teaching its tone of uncompromising severity? It warns us that life and Christianity are not the soft and easy things we sometimes take them to be. The sternest words in the New Testament about sin, its horror and its consequences fall from Christ Himself, spoken by the same Voice which utters the parable of the Prodigal Son. If He tells us anything, He tells us that the moral issues of character are mysterious indeed, but so grave that they dwarf everything else in comparison. And He declares again and again that He is Himself the Arbitrer of moral judgment, sifting the wheat from the chaff and severing the sheep from the goats. Each naked soul must face the white light of His truth. Our human disguises shrivel and vanish at the touch of His Reality. He Himself utters that verdict against which there is no appeal.

Say what we will, there is something awful about the Bible. The everlasting Gospel, with its watchword, "Fear God and give glory to Him," compels the most careless to feel how grave a thing it is to be alive, how solemn are life's issues beyond this world, how certain is life's judgment "at no assize of man." And that fear of the Lord wherein wisdom begins is woven into the very crown of perfection. No character, however winning, can be great without some touch of its unworldliness and austerity. The true saint bears about in the citadel of his being a hidden, isolating, constraining, ennobling fear. Multitudes of modern Christians have lost the secret of inward dignity and simplicity and courage and detachment just because they have forgotten the fear of God and let it slip out of sight.

T. H. D.

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