

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
A Few Thoughts on 1 John ii. 1.....	73
An Answer to the Question of a Correspondent.....	159
Answers to Correspondents	112, 196, 252, 308
A Practical Word.....	224
A Separated People who "had not separated themselves" ...	7
As we wait for the Lord.....	233
At the Master's Feet.....	221
A Twentieth Century New Testament	106
Brief Bible Studies for Young Christians.....	22
Cardinal Truths.....	203
"Covet earnestly the best Gifts".....	290, 309
"Darius the Median"	180
Enemies of the Cross of Christ, and Dwellers on the Earth	236
Evil Speaking	28
Extract of Correspondence	278
Faith and Faith's Testimony to Christ.....	130
"Far Better"	40
From Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea by Way of Mount Seir....	265
Fragments.....	15, 27, 28, 96, 112, 322
God's Mouth and Hand.....	253
God's Voice to Oppressors.....	232
"How is it that ye have no Faith?"	34
Jonah the Prophet.....	169, 197, 225, 256
Jonathan and David.....	192
Joseph's Journey from Hebron to Shechem and Dothan...	211
King Saul: the Man after the Flesh.....	1, 29
Now and Then	95
Obedience to God under World-Governments	301
On Bible Study.....	11
On So-called Divine Healing.....	135

Prayer for Rulers.....	263
Prophecy with Harps.....	281
POETRY:—	
“ As Men who wait for their Lord ”.....	93
A Song for the Harps on the Christian Pisgah	320
A Prophecy of Spring.....	150
Call them Back	289
He Refresheth my Soul	128
I will Come to Thee.....	71
“ My Beloved is Mine ”	158
My Web of Life.....	337
“ Rest in the Lord ”	210
The Christ of God.....	247
Thy Way	176
Transformation	50
Re-tracings of Truth.....	42, 78. 97
Signs of a Revival.....	152
Some Distinctions.....	84
The Assembly Meeting of 1 Cor. xiv.....	278
The Bible	177
The Church in its Progress towards Rome.....	57
The Epistle of Jacob.....	141
The Light of the Glory.....	250
The Man with a Message	323
The Ministration of Carnal Things	270
The Need and Power of Revival.....	85
The Priesthood of Believers.....	216
The Reckoning of Time.....	113
The Second Coming of the Lord our Hope	161
The Silence of Jesus	52
The Two Sides of Truth.....	16
The Way to the House.....	123
Trade-Unionism. A letter	162
Two Things.....	56
“ Why came we forth out of Egypt ? ”	156

KING SAUL :
THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter i.

THE STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

Continued from December number.

WHEN once God lays hold of an instrument, working upon the heart as well as the mind, He will doubtless continue to make use of it. So Samuel not only received the first message, of judgment upon Eli's house, but was made the channel of God's resumed relationship with the people. "The Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by the word of the Lord." What an honor—to be used of God, after ruin had come into the very household of the priest. And is it not true that at this day, God passes by all pretentious officialism which has departed from Him, to reveal to babes the things hidden from the wise and prudent? The childlike, obedient spirit, which can say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth," will have a message.

Nor will the humble instrument fail of recognition, though the careless and thoughtless may mock. The Lord let none of his words fall to the ground; what he said came to pass, and his message commanded a respect which could not be withheld. The words spoken to Jeremiah are also appropriate to him: "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Behold I have put My words in thy mouth" (Jer. i. 7-9). No need to fear the face of man when one has

seen the face of God. The weakest is as the mighty when he has the words of God on his lips. Let us remember this in these days, and faint not because of our feebleness. The Lord will let none of His words fall to the ground, though spoken by faltering lips.

We have seen now the state of the people. The mass, weak, prone to wander, and, without the strong hand of restraint, lapsing into carelessness and idolatry; the priestly family degenerated into senile feebleness and youthful profligacy; but, in the midst of all this, a feeble, prayerful remnant who still count upon God, and obtain His recognition. This remnant finds expression, in God's mercy, through the gift of prophecy, raised up by Him as a witness against the abounding apostasy, and the channel of His dealings with the people. Sad and dark days they were, but just the time for faith to shine out brightly and to do valiantly for the Lord.

Chapter ii.

THE CAPTIVITY IN THE PHILISTINES' LAND.

(1 Sam. iv.)

As has been frequently noticed, the enemy who could successfully attack the people of God, represent in a spiritual way their state, or the natural consequence of their state. Throughout Judges we find various enemies, assailing different parts of the nation and at different times. At one time it is the Moabites on the East; at another, Jabin king of Hazor on the North. The first suggests carnal profession, and the second rationalism. The last enemy spoken of in Judges was the Philistines. Samson, last, strongest and feeblest of the judges fought against them during his life—when he was not having associations with them. He did much, in an

indefinite way, to keep them from completely bringing the people into bondage, but never wrought a thorough deliverance. He died in captivity, and though he slew at his death more than he had in his life, he left them still practically unconquered.

These are the enemies that confront Israel during the priesthood of Hophni and Phinehas, and all through the reign of Saul. So we must see afresh what they represent in a spiritual way. Living in the territory which rightly belonged to Israel—their own land—they stand for that which is closest to the people of God without being really such. They drifted into the land—exemplifying their name, “wanderers,”—along the shore of the Mediterranean sea, the short way from Egypt. For them there was need neither of the sheltering passover, the opened Red Sea or Jordan’s flow arrested. They stand thus for the natural man intruding into the things of God.

That this has been done in its full measure by Rome, none can question. She has taken possession of the heritage of God’s people, and settled there as though it belonged by right to her, giving her name to the entire Church, or claiming to be “the Church,” just as Palestine, the whole land, got its name from these Philistines. Rome with its profession, its ritualism remains the great enemy which menaces the inheritance of the saints. It is to be feared that Protestantism, like Samson, has but feebly dealt with this adversary, and too often adopted its principles to be a true and victorious deliverer from it. They still remain in probably greater vigor than ever, ready to make fresh inroads and to lay waste more of the land of God’s people.

But Rome as a system appeals to man’s carnal

nature. It may be said that *all* mere carnal, formal religion is Rome in principle. At any rate, doubtless, the Philistines stand for all that is of nature in the things of God. Any carnal trafficking in unfelt, unrealized truth is but the intrusion of the flesh—mere Philistinism. This explains the constant tendency toward ritualism, and so toward Rome. Nor will this cease till the "mother of harlots" gathers back her children, representing apostate Christendom, after the removal of the Church to heaven. Rome will again be supreme.

A state of the people like that which we have been tracing, with its carnal and corrupt priesthood and no power to act for God, would be just suited for the degradation now imminent. Indeed in Hophni and Phinehas we see but Philistines under another name. God will show His people outwardly where they are inwardly. How often in the individual soul, and in the Church at large, are the outward sins but the expression of a state of heart which has long existed.

We are not told the occasion of the conflict here, whether there was some fresh inroad of the enemy, some additional imposition of tyranny, or whether in fancied strength the people arrayed themselves against them. This last would almost seem likeliest from the language, "Israel went out against the Philistines to battle." "Pride goeth before destruction," and self-sufficiency is ever the sign of an absence of self-judgment. Many times do God's people go out to do battle against a spiritual foe in a state of soul which would make victory impossible, which it would really compromise God's honor were He to give it. This is why it is absolutely impera-

tive that there should be the judgment of self, before there can be a true warfare against outward foes.

But one defeat is not enough to teach the people their need, and the folly of their course. Four thousand fall before the enemy, and surely this should have brought them on their faces in confession and prayer to know the reason of this defeat. Had they waited upon God, they would soon have learned the reason, and doubtless have been spared the further loss of the next battle. But evidently they think nothing of their own condition, and the only remedy they can think of is truly a Philistine one. They will have something outward and visible brought along which will quicken the failing courage of the people, and strike terror into the hearts of their enemy. It does both, for when the ark is brought into the camp, a great shout is raised by Israel, and the Philistines are smitten with fear.

The ark had led them to victory before. It had gone before them in the wilderness, "to search out a resting-place"; it had stopped Jordan for them to pass over, and had led them about Jericho till its walls fell. Naturally they think of it as the very throne of God, and substitute it, in their minds, for God Himself.

But God is holy, and can never be made to link His name with unholiness. The ark was His resting-place in Israel, but He cannot be forced to countenance sin. So His ark can no more overthrow the enemy than Israel could previously. The hosts of Israel are overthrown, Hophni and Phinehas are slain, the ark is taken captive, and carried in triumph and placed in the house of Dagon, thus giving the glory of the victory to the idol.

What food for solemn thought is here. No outward privilege, no past experiences of God's presence, no correctness of position or doctrine can take the place of reality of soul before God. None can ever say they have a claim upon God because of any thing except Christ Himself laid hold of, and presented in true self-distrust and brokenness, with real, true judgment of all in the life that would dishonor the Lord.

This is the meaning of "Ichabod," the glory has departed. It refers to the ark, the glory of God's manifest presence; but this can only abide among a broken, self-judged people. In a real sense, we have the Spirit of God always abiding with us, but if that is allowed in the heart or life which greives Him, all outward and manifest approval of God ceases. He will permit the *badge* of His presence to be removed. Persons will lose the joy of the Lord individually, and the candlestick of collective testimony be removed, if God's warnings fail to bring His people into their true place. Let us ponder this lesson, remembering that none have a claim for permanent recognition, but only as God's holy presence is not dishonored.

Poor Eli! he had died long before, so far as service for God was concerned. His lesson is written large and clear. May we have grace to learn it. The way to "Ichabod" is careless weakness when God's honor is involved. He bears patiently, but there is a limit to His forbearance, and when there is "no remedy," He must allow the due results of His people's weakness, folly and unfaithfulness.

(To be continued.)

A SEPARATED PEOPLE WHO "HAD NOT SEPARATED THEMSELVES."

"Now when these things were done the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, . . . have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, . . . for they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons . . . and when I heard this thing, I rent my garment, . . . Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of God of Israel . . . and I sat down astonished until the evening sacrifice.

"And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness, and having rent my garment and my mantle I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said. O my God I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, . . . Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass . . . and now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God. . . . And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken the commandments, which Thou hast commanded, saying . . . give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons. . . . O Lord God of Israel . . . behold, we are before Thee in our trespasses. Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore" (Ezra. ix. 1-x. 1).

NOTHING is more plain in Scripture than that God forbids His people to form any alliance with the world. Israel was a type of us, as we know—and we have besides the teaching and the commandments of the New Testament; the unequal yoke forbidden of old, is forbidden, of course, to the Church—and if Israel's responsibility was great, how much greater is ours. If Ezra and those with him wept, and chastened their souls—what becomes us when souls turn aside to the world and despise the commandments of God?—now, with so much greater light.

We need to be aroused to the encroachment of the

world. We must be awakened from self-indulgence to allow exercise to be produced that will lead to confession and crying to God. We must deplore any lack of united exercise; we should indeed pray for it, that deliverance and blessing may not be hindered; for it is never God's will that we should be delivered to do the will of the flesh, but that we should glorify Him; and therefore, that we should be delivered from every snare of Satan that would dishonor Him, and hinder the blessing of His people. We can count upon His help, but we are to diligently seek it, confessing our real condition. Note the deliverances to His people of old when they felt their condition, and cried to Him with sincere hearts and broken spirits. We have a notable case before us in Ezra; and there are many as we know, and very touching they are, as in the book of Judges, and in the books of Kings and the Chronicles.

Never did the Lord turn away from His people when they cried to Him. In Gideon's time (Judges vi.), "Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites," (the encroachments of the world) "and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, and it came to pass that when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites that the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel." The prophet rebuked them. God would not answer Saul at all even by a prophet, but He answered Israel's cry; better to be rebuked than to be left to ourselves. And then, after the rebuke, the Lord raised up Gideon, the "cutter down," as a deliverer; self-judgment was produced; idols were overthrown and the enemy was overcome.

Admonitions must be given, of course, and at

times a rebuke; and parents are to govern their children; and when the assembly is, in the main, walking with God this will be done with effect and with blessing from God; but when the assembly has become enfeebled and the enemy has gained a foothold, confession and prayer is called for, unitedly, that deliverance may be wrought. We are all interested in one another, and in every family connected with the assembly, that all may be able to "keep rank."

When alliances with the world occur among us in marriage, in business, in joining benefit societies; when souls are turned by Satan in any way, Ezra's example tells us how we should be exercised that the Lord may deliver us from our peril and our shame.

But what can keep us from turning back to the world but having our hearts satisfied with Christ, finding joy in Him, as at first? "Seek those things which are above" and "mortify our members which are upon the earth."

This is our Gilgal to which we need ever to return. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." The cross closed our life in the flesh; and we are risen with Christ, and are soon to appear with Him in glory. How deep and high and precious is the ground of this exhortation. In the power and blessing of this word, we can deny the lusts of the flesh. Can we think of Christ as our

life and of our being dead with Him, and risen with Him and about to appear with Him in glory, and then indulge the lusts of the flesh, and turn aside to the world? The joy of this precious truth in the soul is victory over all temptations, as Israel went forth from Gilgal, where they were circumcised, to victory after they had crossed the Jordan.

May we turn again to the Lord with true hearts and present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him and be not conformed to the world. The world can only delude. God will fill the soul with joy and make Christ to be so precious to us that the heart will be preserved by its secret joy from all unrest, and from every snare of Satan.

Are we finding joy in the Lord? If we are, we can contribute a portion towards the worship and happy service of the assembly. If not, we are like a city with walls broken down and open to the enemy on every side. If not devoted Christians, we wrong one another, we hang like a dead weight on those who are faithful, and the marks of decay are seen in many ways. Ministry that is faithful, and with the comfort of the Spirit is lacking; gifts are not developed, meetings forsaken, and children seek satisfaction elsewhere, when they might have been led on in the way of deepening peace and joy by the knowledge of Christ.

May the Lord confirm what is true and faithful in the lives of any among us, and as to what we lack, may His grace work in us suitable exercises. If we do not judge ourselves, we must be judged. May restoring grace work blessing far and wide. The Lord make us so happy in the expectation of glory with Christ that we shall pass on undefiled by the world.

Are we willing to be exercised in soul before God as to our condition and the condition of the assembly? We are not called to self-indulgence, but to deny ourselves and to take up our cross and to follow Christ. We are soldiers of Christ, called to conflict, and His discipline and rebuke and chastening is to purify and lead to great blessing and usefulness. If we know the afflictions of Christ, we will know the consolations of Christ. May we love the Lord, and His people, and count upon His delight to bless them.

E. S. L.

ON BIBLE STUDY.

"This Book, this holy Book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high Divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love;
This Lamp from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting in the dark her gracious bow:
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live."

IT is sincere pleasure to write a few lines to fellow-students upon such a fruitful theme as "Bible study," for I am convinced that nothing in the world is so important and nothing is so much needed. I find as I journey on in life that Christians may be divided pretty generally into two classes, one of which does not study the Bible, and in consequence makes no definite progress in the spiritual life from year to year, while the other class feeds daily upon the Word and grows in stature in the knowledge and wisdom of God.

I do not wish to assert that many of the members of the first class do not "read the Bible" every day,

but that there is no seeking, heart-searching, appropriating study, and hence no assimilation, no growth, and no power for the Master's service. These Christians are often sweet and amiable and lovable in character, it is true. But they really know little or nothing of the wonders of the realms of grace. They cannot speak with certainty, from a definite personal experience of the work of the Holy Ghost, and as for a daily walk in the Spirit, they have not so much as heard of it. They often spend much time in philanthropy and in "trying to do good to others," yet when questioned by an unbeliever they are scarcely able to give substantial reasons for the hope that is in them.

I cannot do more in this brief letter to college men than state my personal and earnest convictions as to the necessity of Bible study, without argument. I therefore declare again with absolute assurance that without a real, devout, persistent Bible study there can be no real growth in the Christian life. I make this assertion after a wearisome, fruitless experience in my own life without it, as well as after hearing the experiences of many fellow-Christians and listening to many sermons.

The second categorical statement to which I beg the attention of the students whom I am addressing, is that there is nothing in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, which needs any apology of any sort from any man. Since I have found out this vital fact, and have gone to my Bible day by day with prayer for guidance and simple faith in studying it, whole books which used to appear obscure have become luminously clear, and I am now able to take my portion day by day, led by Him whom

Christ has sent to be His vicegerent on earth until His own personal return.

If the Bible is in very truth the word of God and His appointed means for advance in the Christian life, the next important question is, what is the best way to study it? I would study my Bible *prayerfully*, looking to God alone to open up its meaning by His Holy Spirit, fully persuaded that these things cannot be understood by the natural man. He cannot receive them, for they are foolishness to him, for they are spiritually discerned; the gift of the Spirit is the supreme gift to His people in this age from God through Christ.

I would search the Scriptures *regularly*, taking my spiritual food with the same precision I apply to supplying the needs of the body. I find as the practical outcome of this honoring of the Spirit that I actually develop a positive spiritual appetite and even long for the time to come when I can be alone with my Bible and receive from my Father the heavenly food He sees good to give me for my day's needs. I find, too, that regular feeding develops a spiritual strength unknown before, and with it a fitness for His service not possessed by the fasting man.

I would study my Bible *intently*, eagerly, seeking under the guidance of the Spirit to realize fully the precious import of every word. If man's words are held to mean what they say in contracts and legal documents, how infinitely more valuable are the words of God in this inspired and blessed writing.

I would study the Bible with *faith*, and so happily wander through its great treasure stores made mine by the grace of God, gathering here and there the precious gems of truth richly strewn through its

pages. I have yet to find that I can make a too minute analysis of the Bible. It is like some marvelous divine instrument which combines ten thousand beautiful instruments in one. You strike one note in one part and it awakens harmonies and sweet reverberations which run down through the ages; again close by you strike another note, and lo a different set of tones resounds, and so it keeps on day by day yielding its sweet, ever fresh, soul-satisfying melodies to those who care to stir them. It is like a cloth of gold with thousands of cords mutually independent yet all interwoven in one glorious whole; if you pull a cord in Genesis you can trace it consistently on to Revelation. A man's book is wonderful if the author carries out in it a few lines of thought consistently; in this Book there is one theme, Redemption through Christ, displayed with a variety which is infinite, as is the Author Himself.

We live in a day of multitudes of helps in Bible study, and it is often a great temptation to try to take the digested food of a help, and so more quickly to appropriate its truths; but I would here assert with earnest conviction that the great expositor of the Bible is the Bible itself, and the one great commentator who enables us to understand the Bible is the Holy Spirit. This is His peculiar work; the Book is His, and the application of the word to the individual life is His, and no human agent, formula, or catechism dare supplant the divine Guide under penalty of utter failure of being able to exercise quickening faith and of understanding the message aright. It seems to me that the class of simply devotional books are even worse than useless, as they never turn out anything better than weak, lackadai-

sical Christians. The best books are those which continually send the student right back to the Bible to test the truth of their statements.

In conclusion, if I have gained the attention of any young Christians, let me again beg them to be Bible-loving, Bible-reading Christians. If they are weak, the Bible will make them strong; if they are ignorant, the Bible will build them up in the truth; if they are assailed by doubts and criticisms, the Bible will dispel them as the mists of the morning melt away before the sun in his splendor. Do they desire to know more about Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? the Bible is the one place to seek for such wisdom. Are they among those who know not if there be any Holy Spirit? they will never say so if they read their Bibles. Are the lusts of the flesh strong within them? here they learn how the flesh has been buried and they find their Christian privileges in a resurrection life. Is our earthly pilgrimage one of sore trials? here we find that we are seated in Christ in the heavenlies, and heaven has begun on earth for all who love the will of God above all else.

“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.” “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

H. A. K

THE Lord give us to have these poor wretched hearts of ours broken, swept out, and all that is in them replaced by what is in Himself.

I am but a broken vessel, no creature glory whatever; but, if I am this poor thing, all the sweeter are God and Christ up there for me.—G. v. w.

THE TWO SIDES OF TRUTH.

THERE are two sides to the Christian life, and it is of all importance to hold the due proportion in each. An even balance is greatly needed in Christian truth, in Christian life and practice as well. Many passages give us these things, of which we will note a few.

"Shall go *in* and *out* and find pasture" (Jno. x. 9). From this beautiful passage spoken by the Lord we learn of these *two sides*, an "in" and an "out." These two places belong to all who have entered the door and are numbered among the saved. To interpret this in harmony with our place now as believers, the "*in*" is the place where the heart finds communion. It is the inner side of the Christian life. In this inside place the voice of prayer is often heard, and of praise and worship. Often the heart is fully occupied when the lips are silent. In this inside place the true occupation of the heart is with the Father and the Son, for we are called to the fellowship of both. Here we read and meditate; here we learn. This side comes first.

But there is also the other side, "*and out,*" and this place is not at all inconsistent with the first. What God hath joined together, let us not put asunder. The "*outside*" is the testimony, the life of the believer before the world. A proper life and testimony only will be borne in this outside place when the inside is used aright. When the heart which is at home in the *inside* place, grows familiar with the interests of Christ, whose glory fills the Holy of Holies, a keen sense of what concerns Him will govern the life, as the face is again

turned towards the world, and the need of men is seen. Then testimony and service are the result. A look within and we think of Jesus and His glory; a look without and we are made sensible of the fact that we are not in heaven yet. The world and Church lie before us and the interests of Christ in both meet us.

As to our acceptance we are in Christ, risen and seated in heavenly places. As to our bodies and our lives we are yet here and among men. When we think of eternity and the value of souls in view of that day, service follows. Thus these two places are so joined together that we cannot separate them, although we can distinguish them, and one is dependent upon the other—the “*in*” and the “*out*.”

The same principle appears again in the epistle to the Hebrews: “Having therefore brethren boldness to enter *into* the holiest” (Heb. x. 19). Here again Scripture introduces us into an inner place. And if in John x. we saw the Shepherd and the sheep, here we see the High-priest and a whole family of priests. They are the same persons in each case. The Shepherd of John x. is the High-priest of Heb. x., and the sheep of the one are the family of priests as happy worshipers in the other.

But when this inside place is discovered in Heb. x. the same lesson as we gleaned in John x. appears also. There is an outside place also, “Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp” (Heb. xiii. 13). Here again we are reminded of the other side of the Christian life. As we turn out we view the great mass of religious profession, and which may even bear Christian names. Yet if there are the same elements of Judaism that we see in this epistle,

the heart true to Christ goes "forth unto Him without the camp." The responsible side of the believer's life now comes out. Discernment for this path of separation from evil, and strength and courage can only be received by those who know their place inside the veil. The world they discern readily, the camp also, and the place where Christ is, amid all the profession, is discerned also—"outside the camp."

A glance at Exodus will give us these two sides again, and help us understand Heb. x. 19 and xiii. 13. In Ex. xxiv. Moses goes up to the top of Mount Sinai, and there spends forty days with the Lord shut in; and there he enjoys communion. This is his within. But in chap. xxxii. he must return to the base of that mount, where the people were, and there he is compelled to view the people in their departure from the Lord. Those forty days gave him a right idea of God's holiness, and hence he could form a right idea of things when he returned and found them contrary to God. He pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, and God vindicates this act of His faithful servant by descending in the cloud, and standing by his side (chap. xxxiii.) At one moment we see Moses upon the top of the mount with God; at another we see him at the base, in the valley, and God there with him. At one time he is up where God was; next, God is at the bottom where His servant was. Now these two positions occupied by Moses give us in picture our double place, within and outside, as we have seen in Hebrews. Hence, a heavenly, a sanctuary-taught believer, as Moses was, learns ever the need of separating from God's people when their walk and association is not right; a needed lesson for us to-day (Ps. lxxvii. 13).

These same lessons are further taught in Ephesians literally, and not by parable nor type. In the first three chapters we get the heavenly position and relationship of each believer: "Seated in heavenly places in Christ." This is grace, all grace; but in the last three chapters, the believer is again brought back to the world and taught how he ought to walk.

The first three chapters show our position through His sovereign grace; the next three, our responsibility, as associated with His name on earth. We wonder that souls can grasp the first to the neglect of the other.

This line of thought pursued gives us really the difference between the wilderness and Canaan in their typical lessons. They each have their lessons, and are but the two sides of the Christian life. As we stand on the line between the wilderness and Canaan at Kadesh-barnea, we can look *in* and *out*, and as we do so, learn the lessons each place is meant to convey. The whole land lies before Israel, and for us now. But it requires faith to enter into the enjoyment of our spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. This is one side of truth, and of the believer's life. Oh, that we all knew this important side. Enemies there are, as the book of Joshua shows and the epistle of Ephesians (chap. vi.); but the land flows yet with milk and honey, and we are exhorted to "arise and walk through the land, the length and breadth of it." But, as before said, this is only one side of things, and again we must turn our faces toward the world and the reality of things on earth. We each have *our* experience, a fact made too little of by some and exaggerated by others. But to have an experience proper and Christlike, we need to know what the

Canaan life is, and this enables the believer to return and take up his vocation in the earthly life and fill it to the glory of God.

A word more about this wilderness. A mistake that some right-meaning Christians have made is in supposing that there should be no wilderness for one entering into his heavenly portion. They have supposed the wilderness means failure, fighting, and lust. But this is not necessarily so, and was not so for Joshua and Caleb. True, if the people fail—and they did—it is brought out in the wilderness. But as they journey, even their failures prove the faithfulness of their God and His fulness and sufficiency for every need. And this is the other side of truth, needed in its place. After forty years, as they look back, and remember all the way, would they be without the benefit of any part of the lesson learnt? Surely not. If they thought of themselves, after they have done all, they could only say, "We are unprofitable servants." But as they think of His love, proved again and again, and His power also, they could say, "What hath God wrought."

Forty years they journeyed, with Edom by their side (the *flesh* in us), and were commanded not to *fight* nor *meddle* with Edom, just as we are now exhorted not to fight nor meddle with "sin in the flesh," but turn away from it. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin" (Rom. vi.). Hence, neither for them nor for us did the wilderness mean a battle ground, but a blank desert, where they were made to feel all was not right. They were not yet home nor at rest in the land. Who, with a rightful balance and spiritual mind, cannot but feel this as we journey across our desert path? Christ is not here.

Sin—Edom—is, and there may be conflict, at times, if the eye and heart are not kept right. Amalek may appear; and he represents, as the grandson of Edom, (Gen. xxxvi. 12) the fleshly lusts. Edom (the flesh), Amalek (lust of the flesh); these two are to be found in the desert yet, but if we follow the word of our God, we will turn away from the one and not fulfil the desires of the other. Hence there is need neither of battle nor war. This is the important lesson of Rom. vi. If we wish to enter the proper battlefield, we must pass on to Eph. vi., our spiritual Canaan, and there we discover spiritual enemies and Satan the great master leader among that host, seeking to hinder our entering in to enjoy that good land. Here we need the whole armor of God, and faith, and energy, and courage to go in to possess the land. The Lord goes ahead as the Captain of our salvation.

May we know this side, this inner side, better, and then we will better take up our responsibilities outside before men. Let come what may, as we face the wilderness, the cloud of His presence will overshadow and accompany us till the end. Then comes rest, perfect rest, and we will be home; no wilderness, because no *sin*, no *thorn*; every enemy driven out and overcome. God all in all. Christ and His glory supreme, and we following Him as happy subjects and worshipers forever. May we hold the truth well balanced, and be sanctified by both sides of it.

A. E. B.

BRIEF BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

THERE are some great truths revealed in the New Testament upon which it is most important the believer should be clear, both for assurance of the soul's salvation and also for settled peace of heart.

ATONEMENT.

Except in Heb. ii. 17 where "reconciliation" should be "atonement" this word is an entirely Old Testament word (Rom. v. 11 should read "reconciliation"), yet the truth it conveys is seen all through the New Testament. Of course by this is meant the expiatory death of the Lord Jesus on the cross at Calvary, and its application Godward and manward. Thus it is said of Him, "He offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14), and also, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

Leviticus xvi. brings out in illustrative type, what Jesus did actually in His death on the cross. On the great day of atonement Aaron was to take two goats and present them before the Lord. The first, for the people; the second for the Lord, decision as to which was to be by lot. Then the one "upon which the Lord's lot fell," to be the sin-offering, was killed, the blood sprinkled once *upon* and seven times *before* the mercy-seat, and Aaron returning to the altar lay his hands on the live goat's head, confessing the iniquities of the people, and the goat would bear upon him all iniquities so transferred. Read carefully Lev. xvi. 5-22, noting particularly

verses 4, 7-10, 14, 15, 21. The sprinkling of the blood was the basis of the whole service. *Once* upon the mercy-seat, satisfying the holy righteousness of God; *seven* times before it, giving righteous standing to the high-priest. Compare this with Heb. ix. 7-12, 22-26; x. 1-10.

In Leviticus there are more truths connected with the typical or illustrative teaching than these, but the above will help us to see the matter we desire to present. The theory of "at-one-ment," *i. e.* that Christ by His death reconciled *God* and man, is unscriptural; and not only so, but casts a slight upon the fact revealed in John iii. 16 that God "loved the world," even "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. v. 8). No, it is *man* who needs to be reconciled to God; the carnal mind being "*enmity* against God" (Rom. viii. 7), and so God was in Christ reconciling *the world* unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19).

SUBSTITUTION.

This means literally one being in the place of another; and so it is written to the Thessalonian believers, of Christ, "Who died for us" (1 Thess. v. 10). It is never said in the New Testament that Christ bore the *sins* of the world; in the gospel according to John (chap. i. 19) He is called "the Lamb of God which taketh [beareth] away the *sin* of the world," that is sufficient for all.

Dying for our sins (1 Cor. xv. 3) and bearing our sins (1 Pet. ii. 24) are believers' truths. If Christ bore the sins of the whole world, of necessity the whole world must be saved, or His atoning work would not be a complete one. Such would be the monstrous falsehood of universalism. But while His atoning work is sufficient to save the whole world,

and is offered to all, yet it is only available for those who believe on Him. Compare 1 John ii. 2; for "propitiation" read "mercy seat," and omit the words, "the sins of," which are not in the original. See also Rom. iii. 22, and notice it is "*unto* all" but only "*upon* all them that believe." John iii. 16; v. 24; iii. 36; Acts xiii. 38, 39, etc.

Substitution, then, is the actual bearing of the sins of believers—sins, guilt, judgment: so then each believer may say, upon the authority of God's word, "He bore my sins in His own body on the the cross at Calvary." And the promise is, they will never again be laid to their charge (Heb. x. 17). And this transferring is an act of God. No one can lay his sins on Jesus as is sometimes heard taught. See Is. liii. 6, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and *the Lord hath laid* on Him the iniquity of us all." Thus it is an act of God setting to the believer, on faith, the full value of Christ's death on the cross, which was sin-bearing and atoning.

RECONCILIATION,

is the result of the death of Christ as applied, both to persons and things, by bringing them back to God. Believers *are* reconciled from the very moment they make by faith a personal application of the death of Christ (Rom. v. 10, 11; 2 Cor. v. 18);—notice, "Hath reconciled us to Himself." All *things will* be reconciled; see Col. i. 20.

The expression, "My God is reconciled," has no scriptural foundation whatever. The thought that God had to be reconciled to us is foreign to the teaching of the word of God. And this work of "reconciling the world unto Himself" is the gracious

ministry He is still doing by the gospel (2 Cor. v. 18-21; Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 18).

BORN AGAIN.

This is, and means just what it says—"born," showing it to be something entirely different from what existed before—having no connection with the old natural birth whatever. It is therefore the entire setting aside of the old-nature-life, and the communication of an entirely new life with all that belongs to it.

Notice the expression "born again," not born over again, which would be but a repetition of sinful nature with its acts of willfulness, disobedience and sin, but born "from above" as may be seen in the marginal reference in our English bibles. It is the impartation of a new nature, and that a divine nature; see 2 Pet. i. 4, "partakers of the divine nature," and is as true and real in the believer as in Christ Himself, see 1 John ii. 8, "which thing is true in Him and in you." As to the mode of new birth, John iii. 5 says it is "of water and of the Spirit."

There is nothing here to imply baptism, no matter in what form administered, but 1 Pet. i. 23 shows it means "by the word of God" administered by the power of the Holy Spirit to the heart and conscience of the sinner. Water, all through Scripture, is a figure of the Word. Eph. v. 25-27; John xv. 3, etc. are illustrations of this.

Thus with the reception by faith, i. e., trustingly believing the word of God as brought to one's conscience and heart by the Holy Spirit, one has given to him an actual, real, and divine nature which ever exists in the believer together with the old Adamic nature, which are never reconciled but continu-

ally at variance; see Gal. v. 19-25. At the same time God sets to the believer the full value of all Christ *is*, and *all* He *has done* for him, of which the Holy Ghost *then* given is the seal, and earnest of the glory to come (Eph. i. 13, 14; iv. 30). The Spirit also being the energizer of the new life, enabling the believer to keep in subjection the old nature still in him, and which he is responsible to ever reckon as dead and keep under (Rom. vi. 11; Col. iii. 5-12, etc.).

ADVOCACY.

'This is the work of the risen, exalted Christ in the presence of the Father for all *believers*, i. e., for their individual failures; "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). Thus all the believer's failures are met by the righteous person of Christ, the perfect Man in the presence of the Father, restoring communion when interrupted, and renewing peace of heart when lost.

This is the present work of Christ, and is for the believer as a *child*, while His High-priesthood has reference to him as a saint. The relation of child can never be broken because it is the result of Christ's work through faith, but the believer's communion may be sadly interrupted by sin or any act of disobedience, and for this latter this work of the risen Christ avails for restoration, upon self-judgment. See Gal. iii. 26; John x. 28-30; Eccle. iii. 14. For illustration of restoration see Luke xxii. 31, 32, 54-62; xxiv. 34; John xxi. 15-17. Thus 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32; 1 John i. 9.

JUSTIFICATION.

This is being made right, or clean, or perfectly guiltless before God, and is the present and perma-

ment position of every believer. The ground of this, is "the blood of Christ" (Rom. v. 9), while the measure of it is Christ risen and glorified (Rom. iv. 25; 2 Cor. v. 21), obtained by faith (Rom. v. 1), and is all of grace (Rom. iii. 24). On account of the shedding of His precious blood on the cross, Christ has met fully all the claims of God's holiness, and justice for sin, and also the deepest needs of poor sinful man, so that God in all His holiness can and does righteously pronounce "clean every whit" as a permanent justification before Him each one who appropriates that truth to himself as a lost sinner. From that very moment, no matter how weak the faith, if there be a sense of one's lost, helpless, sinful state, an everlasting justification is conferred by God to one believing Christ's death and resurrection were for him, and were all that were necessary. Such an one stands before God as if he had never committed any act of disobedience against Him. Blessed be His name, such is love, such is grace, such is the value of the blood.

B. W. J.

THE gift of tongues was doubtless esteemed above many others, as being brilliant and showy. But in 1 Cor. xiii. tongues are set aside for love which is greater than all gifts. In chap. xiv. tongues are again spoken of, but to be set aside again for that edification which is better than all show. And how good it is to know that it is ever our sweet privilege to exercise love, and seek to edify the beloved saints of God. We have no gift of tongues now, but we do have the tendency to desire gifts of show. Let us remember that love and edification are infinitely more precious than the "tongues of men and angels"

without them. May we be a people not of word and tongue, but of true love, and grow, building up one-another on our most holy faith.

EVIL SPEAKING.

WE need to watch ourselves as to evil speaking. A good test of our utterances is the consideration, Would I think it right if said of me? And even if true, was it necessary to say it? It may be necessary to utter some things in judgment of another, for the Lord's sake and for the sake of the wrong doer, but we will allow that we need to be very careful not to transgress.

A word of caution may be added here. We are liable to say things about another in the presence of children, who ought not to hear it. Even if right to speak of a matter, it may be a serious wrong to the one criticised to refer to it before children, or before a mixed company, who are not called upon to enter into the case.

May grace and love keep the door of our lips,—and the fear of God.

The one way of escape from every sin is to have the heart possessed with the joy of the Lord. Then naturally the mouth "is opened with wisdom" and in the tongue "is the law of kindness" (Prov. xxxi. 26).
E. S. L.

THE secret of human happiness is to live for others, but the secret of divine happiness is hid in these words: "To me to live is Christ."

This does not necessarily imply the doing of great things for Him, but His being Himself enthroned in my heart as its all-satisfying portion.

KING SAUL :

THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter ii.

THE CAPTIVITY IN THE PHILISTINES' LAND.

(Continued from page 6.)

SO far as the people were concerned, they had lost the very badge of their relationship with God. "The Ark of the Covenant" had passed from their unfaithful hands—the very throne of God was no longer in Israel. "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand" (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61).

What an abiding witness that God will never act contrary to His nature, even though the stability of His earthly throne seem for a time to be threatened. How it shows that all divine power is holy, and that there is no authority save that which is consistent with God's holiness. God does not need to preserve the outward continuity of His government, as is the common thought of men. What a mass of ecclesiastical rubbish is swept aside when this is seen. No need to delve into the annals of the past—doctrinal errors of the early "Fathers," grossest abuses of Rome, with her rival popes and councils, all tainted with that unholiness which forever disqualifies them from a claim to God's recognition. No need to search here for a succession from the apostles. Ichabod is upon it all. God forsook all that, as He did Shiloh of old.

But what a relief is this—to see that God can never be held responsible for the errors of His professed people. Were this seen, how quickly would earnest souls turn from Rome or any other establish-

ment which bases its claims of authority upon an unholy past. God can never act contrary to His character, and when that character has been distinctly and persistently ignored, we have a Shiloh—no matter what precious associations may be linked with it—bereft of its glory. Faith can follow God. Even as at an earlier day, when the golden calf usurped God's place in Israel, Moses pitched the tent of meeting outside the camp, and thither resorted all who desired to meet Jehovah, rather than the place where once He manifested Himself.

Thus faith ever reasons: "Let us go forth *unto Him* without the camp." Has He been compelled to withdraw? We can no longer recognize that which He has left. Shiloh with the ark away is like a body when the spirit has departed. It can only be buried out of our sight.

We have here a principle of wide-reaching application. Not only is a simple path for faith laid down, where there is no need to attempt to justify what is not of God; but there is a basis here for recovery to Him, and thus for true unity amongst His people. Who would not desire that? But it can only be in this way.

The great mistake with nearly all efforts after outward unity among God's people, is in having the eye upon them rather than upon Him. The question, the only question to be asked is, Where is God with reference to the matters upon which His people are divided. Has He been compelled to withdraw His approval? does His word condemn that which characterizes His people? To uphold their position does that need to be maintained which violates, in a radical way, His character? Then surely all effort at

uniting His people, and at the same time ignoring that which has dishonored God, will never meet with His approval, not even if it outwardly brought together all those now separated. God, His will, His character, ignored—all else is absolutely worthless.

But have not all here a most simple basis of true unity? We side with God—we take up, patiently and prayerfully, if painfully, that which has occasioned the breach. Is it a matter about which God's word expresses His mind? Then the only thing to be done is to own that mind—to bow to Him. On the other hand, is it a matter practically immaterial, where patience and forbearance would accomplish what suspicion and force could not do? Then the path is equally clear. May there ever be grace among His own to seek to be with God according to His word, and they will ever be with one another also. Mere ebullition of love to saints, no matter how real, can never take the place of a clear, thorough examination of the difficulties in the light of God's word. To ignore difficult questions, is but to invite fresh and more hopeless complications. But we must return to our narrative.

Chapter iii.

GOD'S CARE FOR HIS OWN HONOR.

(1 Sam. v., vi.)

Having vindicated the holiness of His character by permitting the ark to be removed from Shiloh, and taken captive by the Philistines, God will now show to its very captors that His power and majesty is unchanged. We need never be afraid that God will fail to vindicate either His holiness or His power. Our only fear should be lest *we* be not in that state in which we can be vessels of testimony for Him.

Notice how all interest is transferred from Israel to the Philistines' land. Wherever God's presence is must be the true centre of interest. Nor does this mean that God has permanently forsaken Israel or ceased to love them. Nay, all that is now transpiring in the distant land is but the twofold preparation for the maintenance of His holiness and His grace toward a repentant people.

The Philistines have looked upon this capture of the ark not only as their victory over Israel, but over God as well. They ascribe both to their own god, Dagon, and in acknowledgement of his triumph over Israel's God, they put the ark in Dagon's temple.

It is now no longer a question between God and Israel, or even between God and the Philistines, but between the true God and man's false one—part fish, part man, as the perverted and corrupt ingenuity of fallen man delights to depict the god of his own fashioning. This false god is at once immeasurably inferior to man,—like to the fish in the main, with head and hands of human intelligence and power,—and yet the object of his dread and worship. Such is the idol ever, in all its forms, really beneath those who form it.

At first, doubtless to impress more fully the lesson, God simply casts the image prostrate before Him. Poor hardened man sets it up again. But the second time, the blindness of the people failing to understand, Dagon falls and is broken. He loses all that had given him a semblance of intelligence or power, and the headless trunk witnesses of the vanity of idols, and of the majesty and power of that God whom they in their madness had despised.

Had there been the least desire after truth, what

an effectual witness would this have been to the Philistines of the vanity of Dagon and the reality of the living God! Alas, their hardened hearts see but little in it, and give added honor to Dagon by not treading upon the threshold, where his head and hands had lain. Doubtless the priests put head and hands back again, and most was soon forgotten. How utterly hopeless is all witness to those who do not desire to know the truth. But God is vindicated, and His desire as well to deliver men from their errors.

In how many ways does Rome answer to all this persistent and shameless idolatry. Dagon, the fish-god, suggests that worship of increase, for which the fish is remarkable, and which forms one of Rome's claims to "Catholic." Does she not number her adherents by millions?

Nor can we fail to recognize in all our hearts that Philistine tendency to worship numbers. Is it not the test of a work? How many simply follow a multitude, and measure all spiritual results by the number of those who are identified with a movement. Again and again does God break to pieces this false god, permitting the loss of hands and feet—both intelligence and power to that which a carnal religion would still deify. We need to have this thing hunted out of our souls. *Here* numbers are no token of God's presence or approval, whether it be in evangelistic work or any testimony for God. His truth must ever be the test—His word, as applied by His Spirit. Without that it is but Dagon.

(To be continued.)

“HOW IS IT THAT YE HAVE NO FAITH?”

A WONDERFUL place is assigned to faith in Scripture. By it are we justified; by it sanctified; the heart purified, joy and peace fill it;—we live by faith, walk by faith, and all true and Christian work is that which is “the work of faith.” Indeed, Christ being all to us as believers, and we “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” faith is the hand that lays hold of and actually appropriates these blessings. How immensely important then for us that it should be in proper exercise and in vigor as it ought to be.

.But, as our Lord's words to His disciples intimate, and as Scripture assures us from one end of it to the other, faith is that, nevertheless, in which the people of God are most constantly falling short, and this is indeed at the bottom of all other falling short. The whole generation of Israel, which had had God's mighty works in Egypt and the wilderness before their eyes, were shut out of Canaan, save only two persons, because of their unbelief. And it was that with which, more than any other thing, the Lord upbraided those who had, still more than those brought out of Egypt, the visible glory of God manifested to them. “O ye of little faith.” “O fools and slow of heart to believe.” “How is it that ye have no faith!” And we have scarcely need to refer to Scripture in a matter which is of daily experience with us. Faith, which in view of all that God has done and manifested in our behalf, ought to be the simplest possible response of the heart to Him, is in fact what we are so grossly and sadly deficient in, as to be the open shame of Christians everywhere, and

the conscious lamentation of every one who has any right thought Godward.

It is surely, then, a question that we may rightly take from our Lord's lips, and put seriously to ourselves, "How is it that ye have no faith?" There is reason for the question, and an answer to be found by those that care to look for it. Of one thing we may, to begin with, be quite sure: it is no arbitrary appointment of the Almighty, no will of Him whom we call "Father," that it should be so; that the Lord's question, above all implies, that the responsibility is ours, for the little we have of it. It is we that are in fault, and only we.

Some, indeed, so speak of faith being the gift of God as apparently to deny all responsibility of their own in the matter. But to those to whom I am now referring, God *has* given faith. The question is, has He affixed a limit to the faith which He has given? Has He given to us a "*measure* of faith" which we cannot exceed? It is quite true the words are from Scripture, but in the passages quoted, it is not that faith which is the common portion of believers which is in question, but the special gift of faith for that particular "office" which belongs to us individually as members of the body of Christ (see the next verses, Rom. xii. 4, 5). In this respect it is quite true that we have our measure, and it is well to remember it too. I do not expect to have faith to preach at a street corner, if God has not given me the gift for the preaching itself. It is faith for my own line of things I want, not for somebody else's line. The thing is, ought I not to have that? ought I not to have that which will carry me on in the path wherein He leads me, invariably superior to all the circum-

stances, trials and difficulties of the way? Surely it is clear I ought; and if I ought, why have I not?

When the disciples felt that unbelief of theirs, and brought it to the Lord, saying, "Lord, increase our faith," His answer was a rebuke. Not surely that it is wrong to confess our failure to Him and seek His help against it. So far all is right. But the thing is, that there are *causes* of unbelief to be judged,—roots to be searched for, from which if undetected the same fruit will be ever found. And how many of us find it so? We lament about it but we go on with it. We confess it as sin, but it comes up at every turn.

The exhortation of the apostle is, "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." We are not called then to lament over it, but to lay it aside. You may say, "There is the difficulty;" but the apostle's words imply most surely that it can be done.

The word of God always gives a moral reason for unbelief. The truth *ought* to have reception from every one. "If I speak the *truth*," says the Lord Jesus, "why do ye not believe Me?" Not the sanction of the synagogue was needed, nor the consent of the Rabbis. Not (in our day) the voice of the Church, nor a *catena* of the fathers. The truth speaks to the *true*: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." And men did not believe, yea, could not believe,—why? "How *can* ye believe," asks the same authoritative speaker, "who receive honor one of another, but seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

That was the secret of the rejection of the message in the day of Him who came unto His own and His

own received Him not. This is the secret still, why in the hearts of those who have received Him, His word has even yet so little power. Want of truth of heart to Him, is the sad reality of what we have to confess, when we speak of our little faith. *We may lay it aside, if we will*, this unbelief of ours. You may in astonishment perhaps, Would we not gladly if we could? And I must answer again, We could readily if we would. The trouble is, we find it costs something. Which of us does *not* "receive honor from one another?" Which of us does seek, as the undivided purpose of his heart, "the honor that cometh from God only?" How *can* we believe unless it is so?

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." All true, indeed. And how little *real* occupation with the Word there is, everywhere. How little the mouth speaks of it as that of which the heart is full. Christians themselves prize almost anything more. They have *prayer-meetings*, and they do well. They do not ordinarily meet to read the Word together. They have made the interpretation of it a matter belonging to an official class, whose ministrations too they value more according to their powers of oratory than the ability to give to them the unadulterated bread of life. What else can there be but little faith, where that which begets faith is so little accounted of?

But there is a deeper meaning in all this than appears at first sight, for it is greatly disguised often by an apparent zeal for God and a multitude of good works. Under all this, many, if they will honestly search their hearts, will find that there can be covered up a reserve of very much of that "gain to *me*"

which the zealous apostle counted to be "loss." Nay, the bustle of much work may be indeed the very effort to pacify the conscience for the want of real "*self-surrender*" to the claim of Christ upon the soul.

Lot lived as a "righteous man" in Sodom. The manners of the place distressed him. "In seeing and hearing he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their ungodly deeds." It was not open evil that seduced him; it was the verdure of "well-watered plains" for his cattle, God's natural blessings, innocent enough to use had they not been his aim, but which called him from the simple path of faith to one of sight and sense and self-enjoyment. In result it was the shipwreck of all true joy, and the event shows, what is more solemn yet, how bankrupt he had become in faith itself. Inability to trust God marks him, whether pleading for Zoar, because it was a "little city," and God might perchance save a *little* city, and that, not for the sake of souls in it, but for his own miserable sake who dare not flee to the mountains as God bade him, lest some evil take him and he die,—or fleeing again from Zoar because even so he dare not trust the refuge of his own asking. All this reads us a lesson that it is in God's path—in the path of His will for us, that faith is found for the path.

And look once more at the apostle's words: "Laying aside every *weight*, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Is there not divine wisdom in that connection, and the *order* of that connection, between "weight" and "sin?" It is a racer stripping himself for the course that he is speaking of. It is only as one *is* that—the goal before him, and his whole

soul bent on reaching it—he can understand even what a "weight" is. For that, we must realize the apostle's "this *one* thing I do; forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This intentness, this pursuit of "one thing" is what we want, and Christ Himself in glory the attractive object, the goal of the race. Then it is that all that makes not toward this is worse than profitless: it is a drag, a *weight*. Not frittered away upon a hundred other things, the undivided energy of the soul is concentrated on the attainment of its object; and it is easy to lay aside a "weight," which is felt as such, and the only possible way of laying aside also the "sin which doth so easily beset us."

Christian! fellow-heir of that incorruptible inheritance,—have you even a thought to "get on in the world" to which the cross of Christ has crucified you? Do you want its honors, pleasures, emoluments? And do you yet complain that faith cannot lay hold of and enjoy her own? To be sure it will be so. And many a one may detect by this simple test of the capacity he has to lay hold of and enjoy his proper portion, how far he is allowing the world to become an object to him. All sorts of worlds there are. The babe may be such to its mother, as well as his money to the miser. Christ alone *satisfies*; and He has declared that whosoever cometh to Him shall *never* hunger. If we do hunger then, it is because we are "coming to" other things than just Himself.

"My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living water, and have

hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water."

The soul set right with God in this, His word becomes the necessary and blessed occupation of the heart and mind, and there is honest and unsparing judgment of whatsoever it condemns. Occupied with Christ, faith will have its proper sphere and exercise. It will not be, "My leanness, my leanness" any longer, but, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings *in heavenly places* in Christ."

F. W. G.

"FAR BETTER."

WITH all its trials, the life of the apostle Paul was doubtless a happy one. He proved for himself our Lord's words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," "in Me ye shall have peace." So he could say, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." There was a joy in his heart which could not be quenched by the sorrows of life; an upspringing well of delight amid all the arid waste about him. His heart was satisfied, and hands and heart more than full of the weighty cares connected with the Lord's interests upon earth.

And yet in the midst of all the joy of communion and the activities of love for the Church of Christ, he lets slip, as we might say, the secret of what was in the bottom of his heart. A desire to depart and be with Christ was there, beneath all else that claimed mind and heart and service. It was "far better" he tells us, though as we know death was not his hope;

rather the coming of the Lord. But his longing was to get away from earth and to be *with Christ*. Ah, it was not heaven with its joys, its rest and delight that lured him on, if we could think of these things apart from Him who is the light and glory of them all. It was Christ Himself who attracted his heart and made him long to be with Him.

For us too, dear brethren, it is "far better" to be with Him. It is good to be here as saved men—trophies of His grace, and witnesses of that to others. Good to seek to gather in the lost, to point the weary and heavy laden to the Giver of rest. It is good to get the glimpses of Himself "through the lattice," as we feed upon His word, and pour out our souls in prayer. It is good to enjoy fellowship with His beloved people and have hearts warmed as we speak of Him we love, and together set forth His praise.

"It is good at His word to be here
But better e'en now to be gone."

Ah, "far better." Here we are with hands full, with hopes of seeing His work prosper. We stand at the opening of a new era, a new century, and we are glad to be of some service for our Lord. But we ask not to remain; we earnestly desire to be "clothed upon."

Let this desire be stronger in all our hearts. Let it mingle with all our communion, our worship, our fellowship and our service. It will not make us misanthropic, nor cool the ardor of our zeal. But it will temper and color our whole life—the desire for His coming.

"I am waiting for Thee, Lord,
Thy beauty to see, Lord,
No triumph for me like Thy coming again."

RE-TRACINGS OF TRUTH:

IN VIEW OF QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN LATELY RAISED.

8. DELIVERANCE AND DEATH TO SIN.

IN taking up what is now before us, we shall be treading ground already plentifully trodden by the feet of combatants, and where we shall find ourselves under the necessity of recalling what has been elsewhere said, and in connection with the doctrines also which we are now reviewing. But the topic is one of such great importance for doctrine and for practice, and is still so little clearly understood by many who might be expected to be most clear, that it cannot be in vain to take it up once more, and in view of statements and arguments which it cannot but be for profit to appraise at their full worth, both scripturally and experimentally. The experimental test is necessarily of great value in a matter so eminently practical as this.

According to the writer whom, as in general, I shall quote here, "If I were to put the question, 'How is deliverance effected for the Christian from sin and from the world?' the natural answer would be, 'By death.' I admit it; it is effectuated in that way. *But then the Christian has to die to it*, and how is he to be brought to that? I dare say some would answer, 'We have died to it in the death of Christ.' That will not do. I say the death of Christ is your title to die to it, to die to one as to the other. 'Our old man has been crucified with Him'—that is your title to die to sin; and the world is crucified to

the believer in the cross of Christ—that is your title to die to the world. I quite admit the title of the Christian to die by the death of Christ both to sin and to the world, but my present point is what it is that gives power in the soul to die to sin and to the world. I believe Scripture makes it very plain; if a Christian is going to travel that path, and to enter into the thought of God about him, he must be attracted by the grace of God and by what God presents. . . . There are two things in Scripture to which the Christian is said to die, sin and the world. In regard to law you are become dead to it; God has released you from one bond, and formed another. Then in regard to the flesh 'You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;' that is the change that takes place in the Christian, he is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. You are never said to die to the flesh, that I know, but by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the body. But you can very well understand that in that case deliverance stands on a different basis. The law is compared to a husband; and you could not be free from law if God had not dissolved the bond. On the other hand you could not be in the Spirit, if you had not received the Spirit of God. But in regard to sin and the world we have to die. . . . I could not think of dying to sin if our old man had not been crucified with Christ. That is my title to die to sin. What I understand by it is that all that comes under the idea of our old man, what a man is as in the flesh, God has dealt with judicially in the death of Christ for Himself and for me too. If it were not so you could not die; if our old man had not been crucified in the cross of Christ, you would

be on the footing of responsibility as to the old man; but our old man has been dealt with in the cross of Christ, that we might not be on that footing, but might be privileged to die with Christ."

Let us pause here, and try to get clearly hold of what is being taught us. The language is plainer than it often is, and there ought not to be much difficulty in arriving at the meaning, whatever we may think of the conclusion that we reach. The scripturalness of it will not be hard to settle either, when this is done.

Deliverance from sin, it is stated, is effected for the Christian by death—true; but not simply by Christ's death for him: this gives him *title* only to die to sin, the death which in fact delivers him. And in the same way exactly as to deliverance from the world. It is *not* the same as to deliverance from the law: here a bond existed which only God could dissolve; and therefore here he becomes dead by the body of Christ. Then as to the flesh, while you are not said to die to it, you must have received the Spirit to be in the Spirit; and that is (or shows?) your deliverance.

How far does this asserted difference exist? It is allowed that "our old man was crucified with Christ,"—"was dealt with in the cross,"—and that that is equivalent to what we were as men in the flesh. This was "crucified," put to death, so that "we died with Christ," says the apostle; and He thus having died to sin (*our* sin) we are with Him dead to sin; our old man—we, such as we were in nature and in practice, were crucified, died, are dead, with Christ: our reckoning ourselves dead to sin is only simple acceptance in faith of a most blessed fact, which

must be true before we reckon it, or we should have no right to do so.

But thus we have no need of dying. We start with being dead, through the death of Another for us, but which is in this way our death. The reasoning of the apostle with regard to it (Rom. vi. 7, 8) makes it perfectly plain in what way we are to understand this; for he argues that "he that has died is *justified* from sin"—so the Greek—and that "if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." He is speaking, therefore, of atonement and its results for us, not of any work in us. It is evident that our having died and being dead with Christ have, all through, the same meaning and application: there are not two deaths or two modes of dying. Our dying with Christ is not something accomplished by the energy of our own wills, —even of our renewed wills; and so the full significance of the change proposed for us becomes apparent. Change it is indeed; for no one can pretend that Scripture anywhere exhorts us to die with Christ; and it may be safely trusted to give us its own meaning, and not to leave us to the tender mercies of interpreters to supply us with more competent phraseology. We die to sin (we are told elsewhere) in reckoning ourselves dead! On the contrary, as surely as we do reckon ourselves dead, we cannot think of dying. Dead men do not die, but only living men. Scripture, perfect here as always, has given us the very contrary of the thought suggested to us, and in complete consistency with what we have seen of its argument all through. It could not bid us to die with Christ, because the dying with Christ of which it speaks is on the cross and the

cross is, blessed be God, not a thing in any sense in the future, but an accomplished fact. We have to accomplish nothing, but to accept thankfully what is done. We can reckon it done, just because it is done: the death which is ours is that which Christ died; and therefore not a title for us to die,—which would mean of course, some other death. The apostle in bidding us reckon ourselves dead is not exhorting us to aught else than to set to our seal in faith to that which he has been proclaiming to us. It is a living faith he wants; not a cold assent to an orthodox creed. This surely we need to press, and shall always need; but not to exhort Christians to do what they cannot, and what needs not to be done, because it is done.

After all, it may be urged, are we not contending about a mere clumsy expression, when the same thing is meant at bottom? One would certainly be wrong in making a man an offender for a word, and are bound to give all the credit that one can to those who may in their very zeal for a godly walk have used strained arguments, and misinterpreted, perhaps, some texts of Scripture. But with the motives or influences which incline people to the views they hold we have nothing really to do; and we may easily make great mistakes about them. Besides, the misinterpretation of Scripture may have the most serious consequences, whatever the rightness of intention on the part of those who make it. The heart may indeed be better than the head; but that affects only the question of one's own responsibility. Error is that with which the enemy continually works, and which he is constantly recommending by the respectability of its advocates.

In this case there is a recklessness about the statements which involves a treatment of the word of God most dangerous in its character. We are not to say we have died to sin in the death of Christ: "that will not do;" although Christ died to sin, our old man was crucified with Him, and we died with Him! But again,—we *are* to say that we *have* to die to sin (which Scripture never says), and that His death gives us *title* to die to sin,—which it never says. Then comes up the very important question, how we are to find power to do what Scripture has never told us to do; and to do which is indeed, as is elsewhere said with regard to parting company with the first man, "not quite so easy as it may seem!" So this gap has to be filled. And exactly the same thing with regard to dying to the world; there is "leverage" needed to enable one to accomplish it. Here it is: "I believe that the apprehension that such a circle (the heavenly circle of the church) is revealed in Scripture, and the anxiety to reach it, encourages and strengthens a person to accept the place of death to the world, for if I am going to have part in that circle, all that binds me to the world must go." *Paul* was content to say in such a reference, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world;" but the modern commentator has found that the cross is only *title* to die to the world, and not attractive power, and "believes" that he has found something more effective in the New Testament representation of the Church!

All this, alas, goes but too well with what we have heard from the same person, that if he had his life to live over again, he would study Scrip-

ture less! Evidently his study of it hardly yields satisfaction to himself. May one suggest to him that, if he *did* read it more (as he says he does not) "in the letter,"—if he attended more to its every jot or tittle, and thus showed it more the respect that the word of God should inspire, while there might be less of meteoric brilliancy in his expositions, there would yet be much more of what would command the confidence of those who require to know whence as well as what the teaching to which they bow may be.

But to return to what is (thank God) the unscriptural injunction that we die to sin; if that is to be the definition of our separation from it, who that knows the treachery of his own heart could ever satisfy himself as to his accomplishment of such a complete and absolute separation as is implied in *death*? How many of us would venture to claim being in such a condition? There is power for it, we are told, in the attraction of Christ as the Second Man! The plain answer is, that attraction is one thing, and power to fulfil what we desire is quite another. It is a strange thing to be told that what a Christian needs is to be "strengthened and encouraged to part company with sin." One can understand, alas, the conscience of a Christian being too little exercised with regard to the less manifest forms of it, and the hindrance to going on with God that is the necessary result of this; but in the man in the 7th of Romans, the specific case by which the apostle illustrates the need of deliverance, the lack of either will or exercised conscience is not what is supposed, but that when he would do good, evil was present with him: the thing which he *hated* still he did,

It may be said that it is deliverance from the law that is in question here. Of this we hope to speak at another time; yet it is evident that the "law of sin in the members," which the experience here reveals, is not produced by law, and has no essential relation to it. The inefficacy of the law to deal with it, (nay, the aggravation of the case by the would-be remedy,) is indeed insisted on, and the need of deliverance from law for any deliverance from the bondage of sin revealed by the experience is emphasized in a way which clearly the teacher before us does not understand. But the point before us is at present, that here is a man who, as is represented, needs no "encouragement to part company with sin," and yet cannot do it. Indeed the man who, without compulsion, yields himself to sin is dealt with by the apostle in another and much severer manner (Rom. vi. 16): "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey? whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" So that the apostle evidently does not consider the Christian as needing to be encouraged to part company with sin, but supposes the readiness to this to be implied in his conversion.

Spite of this, a death to sin is "not so easy as it may seem;" and the effort to accomplish this is, in fact, the lure that, in some form of it or other, leads so many astray from God's true remedy. God must help us, of course; that is easily conceded; but God does *not* help us to produce in ourselves the state we are seeking to find satisfaction in; and, on the other hand, He has already done for us what, when in faith we lay hold of it, is effectual deliver-

ance. "Our old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin may be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that has died is freed (or justified) from sin." We are in Christ before God; and while we identify ourselves in faith with Him, the whole difficulty that we had drops away and is gone. His death is not our title to die in some other way, but is that in which we died, and died to sin, because He, our Substitute, died to sin once for all. "In Him is no sin;" and "he that abideth in Him sinneth not." He is the storehouse of every blessing for us, upon whom as in Him the favor of God continually rests; and as we are in Him, identified with Him, before God, so is He in us, identified with us, in the world. He is in heaven for our interests, which are thus amply, and beyond all need of anxiety, secured in Him; while we have the privilege of being here for Him. In proportion to the simplicity of our faith in receiving this will be our realization of peace, and joy, and power over circumstances, as well as over the sin in us that still remains, and remains to make self-confidence impossible to us, and Christ our continual necessity and dependence.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

TRANSFORMATION.

Rom. xli. 2; viii. 29; John viii. 32; Rom. vi. 2; viii. 3; Heb. ix. 26;
Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

I ASKED the Father, once, to mold
Me to the image of His Son;
But, brooding o'er the matrix cold,
Shrank back before He had begun.

I pleaded that subservient
To His, alone, my will might be;
And here, alas, willed to relent
Ere He His will made known to me.

Resistless marble, next, I sought
To be, and He, the Sculptor rare;
Still, ere creation could be wrought,
Repented was the creature's prayer.

As silver, then, I would be tried,
With Christ in the Refiner's seat;
Yet scarce the test had been applied,
Than quailed I at the glowing heat.

At length, I prayed, "O, Father, show
Why thus, in bondage, I should be."
The answer came, "My child should know
My pledge, 'The truth shall make you free.'"

Then to the blessed Book I turned,
Deliv'rance found from sin's fell sway;
"Sin in the flesh," there fully learned,
The cross "condemned," and "put away;"

And Scripture proved me "dead to sin"—
Thus, by "the truth," was I "made free"—
And should no longer "live therein,"
But live the life of "Christ in me."

So, now, the Word abides in me,
And God the Spirit wields His sword,
That Father's heart and eye may see
The growing image of my Lord.

No need for matrix do I feel,
No thought of crucible recall,
Nor yearns the marble for the steel—
Christ Jesus is my ALL IN ALL.

G. K.

THE SILENCE OF JESUS.

IF at times the voice of Jesus was raised in stirring appeal or majestic command—and we may read sweet lessons from its rousing tones—so also was His silence vocal with unheard music, and the “rests” in the full flood of harmony with which His voice was pregnant are also most beautiful. They read us lessons of the love of God, they witness silently to the majesty of the blessed Christ, they speak of depths unfathomed by the poor plummet of earthly affection and understanding and they rise to the eternal home of the divine Father, and gives us assurance of our entrance there. With this prospectus before us let us seek to follow them out; but oh, brethren, it is no use for you to read, or for me to write, unless through grace His Spirit teach us. “Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels,” says the apostle, “if I have not love, I am as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” Who shall describe Christ? Who *can* speak of Him aright? and if one of the holiest of men on earth was not worthy to stoop and loose the latchet of His shoe, what are we?

There are a number of instances in which Jesus kept silence, of which the Gospels speak or at which they hint, and there are circumstances connected with them which are well worthy of meditation. Of course, they are familiar to most of us, but perhaps it has not yet been the privilege of some to consider them as a whole, and to such the subject should be of interest. There are two aspects of them which we will consider; the one tells us a connected story of

what His love accomplishes and when it works; and the other, of Himself personally.

It was near the end of His earthly journey. His disciples had left Him, and His enemies were rejoicing in His downfall. The rulers were taking counsel together, and one of them who for a long time had been desirous to see, because he hoped to have his idle curiosity sated by some work of wonder wrought at Christ's command, now questions Him in many words. He receives no answer. Those lips unsealed so often at the cry of necessity and the voice of anguish to pour out a bounteous blessing are fast locked against the words for empty curiosity, even though a king with his armed band stand to command their undoing, "*He answered him nothing.*" How vexatious for proud Herod! Here was a treasure to which no king could command the key, and which self-proud words could not unlock. And this should have its voice for us and for men of all time. It is a divine principle. It is only the heart in earnest whose cry is ever heard. And God is not a respecter of persons. These are principles which meet us upon the threshold of all dealings with God. We may apply them when in prayer we seek His face, when we come to Him for salvation, whenever it be. Be in earnest and humble, or no answer will come.

But if God hear not idle curiosity, do not imagine that you are going to be heard because of any *mere* earnestness. You cannot storm heaven in that way. You must come in your true relationship.

There are two silences of Jesus which bear witness to this, one of them carrying with it a further lesson, which is indeed very blessed.

There was a poor woman who came to Him in

great distress about her daughter whom she had left at her home on the sea-coast grievously vexed with a devil. There was no mistake about her being in earnest. Oh, that we all were ever as earnest as she! She was a foreigner, and she cried to Him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David." "But He answered her not a word." This evidently went on for quite a time, until at last the disciples grew wearied, and besought Him, saying, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." One can well imagine what a trial it was to our dear Lord thus to put her off, but when it was necessary to teach a lesson He never spared Himself. How quickly are the channels of mercy thrown open when she drops the "Son of David," and takes her true position towards Him. The silence is broken then, and from the Lord's lips break those blessed words of joyous delight: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

If we have learned now from His silence, and that it had to be broken, that nothing in ourselves but only our outcast condition could give us place at His table, another question arises, "Will He care for me and shelter me on my journey through this world, spite of all my erring ways? and a third most beautiful silence of Jesus gives its divine and comforting answer, "He will."

It is night in Judea; a night of sorrow and distress; a night of blasted hopes and scattered friends, and we see our blessed Saviour surrounded by His enemies in the palace of the high-priest. They are asking Him many questions; and also one of His followers, who had sneaked into the palace, and is warming himself by a fire, is saying something. Let

us listen a moment. He is cursing and swearing and saying, "I know not the man;" "I know not the man." Is this Peter, the valiant Peter? And who is it he does not know? "The Christ, the Son of the living God." "I know not the *man*." "The high-driest then asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine," and from John's Gospel we see that Jesus omits all mention of His disciples. He might have answered "There is one at the fire there, cursing and swearing that he does not know Me." Oh, how terribly sad must have been thoses curses to the ears of our dear Lord. How much alone He must have felt at such an hour! Ah! never was sorrow so bitter as His, and yet it did not absorb Him. He thinks of Peter. He does not speak to him, for that would betray him. Peter deserved it a hundredfold, but Jesus loved, and that love, forgetful of its injury, will acquiesce in Peter's wish not to be known as Christ's. In perfect silence Jesus turned, and just looked. We are not told what there was in that silent look, but just as the railing of the thief on the cross was suddenly checked, and turned to entreaty, so curses change to tears. Peter went out weeping bitterly.

And will it be bold and illogical in us to argue that, if thus Christ cared for Peter in his disobedience, forgetting His own deep sorrow and thoughtfully shielding his wayward one, He will likewise shield and care for us? I think not.

His silence, then, assures us of care through this scene, and if we ask, "What about the hereafter?" we hear a voice saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." There was no need to speak on such a subject. Fancy one like Christ having to tell His own He had

a home for them. Silence was guarantee from Him that there was. Reader, I will not dwell on the last blessed silence of Christ. "Thinkest thou I could not pray to the Father and He would presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels"? We know what this abstinence meant both to Him and to us. But let us return often to meditate on such themes. They are worthy of it. F. C. G.

TWO THINGS.

TWO things ought ever to characterize us: a people given to much earnest prayer continually, and with this a keen relish for the word of God. Here is where God begins to work, with ourselves, and creates deeper longings after what is real and divine. Then the heart expands and goes out in those desires for others, and we become a hearty evangelistic people. "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." These were His words to Moses for Israel of old, and He is the same to-day. He brings His people out of Egypt, then through the wilderness; then into the land; and this God is our God.

How much we owe Him until we see Him face to face! From us there ought to be *a double line of service and ministry*, as in Col. i 23-25. Ministry first in the gospel, flowing out without stint to needy sinners around us. And then ministry continually flowing out to those who are saved and gathered by the gospel into the Church, the body of Christ. This double stream of ministry flowing through us, is the fruit of communion, and of the truth held with us in even balance. A. E. B.

THE CHURCH IN ITS PROGRESS TOWARDS ROME.

Some leaves from an inspired history.

[The following extract from the notes on Acts in the *Numerical Bible* is republished here for various reasons. First, to draw attention to the deeper meanings which constantly underlie the scripture histories, and distinguish them from any other histories that can be found: one of the manifest signs of their inspiration as well as an encouragement to us to look more deeply into every detail. Secondly, for its own sad but necessary warning as to man's failure everywhere in keeping the choicest blessings committed to him, a "Cease ye from man," which brings us to confidence alone in "God, and the word of His grace." Once let our hold be lost upon this anchorage, all other confidences, whatever, are but false and ensnaring. The Church's decline began in the souls of individuals: we may here learn how many lessons of the dangers that beset us, —put how many a question to our hearts!)

WITH the apostle's voyage to Rome the book of the Acts ends. The strangeness of such an ending has been often commented upon, and naturally; especially for those who imagine a history of progress on to final triumph for the Church on earth. We expect some correspondence between the history at large and this its specimen page; and to end with a shipwreck and the apostle of the Gentiles in a Roman prison gives an impression of an unfinished fragment instead of the perfect workmanship of the divine hand. But this proceeds from a wrong conception of what the Church's course was in fact to be, which all the sorrow and disaster of near nine-

teen centuries has for many been incompetent to remove. Allow the Scripture-statements their full weight, and the want of correspondence will be no longer felt : for the history is really that of a shipwreck and a prison ; and instead of wondering any longer at the apparent contrast, we shall perhaps suspect that the similarity may be closer than it seems, and begin asking ourselves if the one is not indeed an allegory of the other.

The very name of Rome to us at the close of so many long years as have passed is predictive of disaster. Rome has through all its existence as a dominant world-power antagonized the gospel. Submit to it it never really did. It took the name of Christian, but as a symbol of material conquest and political dominion ; and thereby dragged in the dust what it professedly exalted. As already said, it was judaized rather than Christianized, and with the Jewish spirit of legality drank in its bitter animosity to the gospel. The spirit of Rome was indeed always legal ; but this legality now became ecclesiastical, sacerdotal, hierarchical, and necessarily persecuting. Begin Paul's captivity it did not, for it never knew him but as a prisoner. But keep him prisoner it did, until the time of God's release came. The picture does not go as far as this ; probably for the reason that after all this never has been,—never will be—complete ; while what has taken place in this way is the mere mercy of God, and for us the instruction is in the causes leading to the disaster : causes which are still at work, and in which we may have part, if we do not avert it by self-judgment.

1. There are two parts in this account, the first of which consists of the voyage and shipwreck, ending

with the reaching land at Melita, or Malta. Here also there are two parts: the first, that in the ship of Adramyttium to Myra; the second, that in the ship of Alexandria, wrecked at Malta. The conflict of man's will with God's rule appears all through, though most conspicuously in the second part. The detail given all through should surely show us the interest that it should have for us, and that there is more in it by far than appears upon the surface.

All through, Paul is a prisoner; and yet with the clear vindication of the judge from any charge which should make him rightly this. Finally, he is shown to be the one to whom God has given the lives of all that sail with him. If we see in him the representative of the truth for which he stands, there can be in this no perversion of fact; and the sorrowful fact is that the truth of the gospel for which he stood has been, almost from the beginning of the Church's history until we reach the full development of the system which has Rome for its head, as it were, shut up, without formal accusation perhaps, yet fettered, and scarce permitted speech; professing Christians being its courteous guard, like Julius here, with a certain honor for Paul, but not freedom. Indeed, Julius himself has not his choice in this: he is under authority, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, an instrument of the world-power simply, and to whom in those interests with which he is identified, Paul is simply a stranger.

The meaning of his name may be variously given; that which would have significance of the kind that we are looking for, would be derived from "julus," a wheatsheaf, and might thus be "belonging to the wheatsheaf;" an enigma, no doubt, as we might ex-

pect: all here is necessarily enigmatical; but it is not impossible to penetrate the disguise.

Christ in resurrection is the significance of the one sheaf of wheat which stands out prominently in connection with the types. The sheaf of firstfruits, presented to God between Passover and Pentecost, occupies a remarkable place in that series of feasts which we easily see to be specially related to Christian truths. Christ in resurrection was also, as we know, the basis of the gospel; and in a pre-eminent way, of Paul's gospel. It is Paul's gospel that specially identifies all believers with that wheat-sheaf presented to God, that is, with Christ gone up to Him. If Julius in such an allegorized history, as we are taking this to be, represents in fact, as has already been suggested, those who, even while they might be true believers in Christ, yet were ignorant of those priceless truths with which the apostle of the Gentiles was identified, and who could thus hold the truth shut up, as it were in captivity, then the implications of the name he bore would be indeed significant. They who themselves had that Christian place of identification with the risen Christ which Paul's doctrine made so conspicuous, were yet in ignorance of the place and what belonged to it; that is, of Paul in the truth he carried; and however courteous to himself they might be, were but the instruments (yea, the imperial band) of the enemies of the truth he lived and died for. Look at the imperial band of the church fathers: do they not treat the apostle after this manner? Are they not so many courteous Julineses in this way?

They are bound for Italy, all these, though it may well be not by a straight road. The first ship we find

here is not going to Italy, but to the coast of Asia, and is a ship of Adramyttium—a name of which there is doubt as to the meaning, but it seems as if it might mean that “one must not haste,” while Asia speaks of a “miry” shore. Spiritually at least, these things go well together. A lack of earnest diligence in the way is apt enough to have a slough for its terminus. Corinth had got so mired with the world at a very early date, though they knew little of it: they were reigning as kings, following their wills, as such a course implies, and not the guidance of the Spirit. The “best Ruler,” as Aristarchus means, was with them all the way through, but we hear of him no more: he is a *passenger* and only that. Yet, as the Macedonian may remind us, He is the Spirit of worship, which putting God in His place is seen as of Thessalonica too, the means of “victory over that which brings into commotion.” But so the start is made.

The next day they are at Zidon, still in what is properly Israelitish territory, though in fact in other hands. It means “taking the prey,” and in Joshua's time we find it coming into Asher's portion (See notes on Josh. xix. 28), and there in reference to victory over evil, which is indeed the portion of Asher, the “happy” saint. But in fact, as we know, in the common failure of Israel, Asher never did even conquer Zidon, which had many and great kings of its own, some of whom were in alliance with Israel afterwards. The “taking of prey,” so connected, would come to have a different meaning, and imply such a career of conquest as that upon which, when become conscious of her power, the Church soon started. The victory over the world which faith in the Son of

God gives became exchanged for victory by which the things of the world became the possession of the victors. Thus the parable of the mustard-seed began to be fulfilled, and the Church to take rank among the powers of the world. Friends of Paul were still to be found, for whom victory over the world retained the old and contrasted principle of separation from it, crucified to it by the Cross. With these the apostle would still find communion, and hearts drawn to him.

But the ship of Adramyttium is bound for Asia ; and starting again, the winds are contrary, and she is forced under the lee of Cyprus. Cyprus means blossom, especially of the olive and the vine, and became identified in the Grecian mind with what is fair and lovely in nature, with Venus and her worship, the soft influences which woo and win man's heart. And here indeed is how the heart, realizing that after all the winds for the Christian voyager are contrary, would shelter itself under what in nature it can plead, and with truth also, God has made for man's enjoyment. So He has; and yet how easy to make enticement of it, the ship using it as her shelter to reach the "miry" shores of Asia beyond ! How all this fits together in the picture here ! Was not this in fact the history of declension in the Church of God ? a history so often repeated in individual experience that we cannot but know it all too well !

Not difficult is it to understand that beyond this there are dangers which Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lycia, all in different ways express. Cilicia is said to mean "which rolls, or overturns," and to play the Cilician is to be cruel and treacherous like these. Pamphylia would mean a union of various tribes; and their history seem to corresponds with this. Lycia is from

lycus, a wolf, which whether referring to beast or man has no encouraging significance. In two of these names the dangers following the thirst for pleasure may be fitly indicated; the relaxation which it implies exposing to such dangers as the apostle speaks of to the Ephesians as the entering of grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; while the union of various tribes was truly what practically the church soon came to be as mingling with the world's various interests affected and moulded it, making the diversity as apparent as the uniting tie. How soon did the Body of Christ cease to have visible expression; and the church united with the world become divided within itself !

Striking it is that here presently the end is reached of the first voyage at Myra, where the ship of Adramyttium is exchanged for another. If Pamphylia has the import which we see in it, the breaches of unity which it pictures would have need of the "ointment" of which Myra speaks. How many salves have been sought for this broken condition ! And the change of ship for a ship of Alexandria is still more plainly significant. Alexandria speaks of help given to men, or better, of the warding off from them impending danger. The new ship of the church is a human means adapted to that end, while openly pointing now towards Italy.

Notice how well all of this agrees together: the perils have been shown us, following self-indulgence and love of pleasure. The new vessel from Egypt, which stands all through Scripture for that independence of God, alas, how natural, and from Alexandria,—a human device for warding off danger,—and now with her course directly Romeward, towards

which, in fact, indirectly, they have been going all the time,—all this speaks to us not uncertainly in what we have upon other grounds concluded to be an allegory of the Church. Most undeniably, for all who take their view from Scripture, the vessel of God's testimony has changed much since it came from His hands at the first; and there has been human shaping, taking its justification from expediency largely,—the warding off of dangers, real or imaginary. The simple eldership of the apostles' days has grown into an episcopate, more and more monarchical; and this into archiepiscopates and patriarchates, and from ministry to priesthood, and all the ranks of hierarchy conspicuously absent from the New Testament original. The "best Ruler" is little seen, and a mere passenger: there would be danger indeed in letting the blessed Spirit have that governing place which, at the beginning, was His. We have taken a fresh start clearly, and our vessel is Egyptian—Alexandrian; and we are manifestly on our way to Rome.

But still the wind is contrary; heaven does not vouchsafe its favors for some reason; and it is with difficulty, and after many days of sailing, that the vessel is got abreast of Cnidus. Cnidus means "chafing, nettling," and may be a bad augury for the new *regime*; and here they leave the coast of Asia for Crete.

The wind, still contrary, forces them to take refuge under the lee of Crete abreast of Salmone, a name which, like that of Salamis in Cyprus, seems to be derived from the breaking of the wave upon it. That of Crete seems to be derived from the Cherethim of the Old Testament, who, in the judgment of many, were its inhabitants. The meaning in that case would

not be doubtful. The cherethim were the "cutters down, or cutters off," sometimes given as "executioners." But the word was also very commonly applied to the making or "cutting" of a covenant, for which as a whole sometimes the one word stood. That the covenant of the Lord should connect itself with the cutting off of evil can be no mystery to us; and significant it is that it is in turning from the "miry" shores of Asia that Crete presents itself to us. Self-judgment would have been indeed the resource for the Church bemired with the world, and it is no wonder that it should present "Fair Havens" to the buffeted ship, or that the apostle's advice should be to winter there. Final rest indeed it could not be, but yet quite helpful against winter storm; but the ship of Alexandria, under the guidance of those belonging to it, will not stay there; and Julius of the imperial band, while courteous enough to the apostle, yet approves their choice. Alexandria seems a name peculiarly significant here, and the history of the church shows here indeed how the notion of "Crete" that came from Alexandria would be in grave enough contrast with the apostle's. "Cutting off" in the shape of asceticism, and even in covenant form, had indeed its home there. Monasticism in its pseudo-Christian form arose there: a direct descent from heathen principles and practice. "Fair Havens," with its city of the Rock (as Lasæa seems to mean) near by, did not suit with the ideal of the Alexandrians as Phenice did. Phenice means "palm," the constant figure of the righteous. Righteousness is not after all found in cutting off, and the city of the Rock intimates the corrective truth, distasteful naturally to the true ascetic. Its ideal is in this way

unattainable; and when, mocked by the softness of a favorable south wind, the vessel leaves the harbor that would have saved it, the stormblast Euroclydon descends upon it, and it is blown out irrevocably from all land.

The wind that now assails the ship is called in most manuscripts Euroclydon, but in the oldest Euraquilo. The one term means "the eastern wave" referring to the effect upon the waters. The latter, the "north-easter;" which has the sanction of most of the editors. The east, as we have seen elsewhere, is the quarter that speaks simply of adversity; the north is that which speaks of darkness, mystery, and spiritual evil. Taking Euraquilo as the best attested reading, we find it also to be the most significant. It speaks not merely of adversity, but of Satanic influence: in the case of the Church, besides persecution, of evil doctrine; and such were, in fact, the influences which assailed the early Christian. In the epistle to Smyrna, which stands second in that apocalyptic series in which many have learned to trace the successive stages of the Church's history, we have on the one hand the ten days of tribulation, (the persecution under the Roman emperors), and on the other, the blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Doubtless, these work together, as the shout of the hunters, which drives the deer into the trap prepared. Judaism, as we know, favored that fusion with the world as well as those defensive methods which promised best protection from outside attack; while it was itself the most complete attack upon the vitals of Christianity. And the same two influences are, no doubt, to be seen here in the storm that hunts the

Alexandrian vessel to its wreck. We must distinguish, of course, carefully, between that worldly prosperity into which, through all the assaults upon it, the church was steadily rising, and the spiritual wreck to which in this very way it was going on; until under Constantine its pilgrim and heavenly character was exchanged for an opposite one; and the gospel of grace, except perhaps with a few hidden and hunted men, was well nigh gone from the earth. We have the creed of these orthodox Nicene days, and the faith of their most eminent men in various expressions, and we know with exactness what they held and taught; their doctrine as to Christ, in general orthodox enough,—as to the gospel, what the extremest ritualism may permit of it: baptism to wash away past sins, and make children of God; penance and priestly absolution, to take away sins afterward; helped, and needing to be helped, by the virtues of the saints, and even their dead bones! That was for the people of ordinary lives; but the religious life, which alone made saints, was to be found in following out what Scripture calls “the doctrines of demons, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. iv. 1-3). This life too was to be spent in deserts, or between monastery or convent walls, and then might attain merit which would help to save other people,—the merit of doing more than it is one’s duty to do.

If Scripture in hand we place ourselves in the midst of that flourishing church of the Nicene period, which the hand of Constantine has just liberated from the dungeon to put it upon the throne,—and

look at it with the eyes of him who said to the Corinthians, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings *without us*" (1 Cor. iv. 8), we shall no doubt see that, spite of all the seeming prosperity, there has been in fact a change and a loss, such as would imply no less than a shipwreck; while the "honey" of nature's sweetness enjoyed might make a Melita for the released sufferers. Into the details of the fourteen days of storm and drift it is harder to enter by way of exposition. The lack of food we can understand, while yet the wheat was in the ship; the fact of the safety of the voyagers depending upon that Paul whom yet they knew so little; his voice being heard once more as the storm works on to imminent disaster: surely ears must have been opened to hear it! The shore was won, though the ship had gone to pieces; there was a pause in the progress towards Rome, and a new ship must be found to get there, though of the same Egyptian, Alexandrian build; and then by easier stages, and with fairer weather the end will soon be reached.

2. The incidents of Paul's stay at Malta have all one character. They show us how the favor of the islanders was won by the display of divine power acting through him in the setting aside of what was in fact the power of the enemy, but in their minds divine, and in the relief of human suffering. The chief man receives and entertains all Paul's company. The bearing of all this upon the allegorical meaning is as plain as need be. If we have indeed arrived at that period in the Church's history when Christianity became the religion of the empire, and the emperor its official head,—when in the thoughts of men it had reached the land of milk and honey, which by the

application to themselves of Jewish prophecies they could believe also to be their land of promise, then there is little difficulty in what is before us now. The very acceptance of this new head changed everything, however much the old forms might be maintained, and declared to all who had heart to understand the wreck of all true church principle. It was decisive enough that the first who took this place of ecclesiastical head was a man unconverted, and (what was still more decisive according to the doctrines of the day) unbaptized; baptized at last by a denier of the deity of Christ; the slayer also of his son and of his wife. They had afterwards to invent the fiction of the bath of Constantine to cover what was ecclesiastically the sorest disgrace. Yes, the ship was a wreck, but they had reached nevertheless the land of honey, their Melita. By and by a new ship also would be found to carry them to their destination.

Yet had not in fact the serpent's power been overcome when the Pontifex Maximus, the head of heathen power, the head that had so recently and fiercely bit at Christianity, and not in vain, was now itself Christian, and putting down heathenism? According to many since, it was the fulfilment of the Apocalyptic story of the Dragon and the Woman, and the Dragon's being cast out of heaven. Was it not indeed a good that in the seat of widest earthly power the malignant forces of evil should be dispossessed by the healing and life-giving influences of heaven's sweetest grace? That is what captivates the people of Melita, who see the viper harmless and cast into the fire, and presently experience the mercy of God in the undeniable signs of divine working.

Who can deny the blessings thus coming in through that wonderful change which we have been contemplating? So Paul is in the house of Publius, and the new ship is laden with things which are the thankful acknowledgment of benefits received. Yet is Paul after all a prisoner still, and the vessel's head, at much less distance than before, is pointing towards Rome!

So again we have a ship of Alexandria, and the fresh start is but a continuation of the former voyage. The vessel went under the sign of the Dioscouri, the "sons of Jupiter," Castor and Pollux, the patron divinities of sailors. Perhaps we may interpret this as showing what is certainly true, that while Jupiter himself may have passed away, the ideas born of heathenism remain to preside over the course of the state-church. The very title of Pontifex Maximus to which reference has been made, was retained by the Christian emperors for some time, and when dropped by them was revived, and at the present time is borne by the pope! It carried with it the claim of chief authority in matters of religion, and it is intended to announce this claim to-day.

At Syracuse they land and tarry for three days. Syracuse means "dragging unwillingly," and speaks sufficiently of the exercise of arbitrary power; which Rhegium, a "forcing the way through," intensifies. It is singular at least, that here the Dioscouri, who presided over the vessel's course, were again the patron-divinities. Puteoli ends the voyage, and takes its name from the thirty-three mineral "wells" that were there, or else from their ill-odor. Puteoli was the chief harbor of Rome, although some distance from the city. Here they found brethren,

with whom at their solicitation Paul was able to stay seven days; "and so we came to Rome." The market place and the taverns complete the journey—morally, as in fact; though here also we have the meeting of the apostle with the Roman brethren.

In all this the tracing of historical fulfilment may be little detailed, but the general character of the period between the state-church and the church-state is sufficiently shown. Violence, breach of faith, pretentious assumption, characterize it; the mal-odorous wells (of error introduced) bring us nearly to Rome itself, though the traffic of the market and the dissipation of the tavern are needed touches to the picture. Even here Paul's heart is cheered as he looks upon the brethren; and prisoner as he is, he thanks God and takes courage. This is always the style of God's precious book: His "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," rings throughout it. The head hung down means only unbelief, and it is not in this way that Paul enters the miscalled "eternal city." All things that are seen are temporal; "things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit."

F. W. G.

I WILL COME TO THEE,

AND I WILL BLESS THEE, (Ex. xx. 24).

O that Thou wouldst bless me indeed (1 Chron. iv. 10).

LIE still, my child, thou need'st this quiet rest,
Nay, fret not at the hand that laid thee here;
For I have purposed that thou shalt be blest,
To Me thou'rt dear.

I know thy service, fraught with love, and prayer,
But come with Me apart;
I'll rest thee, strengthen thee, and banish care,
And overflow thy heart.

Just leave these broken threads of toil to Me,
I've marked thy deep desire, and fervent call;
And every burden thou hast borne for Me,
I know it all.
But just this little while I crave thy heart,
In shadowed quietness;
From every earthly heart and voice apart,
That I may richly bless.

I love My "servant," and thy service well,
And long with that "well done," thy work to crown;
And face to face My joy in thee to tell,
My love to own.
This seeming cloud which cross thy path doth run,
'Tis but My loving hand;
To shield thy head, thy feet, from burning sun,
And glaring desert sand.

No cloud can cover *thee*, but *I* am there,—
Thy sorrows, trials, griefs, and joys are Mine;
Thy loved ones too, are My unceasing care,
And all that's thine.
This seemingly untimely break will hold—
(Tho' now it seem but pain.)
Some hidden treasure purchased not with gold,
Some deep eternal gain.

If on thy willing hands, I've laid Mine own,
A little while, to rest, and keep them still—
To teach thee better than thou'st ever known,
To do My will—
Then rest, with Me, it will not be for long,
And in eternity
Thou'lt sing a deeper, sweeter, fuller song,
Of praise, than else could be.

H. McD.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON 1 JOHN ii. 1.

THE opening verses of this second chapter of John's epistle are very beautiful, and it may not be amiss to spend a few moments in meditation thereon. The most wonderful glories of God's ways seem focussed on the darkest pages of those of man and where clouds gather blackest we may look for the brightest sunshine. These verses form no exception to this rule. We may say that there is nothing more awful than sin in the believer and that there is nothing more beautiful than the grace which meets it. Where knowledge is greatest, responsibility is deepest.

That this is true needs no proof. It is an axiom, it is self-evident. "If I had not come unto them" said our Lord, "they had not had sin but now they have no cloak for their sin." "He that committeth sin hath not seen Him neither known Him," exclaims he who leaned on Jesus' bosom, while of Capernaum exalted to heaven, because of Christ's presence, it is said that it shall be cast down to hell. Knowledge intensifies guilt. The very laws of human jurisprudence proclaim it and avow it, and it is so true that that which is not sin to one is to another. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to *him* it is sin."

Let us look then at some of the thoughts connected with sin in Scripture and may they serve as sign posts to warn us off from treacherous and forbidden ground and stand as warrants to condemn us should we venture thereon. Trench tells us that there are about nine words in the Greek of Scripture which are connected with it, or translated into it. While,

no doubt, the knowledge of sin existed in all races and had some equivalent in all languages, yet God's revelation has added to its knowledge and accumulated around it a wider vocabulary, giving birth to a more comprehensive conception, and the analysis of that conception should be helpful.

Each of these words which we shall look at has an original and root-meaning, and while that root-meaning is by no means the equivalent of its present sense, yet each little root thought serves to build up our complete idea thereof. "*Amartia*," is the first of these, and involves the idea of missing a mark, failing of an ideal. He that sins then, misses the mark that has been set by God for him. Shall we say it is a miscalculation? Indeed it is and a most shameful and sorrowful one, a most wretched failure! It has darkened the whole creation by its folly. It is an awful blunder. But it is not merely that—a blunder, a miscalculation, a careless mistake—it is disobedience, *parakoe*, a "hearing amiss." It is that disobedience which results not so much from defiance as from a careless indifference as to the Master's word, a "Yea, hath God said?" and that sort of thing. How intensely sad to think that the believer's sin has that in it. "Yea and hath *Christ* said?" "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me," said the Lord; but alas, he who sins is indifferent to it.

But indifference in anyone, and so much the more if it be in Christ's own, cannot be merely that, it is also *parabasis*, "transgression." Perhaps especially true where a direct command is violated, yet all sin has this in it. If God's commandment is not trampled on, yet the voice of conscience is. It is breaking down God's landmarks, and entering into the

devil's territory. And this transgression has in it the germs of that which leads to throwing off all law and government and becoming "lawlessness," "*anomia*, all "sin is lawlessness." It is a throwing off of the laws of the Creator and the introduction of spiritual anarchy which knows not law. No wonder then that here everything gets out of tune. Sin is *plemmeeleia*, "discord." What sad discord! the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain because of it. And oh may we not say as we look at its awful consequences that is *agnoema*, "ignorance?" Ignorance, folly, self-indulged, self-induced and needlessly revelled in.

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." John wishes to keep sin from his little children but he knows that there is, alas! a possibility of it. Had he not seen it break out on the lips of one of the best of men on the dark night of Christ's betrayal? It is possible for us to sin. It is possible for us to curse and swear, to deny Christ and break the blessed communion which should be ours with Him. It is possible for us to do all these things and more. Do we know it? Men say that, "Forewarned is forearmed." We are forewarned; Peter was forewarned, but are we forearmed? John gives us the armor in the first chapter, but it needs to be put on. The first chapter may be briefly epitomized as "the glory of Christ as God and Man and His glorious environment." What could be more sanctifying? It is of Him that John says that a man committing sin hath not seen Him neither known Him. What a blessed safeguard!

"In all extremes Lord Thou art still.
 The mount whereto my hopes do flee;
 O make my soul detest all ill.
 Because so much abhorred by Thee."

To become more like Him we need to hate sin more, and to delight in gazing on Him more; and each mutually helps to bring about the other. Among all the vast multitudes who hold in their hands this awful power, Christ is the only One upon whom we may direct our gaze and be absolutely sure that there we shall find nothing sinful. No wonder John opens his epistle with those beautiful words, "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes which we have heard, which we have gazed on and our hands have handled of the Word of life." "These things," this Christ, this God, this Man, this One in whom is light and who dwelleth forever in the light, this Jesus, shall be our Sanctifier and Saviour from sin and all its power.

"He forgives sin and breaks its power;
 He sets the captive free."

Reader has He done it for you?

As we were saying before, John knows too well how possible it is to sin; and for such he says, "there is an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." I would call your attention for a little to the word "advocate" *paracletos*. It is very interesting to notice that it is found in the New Testament in John's writings only; while its abstract form *paraklesis*, translated "consolation," "comfort," and occurring many times elsewhere is never once used by this same apostle. If we look at this as a mere chance phenomenon, it is a curious one, whereas if we perceive in it something more, we have a beautiful thought. We have so identified the sun in our

every day experience with the light which it so bountifully sheds upon us, that to speak of one is to think of the other; and with John to think of "consolation" is to think of the "Consoler," yea is to forget all about the consolation (*paraklesis*) in the blessed Person who brings it (the *Parakletos*). Reader when you think of comfort, do you always think of Christ?

The word "advocate" has been variously rendered by different translators. In John's Gospel the same word is rendered "Comforter;" "I will send you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth." We have then two advocates or comforters. The One tells us about God and the Other speaks to God about us. Here then speaking reverently, we have Divine Arms linking us with the Father and the Father with us; a blessed Voice of mercy which in our estrangement from Christ, whispers in the Father's ear of our blood-bought righteousness, and the earnest pleading of the Spirit-advocate, of the excellences of our Advocate above.

"We have an Advocate with the Father." When? "If any man sin." I believe and am sure that that pleading begins as soon as the sinful act is commenced, but that is not just what John says. He says, "If any man sin *we* have an Advocate with the Father." John brings us into the family of God. If any man in the family sin, the family has an Advocate, to whom they can appeal in behalf of the transgressor. The whole family is stirred into supplication for its erring member and many an earnest entreaty arises to the blessed Advocate above who on His part with His whole heart full of willingness, anticipates their plea. The Advocate pleads "guilty"

in behalf of His client and puts in plea, a blood bought pardon. This is a righteous plea advanced by a righteous Person, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

O child of God, disgraced by sin, with your beautiful garments soiled and mud-stained, our righteous Advocate will not belittle your guilt, will not slur over your transgression. You shall be judged in the full light, every flaw shall be judged and . . . not condemned!

F. C. G.

RE-TRACINGS OF TRUTH:

IN VIEW OF QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN LATELY RAISED.

9. DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW.

FOR deliverance from the practical dominion of sin, we must of necessity be delivered from the law; and therefore the order of truth in the sixth and seventh chapters of the epistle to the Romans. Deliverance from the law and the necessity of this are dwelt upon in the seventh chapter; where the great point is that being under law means self-occupation in a religious way, the attempt to make something of that from which God would turn us away; and in which we find ourselves confronted with an unmanageable evil rooted in our very nature as born of Adam, and from which God Himself does not, in the way we look for it, come in to deliver us. Alas! pride tends ever to come in by the natural and conscientious endeavor to be right with God carried out by legal ordinances and self-culture, with all forms of asceticism superadded. God's remedy for all is the eye off self and upon Christ, with the apprehension, as given by the Spirit, of our identification with Him, so as to make God's delight in Him the joy in which

we dwell, and thus the power by which in self-forgetfulness we live and serve Him.

We have therefore only to express our cordial and entire agreement with the teaching we are now examining that the true lesson of the law is that of one's own powerlessness. It is curiously put as a supposition, though it is to be hoped that the writer does not mean that it is no more than that with him: "*I suppose* it works in this way, that law brings home to a man the truth of his own utter powerlessness. That is the lesson to be learnt; I do not care how it is learnt, in all probability by law, but it has to be learnt." It is evident, one would say, that the apostle expected it to be learnt in that way; and that law is so entirely the human method of religious accomplishment that, apart from the revelation of God in the matter, we have no reason to imagine any ex-cogitation of another. But we need not dwell upon this: so far we are glad to agree with him that the entire "end of the law" is Christ.

When we come, however, to the necessary question as to what is the practical outcome of this for us, we find our agreement soon reaching its end, and a doctrine laid down which we have already sketched, but which is being pressed with continual earnestness, and (one must say) audacity. It is undoubtedly the root of the whole system presented to us. We have, of course, things inconsistent with it presented to us too; if it were given clean cut and with entire consistency, it is hardly to be thought that Christians could go on with it as they manage to do now; but this evasive character belongs naturally to the devious ways of error wherever found, a kind of Jesuitism which may be perhaps uncon-

scious, but which all the more does its work. One may boldly assert that it passes the power of man to reconcile the different statements made. When for instance we have the question directly asked,—a question apt enough if we consider the many depreciatory remarks about it,—“*What is the use of Scripture to us?*” we are comforted and quieted by the assurance: “It is for doctrine, and is a guard to us, and it is a very important point in regard to it that our minds are thus kept from getting out of bounds.” Yet none the less confidently is it declared that if you *go to it* for doctrine, it only shows you are not yet delivered from the law! Here are the words:—

“This question of law is a very great hindrance to many of us, and I think it takes us a long time to get free of law. I will tell you how it works—people go to the Scriptures to find exhortations and rules; *they want chapter and verse*, as they say commonly, *for their doctrine*, and they want precepts for their conduct. *That is all legality*, it is the letter, and I think people are uncommonly fond of the letter; they go to Scripture in that sense to a large extent.”

So, though Scripture is “for doctrine,” to go to it for doctrine is legality! and although it is a very important point that by it our minds are kept from getting out of bounds, yet where the bounds are in this case is a mystery which must remain a mystery. When it is suggested that “the unsearchable riches of Christ are accorded to us by the Scriptures,” that supposition is promptly repelled with a “No; you cannot get them except by the Spirit”! Who ever thought you could? But are they communicated to

us apart from those inspired Scriptures the possession of which has been thought of as furnishing us with all the mind of God for His people here? But let us go on:—

“The idea of the word of God is, that God puts Himself into direct communication with man. . . . A man preaches effectually only what he has learned from God, *not* from what he has found in Scripture.”

These things are put in fullest opposition; and yet what a man supposes he has learned from God is to be kept from getting out of bounds by what he has learned, not from God, but from Scripture! “I do not think people learn exactly from Scripture, but from the Spirit of truth, but the more familiar people are with the Scripture the better; because a man’s mind is thus continually pulled up in its tendency to go beyond the limit”! To make the contradiction more complete and absolute, it is the same person who says, “I claim only the light of Scripture.” Thus, though of course, he did not find it in Scripture, the light of Scripture is all he has! He was taught it, perhaps, independently; and then taught that it was all the while in Scripture, although he himself did not find it there, and “effectually” no one could. There is thus a continually fresh revelation being made to souls, not derived from Scripture, and which yet Scripture gives them authority to press on others, although it cannot, of course, teach others what it did not teach them, and people are legal and wrong if they go to Scripture for doctrine at all! Surely, as the wise man says, “The legs of the lame are not equal.”

And after all it may be doubted whether any of us know what deliverance from law is, even the one

who is teaching it to others. He has been himself studying Scripture, (only too much, he thinks,) and all his teaching he finds in Scripture, and only thus can press it with authority on others. How can he himself know for how much he is really indebted to this, which has thus been floating in his mind, and which he recommends us all to be familiar with? Really it seems as if the only thing that we could be quite sure he did *not* learn from Scripture is just this doctrine of his not learning from it. A good deal more, however, will be found to be involved in this.

It is legality also, we are told, to go to Scripture for precepts as much as doctrine. Precepts there surely are, in the New just as well as in the Old Testament: is it meant that we are not to listen to them? Well, at any rate, we are not to go to it for them. Are we to be taught them outside of Scripture? But then we must go to Scripture, to find out if our minds are betraying their natural tendency to get out of bounds! Nay, it would seem that we must be taught even more decisively by Scripture thus, than we have been already taught without it. Yet this primary teaching is supposedly by the Spirit of God, which after all we cannot rightly accept save under the "guard" of Scripture! What a wilderness of perplexity and unreality it is, which nevertheless cannot escape from the control of what the Spirit of God has provided for us all, except as, alas, this loose and careless slighting of the Spirit's instrumentality may enable us to leap the "bound," and follow our own thoughts with little check from aught beyond them.

And this is sure to be the result where (although it is confessedly good to be familiar with it) the *study*

of Scripture is treated lightly: "a Bible student is not much after all." Aye, but "if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. ii. 3-5). Where but in Scripture shall we search, where find, after this fashion? Let us set then these human thoughts within the so necessary bounds which befit them.

Notice once more, that the precepts of the epistles were never anything else than part of Scripture. They address themselves directly to the heart and conscience of those to whom they were addressed. Precepts as they were, they were not legal; or else the great apostle who gave us the lesson of deliverance from the law made a terrible mistake. We at least will not charge him with it. He knew surely also, that the Spirit must act through the written Word in order that it may be effectual, whether for sinner or saint; yet that did not hinder him from claiming the most absolute obedience to what he wrote; and that obedience is no less due from us than from them. It is not merely that we are in a loose way to have it before us, but to learn from it, and to give heed as to the voice of the Lord Himself: "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" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). The Spirit of God does not come in between, to make this a degree less direct or decisive, but to give it all its power for the subject soul.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

SOME DISTINCTIONS.

IN the Word of God certain words are used apparently synonymously, or else so nearly alike as to be confounded by many. Certain words connected with evil have thus been misunderstood.

(1) **Sins.** "The forgiveness sins" (Eph. i. 7). These are the actual offenses of the life, in thought, word, and deed, forgiven through the blood of Christ.

(2) **Sin.** "Condemned sin in the flesh;" "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. viii. 3; vi. 14). In these passages it is the root and the principle of sin. Sin is the principle which has sway, the root that produces the sins. This is never forgiven, but judged, condemned by the cross.

(3) **The old man.** "Our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). The old man is the man connected with Adam. *I* as a child of Adam. This man in God's sight is dead, crucified.

(4) **The Flesh.** "The works of the flesh are manifest" (Gal. v. 19). This is the old *nature*, which remains unchanged in the believer, and which he must mortify, keep under. The sentence of death is upon it, and no good thing can come from it. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh" (John iii. 6).

Although the flesh is in us, we are not "in the flesh, but in the Spirit;" and, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have a perfect standing before God, and are sealed with the Holy Spirit. We are not therefore debtors to the flesh to live after its lusts, but to walk in the Spirit. The promise then is, "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

THE NEED AND POWER OF REVIVAL.

Micah ii. 7—"Oh, thou that art named The house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?"

THE necessity of constant revival is a lesson that is forced upon us by the history of the Church from the beginning. As we know, in the apostle's days came the first sad declension, from which at large it has never recovered. God has come in, in His grace, and again and again raised up a testimony for Himself, and gathered a remnant as witnesses to it; but the Church as a whole has never been restored, and never will be until the Lord takes it to Himself forever. This is only the echo of all human history. We might have thought indeed that the Church would be an exception to the rest, but it has still been left to prove how "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

The need of revival is just the lesson of man's faithlessness in every trust committed to him, and the greater the trust the more, alas! is the failure evident and the more terrible it is. Babylon the Great is a mystery at which the apostle wonders with great wonder. It is now so familiar to us that we are hardly capable of realizing, perhaps, the solemnity of it; but we are not to speak of that just now. We want to look practically at things for ourselves and to inquire where we are, any of us, at the present moment. What our need of revival may be, every one, of course, has the responsibility of knowing for himself, but the need at large cannot be questioned,

and the need of considering it can never fail. The Lord's words by the prophet here, although to His people Israel, and taking shape from this, yet have a voice to us, which is only more earnest and closer in application by the difference between Israel and ourselves now. The Lord appeals to them as the house of Jacob,—his house who in his name speaks of what man is in nature, of the characteristics that belongs to him, but whose relationship to God speaks of the grace which God is ever showing. The God of Jacob is just the God of grace, and it is in this character that now we know Him, as that old house of Jacob did not. He addresses them in the midst of terrible failure and He appeals to them with a question,—a question, alas, that the heart of His own is so capable of raising,—nay, in fact so often raises: "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?"

It might seem so, if we look at things around,—there are so many things, in fact, to grieve and hinder the blessed Spirit of God, but that is not all in the question. There is, alas! a terrible tendency with us when we look at the failure, to impute it in some sense even to the God of all grace Himself, and to murmur as if we were delivered up to failure, as if He had appointed our portion in it, and therefore there was no hope of escape; but in this sense the Spirit of the Lord is never straitened.

Notice the expression, which is "the Spirit of Jehovah," the covenant God, the One who under that name of Jehovah took up Israel in Egypt to make the glory of that Name known, and who entered into covenant with them by that Name, which speaks of His abiding constancy and power to fulfil what He had undertaken. They could not indeed be straitened

in Him. They must be straitened, as the apostle says, if such were the fact, in their own bowels. The Lord's people never fail from inefficiency on His part for them, but always by their own voluntary giving themselves up to failure, and this may be the result, even, of that unbelieving discouragement which is implied in the question here. As Joshua, when Israel had fled at Ai, fell on his face before God to say, "What wilt Thou do for Thy great Name?" so with us, alas! we are apt to think that we are more jealous for the glory of God's Name than He is Himself; but the Lord replies to him: "Up, why liest thou on thy face? Israel has sinned." That was the whole matter. It is still the whole matter, and it is never, even thus, a reason for discouragement. God will take care of the glory of His Name, and on the other hand He will never be lacking to the soul, which, in the fullest confession of failure, turns to Him.

Amid whatever circumstances of discouragement in the Church at large, we can always encourage ourselves, as David did, in the Lord our God, and the faith that trusts in Him shall not be ashamed in this respect any more than any other. How good it is to know that He will necessarily be more than sufficient for all we count upon Him for! Do we believe this? or are we putting the question still as to whether the Spirit of the Lord is straitened?

Look at the Lord's own picture. The Spirit of God is in us now, a thing that no Israelite could speak of in his day, and the Lord's word as to it in that familiar speech of His to the woman of Samaria describes it as "living water," as "a spring of living water," not a well, as our translation puts it, but "a spring of water leaping up into everlasting life."

Certainly we are intended there to realize the energy that there is in a spring like this. There are conditions, no doubt, as to our realization of it, but the failure to do so can only be with ourselves, and with ourselves as individuals, and never with the spring. The Spirit of God is in us now. Alas, how much do we realize of this marvelous truth? *God* is in us. Our very bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, which we have of God. Can we be wrong in predicating the very largest results from such grace and power as are implied in this? How can the conduct of others affect this as regards ourselves? The unfaithfulness of the whole Church can never deprive the individual soul that turns to God of the display of power which God has for him, which may not indeed manifest itself outwardly in mighty works, but inwardly, assuredly, in the revelation of blessing and of power from One who is faithful to His gifts and never repents.

The Lord's words here reveal the secret of any failure. "Do not My words," He asks "do good to him that walketh uprightly?" That is the whole matter. Does God's word cease to be to us what it once was? Have we lost the blessed savor of it in any wise? Does it fail to yield to us for all our need, for more than all that faith can seek from it? Then there is but one reason for this failure. It is that we walk not uprightly.

And that is a terrible thing to say of any child of God, for it does not mean simply what we call failure. It *is* failure, but failure of that purpose of heart which God claims and looks for as the very condition of His manifesting Himself with us. The unleavened bread with which we are to keep the

feast is the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We can keep God's feast in no other fashion. Everything else is leaven; that is, it is not mere lapse from weakness or incapacity, but it is ferment, it is the spirit of rebellion, in fact, against God Himself. Let us remember that uprightness has to be measured according to the place that God has given us, according to the power of the revelation He has made to us.

What is the place that He has given us? A place in Christ, as Christ. We have Him before God, who has gone up to God charged with all our interests, to maintain us according to the value of His blessed work for us; so that now it is only unbelief if we ever think we have to serve ourselves, to look after our own concerns, as it were, as if He were in some way at least insufficient for us.

We have things, surely, to do down here. We have a life to live, we have duties to perform; but that is a very different thing from that seeking of our own which is never a duty, but a departure from Him. We are here in the world for Him. If He is before God for us, on the one hand, we are as truly for Him upon the other. If we are in Him, He, as the result, is in us, and thus is all fruit found. If now, as the seal upon it all, the Spirit of God has come to take possession of us, this is the plain mark, as the apostle says, that we are not our own, we are bought with a price. He is with us, in us, to secure Christ's interests, to work for His glory.

All that implies, most surely, our highest interests also. We cannot lose our lives for Him without gaining them over and over again, as we may say. We cannot live to Him without finding the wondrous

power of such a life, the blessing and enjoyment of it. We cannot seek His things without finding that, in the truest sense, and as far as lies in us, we have secured our own, but the seeking His things must be what is in our hearts. Let the care of all else be upon Him. He is competent for it, and our first duty is to trust Him unfeignedly with it all. Thus we may go unburdened. Thus alone are we witnesses for Him and not witnesses against Him. It is when men can see in us that Christ has possession of us and that our lives are, in the purpose of our hearts, devoted to Him,—it is thus He is commended. The doctrine of Christ makes way for itself in the power of a living witness.

This, then, is what is uprightness. We are to answer to the place that God has put us in. As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, we are to walk in Him; if we are risen with Christ, we are to have our mind upon things above, where Christ sitteth, at the right hand of God. All that is short of this is not mere failure in reaching what we aim at, it is failure in the aim itself; and there can be nothing but straitness for us if that be our condition. It is vain to think of anything like revival until we are ourselves revived out of a fallen condition.

We need, therefore, to begin with ourselves individually. We are not to end there. If once our hearts are really in the power of that which God has made our own, the state of His people will press itself upon us in exact proportion, but we shall find that now the Lord can use us in ministry to those He loves, and from whom His love never departs, however much they may have departed from Him. It is indeed a terrible thing for those who are truly

His to be encompassed with a multitude of those who, if they are indeed believers, are not, for all that, in the energy of faith, in the power of the truth which they acknowledge as such. One can understand that in such a condition one might feel that he could go more easily alone than with those who are out of sympathy with, and irresponsible to, the claims of Christ upon them, but here also we might find that it was our own that we were seeking in another way. God never leaves His people, and we are to be the witnesses of that love of His which never leaves them.

We are to refuse indeed all that would make us *responsible* in any wise for the evil of others, all that would be complicity on our part, conformity to that which springs out of an unjudged condition; but apart from this, it is ours to be with the people of God, seeking their blessing, as our own blessing, which it truly is. The body of Christ needs all its members. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," and, alas, how crippled is the Church to-day by the mixture of clean and unclean which everywhere prevails. There must be in all that involves one's duty to Him, no compromise; but there must be, on the other hand, the love which has its central characteristic in not seeking its own, therefore in true and unselfish ministry to all the need there is around.

Discouragement is here apt to be our sorest hindrance. Whatever love might desire, if once we get the thought that it is impossible to realize it, all efforts are chilled, all work for that which is hopeless drops of necessity. We still have need to urge upon ourselves the question: "Is the Spirit of the Lord

straitened?" If we plead it with Him in faith, we shall surely find what is His answer to it. The consequences of our own past failure may in measure follow us, and the general condition of things we can never hope to alter; but those who are with God will still find that His word appeals to the hearts of His own, and that there is a power for revival out of whatever ruin may have been wrought. There still remain for us Christ and the Spirit and the precious word of God ready to reveal more and more of that which is in it for the enrichment of us all, the riches which Christ's poverty has secured for us and which still appeal to the hearts of His people. How blessed to know that in every one of these there still abides that Spirit who is the seal in us of the perfection of Christ, and who never, therefore, can give up His care of those who thus stand identified with that perfection! Of revival, every one of us will still find his constant need, and the path itself which God puts before us is never spoken of as an easy one. If we think of it we can never say that we have strength sufficient for it. It is out of weakness still, and ever, that strength is found, and grace alone is all our sufficiency. The more deeply for ourselves we realize this, the more we shall count upon that grace for others and expect to see the fruit of the Spirit in those in whom the Spirit still abides, and who will never give them up.

F. W. G.

"AS MEN WHO WAIT FOR THEIR LORD."

Night around us, strife within—
 Oh the pain, the sting of sin!
 Have we in our rife discord
 Ceased to look for Thee, O Lord?

O forbid that it should be;
 Draw our foolish hearts to Thee;
 Teach us what becometh us,
In the presence of Thy cross.

FELLOW pilgrim mid earth's tumult,
 What have we to fear?
 Hast'ning through as those who're travelling
 To a brighter sphere;
 What to us is earth's reward,
 If we're looking for the Lord?

Oh, to look with earnest longing
 Toward that glorious goal;
 All our ways, our heart, our service,
 Under Christ's control—
 Hearn'ning for the quick'ning word,
 While we're looking for the Lord.

Keeping all our robes unspotted,
 From earth's dust, and soil;
 Ever, like the blessed Master,
 From its ways recoil;
 Guided by His faithful word,
 While we're waiting for the Lord.

Choosing not our heart companions
 From its faithless show;
 Walking so,—the world beholding
 Without doubt might know
 And confess, with one accord,
 That we're looking for the Lord.

And our place beside His table—
 E'er a blest retreat,
 Where the heart delights recalling
 Mem'ries sad and sweet—
 Worship to His Name accord,
 While we're waiting for the Lord.

Time is passing, and His promise
 He must soon fulfil
By His presence; may He find us
 Subject to His will.
This will peace and joy afford,
While we're waiting for the Lord.

Would Thy Church might thus be waiting,
 —But, alas, she's not;
For the "wolf," the world, and Satan,
 Ruin sad have wrought.
Sweet His smile,—her blest reward,
Were she looking for the Lord.

Yet, within her pale how many
 'Neath this sorrow cry !
Owning all the shame, yet seeking
 Not to justify;
Bowing 'neath Thy righteous word,
Longing for Thy coming, Lord.

Sing, my soul ! the night now deep'ning
 Tells of coming day !
When the sorrow and the waiting
 Shall have passed away;
And with thee, in perfect grace,
All the journey He'll retrace.

Sing the song of thy releasing ;
 Let thy heart not fail
Just before the day is dawning !
 It will naught avail
Losing courage; wield the sword,
Whilst thou'rt *waiting for the Lord.*

H. McD.

NOW AND THEN.

THE wicked man does evil and glories in it. The self-righteous man does good and glories in it. The Christian abhors the evil and follows the good, but glories only in the Lord; for what has cleared him from the evil he has done but the death of his Lord? and what fruit can he yield to God without his Lord?

The wicked man gets all his enjoyment now by the pleasure there is in sin. The self-righteous man all his reward now by the praise he gets from man. In the world which is to come they will both have their part in the outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, for neither of them has "a wedding-garment on," and none can stand in the presence of God without that (Matt. xxii. 11-13).

The Christian gets no reward now—he gets all his sorrows now. Sorrow is a necessity to him by reason of the discipline he must needs pass through to be an overcomer in a world which is wholly estranged from God and full of allurements and snares. 1 Pet. i. 3-7 plainly declares this: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, *though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,*

though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Thus the Christian's reward can only be "at the appearing of Jesus Christ." All desire for any *now* must inevitably drag him down from the true Christian path, and place him thus on a worldly level. His present joys must be from communion with his Lord in the things which are not seen—that inheritance in heaven—while patiently going through the needful trials, whose end will have such praise and honor and glory as man here below cannot bestow on any of his poor fellow-mortals. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."

P. J. L.

IN LUKE viii., ix., x., we see, as our Evangelist tells us, that the Lord "went throughout every city and village." No spot was unvisited by His light and goodness. And this divine Minister of grace is attended by a suitable train. A company who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities follow Him now to witness of His *grace*; as, by and by, when He comes forth in power, He will have behind Him an equally suited train of shining ones to reflect His *glory*.

THE case of the widow of Nain, is one so tenderly affecting the human heart, that it properly lies under the notice of the Spirit in Luke. For in the style of one who was looking at man and his sorrows and affections, our Evangelist tells us, that the young man who had died "was the *only son* of his mother, and she was a *widow*;" and again when the Lord raised him to life, that "He delivered him to his mother." Would that we caught more of the same tender spirit, while delighting at the discovery of it in Jesus.—J. G. B.

RE-TRACINGS OF TRUTH:

IN VIEW OF QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN LATELY RAISED.

(Concluded.)

10. THE SUPPER, THE ASSEMBLY, AND THE SANCTUARY.

IT is not my purpose to pursue the doctrines which we have been considering much further. The fundamental point as to the Person of the Lord has been already and by others sufficiently gone into. We are told that the Lord was not personally man, but man only in condition. His Spirit seems to be spoken of always as His deity which tabernacled in a human body. Thus He was not Man in the truth of His nature, as we understand man, or as He, in the way in which Scripture constantly speaks, is represented as able to enter into the full realization of manhood apart from sin. The Christ presented to us, if a man at all, is truly another man, far other than the One "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," the One "crucified through weakness," now "living by the power of God." But I do not intend to enter upon this further now.

There is yet one thing which should be considered before we close,—a doctrine which is indeed, as it would seem, rather shaping itself than already having received its final shape, but which, nevertheless, presents certain features that can be distinctly enough set forth. It is, in fact, a new ritualism, a sacramental doctrine which, however, in contrast with most doctrines of this character, lowers instead of exalting this so necessary sacrament itself. The doctrine is, in other words, that the sanctuary in which we approach God is the assembly, come to-

gether, with the Lord in His place; and the Lord's supper is the way into it, it is the introductory act into the assembly. Once in the assembly your worship becomes of another and distinctly higher character. It is a distress to have hymns and praises expressing the worship of the sanctuary in connection with the remembrance of the Lord in the supper or before this. The supper is the way in which He makes His presence good to and felt by us. When He instituted it, He was about to leave His own after the flesh, and shows them how He would make good His presence to them after He left them. It is a question whether the remembrance of Him connects itself with the sufferings at all. It is calling Him to mind. The instant you call Him to mind, you call Him to mind as the living One. It is the Person. The bread and the wine set before us death accomplished, not accomplishing. One would be slow to make limitations, to prevent the heart traveling over all His sorrows, but we must have it set in the right direction.

In some expressions of this doctrine there is, in fact, a perfect confusion between the remembrance of Him and His presence in the assembly; but it is agreed that as soon as the supper is ended you are in the assembly proper. The praises assume a new character, a character of worship in a higher sense than you were capable of before. In fact, now the sanctuary is open to you, although this must be a practical realization for each one; as to the mass of those gathered, a realization little found, but it is what we are now invited to. Outside of the gathering of the assembly you may have a sense of boldness, but you cannot really enter into the sanctuary

except when gathered together, because all is dependent upon Christ, upon the place which He has taken, and it is in the midst of the church that He gives praise unto God; that is, He does not sing with you individually. You sink your individuality in the assembly. His presence makes it the holiest.

This will suffice at present for the doctrine. In taking it up, let us first of all consider how Scripture puts these various subjects before us, the manner of its doing this having great importance, as we shall see. The doctrine we are considering is evidently based largely indeed upon a supposed order of Scripture,—the order in the first of Corinthians. You find there the supper first, then you go on to the assembly and the various gifts exercised according to God. It is admitted, however, that Corinthians omits this very important view of the "sanctuary." The sanctuary constituted by the gathering of the saints is, in fact, nowhere in it, nor the worship of this highest sort, of which we are told. This is noted, indeed, by the advocates of this view. It is explained very simply by the fact that the Corinthians were too unspiritual for the apostle to enter into it with them, so that the omission of what is essential to the doctrine is quite easy to be understood!

To find the doctrine you must go on to Hebrews; only in Hebrews, in fact, you don't find it either. In Hebrews you have, as is evident, no gathering of the assembly as such at all, no constitution of the gathered saints into the sanctuary, no supper of the Lord as introducing you in. All these things, Scripture in the most distinct way, and surely with divine wisdom, has separated widely from one another, in order that there may be no possibility of founding a ritual-

istic doctrine upon anything for which it can be really quoted. The simplicity of Scripture as to all this is indeed of the most striking sort. No doubt you have in Corinthians the assembly as the temple of God, but it is not connected with worship in any way whatever. Both in the first and second epistles, the doctrine is given to show you the holiness that attaches to the assembly and to warn against any thing that would be a profanation of this. When we come to the supper, you have what is simplicity itself. It is the remembrance, not of a living, but of a dead Lord. We show the Lord's death. Living He is, surely; if He were not, all this would be in vain, but it is not as living we remember Him. This is the confusion which, as we know, Romanism has made, but which it is strange to find continued by those who are almost at the other extreme from it. Nothing is plainer than that the bread and the wine signify for us the body and blood of Christ, the body and blood separate, a dead Christ and not a living One. You remember Him, you don't realize His presence with you; that is not the way it is put, but the very opposite.

You remember the past in the present. It is a past indeed, which presents the One who is a living Person in the most blessed way to the soul. His death is that which surely expresses His love in its fullest, in His gift of Himself for us. Nevertheless, we are looking back, not forward. We are looking down, if you please, not up. Our fellowship is the fellowship of His body and of His blood. The blood presented to us in memorial is, nevertheless, that which was most distinctly shed in the past. He is not entered as flesh and blood into heaven. He is not with us

now in that character upon the earth. Yet we know Him by what He was upon the earth, and in no way more deeply than in all this story of His love-death for us to which the supper recalls us. Think of being told that the highest character of worship cannot be rightly found in connection with that in which the Lord's heart is told out as in nothing else ! Yet this is only the threshold. It is only the way in. We must leave it behind and get beyond it, although in the Acts the disciples were gathered together to break bread,—not by means of the breaking of bread to do something else. The breaking of bread was the object of the gathering, and how simple is the language used ever !—“the breaking of bread.” With all the wonderful implications there are in it for us, yet how sedulously does Scripture keep us to the most perfect simplicity about it ! We are not even told that we gather together to worship God. It is sufficient, it expresses all that need be said, to say that we are gathered together to remember Christ,—on the resurrection day indeed, but to look back upon His death. Resurrection is surely needed in order to put the remembrance in its right place, but to say that we must get past the remembrance in order to enter into the worship aright, is the most presumptuous violation of Scripture and of all propriety for the Christian soul that one could think of, as committed by those who own, nevertheless, what Christ's death is for them.

When we come to the assembly afterwards in the fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, we have the regulation of gift in its exercise for the edification of the assembly. We have no doctrine of the assembly as the sanctuary at all. It is not even wor-

ship that is spoken of. It is *ministry*; and that so clearly that there cannot be a possibility of question as to it. If, therefore, the way in which these truths are put together has any meaning for us, the ritualism which is now intruding amongst those who might be thought the freest from it, can have no place.

When we go on to Hebrews, as already said, there is no gathering of the assembly as such, that is contemplated at all. The approach to God in the holiest is entirely separated from every question of circumstances. It is as open, so far as Hebrews leads us, to the individual saint anywhere, as it is to the assembly; and how important it is to realize this; for the rent veil, (which indeed is denied to be in Hebrews at all,) is that which is the very characteristic of Christianity itself. It is that in which the true light already shines for us and which is the sign of the full liberty of worship that belongs to us now, as those no more at a distance, but brought near to God. Our drawing near does not depend upon a meeting, but it depends upon power in the Spirit alone. We have access through Christ, by one Spirit, unto the Father.

It is surely true that Christ, in the midst of the Church, gives praise unto God. No doubt it is true that we are able by grace to be in fellowship with Him in these praises of His,—nay, in our measure to express them as gathered together. Nevertheless, that is an inference, and not a direct scripture doctrine. The doctrine is that it is He who in the midst of the assembly,—not by means of the assembly,—gives praise to God. As we find it in the twenty-second psalm it refers indeed to the gathering of the

disciples after His resurrection when they are put into the place in which His work has set them. The praises at that time were surely His alone. Let us make whatever inferences are legitimate from it. No Christian will make any objection to that, but every right minded Christian will make an objection to having an inference forced upon him as a doctrine of such weighty import as is supposed, and which is used, in fact, to divert him from the very object for which the assembly comes together, which is to remember Him.

In Hebrews there is no supper and no assembly. We have a blessed way of access to God. There is a new and living way which He has opened for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. It is remarkable that where, in the doctrine before us, we have the gathering of the saints, as in Corinthians, there is no sanctuary worship, and that where we have the sanctuary worship, as in Hebrews, it is denied that there is a rent veil, and therefore a way of access in that way at all. The fact is we are told that the object of Hebrews is to give us boldness to enter, but there we stop. There is no entrance actually spoken of; yet we are of course to enter, but the very idea of entering *through* the veil, it seems, shows that the veil is not rent. How it shows it will be a mystery to most, probably, to understand. It is quite true the veil is not looked at as put away, but that we do enter through it. The veil is the flesh of Jesus, and the entrance is made for us by His death. We enter by the veil, but by a way of access opened for us through it.

Where is the contradiction between the *rent* veil being there, and our entering through?

But this unrent veil in Hebrews has another purpose in the view that is held. It cuts off still the holy place from the holiest, only with this effect, that the holy place, the place of the table, the candlestick and the shew-bread, has dropped out now. It is Jewish and we have nothing to do with it. All that you have in the present time is the holiest. You have no holy place. That has no present standing; and if it is still said that Christ is the the Minister of the sanctuary,—or, as we are reminded we ought to take it, as the Minister of the holy places, that has a sort of general reference, wider of course than Christianity, in order expressly to guard against the thought of the holy place having any reference to the Christian. It has been asked, why does it say, then, that Christ entered into the *holy place* with His own blood? but that is very simply settled. It is supposed that that *means* the holiest. There is no other word for holiest and you must take it in its connection; and if it be asked, did not the rending of the veil bring the holy place and the holiest together? it is answered, the ground taken is that the first tabernacle has no standing. Therefore you have nothing left except the holiest.

Now the doctrine of Hebrews is, in fact, quite otherwise. "The first tabernacle," as the apostle says, was practically the holy place for Israel. They could not (except the high-priest, on one day in the year) enter into the holiest at all. There was a first tabernacle that they could enter, and a second tabernacle that they could not enter. This first tabernacle, as such, has necessarily come to an end by

the rending of the veil. The moment the veil is rent you have a holy place which is formed of the two holy places contemplated before. The first, *as first*, has come to an end. There is for us no *first* tabernacle; that is true; but as the word really is, we have "boldness to enter into the holy *places* by the blood of Jesus." That is the express doctrine as taught in Hebrews itself, that the holy place exists still,—nay, the holy places; while indeed they are one for us. Thus it is that Christ entered by His own blood into the holy *place*. It is sufficient to say that, while this holy place is by that very fact holy and holiest all in one, thus we have liberty to draw nigh indeed, and we enter not by some new experience of our own about it, but simply "by the blood of Jesus." This in its essence abides for us as Christians wherever we may be,—alone, together, in the assembly, or in our daily walk. It is the character of Christianity; and we are not Christians at certain times or occasions, but we are Christians all the time. A "better hope" has come in for us than the law could give men, for the law made nothing perfect, but we now, by Him who has entered into God's presence for us, draw nigh to God.

In a word, all this ritualism is a plain invention. Neither Corinthians nor Hebrews knows anything of it. Let anyone take simply the passages in which the Lord's supper is spoken of, and let them realize the impression that is made upon them by the deepest consideration that they can give such things. The simplicity of Scripture appeals to us all and would put the simplest believer into his place with God, privileged to be a worshiper, not through any attainment of his own, but through the work of

Another. The constant aim of all that view of things that we have been considering is aristocratic. It is to make a distinct class amongst Christians, to comfort some perhaps with the thought of how much they have attained, to occupy others with themselves after another fashion, and put them practically at a distance.

It is not Christ Himself that in all this is rightly set before the soul, but our experiences with regard to Him; which indeed the Spirit of God works in us as our eyes are upon Christ and our hearts realize His love, but which are put in the wrong place, so that, in fact, we lose very much that which it is the apparent effort to make us gain. Let us keep Scripture as God has given it to us, surely best so, and let us not supplement it with thoughts to which Scripture may perhaps be supposed to give the limit, lest we should go astray, but which Scripture itself has not inspired.

F. W. G.

A TWENTIETH CENTURY NEW TESTAMENT.

THE century which has come in has no doubt great things for us. If it has not, it will disappoint the hopes of its many glorifiers. We have been making in the last already so much progress that one can hardly set any limit to the progress we may be supposed capable of making at the present time. The drudgery of the work has been well nigh done for us. There remains only to enter into the fulness of all that this implies.

Scripture itself is to share in the progress made and to have stamped upon it the impress of the

Twentieth Century. The higher criticism has already been employed upon this work, as we know, and for many professing Christians it has largely remodeled the Bible. It has taught us, at least, that we must not think of any inspiration of the *words* of Scripture. Religious truths may be given us all right, but that is in a general sense merely. We must not base anything upon certain words. It is a natural consequence that we should have a New Testament now proffered us, in which the husk of old time verbiage shall be laid aside, and we shall have the necessary sense only, given in all its simplicity as suited for us to-day.

That is the aim, as is evident, of the translators of the "Twentieth Century New Testament." They have, in fact, done this. They have given us Scripture in a free translation,—not that they will allow it to be a paraphrase simply. It is a translation, but still a translation of the freest character possible, in which their own words are largely substituted for the words of Scripture, and not only this, but the Scripture statements are supplemented by all necessary words to make them plain to the ordinary capacity of men.

It looks very promising; for in fact, what could one desire more than that the knowledge of Scripture should be made as accessible as possible to the masses, that all difficulties should be removed out of the way of those who, as we know, find at present so many? Will there not be, in this way, an advance all along the line for those who at present have been making doubtful progress, or are perhaps shut up to get what they can from their guides, less and less faith as they may be finding in the guides themselves?

It is not necessary to go deeply into any review of the work in question. A few characteristics of it may be not without help to some; and the first point, of course, is just as to the translation. Is it fairly, honestly, rightly that? We ought to have no objection surely to any fresh translation, many as these may be already. No one can claim to be so perfect as to have no need of being supplemented by another, and there is in the very fact of different translations a help afforded to us to get out of the mere familiarity with words which may, by that very familiarity, have been dulling to us the very truth that is in them.

Exercise also is gained in this way. If competent men differ with regard to the meaning of Scripture, it is a great blessing for any Christian who knows that he has the Spirit of God to guide him and who can count upon God for it, to be able to compare these together and realize, either which is the suited meaning, or to gather perhaps, a greater blessing by putting them all together.

It is evident, however, that the translators before us have not a supposition that there can be properly any question about that which they have given us. There is one remarkable peculiarity about the book, and that is that wherever you look in it, from the first page to the last, there is no alternative rendering suggested for a moment. The Greek means what they say it does, and it means nothing else. Translators hitherto have never been able to reach this wonderful accuracy, but have often been content to indicate their own doubt about what they are giving. The Twentieth Century, it seems, is to do away with all such doubt. It is to give us some-

thing so simple that no one can be in doubt as to it, and so thoroughly the meaning of the original (for it is a translation, so we are told) that all former differences shall be reconciled and come to an end in what they have accomplished for us.

Nevertheless, when we take up the book, it is rather startling to find that some words that we have thought fundamental to Christianity have almost dropped out altogether.

We sing sometimes:

"Grace is a charming sound
Harmonious to the ear,"

but it is evident that to the translators there is no harmony in the thought of grace at all. The word is really dropped out of their translation. "Grace to you from God" means simply, "God bless you." In the large part of the passages it is translated "mercy," although there is another word distinctly in Scripture for mercy, and which is given as such by themselves. Sometimes it is absolutely left out: there is no word for it. The grace given to the apostle becomes simply a charge entrusted to him. Where he tells us that he "received grace and apostleship" (Rom. i. 5), we find that he means simply that "we received our apostolic office." There is no need to quote passages any further. It is certain that grace as we have learned it has dropped out from the new Bible.

When we come to justification, we find it is our "being made to stand right with God." Sometimes, indeed, but rarely, it is our "being accepted as righteous." "Those who received His calling He also accepted as righteous." But the general sense

is given as we have already said; and while righteousness may be supposed to be implied in it, it is certainly not expressed.

Sanctification, too, seems to have disappeared. It is translated variously. "Christ our sanctification" means "Christ our holiness." "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" is to be read rather as: "You washed yourselves clean, you became separate from the world, you were pardoned." This is all the sample that is perhaps needed. If the apostle speaks of our coming "short of the glory of God," we find that he means: "We have come short of God's glorious ideal," and again instead of having "hope of the glory of God," this means "hope of attaining God's glorious ideal."

Almost everything seems in a similar way to be debased and degraded. Look at a passage that one could hardly think could by any maltreatment be stripped of its blessedness for us, and see what is made of it: "We all with unveiled face see as if reflected in a mirror the splendor of the Lord and are being transformed into His likeness from one degree of splendor to another as it comes from the Lord even the Spirit."

Sometimes a doctrine that has been in question is very definitely announced. Thus, in Colossians we are told: "In baptism you were buried with Christ and in *baptism* you were also raised to life with Him." In the second case there is no word for baptism at all in the original, although the common translation gives "wherein," but many have believed,—and the passage itself gives abundant reason for it,—that this should be "in whom," the Greek word being in itself indecisive. Our transla-

tors make no doubt about it. They insert the absent word, in order that we shall definitely know that it is in baptism that we were raised to life with Him.

These quotations are given simply as specimens of a work which in itself has perhaps too little significance to be noticed at all, and for the mass of Christians one would sincerely hope is outside of any possibility of harm for them. Nevertheless, who knows, in days which have produced "Christian science," with many another system in which one would think people were learning to repeat the old formula of the schoolmen and to believe *because* it was impossible? The translators tell us that they have met with great encouragement already. Their work is published by a publisher of evangelical literature, and therefore comes commended to us by his imprint; and, alas, in a world where weeds and thorns spring up naturally, and flowers and fruits have to be cultivated, it is a mercy sometimes to destroy seeds that in themselves are worthless.

There is one point that we ought to note, which this translation presses upon us; and that is that the longing which most, perhaps, naturally have for an entirely simple Bible is one which Scripture itself would set aside altogether. All Scripture is profitable, but "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." It is not so intended as that every one should be capable of penetrating its depths apart from the guidance of the Spirit of God, nor is it intended that we should realize in Scripture a book that any of us are capable of possessing ourselves of at short notice, by a mere making plain of so much Greek. God means us to be exercised over it. His word tries us. The wilful

and the unbelieving will go astray still, and no help can be given them, and help it certainly is not, to any who deserve help, to have Scripture flattened down for them to the level of the mind of a few men who are supposed to have compassed the meaning in such sort as to make it all perfectly plain to the meanest capacity, and leave no difficulty anywhere for any one.

F. W. G.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 1.—I have been puzzled about the word "hato" or "hateth" as it occurs in different passages in the Bible, and I have been unable to reconcile Luke xiv. 26 with 1 Jno. iii. 15; also ninth and eleventh verses of the second chapter.

In Rom. ix. 13, the word occurs again, and I have difficulty in thinking that the Lord used the word "hate" in the sense that we use it now.

ANS.—Undoubtedly the Lord used the strong expression "hate," not absolutely but in the way of comparison. One must be prepared for His sake to renounce father, mother, sister, brother. "He that loveth" any of these more than Him, is not worthy of Him. We are in this way to hate our own lives also. The meaning is evident. The strength of the expression is to arrest the attention. The Lord's claim is absolute.

THE fisherman does not spend the whole of his time in fishing, though about fishing; he uses many hours in mending his nets. And those who fish for souls need prepare for their work by reading and prayer.—H. F. W.

THE RECKONING OF TIME;

LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

WE purpose to take a brief glance at the history of God's ancient people—Israel, and note the different periods of their history from the beginning to the end; namely, from Abraham's birth to that period called the Millennium. These lessons will be of great value if we take the practical lessons to ourselves, and again, as we proceed and discover their accuracy they will more and more convince us of the truth of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. A monarch, it is said, asked his chaplain once to give proof in one word of the authenticity of the Bible. The chaplain returned in three days with this answer,—Israel. Theirs, truly, has been an eventful history, "written for our admonition," and their presence and place upon earth even now, is an abiding proof of the truth of Holy Scripture.

We will look at that history and divide it into four cycles of time. First, from Abraham to the Exodus; second, from the Exodus to the dedication of Solomon's temple; third, from the dedication of Solomon's temple to Daniel's prophecy; fourth, from Daniel and the time Daniel received his prophecy to the Millennium. Each of these periods, carefully reckoned, cover about the same number of years. The first begins with Abraham; the next, with Moses; the third, with Solomon; and the fourth, with Daniel the prophet. Let us carefully look at Scripture for proof, and when we gather that, we will look at the after lessons. In each period, we have said, the time is about the same, if not exactly so; that is,

when we look at the true order of reckoning time, each period will be found similar to the last one, which was revealed to Daniel—70 weeks of years, or 490 years (Dan. ix. 24-27).*

CYCLE I.

From Abraham to the Exodus. Two scriptures seem to cover this. Abraham was 75 years when he came into the land (Gen. xii. 4), and the law was 430 years after (Gal. iii. 17). This makes in all 505 years. This is the first count. This is the full time given, but we must look somewhat deeper and see what further we can learn from this period. Abraham went down to Egypt in the time of famine. This, all will admit, was a grievous failure on Abraham's part, and led to grievous results; he received Hagar into his home, and in this, clearly, Abraham was in a path of unbelief. This was 10 years after he first entered Canaan, which would make him 85 years old. At the age of 85, Hagar enters (Gen. xvi. 3), and soon after Ishmael was born. What a departure for the man of faith from that highly exalted path! But, eventually, Abraham now restored and in Canaan, God fulfils His promise in giving him Isaac (chap. xxi. 5). Abraham by this time is 100 years old. Hagar entered at 85; Isaac was given at 100; what sorrow Abraham experienced between! Here we have 15 years of time, which if deducted from 505 leaves just 490 years, from Abraham to the Exodus. The whole period, 505 years, with Abraham's 15 years deducted, leaves our cycle

* These "weeks" or rather *heptads* are manifestly the *sabbatical heptad*; each seventh year being a "sabbath" year. See Lev. xxv. 4, 8; Deut. xv. 1.

490, or 70 weeks of years. Abraham lost these 15 years as a testimony, and for reward at the judgment-seat. This way of deducting time from natural history, illustrating for us God's holiness, will get more confirmation as we proceed.

CYCLE 2.

This second period begins with the Exodus and goes to the dedication of Solomon's temple, which is about the same space of time, if not exactly. We will need here to examine the Scriptures carefully, and get all that God has said.

From 1 Kings vi. 1, we get one date. Solomon began to build the temple 480 years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. This is one of the passages which have given material for "higher critics" to use against verbal inspiration,—notably among them Bishop Colenso. Yet, for the true believer, while many parts of such a wonderful book may not be at once clear, humility would attribute the mist to our poor perception rather than cast a shadow of doubt upon the sacred Scriptures; and the very difficulties, in the end, only furnish the reverent student with more abundant truth. If the whole history is counted from Exodus, we will find 573 years in all. For this see Acts xiii. 18-22. The wilderness history was 40 years. Then He gave them the Judges by the space of 450 years, till Samuel. Then the reign of king Saul, 40 years; and finally, David, 40 years, and Solomon, 3 years to the building of the temple. Thus, altogether, we get 573 years. But 1 Kings vi. 1, states clearly 480 years—a difference of 93. How can we account for the missing 93 years? The natural man sees them not

and concludes that the Bible contradicts itself. But when a search is made, and God's holiness apprehended in reckoning time, the lesson is clear, and Scripture true and perfect. We will now look at the Book of Judges.

We have already seen how 15 years are deducted from Abraham's history in Genesis; now, in Judges, we are to learn lessons of a similar character. Israel turned away from the Lord five times, which altogether is 93 years. In Judges iii. 7, 8, they were captives for their sins 8 years. In vers. 12-14, captive again 18 years. In chap. iv. 1-3, captive again 20 years. In chap. vi. 1, captive for 7 years. In chap. xiii. 1, captive to the Philistines, 40 years. (This last includes the 18 years mentioned in chap. x. 7, 8, embracing the whole captivity of the Philistines.) We now sum up the whole period in which they were captives on account of their failure, and get 93 years in all:—the missing 93 years in 1 Kings vi. 1. Does it not manifest man's short-sightedness, as well as the educated ignorance to be found in the schools of "higher critics"? In the very places where they vainly think they can find flaws and mistakes, in these very places the true believer finds a feast,—finds light and truth; the holiness, as well as the grace of God, thus is better understood.

We see, then, that as Abraham lost 15 years, Israel lost 93, which, if deducted from 573, leaves us 480 years till Solomon began to build the temple. Seven years it was in building (1 Kings vi. 38), which would make 487, and if the dedication was 3 years later, as is supposed, the period is exactly the same as the first 490 years. It was some time later than 487 as the building was completed the *eighth* month

(chap. vi. 38), and the dedication was the *seventh* month (chap. viii. 2), which could not therefore have been the same year the building was completed; hence, the dedication was at a later time. To give time for garnishing and furnishing all the vessels of service, it is very probable that the dedication was about the 3rd year, the work of chap. vii. coming between the completion of the main body of the temple, and the dedication, which took place in chap. viii. Hence, the whole period would be about 490 years, if not actually so.

CYCLE 3.

From the dedication of the temple to the close of the Babylonish captivity when Daniel received his last prophecy, we have a period of 560 years in all. (See the chronological dates at 1 Kings viii., B. C. 1005, and Nehe. ii., B. C. 445, thus leaving exactly 560 years.) This is again the natural count; but what shall we say of the 70 years in Babylon? Shall we deduct them? Surely, if we continue the lesson of holiness; and if 70 is deducted from 560, the balance will be as before, 490 years (70 weeks). Just and true are all Jehovah's ways, and in the end *all* shall justify Him in *all* His ways.

CYCLE 4.

This cycle completes the prophetic history of that people (now but two tribes), and brings us down to the end, to the second coming of Christ when God shall make them a name and a praise in all the earth. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and thy holy city" (Jerusalem) (Dan. ix. 24). This gives the closing cycle of their history until the Millennium. The first section, 7

weeks (49 years), with the second, 62 weeks (434 years), bring us to the time when the Messiah was "cut off;" there we stand beside the Cross, and halt. Sixty-nine weeks only have been fulfilled, one week is yet future. Where shall we place this last week, or 7 years of Daniel's prophecy? Abraham lost 15 years; Israel lost 93 in the time of the Judges, and afterwards 70 in Babylon, all on account of their sins. But where can we trace departure from God and from truth like the rejection of Christ, which is expressed in the Cross? For this they are set aside as a nation to-day, as Romans xi. clearly states. And God is now visiting another people,—the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name (Acts xv. 14). Thus we get this interval of grace, coming in between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel, and for the Jew it is all deducted time, lost time, a blank. Daniel quietly passes over this interval and sees it not. This was left for another to unfold, for Paul, not Daniel (Eph. iii.). Sixty-nine weeks were completed at the Cross, and there He ceased to count time for them. They are now away from their inheritance and sanctuary, and without a king, priest or a sacrifice (Hos. iii. 4, 5). During this interval, all dates are suspended (Acts i. 7; Gal. iv. 9-11). Times and seasons belong to the earth and the earthly people—the Jews, and are given in Daniel in 70 weeks of time. The same is taken up again in Revelation, from chaps. vi. to xix., after the Church interval which embraces only Rev. ii. and iii.—the present interval of grace.

During this dispensation, we have said, those dates do not apply. A new work of grace—a "mystery" comes in and is unfolded between the 69th and 70th

week of Daniel.* While Christ has gone back to the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit is present upon the earth, and the Church, the body of Christ, is being called out and formed, and the hope of the Church is "the Morning Star"—Christ's coming in the air (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). In this, the ministry of the apostle Paul comes to the front, unfolding, as he does in his epistles, the formation and character of the Church, as well as her hope and destiny. We find no dates here; in this time they have no place. Dates refer to Jewish people and Jewish history, and this whole period is a blank for them. The hope of the Church has been the second coming of Christ since the beginning. The apostles did not know whether this would take place in the first century or the 20th, and none have been informed since. The Word was completed by the apostle Paul (Col. i. 25),—no new subject has been given since, and we look for none. How long this dispensation will continue, none here can say. How soon our Lord may return, none here know; but it is the blessed hope of the Church. At His coming in the air and the translation of the saints to heaven (as seen in Enoch, the type of our translation), this interval will close, and the last week of Daniel's prophecy will be taken up and fulfilled.

This last week covers the whole portion of Revelation chaps. vi. to xix., in which dates again appear; all refer to these last 7 years of Daniel's prophecy; mainly to the last half, in which we have 1260 days, (3½ years) 42 months, (3½ years) time, times, and half

This is beautifully shown by a little chart in a pamphlet "The Mystery—the Church of God," 15 cents.

a time (3½ years). In accord to this the different themes, and different lines of ministry can be readily discerned. Daniel refers to the earth and the earthly people, as also Rev. vi. to xix. Paul's ministry refers to the heavenly people and their hope and inheritance. When these distinctions are seen, the different errors taught in confounding these lines are readily discerned, and the hope of the Church will shine out clear and distinct. Lord, revive with freshness in our hearts this bright hope of the "Morning Star," as before our eyes!

At the close of this last period of Daniel's prophecy and time of trouble for Israel (Jer. xxx. 7), and the nations also (Rev. vii.) the Lord will appear "as the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv.). His feet will touch the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv.), He will then deliver Israel, and through them blessing will flow to the now heathen world. This will be the Golden Age of prophecy,—the days of heaven upon the earth; the days that God's earthly people, Israel, have always looked forward to. (See Isa. xi.; lx.; Jer. xxx.; Ezek. xxxvii.; Zech. viii.; xiv.) However much that hope has been clouded in their minds through unbelief, yet all the promises will be made good to them.

But *our* hope is far different. Before them lies Daniel's last week. But *we* look for our translation before that event. They look for Palestine as their inheritance; our inheritance is reserved for us in heaven. They are an earthly people; we, Christians, are a heavenly people. Their hope "the Sun of Righteousness;" ours, "the Morning Star;" and the last week of Daniel is the dark interval between those two events.

Recapitulating briefly: We see that four periods complete Israel's history.

1st. From the birth of Abraham to the Exodus, 505 years, with the 15 deducted, leaves 490, *i. e.*, 70 weeks.

2nd. From the Exodus to the dedication of the Temple, 583 years in all, with their 93 years in the book of Judges deducted, also leaves 490; another 70 weeks.

3rd. From the dedication to Daniel's prophecy, 560 years, with 70 years in Babylon deducted, leaves again 70 weeks.

4th. From Daniel's prophecy to the Millennial period, (dropping out this whole Church dispensation—all between the 69th and 70th week) gives us the 490 years, another 70 weeks—4 cycles of the same duration. This number also, 70 times 7 (49 as seen in Matt. xviii. 22, is one that is expressive perfect grace and forbearance, which surely can be seen in Jehovah's ways with Israel in every period of their history. And we are exhorted to be imitators of Him in this grace towards each other.

How perfect are God's ways! Who can doubt His plans? When this double way of reckoning time is understood many things become plain. The *verba inspiration* of Scripture is confirmed, and the truth of 1 Ki. vi. 1 is seen to be correct, and "higher critics are reprov'd for their short-sightedness and unbelief.

Underlying this wonderful history we would note a spiritual lesson, and close this brief review. God's principles and His truth never change. His holiness is the same now as in the past dispensation, and we are safe in applying the history of Israel as typical of

ourselves. "All these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). The end of the believer's path here will bring him one day face to face with the Judgment-seat (*Beema*) of Christ. The Lord himself will occupy that seat (2 Cor. v. 10). Then each believer will look back and "remember all the way,"—every step of the journey "and every one of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 10-12). Grace and mercy will never be more manifest to each believer than there. The grace that saved, and the mercy all along the way up to the end will be understood aright and appreciated fully; but holiness will be shown there also. The even balance of truth we will see—God is light, and God is love.

How this truth should spur our hearts and stir our consciences! What about the valuable time granted us now, to serve and glorify the peerless name of the Lord Jesus? The *hours*, the *days*, the *weeks*, the *months*, the *years*,—how has our time been used and in what way?—serious and pointed questions for both reader and writer! May we lay them well to heart. At the Judgment-seat will be a careful reckoning up of time. A perfect Hand will balance all correctly, and His judgment none will for a moment dispute. He who loves His own people and values also every moment of their heart's communion and service, will reward each one according to his works. What a searching thought! Abraham, we see, lost 15 years because of his unbelief and departure from God. Israel, as a nation, lost 93 years in the book of Judges, and at an after date 70 years in Babylon, with their harps hung upon the willows;

and what shall we say of this whole dispensation? It has been lost to the Jew, and God has ceased to count time for them since this break in their history. For *us* the history and its lessons are given that we might not fail as they failed. The word of God has been preserved for us. The Holy Spirit is given to each believer to teach us that Word; and therein we get *the path* and *work* for each believer marked out. Do we search that Word earnestly? Do we earnestly desire each day to follow where it leads? Here, and here only, is the believer right. Here, and here alone, will time truly count. When the heart grows cold, as in the case of Ephesus (Rev. ii. 4, 5) and the feet wander from the right path, all this time will be deducted for us too. True believers possess eternal life, and can never be lost, (John. x. 27-29) but time they may lose, and their rewards also, at the Judgment-seat (1 Cor. iii. 9-15).

Let us, then be admonished by Israel's history. Let us give ourselves more unreservedly to the search of God's holy word and earnest prayer, that we may be sanctified by the truth. That, until we see Him face to face, we may follow Him our Saviour and Lord, who is worthy of our undivided hearts.

A. E. B.

THE WAY TO THE HOUSE.

Ps. lxxxiv.

"A PSALM FOR THE SONS OF KORAH."

THOUGH we are not given the name of the penman of this exquisite psalm, we are permitted to know for whose special use it was penned; for while there is no reason to question the genuineness of the headings of psalms in general, this psalm

bears intrinsic evidence that its heading is correct; thus from whom would verse 10 (where the sons of Korah declare that they would rather be doorkeepers in the house of their God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness) so appropriately come, as from those to whom their office of being doorkeepers had been specially assigned? (1 Chron. ix. 19.)

Let us for a moment recall the facts. At the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, we read that the wives and sons and little children of the two latter (who were Reubenites and who therefore did not accompany Korah, who was a Levite, to the door of the tabernacle), came out and stood with Dathan and Abiram at the door of their tents (Num. xvi. 27) and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and *all the men* that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods (ver. 32). Thus Dathan's and Abiram's households were swallowed up, but only the *men* of Korah's family perished; for the children of Korah had neither accompanied their father to the door of the tabernacle, where he perished by fire (vers. 19, 35), nor came out to their tent-doors as the children of Dathan and Abiram did, and were in consequence swallowed up; so that we read that "the children of Korah died not" (Num. xxvi. 11). But where sin abounded grace did overabound. At the door of the tabernacle Korah and his two hundred and fifty companions met their doom by fire; the guardianship of the door of the tabernacle should be henceforth his children's special charge. And a delightful task they found it. There was no irksomeness in their duties. They would rather be doorkeepers in the

house of their God than dwell, as Dathan and Abiram had done, in the tents of wickedness.

And, objects of grace themselves, out of full hearts they sing their song, exalting at once their service, and the beauty and attractiveness of the courts to which that service attached. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts," they cry, and go on to express the fainting longing of their hearts for those courts, where even the worthless sparrow and vagrant swallow could find a home,—fit types of Israel who in their worthlessness had wandered far.

But what of those whose weary wanderings were over, whose feet were no longer "in the ways," but who were at rest within the courts? "Blessed," cry the sons of Korah, "blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee." There remained a rest for the people of God. They had proved Jehovah in the way, amid all its trials and difficulties and tears; but the trials were now over, the difficulties but a memory, and the tears forever dried. And if amidst its sorrows, they had praised Him on the way, they would praise Jehovah still. At rest in Jehovah's courts, they would *still* be praising Him.

But if they were blessed who, all their troubles over, were safely housed, blessed too were those who were yet on their way to Jehovah's courts. They, passing as Israel will yet have to pass, through the valley of Baca,—the vale of tears—make it a well; they find a source of blessing down here in their very tears; for the well speaks to us of refreshment from below: nor was this all, as that little word "also" beautifully shows; blessing should also accompany them from on high, "for the rain also"—that comes

down from above—"covereth it with blessings" (R. V.). Thus earthly refreshment and heavenly blessing were alike theirs.

But were these blessings unconditional? Would Israel unconditionally rise superior to the trials of the way to Jehovah's house? Conditions there were, and these the sons of Korah proceed to lay down. First in order for Israel in the latter day to find earthly and heavenly blessing in their trials, their strength must be in Jehovah. Secondly, their heart must be in the way to Jehovah's courts, and the way in their hearts—"in whose heart are the ways." But wherever there was one whose soul longed, yea, even fainted for the courts of Jehovah, whose heart and flesh cried out for the living God, that one should go from strength to strength—the very trials of such should energize their souls, and every one should finally appear before God in Zion.

Now, "no prophecy of Scripture is of private (or special) interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20): *i. e.*, we cannot take a scripture and bind it down simply and solely to one sole and only interpretation, however true that interpretation may be. True, this psalm was written primarily for the sons of Korah, and it deals primarily with Israel and their latter-day trials and blessings. But were we to bind the interpretation down exclusively to their primary meaning we should rob our souls of infinite blessing in reading the Psalms. How many an one who knows nothing of dispensational truth has derived the deepest comfort from the Psalms! As Mr. Spurgeon once remarked, there is no depth of sorrow into which we can descend, nor height of joy to which we can rise, but we find that David has been there before us! Thus,

that which primarily applied to him is fraught with richest blessing for ourselves. Truly the Bible is not like a book of man's production, which has a "private interpretation"—an explanation, that is, alone applicable to it; but, being God's work, the meaning of any particular passage cannot be confined to that interpretation which lies primarily and obviously on its face. Hence this psalm of the sons of Korah has its application to ourselves. We, like Israel, who in the latter day will have to win their way through trial and difficulty to Jehovah's house *on earth*, have ours to win towards the Father's house *on high*; and trials and tears lie in our path. The way to the throne has ever lain through the pit, whether in Joseph's case, the great Anti-Type's, or our own. But if God is our strength, and the ways to the Father's house are in our hearts, those tears which God puts in His bottle, those sorrows which He notes in His book, shall work us present and eternal blessing. Oh, tried and tested fellow-believer, you are in God's school, where "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Therefore you may glory in tribulation also; and, Jehovah being your strength, in all these things you are more than conquerors; for earthly victors conquer when their difficulties are overcome: you conquer *in them*; your tears become a well, and rain from heaven covers you with blessings; for, Achsah-like, the upper and the nether springs are yours (Josh. xv. 16). And hence it is that you shall go from strength to strength—"there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Ps. cv.

37); but "every one appeareth before God in Zion."
 "He never promised me," said an aged widow in Devonshire to the writer, who had but three shillings a week to live on,— "He never promised me a smooth passage, but He *has* promised me a safe landing."

Yea, His sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand. Herein is the "final perseverance," not of the sheep, but of the Shepherd. "I am the *Good* Shepherd," He says. If He lost but one of His sheep He would lose His reputation also. He will never do this; He leadeth them in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake—that name of *Good* Shepherd. Blessed Saviour, who having loved His own that were in the world, loved them unto the end.

"O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

JOHN FORT.

HE REFRESHETH MY SOUL.

© LORD, Thy gracious hand
 In love, but heaviness,
 Doth often, and again,
 Through sorrow and through pain,
 (But with intent to bless,)
 Reveal how little like I am
 To Christ my Lord, Thy chosen Lamb.

I may not lift mine eyes
 To Thee my God, and say
 I'm worthy of one thing
 Thy grace to me doth bring:—
 Thy debtor every day—
 Yet, still I plead Thine own sure Word,
 Which casts me on Thy mercy, Lord.

O Christ, my heart's resource,
In whom all fulness is—
My Life, my Light, my Joy,
My Peace, my soul's employ,
My only lasting bliss.
To Thee my longing doth aspire;
To Thee, O Lord, is my desire.

How could this beggared world
Have anything to give?
The things my hands would hold
Might cost me pain untold;
My joy in *Thee* must live,
And so I give them back to Thee
To keep, and sanctify for me.

I know Thou wilt not choose
The heart to be for Thee,
O'er-filled with earthly things;
No heart like this e'er sings .
'The heavenly melody
It gives Thee joy, O Lord, to hear;
Then let me to Thyself draw near.

Nor wilt Thou choose, my God,
The hands to work for Thee
O'er-filled with earthly fruits,
Whose e'er descending roots
Are drawing constantly
Their sustenance (of nothing worth)
From out a ruined, cursed earth.

Thou canst not satisfy
With Thy sweet whisperings
Th' unconsecrated ear,
That seeks and loves to hear
Unhallowed fleshly things
Which waste away the precious days,
And rob Thee of Thy rightful praise.

Thou'lt follow, but not walk
 In close companionship
 With those whose wayward feet
 Have chosen paths unmeet,
 Where they must surely slip.
 What joy untold, they wilful lose,
 Who thus His blessed paths refuse.

Then mould this vessel frail
 With Thine unerring hand;
 I dare not undertake,
 Lest I might rudely break
 Some tender chord or band;
 Thou'lt shape it for eternity,
 And *none* may do this work but Thee.

Thus fashioned, Lord, by Thee,
 I may not choose the *way*
 Thou'lt seek Thy plant to prune,
 Or set my harp in tune
 For some sweet melody,
 Or wake the new, old song again,
 My first love's rapturous refrain.

H. McD.

FAITH AND FAITH'S TESTIMONY TO CHRIST.

Gen. xiii. 14-18; xiv. 1-24; xv. 1.

WHAT a peaceful scene closes the thirteenth chapter of Genesis—a scene which is marked by faith, as the early part of the chapter is marked by the absence of it. Lot chooses, and there is no faith in his choice. In fact, where is there ever to be found faith in this world-bordering child of God? for child of God he must be, according to 2 Pet. ii. 7. But he is never said to walk with God, and God, on other hand, never links His name with Lot. The nearest we get to anything like faith as

connected with him is that he accompanied Abraham, and this is not faith at all. Faith never has a creature for its object, be that creature a saint; but only God. But it is not just now the intention to do more than simply allude to the fact that Lot chose, while Abraham let God choose for him, and to call attention to the contrast.

Let us pass on, then, to Abraham. God calls him to lift up his eyes and to look northward, southward, eastward and westward; and He calls upon him also to rise and walk through the land in its length and breadth, saying that all this land is his and his seed's. How much more he gets than Lot—how much better is God's choice for His people than their choice! And to this gracious promise Abraham, as it were, bows his head in faith and worship; faith, because we read immediately of his tent, the witness that he is a pilgrim for the present and that the promise of the inheritance of the land is received in faith for the future; worship, for he builds an altar to Jehovah. Notice, moreover, that he dwells in Mamre, "the place of fatness." I repeat, then, how peaceful is this picture. God chooses; Abraham accepts the choice in faith and worship. But as we have in this chapter the strong contrast between Abraham and Lot, so we have in the next chapter a vivid contrast to this scene presented to us—the strife of kings—the strife of kings for mastery. We are brought, as it were, from the sanctuary in the thirteenth chapter out into the world of strife and turmoil in the fourteenth chapter. The four kings vanquish the five kings, and they take the spoils with "Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his goods." In other words, it is, as we may say, the same story of victory on the one

hand and defeat on the other, that makes up the history of the world, one in the ascendancy now, only to be put down, and another to take that place a little later; without stability and permanence anywhere, it is, and will continue to be, until He comes whose right it is to reign, nothing but overturn, overturn, overturn.

But how strikingly Abraham now brings into this scene in his own person, the hopes of the former chapter; he is the man of faith, whether in receiving God's promise, or in pursuing and conquering kings. He overtakes and overcomes the kings and recovers both Lot and Lot's goods and also the spoils. In the victory that has just before been recorded, do we not see, as it were, the potsherds striving with the potsherds—the world claiming the world from the world. In Abraham's victory, as I take it, we have faith laying hold of all for God, or, to speak more correctly, for Christ, as we shall see presently.

This brings us to Melchisedec, the central figure here; and how can anything be more perfect than the introduction of Melchisedec, type of Christ, just at this point? For if Abraham lays hold of and recovers for God all that the world has claimed for itself, to whom shall it be given,—at whose feet shall it be laid? Christ's surely. And so to Melchisedec Abraham gives tithes of all. Tithes which, while they witness that Abraham is owning Melchisedec's superiority and taking himself an inferior place, are surely also the pledge and earnest of the world being put into the hand of Christ; and that it is a question of the turning over of all things and all peoples to the Lord Jesus, the Melchisedec King-Priest, seems clear, for in the first place, God's millennial name,

"most high God," possessor of heaven and earth, is four times used here : Melchisedec is "priest of the most high God" and blesses Abraham as of the "most high God;" and again he says: "Blessed be the most high God." Again Abraham lifts up his hand to Jehovah the "most high God," possessor of heaven and earth, that he will not be enriched from a thread to a shoe latchet by the king of Sodom. (Now the millennium is the time of Christ's universal dominion). And again, if we look at the 110th psalm, the Melchisedec King-Priest psalm, we see the same thing—His people are made willing in the day of His power; His enemies are put beneath His feet—His dominion is universal. How perfect, then, that this One whom God has appointed heir of all things should be brought before us just after Abraham has, as it were, taken possession of all things, not for himself, but for Another, and that he should bring them, in spirit, as we may say, and lay them at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a blessed thing to know, too, that God's King is God's Priest. The two offices are joined in one Person; the One that holds the sceptre over men is the One that was Priest for men's sins, and throughout the ages of the Lord's dominion this blessed fact abides for the joy and worship of all His own in heaven and earth. And, again, as it seems to me, the most awful of all bitter remembrances among the lost will be that the Name to which they bow is the name which means "Saviour;" the One whom they own as King and Lord is the One who died that they might have been delivered from the flames of an eternal hell. Notice how similar lines of thought with reference to Christ are brought before us in

meditating on the fifth of Revelation. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the One who is rising up and going forth with resistless strength, is immediately described as "a Lamb as it had been slain." In other words, God's King is the Man who was down here amongst men, perfected as a Priest, by acquaintance with infirmity, need and sorrow (Heb. iv. 14, 15, v. 7-10).

The remark was made just now that Abraham did not claim the world for himself; he really only claims it in faith for Christ, and now that he has, in spirit, presented it to Him, he declines to have anything further to do with it—he turns it all over to Sodom's king for the present. He has been enriched by God, by God's promise, and he will not be enriched at the hands of the world; he will rather wait in faith to inherit those promises. Refusing anything from the king of Sodom seems to be as beautiful an expression of faith, in its way, as is the act of giving tithes of all to Melchisedec, which we have just been looking at. And now, passing on to the opening of the 15th chapter, we have God's beautiful answer to Abraham's faith. Has he just now refused to be enriched by the world? Then God will enrich him Himself, yea, enrich him *by* Himself: "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." In the 13th chapter God gave him a goodly portion—the land of Canaan—but here He gives him something quite beyond this—God Himself is his portion: How blessed!

So that we see Abraham as a man of faith, whether a pilgrim and a worshiper, as we first looked at him, or whether as the same pilgrim (for we read that they went and told "Abraham the Hebrew"—the

passenger—the pilgrim), laying hold of the spoils for God and bringing those spoils to God's king-priest; or again, refusing aught of those spoils for himself from the king of Sodom. And when the Lord Jesus affirms that "Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad" does it not seem that this would apply to the occasions we have been looking at, as well as, surely, to others also? Is it not indeed faith, and faith's testimony to Christ? F. G. P.

ON SO-CALLED DIVINE HEALING.

A Letter to one Inquiring as to its scripturalness.

AS to the question of "divine healing"—so prominent a theme with many to-day—it seems to me that one verse in Ephesians clears up the whole matter if carefully weighed. I refer to chap. i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings*, in heavenly places in Christ." All the Christian's blessings are spiritual, in contrast to Israel's which were of an earthly character. They are in heavenly places, not in an earthly place in the land of Canaan. This verse furnishes the key to the right use of the Old Testament promises. Every spiritual blessing promised to Israel *we* can also claim, for all such are ours too, but the temporal blessings are not guaranteed to us at all. Who was more lacking of them than the suffering, persecuted apostles? If God, in His love and mercy, is pleased to grant us such out of His own abundant grace, that is quite another thing.

Therefore the promises of bodily health and healing made to Israel and conditioned upon their obedience to the law, we have nothing to do with, though we may learn from them, as from all else in the word of God.

They are temporal blessings vouchsafed to an earthly people.

We need not search the Old Testament Scriptures for the Christian's blessings therefore, as it is not there God has put them. To the New Testament we turn and ask: Is there, from Matthew to Revelation, one promise that believers in this Christian dispensation shall not be sick, or can always be healed if they are, providing they exercise a certain amount of faith? We must answer, *Not one*. In fact the very contrary is not merely implied, but stated directly.

Timothy was sick—a dyspeptic evidently. Was he commanded to “claim the promises for healing,” or to go to some person to be prayed for and anointed, and promised health if he did? No. The Holy Ghost, writing through Paul, says, “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Tim. v. 23). Would any cavil as to this? It is just as much the word of God as John iii. 16 or the fifty-third of Isaiah. Yet it not only ignores the doctrine of “divine healing” but prescribes a suited remedy instead. If similarly troubled try it and see if the Great Physician knows not how to treat the disorders of the body as well as to heal the soul.

In Phil. ii. 26, 27, Paul writes of Epaphroditus, “He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

Is there a hint here that this devoted servant of Christ had no business to be sick? Instead of that his raising up is spoken of as a signal act of the mercy of God. Means may or may not have been used, but the point is

neither Paul nor Epaphroditus looked upon the healing as something they *had a right to* (as people often put it to-day) but simply as "mercy" for which they could joyfully thank God, but could not demand.

Whether Paul's thorn in the flesh was a physical infirmity or not has been questioned, but how else could it be *in the flesh*? At any rate the principle is the same. Did he demand its removal? He prayed thrice that it might be. Then the answer came, not that it would be removed, but, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Then he exclaims, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 7-9). Is there much glorying in infirmities among those who advocate "divine healing" in our day? Instead of that they generally regard infirmity, weakness, or ill-health as a matter of which to be ashamed, and as evidence of low spirituality, or weak faith. How contemptible the apostle Paul would appear in their eyes if he could come among us again in the infirm and weak condition that often characterized him! He knew nothing of "opening his mouth and breathing in the resurrection life of the glorified body of Christ, communicated by the Spirit," as I once heard a healing teacher put it. No, he had learned that, "If Christ be in you, *the body is dead* because of *sin*" (Rom. viii. 10, 1st part). And thus he was content to add his groans with those of the groaning creation while waiting for the redemption of the body (vers. 19-24).

The *present* redemption of the body is quite prominently insisted on by those who advocate the doctrine I am seeking to refute. Paul knew nothing of it. To him it was future, and referred to the time when Christ "shall change our vile body (or, the body of our humiliation)

that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," etc. (Phil. iii. 21).

Of another servant he writes "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." I have heard it confidently asserted that Trophimus must have been in a backslidden state or he would certainly have been healed. God does not say so. He was sick and Paul says nothing of his privilege to claim healing, nor did he heal him himself, but left him to learn in the presence of God whatever precious lessons his illness might be intended to convey.

In James v. 14-16 we read, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Nothing could be more directly opposed to the entire healing system than this passage; yet, strange to say, it is frequently glibly quoted as though it really supported it. Let us see.

In case of sickness what were they to do? Call in some brother or sister who is known as a healer, or supposed to be a remarkable person as to faith? Not at all. "Call for the elders of the church." Is this ever done to-day? Never! Why? Because in the present disordered condition of things it is absolutely impossible to find elders of *the* Church to call in. Man-made elders of one or another sect will not do. God-appointed elders of the Church composed of all believers alone could meet the conditions. Of such we read in Tit. i. 5-9 as also 1 Tim. iii. 1-11; but who has authority to ordain them to-day?

Titus had, but Titus is gone. If any one else has, let him show his credentials. The fact is, only an apostle or an apostolic delegate ever had such authority. As we have neither the one nor the other in the Church on earth now, as a logical necessity we have no officially recognized elders either.

Now this consideration should prepare one to expect that the passage in James cannot be fully acted upon to-day, and a careful examination of the epistle only confirms this. It was God's last word to "the twelve tribes" (chap. i. 1), to whom promises of healing had been given in the Old Testament, and as such it is quite in keeping that it instructs them as to this in the new order of things. James is the bridge between Judaism and Christianity, and to be properly understood must be so looked at; else how can we account for verse 2 of chap. ii., where the word translated "assembly" is really "synagogue," and has no reference to the properly *Christian* company whatever.

It is well to remember also that since then the ruin of the Church has come in. All is now in confusion. Hence the power that wrought in the beginning is in great measure withheld now.

If however these considerations do not seem clear, a more important point yet is this. In James v. no account is taken of the exercise of faith on behalf of the sick one—only of the faith of those who pray for him. Is this true among divine-healers now? Is it not just the opposite with them? They excuse all their failures to heal, by lack of faith on the part of the patient, which clearly shows that their entire system is different from that referred to here.

If any *can* act on James v., and through their prayers healing be granted the afflicted people of God, we can only wish them God-speed, and doubtless the sixteenth

verse is one of wide enough range to apply to all. There is nothing official about it. Tried saints in all ages since the Cross have proved the blessedness of it, but it is no question of faith on the part of the sufferer.

Another misapplied scripture with the healers is Matt. viii. 16, 17, "When the even was come they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all their sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

The awful doctrine has been founded on this, that Christ bore *on the cross*, our sicknesses as well as the judgment due to our sins. I say *awful*, because this would imply that He was Himself, as I heard a leader among them say on one occasion, "filled with every loathsome disease and a living mass of corruption on the cross." Worse was said which I would not repeat. Alas, how little do such realize the meaning of their Satan-inspired words. "Neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" was true of that precious, "prepared" Body, in life as well as in death. But in no other way could He have really made atonement for sickness, and if He has so done Christians could no more be sick than be judged for their sins. The passage quoted by Matthew from Isa. liii. does not state this however. It says the fulfilment took place as He healed the sick in the exercise of His gracious ministry on earth, not on the cross. He never healed a person that He did not bear, in His deep sympathies, all that the afflicted one had suffered.

I think it unnecessary to say more. The words of Jesus Himself imply clearly that sick people need a physician (Matt. ix. 12) nor does He forbid a human one such as "Luke, the beloved phisician" (Col. iv. 14). On the other hand, His word is ever true, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). H. A. IRONSIDE.

THE EPISTLE OF JACOB.

THERE are probably many who do not recognize the fact that there is an epistle of Jacob in the New Testament; and even those who are quite aware that James is only a form of the word Jacob, —which is the real transcription of the Greek,—may yet fail to attach any particular significance to this. Alas! we so commonly read Scripture without even imagining that there is significance everywhere—in a proper name as in everything else—that it probably strikes few, although one would think it plain enough, that there is any particular meaning in this. Yet one can see at once that there is a peculiarity of the epistle with which this harmonizes in a very complete way. It is an epistle to “the twelve tribes scattered abroad.” There is no other epistle in the New Testament which recognizes Israel after this manner. In fact, we rightly think of it as in a sense foreign to Christianity to do so. We know that God has promises for Israel which will be fulfilled in a day soon to come: but in the meanwhile the branches are broken off: Israel as a nation is set aside in order that God may fulfil His purpose of taking for Himself a heavenly people out of the world, a people formed of Jews and Gentiles, brought together upon equal terms, and with higher promises than Israel’s ever were.

Yet a glance at the book of the Acts is sufficient to assure us how long was the weaning time before those that believed in Israel were content absolutely to separate themselves from the nation to which they belonged. When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, the last time of his being there, it was to find myriads of

Jews believing; who, as he was told, were "all zealous of the law." And we know how he was urged himself to go with those who were offering sacrifices at the close of a legal vow, in order to assure every one that he walked orderly and kept the law. It had been indeed allowed that believing Gentiles were not under it. God has made it amply plain; and that is why in the letter with regard to it, with which James himself had prominently to do, it is said: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." This has been taken as if it meant really the Holy Spirit *in* us, but it is surely not so. We have but to remember how, apart from law, apart from ritual even of every kind, baptism itself displaced from the order which it had among the Jewish converts, the Spirit of God fell upon Cornelius and those with him, while yet they were listening to Peter's word, and Peter distinctly refers to this when questioned at Jerusalem as to how he could go in unto men uncircumcised, and eat with them, when he asks: "Who was I that I could resist God?"

But this acceptance of Gentiles as Gentiles did not necessarily displace the Jews from their position, a position as the favored family of God. In millennial days, Gentiles will be owned as Gentiles, while at the same time Israel will have their own special place and eminence upon the earth. It was not until after this, and some years afterward, that Paul was chosen to write his epistle to the Hebrews and to bid believers among them to come outside the camp and give up the whole Jewish position. It is in this meantime that the epistle of James evidently has its place. While he, of course, distinctly takes his place as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

and while he writes as to those who had the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet they are part of the twelve tribes. Peter also, the apostle of the circumcision, as he distinctly was, writes to the "strangers scattered abroad," or the "strangers of the dispersion," manifestly Jews; but he does not address them, after all, as being such, and in his epistle we see distinctly recognized the position of Christians as living stones built upon that Living Stone which Israel's builders had rejected, and thus built up a "spiritual house, a holy priesthood,"—the complete setting aside of the Levitical one. Peter refers also to the epistle which Paul had written to them, "according to the wisdom given him;" and this is evidently that epistle to the Hebrews which is often denied to be his; but no one can find that other epistle which he wrote, and which Peter expressly puts along with the other Scriptures, while he owns there are in it things "hard to be understood." The complete setting aside of the whole Jewish ritual would be necessarily hard enough to be understood by Jewish believers.

With James there is nothing of this kind. He raises no question indeed as to it, and the whole style of his epistle shows the character of things still obtaining among those he addresses. Thus the word for "assembly" in the second chapter is really "synagogue;" which must be intended to have some meaning for us; the only synagogue that we hear of amongst Christians being that which the Lord speaks of in the epistle to Smyrna as the "Synagogue of Satan."

The synagogue exactly showed the Jewish position. With children of God among them, the children of

God as such were still scattered abroad. There was no distinct gathering together of believers as such; though they might have and did have, no doubt, their separate meetings, yet they were rather a "sect of the Nazarenes" than a distinct body. The apostle here addresses those who were evidently still in that mixed condition. He speaks as in the synagogue. He addresses himself to the rich whose riches are corrupted and whose garments are moth eaten, who have even condemned and killed the just, —to denounce upon them the miseries that would come upon them. He speaks of their wars and fightings, of their killing and desiring to have, their fighting and warring in order to satisfy what was mere fleshly lust. All this is perfectly consistent with what Paul himself might have said when standing in those synagogues, which, as we know, he sought out in the first place to deliver his message there. By and by when they oppose themselves, he shakes his garments, and separates the disciples from them; but to this he is forced. He does not take the ground of separation from the beginning, and if this were so even with Paul at that time, we need not wonder if it were so with James and those gathered within the nation, as in Jerusalem.

All this does not hinder in the least the application of the truth given in the epistle, to believers everywhere. It is evident that it is practice rather than doctrine upon which he dwells; and while it is in the wisdom of God, no doubt, that we should have in the New Testament itself the proof of that intermediate condition between Judaism and Christianity, at least as we find it in Paul, (a condition which obtained for many years,) yet we may be sure that He would not

allow this to detract from the blessing that we shall find in this epistle to the twelve tribes.

When we think once more of the name of him who addresses them, there certainly seems a suitability in it that we cannot but recognize. An epistle of Jacob to the twelve tribes ! Is it not as if it were the spirit of their ancestor speaking to them in it ? And when we look closely, we shall find that this is truly the case. It is, as it were, the Jacob of the old history that is speaking in it ; but a Jacob with his lesson learnt, or he would have really no title to speak at all. It is a Jacob of whom God has made an Israel, while all the more he remembers his old name, and is careful to show how God has wrought in him through the trials which have wrought to make him what he is,—such trials as he calls those whom he addresses to rejoice in, with an assurance of how blessed he is who endures them.

It is not necessary to do more than allude to that history of his so familiar to us all, and which the book of Genesis sets before us. Jacob-Israel is the very pattern of the Spirit's work amongst men. Jacob the supplanter, the man seeking constantly to attain by his own effort, even if he were seeking the blessing which we know he did seek, and which, moreover, God designed for him. With his efforts he only succeeds in putting off from himself that blessing for long years ; and in making, as far as could be, the God who was for him to be against him. So that, if after all God will bless, for this He must take him into His own hands, wrestle with him, break down the strength with which he would contend against Him, make it impossible for him to wrestle any more, in order that just in this way he

may find that which he has sought, not as *wrestling*, but as *clinging*.

The man with the dislocated thigh can only cling, not wrestle; and the laying hold with the hand, of which he is so fond, yet now assumes another character altogether. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," is such a cry of need as God delights to answer, and such a faith as He is seeking to bring men to. Thus it should be no wonder to us that James' epistle here everywhere dwells upon FAITH. It may seem, indeed, to many almost the opposite of this. We are familiar with the labor that has been spent to assure us how James, if he be not against Paul's doctrine of justifying faith, as even Luther thought, yet at least is bent upon explaining it in such a way as to guard against the abuse of it. If Paul assures us that Abraham was justified by faith, James, on the other hand, assures us that he was justified by works no less. He puts it as an undoubted fact to which he can appeal: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only."

Yet one who reads carefully, and who knows clearly the gospel and his own need, will scarcely make a mistake here. Paul has left room, in fact, for the very doctrine of James, while guarding his own in the most absolute way. "For if," he says, "Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but, he adds, *'not before God.'*" He does not say that Abraham was not justified by works, but he does say in the most positive and absolute way that can be, *"not before God."*

In what other way, then? some may ask. It should

be perfectly manifest that, if it be not before God, it must be before man; and that is what James speaks of here throughout. "A man may say, thou hast faith and I have works. Show *me* thy faith without thy works and *I* will show *thee* my faith by my works." The man who shows himself a believer by his works justifies his faith, justifies himself as having it; and that is how James speaks with regard to Abraham. When was Abraham justified by faith? As we know, when, as a childless man, he stood under the starry heavens to have God say to him: "So shall thy seed be." It is there that we have the record: "He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." But, says James, "Abraham was justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar." It was then that that Scripture was fulfilled which saith: "Abraham believed God." In that wonderful act, his faith was fully manifested. We see how real it was and how operative, for James does indeed tell us that the faith which is not operative is not a living faith; and only a living faith can save. That is not to dishonor faith or to make less of it in any wise, to say that it has of necessity this character of a power that works; as John also tells us, that it is "faith" that "worketh by love." He does not put down these works of Abraham as having to do with his justification before God; or as being needed at all for God to pronounce upon his faith. On the other hand, for man they are surely needed.

And the works of which James speaks, let us notice, are not such as people would supplement the righteousness of faith with. They are not works of benevolence; they are not works which necessarily

make much of the person at all. Thus James can put "Rahab the harlot" along with Abraham in this matter. The very way in which James introduces her here as "Rahab the harlot" may assure us that it is not of what people call "moral works" that he is speaking. Rahab was justified by works when she had received the messengers and sent them out another way. These were works that made her faith plain, and that is the kind of work that he is seeking. They involved what men would call the betrayal of her country, and which could only be rescued from the charge by the faith in her which recognized God in those messengers who had come to her, and bowed in them to the will of God.

Thus it is faith all through that, in fact, James is dwelling upon. Faith is the great worker, as Jacob his father found it, and thus he rejoices, and would have others rejoice, when they "fall into divers trials," as knowing this, that "the trying of your faith worketh patience." And how much is involved in this! "Let patience have her perfect work," and you are "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Is it not the moral of Jacob's history? Is it not the man so fond of putting forth his hand, after his own fashion, broken down from all the self-confidence of his own efforts, to find that after all it is

"Man's weakness waiting upon God
Its end can never miss."

That is why our Jacob here makes so much of faith and makes so much of patience too,—makes therefore so much of the trial which works patience,—the breaking down of human strength and human wisdom with all its sinuous energy, which, after all, left him only to be the "worm Jacob," as God calls

him. How this winding of human wisdom, of which men make so much, is like the effort of the poor wriggling worm! How simple and blessed and suited to us this, that, when we have once got down to the prostration of this energy, God is ready for us with all the grace that is His: to give much more than we sought to take, to bless us beyond any conception that we ever had of Him!

Everywhere we shall find that James is holding up before us faith,—that which in itself speaks of the abandonment of all confidence in self,—of all mere human resources,—to turn to One who is absolutely sufficient, and who is absolutely for us. How simple it should be, now that we have Christ, that this is true! How blessed to have in His cross the judgment of man in every way that is natural to him, the setting aside of the old man altogether, in order that we may put on the new man, which is but the man in Christ: the man standing in an excellence which is not his own, and in a power which is divine,—power made perfect in weakness! How well, therefore, we may be set to learn the lesson of James' epistle! How profitable we shall find it just simply to recognize that "if patience have her perfect work," we shall be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing!"

If we could be only sure of this, how simple a thing, one would say, patience would be; but thus the trial which works this detects in us, in fact, the little faith we have. After all that God has done for us, when the triumphant challenge of our hearts should be: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" yet how much we can be-

lieve in the excellency of our own wisdom, and in the sweetness of our own wills ! How we strive with God, in short ; only to receive by it all, and through His very grace to us, a crippled joint as the memorial of our striving ! How many are the troubles that we bring upon ourselves ; and in which, too, instead of counting the trials joy, we murmur against God because of it ! How few, perhaps, are the works in our lives which James would put into *his* class of works,—those that are excellent just because of the faith that is in them ! How we stagger when the faith which we accept joyfully as all that is needed for *salvation* is required to be manifested in our lives, in some practical way, which (as we put it,) must cost us something ! How well may we take up just these opening verses of the epistle of Jacob, and read, and read them, praying God to stamp them upon our hearts, and to make us know the blessedness of a faith, which, after all, we have in the end to come to,—a faith that in the wreck of all self-confidence trusts God for all things, and finds it no mistake !

F. W. G.

A PROPHECY OF SPRING.

Song of Songs ii. 8-13.

THE voice of my Beloved !
 His shout of joy I hear !
 Behold, behold, He cometh !
 Behold, He draweth near !

He leaps upon the mountains !
 He skips upon the hills !
 He swiftly draweth nearer !
 My bosom throbs and thrills !

A roe is my Beloved !
A young hart, bounding, free !
And see ! behold, He standeth
Behind our wall—'tis He !

He standeth and He gazeth
In through the windows there,
And through the lattice showeth
Himself—O vision fair !

Thus came my own Beloved—
His shadow did I see ;
And as He stood revealed,
Thus spake He unto me :—

“ Rise up, My love ! take wing, my dove !
My fair one, come away !
The winter's blast—lo, it is past,
The rain is o'er and gone at last,
And spring holds quickening sway !

“ On earth, once drear, glad flowers appear,
While nature trills her lay ;
The singing bird to song is stirred—
The turtle in our land is heard,
Soft cooing through the day !

“ The sap flows free in the fig-tree—
She putteth forth green figs ;
The tendrils twine on budding vine—
The air is filled with fragrance fine
From blooming boughs and twigs !

“ Arise, my love ! take wing, my dove !
O fair one, fly away !
The winter's blast—lo, it is past,
The rain is o'er and gone at last :
Come, fair one, haste away ! ”

F. A.

SIGNS OF A REVIVAL.

THE signs of a revival, whether in an individual soul, in an assembly, or in a neighborhood, will be found to be substantially the same. A revival of true, vital godliness in the souls of believers, or an increased number of conversions, is the work of God's Spirit. Strictly speaking, He is the only Revivalist. To apply the term to any of the servants of Christ is a mistake. Hence, the signs and fruits of a genuine revival, must be in accordance with truth and holiness, for He is "the Spirit of truth," and "the Holy Spirit." All that is contrary thereto, must be attributed to man's faultiness in the details of the work.

1. The first sign, or indication, of a reviving of the Lord's work in a neighborhood, we believe to be, *a fresh quickening of His own people in that place*. Like the fire that has become set and dull, it needs to be stirred up, so that its energies may be renewed, and that they may spread forth on all sides. In like manner, with the Lord's own people who may have become dull and inactive, they need stirring up. But when the divine life in the soul has been stirred up by the Spirit of God, then it will manifest fresh life, and fresh energy. A heavenly freshness will pervade the soul, as if it had received new life. This blessed work may begin, and for some time be manifest, in only one or two individuals; but where the Spirit of God is, there is gathering power, and there numbers must soon increase. By this means, the people of God are brought into sympathy and fellowship with His mind and purpose. Now they can work together. The love of the world in its many forms, will immediately and greatly decline. Obedience to its exorbitant demands will be refused. And on the other hand, love to Christ,

and true subjection of heart to His claims, will greatly and rapidly increase. To meet the desires of His heart will now be the delight of each newly-invigorated soul.

2. The second sign will be manifested in a *revived spirit of prayer*. The tender sensibilities of the renewed mind will soon be made to feel the coldness and deadness that prevails around. This will lead to an earnest desire for prayer on the behalf of such. Time and place will be found. Difficulties hitherto insurmountable will be overcome. In some places there are now prayer-meetings between five and six o'clock in the morning, to accommodate those who commence work at six. This sign is now so generally received as a token for good, that persons are in the habit of saying, "I have no doubt that the Lord is about to work there; the people are coming together for prayer." Still, there may be an increase as to the *number* of prayer-meetings, without much increase to the *spirit* of prayer. An effort may be made to "get up" prayer-meetings in one place, because they have been made a blessing in another; or because they are becoming general. In some instances this may be little better than imitation. But where the work has been begun by the Spirit of God, there will be a real, earnest spirit of prayer. There will be such felt need, and such conscious weakness, that prayer will be eagerly desired. Any hour, any place, that affords the desired opportunity will be heartily welcomed. The less display, the more congenial to the heart. There is a wonderful difference between merely coming to a prayer-meeting, and coming in the true spirit of prayer. The one may be a formality, the other is a living reality; the former may be gone through in a dull, sleepy state, but the latter will be manifested in the stirring energies of life—in a spirit of real waiting upon God, and earnest crying unto Him.

3. The third sign may be, *an increased love for precious souls*. The spiritual vision of the revived ones is now so bright and clear, that the fearful condition of unbelievers, and the solemn realities of the future, are vividly before them, and greatly affect them. Hence, the eternal welfare of the unconverted becomes a subject of the deepest interest. They will think much about them, affectionately entreat them, and constantly pray to the Lord about them. Their love for precious, immortal souls will grow exceedingly. The love of Christ Himself for them is seen in a new light. His glory in their salvation, and His dishonor through their unbelief, are differently felt. The perishing soul is now, as it were, seen in His light, and loved with His love. Oh, what a change! what a happy change, as to their love for precious souls. When things are in a low state *within* the Church, souls that are *outside* are but little cared for.

4. There will now be *efforts made answering to this love*. We have observed, in such times of refreshing, that there is not only a difference in *praying*, but also in *preaching*. What plainness—what earnestness—what beseeching—what depth of feeling, is exhibited; and how intensely bent the preacher is upon the one thing, namely, to win souls to Christ. The Church has been awakened, aroused, blessed, and has caught the sacred fire. Everyone is seeking to do something for the glory of the Lord, the building up of the Church, and the ingathering of precious souls. Attention and kindness are shown to strangers. Children are cared for. The salvation of their souls is earnestly desired. The thoughtless, outside, are thought of, and efforts are made to bring them in. Tract distribution, in various ways, is attended to with the most lively and hopeful interest. All are at work, and all are earnest and happy in their work. A revived, healthy,

vigorous, elevated tone, and self-denying effort now characterize the assembly of God.

5. Another happy feature of a true revival is *an enlarged expectation of blessing*. Not only is blessing prayed for, and efforts made to obtain it, but it is *expected*. God is trusted. His grace to meet every need is counted upon. Answers to prayer are looked for. Blessing to souls in connection with the preaching is searched for, and prayer is made that the search may not be in vain. It is no longer the mere routine of service, the use of means, as it is called, and leaving the results with God without being concerned as to what these results are. But now, in the improved state of things, diligent search is made as to what ground the seed has fallen upon, and where it has taken root.

At such times, and on some occasions, it has pleased the Lord to give special faith to some of His servants in expecting blessing. So much so, that they have been led to pray for it, not only with expectation, but with certainty. And through them the faith of others has been strengthened and encouraged to look to the Lord in the fulness of expectation, and in the confident assurance that "showers of blessing" (Ezek. xxxiv. 26) would be poured down. Such faith can never be disappointed. Numbers of conversions must follow—the blessing must extend. The power of God is now manifest in the assembly, even if His special servants are absent. The work cannot stand still; it moves on steadily and surely. Conversions bear the special seal of God. Unbelievers are more thoroughly overpowered by the character of the work, than by the power of preaching. There is no room for criticism in such remarkable cases of blessing. God is present of a truth. His power is felt, and numbers of the most unlikely, and the least expected, bow before

Him, confessing their sins, and worshipping Him as the Saviour-God. Oh, what a blessed, happy, God-honoring state for an assembly to be in. To be brought into such close communion with God—such real fellowship with Him in His work of grace—such blessed nearness, as to make the praying ones feel as if they were "inside the veil." Oh, who would not earnestly breathe after such a state of things? Who would not seek to be blessed with the bright beams of such wondrous grace? Who would not fervently cry to the Lord that He would so revive His work amongst us, and give us to taste and see such floods of blessing?

May the above thoughts, which have been suggested by such scenes, lead many who may read this paper, solemnly to judge themselves before the Lord as to how far their souls are in the present current of the Holy Spirit, and whether they are now praying and looking for such seasons of blessing, in this the day of His most marvelous grace.

"WHY CAME WE FORTH OUT OF EGYPT?"

(Numbers xl. 20)

ONE year of wilderness trial had sufficed for the people of Israel to ask *why* the Lord had brought them out of Egypt. In Exodus i. and ii. we read, "The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field . . . And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born [to the Israelites] ye shall cast into the river And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage . . .

And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."

He had sheltered them from the results of their own sins by the blood of a lamb. He had put Himself between them and the Egyptians, and, opening the sea to let them out of Egypt, had overthrown their oppressors, and freed them from the awful slavery to which they had been reduced. Many acts of power He had done in their favor, and if He was leading them through a country which had neither bread nor water, He was sending them bread from heaven every day, and watering them abundantly out of the rock.

But all their past misery and present blessing seemed as nothing in their actual state of mind. Difficulties had come up. They had acquired tastes in Egypt which could not now be gratified. A people who have changed masters must adapt themselves to the change. There may be suffering in it, but does not the patient suffer the surgeon's knife, even though it be but for the prospect of a few years of comfort? Had not God sufficiently proved to them in His past ways that His future purpose for them must be a blessed one? Could they not trust Him now and suffer any difficulty, any self-denial, anything which might be necessary on the way to His ends?

Oh, the ungratefulness and treachery of the human heart! *Of the human heart in the Christian*—in the man who knows he is saved forever by the grace of God, and is being taken to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. i. 4). It is the human heart showing itself through the pains and sorrows of the way from grace to glory, when we

from some cause or other get at a distance from God. All His gifts are then so insignificant that the things which please the flesh hide them from view, and the cry goes out—the cry of infamy—"Why came we forth out of Egypt?"

Were their Deliverer to have sent them back to Egypt, and forever left them there, it had been but righteous. But He has taken them up in pure grace, and in grace He goes on with them. He even allows them their wish that they may, by the results, the better learn their lesson. But He forsakes them not. Truly He is "the God of patience."

Now, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4).

P. J. L.

"MY BELOVED IS MINE."

(Song of Songs ii. 16.)

NOT only mine in that for me
 His precious blood was shed,—
 That bruised and bleeding "on the tree,"
 He suffered in my stead—
 But by His blessed presence mine,
 By Spirit and the Word.
 I a dependent branch—the Vine,
 My living, loving Lord.

Not only mine in that I live
 For Him, and He can claim
 The purest service I can give,
 While bearing, here, His name ;
 But that, with Him, in blest accord
 May walk and word agree ;
 And mine in that I love my Lord
 Because He first loved me!

G. K.

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF A CORRESPONDENT.

(*Extracted.*)

WE have yet another question, however, to consider, in connection with this thought of Christ's priesthood being exercised entirely in heaven: and that is, if His be, as the apostle insists, entirely a Melchisedek priesthood, how else could it be exercised than *after* death, when the "many priests" of Aaron's order proved their incompetency by the fact that "they were not able to continue, by reason of death;" while Christ's Melchisedek character is seen in this that He abideth for ever, "in the power of an endless life?"

Now, whatever the difficulty here, it is certain that Christ was "a merciful and faithful High-priest *to* make propitiation;" and that therefore He was High-priest before propitiation was, or could be made. If death negated the possibility of His being this at that time, then it would necessarily forbid His being so until resurrection had taken place: that is as plain as it is really decisive; for His resurrection was already the witness of the acceptance of His work, and consequently, of propitiation (that is, appeal) having been already made. Propitiation is by blood, and that was shed on earth; nor, when this was shed, did it wait an hour for the tokens of its acceptance. His own words, "It is finished," were followed immediately by the rending of the veil, by which the holiest was opened to man; where Christ has now gone in to take His place for us with God, in the value of that blood, our Representative.

Thus, being made perfect, He is greeted (or, "hailed") of God a High-priest after the order of Melchisedek. Notice, it is not the same word as when it is said, He

was "called" to the priesthood. He is hailed now as Victor after His conflict, when the power of that endless life that was His had been manifested in His victory over death and him that had the power of it. Death had been but the sword which Christ had turned against him who wielded it; and over Him it could not have dominion, when once to do the will of God He had descended into it. The eternal life which was in Him could not be touched by it; and the giving up of earthly life—which *for the merely human priests* had ended their priesthood fully, and taken them entirely away from the scene of their earthly ministry—could not affect the office of Him who could answer the appeal to Him as Lord of the dying malefactor with the royal words, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Thus was He still Priest and King all through. Presently, with the keys of death and hades at His girdle, He is hailed in resurrection as the Royal Priest; not *made* so then, but approved as fully manifested such already. While the disciples gaze upward after Him, "a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts i. 9). Was it mere earthly vapor? or was it not rather the welcome home of the manifest glory? Was it not fit, (as when even for the objects of His redeeming love the Lord of glory, not leaving it to angelic hosts to give them welcome, "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven") that He who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,—whom He Himself describes as "running" to put His arms round one poor returning prodigal—should thus, the angels nowhere as yet seen, be welcomed back to where He had been before, even when creation as yet was not called into being by His word?

(*Extracted from Numerical Bible, Notes on Heb.*)

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD OUR HOPE.

OUR Lord's second coming is the bright morning star of the believer's life.

It is the *goal* which the racer ever keeps in view (Phil. iii. 14-21).

It is as the distant *shore* for the sea-tossed and weary mariner, becoming more and more distinct as he uses his glass and keeps a watch.

It is as the *going home* for the soldier in the distant country, as he emerges from the battle-field: the battles have been fought, the trials have been many; but peace has been proclaimed, and the music strikes the notes of "Home, sweet home."

It is as the *morning star* for the faithful watcher who has stood by his post during the various stages of the long, dark night,—the harbinger of the day-dawn.

It is *rest*, the ideal rest for the afflicted and weary saint, who has, under the government of God, patiently waited the change, to see Him face to face.

It will be the great and grand *reunion* of the many saints that death had for long separated—fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, friends, companions, which death had parted; but at our Lord's coming all who have passed away, "died in faith," will join the living, who shall be changed, and be forever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 13-18). And what a joy this will be,—first for Him, and next for the saints! It will be the day of His espousals and the gladness of His heart (Songs iii. 11). Then the *Bride*, the Church, shall be presented without spot, coming up from the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her Beloved.

The *racer* will reach his goal; the *mariner* will step on the distant shore; the *soldier*, the *watcher*, each and all will have their long cherished hopes realized.

The full blessedness of the love of God each shall know. The grace and redemption by the blood of the Lamb each shall share with exultation; and worship and praise will rise from all the redeemed, to God and to Christ forever.

A. E. B.

TRADE-UNIONISM.

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER TO ONE ENSNARED THEREIN.

BELOVED brother: Recently I heard of your having gone into a "union" in order better to support your family. This was a great surprise to me, and has troubled me so much that I cannot forbear addressing you upon the subject. Surely, dear brother, you cannot have weighed this step in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ, where we must so soon appear. I trust, therefore, you will not resent my endeavoring to draw your attention to several portions of that Word which we both love and which I know must be familiar to you, but may have, of late, been overlooked. I choose to write *to* you, rather than to speak to others *of* you, and I do so because the Book says, "Thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor and not suffer sin upon him." I am sure too that you will remember that "faithful are the wounds of a friend," and "open rebuke is better than secret love."

I would be unfaithful to God and to you if I refused any responsibility towards "washing your feet" simply

through fear of, for the time being, hurting your feelings. And so, dear brother, let us meditate a little first upon the present position of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. His position, of course, determines our only proper one, for we are linked eternally with Him. Where is He then, as to this world? Alas, He has been cast out of it! He is in no sense of it any more. For *Him* there was no room in the inn, no room anywhere while living,—and when dead, only room in a borrowed tomb. Always outside. Always getting His wrongs, instead of His rights, as one has said; always in a different path from the dwellers on the earth in His day of humiliation; this is in brief His history. And yet it might have been so different, if one dare allow the thought. That is, He need not have taken the place of rejection they gave Him. Had there been in Him an atom of selfishness (which there was not, for in Him was no sin,) He might have claimed a place among them here as others did; yea, and better than others, for all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them were offered Him, but on what conditions? Conditions He could not brook for one moment, for He must have acted in violation of the word of God to have accepted them. This He could not, would not do, (oh, that we were more like Him!) and so faithfulness to God kept Him ever the rejected One, till at last He suffered outside the gate.

Let us remind ourselves, dear brother, that this is the One to whom we owe everything for eternity, whose loving kindness is better than life. Do you then want a place where He had none? And do you want it so much that you will have it despite the fact that you must grieve His heart to get it, and that if, like Him, you seek to be faithful to God, you never can get it? Is it really worth so much? Will it appear so when you see His face?

Surely you cannot say so ! Better, far better, a crust of bread and a cup of water, than plenty at such a cost.

Nor has He come *inside* yet, despite all that men may boast of the subjection of the world to Christ. I know there is a Christ, one whom even a well-known preacher* intimates would Himself join a union if on earth a "carpenter" again; but this is not the holy, unworldly Christ dear to our hearts, my brother. This is a creature evolved from the evil imagination of the writer's own deceitful heart, palmed off as the Christ of God. Our Christ, the Jesus who shed His blood for us, is outside still; and again, I say, His place determines ours. We *may* have another, if we *will*; but not in fellowship with the devoted Object of the world's hatred and malice.

What avails it if we profess to gather to His name and turn our backs on sects and systems, religiously, to be identified with systems, socially and commercially, in which He has even less place than in the various parties of Christendom? In such a case are not our legs the unequal ones of the lame?

Let us notice also, what you must often have noticed before, the solemn language of 2 Cor. vi. 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" Let us stop here a moment. Of old God said, "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass yoked together." The clean and the unclean yoked for *toil* was thus forbidden. "Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, doubtless, it is written."

* "Rev." Courtland Myers in "Would Christ join a Labor Union?" Religious novels of this mischievous character abound to-day. How shameful to think of ministers of the gospel turning from their vocation to write *works of fiction*.

And here in our chapter we have the divine commentary upon what might have seemed so trivial a matter to an Israelite of old. Let us lay it to heart. Righteousness and unrighteousness cannot be yoked together without incurring the Divine displeasure. "Righteousness;" that should characterize the Christian. Can a member of a labor union be *righteous*? Is it righteousness to turn my brother out of employment because his conscience will not let him affiliate with what is so manifestly contrary to God? This is what the union demands of its members.

Ah, my brother, put the question home to your own conscience, is it righteous in the sight of God to have to turn a Christian from your employ because ungodly men (infidels and blasphemers many of them) say you shall? Where is care for a fellow-member of the body of Christ here? Fellowship with the unrighteous destroys invariably real fellowship with the people of God. How, think you, will this look when the mists of earth have cleared from your soul, and you see all in His light at the judgment seat? How differently will sound the words then, "What communion hath light with darkness?" In nature there can be *none*! And in things spiritual if the child of light associates with the children of darkness, he will find the light within him become darkness too, and every spiritual perception enfeebled.

I need not say to *you* that nothing is more false than to pretend that this scripture applies merely to marriage, or even simply Church fellowship. It applies clearly to every relationship of life.

Let us read on: "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" It does not refer alone to an "infidel," as we use the term to-day, though even that were strong here, for how many actual atheists must a "union man" have

part with! But an unbeliever, one who has not trusted Christ is what is really meant. Trade-unionism makes a man have part so thoroughly with such that they are more to him than his brethren in Christ. He may and often must boycott the latter. He dare not act out of harmony with the former.

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols, for ye are the temple of God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore *come out from among them, and be ye separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (verses 14-18).

Notice here, that the last verse depends on the previous one. "Come out . . . be separate . . . and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you." One might ask, Is He not the Father of all believers, whether separate from such associations or not? Assuredly He is; a grieved Father often, but a loving Father still. Why, then, does He say to the separated one, I *will* be a Father to *you*? Ah, dear brother, is not this the answer to what has been troubling you? Did you not go into this ungodly association because you feared your business would be ruined, and your means of support gone if you wholly followed the Lord? See how He rebukes such a thought: "The parents ought to lay up for the children," and He says, I will do the parents' part, I will be *your* Father; you shall be My son. The question of support will be *Mine* to attend to, if you walk apart from evil in holy separation unto Me.

Is not He better than all human fathers, and will He not care for His own? Has He not even said, "Leave thy fatherless children unto Me and I will preserve them

alive;" and "let thy widows trust in Me?" Thus we may, if in the path with Him, be assured of care for us and ours while we walk on earth, and care unceasing for those we leave behind, if taken home. He is far more to be relied on than trade-unionism, whose one controlling principle is selfishness. But let us be careful how we practically take ourselves out of His hands, lest we learn bitterly what it is to be cast on our own resources.

But I want to pursue our subject a little further, even to its final terrible phase. For this I turn to Rev. xiii. The contents of this chapter you will remember at once. The revived Roman Empire is pictured in the first beast, as I presume we both are agreed. It is its last form, after the Church has been taken to heaven and when Jewish saints are suffering on earth. The lamb-like beast with dragon tongue is doubtless the symbol of Antichrist. In connection with the image which he makes to the first beast, we are told: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name (ver. 17). This, then, is trade-unionism, at least the spirit of it when full blown, and this is what, in principle, *you are now associated with!* Does not the very thought make you shudder as you reflect on what company you are keeping? "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners."

In that awful day, a remnant will choose deprivation of all the necessities of life, yea, choose death itself, rather than be affiliated with this antichristian association; and shall we, with so much greater light and higher privileges, be characterized by devotion to Christ less than theirs? Rather, as Moses, let us choose to suffer

affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Already one sees how easily Antichrist will be able to combine men of the most diverse opinions and characteristics, as well as stations in life, in one common cause;—the exaltation of man as God: for even now this is what trade-unionism, free masonry and other like associations are doing. The spirit of it all is utterly antichristian. The great idea is to build another Babel tower and be independent of God.

The value of the book of Revelation is that it gives us the full grown trees which are seen in their incipency, —and some quite well advanced in growth,—everywhere about us to-day. It behoves the child of God to “touch not the unclean thing,” for “blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame” (Rev. xvi. 15).

Let us then labor, dear brother, since we are accepted *in* Him, let us labor to be acceptable *before* Him in that day (Eph. i. 6; 2 Cor. v. 9). In order to this we must avoid every entanglement which would hinder our going on with Himself.

In conclusion, let me urge you to go down before God about this solemn matter; and I know, if you are honest with Him and faithful to His word, you will at once sever the link that has temporarily bound you to the accursed thing. Let us pray one for another. It is a day of much weakness. We need each others' help in going on with our God. Believe me to be,

Yours affectionately in Christ Jesus.

H. A. I.

JONAH THE PROPHET.

I. THE REBELLION OF THE PROPHET.

THE history of Jonah furnishes at the present time, as we cannot but know, only material for ridicule to the infidel and rationalist. We have nothing to do with it in this way here. There is no need for us to defend a story to which the Lord has Himself given such explicit sanction as He has to that of Jonah. Jonah is by Him styled emphatically "the prophet," and when Israel sought from Him a sign, He answered them that there should "no sign be given but the sign of Jonas the prophet, for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish" (not at all necessarily or properly a "whale") "so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Israel, alas, would only find their own condemnation in the application of this: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here." Here we are told in the most absolute way that the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah, and that Jonah himself had been in the belly of the fish three days and three nights; a preparation which alas he needed, strange and solemn as it was, in order to be that messenger to the nations for which God destined him.

The application that the Lord makes to Himself of the story here is not to be taken as if we should find in the book of Jonah the expansion of it. The moment we look at Jonah and realize the whole con-

dition which necessitated for him the severity of the discipline which he had to undergo, we see at once how far separate we are from any such thought as that he could be even a direct type of the Lord. Christ simply makes an application of the story to His case, an application which we shall consider as we take it up. In all cases, perhaps, of the typical histories of the Old Testament there are other applications than that which is in the line of their primary meaning, and so we find it here. Jonah as a type (which no doubt he is) is rather a type of Israel, the nation to which he belonged, and in this way the whole book becomes luminous for us. We see the moral of it, the spiritual meaning, in the plainest manner.

In the order which the books of the minor prophets have in the Septuagint version, Jonah comes third in the second division of them. It has elsewhere been urged that the arrangement given by the Septuagint here is in fact the true one. There is no need to dwell upon it in this place; but the three books thus associated together are all books that speak in some way or another distinctively of the Gentile,—the enemy, as, alas, he was of the people of God; but not simply because of his own sin, but also on account of theirs.

Of these three books, Joel first of all shows us how the Gentile was indeed the rod of God upon Israel, in order that His purpose of blessing might be at last accomplished in them; and then the rod is broken, the enemy cast out, and blessing from the Lord comes in more than adequate recompense for all the suffering. Next, in Obadiah, we see Edom, in obstinate enmity against his brother Jacob, des-

tioned to utter destruction. The hardened enemy is cut off. Jonah now, in the third place, has a very important lesson to give us. It is the lesson, in fact, of the prophetic mission of Israel to the world, a mission which as yet she has never rightly fulfilled; in fact, fled away from the face of God that she might not fulfil it. This has necessitated the dealing of God with her, which has so large a place in the book of Jonah, and which at last humbles her to become the instrument in His hands, of blessing to the Gentiles such as He intended her to be. Her message may be one of judgment like that of Jonah, but bowed to by them, in result it becomes blessing, as it always is. For the announcement of judgment is that God may *not* judge, as He has Himself declared. Let us look at the story briefly, and see how this is all worked out for us in the history of the prophet.

History the book is almost altogether, as we are fully aware. The history, therefore, must be that which is to have meaning for us. The history is, in fact, the prophecy. No doubt Jonah has his own prophetic message. Nevertheless, he is himself a prophet in his life as well as in his testimony. If we do not see the spiritual meaning which underlies the book, it must be in the main a mystery to us. It is in the spiritual meaning of this history, evidently, that Jonah finds his place among the three minor prophets whose meaning has been glanced at. In Scripture, in fact everywhere, the spiritual meaning governs all; which does not mean that it is not based upon—perhaps rather incorporated—in the historical fact. The history is no less a history because God has been pleased to mold it so that it should be the

vehicle of that spiritual instruction; which must be, with Him who seeks us for Himself in it, of the greatest account. How wonderful a thing it is to realize that God has, in fact, molded the history of the world after this manner!—shown Himself thus the absolute Master of that even most opposed to Him, and made it all the servant of man's need wherever there is an ear to hear, a heart open to receive instruction! Let us look, then, at the story of the prophet.

Jonah's name is a striking one. It is "the dove." How unlike it seems to the history before us; how untrue he is to his name! And yet officially it is evident that he is indeed the instrument of the Spirit, whom the dove pictures; as Israel, the nation, also was intended thus to be the spiritual teacher of mankind. Spite of herself, God has made her this, as we surely know. Almost every book in the Bible has been given us through her means. This has indeed been but little glory to her, for the very men whom God raised up to inspire them with His truth have been the witnesses of the rebelliousness of the stiff-necked nation among whom they were. God has nowhere found as yet a nation plastic to His hand as He would have them; and the history of the Church no less than the history of Israel, what has it been, while a history of His grace on the one hand, but a history of rebellion on the other? It is time that we give up altogether glorying in men; but all the more appears the glory of the Lord in thus accomplishing His purposes in spite of all that the self-will and folly of man could do to set them aside.

Israel is thus the true Jonah, whose history has

been anything but the history of a vessel of the Spirit; and yet it is none the less to us the pledge of a grace, which, spite of all, will have its way with them as with others. It was when the nations had turned their back upon God and gone into idolatry that God first of all brought out Abraham from among them; and if He shut up His revelation, as it might seem, within the limits of a favored nation, it was in order to secure the revelation itself that He had to do so. Even then He planted Israel in the very highway of the nations, as has often been said, in the very midst of the great centres of civilization of the ancient world, and with Tyre and Sidon by sea ready to be His messengers, if they had only heart for it, to proclaim that revelation far and wide.

Thus, Israel was the true Jonah, as is plain. But he refuses this place, flees to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord to mingle thus with those very nations to whom God would have sent him as a messenger from Himself. Tarshish, "traffic in fine linen," is the very place which naturally stamps Israel as what they have become,—mere traders, Canaanites with the balances of deceit in their hands; but Jonah profits nothing by this. He only pays the cost, and gets into a storm upon the sea, which imperils not himself only, but the Gentiles among whom he is; for, in fact, the blessing of the Gentiles is bound up with Israel, and however God may work, peril to Israel means peril to the world. Significantly, he is asleep amid the storm; while on the other hand, they of the nations are awake at least to that. These have to consent with regard to Jonah, as regarding Israel also, to the judgment of

God, or else share it. In judging her, they in fact find rest and deliverance. This is a glance surely at the present time of grace, when Israel is at the same time whelmed and lost in the sea of the nations.

Still, God has provided for this emergency; the great fish is prepared by which Jonah is swallowed until he learns the lesson of death and resurrection, and finds indeed that "salvation is of the Lord." It is the same lesson that Israel must learn for her deliverance; the Gentile empire which has swallowed her up being, in fact, the anomalous sea-monster which *Daniel* sees (ch. vii. 3, 7), and which, contrary to its own nature, has nevertheless been appointed for her preservation.

The story here passes beyond the present time. Brought to repentance which as yet she has not manifested, she is raised up again as from the dead and then delivers the message to which she has been aforetime false, in such a manner that the Gentiles hear; her deliverance being like that of Jonah with the Ninevites, a sign to them. What a sign it will be when Israel is at last brought out of her long captivity and made the witness of God's faithful mercy to her.

The last chapter of the book, as is evident, looks back over their history. Jonah gives God the account of why he fled to Tarshish, and has to learn the grace of God to the Gentiles as he has yet never learned it, and Himself therefore, as never before known.

This, then, is the book in brief. It is evidently complete on all sides, and we need make no apology for any point of the interpretation, which is thoroughly sustained all the way through. This

story is of no human manufacture, but divine; and the more deeply we look into it, the more we shall find that the seal of God is upon its every part.

Let us take it up, then, to examine it more thoroughly, and to see the lessons which God would convey to us also in it. The whole of Israel's history, as already said, is plainly on the one hand the history of man's sin and failure; on the other, the history of redemption through God's grace. It has thus a lesson for us all, of which indeed those have deprived themselves who imagine that as a nation God is done with Israel, and that the Church has fallen heir to all the promises that God made to her. God Himself has said of this: "The Lord who giveth the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar, the Lord of Hosts is His name. If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 35-37). Thus the lesson of His grace abides for us. Thus we find the unchangeableness of His purposes, whatever man's unfaithfulness may do against them. Thus alone Israel becomes, spite of herself, and in her own history, the true prophet of the Lord, as else she could not be.

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

THY WAY.

WHEN all things seem against us,
 And days are dark and drear,
 And every outlook gloomy,
 And naught hath power to cheer,—
 O, give us grace to say,
 Lord Jesus, have *Thy* way.

When we—alas, how often!—
 Must bear the penalty
 Of our un-Christlike actions,
 O, grant humility
 And brokenness to say,
 Lord Jesus, have *Thy* way.

But, ah! when we are wounded,
 How quick to take our part,
 And smite when we are smitten—
 Alas! the pride of heart!—
 That makes it hard to say,
 Lord Jesus, have *Thy* way.

Could we—ourselves forgetting—
 To Him leave all the rest,
 E'en though we must be humbled,
 It must be to be blest
 If only we can pray,
 Lord Jesus, have *Thy* way.

How many a needless sorrow,
 How many a broken heart
 Were spared, and many brethren
 Had never need to part!
 Had we been quick to say,
 Lord Jesus, have *Thy* way.

Thy way is never sweet, Lord,
 When 'tis against *our will*.
 O, mould our wills to *Thine*, Lord,
 And bid *our thoughts* be still.

Thus only can we say,
Lord Jesus, have *Thy* way.

How little, Lord, Thy meekness
And lowliness we show !
How little may the worlding
By us our Master know !
How often we display
Our own, and not *Thy* way.

Like Israel of old, Lord,
In spite of all Thy grace,
We sin against Thy goodness;
Forgetting Thy past ways,
Thy way thus thrust aside
Gives place to human pride.

When wilt thou come and free us,
From all our foolishness ?
O, when shall we be like Thee,
Where Thou canst only bless,
And all our being say,
We glory in *Thy* way ?

H. McD.

THE BIBLE.

THE lawgiver passed to his rest. His laws and literature surviving through many vicissitudes have produced in each succeeding age a new harvest of poetry and history inspired with their own spirit. In the meantime the learning and superstition of Egypt faded from the eyes of men. The splendid political and military organizations of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Macedon arose and crumbled into dust. The wonderful literature of Greece blazed forth and expired. That of Rome, a reflex and copy of the former, had reached its cul-

minating point; and no prophet had arisen among any of these Gentile nations to teach them the truth of God. The world, with all its national liberties crushed out, its religion and its philosophy corrupted and enfeebled to the last degree by an endless succession of borrowings and intermixtures, lay prostrate under the iron heel of Rome.

“Then appeared among the now obscure remnant of Israel one who announced Himself as the Prophet like unto Moses, promised of old; but a prophet whose mission it was to redeem not Israel only, but the whole world, and to make all who will believe children of faithful Abraham. Adopting the whole of the sacred literature of the Hebrews, and proving His mission by its words, He sent forth a few plain men to write its closing books, and to plant it on the ruins of all the time honored beliefs of the nations—beliefs supported by a splendid and highly organized priestly system and by despotic power, and gilded by all the highest efforts of poetry and art.

“The story is a very familiar one; but it is marvelous beyond all others. Nor is the modern history of the Bible less wonderful. Exhumed from the rubbish of the middle ages, it has entered on a new career of victory. It has stimulated the mind of modern Europe to all its highest efforts, and has been the charter of its civil and religious liberties. Its wondrous revelation of all that man most desires to know, in the past, in the present, and in his future destinies, has gone home to the hearts of men in all ranks of society and in all countries. In many great nations it is the only rule of religious faith. In every civilized country, it is the basis of all that is most valuable in religion. Where it has been

withheld from the people, civilization in its highest aspects has languished, and superstition, priestcraft and tyranny have held their ground, or have perished under the assaults of a heartless and inhuman infidelity. Where it has been a household book, education has necessarily flourished, liberty has taken root, and the higher nature of man has been developed to the full. Driven from many other countries by tyrannical interference with liberty of thought and discussion, or by a short-sighted ecclesiasticism, it has taken up its special abode with the greatest commercial nations of our time; and, scattered by their agency broadcast over the world, it is read by every nation under heaven in its own tongue . . .

“Explain it as we may, the Bible is a great literary miracle; and no amount of inspiration that can be claimed for it is more strange and incredible than the actual history of the Book. Yet, no book has thrown itself into so decided antagonism with all the great forces of evil in the world. Tyranny hates it, because the Bible so strongly maintains the individual value and rights of man as man. The spirit of caste dislikes it for the same reason. Anarchical license on the other hand finds nothing but discouragement in it. Priestcraft gnashes its teeth at it as the very embodiment of private judgment in religion, and because it so scornfully ignores human authority in matters of conscience and human intervention between man and his Maker. Skepticism sneers at it, because it requires faith and humility and threatens ruin to the unbeliever. It launches its thunders against every form of violence or fraud or allurements that seeks to profit by wrong, or to

pander to the vices of mankind. All these consequently are its foes. On the other hand, by its uncompromising stand with reference to certain scientific and historical facts, it has appeared to oppose the progress of thought and speculation; though, as we shall see, it has been unfairly accused in this last respect."

Origin of the World.—DAWSON.

"DARIUS THE MEDIAN."

*An Illustration of the Incompetence of "Critics",
through Unbelief.*

THE book of Daniel has ever received the special attention of those who labor to discredit Scripture. It could not be otherwise. For in the form of prediction, Daniel traces the exact history of world-empires from Nebuchadnezzar to the Cæsars. Can we believe the book of Daniel, in its testimony that this history was foretold several centuries before many of the predicted events occurred? If so, we have a clear proof of the verbal inspiration of Scripture.

It is plain that those who will not concede that "all Scripture is God-breathed" must take issue with the book of Daniel in the most radical way. They would stand self-condemned were they to admit that the prophet Daniel really received, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and his immediate successors, the revelation of future events which the book of Daniel declares that he then received. Nor can they admit that the book itself was written at any period prior to the desecration of the temple at Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes, in the time of the

Maccabees (about 167 B. C.). For the minute details of the history down to this point, as foreshadowed in Daniel, so perfectly agree with the actual events, as recorded in secular history, that we are absolutely shut up to one of two conclusions: (1) either the narrative in Daniel is inspired prediction as it claims to be; or (2) the book is the forgery of an impostor, a false Daniel who, at least as late as the Maccabæan age, foisted upon the Jewish public a compilation of *history*, artfully dressed up as *prediction* from the lips of a prophet who had lived at Babylon four hundred years before.

The latter view is necessarily that of all shades of unbelief, who in its support have marshaled every resource of infidel scholarship. In this instance, as so frequently, the uncritical "critics" propose to escape the miracle of verbal inspiration by substituting something more than miracle—the postulate of the supernatural without a miracle-Worker to accomplish it! For if the book of Daniel is indeed a forgery, it is a literary master-piece without a parallel in secular world-literature, transcending all known laws which limit human literary workmanship and rising to the most sublime heights of the "supernatural"! The justification of this statement, in detail, will not be difficult, but requires some space. In passing one may simply state that a study of the subject, from this standpoint, has conducted to the following conclusions: (1) That if the vivid situations which abound in the book of Daniel are fictions, the work is the most marvelous achievement of literary imagination in the history of world-literature; (2) That if the simple power with which these situations are drawn is that merely of literary art,

their author stands forth as the greatest dramatic genius whose work has come down to us ; (3) That if the outline of history for four hundred years, as traced in Daniel, is not inspired, but the work of a historical student, then in an age of uncritical history-writing, of meagre, inaccurate and inaccessible authorities, and of absence of antiquarian interest, we find one who attained to a marvelous historical and antiquarian accuracy which has never been approached even in our own age of printing, books, libraries, antiquarian interest and historical training ; and (4) That if the skill and power in selecting the materials, and weaving them together into the semblance of a God-breathed oracle, which sways man's conscience, as this book has done, be the skill and power of mere art and fiction, then the mind that so wrought was a literary "genius" whose like never appeared on earth before or since.

Little wonder that Prof. T. K. Cheyne, inviting us to credit the more-than-miracle, that the book is a literary forgery, wrought out four hundred years subsequent to the scenes in which its action is set, assures us that if we adopt his view "We shall then no longer be surprised at the improbability of many of the details," but "admiration will be our only feeling, when we consider the author's comparative success in reproducing a distant past"! But is there indeed, then, not one clue to the shadowy personality of this "immortal genius," who towers above all of all ages who have used the pen,—one who possessed such extraordinary modesty that he effectually concealed his own identity behind a prophetic figure of the past only known by name through three allusions in Ezekiel (xiv. 14, 20; xxviii. 3.), and yet at the

same time such moral obliquity that he employed his peerless talent only in the perpetration of a gigantic fraud? He who will credit a theory so absurd, in order to eliminate the divine from Scripture, we can only classify with those "blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel"!

But we must go on to make the sad charge that those led by such bias of mind cannot always be trusted to exercise ordinary intelligence in dealing with documents, so that we dare not rely upon their mere scholarship, even in fields in which they have world-wide repute as "specialists." As a case in point we will consider the most serious of the alleged discrepancies between the testimony of secular historians and the "monuments" on the one hand, and of the book of Daniel on the other. We will permit Prof. Cheyne to state the difficulty in his own way (article "Daniel," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed., vol. vi., p. 804):

The most puzzling discrepancy, however, relates to the name of the Medo-Persian king, who "received" from God's hands the "distributed" Babylonian empire (v. 28, 31). The book of Daniel states (v. 31) that this was Darius the Mede; profane history asserts that it was Cyrus the Persian. Many attempts have been made to reconcile these opposing statements. Some think that Darius the Mede was Astyages, but there is a chronological difficulty; others, Cyaxares II., but we are not certain that such a king existed; while Des Vignoles and M. Lenormant would make him a Median prince, rewarded by Cyrus for his fidelity with the vassal kingship of Babylon. Unfortunately this Median prince is at present even more shadowy than Cyaxares II. "The inscriptions," remarks Mr. G. Smith, "have as yet afforded no information on this point."

The testimony of the book of Daniel is certainly unequivocal. We read that "in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And *Darius the Median* took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old" (v. 30, 31). If the kingdom was really taken by Cyrus the Persian, the difficulty here is serious enough. Moreover, we are explicitly told that Darius at once organized and began to administer the kingdom: "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three presidents, of whom Daniel was first" (vi. 1, 2). Then follows the account of the conspiracy against Daniel, and of his deliverance out of the den of lions, closing with the statement: "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (vi. 28). This assuredly bears witness to a reign of Darius, however brief, preceding the reign of Cyrus. This is confirmed by Dan. ix. 1 and x. 1. The first of these passages declares that Daniel's supplication in behalf of Israel occurred "in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans." The second tells of a revelation made to Daniel "in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia."

It is true that "profane" historians speak of Cyrus, and not of Darius. But if it is a fact that "the inscriptions have as yet afforded no information on this point," this is not the fault of the inscriptions. It is the very serious fault of the "higher critics" and "Assyriologists," who have profoundly failed to acquire the information from the so-called Annalistic Tablet of Cyrus, although since 1880 it has been

staring them in the face in the form of the original, of printed texts of the original, and even of translations into English ! I am not an Assyriologist ; and yet, curiously enough, I obtained this information for the first time about six years ago when reading the very words in which an Assyriologist (Prof. Francis Brown, of Union Theological Seminary) discredits the book of Daniel on this point. This remarkable passage is as follows :

As a third illustration, take the newest Cyrus Inscriptions. There are two of them, which give the account from different stand-points (that of the zealous priest and that of the annalist) of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus' troops, B.C. 538. I mention only one of the points of difficulty which arise when these inscriptions are compared with statements in the book of Daniel. They seem to leave no place for "Darius the Median." Gobryas, general of Cyrus' forces, entered Babylon, according to their statement, in July, of the seventeenth year of Nabonidus, the reigning King of Babylon. Cyrus followed him soon after ; having at once deposed Nabonidus, and assumed the royal power. The Darius who from Dan v. 31, vi. 1-28, etc., would appear to have followed the last Babylonian king, and preceded Cyrus, seems not to exist for the inscriptions. Now here is a historical problem of the first order. It needs no amplification. The issue is clear. I do not know what adequate solution can be now offered for the difficulty. That there is some solution, under which the Bible will suffer no damage, I feel sure, but who can tell us what it is ? This is a specimen of a comparatively small but extremely grave class of problems, which it is not honest, nor wise, for Bible students to put wholly out of sight, when they call Assyriology to their aid in interpreting the Scriptures.

As soon as my eye caught the words above, "Gobryas, general of Cyrus' forces, entered Babylon," I was morally convinced that "Darius the Median"

was no stranger to the inscriptions—a conclusion which the examination of a translation of the Annalistic Tablet of Cyrus at once confirmed. The Gobryas of the inscription is of course the Darius of the book of Daniel. According to the inscription, Cyrus was personally engaged in warfare elsewhere when Gobryas entered Babylon, while the latter administered the government for three and one-half months before Cyrus so much as made his appearance. The Annalistic Tablet even states that "Peace to all the province of Babylon did Gobryas his governor proclaim: governors in Babylon he appointed,"—in striking agreement with the statement of Dan. vi. 1, that "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps." Gobryas entered Babylon on June 16, according to the Tablet, and Cyrus on October 3, following. We need not even suppose that Gobryas continued to "reign" over Babylon, under Cyrus. What is there in Daniel to suggest that all the events recounted in that book as taking place in the "reign" of "Darius the Median," could not have occurred in the interval between the capture of Babylon by Gobryas and the coming of Cyrus?

After such an example of the competence of Prof. Brown to compare the inscriptions with the statements in the book of Daniel, and after so simple a solution of what he styles "a historical problem of the first order," shall we be alarmed at his intimation of some less important "points of difficulty which arise when these inscriptions are compared with statements in the book of Daniel"? I may add that the paragraph quoted above is from his little book (pp. 37, 38) entitled, with some appropriateness,

"Assyriology: Its Use and Abuse in Old Testament Study" !

Prof. A. H. Sayce, the distinguished Assyriologist, has in recent years aimed some sturdy blows at "higher criticism." Yet one who reads him soon finds that the credit of Scripture is not so much his object as is the substitution of the dictum of Assyriologists for the dictum of "higher critics." What this would mean we can imagine from the fact that he himself is as helpless as the rest in the matter of "Darius the Median." Yet in one of his books, having echoed the usual indictment of the book of Daniel, because in it "Darius the Mede" makes his appearance by the side of Cyrus the "Persian" ("The 'Higher Criticism' and the Verdict of the Monuments," 2nd ed., p. 497), he gives only five pages further on a translation of the Annalistic Table of Cyrus in which "Gobryas" makes his appearance "by the side of Cyrus" in the most emphatic manner, as the following extract witnesses :

In the month Tammuz (June) when Cyrus had delivered battle against the soldiers of Accad in the city of Rutu (?) on the banks of the river Nizallat, when the men of Accad also had delivered battle, the men of Accad raised a revolt ; some persons were slain. On the fourteenth day of the month, Sippara was taken without fighting ; Nabonidos fled. On the sixteenth day, Gobryas, the governor of the country of Kurdistan, and the soldiers of Cyrus, entered Babylon without fighting. Afterwards Nabonidos was captured after being bound in Babylon . . . The third day of the month Marchesvan (October) Cyrus entered Babylon. Dissensions were allayed before him. Peace to the city did Cyrus establish, peace to all the province of Babylon did Gobryas his governor proclaim. Governors in Babylon he appointed.

An English translation of this tablet, by Dr. Julius Oppert, will also be found in "Records of the Past" (vol. ix., p. 67).

Thus in contrast with a consensus of "profane" historians, who spoke of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in person, the book of Daniel has long been under a reproach with its superficial "critics," because it alone bore witness to the truth,—the fact that Babylon was actually captured, and its government at first administered, by Gobryas ("Darius"), general of Cyrus and governor of Kurdistan, the land of the Manda, Madians, or Medes. It is the voice of Cyrus himself, as it were, which rises in these last days to rebuke the madness of the "critics." Futile are their attacks and their widespread clamor. "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35); "for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21, *marg.*).

But while we may rejoice in them, such external witnesses to the fact that God's infallible voice speaks through His written word are not needed by us who know that word as a miraculous power of God in our innermost being—"living and operative" (Heb. iv. 12, *Gr.*). And it is of this kind of knowledge of Scripture,—the only knowledge which saves, instead of adding to our condemnation,—that I would add a word for young Christians. You who, in your preparation for this life come under the influence of the spirit which is now generally in control of public schools and colleges, books and newspapers, and current opinion in nearly all lines of thought, are in grave danger of having your minds unconsciously

corrupted from the faith which is in Christ Jesus. This spirit of infidelity masquerades as "liberalism," "advanced thought," and "science," the last-mentioned claim being especially effective in imposing its pretensions upon the young. Though you have faith in Christ, and reverence the Bible as the word of God, yet when you behold its perfect credibility questioned by specialists in nearly all of the many branches of "science" of our day, only the power of God can keep you from thinking that there must be a little fire, at least, where there is so much smoke. It is easy to think that those who still hold to extreme views of the verbal inspiration of Scripture are slightly credulous—a little too religious. It is only too easy to adopt some one of the current views of professedly orthodox Christians, who now say the Bible *contains* God's word, though no longer sure that every part of it *is* His word. But to fall into this snare means—what? Shipwreck concerning the faith! The suffering of loss eternally, even if the soul be saved, so as by fire!

What is the remedy? To call attention to such a corroboration of Scripture's credibility as we have been considering? On the contrary, what I wish especially to emphasize is the fact that no power lies in this direction;—that if our confidence in Scripture is based upon the witness to its integrity given by archæology, history, science, etc., however remarkable this may be, we are already in a deplorable state, knowing little of the power of God.

When the apostle warned the Ephesian elders of evils to come, he commended them to the word of God's grace, as that which was able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among the sancti-

fied (Acts xx. 32). When the same apostle wrote his second letter to Timothy, after evil had already begun to come in among Christians like a flood, he both warned that the evil would wax worse, and presented the remedy available to faith, in the following words: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 13-17).

But God's face must be sought earnestly, that His word may be engrafted upon the soul by the energy of the Holy Spirit. Only in proportion as this is accomplished will we be preserved from a philosophy after the tradition of men, and the oppositions of that which is falsely styled "knowledge" (Col. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21). Only in proportion as the word of God abides *in* us, will we become what Scripture calls "young men," who are spiritually "strong" and have "overcome the wicked one" (1 John ii. 14). Only thus will we become as stones livingly united to the rock-Foundation, whose moorings nothing can successfully assail.

It is the privilege of one who has just put his trust in Christ to obtain the assurance of salvation by simple faith in God's pledge to that effect in His written word. But in the first epistle of John the Christian

testimony "*We know*," is again and again put upon a different ground;—blessed assurance about spiritual facts growing out of a ripe experience of the soul, as deeply wrought upon by the word and Spirit of God. How much do you know of this, dear young fellow-saints? This is the secret of assurance, rest, peace, patience, profound personal knowledge of God, which no flood of apostasy around us can disturb! Earnestly ask to be searched out in God's presence, to know from Him whether your soul is making the progress in this direction which it should.

We do not easily learn the lesson of communion with God, in His patient endurance of rejection and seeming defeat. We hope that the corroborations of His word, which His providence brings to man's notice, now and again, may stem the tide of error. But no: they are only the multiplied signs given to a hardened generation to fill up the measure of its iniquity. Scripture is unequivocally committed to the prediction that the so-called Christian nations will hasten on to complete apostasy, which God will avenge with dire judgments. What a grim commentary upon the puny assaults of its enemies—this fact that their wide-spread movement against the credibility of Scripture fulfils its very prediction for our days which was left as the supreme external test of its inspired character!

Are the days evil? Yes, my young fellow-Christian; and therefore never before had faith such an opportunity as is offered to you and to me, of standing and withstanding in the evil day, and being rewarded with a proportionate crown of glory. Will it be yours? Will it be mine? God grant it! Will you, then, be swayed by the great current of plausi-

ble iniquity around you? Will you even permit yourself to be troubled by it? Nay; "to you who are troubled: *rest* with us—when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power,—when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. i. 7-10).

F. A.

JONATHAN AND DAVID.

(1 Sam. xvii.-xviii. 5.)

(*Notes of an Address given in Lowry, by A. E. B.*)

THERE is one thing in Jonathan's life I wish to speak about this afternoon, but before doing so I will first notice a few things in this chapter.

Saul and his whole army tremble before Goliath,—for "forty days and forty nights" none could overcome this powerful enemy. Saul may fitly represent the first man (Adam), who with all his race for forty centuries trembled before another enemy, another Goliath, even Satan, the prince of this world. But after that period, during which man had a fair and perfect trial and utterly failed, we then learn of a Second Man, God's "Beloved," who appears upon the scene as David did here. His brethren might reject Him also, as they did David; but as David said, "Is there not a cause?" so, was there not a

cause why *our* David, God's Beloved, came down from heaven and went down to the valley of Elah (death)? A greater enemy than Goliath was to be met and overcome. David met Goliath single-handed, and with the smooth stone selected from the brook he brings down the giant; and more, with the giant's own sword cuts off his head, and then rises up and carries the head up to the king and puts it down before the throne.

David undertook and finished the whole work; all the people did was to stand by and witness the savior that day do the whole work that brought salvation to them. So with Jesus; in death He overcame him who had the power of death, that is, Satan (Heb. ii). Upon the cross He finished the whole work of atonement, by which all are saved who repent and believe the gospel.

Here is where Jonathan comes in, after this marvelous victory. He beautifully represents the Spirit's work in the young believer; his heart was knit to David's, and he loved him as his own soul. May we not say here is David's first convert? And a fine example he is to start with. Next, he "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." David was his savior—had brought salvation to Jonathan that day, and Jonathan rightly felt nothing was too good to lay down at David's feet; he surrenders all to David. Young converts who mourn over the fact that they have to give up *so much* of the things of the world when they are converted, have not had the plowshare of conviction concerning sin put in very deep, and hence their apprehension of the glory of the Lord

Jesus and His claims is very shallow. It was a joy for Jonathan to surrender all to David. He apprehended the true character of David's work.

The cross of Christ is where we get a glimpse of this. It is there we learn what an awful thing sin is; it is there we get a right conception of God's holiness and of God's love. Oh that our hearts took this in more seriously! there would be with us all then a more whole-hearted response to His claims upon us, and we could truthfully sing with the poet,

"I love to own, Lord Jesus,
Thy claims o'er me divine.
Bought with Thy blood most precious,
Whose can I be but thine?"

This, I believe, Jonathan in those verses fairly illustrates to us.

- (1) He loved David (ver. 1).
- (2) He stripped himself, a proof of his love (ver. 4).
- (3) He delighted much in David (chap. xix. 2).
- (4) He confessed God's salvation through David to Saul, his father (chap. xix. 4, 5).
- (5) He visited David in the field (chap. xx. 11).
- (6) He visited David again, in the wood (chap. xxiii, 16).

Yet the main point now before us is, Jonathan falls short of all we would like to have seen recorded of one who commenced so well; he does not follow David *wholly*. Saul, his father, now is manifested as an enemy of David; Jonathan knew this; and David flies to the outside place, the place of exile. Jonathan does not share this path with David, as others of David's company did. What a loss for Jonathan! Natural ties and social links, no doubt, were too strong for him to break, and, we doubt not, many a

restless and uneasy hour he spent. He pays David two visits while he is away, but he did not enjoy *walking* and *living* with David day by day. I think we can scarcely excuse him;—although one is delicate in marking the failure of one otherwise so true and devoted to David—a life that puts some of us to shame when we consider the higher claims of David's Lord upon every one of us. Yet the Holy Spirit has recorded this lesson for us, and we would be the losers if we did not notice it and search ourselves by it. In chapter xxiii, 17, Jonathan says, "Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee." The first was true, but the second never became so. David, according to God's purpose, ascends the throne, but Jonathan never takes the place by his side to sit next to him. And if any ask, Why? there is but one answer: He did not step *outside* and walk with David day by day. How our hearts mourn this part of our lesson—that he ever returned to Saul's house on that last day when he visited David in the wood (chap. xxiii)! David and he met no more. Jonathan, we believe, was saved, and is now in the glory: this we do not doubt; but when the Philistines defeat Israel, Jonathan falls on Mount Gilboa with his father.

What a voice this has for us! and it ought to search us through and through. Is there anything holding us that hinders our following Christ day by day, and enjoying the precious word of God left to guide us through life? May we learn from Jonathan's failure not to please ourselves, and come short, as he did. When David reached the throne, Jonathan was not there, and well he might lament, "O Jonathan, O Jonathan, I am distressed for thee, my brother Jona-

than; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

But who are they who share with David his kingdom? Those who *followed* him in the days of his exile, those who *walked* with him, those who *served* him; and although that day is now long past, yet their names are recorded and handed down to us with their weighty lessons.

Our day, beloved, of seeing *our* David crowned by all is near at hand, very near; let nothing hold us back from companionship with Jesus to-day. What great blessing we shall find in it, even *present* blessing! Without this, as believers, we must suffer loss—great loss; not here only, but in the glory before us. The lessons learned here are to abide; let us therefore keep the end and the glory in view, and, above all, the Lord Himself, who is coming, our David who shall reign forever.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 2. In obedience to 2 Tim. ii. 21—in separation to the name of the Lord, is one to purge himself from vessels to dishonor only, or from the "great-house?"

Is the "great-house" all that calls itself Christian?

ANS.—From the vessels to dishonor, clearly. There is only one house, the house of God; but it has become *like* a great house, to which the apostle therefore compares it. We cannot leave Christendom, but only what defiles it. Soon, all that man has built in will be tried by fire; but God has given us His word to judge by now, and he who names the name of the Lord must depart from iniquity.

JONAH THE PROPHET.

I. THE REBELLION OF THE PROPHET.

Continued from page 175.

JONAH then, in the meaning of his name, is "the dove," the vessel of the Spirit, the son of Amitai, the "Faithful One." He is, as we learn from the book of Kings, one of the tribe of Zebulon, the representative among the tribes of that "dwelling in relationship" (Gen. xxx. 20), which God would have, and will have, His people know. It is plain that here we are looking at what God means Jonah to be. The Israel that God takes up begins his life, as we know, as *Jacob*, and for long years is that. Jonah has yet to come to the value of his name.

God has a message for him. He is to arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it because their wickedness is come up before Him. Nineveh means apparently "a dwelling-place;" and the word seems to be reduplicative in its form, and thus to have an emphatic force. God meant man—fallen as he is—to be, for his own blessing, a pilgrim and a stranger upon the earth; but he who first went out from the presence of the Lord with the brand of his guilt upon him, went out to build a city in the land of Nod, the land of vagabondage, and to make for himself, therefore, a dwelling-place, which his posterity enriched, as we know, with all the beginnings of civilization,—things of which men boast so much, without realizing how far they may be led away from God by them. Cain says, as if he mourned it: "From thy face shall I be hid;" but

alas, how readily do men accept this and desire it! Jonah, alas, prophet of the Lord as he is, has no heart to face that great world-city, Nineveh, and cry against it. How little have we, as the people of God, followed Him who said with regard to Himself, that the world hated Him because He testified of it that its deeds were evil! Surely we know how gracious, too, that testimony was, and how He besought the men whom He would have aware of their condition, to come to Him for the effectual remedy of it. Nevertheless, for His love He got hatred, and how we shun a testimony like this! Jonah shuns it, and would rather flee from the presence of the Lord than be the messenger of the Lord with such a message. He rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. How solemnly the moral of it all is pressed upon us here! It is a downward course indeed. It is a terrible story of how the refusal of God's will leads to estrangement from Himself; and how the people of God even can doggedly accept this, rather than take that place of estrangement which the God-estranged world would give them.

Joppa is the last place in Israel from which Jonah departs. Joppa or Japho is "fair to him." That was what Israel was, as we know, in God's thoughts; but Joppa was in the territory of Dan, that is, of judgment; and *self*-judgment is truly that which will alone enable us to be "fair to Him." With Jonah there is nothing of this. He is off to Tarshish. He goes with the merchants of the earth, as if at

least he were going to pursue traffic among them. How striking a picture it is of Israel's condition! Are they not, in fact, of all men even proverbially, the keenest traffickers? They have learnt it where they learned to treat that which was their treasure, God's own revelation, as a mere matter of gain to themselves, as others of whom the apostle speaks, supposed in his day that "gain was godliness." Israel has grasped God's revelation after an unholy fashion as gain to self, instead of for self-judgment; and thus they have built themselves up in self-righteousness, and cast themselves away from the very One whom His word should have revealed to them. Thus they have become but like the Gentiles from whom professedly it is their boast to be separate.

God has done more for them than they desired. If they will be uncircumcised in heart, they shall not merely have their place with the uncircumcised, but shall find themselves swallowed up of the nations to whom in ignorance of the Lord, their Lord, and for mere earthly gain, they became like Issachar; (their representative in their father's prophecy, Gen. 49). Issachar is a mere ass couching between the hurdles, seeing rest that it is good and the earth that it is pleasant, and bowing the shoulder to bear, and becoming servant to tribute.

But a worse fate still was in store for them. The Lord sends out a great wind into the sea and there is a mighty tempest in it, and then Jonah's condition is discovered. Morally and spiritually he was indeed asleep. So Israel has had to own, if not with their lips, yet in their manifest condition, that they were, as the people of the Lord, cast out from the land which was for them identified with the fulfilment of

all the divine promises. That land they never could have lost except as having indeed fled from the presence of the Lord; and here the Gentiles have, perforce, whether they will or not, to inflict the judgment of God upon them. In fact, the very grace which goes out to the Gentiles now is bound up with the judgment of the nation who gave Christ, their King, the cross. Here is the full discovery of Israel's condition; and only in consenting to her judgment do the Gentiles find themselves rest and deliverance. This is but, indeed, a glance at what grace has wrought for us. It is not in the nature of Israel's prophecies to do more than give a glance at that which was to them a hidden mystery, as the apostle witnesses. Those who recognize her as the object of divine judgment would, in fact, fain deliver her from it, but they cannot. They can merely escape themselves while Israel is overwhelmed in the sea of the nations. It is a beautiful touch here with regard to those in the ship that had carried Jonah, that seeing what had taken place, "the men feared the Lord exceedingly (feared the true God, not their idols) and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows." It is but a glance, as already said; but we ought to be able to interpret even a glance in this way.

Let us pause here to apply this story to ourselves and to ask ourselves if Israel found that which had been committed to them become, through their unfaithfulness, so great a burden upon them, how great must be the burden for those whom God has freighted with all the blessed truth which He has given His people now, but who have not been stewards of His grace to others; who have kept simply for themselves,

for their own use (if indeed for that), the priceless things which should be enriching others? How easily we may, all of us, in measure do this! For it is not the gospel only about which we have such responsibility. In this, no doubt, it will be more readily recognized, though here also it will not be in vain to ask ourselves how earnest we have been to give that which is the bread of life to others. But beyond this, every truth that God has given, every whit of that which is in every part of it blessing and nothing else but blessing, has its necessary responsibility attached to it. We are not only responsible to receive it ourselves, but to give it to others. Every fresh acquirement for ourselves in this way is fresh responsibility. To be tongue-tied and silent where we ought to speak, how great a failure is here on the part of those who own the blessedness of what God has given to them!

Jonah might have said, How likely is the proud city of Nineveh to listen to a despised Israelite? and we may, even among the people of God themselves, have cause also to realize how little acceptable is the whole truth of God to those to whom every whit of it should be pure blessing, and nothing else! But that we have nothing to do with. God has said, "He that hath My Word,"—simply *hath* it,—*"let him speak My Word faithfully."* It is not a question of any official place here. It is the possession of the Word which makes us responsible to speak of it, and to speak it all. Whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, is not the question. The glory of God requires that what He has given for blessing should be fully known, and how much, can it be doubted, we are all of us more or less suffering for

want of absolute faithfulness in this respect ! Jonah fleeing from the execution of his commission fled from the presence of the Lord ; and how much do we lose of the power, at least, of that Presence with us, by our lack of speaking out the Word which God has put into our lips ! Does He not always join the heart and the lips together,—confession with the mouth with belief in the heart ? Does He not link them as if they were but different aspects of one and the same thing ? And may not the Lord have oftentimes in this way a controversy with us, of which we may be simply unconscious only because of the lethargy which has fallen upon us as it fell upon him who slept in the sides of the vessel, when all others were aroused by the storm that was upon them ?

The Lord give us in His grace that we may examine ourselves faithfully in view of such a history as this, not forgetting the importance of what we may be apt to call minor applications of divine principles, where, if we are only true to God, we shall realize that the principles apply all through and that here we have no business to count any application minor. To His principles we must be true or false ; and that is no minor question for us, whatever may be the principle. What blessing God has given us in all the truth which He has made known to us ; and what honor He intends for us in making us the means of the communication of it to others ! We are indeed but the hands to distribute the bread which we have received from Him, and which His own grace alone can multiply for the need and make effectual ; but how blessed to be, in this way, as the hands of the Lord Jesus, or as His feet also to run errands and to do His will ! Is it not part, at least, of what is im-

plied in membership in the body of Christ? the body being that in which the indwelling Spirit expresses itself, and even our body being the temple of the Spirit which is in us!

F. W. G.

CARDINAL TRUTHS.

THERE are some truths in the word of God, which we believe are important to keep clear and distinct in our minds at all times, and to zealously teach them to the young, and so guard them from the heterodoxy of the these last days. A few of them we will set before the reader.

First.—The *deity* of the Lord Jesus. It is important to have every part of the foundation solid; if not, the whole superstructure may collapse. And this weighty and important truth lies at the very foundation of our Christian faith. To give up this would be to give up all; to take away this would be to take away the most precious treasure the child of God possesses. If our Saviour was not "God manifest in the flesh," we have really no Saviour at all, no true atonement; hence no salvation for the lost. But Scripture teems with proof of His *deity*; and by this term we mean not *divinity* merely, as some would grant, but the God-head glory of Jesus the Son of God. By a careful reference to John i. 1-5, Col. i. 14-17, Heb. i. 1-3, we believe each reader will see that the eternal existence and *deity* of the Lord Jesus is fully established without a shadow of doubt. *Creation* is set forth in the beginning as the work of His hands; all things even now are upheld by His power. "God was in Christ;" "God was

manifest in the flesh" (2 Cor. v. 19; 1 Tim. iii 16) is the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning Him. The Father saluted Him, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And again, to the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever" (Heb. i. 8).

And although He was crucified and put to death by man, yet He lives, risen from the dead, glorified at the Father's right hand; and of Him now the apostle writes, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9).

May this truth, so wonderful and majestic, lead us as worshipers to fall at His feet, and there exclaim, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive *glory* and *honor* and *power*; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. iv. 11).

Second. The *incarnation of the Lord Jesus*. Here we begin as worshipers to learn of God and man in one Person: truly God, and yet just as truly man. How wonderful the mystery, far beyond the ken of man. One moment as we survey His path from the manger to the cross we see His Godhead-glory shining forth. His *power*, His *dignity*, His *majesty*; and the next moment His human glories as man, a perfect man. The eternal Son assumes a body prepared for Him (and this was also holy). We behold Him a babe in Bethlehem, yet a perfect babe. One in whom there was no spot, nor blemish, no traces of sin: "God manifest in the flesh," "The Second Man, the Lord from heaven," "The mighty God, the Father of Eternity," and yet a babe in Mary's arms, "Immanuel, God with us." What a thought for each believer! He was "the true days-

man," "the mediator," that every true and anxious inquirer desires. Because He was God (the Son) He knew the requirement of God's throne, and because a true man He could draw near and measure the need of man, and take him by the hand, and bring God and man in righteousness together. How necessary for each believer to recognize, if not able to solve and fathom, the depth of this great mystery, and to hold fast as a most sacred trust—the incarnation of the the Son of God; and, in the spirit of the wise men from the east, to give to Him, the second Person of the Godhead, the *gold*, the *frankincense*, and the *myrrh*. (Matt. ii. 11.)

Third. The Lord's *perfect life of obedience*. Nothing else could we expect to see in Him, when once the truth of His person is apprehended and recognized. In Him we see, not Adam innocent, much less Adam sinful, but the *Second man*, a new order entirely, as announced to Mary, "that *holy* thing that shall be born of thee. Hence when we look at His lowly life here below, we look for *holiness* and perfection—absolute obedience to His Father's will. This we discern in every step of His journey across the desert world. In childhood obedient to His parents; bowing to baptism under John at the banks of Jordan; suffering the forty days of temptation by the devil; then three and a half years of lowly service to man, at the end of which He is "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." His every *thought*, *motive*, *aspiration*, and *feeling*, *word* and *way*, as He Himself—*perfect*. Nothing else was possible for Him. The "obedience of Christ" is the constant testimony of the Scriptures (2 Cor. x. 5; Phil. ii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 2); and this is brought

before us as God's standard for our example in daily life. How wonderful to contemplate Him in such perfections; and own Him our Saviour and Lord. Then it is that we enter into the *priestly* functions; as of old Aaron's family, go inside the fine linen courts of God's holy presence and feed upon the "meal-offering," of *fine* flour; no coarse, uneven grain, but all perfect: and by thus feeding upon Him (Exod. xxix. 33), we gradually grow into His likeness, are transformed into His image from glory to glory.

Fourth. The *atonement* of Christ. The previous subject would prepare us for this one, showing His fitness for this great work. He and He alone could assume such a task and fulfil it. Not *Michael* nor *Gabriel*. The one might be permitted to announce the Lord's birth (Luke ii.), and the other, by and by, to lead the angelic hosts on to victory (Rev. xii.); but the work of *atonement* for sin, the work that would enable God righteously to justify from all their sins and save with an everlasting salvation all who repent and believe the gospel,—this work could be given to do only to Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, for He alone could accomplish it. According to His power and love He has accomplished it. He would not go back to the fair scene of His home until all was finished. Upon that *foundation* God is bringing millions upon millions to the same home with His Son. The atoning suffering of Jesus, borne when on the cross, made the propitiation. Note it well that it was not by His *life* mission, but *upon the tree*—"He bore our sins in His own body *on the tree*." It was during the last three hours of His suffering there that the dark storm-cloud broke upon

Him. It was at that time the waves and billows rolled over His soul. It was then, as the priests of old in Jordan, (Josh. iii. 17; iv. 10), His feet stood firm till all was finished, and the way opened up for the ransomed host to pass over in safety. There His blood was shed. There satisfaction was rendered to the throne of infinite justice; and since He cried "It is finished," all, all that is required to save with an everlasting salvation those who repent and believe, is proclaimed. As we think of a work so important and entailing such a sacrifice, the feelings of love and devotion grow warm; and when "higher critics" and sceptics would cast a slight upon such a grand and all-important work as the *atonement*, we would rise in earnest zeal for the very foundation of the Christian faith, and, as Abraham, drive the unclean birds away.

Fifth. The *resurrection* of Christ. In this we get the triumph and victory of the blessed Lord over every foe—men and demons. During His lifetime His enemies longed for His death and the time when His name would perish forever (Psa. xli. 5). The enemy seemed to triumph at the cross, though it was really the power of God unto salvation for us, as we read: "He was delivered for our offences," but "He was raised for our justification" (Rom. iv.) When He rose it was proof that His sacrificial work was accepted, and this gives us a good conscience; we know by His resurrection that our sins are forever put away. As risen He is the sheaf of first-fruits, the sample, and the pledge that the saints shall rise and follow Him where He is gone. But every man in his own order: Christ the *first-fruits*, afterward those who are His at His coming. What a

glorious harvest will soon be reaped by Him: every grave, every sepulchre that holds the dust of those laid asleep by Jesus, will one day give up its precious treasure, and the fruit of His triumph will be seen before the Father, when they shall then appear in His likeness.

The believer's badge before all nations of the earth is the resurrection of Christ, and we show this by observing that day, the resurrection-day of our Lord, the first day of the week. The Jews kept the seventh day, the Sabbath; we observe the first day, the *Lord's day*. They did so, because they were under law; we do so as being under grace, and because it is a privilege, the example being set us by the apostles themselves.

Sixth. The *present life* of Christ in heaven. We fear many do not understand this aright. The righteous *foundation* of all our blessing is *His death*; the proof of God's acceptance of that work is *His resurrection*; but we follow Him yet further: He has gone *into heaven*, as the high-priest of old, into the sanctuary, and has placed the blood of atonement upon the *mercy-seat*. That is, He has presented to God the full value of His atoning death, and God has accepted it, and there it abides upon the throne, and abides in all its eternal value. He abides in the presence of God *for us*, as our *Advocate* and *Intercessor*, and hence He could say in view of this fact, "Because I live ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19). And again, "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by *His life*" (Rom. v. 10). Our present life as believers is sustained by His life in heaven; our pres-

ent day by day salvation, right on to the end, is secured for us by the active ministry of our Priest and Advocate in heaven. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). Will He ever fail in this service undertaken for us whom He loves? Will He ever give up this work before we reach the end? Surely, surely not. Then cheer up, ye weak and timid believers; He shall not only bear us upon His heart to the end, but upon His shoulders also. And never until He brings them all home, with His name and the name of His Father upon their foreheads, will one name be erased that has been inscribed. Saved by His *blood*, we begin our Christian life; saved by His *life*, along the way; and saved by His *power*, as to our bodies with the complete deliverance at the end (Rom. viii. 24; xiii. 11).

Seventh. The *second coming of the Lord*. This will be the day of His espousals, and the day of the gladness of His heart (Song of Sol. iii. 11). What a contrast this will be to His first coming! First He came in lowly grace; then He will come with *power* and *glory*. First as the Man of Sorrows; next, the gladness of His heart. First, to suffer to put sin away; next, to reap the fruit of His suffering and to reign. We who believe get the salvation of our souls by His first coming: we will get the salvation of our bodies by His second coming. Then the glory, the Father's house, forever and forever. All this for which we look and wait is not death; for death is not the second coming. At death believers are laid asleep; at the second coming they are raised from sleep (i. e., their bodies). Each then will leave the grave who has entered it, and the earth also, and go to join the Lord of life and glory (1 Thess. iv. 13-18),

then to be like Himself the glorified Son of Man in heaven, and to go no more out.

What a cheering and soul-purifying hope, and how suited to meet the longings of His people !

May these lines find every reader clear as to His first coming and the work finished then. Then there will be a way clear to look out for His return, "the bright Morning Star." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Let us look over these seven articles, fellow-believer, meditate upon their fulness, cling to them as a sacred trust, and proclaim them by *voice* and *pen* to the four quarters of the earth, as His *witnesses*, *ambassadors*, *disciples*, and *servants*, till He come.

A. E. B.

"REST IN THE LORD."

LEAVE God to order all thy ways,
 And trust in Him whate'er betide;
 Thou'lt find Him, in the evil days,
 An all-sufficient strength and guide.
 Who trusts in God's unchanging love
 Builds on the rock that naught can move.

Only your restless heart keep still,
 And wait in cheerful hope content
 To take whate'er His gracious will—
 His all-discerning love hath sent;
 Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
 To Him who chose us for His own.

He knows when joyful hours are best;
 He sends pain as He sees it meet;
 When thou hast borne its fiery test,
 And now art freed from all deceit,
 He comes to thee all unaware
 And makes thee own His loving care.

GEO. NEWMARKS.

JOSEPH'S JOURNEY FROM HEBRON TO SHECHEM AND DOTHAN.

Genesis xxxvii.

WE probably have no type which so distinctly sets forth Christ as that of Joseph in the Old Testament. Every incident of his history is vocal with some meaning relative to Him and His pathway, whether it be in humiliation or glory. We see him first of all as the well-beloved of his father: "Israel loved Joseph more than all his children" (Gen. xxxvii. 3). And following this we have those visions of supremacy, which so clearly show us Christ; first, in that position of King of kings,—the sheaf to which all the other sheaves bow,—which shall be fulfilled when He comes to set up His kingdom; and, second, as the object of the adoration and worship for a heavenly people,—the moon and stars making obeisance to Him. We are carried thus from eternity to eternity: from Christ in the bosom of the Father, to the fulness of glory which shall be His with the Church, while a glimpse is given us of Him reigning in power, which is really only the introduction to the eternal ages.

It is what comes in between this we would look at here—the journey Joseph takes at his father's bidding. It is a message of fatherly love and care that he is to take from the vale of Hebron to his brethren in Shechem.

We have said that Joseph is a type of Christ; so we find him dwelling at Hebron with his father. Hebron means "participation" or "communion"; and here we find Joseph, the son of his father's love, with him. How beautifully this speaks to us of what John affirms of the true Joseph, that He is the

only-begotten Son, who is "in the bosom of the Father." The Son abiding in the place of the fullest communion with the Father, entering into all His counsels of infinite love and grace. Before all the works of creation, He was "as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. viii. 30).

But Israel had purposed to send his son Joseph with a message of love to his brethren. When called he yields himself perfectly to his father's will: "here am I." We cannot fail to see how closely this corresponds to the blessed Anti-type. We see the Father yearning in His love over the creature, desiring that man may know the infinite grace and blessing which is in His hand to give. He cannot think, blessed be His name, of any proof too strong by which to manifest the depth of His love; so Christ, the Son of the Father's bosom, is the Messenger who has come to declare Him (John i. 18). He has come from the throne of heaven, from the place of participation and communion with God His Father, to display Him in all the fulness of His love and grace. He has come from that "Hebron" and its blessed surroundings into which He will soon introduce us, where the fulness of what our fellowship with the Father and the Son is will be realized by us in the unspeakable joy of being forever with the Lord.

The journey is to Shechem. It means "shoulder" and the thought of service naturally connects itself with this. From Hebron Christ indeed came to Shechem, as the Son of Man who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister as the Servant of His Father. "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God,"

speaks not only of the fact that He has stooped to the place of service, but also of that perfect willingness expressed in Joseph's "here am I." He has thus made Himself of no reputation, and taken the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Who can measure the love of God and of Christ which finds expression in this journey, and the obedience to the death of the cross which it entailed upon Him who made it? It speaks the infinite blessedness of that sweet name, Emmanuel; of the fact that God has dwelt among men that He might be able to exhibit the wondrous depths of His heart.

To Shechem, then, Joseph came only to find no welcome. Christ, too, came only to have Herod's sword thrust out after Him, and Egypt to be made His exile-home: prophecy, as it were, of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction that a people who walked in darkness should see a great light; and further, that the Gentiles should be partakers of the promise by the gospel through Israel's rejection. Christ, like Joseph, came to the place where His own should have been, but His own were not there to receive Him; we shall soon see how, *coming to His own*, they would not receive Him.

We have now the second part of the journey. Joseph goes from Shechem to Dothan to meet his brethren. We shall find it speaks of that downward path, from the taking of the form of a servant to the death of the cross. His brethren are not found in the place of service as they should have been; and as Israel had left the true station of obedience, and therefore of service to God, so Joseph's brethren were to be found at Dothan, not at She-

chem. It pictures exactly the place Israel occupied when Christ came. Dothan means "two wells or cisterns." Two is the number that signifies evil, or contrast, in various ways. Jehovah speaks of Himself always as *the* fountain of living waters, there being no other. The application of the singular implies how all-sufficient this *one* fountain is. Surely it is at Shechem, the place of true service, that the fulness of this is found. But if that place is left, Dothan is the natural end of such a course, where they have hewn out cisterns for themselves, which are broken cisterns. This Israel had done, and this was the place they occupied when sought by the Messenger of God's love. And, notice, "when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired to slay him." How soon it was indeed that the life of Christ was sought by the blood-thirsty hearts of men. God had drawn too near to them; His light manifested what and where they were in relation to Him. And the truth that the mind of the flesh is enmity toward God was fully shown. The words which Christ puts into the mouth of rejected Israel, when He gives forth the parable of the wicked husbandmen, are but the echo of what Joseph's brethren say, "Come now therefore and let us slay him" (ver. 20). Reuben stands up on his behalf, and his action here reminds one of the attitude of a certain class in the Jewish nation of which, I believe, Nicodemus is representative. He takes a parallel position to that of Reuben when before the assembled chief priests and Pharisees he says, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" Their wicked purposes are restrained for the time being: "every

man went unto his own house." So with Joseph's brethren, the counsel of Reuben for the moment prevails.

Finally, we find Joseph is sold to the Ishmaelites, speaking—how plainly, who can doubt?—of the delivering up of Christ into Gentile hands. When this is done, Reuben is away; he is not present in the crucial moment to raise his voice in his brother's behalf. So, too, with the class we have been speaking of among the Jews, we do not hear of them being present, or of one voice being raised when Christ is brought before the court of the high priest. Judah's advice then carries the day, and the deed of violence is committed. We know well what all this leads up to. The Cross is the end of our Joseph's journey from Hebron to Dothan; it is the fruit of what Dothan means.

Beloved, what journey is like this, in which we can find continual food for meditation? Our hearts should be wrapt up in it surely, knowing as we do in some measure how much in our behalf it was undertaken by Him whose delights of old "were with the sons of men." The apostle collates in one blessed, comprehensive statement the whole course we have been looking at when speaking of Christ he says, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The culmination of Joseph's course is that of Christ's also, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is

above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Beloved, it will be our joy to be co-sharers with our beloved Lord in this glory. What joy like that of seeing His face, once so deeply graven with the lines of sorrow and pain, all radiant with the effulgence of God's glory? It will awaken in our hearts the glorious strains of that eternal song with which our hearts will greet Him. Since this is so, meet then it is that His path of rejection, should be ours also. Is it so? and if not, wherein lies the trouble? The promise is, "if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him."

J. B. Jr.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

"Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5).

"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb xiii. 15).

ONE of the most precious truths recovered to us in these last days is, as it seems to me, the priesthood of all believers; a truth which alas! seems practically unknown amongst the mass of Christians around us. And while I trust not a single saint could be found among those gathered to the name of Christ, ready to give up that truth—and God be thanked for this—yet is it not slipping from us, or are we not slipping from it, viewing the mat-

ter from a practical standpoint? I believe it is so, and for this reason I write to my beloved brethren on the subject.

There were certain central truths recovered to God's people by the Reformation; there were others, likewise central, recovered to the Church about sixty years ago; and, as I view it, the priesthood of all believers is one of these latter. This truth, in company with that of the oneness of the body of Christ, and other truths which might be mentioned, would stand, as it were, for the mass of precious truth given afresh to us; and if we are practically, even if not theoretically, resigning it, how serious a sign it becomes; for truth is one, and it is doubtful if a single truth only is ever given up: certainly, one scripture-doctrine which has lost its preciousness for the soul, or amongst a body of believers, is a sure indication of other doctrines being in danger for the individual or the company.

And, beloved brethren, I ask in all earnestness, can there be a question about the freshness and power of the wondrous truth of our common priesthood in its broadest meaning, privileges and responsibilities, having been lost amongst us? A visit to almost any meeting anywhere, or better still, a month's sojourn in any meeting you choose, will, I think, justify but one answer to the question. If the meeting is small, there may be say two or three brethren out of half a dozen, who are ever heard; if the meeting be larger, perhaps out of a dozen or more brethren, three or four may be heard from time to time. I believe the average would not be above what I have indicated. Can there be any doubt about the story this thermometer tells?—that

there is a drifting away from maintaining our priesthood, and toward clerisy? Do not misunderstand me as saying that we are only priests when we give audible expression in praise or prayer or reading of Scripture or the like, in and for the assembly; I would convey no such meaning. We may be truly exercising our functions as such in silence as truly as in speech. The sister's place of silence in the assembly surely does not, therefore, rob her in any way of the priest's place. All this I fully recognize; and I trust it would be as far from my thought as that of any one to make little of the praise, thanksgiving and worship which may, and surely does, go up to God in silence. But, owning all this, still the fact that it falls to a certain few brethren in almost every meeting to be the vehicle of expression for the assembly, instead of each brother realizing that he has responsibilities of this character in connection with his priesthood ("the fruit of the lips") can, I believe, admit of but one interpretation,—that there is in fact a great lack and a dangerous tendency amongst us along this line. I appeal to my dear brethren if this is not so?—I write not to criticise, but to appeal. Where are we, brethren? A large part of us settled down to let brother A and B and C offer praise, lead in prayer, give thanks at the table, or give a word from Scripture, without a thought as to the responsibilities we are shirking on the one hand, or the privileges we are forfeiting on the other?

Let us look a little more closely at the prevailing conditions in connection with our subject:—

1. Are we not confronted with unmistakable evidence that many of the special important truths,

long since recovered to us, are not laid hold of as generally and firmly by the saints gathering to the Lord's name, as they once were?

2. And is it not so that there is a smaller measure of apprehension amongst us of the happifying and soul-uplifting truth of the universal priesthood of believers, than was to be found when the doctrine was first recovered, or even a few years back?

3. And thus it surely follows that God the Father and Christ the Lord are robbed of praise. When our souls are robbed, especially of the practical enjoyment of a truth bearing directly on praise and worship, God is necessarily robbed of His portion from us.

4. Again, if some brethren hold back and fail in their priestly privileges and responsibilities in the assembly, does it not, of necessity, force others forward?—each being unnatural, (unnatural spiritually, I mean) and one as unnatural as the other?—neither according to the Spirit of God. I believe I but speak the experience of many when I say that brethren often feel burdened and constrained on account of this very thing—an undue sense of responsibility in connection with being a voice in and for the assembly.

5. This condition must inevitably lead to clericalism in principle, even though we may be unconscious of it. What is clericalism but an exaggeration of this—all the priests abrogating their office and electing one to fill it for them? And if half, or two-thirds, or three-fourths of the brethren regularly by silence consent to a few taking all the active parts in the assembly meetings, yea, by their silence, *forcing* them to do so, how much short (in principle, and

the soul-condition which it bespeaks,) is it of *electing* them to fill their offices for them? Here we have then, surely, the root of clerisy. And as to a corresponding clerical position, can it be wondered that some naturally, and perhaps unconsciously, drift into it? Others perhaps against their will, as already suggested, are almost forced into it; while others again, alas! may rather covet such place and find a ready opportunity to assume it.

O brethren, "suffer the word of exhortation." If the word of God is our food; if Christian doctrines, liberating and giving wings to the soul, are more and more apprehended, if nearness to God is enjoyed in our hearts, if the Sanctuary is our abiding place,—can we assemble together and not by audible expression reflect these conditions of soul and share with each other the Christ, and the things of Christ we are enjoying? "Fellowship with us"—Christian fellowship (and what is sweeter) is based upon: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jno. i. 3).

May the Lord revive His truth and grace among His people. Is it not a real spiritual revival that is needed, that we lay hold afresh of this precious doctrine and that it may lay hold of many who, it would seem, have never practically apprehended it?

Before closing, I advert to one reason often given by brethren as to their slowness, and that is that they have no gift for anything in public. Let it be remembered that gift is a different line of things entirely, it being from Christ to the Church; whereas priestly functions, which we have been considering, are from the Church to Christ. Gift, properly so-called, therefore, is not in question. It is not a

matter of edifying the saints, but of offering praise to the Lord Jesus Christ; and while there will always be differences as to the extent of liberty that brethren feel in giving audible expression of any kind in the assembly, yet it is not conceivable that anyone can be growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, realizing in his soul his happy place and privilege as priest, and not have somewhat to offer—yes, and to offer audibly. The vessel filled to overflowing must certainly overflow. It may be in a stammering way, and it may be only in Paul's five words;—how much is said, is not the point. Let the heart go out without constraint and without any thought as to eloquence, or time occupied, or any such considerations, which would only hinder the natural and simple overflow of the heart in praise.

F. G. F

AT THE MASTER'S FEET.

ONCE I went forth to look for Repentance. I sought her day and night in the City of Man's soul. I asked many if they knew where she dwelt, and they said they had never seen her. I met one, grave and scholarly, who told me what she was like, and bade me seek her earnestly; but he did not tell me where she was to be found. Then, sad at heart, and wearied with my search, I went forth without the city walls, and climbed a lonely hill, and up a steep and rugged way, until I came in sight of the cross of Him who hung thereon. And lo! as I looked upon Him, there came one and touched me. Then instantly my heart was melted, and all the great deeps of my soul were broken up.

"Ah, Repentance, I have been looking everywhere for you," I said.

"Thou wilt always find me here," said Repentance; "here, in sight of my crucified Lord. I tarry ever at His feet."

Again I went forth to look for Forgiveness. I knocked at many a door in the City of Mansoul and asked for her. And some said they thought she did live there sometimes; and some said she used to once; and some said she came there occasionally. Then up came one whom I knew by name as Unbelief, with a voice like the croaking of a raven, and he said that Forgiveness never was there and never would be; that she was much too fine a lady to live in so low a place as that and among such a set as they were. So I came forth wearied and sad, and as I reached the city gate I met again the grave scholar and he gave me much account of her birth and parentage, and he showed me her portrait, and told me of her gracious works, and he bade me seek her earnestly, but he did not tell me where I could find her.

So I went along my way, looking, but well-nigh in despair, when it chanced that I found myself again upon the hill, climbing again the steep and rugged path. And I lifted my eyes and saw once more the cross and Him who hung thereon; and lo! at the first sight of my dear Lord, Forgiveness met me and filled my soul with holy peace and a rest like heaven itself.

"Oh, I have had a weary search for you," I said.

"I am always here," said Forgiveness; "here, at my Master's feet."

Long afterwards, I wondered within myself where

Holiness dwelt, but I feared to go in search of her. I thought she would never be at home in the lowlands and busy streets of Mansoul. All whom I asked about her answered doubtfully. One said that she had died long ago; indeed, was buried in Eden before Adam came out.

One said that she lived away at the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death; her house was on the brink of the river, and that I must hope to meet with her just before I crossed it. Another argued almost angrily against the notion. "Nay," said he, "she lives farther on still; search as thou wilt, thou shalt never find her till thou art safely across the river and landed on the shores of the Celestial City."

Then I remembered how well I had fared aforetime on the Holy Hill, and went forth again. So up the lonely way I went, and reached the top of it and looked once more upon my blessed Saviour. And, . . . lo! there was Holiness sitting at the Master's feet! I feared to say that I had been looking for her, but as I gazed upon the Crucified, and felt the greatness of His love to me, and as all my heart went out in love and adoration, Holiness rose up, and came to me all graciously, and said:

"I have been waiting for thee ever since thy first coming."

"Waiting where?" I asked, wondering.

"At His feet," said Holiness; "I am always there."

M. G. PEARSE.

A PRACTICAL WORD.

THE way to overcome the flesh in our every-day experience is to turn to the Lord when it solicits our attention. By so doing we mortify it. Nothing is so mortifying as not to be recognized, especially when you want recognition. The flesh is always wanting it. When you turn to the Lord He will sustain you and the Spirit will help you. The Spirit is always against the flesh. He is your only power. The world around appeals to the flesh, therefore it is of the utmost importance to keep apart from what would provoke or gratify it. The Spirit occupies us with Christ and heavenly things, and thus in the power of what is superior, we are carried above what is inferior.

All this involves deep exercise of heart in God's presence. But it is well to be exercised. Exercise promotes spiritual growth in the knowledge of what the flesh is in all its badness and subtle character, and also in the knowledge of what God is in grace to us. Thus we are saved from being puffed up with pride which is so abhorrent to God and so ensnaring and ruinous to us, and kept daily dependent on grace alone. If we yield to the flesh and allow it to overcome us, we shall get a bad conscience. The Spirit of God will be grieved. We get out of communion with God. We lose spiritual power unless we at once turn to God in the confession of what we have allowed. Then the word to help us is, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Sel.

JONAH THE PROPHET.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF RESURRECTION

(Chap. i. 17-iii. 2.)

THAT God is the God of resurrection, is a testimony which seems exclusively that of the earth. We have it at the very beginning. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and the next thing we find is the *earth* (but not the heavens) "without form and void," (or waste and desolate,) and "darkness on the face of the deep." Thus if this is the picture, as it surely is, of a lapsed condition,—for "He created it not a waste" (Isa. xlv. 18, *R. V.*).—the very ground upon which we tread is a witness to the fact of resurrection. The earth coming up out of the waters on the third day contained within itself, even to the tops of the highest mountains, the evidence of former life, of former stages of existence passed away, but now in a higher form renewed. Resurrection lies, as we may say, at the foundation of things here.

Again, when God said: "Let there be light and there was light," we are told that "the evening and the morning were the first day." That is the Scripture order, and it has evidently meaning in it. To a spectator upon the earth at that time, the light that appeared at the bidding of God would seem at once to decline and pass into extinction. Yet, as we know, the true "morning" was that which was to follow it. Resurrection thus puts its stamp upon every day's work after.

The seasons manifest the same thing. Autumn

passes into winter, in which life becomes comparatively extinct, but to yield once more to summer with all its fulness of life.

Thus it was from the beginning, the witness abiding to this day, and the history of man ever since has repeated that God is still the God of resurrection. Especially in those in nearest relation to God, where one might expect it most, is this manifest. Take Abraham: he who had the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," had yet to see himself a childless man as to the real fulfilment of that promise, until his body was now dead and not till then was he born in whom the seed was to be "called." And so "there sprang of one, as of him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore, innumerable." Israel again has to go down into Egypt, as it were ceasing to be a nation before it had fairly multiplied into one. Egypt might have seemed to be its tomb, but out of this in due time God summoned it to a new existence.

The lesson of resurrection is, as we know, abundant all to be found in this history of Jonah. It was a lesson that he had himself to learn, and to learn before he was morally competent to be a witness to others. Jonah in the belly of the great fish speaks of himself, as well he might, as in the "belly of hell" (or hades,) a man gone out of living existence in the world. But this was only God's way of doing a necessary work in him and preparing him for that which was, after all, his mission. As a type of Israel, he speaks distinctly to us. Israel has gone out of existence, as it were, swallowed up by Daniel's monster from the sea, and learning in her long way

ing time what man is before God. She is to have the sentence of death in herself that she may not trust in herself, but in God who raiseth the dead; and thus the picture of her restoration at the end, as we find it, for instance, in the thirty-seventh of Ezekiel, is a picture of resurrection. Her hope is gone; her very bones, to use the language there, are dry; but God's word remains: "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am Lord." That is the lesson of resurrection. To know the Lord, we have to know, first of all, ourselves. We have to realize the condition of a creature upon whom death has put its stamp, the stamp of a fallen being, that thus we may find a life which is of God alone, and learn His power and His grace aright. Through all her past, in her condition, hitherto, a stranger to her own need, and so to divine grace, Israel was as yet unable to fulfil her mission to the world. God indeed, as we know, raised up in her midst those who could be the channels of His communications to others, and we are all witnesses to-day of what we have in this way gained through her; but for the nation itself, built up in self-righteousness, and turning the privileges which God had accorded her into mere evil and a curse through her abuse of them, there was no remedy. Death had to pass upon her. Governmentally, she has to pay to the "uttermost farthing" for her sins, only at last, however, to find a mercy which rejoiceth against judgment, to hear the voice of redeeming love, and learn the goodness of Him against whom she has rebelled. Then will she be the messenger of that

grace to others, and, repentant herself, she will lead the nations to repentance.

This is plainly the lesson of the whole book of Jonah. It is striking how the prophet's prayer in the fish's belly is almost a repetition of her voice in the Psalms, witness as they are all through of just these times of trial that are in store for her, those pangs of suffering by which she is to come to her new birth as a nation, when, cast out, as it might seem, out of Jehovah's sight, they look again towards His holy temple. How little they had realized that wondrous privilege which had been there accorded them, and in which the heart of God had disclosed itself,—in God's dwelling place amongst men, and which is to be His witness yet in millennial time when that house shall be indeed a "house of prayer for all nations," when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." This was the house to which the Lord came, the Messenger of the covenant according to the promise (Mal. iii. 1), and would then have purified it, that there might be "offered to the Lord an offering in righteousness;" but they had no ears and no heart for Him. Thus their house was left unto them desolate, and they shall see Him no more until they shall say: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

But this leads to the second view of what Jonah here presents, for the sign of the prophet Jonas, such a sign as he was to the Ninevites, is yet to be given to the nation itself. "An evil and adulterous generation," says the Lord, "seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the

prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's (or fish's) belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. xii. 39-41). Here, "the sign of the prophet Jonas" refers, of course, to the miracle of his restoration, as it were, out of death itself. One can easily see that what wrought repentance among the Ninevites was their consciousness that here was, as it were, the testimony of a dead and risen man. The sacrifice and vows offered to the Lord by the Gentile mariners would have carried far and wide the report of his death under judgment from God because of the refusal of his mission to them, and here was the same man risen up out of death with his mission renewed. How could they resist this mighty God? Here, plainly, was the sign or miracle that spoke with conviction to the hearts of men in the great city; but the nation itself shall have the sign of One dead and risen, and now the Son of man in heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30); the sign being *Himself*, coming in the clouds of heaven, once crucified, now glorified, and which is compared to the lightning-flash of threatening judgment (Luke xvii. 24), a greater than Jonah indeed. The lesson of resurrection,—not a message of judgment only, but with abundant mercy also for those upon whom is poured "the spirit of grace and of supplications" when they look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as one that mourneth for his only son and are in bitterness for him as one who is in bitterness for his first-born

(Zech. xii. 10). For that resurrection sign is what we know also as the justification of all that believe in Him, a justification which His death has wrought out for us, but which His resurrection publishes as good news for all that will receive it.

Christ is Himself here, as in many of the prophecies, the true Israel, entering into all the deep reality of that judgment upon sin which they have as a lesson to learn, which through Him alone can they have profit in the learning. Here Jonah becomes, as we see, a double type. Two histories run necessarily together, and the Lord's words in application to Himself are not an arbitrary application, but give us the full depth of the meaning here. For Him who has stood for Israel, under Israel's penalty, the word is uttered further: "Thou art My servant, O *Israel*, in whom I will be glorified" (Isa. xlix. 3). See how the divine Voice answers the complaint of the One so addressed in the verses that follow, assuring Him that He was formed from the womb to bring Jacob again to Him; that not only should He be the Restorer of the preserved of Israel, but also for a Light to the Gentiles that He might be God's salvation unto the end of the earth.

Thus, then, in a double way have we the lesson of resurrection here. For ourselves as Christians now, these two lessons are indeed united. The objective and the subjective, as one may say, come together. What we find for our souls in Christ dead and risen, we learn in faith to make our own, as dead and risen with Him. We accept the sentence upon man as man, which must be accepted for all real deliverance. We accept the setting aside of all man's pretension to goodness or to strength, and the sign of the Son

of man in heaven speaks to us of how truly nothing else is left for us to glory in but the Lord Himself. But here all the glory of God in the face of Him who abides in His presence for us, in whose cross we have found at once our judgment and our salvation, and whose glory revealed, is that by which, as delivered from ourselves, we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The lesson of Jonah is thus of central importance for our blessing, as for Israel's blessing, at all time. There is no other way. For all who have accepted it, the billows and the waves of wrath that once passed over them are gone forever, and the dry ground, yea, the Rock of our salvation, is under the feet of the delivered man. Crucified with Christ,— "our old man" crucified,—all confidence in the flesh buried in His grave, to know no resurrection,—He alone remains to glory in, whose glory has shone out in the wonder of an unspeakable humiliation. And here is the One in whom we are: our history and His have come together; the stamp of death is removed and replaced by that of resurrection: raised with Christ, we are "created in Christ Jesus," and "if any man be in Christ, it is new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new."

F. W. G.

(To be continued.)

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. iii. 1-4).

GOD'S VOICE TO OPPRESSORS.

James v.

"GO to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together in the last days. Behold, the 'hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of armies. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and *he doth not resist you.*"

TO "THE JUST."

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rains. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Conclusion.

Could we be counted among "the just" if we "resist" the oppressors? If we band together to protect ourselves against them? If we take it into our hands to redress our wrongs? Nay, nay, for then we turn oppressors ourselves and come down on the same level with them. "The just" are those in whom Christ's ways are reproduced, and Christ was a *sufferer* here. The day of His rights, and of ours, is not yet.

AS WE WAIT FOR THE LORD.

WITH entire freedom of heart I can say, I do not desire to lead the opinions of others. Even our knowledge of truth itself is but little worth to the soul if it have not been attained by exercise of the renewed affections before God. And opinions are poor human things, the fruit of man's midnight lamp, at which he eats the bread of literary carefulness. And how can the saint value them? But if we walk together with right desires, though it may be in much remaining ignorance, we may assure ourselves, even at this still later hour of the day, that our Lord will not refuse us both His light and His company, as once to our brothers on their way to Emmaus. Do not, however, let me intimate that I find no difficulties in considering this great subject of the Lord's return and its concurrent events. Indeed I do; and besides difficulties, I am going to say this, that I think there may be some indistinctness as to it purposely left on the page of Scripture, in order to keep the saints in health of soul, maintaining them in spirit still, ever longing for Jesus till His return, and yet being in divine strength ready to reach Him by death through flames and floods. For indeed the soul's lively, hopeful, suffering energies are far beyond well ordered and carefully digested conceptions of these things. And sure, sure I am, that our Lord has another purpose touching us as His disciples or pupils than the merely having us of one opinion by dint of the study of the Bible. For poor is the communion our souls have tasted as the fruit of that.

I will add another thought—that though I see

nothing necessarily delaying our rapture into the air, nothing put as a drag upon it, yet I know and allow that many things are to be done on the earth before the full form of evil be revealed, or the reserved week of Daniel begin. The nations of the East may have either to be reproduced or organized, and all of the prophetic words about Babylon, Edom, Tyre, and the rest of these may have to be accomplished in the ancient sites of these famous cities and lands of the peoples. I do not deny this; and we know that much is to be done with Israel and with Judah, morally and politically, and with the land that is theirs by gift of God. The West, too, is to be got ready as the platform of a serious action ere the crisis comes, or its precursors in the seventieth week. Also I grant that the present dispensation may still go on, because God's long-suffering is salvation, and He waits to be gracious. But still I add, that *none of this* is made necessary to our removal. *We* are not to be remembering days and years, though of course the longer we live the nearer is our salvation. Nor have we to ponder the ways of the nations, though of course the maturer the iniquity, the more fit for the judgment.

But "Come, Lord Jesus" is ever to be the desire of the utterance. "Hope of our hearts, O Lord, appear" is a song, I believe, most suited to the worship of our souls. Let us call each other's spiritual senses into exercise, but not seek either to frighten or to school others into our way of thinking. For on such subjects even an inspired apostle used this chastened style, "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant;" at the same time, as he also tells us in the same place, opening these mysteries,

not for the filling of the mind of the disciples with opinions, but for the guiding of their hearts with right affections, saying to them, "lest ye should be wise in your own conceits." Let us then, beloved, get the apostle's taste and spirit, as well as his knowledge. A brother's spirit is more edifying than his communication. We experience that every day.

Let us take a hint from another, "to aim to gather knowledge more from meditation than from study, and to have it dwell in us, not as opinions, but as the food of communion, the quickener of hope, the husbandman of divine love, and the blessed refreshing of the Kingdom of God within us." I esteem it holier to confess difficulties than to grapple with them in either the ingenuity or the strength of intellect. And surely it is bad when some fond thought or another is made the great object. It soon works itself into the central place, and becomes the gathering point. The order of the soul is disturbed, and the real godly edifying of the saints hindered. For we have to remember that knowledge is only a small part in the wide field of our husbandry (2 Pet. i. 5-7). An appetite for it needs to be regulated rather than gratified. And many who in their husbandry have raised far less of it than others have more abundantly prospered in bringing forth richer fruits in service, and in love, and in personal devotedness to Jesus.

May the Lord deepen in the souls of all His saints the power of His own redeeming love, and shed more and more among us the savour of His precious and honored Name!

ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST, AND DWELLERS ON THE EARTH.

THE attentive reader can scarcely have failed to notice that the third of Philippians is a chapter abounding in marked contrasts.

There is the contrast between the Judaisers, whom the apostle contemptuously styles "the concision"—the cutting off—and those whom he designates "the circumcision"—the cutting round—who have no confidence in the flesh and who rejoice in Christ Jesus (vers. 2, 3). This leads him to contrast his own past religiousness;—his trust in the flesh, with his present state, as having counted all loss for Christ and gladly letting everything go and esteeming it as offal, to win Him (vers. 4-9).

In ver. 9 the legal righteousness which "is of the law" is contrasted with "the righteousness which is of God by faith." This is really but carrying out the distinction noticed just above.

In vers. 10 and 11 there is implied at least, the contrast between the resurrection of judgment which was all he could once look forward to, and the "out-resurrection from among the dead" in which he now looks to have part.

Perfection, in the sense of absolute holiness,—final perfection such as will be ours at the end of the way—is then contrasted with perfection (or full-growth) in the sense of having apprehended the great truths of the gospel (vers. 12-16). The former he disclaims (ver. 12). Regarding the latter he can say "Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded."

Lastly he contrasts the body of our humiliation with the bodies to be ours at the Lord's coming, "fashioned like unto the body of His glory" (ver. 21).

Just before this however he points out a contrast between two moral classes frequently brought before us again in the book of the Revelation, and in fact everywhere distinguished in Scripture. It is the contrast between earthly- and heavenly-mindedness.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things." Opposed to these we have the heavenly-minded ones, "For our conversation (citizenship commonwealth, politics; it has been variously rendered) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (vers. 18-20). The seventeenth verse should also be noticed in this connection: "Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example." The "walking" here doubtless refers to taking outwardly the Christian place. Those who "walk" are those who, presumably at least, have gone on pilgrimage. They profess to "seek a country." In the Old Testament we read "The Lord . . . knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness" (Deut. ii. 7); while in Acts ix. 31, of anti-typical Israel we are told "Then had the churches rest . . . and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

They too had gone out into the desert with God. They were no longer at home here. Alas, that *our*

walk should ever be otherwise than as theirs, "in the fear of the Lord."

Those referred to in Philipians had the outward appearance of pilgrims and yet, unlike those who began with that of which the blood-sprinkled lintel and the divided sea spoke, they were enemies of the cross of Christ!

There were such who walked with Israel of old. The same chapter that presents the people starting on their journey, after having been sheltered by the blood of the lamb, tells us that "a mixed multitude (or a great mixture) went up also with them" (Ex. xii. 38). Outwardly, perhaps one might have had difficulty in distinguishing them from the elect nation, but their real character came out in the wilderness. In Num. xi. 4-6, we get the cry of the people who were enemies of the cross of Christ (typically of course) who had never entered into what Red Sea judgment should have taught them, of separation from Egypt and its lusts. "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting and (sad result) the children of Israel also wept again and said, who will give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, the melons, and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." And yet the manna spoke of Christ come down in grace to meet His people's need (Jno. vi.). But alas, His beauty, temporarily obscured by association with such as those of whom the apostle warns us "even weeping," we lose our appreciation of it though He be "as wafers made with honey" for

sweetness and "fresh upon the dew:"—ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

For manna they had no heart;—far rather would they have the flesh and fish of Egypt and the fruits which they must grovel on the ground to obtain, or even dig into the earth for. So it ever is when the cross has lost its charm for our souls; when we can no longer say "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

Dear young Christian, have you not known something already of the deadening influence of the mixed multitude who "walk" and "make a fair show in the flesh," but whose hearts are in the world still where they would fain draw yours? O remember, leeks, onions and garlic all leave their odor behind!

You cannot feast on things like these without spiritual loss. Perhaps you fancy that a little worldliness, a little indulgence of the flesh will not hurt your testimony, nor mar your enjoyment of divine things. You imagine it will never be noticed by others, for whose piety you have respect and who watch for your soul. If you do allow yourself to go on in measure with the world, you at least are regularly out to the meetings and manifest an interest in the gospel. Be assured it is just as impossible to dine on garlic and not have the odor on your breath as to taste of the world's follies in any form without manifestly lowering the tone of your spirituality.

A night in worldly company, how it tells on one. An evening at the theatre, what a stench on the breath the day after! A popular and fascinating

novel greedily devoured, what a garlic dish is that! Indulgence in earthly vanities, worldly dress and careless ways, how they eat out the spiritual life and cause the soul to loathe the manna! You cannot enjoy the world and Christ at the same time. One will inevitably crowd the other out.

I judge that there is a distinction and a marked one between the mixed multitude and murmuring Israel; just as we are called upon to distinguish between the "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction," (not merely chastening, nor yet the break-down of testimony; see 1 Cor. ix. 27), and the Philippian saints who are warned against such. Like them in ways, in measure, they were in danger of becoming if unwatchful; but one with them actually they never could be for *they* owed everything for eternity to that cross which was hated by the others. *Forgetful* of the cross of Christ, believers often are; sad that it should be so! *Enemies* they could not be.

The great characteristic of these, "whose glory is in their shame," is earthly-mindedness: "Whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things." In this their connection with the mixed multitude is very marked. Lust, the desire for personal gratification, let it take what form it may—, and love of the scene from which the cross has separated the Christian, are their two great marks.

Let us, dear fellow-pilgrim, beware of any who would tempt us to seek our enjoyment in the sphere that has cast out our Lord. His cross has come in between us and the world. Do we, then, want anything out of it, or a place in it? If so, in heart we go back to Egypt.

To do that, Israel had to *go around the Red Sea* (Jer. xliii. 1-7); through it they could not go. It is a dreadful thing thus to set the cross aside. It is not necessarily denying our interest in the death of Christ or in the shedding of His blood. These truths may be acknowledged and confessed in measure, where the cross—symbol of His shame and bitter sorrow—has really been ignored.

It is the cross that has stained all the glory of this world; even as of old the cedar-wood, the scarlet and the hyssop were stained with the blood of the bird of the heavens, slain in an earthen vessel over running water; Christ the heavenly One, in the body prepared for Him offering Himself through the eternal Spirit a sacrifice for our cleansing (Lev. xiv). To faith all its glory has disappeared in the "burning of the heifer" (Num. xix). It has no glory since it became guilty of the murder of the Son of God; since it nailed our Lord to the tree. All its objects of beauty; its religious splendor; its society; its culture;—everything in which it prides itself;—all is blood-stained now.

This is what those "who mind earthly things" deny. Refusing the truth that He is outside this scene of man's pride and folly, they seek to attach His name to the world that cast Him out. Of old they cried "Crucify Him!" Now they would garnish His sepulchre.

They cannot utterly ignore Him, His impress is too strong and clear for that. It was impossible that God in human form could be in the world and yet not leave some evidence of His presence behind Him. So they claim Him now as One like unto themselves.

Have you noticed that—how every body wants to

claim Jesus, even though they hate His cross? They speak of Him as the great Exemplar, the Teacher, the Martyr,—anything you will, but that He died to deliver us from *this present evil age*—that His cross is the dividing line—this they will not have.

In contrast to these "dwellers on the earth," how sweet to read of some "whose commonwealth is in heaven." Here they find no continuing city. They seek one to come. His lonely path of sorrow and separation is the one they would tread in such a world as this. Identified by faith with a rejected Christ, and possessors of His life, by new birth,—they cannot be at home in the scene of His deep, deep sufferings and of His awful shame. A separated, peculiar people, they confess plainly that they "seek a country" and are content to wait for glory in the coming day of His appearing. His path of isolation and strangership is dearer far than earth's fair by-ways, just because it was *His* who left us "an example that we should follow His steps."

Marked is the contrast now. Marked will it be at the close. Caught up to be forever with Himself will all those be who knew Him as Lord and Saviour. Left in the earth of their own choosing and the place of their hopes will be those who were the enemies of His cross. The future of both we have outlined in the Apocalypse.

To the assembly of a little strength, who had not denied the Name of the absent One, He says, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which is coming upon all the world to try *them that dwell upon the earth*" (Rev. iii. 10).

These last are evidently the same moral class as

those whose present earthly ways we have been tracing; for that the expression does not refer merely to inhabitants of the world is clear by reference to chaps. xi. 9, 10, and xiv. 6, where we find them distinguished from "the people and kindreds and tongues and nations."

In the verse quoted above we see that when the Lord comes and takes His own away from the place of their toil and suffering to enter into His own rest in the glory of God, these will be left behind (despite possible Christian profession) to pass through the terrible period of judgment so graphically depicted in this closing portion of the divine oracles.

We find them again specially brought before us, in the eighth chapter, immediately preceding the sounding of the last three trumpets. "And I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice; Woe, woe, woe, to the *inhabiters of the earth*, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound" (ver. 13).

Those who cared not for a name and a place here are seen before this, represented by the twenty-four royal priests, robed and crowned in heaven; their theme of praise, the precious blood shed on the cross which had separated them from the world. How dreadful now the position of those who refused the heavenly calling which, though grace, these had learned to prize. The earth that they loved is now the scene of the hardening judgments of God and is fast slipping from their grasp;—and heaven they have lost all hope of; though once, they fondly thought they might at least have a place there when death should snatch them from their delights here.

Thus they would be *making the best of both worlds*. Now they have lost them both!

The testimony of God's "two witnesses" only lacerates them into the agonies of despair, and amid the well-nigh universal joy over their death, when all the kindreds and peoples are making merry in that awful day of the divine displeasure we are told: "*And they that dwell upon the earth* shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another because these two prophets tormented *them that dwell on the earth*" (chap. xi. 10).

But though no voice below may continue to proclaim their doom, in *heaven* a loud voice cries, "Woe to *the inhabitants of the earth* and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (chap. xii. 12). How marked the contrast here, with the words immediately preceding: "Rejoice ye heavens and *ye that dwell in them.*"

In the next chapter while authority is given to the Roman beast "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," yet it is only of the earth-dwellers that actual worship is predicated (ver. 8). For they will not be without a religion then, as they are not without one now. Twice in the seventeenth chapter are they likewise referred to, in connection with this same beast and its harlot rider. "*The inhabitants of the earth* have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (ver. 2). "*They that dwell on the earth* shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (ver. 8).

Terrible outlook for apostate Christendom! It is

the false Christ "the man of the earth;" the lamb-like beast, who leads them in their worship of the first beast. "He exerciseth all the authority of the first beast before him and causeth *the earth and them that dwell therein*, to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men and deceiveth *them that dwell on the earth* by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to *them that dwell on the earth*, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live" (chap. xiii. 12-14).

Strong delusion God has given them up to. Those whose hearts were set on things down here now have a God and a Christ of their own, of earth and suited to earth, but all alike soon to be destroyed at the appearing of the heavenly One in judgment.

In chap. xiv. we find the 144,000 of Israel distinguished from these as a people "redeemed from the earth." They are not the Church, nor a part of it, but during the absence of "the Lamb" their hearts had gone out to Him in the place where He was and from whence they waited expectantly for His coming, and thus they were not seduced by false Babylon or the christ of the earth.

Immediately following this vision we have the last word from God the earth-dwellers shall ever hear until they meet the rejected One in judgment. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto *them that dwell on the earth* and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud

voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (vers. 6, 7). It is a call to cease from their folly though the hour is late, but we hear of no response.

Their dreadful doom as beast-worshippers is given in the message that follows: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation" (ver. 10). Solemn words! Who can conceive their awful import?

Such a cup had the Lord Jesus drained for sinners when He hung upon the cross they had hated. Now they must quaff its fearful contents themselves.

Such in brief then, is the present and future path and portion of those who mind earthly things, "whose end is destruction."

Let us see to it, beloved, that we walk in holy separation from them now, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1-3).

As strangers and pilgrims, may it be ours to press on in haste to the land where He has gone who has won our hearts by dying for us on the cross, and who is soon coming to take us to be with Himself in the Father's house. How paltry and poor will Egypt's fare look then when we feast upon the hidden manna!

H. A. I.

THE CHRIST OF GOD.

ART thou ever thirsty?
Christ was once athirst.
 On the cross He thirsted.
 He would serve *thee first*,
 Tho' He were accurst.
 So, where thou art thirsty,
 Drink, the water's free.
 All its sparkling crystals
 Are as life to thee—
 Drink abundantly.

As thy soul it freshens,
 And thy thirst it slakes,
 Then the overflowing,
 Unto him who takes,
 Sweet new life awakes.
 Thou may'st for the Master
 Bear the cup of life;
 By thy soul's o'erflowing,
 Offer peace for strife,
 Love, where sins were rife.

Is thy heart an hungered?
 Ah! *He* hungered *more*,
 That thy soul might gather
 From His plenteous store,
All His love could pour.
 Taste, the Lord is gracious,
 Yea, the Lord is good,
 And His word is given
 For our *daily* food,
 Suiting every mood.

And when thou hast found it
 All thy soul could plead,
 Let some crumbs of comfort
 Fall for others' need;
 Sow the precious seed.
 When thou'st sipped the honey

Of its precious things,
Let some drops of sweetness
Fall upon life's stings,
Till some sad heart sings.

Is thy soul aweary?
So was *He* as well;
See Him, worn, at noonday,
Rest by Sychar's well;
Hear Him gently tell
To the lonely woman,—
(Who had come apart
To the well for water,)
All her sinful heart,
Healing every smart.

Still there are the weary;
Stop their fruitless quest;
Point them to the Saviour,
Where thou'st found *thy* rest,
On His peaceful breast.
When thy way seems dreary,
Neath some needed test,
Turn thine eyes to Calv'ry,
Where the Christ oppressed
Won thee endless rest.

Dost thou plead thy weakness?
He, by *weakness*, gained
Victory over Satan,
And his power restrained.
Thus thy soul detained
When thy courage faileth,
Haste thee to the Strong.
Giant strength He'll give thee,
And 'twill not be long
E're thou'lt find a song.

Lean upon thy Father's
Everlasting arm;
Weakness then will *serve* thee,
And the wildest storm

Cannot do thee harm.
Thou art strong when weakest;
Leaning on His might,
Fix thine eye on Jesus;
Never walk by sight;
He *must* lead aright.

Is thy soul impatient?
He the *Great I Am*
Was the suffering Saviour,
God's provided Lamb,
All thy fears to calm.
Think upon His promise,
Soon He'll "come again,"
All thy suffering ended,
Passed the moment's pain—
'Twill not be in vain.

He hath not forgotten
This last promise sweet,
And His heart is yearning
All His own to meet—
In Himself complete.
He would teach thee patience;
Let no murmur mar
This the Spirit's mission;
Look! behold afar,
Yonder Morning Star.

Hath thy heart home-longings?
How *He* must have yearned.
But He could not leave *thee*,
Not till He had earned
What thou since hast learned.
So when thou art yearning
For His blessed face,
Think of those who know not
All His love and grace—
Seek for them a place.

Tell the sweet old story
Of His changeless love.

Tell how still He's waiting
In His home above;
Bid them no more rove;
Tell them of the promise
Of all sins forgiven;
Tell them *Christ* the *Mighty*
Hath sins' shackles riven,
Purchased peace and heav'n.

Is thy portion scanty?
He was poor *indeed*.
Hath thy heart known sorrow?
Did not *His* heart bleed
In His hour of need
When none seemed to heed?
Even *God* forsook Him!
While He bore *thy sin*
In those hours of darkness.
This, thy soul to win!
Else where hadst thou been?

Water for the thirsty,
Yea and living bread,
Strength for human weakness,
He hath given instead,
Life e'en to the dead.
Christ of God the fulness,
Christ th' eternal friend,
Christ the *Father's* Object,
All their glories blend,
Christ the blessed end.

H. McD.

THE LIGHT OF THE GLORY.

A LIGHT surprised the persecutor as he journeyed to Damascus. It was above the brightness of the sun at noon-day. And well it might have been, for it was a beam from the glory, and bore the Lord of the glory upon

it (Isa. xxiv. 23). But it did not come to gladden Saul all at once or merely to display itself. It had, I may say, weightier business on hand. It came to make this ruthless persecutor a citizen of its own native land. It begins, therefore, by laying him in ruins before it. It is the light of Gideon's pitcher confounding the host of Midian or the army of the uncircumcised. Saul falls to the earth. He takes the sentence of death into him. He learns that he had been madly kicking against the pricks, destroying himself by his enmity to Jesus, for that Jesus was the Lord of glory. But He that wounds can heal, He that heals can make alive. "Rise and stand upon thy feet," says the Lord of glory to him, and he is quickly made His companion, servant, and fellow-heir. It is sweetly characteristic of the present age that the hand of a fellow-disciple is used to strengthen Saul to bear the glory, or to accomplish his conversion. The seraphim alone do that for Isaiah (chap. vi.), the Spirit does it for Ezekiel (chap. ii.), the hand of the Son of man does it for Daniel (chap. x.); but a fellow-disciple is made to do it for Saul.

What a transaction was this! what a moment! Never, perhaps, had such points in the furthest distance met before. The persecutor of the flock and the Saviour of the flock, the Lord of the glory and the sinner whom the glory is consuming, are beside each other! The glory came, not to gladden, as it had the congregation of old, but to convict, and through conviction and revelation of itself and Jesus to turn a sinner from darkness to light, making him a meet partaker of the inheritance of its native land. Can we trust all this and rejoice in it? Is it pleasant to us to know that the glory is thus near us? Stephen

found it so when the Lord of it pleased to raise the curtain (Acts vii.). And when the voice of the archangel summons it, and the trump of God heralds it, it will be here again as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to bear us up to its own country (1 Cor. xv.; 1 Thess. iv.).

Thus may we cherish the thought that the glory is near us. Our translation to its native land asks but for a moment, for the twinkling of an eye. The title is simple, the path is short, and the journey rapidly accomplished. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Ques. 8. Will you kindly explain the meaning of "the two witnesses" of Rev. xiii. 8?

Ans.—We believe they are the faithful Jewish remnant during the second half of Daniel's last week—the time of "the great tribulation."

Number *two* is not necessarily literal, but denotes *an adequate testimony*, even as the law required. The present heavenly testimony is past, the Church having been taken home, and God is now claiming the earth for Himself. But the Jewish nation, which is to be the central one in the earth, is at this time *apostate and under the power of the Gentiles*. A faithful remnant, however, is among them; they are true worshipers and God owns them and makes them His witnesses, suited to the character of the testimony to be rendered at the time. Like Moses and Elias whose testimony was under similar circumstances, and is analogous to theirs, they have with it power against their enemies, though the King being yet away, they are in reproach and suffering. They suffer death at the end, and their enemies rejoice for they were tormented by their testimony. But the hour of triumph has come and in the view of their enemies they are raised from the dead and taken up to heaven. They are doubtless the last sheaves of the great first-resurrection-harvest, as Christ was its *first* sheaf—the pledge of all the rest.

GOD'S MOUTH AND HAND.

(1 Kings viii. 15.)

ISRAEL'S golden age was during Solomon's reign. Brief indeed, and soon darkening into apostasy, it was the type of that glorious reign of the Son of David, whom no prosperity can affect, as no depth of sorrow could swerve from His allegiance to His God and Father. With Solomon, alas, it was the opposite; and his exaltation and fall but emphasizes the solemn fact that "no good in creatures can be found." It seems as though the care of our God, jealous for the honor of His Son, must show the imperfection of the type in contrast with the unsullied beauty of His Son. Even Moses and Elias in glory must stand aside for *Him*. Well do we know how gladly they would stand aside.

But type it was—this reign of Solomon—of the happy time coming for this earth. And no part of it was more clearly typical than the building and dedication of the temple—God dwelling among His people—happy in their rest from conflict, and satisfied with the abundant goodness of His house.

It was, then, fitting that Solomon should use such words at the dedication of the temple: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with His mouth unto David my father, and hath with His hand fulfilled it." Such words, as we have said, could apply only in a partial way to Solomon's reign, or that of any of the kings of Israel. A glance forward or backward from that time will show this most clearly. Even our Lord's first advent was marked by national humiliation rather than glory. All was veiled; even in Himself, faith alone could say, "We beheld His

glory." His triumphal ride into Jerusalem, amid the people's acclaim, was in some sense the antithesis of the Millennium, and the Roman dominated all.

But this language will yet be used, and a repentant, redeemed, restored nation will look abroad upon their land, again flowing with milk and honey, and upon the glories of "this latter house," covered with the Shekinah cloud, and say He "spake with His mouth and hath with His hand fulfilled it." Let us remember this, spite of the apostasy of Israel after the flesh, and the desolation of their land. One day—not far distant, we may surely believe—and the brief, sharp judgment-storm will break and sweep away the fetid clouds of man's small day and usher in "the day of the Lord." As regards the earth, faith can look forward to such a consummation, and even now in anticipation translate the glowing pages of prophecy into history, and triumph in the reign of the Prince of peace. What a privilege, as we look upon a groaning creation, with its ills that cannot be remedied, its wrongs that cannot be righted, and think of that time when "the wilderness and the solitary place shall rejoice."

So too we can apply these words to the heavenly hopes of the Church of Christ. Not yet do we see all that has been secured for us. In a certain sense, we see nothing. Even for faith, so far as the visible glory is concerned, all is future. And what a future, beloved brethren! Delivered forever from the *presence* of sin, even as already from its guilt; our poor, weak "bodies of humiliation" changed for "bodies of glory," like His who will come for us; the things which we now "see through a glass darkly," then "face to face;" above all, our blessed Lord, who

loved us and gave Himself for us, who is on high for us now—to see Him, to be like Him and with Him forever—how blessedly will we know that God's hand will do all that His mouth has spoken. All that is revealed in His precious word will then be for sight even as it is now for faith.

And how this emphasizes for us the value of being familiar with the contents of God's word. Faith can find food there alone, and hope must stay itself upon that sure Word. If that be neglected, faith and hope will falter, and even love will grow cold. But where the Word is fed upon, there is the "continual feast" of a "merry heart"—made glad by the truth of God, and anticipating what will soon be.

And oh how soon will all be done! How near is the coming of the Lord. Then will we see how God's hand will do all that His mouth has spoken. May an ungrieved Spirit even now give in greater fulness the earnest of that blessed time.

But is there not a sense in which, as we look back over our own history, we can see this connection between God's hand and His mouth? Take the emancipating truths which once we looked upon as dimly in the future; has not the Spirit made them a present reality? Pardon, access to God, priesthood, worship—yes, these have been spoken of and made good too for the weakest babe who bows to God's word.

Turning to our more individual history, how many good things has the hand of our God given in fulfilment of the promise of His mouth. What child of God is there who cannot recount mercies thus given? And what an encouragement is this to prayer and patient waiting. All things are not held back till

heaven. He is the God of the wilderness as well as of the land. Some can remember when circumstances of distress pressed upon them,—poverty, debt, sickness. Earliest resort was had to God! His promises were recalled, and now the fulfilment of His word is celebrated. True, He does not always answer as we expected. He loves us too well to do that which is not good for us. But if we would but see it, how the needed grace to sustain and bring us through the trial has manifested His hand.

And so if we are oppressed at present by anything, let us not forget the promises of God's mouth. He will not forsake His feeble people. Oh how He loves us! One day, soon, we shall see His hand, and prove in our own life the truth of that upon which we have been dwelling.

"With wonder filled, we soon shall see
How wise, how strong His hand."

S. R.

JONAH THE PROPHET.

3. THE HEART OF GOD AND THE HEART OF MAN.

(Chap. iii. 3-iv.).

GOD summons His messenger once more to the work; and this time he is obedient. "Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh according to the word of the Lord." His message is a short, decisive announcement of impending judgment: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But God threatens that He may not have to strike; and the proclamation of judgment is itself grace. The voice of one who has come, by divine power, as it were, out of death itself, to utter it, startles the great city, and there is immediate humbling before God. They

proclaim a fast and put on sackcloth, covering the very beasts themselves with it, and cry mightily to God, turning at the same time every one from his evil way and the violence of his hands.

We are not to suppose that it was true conversion to God that followed, although we need not question that on the part of some, at least, there was true conversion. But God was pleased to respect the humbling even of an Ahab, though only the fear of judgment produced it. But His grace encourages the feeblest manifestation of obedience to Him. So far as it went, the change was real. God saw their *works*, that they turned from their evil way, and the consequence followed which He declares by His prophet would follow in such a case (Jer. xviii. 7, 8). "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." So here, therefore, God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them and He did it not. This was no exception, therefore, to His common dealing with men. Nor is such repentance any argument of instability as to His purposes. On the contrary, His heart is told out by it. It is what He has been seeking that He has obtained, and the prophet who has been commissioned to deliver the message knew beforehand what the effect would be if Nineveh repented.

Nevertheless, "It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry"! How solemn it is, remembering this Jonah was a prophet of the Lord, one in a place of special nearness to Him, stamped

with that wonderful significant name which accredits him as the instrument of the gracious Spirit of God! "For I knew," he says, "that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." Yet as he puts it, the knowledge of this grace is what only had incited him to refuse the commission, and he puts it to God Himself as what, in measure at least, justified his flight to Tarshish. When the soul, even of a believer, is plowed up, what depths of evil can come out of it? Job learnt to know himself in his murmuring under the *chastening* hand of God, but Jonah has to gain a deeper knowledge, and to learn himself in his murmuring at God's *grace*.

No doubt he would urge that he was put by it into the place, apparently, of a false prophet; but could he rightly urge even this? For it was not to a nation disregarding his voice that this grace was shown, but on the contrary, to those who recognized God's voice in him, and honored it. Yet Jonah would rather, as it were, go back to the depths out of which he had been delivered than see such mercy to others. Think of the awful and pitiful wail: "Therefore, now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live!" What is man, surely, at the best? But how beautiful the grace that will not deal with him yet according to his petulant haste,—the gentle question which one would say could not fail to be answered in his soul at once, "Doest thou well to be angry?" But his anger is not quenched, and we see the strange infatuation that it produces in him. He turns from the city, as hateful to him, just for the goodness of God towards it, and makes him a booth and sits down under it to

see if, after all, God means to carry out this mercy to the full. What a mirror for Israel to look into and see their own spirit with regard to the Gentile world about them! But it is all in vain for us to expect to bend God to our thoughts when we will not bend to His. Jonah may nurse his anger and his pride, but he only lapses, by this, into the very condition of heathenism itself, which always takes its gods to be such as it can control for its own interests, according to what it deems such. Idolatry means everywhere, *man the maker of God*, instead of God the Maker of man; and Jonah would gladly be that now. Is it so strange a thing as at first sight it may seem here, and do we not act oftentimes more or less after his pattern? Which of us would not some time make his own will supreme, though it be to dethrone God to do so?

But Jonah cannot provoke God even to deal with himself as his anger would have it. On the contrary, grace must only manifest itself more to him, and as he waits under the burning sun of the East, in the discomfort to which he has destined himself, the Lord God prepares a gourd and makes it to come up over Jonah, that it may be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. What labor God will take to get at the heart of His poor creatures! And how often it seems as if there was not even a heart to get at! Yet Jonah is exceeding glad of the gourd. But that is only the first step towards that recovery of him which God is seeking. The next seems a step in reversal. The mercy is taken away. "God prepared a worm, when the morning rose the next day; and it smote the gourd that it withered." Changeable these ways seem, as how often God's

providences do seem changeable! But this, even, is not enough. "It came to pass when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live." He has gone back to his old position, and nothing seems to be wrought yet. Nevertheless, he has felt as a creature, in a way very keenly affecting himself, that he is in strong hands that cannot be resisted. Do we not remember how in Job's case also, though so different from the present one, it is the revelation of His might by which God awes an angry heart to stillness? But again there comes the question: "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" Was it indeed for the blighted gourd that he was feeling? God so represents it, as it were, not touching the sore spot exactly itself, and yet only to make him the more conscious of it. But he answers more passionately than ever: "I do well to be angry even unto death." Was it for the gourd indeed that he was angry, or was it for his personal loss in it? Did he care so much for the thing as to which he had not labored nor made it grow, the offspring of a night and which perished in a night? God would so represent it, as it were, as if he would not impute more to him. He has had pity on the gourd; he has not had pity upon Nineveh, that great city of more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and their cattle too,—none of them forgotten by Him who made them. Pity for a gourd, and not pity for great Nineveh! A plentiful waste of a niggard heart! Something there must be that has produced in him such complete incapac-

ity to balance things aright; something there must be which seen will make consistent this gross inconsistency. Certainly; and which of us does not know what it is? There is but one thing capable of distorting things after this fashion. Here is the man who has been himself in the depths to learn to cry out there, "Salvation is of the Lord," yet now angered even unto death against the God of salvation! He who lives by grace alone, can plead only for judgment, and against grace to others!

Israel is, without doubt, in their inmost heart told out in this picture before us. Under law indeed, yet the lesson of the law, if learnt, would have preached the need of a grace which God had been ever showing. For the law is not against grace, but its hand-maid; and to every honest soul, most crushingly against *legality*. Israel, as the apostle reminds them, were all, by their idolatry in the worship of the golden calf, under the condemnation of the outraged law, and God's announced principle, upon which alone He could take them up, was, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15). To sovereign goodness they owed it that He could go on with them at all; and their whole history illustrated the same thing. Jonah's "Salvation is of the Lord" was their only hope all through, who (as the apostle again says) were found at last, "forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they should be saved, to fill up their sins always" (1 Thess. ii. 16). Yet even so they will be taken up as objects of mercy at the last, upon this same blessed only-sufficing principle (Rom. xi. 31). "How good is the God we adore!"

But the moral of this history for ourselves, how important it is! *We* are in a place of special witness for God, far beyond that of Israel. Under the law with its closed sanctuary, there could as yet be no world-wide evangelism such as Christianity proclaims. *We* have a distinct message for "every creature." We are not merely the recipients of grace, as even Israel really was: we have learned it from the lips and in the gift for us of the Son of God Himself; the shadow of law is removed, and the sanctuary is open. The brooding "dove," of which Jonah's name speaks, is known in its blessed significance by those in whom there dwells the Spirit of Christ, the power of all ministry and divine testimony among men, and of whom the Lord speaks when He declares that if any one comes unto Him and drinks, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38).

Thus we should naturally think that now there can be no Jonahs who do not answer to their name, and that as an admonition to us the story of the Jewish prophet would be all unneeded. But alas, man's fallen nature violates the most necessary conclusions, and makes its way through every indefectible argument. God asks as to the human heart, "Who can know it?" And we who are, as none ever were beside, the witnesses of divine grace, can we be trusted to maintain consistent testimony to that to which we owe our all? Do our words, our ways, our thoughts of others, our prayers for others, speak for us as those who have learned amid the depths of ruin into which sin has plunged us, to realize that break with all self-satisfaction, all self-sufficiency, all self-assertion, which is involved in fact in that cry of helplessness.

ness in which all help is found, "Salvation is of the Lord?"

All truth, all holiness, all liberty of soul, all power for devotedness, fruitfulness of whatever kind, comes to us out of that knowledge, when it is perfected in us; for out of that wreck, well understood, no other self arises than that which one who perhaps of all men knew it best could express only in the paradox, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."

F. W. G.

PRAYER FOR RULERS.

"I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority (or in eminent places), that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. ii. 1).

THE murder of the president speaks to all as a solemn reminder from God of our dependence upon His mercy for stable government, instead of the horror and confusion of anarchy. It is a call to prayer, according to the well-known exhortation at the head of this article—a reminder perhaps to most of us of our easy forgetfulness to pray, that is, to consider how we are in need of His mercy every hour, and in all relationships.

Great honor, too, is put upon us in giving us the place of intercessors for all men, and for rulers, and persons in high station. We are thus as God's priests around His tabernacle, with the nations afar off, but cared for of God, who has not forsaken them;—as Israel in the millennium will be, a nation of

priests, when all nations will be blest, and recognize Jerusalem as a centre.

Now that evil has reached such a pitch of subtilty and danger to national peace and government as to puzzle the wisdom of legislators, God is giving to His own a special opportunity to approach Him with exercised hearts, and with a spirit of prayer and fasting.

As the priests were to bear on their hearts before God the iniquity of the people, Christians are to act in like manner toward the world,—to consider the world's condition; and cry to God for mercy, knowing His long-suffering and goodness.

As in the seventh chapter of Daniel empires rise out of the sea—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—so the revived empire of Rome in Rev. xiii. rises out of the sea—out of a condition of national confusion. As we see the time approaching (while we know the Church will be kept from "that hour" Rev. iii. 10), let us not forget our obligation to the world.

Prayer "for all men," too, will beget a spirit of gentleness, and love, and meekness, in place of coldness and harshness which has so evil an effect if it colors our intercourse with the world, which also would affect the way we present the gospel itself.

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

The world has its lesson to heed in the recent distressing event—the fruit that sin bears, and the vanity of wisdom that ignores God. But it is to the Church God speaks first, that we may realize what a groaning creation we are in, and that we may pray without ceasing, while in everything giving thanks; for our God who is for us is above all, as He was at the cross, and will be in glory forever.

Let us use the occasion to draw near to God, and cry to Him for mercy in a time of great need; especially that all may be overruled for blessing in the gospel, and to arouse the Church. But still let us pray for peace, for good government, and for all men, and for rulers, and all those in places of special influence and authority.

How great is the goodness of God. How sanctifying the view of faith. Instead of taking a human standpoint for or against a certain party, (often with scorn or evil speaking) faith views all from God's presence. The rulers are "God's ministers" to do His will, for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well (Rom. xiii.).

As violence increases in the world—the offspring of corruption, now as before the flood, may it be ours to cultivate a spirit of meekness and lowliness, and subjection to God and to governments, and to one another in the fear of God.

E. S. L.

FROM HOREB TO KADESH-BARNEA BY WAY OF MOUNT SEIR.

Deut. i. 2.

IT is truly blessed to find that we can never overreach the limits of the divine Word by attributing the fullest meaning to its every statement. We find this especially evident when we turn to the Old Testament, and find how everything has been so written that we may learn more deeply the plain truths of the New. We can say with assurance that all recorded therein is for our learning, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Let us look then at the verse before us and see what the lesson is that

may be in it for us. "There are eleven days journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea." A very simple and apparently insignificant statement.

It is noticeable, at the outset, that the whole of Israel's wilderness journey is comprised of their wanderings from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea. They visited the latter place within the first year of their journeying, returning to it again in the thirty-eighth year. Thus Horeb is the commencement of the journey, and Kadesh-barnea the end. Now this is full of meaning when we consider that the wilderness-way of Israel is a picture of our own pathway through this world.

First, Horeb, the starting point, means "waste," approaching the thought of barrenness. Kadesh-barnea is the "sanctuary of the wanderer." And by way of Mount Seir which means "rugged." We will look at the length of time as we go on. If, as we have said, the journey is a type of our own, how significant that the start is made at Horeb. Was it not with the deep realization of our own absolute barrenness toward God that we first came to Him, acknowledging the "waste" condition that we were in, and bowing to the word of God in its condemning sentence that "there is none righteous, no, not one . . . none that doeth good, no, not one"—all a barren waste to Him who was our God and Judge? Surely this was the starting point of every one of us. But how blessedly full the provision He made for us in this very need. Not the law, with its claims founded on the immutable righteousness of God, which we could never meet. We could only fall under its condemnation, thus shutting us up to what

God had in His mind, even "the righteousness of God *by faith of Jesus Christ*," which simply means that now our *faith* is counted for righteousness, and we know the blessedness of the truth of being justified, and having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus not merely are we seen as one with Christ in His death, our judgment borne, and we free from wrath, but we are seen as in Him also in His resurrection. We are out of the old life and its barrenness, and are introduced into the life of new creation, where, as being linked with Him who was raised from the dead, we *should* bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4). We are already, as being implanted in this new creation, a kind of first-fruits unto God; but the point is that being this as to our standing, there should be the fruits of this produced in our lives. And this is what we are to go on to.

Horeb, then, thank God, is our starting place, where we have found nothing in ourselves and found our everything in Him.

As we have said, fruitfulness in our lives is what we are to go on to. God has a path for us to tread, in which it is His object to deal with us in such a way as to produce this desired fruit. That path is the way He would lead us through this world, and as surely as Horeb is the starting point, so is Kadesh-barnea the end—"the sanctuary of the wanderer,"—the place of rest and worship for the one who once was nothing more than a wanderer and an outcast from the presence of God. It is the blessed result to be enjoyed now by every one who in heart and soul unreservedly submits himself to the gracious work of the Spirit.

Kadesh-barnea,—do we occasionally visit it, or is it our continual abode? How much it speaks of; it reminds one of the psalmist in the seventy-third psalm. He had been in slippery paths, surveying the prosperity of the wicked. He speaks of how they prosper and are compassed about with pride, speaking loftily, while he is plagued all the day long and chastened every morning. He confesses having been envious of the foolish, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked “until,” he says, “I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.” Ah, that is the place for such wanderers as we have been and sometimes still are—the *presence of God Himself*. And the desire of His heart is that it should be our continual abiding place. Indeed, the whole of His work with us is just to accomplish this very desire of His, a desire which controls every act of His toward us. He gave His only begotten Son to do that great work on the ground of which He can thus act toward us.

I have said that fruit-bearing is what we are to go on to after the start from Horeb, but Kadesh-barnea is the place where we only really begin to be fruitful; the journey that lies between speaks of the disciplinary work which is so absolutely necessary before there is fruitfulness. I do not say, that discipline *ends* with fruitfulness. We all know how much pruning is required to make a vine bear fruit, but the pruning *continues* that it may bear more fruit. So with the child of God; how tenderly he is cared for after his first implanting in the True Vine. He is nourished and trained till he bear fruit, and then he is purged that he may bring forth more fruit. It is this first tender nourishment and discipline that it

would seem takes place in the journey we have been looking at. And now let us notice the way it is traversed.

It is by way of Mount Seir. Seir means "rugged." Shall we not say we have found it a "rugged" path from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea? "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). Have we reached this "afterward," at Kadesh-barnea, beloved? How His grace has come in all along the way in our many falls and stumbles, our wounds bound up, and the peace of Christ ministered afresh to our need. This gives us the character of the way, but let us take note that it is an eleven days journey. This will give us what characterizes the way. Eleven would seem to be six plus five, speaking plainly of *discipline*, while five speaks of *exercise under responsibility* which would give to eleven the meaning of God in discipline and man in exercise and responsibility under it. Truly this is what characterizes the Christian's path if he in heart desires to walk with his God.

Have we then properly occupied Kadesh-barnea? Has the path by way of Mount Seir, in the fulness of its eleven days journey, been compassed by us so that we are truly fruitful and in the position to press forward to take possession of our spiritual Canaan? God grant, indeed, that we may learn this lesson in its full worth, and allow the Lord to have His blessed way with us, so that we may be brought to the "sanctuary," the place whence true fruit-bearing flows.

J. B. Jr.

THE MINISTRATION OF CARNAL THINGS.*

WE have now come to a form of ministry which it is evident the apostle makes much of, and which, perhaps, is in little danger of being thought little of at any time. As we see in the body of Christ itself, the fitting together of the whole by that which every part supplieth,—the need of one being met by the ability that is in another,—so in the world itself, not in its evil shape, but as God has ordained things amongst men, we see the same fitting together, the dependence of one upon another, the need intended, as is evident, to draw out the heart in men towards one another, and to make conscious the weakness which is after all a weakness manifest in all in different ways and measures. Here is, I suppose, what makes the suitability also of this subject forming a fifth division of the epistle, the number 5 speaking, as has often been said, of the weak with the strong, primarily of the creature with God, but which may thus have, and surely has, its application in a lower sphere. The ministry of power of whatever kind to weakness, is essentially that all through here; and, as we have seen already in the sermon on the mount, the Lord makes even almsgiving an example of what is simply righteousness on the part of those who realize their own need of the ministry which thus goes out to others.

All this is a matter in which, alas, the heart is so often separated from the hand, and the easy liberality of the rich may so assume an appearance of goodness beyond that which can really be sustained before God, that we have need of care in handling it. The Lord has shown us how the largeness of the gift is in no wise the test of what is good in God's sight, and how the two mites of a poor widow, making one farthing, can be more to Him than all the treasures piled up by the wealthy. In fact, those of whom the apostle speaks here were manifesting in their deep poverty the

* From Numerical Bible, on 2 Cor. viii. and ix.

riches of their free-hearted liberality. This is what makes liberality noteworthy. It is not so much what is given as what remains to the giver. What the apostle valued, as there is no possibility of questioning, was not the largeness of the gift, but the heart displayed in it. The collection of which he is speaking here was for the poor Jews at Jerusalem, a witness of the appreciation on the part of the Gentiles of the blessing which God had ministered to them through the Jews. It was righteousness on their part to own this; and the spiritual blessing which they had received was far beyond anything that could be compensated pecuniarily, however much it might be acknowledged. It was the manner of the giving here which rejoiced the heart of the apostle. The saints did not give to release themselves, as it were, from a certain obligation to the Lord, but they had given themselves first to Him, and this made it a simple matter to give all the rest. Thus the material ministry became spiritual; and this is why the apostle rejoiced in it. It was an evidence of love and devotedness, and thus he could exhort the Corinthians to follow the example which the assemblies of Macedonia had set them; and, as they were abounding now in all Christian grace, they would surely abound in this grace too, among the rest.

He sets before them the transcendent example of One who was rich, and yet for our sakes became poor to enrich us through His poverty. What an example to keep all other giving in its place, to make it seem as little as it really is, and yet at the same time to make it more acceptable to God by the consciousness of its littleness! The Corinthians had, in fact, manifested their readiness for that of which he was speaking a year before. He had only to urge them, therefore, to carry out what had been in their thoughts so long already, remembering that, as to individual giving, God did not expect from a man what he had not, and He did not mean to ease some by putting burdens upon others. The beautiful example of the manna is that which he sets before them here, where—in a ministry which was from heaven itself and in

which men had only to gather that which God had bestowed,—yet “he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.” That was God’s thought and desire for them all, but using human instrumentality to accomplish it, and thus binding the hearts of His people to each other, and drawing forth the love, of which the gift, if it were anything, was but the manifestation.

The apostle goes on to speak of his care that in the ministration of the “carnal things,” as he calls them (which prove themselves so much a temptation to the flesh, and as to which the jealous eyes of enemies would so surely be upon him) there should not be the slightest opportunity given for even a question as to his conduct. It was not enough for him here that God would know all, so that he might leave it to Him to justify him in His own time and way. Where there were means that could be taken to prevent even suspicion he would take them, which even his *not* taking might be in itself a cause of suspicion. It is a principle of importance that we are called to recognize in a man whose faith in God was so pre-eminent, that he would not act simply upon this, in a matter of this kind. He would *not* say here, as in another relation he does say, that with him it was a very small matter to be judged of any. He does not build upon his apostleship, or the undoubted blessing that God had given to his labor, in such a way as to think himself beyond the need of justifying himself by the use of such precautions as would be thought needful in the case of another man. It would rather seem as if the sense of the place he filled in this way only made more imperative the necessity to “provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.” He did not, as many lesser men might do, and have done, stand upon the dignity of his office and disdain the thought of any account to be rendered to those before whom his life had so evidently spoken, tested as he had been by innumerable trials. No, he “magnified his office” in a wholly different way. Thus for this cause also he could be glad of the zeal of others which could

lead them to accept readily association with him in this matter of ministry of even "carnal things." And he thinks it right that not only should these be men of the highest character, but also the choice of the assemblies themselves. Of these he can speak in terms of fullest assurance. "They are the messengers of the assemblies," he says, "and the glory of Christ." He would not allow it to be thought that he had covered any defects in the administration either with the cloak of his apostleship, or of his personal faith.

THE ASSEMBLY MEETING OF I COR. XIV.

WHY should the prominent church-meeting of the New Testament, (aside from the Lord's supper) have so little place among us? We may call it by way of designation the "Open Meeting," as it has often been called, open for what we may be led to—prayer, praise, ministry, and worship. Ministry being prominent as in I Cor. xiv. where one had "a psalm," another "a doctrine," another "an interpretation," and "two or three were to speak and the others to judge;" and all things were to be done "decently and in order." But does not the necessity of giving a name of this kind to this meeting arise from a lack of simplicity and obedience to Scripture? With simplicity and habitual yielding of ourselves to the Spirit's guidance would it not be a common meeting, and need no special designation.

What has been allowed to take the place of the proper church-meetings and ministry of Scripture in the Church at large we well know—human devices of many kinds; and prominently "one man ministry." But if these have been rightly refused and escaped from, our tendency is still to return to them. And so

it is that the assembly-meeting in which gifts would specially be used and developed, and the body be edified,—this assembly meeting hardly exists among us, unless on special occasion. Ministry we have at the breaking of bread, and in the prayer-meeting and in the reading-meeting, and in the preaching, by which we are blest; but we come short of the meeting in question.

In our low and feeble condition there may seem to be little hope that such a meeting can be sustained, but let us consider briefly the familiar scriptures that refer to it, and then also very briefly the condition we must be in to meet our responsibility.

The first scripture we refer to is the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of first Corinthians; and the other is Rom. xii. In the chapters in Corinthians we find, first, the many members in the one body spoken of, and their varied offices and activities; and in chap. xiii. the "love" (charity) which must be the actuating motive in service; then in the fourteenth chapter an example of an assembly-meeting where members are exercising their gifts. The space devoted to the subject shows its great importance.

"How is it then brethren: when ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation? Let all things be done unto edifying." It is true that they are being rebuked for too much activity, but still it was a meeting of the assembly open for any one to minister whom the Lord might lead to do so. Not too many were to speak, only two or three; for love would seek to edify, not to selfishly press oneself upon the meeting.

How gracious of the Lord to commit to us such a sacred responsibility, and what an excellent school of discipline and development for the members of the body; and what a loss not to diligently make use of what God has so provided!

In the twelfth chapter of Romans, the doctrine of our redemption being complete, devotedness is enjoined—the presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God; and then at once we are exhorted as to our membership and place of service in the body. This puts in a strong light again the importance of what is before us. All the beautiful fruits and excellencies of Christian character that follow in the after part of the chapter, are a development of that devotedness, which begins with a sober estimate of one's gift as a member of the one body.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation.” Then follow those excellent things we are familiar with, that shine like jewels: “Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another . . . fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope . . . instant in prayer”—and many more. But what precedes it all, as we have seen, is our membership in the one body, and the gifts committed to us in that relationship. “So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another,—having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.”

Finally, as to the condition of soul needed that we

may fulfil this responsibility, it has, in general, already been necessarily referred to—devotedness to God; and we can well conclude that where this is lacking, this open meeting will be the first to languish and die out, or rather it would be the meeting that would never be attempted. Worldliness, anxious care, coveteousness, the wandering heart, formality, the lack of earnest prayer and joyful communion with the Lord, unfit us for the Master's use. But let us seek grace that it may not be so with us; and our consideration of this subject, and confession of our real condition as so revealed by our incapacity, may lead to exercises far and wide, that will work deliverance. Is it not our shame that we should continue babes, and unable to use our gifts and our privileges? And this leads to many considerations as to our dependence on one another, and the great need there is that we should care for one another, and pray much for one another, as also for ourselves. What an interest we have in one another, that every one in the assembly and every family connected with us should have the blessing of God, and that hindrances should be removed. All this calls for diligence, vigilance, fasting, and prayer—a vigorous and healthful condition, instead of a slothful one, which would go with joy in the Lord, and increasing knowledge of God, while with it would be the Merari bitterness that belongs to those who care for the assembly, the house of God. For if our afflictions abound, the consolations of Christ abound also. There would then be more of the “sorrowing yet always rejoicing.” But we are far from these things; yet, if we care about it and confess our need with prayer, we know well that the Lord will not fail to

hear, and restore and bless through whatever rebukes and chastenings.

What habitual waiting upon God must be wrought in us, if we are to be found ready for special occasions; and if habitually thus, how easy, how simple a thing it is to receive from the Lord the word for the present need. So that all would know and rejoice that the present need was met by the Word in divine wisdom and grace.

How good then is our God, that if He calls upon us to fulfil our responsibilities and to use our gifts, it demands of us exercises that are pure blessing for us, and for His glory; for what is for His glory is for our blessing, which shows the glory and excellence of His character.

We should not be discouraged as to a meeting because we may at times weary one another. If there is habitual failure, there should be grace to admonish, and the Lord will give power to the admonition if from a patient and loving heart that has sought Him in prayer and faith.

May the Lord give us help, in His mercy, and lead us to count upon grace to enable us to do His will. May we bow down before the Lord about this in all the assemblies, and may we be ready to judge and let go everything that would unfit us to fill our place in the assembly; for we must either help or hinder; and how serious a consideration is this for all who love the Lord.

Shall we be dismayed by the smallness of our meetings? No doubt many can bear witness that at very small meetings, (when but two or three or a few more were present, or perhaps a rainy night, or wearied in body, or perhaps saddened by the

absence of some) how the word by some brother was used for blessing, and they were made to feel how tenderly the Lord cared for them in their need, because they trusted Him.

May our hearts be alive to our need, and count upon the Lord to bless us. "He bringeth low and lifteth up."
E. S. L.

EXTRACT OF CORRESPONDENCE.

My loved Brother :

I think I have had my mind more occupied of late than ever with the subject which your letter suggests—the being with the Lord. I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller acquaintance with Himself that our hearts need; and then we should long and desire after Him in such ways as nothing but His presence could satisfy. It is not knowledge that gives this, but personal acquaintance with the blessed Saviour, through the Holy Ghost.

I alighted, as by chance, the other day on some fervent thoughts of an old writer, in connection with this dear and precious subject. In substance they were as follows, and almost so in terms, only I have somewhat condensed them.

"It is strange that we, who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually in obligation to Him, should after all be so little acquainted with Him. And from hence it comes that we are so loath to think of our dissolution, and of our going to God. For, naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, then turn in for a free lodging to an

unknown host; whereas, to an entire friend, whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such an one. I will not live upon God and His daily bounties, without His acquaintance. By His grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him, giving Him some testimony of my love to Him, and getting from Him some sweet pledge of His constant favor towards me."

Beautiful utterance this is. It expresses a character of mind which, in this day of busy inquiry after knowledge, we all need—personal longings after Christ. May the blessed Spirit in us give that direction to our hearts! It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn, to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above the provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ Himself "*after the flesh,*" and to desire to find Him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life and there only.

But this is not our calling—this is not the heavenly life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know, but our calling calls us beyond it. We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our human relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them; but to know Him, and to have Him in such a way as tells us that He is a stranger on earth, and that we are to be strangers with Him, this is a hard saying to our poor fond hearts.

In John's Gospel, I may say, among other things, the Lord sits Himself to teach us this lesson.

The disciples were sorry at the thought of losing Him in the flesh, losing Him in their daily walk and intercourse with Him. But he lets them know that it was expedient for them that they should lose Him in that character, in order that they might know Him through

the Holy Ghost, and ere long be with Him in heavenly places (chap. xvi.).

And this is again perceived in chap. xx. Mary Magdalene would have known the Lord again, as she had already known Him, but this must not be—this must be denied her. This was painful, but it was expedient, good for her then (just as it had been already good for the disciples in chap. xvi.) to know that she was to lose Christ in the flesh. For Mary is now taught that she was to have fellowship with Him in the more blessed place of His ascension.

So also the company at Jerusalem in the same chapter. "They were glad, when they saw the Lord." But this gladness was human. It was the joy of having recovered, as they judged, the One whom they had lost—Christ in the flesh. But their Lord at once calls them away from that communion and knowledge of Him, to the peace which His death had now made for them, and the life which His resurrection had now gained for them.

All this it is healthful for our souls to ponder, for we are prone to be satisfied with another order of things. The sorrow that filled the hearts of the disciples at the thought of their Lord going away—the "Rabboni" of Mary Magdalene—the disciples being "glad when they saw the Lord," show the disposedness of the heart to remain with Christ in the midst of human relationships and circumstances, and not to go with a risen Christ to heavenly places.

But all this I say to you as one that suggests a thought—would that it were the experience of the soul. But I desire to have it so.

PROPHESYING WITH HARPS.

(1 Chron. xxv. 1.)

WHAT a wonderful contrast there is between the David of first Kings and of Chronicles,—a thing which has often been noticed as a difficulty by the devout and with but ill concealed triumph by the unbeliever, who delights to find contradictions where faith always finds perfection.

If we remember that the subjects are different, the difficulty vanishes. We see David according to nature in Kings; in Chronicles, according to grace. Indeed, the decrepit old man flashes forth in all the vigor and energy of faith even in Kings when that faith is called into exercise. The one to whom Abishag ministered, seeking almost in vain to keep the spark of life from going out utterly, blazes forth as much the king and man of might as ever when Solomon's title to the throne is disputed by Adonijah, and then and there secures for him the throne and the succession, as well as provides for judgment upon covert enemies who had long escaped punishment. We might say this gives a glimpse of the David whom we see at full length in Chronicles. Here, nature is left out of sight, and the man of faith, the man after God's own heart, realizing as his end draws near, the glory that awaited his successor, makes full and ample provision not merely for Solomon's own throne, but above all, for the glory and the worship and service of the house of God,—that which was dearest to his heart.

Leave the future out of view, and there is something intensely pathetic in seeing this old man,—who, with all his failings, had lived for God in the main,—gathering gold and treasure in rich abun-

dance for his son to rear the house of God, which he was distinctly forbidden to do himself. There is not a murmur, not a question of divine wisdom. He had been a man of blood, not only in the many wars, but no doubt in his inmost heart remembering the blood of Uriah upon his hands, he realized the wisdom of God in reserving for the peaceable and glorious reign of Solomon the erection of that house which was to be the glory of the nation and the wonder of the world.

David not only provides for the building of the house, as we said, but for the worship of the Levites, the courses of the priests, the porters at the gates and all the details. We can imagine with what keener delight this old man would arrange all; and faith could see, not the bare threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, but the stately temple filled with worshipping priests and singing Levites, and over all, the overshadowing glory. And faith could rejoice, though for sight there was nothing. And so it should ever be for us. Sight has nothing to show, but how lively the view which faith opens up!

It is in connection with the ordering of the Levite service of worship that we have an expression which should arrest the attention: "Moreover, David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun, who should *prophesy with harps*." We would naturally think of harps being used to play upon to aid in the melody of the worship, but there seems to be distinct meaning, as we know there is in every word of Scripture,—in this word "prophesy." They were to *prophesy* with harps; that is, they were to speak for God, which is really the thought of prophesying.

And does it not seem a strange combination, the harp suggesting praise, worship, and joy offered to God; the prophesying suggesting, as it were, God's voice for His people to hear, too? Without doubt, the thought that underlies it, first of all, is that their playing with harps was not a natural exercise, but under divine guidance. As the incense was made according to the formula given to Moses, and nothing could be added or taken from it, so the melody which was to accompany the sweet psalms of praise was also ordered of God. This, of course, does not set aside the thought of their being men of gift and of training, but it reminds us of the fact that everything connected with God must be under His control.

We have another suggestive mention of an instrument of music in connection with the exercise of prophecy in the life of Elisha—when the kings of Judah and Israel and Edom were stranded in the wilderness without water, and the enemy threatening them—in their helplessness they turned to the prophet of the Lord, who, for the sake of Jehoshaphat came to their relief. "Bring me a minstrel," he said, "and it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him." It was in connection with what we might call praise, that God gave His word of deliverance for these kings.

This opens up a very suggestive thought for us and one which we forget all too easily. Nothing is more needed amongst the people of God than prophecy. What would we be without God's word for us? Of course, we have the written Word, that which embodies all the truth of God revealed to us, and which it is at once our privilege and responsibility to feed upon and to be filled with. But the word in

season, the word from the Lord out of His written Word, that which appeals to conscience and to heart, as the apostle says, which ministers edification, exhortation or comfort,—how important, how necessary to receive this!

If we turn to the Old Testament prophets, we see that their message consisted largely of warning, of denunciation of evil, of lamentation over the declension of a people privileged as nation never was. The pages of the prophets are stained with their tears, and yet who that has read, "Isaiah's wild measure" but has heard the sound of the harp mingling its melody even when the theme was most sad, and sending a glimmer of hope over the darkest pages, while predominating, rising above, reaching beyond all the gloom, is that clear, triumphant note of victory which looks on to the end, assured that at the last the harps will have *not* a message of sorrow, but one of unmingled joy and delight.

Putting it very simply, the thought suggested by the harps is the spirit of praise, of worship. Even our sins ought to be sung out to God, as it were. The book of Psalms as a whole gives us this thought. No matter how humbling the sin, how deep the humiliation, how sore the oppression of the enemy, the harp is never laid aside. It all goes up, as it were, to God, in worship. And is there not deep instruction in this? None are more easily discouraged than the people of God, particularly when their failures are brought to remembrance. They are overwhelmed. Mere calling sin to mind will never give deliverance from it; but here comes in the harp of praise too; for in spite of all weakness and manifold shortcomings, how much we have to praise for!

There is lacking amongst us, no doubt, much of that faithfulness which marked the prophets of old. "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully" is too easily forgotten, and while we do not prophesy "smooth things of deceit," there may be the passing over, the forgetting those painful "wounds of a friend" which heal while they smite. This is included in the exhortation that the apostle speaks of in the fourteenth chapter of first Corinthians. We must deal faithfully with one another, and we may all prophesy. But let us always take our harp when we prophesy. Let us always remember that we can praise God and that the accompaniment to the saddest message which we may have to bring to our brethren is the sweet song of redemption. Oh, how this illumines whatever may have to be said! How it changes denunciation into entreaty! How anger is melted to tears, and even over those who have gone farthest astray, how the yearning pity mingles with the faith to count upon their recovery as we deliver, it may be, a message of sorrow!

In quite another connection we have a similar thought. "Be careful for nothing," says the apostle, "but in everything by prayer and supplication"—here is the sense of need, the supplication suggesting strong entreaty of hearts that must have an answer from God, and yet coupled with it is that "thanksgiving" which lightens the burden and, in anticipation, praises God for the answer. Do we always remember to mingle thanks with our prayers, as we wait long for the answer, as it is deferred until the heart well nigh grows sick? Let us remember the thanksgiving, for our God does hear and will in His own way and time give an answer of peace.

Meanwhile, too, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeps the heart through Christ Jesus.

We have been speaking of admonition. In our usual version, this is connected, in Colossians, with psalms and hymns: "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Be the punctuation altered as it may, the close connection between the admonition and the psalms and hymns is, to say the least, suggestive, and reminds us of the prophesying with the harp. Nay, in our own experience, have we not oftentimes received the tenderest and most effectual admonitions in the melody of praise?

"Yet, gracious Lord, when we reflect
How apt to turn the eye from Thee,
Forget Thee, too, with sad neglect
And listen to the enemy,
And yet to find Thee still the same,
'Tis this that humbles us with shame."

It seems as though the very joy of God's grace, instead of making us forget our own wrong, but emphasizes it, leaving us, however, not hopeless and discouraged, but

"Astonished at Thy feet we fall.
Thy love exceeds our highest thought.
Henceforth be Thou our all in all,
Thou who our souls with blood hast bought.
May we henceforth more faithful prove
And ne'er forget Thy ceaseless love."

This is but one illustration of what, without doubt, has been frequently the experience of God's beloved people. Have we not often expected a blow, felt that we deserved it, that nothing short of some correction from the rod of God could move us, and been surprised and melted into deepest contrition by the sweet voice of the harp bringing that message of

love, that love which never changes, which is as fresh in our dullness as in our brightest, happiest moments, which cannot be measured by our apprehension of it, but is its own measure?

Then, too, the one that brings the message, as we were saying, a most needed one of admonition, is also prone to discouragement sometimes, forgetting his own weaknesses as he thinks of those of his brethren. He goes in gloom, with but little hope of seeing results, to do that which is a most unpleasant duty, and he does it faithfully, but in a hard way. He goes away unsuccessful and doubly depressed. How different it might have been had he taken his harp with him and remembered that it is grace alone which restores, as it is grace which saves.

But we must not think that all prophecy is admonition or that every message from God is a word of warning. How far this is from the truth! Has a father nothing but correction for his children? It is the exception, rather than the rule. What happy family is there where admonition is the prevailing atmosphere? It comes with all the greater force because of its comparative rarity. But prophecy goes on always. The Father is always speaking to His children and would use us as His mouth-pieces for His message. Exhortation and comfort as well as edification, are included in it, and how everything is lightened and rendered effective by the spirit of praise! We come with happy hearts and speak to one another for edification, and how different it is when, in a mere perfunctory way we go over truths clear to the mind, but lacking in just that one thing which makes them effective and which the spirit of praise furnishes! Is there not, too often, an atmo-

sphere of depression amongst the people of God? They are looking at one another, and like Joseph's brethren, starving as they look into one another's faces, and yet their Bibles are in their hands, full of most priceless truth. Constraint, the fear of man, occupation with one's brethren,—these things have hindered the free outflow of that which should come in all its simplicity and with all its power. What is the remedy? Take the harp. Strike a few notes. Think of the love of God, of His grace and goodness; think of what redemption is, and how all constraint vanishes! The Spirit of the Lord is free because we are occupied, not with one another, but with Christ, and thus there is the liberty which comes from the Spirit's freedom.

Take again the meeting for prayer. How many heavy hearts come to the prayer-meeting. Do they go away heavy or light? It is a libel upon the grace and love of God to carry a heavy heart away from where we have met with Him. He will surely give a word of help and blessing if the eye has been turned to Him; if, in other words, the harp of praise has become the vehicle for the message of prophecy.

But it is needless to enlarge. We have simply dwelt upon one idea, looking at a few of its many sides. The spirit of praise is absolutely essential. God dwells amid the praises of His people. There can be no sense of His presence without worship, and there can be no true liberty without praise accompanying it. Let us then take a lesson from David's provision. Let us learn more than ever to prophesy with the harp, and to do every thing with thanksgiving. How light it would make our lives, and what a foretaste it would give us of that time near at hand,

—we know not how near,—when the melody of the harp will sound out in all its entrancing sweetness as we sing: “Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

S. R.

CALL THEM BACK.

CALL Thy people back, O Lord,
 As in the early days,
 When love was warm and fresh and bright,
 When first we knew Thy grace,
 When first Thy light broke through our night
 And set our hearts ablaze.
 Lord, call us back.

Call Thy people back, O Lord,
 To that simplicity
 Which marked Thy servants long ago;
 Our yearning hearts would be
 Full satisfied with Thee, although
 The world against us be.
 Lord, call us back.

From the many paths unmeet
 Our wayward feet have trod,
 From foolish words, and wilful ways,
 Yea, turn us back, O God,
 Afresh to taste Thy love and grace,
 Else Thou must use Thy rod.
 Lord, turn us back.

Call Thy loved ones back, O Lord,
 From toilsome paths and steep;
 From bearing burdens all Thine own,
 Which only make us weep,
 The while we moan, and toil alone,
 And only sorrow reap.
 Lord, call us back.

Call us back from hearts cast down,
 And oh, afresh inspire
 Our souls to seek Thee more and more;
 To burn with deep desire,
 Till hearts o'erflow, and faces glow
 With holy, ardent fire.
 Lord, call us back.

Call us back to those sweet days,
 When hearts were knit as one,
 When prayer was as the breath of life;
 Ere we were so undone,
 Ere souls were rife with endless strife;
 For Jesus' sake, Thy Son,
 Lord, call us back.

Broken is the remnant, Lord,
 And difficult the day;
 What shame and sorrow cover us,
 Our tears oft dim the way;
 The tide runs high, Thy coming's nigh,
 Our hearts are loath to stay.
 Lord, take us home. H. McD.

"COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST GIFTS."

1 Cor. xli. 31.

THAT we are in the difficult times of the last days needs, for one that is before God, no demonstration. The difficulties increase continually, and the peculiar characters of evil foretold as to be found in the last days are more and more becoming apparent. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many has waxed cold. Because of the prevalence of error, truth itself is undervalued and discredited. Dogmatic teaching is more and more set aside, for that which is distinctively thought of as "practical," in opposition to it. That which is the first character

of the Word of inspiration, that it is "profitable for doctrine" (and what is first in Scripture really comes first), if its value be discredited, discredits necessarily all that is connected with it. Confucianism and Christianity are then found nearly upon the same level. Confucius has excellent moral precepts, and practically no God. This is what more and more we are coming to, or at least we need to know but little about Him. Morality and altruism, these are enough for us. Look at the jangle of creeds and sects. What have they bred for us but that kind of disregard for one another which is the source of so many evils? Theological hatred is the worst kind of hatred. Religious persecution is the most intense and evil of its kind; and at any rate, it is so hard to discover what the truth is. Bring in from various quarters a dozen professing Christians, and try to harmonize their different statements. Yet good men are good men all the world over, and it is even proverbial that the heart may be better than the creed. Why trouble, then, so much about the creed? Why take so much pains to build up systems which begin to disintegrate as soon as they are built up? "In doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity," comes to have large application with the growing doubt about so many things. .

But what are we to do, then, with Scripture; which certainly is, as to its character, essentially dogmatic? Well, the human element is perhaps the thing most apparent, and if Scripture is even thus in agreement with itself, a great many people have not found it out. It is even claimed to be the work of the Spirit now to disengage the kernel from the husk and to produce for us a new Bible relieved of things which

have long been an incubus upon it. The more the "higher critic" pares down Scripture, the more his love increases for the Scripture so pared down, and he finds wonderful power now in that which, if it be less obviously divine, yet appeals to him the more for its kinship with the human.

Difficulties! why, how many are the difficulties here? difficulties which who shall settle for us? For, alas, our faith in human wisdom itself must necessarily be shaken by them all, and one verse of Scripture remains for us, perhaps, as the most significant of its many verses, that, "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

What are we to do, then? Well, if Scripture has lost its power, there is indeed nothing to be done. They are but few probably, after all, who will give up Christianity for Buddhism or its kindred Theosophy. We shall not in the mass leave Moses for Mohammed; and if heaven's beauteous vision has at last failed us, it has at least so made apparent the dismal failure of all else that one can positively hope for no substitute for it. What man or what committee of the wisest men will give us really another Bible? They are better at destruction than at reconstruction; better in mutilating that which, for them has become a spiritless corpse than in breathing the breath of life into any new form.

Well, let us despair of ourselves; that is all right. Alas, it is the world's wisdom that has mocked and cheated us. With the despair of our own, there may be at least a cry to the unknown God, which shall bring unlooked-for answer. At least one of the most widely discredited doctrines at once begins to dawn

upon us as possibly true, that if any man would be wise, he must become a fool that he may be wise. And after all, sin is in the world surely. It is not a mere name and nothing else. There is such a thing as sin and a great deal of it. Has it not, perchance, clouded the mind so as to produce this darkness which we are burdened with, and in which all philosophies, all fruits of the human intellect, are withering, and are bound to wither? Thank God for the Voice that breaks out even through the darkness with its sweet, comforting, powerful assurance, so strange in its mingling of the human and divine together: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Have you *rest*, dear reader? Has this wonderful word been fulfilled to you? And have you learned to say, Whatever else may deceive, this has not deceived; here is a Voice which has proved its truth in my inmost soul? Here is the solid footing upon which alone we can stand, with the earth and all that is in it shaking around us. Here is the Voice which can alone settle all difficulties for us, a Voice like which there is no other. How blessed to recognize in Him whose voice it is; the true "human element" which men think they prize so highly, which appeals, even as the science of the day does, to "justification by verification," and bids you verify for yourself—each for himself—its utterances. Once upon the rock here, how the fog clears! how the cold mists roll off the face of nature everywhere! and whatever may be the shapes of evil that we see, yet at least there is no more indistinctness, no uncertainty; and not the evil rules, but the good; not man but God. How wonderful a book then is Scripture! Is there

another like it? Shall I permit any, with the highest claim from men's schools or colleges, to tell me what of it I am to believe, or what I may disbelieve? Upon Scripture, from first to last, from Genesis to Revelation, the living truth has put its seal; and what a field of knowledge now opens to me, while the fresh life stirs within my soul to make it all—as far as the finite may apprehend the Infinite—to make it all my own! Christian reader, is this what Scripture is for you? a Voice everywhere alike in its certainty as in its sublimity, a Voice that has power not over the mind alone, but over the conscience and over the heart? Is it something with which you make no conditions, but which claims your obedience, and *which you obey*? In every part is it that? in every sphere that is accessible to man? in every department of nature? in all that can be called—is worthy to be called,—*science*? Then, if this be so, you have found what will be the solution of all the difficulties even of the last days; and amid all these you will stand master of yourself, because in the freedom given by another Master; one who has not received—thank God—"the spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. i. 7).

These words are from one of those epistles which, with the fore-thought of the love that breathes everywhere through Scripture, have been provided for us, just for these last days in which we are; and they reveal the spirit of a man who was in his last days upon earth, and with shadow everywhere around him as to his circumstances. Not only was it upon the *world*, but the Church itself was passing into the shadow. Souls over whom he had rejoiced were departing from him. He was in prison, in the

grip of imperial Rome, in the hands of the pagan persecutor, but with a soul as clear, as bright, as glad as ever it had been since the light of the opened heavens had revealed One in whose face was the glory of God, a glory which ever went with him and ceased not. How good to be where he was! His own heart could find no better wish for all around him than that they might be almost and altogether such as he was, except those bonds!

But he draws every believing soul into the same covert of that glory in which he stood himself. God has not given *us* "a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." We are not Pauls, true; but the sources of blessing which were his are ours, and the ability to draw from them, if only our hearts are true to the truth as his was, no atom of divergence allowed from the path on which his compass guided, doing one thing, "forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling (or the calling on high) of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13, 14). If this be our mind what can arrest an energy which the Spirit gives? If this be not our mind, how can we think even of facing the difficulties which are on every side? There will be nothing for us but the gloom of despair, or the worse alternative of a heart steeling itself to indifference, yielding to the evil for which it has no remedy, the very abounding of iniquity causing, alas, the loyalty of its love to falter and relax. How necessary for our whole course as Christians that the full assurance of hope should animate us at all times! Conflict there will be. We shall not be able to escape from meeting the tide which is

against us. The enjoyed presence of God will not withdraw us from this, but enable us for it, and how necessary for us then to realize what it is to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"! to realize the triumph which Christ Himself has accomplished, not for Himself alone, but for us also whom He bids follow Him through a world in which we shall have tribulation, but which He has overcome! How necessary for us to be in the spirit of those ringing appeals "to him that overcometh," when the history depicted in the Lord's words to the churches is being enacted before our eyes! Assuredly we have a sphere of our own into which the conflict around us cannot enter, and our happiness lies just in being able fully to enjoy this, to *make* our own the things that *are* our own, and to live in the life which is really life. And it is just here too that we learn most surely what the world is, in a way not given by the most intimate acquaintance with the world.

But what is the bearing of all this upon the subject before us, in which we are exhorted to "covet earnestly the best gifts"? There are some things, therefore, which it is right to covet, and here, strangely enough, where it is not only permitted but enjoined, people are the slowest to do this. If God is giving, it should be a matter of course that one would seek the very best of the gifts He has to give. But is it so? Alas, gifts as they are, they seem to many, nevertheless, burdened with conditions which almost destroy their reality as such. To seek the best gifts of God, supposes, in fact, a heart not in the world, but with Himself outside it, while He has interests in the world indeed with which they have largely to

do. Now here it is that the tangle of things, and the difficulties arising from the apparent hopelessness of the condition, of necessity deadens the desire for that which, after all, seems so ineffective to better the conditions and thus in itself so doubtful as good. The Church is in the world, that Church which Christ loves and has given Himself for it, that greatest of gifts from which all other gifts proceed. Nevertheless, what has been the history of the Church? and what a spectacle does it present to-day? How little is it conquering the adverse element? How much, rather, does the world seem to be conquering it, so that everywhere it must make concessions to it! The Church is in the world indeed, but alas, much more than this, *the world is in the Church*; and these are mingled together in a way which seems quite impossible to be remedied, the world which should have been conquered being manifestly rather the conqueror, and Christianity being molded in its hands into forms which more and more degrade it to the level of one of the world-religions, if even it be the best. What, then, has come of the gifts with which Christ has endowed His Church? Things widen in influence just as they are lower in character until, in "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," the positiveness of Christianity disappears, its angles are smoothed off, and he whom the inscribing angel cannot write among "the names of those who love the Lord" may yet, as "one who loves his fellow-men," find his where the vision of the poet saw it, when

"Lo! Ben-adhem's name led all the rest!"

Such difficulties are, of course, difficulties only for the Christian. For the man of the world himself,

the darkness is light just as the light is darkness. For the Christian, they are largely doing just what is most thoroughly Satan's work for him, producing discouragement and perplexity with that dulling of spiritual energy which is the necessary consequence. The gifts which Christ has given are *for the Church's equipment*; but how differently does that sound when we go back to the time when it began, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," from now when, battered in the conflict, its ranks divided and opposing one another, it scarcely knows itself! It is just when we realize most what according to God's thoughts it should have been, that we are prone most to the worst discouragement. "The body of Christ!"—but what is a body of which the members are scattered here and there, and hardly anything of the form remains as Scripture shows it? Here indeed it requires the power of the Spirit of God to lift one up to face that which is seen with the brighter reality of that which is unseen. This is what is so sorely needed to-day. We have grown old in the wilderness. The eternal life that is in us seems to be susceptible of weakness and decay like any other life. Revivals there have been, many, but how surely followed, and how soon, by a corresponding depression and degeneration! But one more wave seems wanting, now with the end so near, to lift us right up into a scene where failure any more will be impossible. Shall there be that or shall the Church's latter end be but in terrible contrast to its beginning? The answer must be in the heart of the individual and it must be given to God, not man. That the Spirit abides, we know. That He abides to glorify Christ in His people we must

not question. Grieved, insulted, quenched as He has been, is there not yet power with Him, power that He can manifest to accomplish that which to man is indeed impossible?

But let us look more closely at what the gifts that we are exhorted to covet, mean. Gifts are, in the Church, that which fits the body together as such. They are the functions of the members which make them, therefore, practically members. It is impossible, therefore, to be a member of the body without the gift that it implies. It is this that the apostle dwells upon in the epistle to the Corinthians which speaks of the body as it exists on earth. The gifts, therefore, differ from one another, not by reason of defect in the organization, but rather of the completeness of the whole according to God. There is everywhere defect in the members, if you forget that they are but members. If they are independent individualities, then they are most unfitted to stand alone. They are made for each other and for the whole. Do we realize it, dear fellow-christians? Do we feel in ourselves our dependence upon all others, as their dependence, too, upon ourselves? We must not shrink back in false humility from that last thought. The apostle will expressly tell us that "much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary." We cannot, therefore, put away this from us by any thought of our feebleness. Nay, even the feebleness itself is, as it is put, in some sense that which makes us necessary to one another. Eve was necessary to Adam by the very feebleness which should draw out for her his strength; and Adam too had his side of feebleness which made it not good that the man should dwell

alone. Thus we are needed for each other's development; and the ministry of each to each, in order that the whole may fill its place. Alas it is this shrinking from the thought of universal ministry which has, first of all, split up the Church itself into two divisions, the ministers and those ministered to: false in the whole thought of it; and not the less because of the truth contained, which is just what gives the falsehood its fatal facility of acceptance. To speak of what is the most plausible and the most fatal, all have not the gift of teaching,—true; but of this is bred a class of teachers who know not the first principle of their calling, which is *to educate others into independence of themselves*; and a much larger class of half-educated scholars, to whom the time when they ought to be teachers, of which the apostle speaks (Heb. v. 12), never comes,—never is expected to come. They have resigned their title as possessors of that Spirit who searches the deep things of God into the hands of those more competent in intellect, more taught in the schools of men, devoted to spiritual studies as those in secular occupations cannot be. Thus clergy and laity came about by a natural application of the principle of a division of labor, by which one class could at more ease pursue the world, while the other enjoyed privileges and acquired a power such as ever the heart of man has craved and rejoiced in. But the sense of immediate dependence upon God and confidence in Him became proportionately weakened; the Bible which the true teacher would have opened and made familiar became gradually darker and less accessible, or lighted with weird and distracting corpse-lights of the imagination, which no hand could reach to test them by the touch of truth.

F. W. G.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

OBEDIENCE TO GOD

UNDER WORLD-GOVERNMENTS.*

INDEED Nebuchadnezzar was a man as wise according to the flesh as he was wilful. He stood in a place that no man had occupied before; not only the sovereign of a vast kingdom, but the absolute master of many kingdoms, speaking different tongues, and having all sorts of contrary habits and policies. What then was to be done with them? How were all these various nations to be kept and governed under a single head? There is an influence that is mightier than any other thing, which, if common, binds men closely together; but which on the contrary, if jarring, more than anything else arrays people against people, house against house, children against parents, and parents against children, nay husbands and wives against each other. There is no social dislocation to be compared with that which is produced by a difference of religion. Consequently to avert so great a peril, union in religion was the measure that the devil insinuated into the mind of the politic Chaldean as the surest bond of his empire. He must have one common religious influence in order to weld together the hearts of his subjects. In all probability, to his mind it was a political necessity. Unite them in worship, unite all hearts in bowing down before one and the same object, and there would be something to furnish the hope and opportunity of consolidating all these scattered fragments into a whole.

Accordingly, the king projects the idea of the gor-

* Extract from *Notes on Daniel*, by W. K. — the *Treasury of Truth*, No. 24.

geous image of gold for the plain of Dura, near the capital of the empire: and there it is that he summons all the leading men, the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, all in power and authority, to come together to the dedication. The authority, therefore, of the empire was put forth, and all were commanded to worship the golden image on pain of death. "Whoso falleth not down and worshipeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

"Therefore, at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up" (ver. 7).

But there were some apart from that idolatrous throng; very few alas! though, no doubt, there were others hidden. We may be bold enough to say there was one not mentioned here—Daniel himself. However this be, his three companions were not there; and this made them obnoxious to others; especially as their position, exalted as it was in the province of Babylon, exposed them to more public notice. Of course they were singled out for the king's displeasure. "Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews." Then they remind the king of the decree that he had made, and add, "There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage and fury, commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego," etc.

But the evil of man and the craft of Satan only serve to bring the faithful into view. The king commands them to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. No doubt, he first remonstrates, and gives them the opportunity of yielding. "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now, if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, etc., . . . ye fall down and worship the image that I have made, well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" It is solemn to see how evanescent was the impression made upon the king's mind. The last act recorded before this image was set up was his falling down on his face before Daniel, paying him all but divine honors. He had even said, "Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret." But it was another thing, when he finds out his power disputed, and his image despised, spite of the burning fiery furnace.

It was all very well to acknowledge God for a moment when He was revealing a secret to him. That was plainly decided in chap. ii. And Daniel there represents those who have the mind of God and who are found in the place of fearing God. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

But God had delegated power to the head of the Gentiles, Nebuchadnezzar. And now that these men had dared to brave the consequences rather than worship the image, he is filled with fury, which vents itself in scorn of God Himself. "Who is that God," he says, "that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The consequence was that it became now a question between him whom God had set up and God Himself.

But a most beautiful and blessed feature comes out here. It is not God's way, at the present, to meet power by power. It is not His way to deal with the Gentiles in destruction, even where they may be abusing power against the God who has set them in authority; and I call your attention to this, believing it to be an important thing practically. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego do not in any way take the ground of resisting Nebuchadnezzar in his wickedness. We know afterwards that his conduct was so evil that God stripped him of all glory, and even of intelligence as a man, for a long time. But still these godly men do not pretend that he is a false king because he sets up and enforces idolatry. For the Christian, the question is not about the king, but how he ought to behave *himself*. It is not his business to meddle with others. He is called to walk, relying on God, in obedience and patience. As to the great mass of every-day obligations we can obey God in obeying the laws of the land in which we live. This might be the case in any country. If one were even in a popish kingdom, I believe that, in the main, one might obey God without transgressing the laws of the land. It might be necessary, sometimes, to hide oneself. If they were coming, for instance, with their processions, and required a mark of respect to the host, one ought to avoid the appearance of insulting their feelings, while, on the other hand, one could not acquiesce in their false worship.

But it is extremely important to remember that government is set up and acknowledged of God; and it has, therefore, claims upon the obedience of the Christian man wherever he may be. One of the New Testament epistles takes up this question, the very one which, more than any other, brings out the foundations, characteristics, and effects of Christianity, as far as

regards the individual. I allude to the epistle to the Romans, the most comprehensive of all the Pauline epistles. There we have, first of all, man's condition fully developed; then the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The first three chapters are devoted to the subject of man's ruin; the next five, to the redemption that God has wrought as the answer to the ruin of man. Then, in the three chapters which follow, you have the course of the dispensations of God—that is, His dealings, on a large scale, with Israel and the Gentiles. After that we have the practical, or, at least, the preceptive part of the epistle: first, in chap. xii., the relations of Christians to one another, and then, after a gradual transition, to enemies at the close; and next, their relation to the powers that be (chap. xiii.). The very expression—"the powers that be"—seems intended to embrace every form of government under which Christians might be placed. They were to be subject, not merely under a king, but where there was another character of sovereign; not only where the government was ancient, but let it be ever so newly established. The business of the Christian is to show respect to all who are in authority, to pay honor to whom honor is due, owing no man anything save love. What makes this so particularly strong, is, that the emperor then reigning was one of the worst and most cruel men that ever filled the throne of the Cæsars. And yet there is no reserve or qualification, nay the very reverse of an insinuation that, if the emperor ordered what was good, the Christians were to obey, but, that if not, they were free from their allegiance. The Christian is called to obey—not always Nero or Nebuchadnezzar, but *God* evermore. The consequence is, that this at once delivers from the very smallest real ground for charging a godly person with being a rebel.

I am aware that nothing will of necessity bar a Christian from an evil reputation. It is natural for the world to speak ill of one that belongs to Christ—to Him whom they crucified. But from all real ground for such an accusation this principle delivers the soul. Obedience to God remains untouched; but I am to obey "the powers that be" in whatever is consistent with obeying God, no matter how trying.

The light of these faithful Jews was far short of what the Christian ought to have now; they had only that revelation of God which was the portion of Israel. But faith always understands God: whether there is little light or much, it seeks and finds the guidance of God. And these men were in the exercise of a very simple faith. The emperor had put forth a decree that was inconsistent with the foundation of all truth—the one true God. Israel was called expressly to maintain that Jehovah was such, and not idols. Here was a king who had commanded them to fall down and worship an image. They dare not sin; they must obey God rather than man. It is nowhere said that we must ever disobey man. God must be obeyed—whatever the channel, God always. If I do a thing, ever so right in itself, on the mere ground that I have a right to disobey man under certain circumstances, I am doing the lesser of two evils. The principle for a Christian man is never to do evil at all. He may fail, as I do not deny; but I do not understand a man quietly settling down that he must accept any evil whatever. It is a heathenish idea. An idolater that had not the revealed light of God could know no better. Yet you will find Christian persons using the present confession of the condition of the Church as an excuse for persevering in known evil, and saying, Of two evils we must choose the lesser! But I maintain that, whatever

the difficulty may be, there is always the path of God for the godly to walk in. Why then do I find practical difficulty? Because I wish to spare myself. If I compound for even a little evil, the broad way of ease and honor lies open, but I sacrifice God and come under the power of Satan. It was just the advice that Peter gave our Lord when He spoke of being put to death. "Far be it from thee—pity thyself—Lord."

So with the Christian. By doing a little evil, by compromising the conscience, by avoiding the trial that obeying God always entails, no doubt a person may thus often avoid a good deal of the world's enmity, and gain its praise, because he does *well* to himself. But if the eye is single in this, God always must have His rights, always be owned in the soul as having the first place. If God is compromised by anything required of me, then I must obey God rather than man. Where this is held fast, the path is perfectly plain. There may be danger, possibly even death staring us in the face, as it was on this occasion. The king was incensed that these men should dare to say, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Not careful to answer him! And what were they careful for? It was a question that concerned God. Their care was to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." They were in the very spirit of that word of Christ before it was given. They had walked dutifully in the place the king had assigned them: there was no charge against them. But now there arose a question that deeply affected their faith, and they felt it. It was *God's* glory that had been interfered with, and they trusted in Him.

Accordingly they say, "If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery

furnace." How beautiful this is! In the presence of the king, who never thought of serving any but himself, and who saw none but himself to serve, they say, "Our God, whom we serve." They had served the king faithfully before, because they had ever served God: and they must serve God still, even if it had the appearance of not serving the king. But they have confidence in God. "He will deliver us out of thy hand, O king." This was not mere truth in the abstract; it was faith. "He will deliver us." But mark something better still. "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Even if God will not put forth His power to deliver us, we serve Himself: we will not serve the gods of this world. Oh, beloved reader, in what a place of dignity faith in the living God puts the man who walks in it. These men were at that moment the object of all the attention of the Babylonish empire. What was the image then? It was forgotten. Nebuchadnezzar himself was powerless in presence of his captives of Israel.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

QUES. 4.—"For the elects' sake, the days are shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22); is it the number of days that are shortened? Will the same 1260 days be carried out after Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jews?

ANS.—The number of days remains the same, 1260; otherwise the prophecy would not be fulfilled. But God prevents things running on as it would seem they must do. He interposes. Christ comes and delivers when Israel is in the midst of the trouble, and it is stopped with a strong hand. It is after all only for as hort time,—"*made short*" by divine love and pity.

F. W. G.

"COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST GIFTS."

(*Concluded.*)

BUT many who may read this will be apt to say: All this, however, does not apply to us. We refuse the distinction between clergy and laity; we recognize the oneness of the body of Christ; we believe that every member of the body has his place and gift from God, and is directly responsible to Him to exercise any gift given, unhindered by any control of man, save that of the common discipline which is to secure holiness among those gathered together. Well, if this be so, we ought to be ready to ask ourselves as to the practical results which will flow from a faith of this kind. It is as true of faith in any particular truth as of faith as to the whole that "without works it is dead, being alone." Now, what will be the practical effect of such belief in the body of Christ and our individual membership in it? Certainly the first result for us all, whether men or women, will be the apprehension of our responsibility to minister in the body according to the special nature of the gift entrusted to us, to learn our gift and to wait upon it; thus obtaining the full value and power of what we have, and that increase of it which will surely follow from its diligent use.

First then as to learning our gift. It is not meant by this that we shall necessarily ever learn to give a name to it. It is a mistake to suppose that it is necessary to do so in order to learn the way in which the Lord would use us in ministry to others. There is a word which is employed by the apostle, one might think, to cover as many of these nameless

gifts as possible, while at the same time to give them the necessary character,—the word, "helps." The spirit which is implied in this word is what is really wanted, a help. Who cannot help? How many of us can excuse ourselves on the plea that we are really unable to help in any wise? Doubtless what we may do in this way may seem somewhat of the very smallest. It is no loss to us, if this be so. Let us remember again the apostle's words that "much more those which are feeble are necessary." In the body of man there are great organs which, of course, cannot fail to make known their functions; but if we think, nevertheless, of the body as a whole, how many nameless parts there are which nevertheless, if they were missing, would be sadly wanted. God's way is not to concentrate attention upon ourselves. There is a danger in this which should scarcely need to be dwelt upon. The spirit of love is that of helpfulness, and if we have love enough we shall surely find some way of being useful, and that in a spiritual way, to those around us. As has been often said, we are free to evangelize without being evangelists; we are free to teach without being teachers; we are free to do without any pretension anything to which desire for souls may lead us; and from the lips of Him who said, "She hath done what she could" we shall not find rebuke. In fact, this is surely very great praise. How many of us could truly say, we have done what we could? It is grace in the Lord, no doubt, which speaks in such words as these, but then they are surely intended for the most ample encouragement to us. Love will be found here to have the truest wisdom in it, and it is impossible for us to have the spirit of helpfulness without learning, as we go on,

in what particular lines we find most ability to help and the blessing of God most upon us.

We can thus, without any very definite knowledge of our gift, yet wait upon the gift, which will be thus made known to us; at first no doubt very feebly manifested, in a way which a false humility would despise. But after all, it is God's working which counts for anything, and who can say how much His blessing may make the little that we have to be? Did we count upon our own ability, how great would be the mistake for any of us! On the other hand, a simple faith that counts upon God for all, conscious that He glorifies Himself in working by the smallest means, how much may it count upon Him for? If love is only real enough, it will brush away how many difficulties which, nevertheless, hinder, one may say, almost the mass of Christians, so that in the absence of any spiritual gift, they consecrate themselves, if one may say so, to material things! And thus while we heartily acknowledge that there is no such thing as a laity in Scripture, we may easily make of ourselves a laity in fact.

How often is the Spirit in us quenched thus at the very outset! Can we account in any other way for the feebleness manifested everywhere in the gatherings of the Lord's people, and for the small development of prominent gift so sadly lacking amongst those to whom God has given such ample means of furnishing for every good work? No doubt the first lack here is, nevertheless, that of clear understanding of the very truths most familiar and most fundamental. If we were to question ourselves as to our power to explain and set them forth to others,—still better, if we would actually seek to minister to others

in this way,—how often should we find (and be shocked to find) the vagueness in our apprehension of even such leading truths! But this vagueness must of necessity cause a corresponding lack in their power over us, and prevent that deep rooting of them in our souls which is so necessary in order that they should have or retain their proper hold upon us. How easily are Christians daunted by the forms of error that arise, so multiplied as they are in the present day and which present themselves with a positiveness of assertion, generally all the greater the deadlier the error in them may be.

I remember a well known brother, everywhere beloved and honored amongst us, saying to me once that he never considered that he had a truth properly for himself until he had written it down; and another well known teacher of a wholly different class has told us in print that, when he wanted to learn a thing, his way was to write a book about it! I suppose few of us ever give ourselves the trouble to try and put down in writing what we hold as truth with regard to any question, and the vital importance of truth for our souls makes little difference as to this. There are others, no doubt, who have written upon these matters, and much better than we can do ourselves. This is the clergy and laity principle at once. Why can we not content ourselves with simply taking their statements, so much better as they will be, than our own? But how do we know even thus, that they *are* better? That is, not that they are more learned, or more eloquent, or anything of that sort, but that they are truth stated in such a way as that one cannot amend it?

For this we must not be content simply to walk over the ground in their company. I have always found for myself that a companion on the road is by no means always a help to finding the road. If I set myself to find it without him, I found how little I knew about it, and thus it is not at all a question of the competence of a teacher. I have to get things for myself, however much I may use, as is right, all means available to doing so. As already said, the practical test is the best, and is that which God has provided for us. Let us try to help others with the truth, and we shall soon find how much we have got the truth for ourselves, and that is the great point. Moreover, the putting a thing to use is to confirm for ourselves whatever may have been our previous conviction of its value. How blessed to see the power of it in this way; in settling doubts, in giving the peace of conviction, and in ministering blessing in countless ways to others! Is anybody shut off from this? No one surely, except as we may please to shut ourselves off; and here is the only means for learning practically what our gift may be for helping others spiritually.

Here, no doubt, we touch the essential cause for there being so little development of gift in the assemblies, so little apprehension of gift everywhere amongst the people of God. How can I decide what gift I may have in teaching without ever having sought to teach? and feeble as may be these first attempts, they are to ourselves, if not to others, of the greatest value. How can we go a mile upon the road without ever having attempted to go a hundred yards upon it? People seem to imagine that the gifts of the Spirit of God are independent of man in such

a way that they require no diligence at least to discover them; and above all, there is little consciousness of how ability is reached rather with the heart than by the head, and that the state of soul is everywhere of the first importance if the Spirit of God is not to be quenched in His manifestation through us.

Then the power of this simple, practical, unofficial, private ministry, how great it is! As has been often said: when John proclaims, as it were, officially, how he saw the Spirit of God descend and abide on Christ, and saw, and bore witness that this was the Son of God,—nothing is said of effect upon the souls of others. When in the company of two disciples he looks upon Jesus as He walks, and says, as thinking out the musing of his heart: "Behold the Lamb of God!" the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. How much is open to us thus in the way of opportunity with others that we may come even habitually to let pass, and not be conscious of it! But our souls must be filled in order thus to pour themselves out spontaneously; and this can scarcely be except where the word of God is not merely read but meditated upon, followed out in thought. According to the Scripture type, the only clean animal for the Israelite was the ruminant. And here accuracy of knowledge must not be thought little of, because there may be a cold and critical accuracy to which the heart is wanting. Indistinctness of apprehension will not certainly help us to profit by the things of God; and it is hard to understand how those whose hearts are really set upon them can possibly refrain from seeking to possess themselves in the fullest way of every truth that God has given.

One cannot help realizing here the proneness of

women especially to constitute themselves as almost undeniably of right a class of laity: that is, of those who not only receive their views from others, but depend almost wholly upon others for them. Their sphere, they would very scripturally tell us, is not public ministry; but there is the misery, that *public* ministry should be counted so much the whole of ministry, and that what is even the larger and more important part of this should be hidden, as it were, behind it. One may boldly say, we could do far better without any public ministry whatever than without this kind of it upon which we are dwelling now. Where, as to-day, a reaction of a sort has come, and women have come to the front to claim for themselves their part in the ministry of the Word, how often do they confound the *publicity* with the *ministry* itself, as if the two were practically one thing! This publicity is, according to the teaching of the New Testament, precisely, I would not say so much *denied* to woman, (for that is not the right way of putting it,) but something which can only lead her away from fullest usefulness and blessing according to God's design. Is it the pulpit or the platform that is the thing to be coveted? or the blessing of souls which are on every hand inviting ministry to manifold need? And this last who will deny her? still more, who can shut her out from, when God has given her advantage over men themselves with regard to so many lines of usefulness? Among the poor, among the sick, among the children, who are to get from her the first and most valuable part of their education, among the homes therefore to which she has access in a way that men cannot possibly pretend to, God has given her opportunities of abun-

dant blessing, which none can deprive her of if she truly desires them.

But here again the conscious possession of the gift depends upon the furnishing. How great a mistake it would be for her to suppose that she at least has no call to enter deeply into truths and doctrines, or to have them clearly outlined and defined. She will have, like others, to meet the full current of the world's unbelief, energized by the power of Satan; which will certainly not be restrained by the fact that it is with a woman he is dealing. She, as all else, must have the armor of faith; she as all else, must know how to use "the sword of the Spirit, which is the saying of God." She is no non-combatant; her sex will not excuse her from such a battle-field; and for herself she will need, as fully as any, the "furnishing" of Scripture for every good work. Nor can any plead "incapacity," in whom the Spirit of God is dwelling,—that Spirit who is given us to lead us into all truth; whose power to do so and whose will cannot be doubted.

Thus, then, we have reached fully at last the apostle's exhortation to "covet earnestly the best gifts." We see, therefore, that there *are* things to "covet;" that God would lead us on beyond ourselves; beyond, that is, all that we find at the present moment. We see that, while it is true that God is sovereign in the communication of the gifts of His grace, yet at the same time these are not so fixed that we have simply to content ourselves with this and merely to use what God has already given us. Besides the fact that except we have the spirit of service we shall not even know the gift God may have given us, we are explicitly taught that He is ready to give us more if

only we have hearts that desire the blessing which is always in His mind. Thus the apostle distinctly says with regard to one who might have a "tongue," but not the power to interpret the tongue: "Let him that hath the tongue, pray that he may interpret." The interpretation is needed that the Church may receive edifying: here then is his warrant to pray for that which is for the edifying of the Church. If this be in our hearts, this desire for the blessing of that Church which Christ loves and for which He gave Himself,—if the longing for souls is with us, which is truly and confessedly the spirit of Christ,—then in proportion as all this is our motive in it, we are free to covet gifts beyond those that we are conscious of possessing—nay, gifts which yet we have not.

So especially with regard to prophesying. The apostle bids all he is addressing: "Covet to prophesy." And here is indeed something which in an eminent way, as is clear from his description of it, love will covet. "He that prophesieth," says the apostle, "speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort." How much need have we of such things amongst us! and here there is no restriction as to sex or in any other way. "If any man speak," urges the apostle Peter, "let him speak as oracles of God:" that is, as God's mouthpiece. God is seeking communication with His people. He has given them His word, but He would have them also ministered to by the voice of the living speaker,—the Word thus brought before and pressed upon souls according to their special need. To speak "as oracles of God" is not merely to speak according to the Scriptures, but to speak as under the immediate

control and guidance of God, as His mouthpiece. And here is that surely which is a very distinct characteristic of Christianity. Prophesying indeed existed long before this came. There were prophets throughout the Old Testament times, from Enoch even onwards, and this was always by the free gift of God, not a successional heritage, not a thing due to office, except as sometimes indeed God might control one who was in this position, to give out unwittingly that which in its meaning he was a stranger to. We remember here Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy (being the high priest that year) concerning the Lord's death (Jno. xi. 49-52). But prophecy in its proper power and blessing was the necessary effect of being with God after such a manner as to obtain from Him the communication of His thoughts, and was the word for the present condition, whatever this might be.

Prophesying is thus, in a peculiar way, characteristic of Christianity. It is what is implied by an opened sanctuary and access by the Spirit to God, and thus we can understand its value, not even merely for the souls of those to whom the Word was ministered, but as the testimony of one with God, with whom, therefore, the secret of the Lord is. How well we may covet to be amongst the number of those of whom Amos says (chap. iii. 7), "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." And what Moses in his day coveted for the people of God: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets; and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" is now so manifestly fulfilled as to the latter part of this, that we cannot but realize that it con-

tains the *privilege* of the former. We have only to read the passages regarding it in the first epistle to the Corinthians to see how thoroughly in the apostle's mind the power for this is what is above all things to be craved in the assembly, and what is open for all who covet it, to possess. Alas, it has almost sunk out of sight! a sad proof of where we are to-day. Only God Himself can arouse His people to the sense of what is lost in the disregard of it. But let us remember that it is not in the assembly only that such a gift is to be exercised, and that it is not simply men who are to enjoy such blessing. A heart thoroughly set upon the things of God, what shall one lack in whom God sees the reality of this? We have, so to speak, what the daughter of Caleb had, an inheritance which will produce an abundance beyond our power to estimate; but we need along with it what her south land needed, the living springs which will call forth the full capacity for production. The springs, moreover, are indeed ours; but nevertheless for the enjoyment of what is here we need a soul subject in all things to God; we need a heart that enters with longing desire into what on His part is God's desire for us. How much of wondrous value for our own souls, and for the souls of multitudes besides, lies in the unworked or little worked lands of our inheritance! The Lord give us, with hearts responsive to His own, to "covet earnestly the best gifts"!

F. W. G.

A SONG FOR THE HARPS ON THE CHRISTIAN PISGAH.

I.

SING, sing, happy heirs called on high to inherit
 Sweet heavenly hopes in yon heavenly home!
 Sing, sing of the Christ, of His cross, of His merit,
 His love, His near coming—sing, sing till He come!

Baptized in one body, one band in one Spirit,
 The bride of Christ's bosom and bone of His bone,
 Ye happy, ye honored ones, hearken and hear it—
 His blessings, His bliss, and His glory, your own!

On high, in your Head, ye are seated and hidden—
 Your secret pavilion His bosom above ;
 To enter the holy of holies are bidden
 In freedom and favor by Fatherly love!

And here, in the day of His humiliation,
 God's Spirit—since Pentecost present on earth—
 Resides in His people, in participation
 Now suffering scorn with the sons of new-birth!

A seal on each saint, each indwelling, enduing,
 The Spirit of promise and peace doth abide,
 A Pilgrim in pilgrims, in patience pursuing
 The passenger's path as the Power and the Guide!

II.

O Father, what fulness of favor hath found us,
 Begot us again who were guilty, undone,
 One body, in bonds of one Spirit, hath bound us—
 Begotten, then gathered together in one!

In grace hast Thou quickened and gathered and given
 'Th' assembly of Spirit-joined saints to Thy Son—
 His spouse, His beloved, whose bosom was riven
 That glory to God thro' His grief might be won!

Thy love in our hearts, by Thy Spirit Eternal,
 Thou sheddest abroad that for Christ they may burn,
 And ravish His heart with a rapture supernal—
 The fruit of His travail for which He doth yearn!

O Father, Thou givest Thy grace without measure—
 Thy life and Thy nature and Spirit have we;
 And willing and doing in us Thy good pleasure,
 Thy children Thou formest in likeness to Thee!

Thine image and features Thy favor dost fashion
 And frame in us, forming our fitness to show
 Affection for Jesus, reflecting Thy passion
 Of love in its perfect, its permanent flow!

Thou weavest Thy warp with the woof of our weak-
 ness:

Soon (Wisdom's skilled workmanship wondrously
 wrought

To morally mirror Thine image in meekness)
 A radiant bride to Thy Son shall be brought!

Then stir us, our God, with Thy love's tender story!

O Father, transform us with heavenly grace!

Yea, hallow our hearts in the hope of Christ's glory,
 And thrill us with longing to gaze on His face!

III.

O Jesus, Great Shepherd, as sheep Thou hast sought
 us,

And found us, and loved us, and bought us with
 blood—

Thro' billows of wrath in Thy bosom safe brought us
 From death unto life, and from Satan to God!

As Head and High-Priest Thou in heaven upholdest
 Thy people—God's presence their portion, their
 place;

While, reaching down arms of Thy love here, Thou
 foldest

Thy flock to Thy breast in Thy Spirit's embrace!

With hearts beating Godward with filial emotion,
 Blest Saviour, Thy saints Thou dost sweetly in-
 spire

To follow Thy footsteps in filial devotion,
 The glory of God as the goal of desire!

Here, robed in degree with Thy graces and beauty,
 As worshipping pilgrims we walk in Thy ways
 With gladness of love, taught to glorify duty,
 Our soul-depths outpouring the perfume of praise!

O Image of Majesty mirrored in meekness,
 To mirror Thy Manhood Thou makest us meet,
 Transforming, transfiguring frailty and weakness
 That in us Thy features Thy Father may greet!

Thou livest within us—O grace without measure!
 O glory divine in these vessels of earth!

Lord, bruise Thou the vase till its radiant Treasure
 Outshines in a blaze of Thy beauty and worth!

Yea, dwell in each heart, Lord, Thy love, in its
 sweetness,

Revealing Thy life in these caskets of clod,
 Till all the Church-bosom, indwelt in completeness,
 Is fragrantly filled with the Fulness of God!

F. A.

“THE soul is the dwelling place of the truth of God. The ear and the mind are but the gate and avenue; the soul is its home or dwelling place.”

“The *beauty* and the *joy* of the truth may have unduly occupied the outposts, filled the avenues and crowded the gates—but it is only in the soul that its reality can be known. And it is by *meditation* that the truth takes its journey along the avenue to its proper dwelling place.”

Andrew Miller.

Take heed what ye hear.—Mark iv. 24.

Take heed how ye hear.—Luke viii. 18.

THE MAN WITH A MESSAGE.

"Behold a man running alone. . . . If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth" (2 Sam. xviii. 24, 25).

DAVID'S throne seemed tottering to its fall. His own son, Absalom, whom he had treated with such clemency but a short time before, doing as unrepentant men will ever do when a time comes, had become his benefactor's worst enemy, and now had plotted and seemed on the eve of successfully carrying out a rebellion which would result in the overthrow of his father and placing himself upon the throne. David had fled from the city and had it not been for the mercy of God in turning the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness, would soon have been cut off. But, through God's goodness, a little time was allowed to intervene which gave him the opportunity of collecting his force of faithful followers to meet Absalom's army. David is not allowed to engage in the actual combat, and anxiously waits in the city for news of the battle. At last a runner is descried. "Behold a man running alone," and at once the king replies: "If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth." The fact of a man running alone made clear to the king that he must also be a messenger, and so it proved, with his message of victory for the king, and yet of sorrow to the father's heart.

But leaving the historical connection, may we not gather here a few thoughts as to message bearers in general and as to ourselves as messengers with tidings weightier far than Ahimaaz and Cushie brought to David? Two thoughts are suggested here,—
"running" and "alone." The first gives us the

thought of an object of sufficient importance to lead one to press on, and the second suggests that it is responsibility which, in a certain sense, can be shared by no others.

In a certain sense the whole Christian life is a race, as the apostle puts it in Phil. iii. "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark." Paul not only gives this as the normal attitude of a Christian, but as his own. He himself was the racer, "This one thing I do;" and while it includes, as we said, the whole Christian life, the whole course of which he could say later, "I have finished my course," yet in a very distinct sense it describes his course as a messenger, nor is the reason far to seek. In a very true sense our Christian message and our Christian course are identical. We are messengers because we are Christians, not in that sense in addition to it. The very fact of being Christians constitutes us messengers, and for that reason that which describes our Christian course would also describe our course as messengers. The passage in Philippians gave Paul's own experience, but surely each of us in our measure must correspond with him who is in a very marked way the sample sinner and the sample saved man, and the sample servant. Hear him as he speaks to the elders of the Ephesian assembly, nearing now the close of that which had been a large chapter in his service: "Now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall there befall me, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto

myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Here his course, which will end only with his life, is identified with that ministry which is described in one word, "to testify the gospel of the grace of God." So Paul was a messenger, and, as such, a racer with a course prescribed, as well as with a definite message, and we in our measure are to follow him.

Then, too, the messenger runs *alone*. Messengers do not run in companies. The message is entrusted to each individual and with him is the responsibility for its swift and sure deliverance. To run in companies would be to distract, to cause one to lag and to lose that very intentness which makes the messenger. Here again Paul is our example. In Galatians, where he is recounting what the grace of God has done for him, we find him very remarkably identified with his message. Paul the saved man is Paul the apostle too, and what he emphasizes there is that he must be alone as to the message which he has received. "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus." It was not that he despised those who were apostles before him, nor that he did not feel the need of fellowship with them, but so far as his message was concerned, he had received it directly from God. It was by the revelation of God's Son in him. Christ who appeared to him on the way to Damascus in the excellent glory, also shone into his

dark heart and there gave him not merely the peace and the joy of his own salvation, but that which must be ever after a message that he should preach to perishing men. And so he could not confer with flesh and blood. He could not ask human permission or authorization for delivering a message like that. He must go alone, as it were, and run with swift and beautiful feet to bring good tidings of peace to many a weary heart.

Let us look back a moment now. What have we said that the messenger is? One who runs and one who runs alone. Are we not in danger of distorting God's truth, of giving a wrong idea? Is not man naturally a social being? Does he not crave intercourse with his fellows? And above all, are not Christian men social? Are we not, by virtue of the Spirit's baptism, united not only to Christ in glory, but to one another, to receive all the aid which comes from the mutual ministry of the members to one another? Undoubtedly this is so, and its importance cannot be overestimated. See a Christian who despises fellowship with his brethren and you will see one who will soon pine and wither. See one who is indifferent to the responsibilities which he owes to his brethren and you will see one who becomes selfish and hardened until fruit is a thing of the past.

We are made for one another, made to have sweetest intercourse together, and yet that does not affect what we have been saying, as to messengers for God in the world, those who must run and run alone. Before we can have to do with one another we must always have to do with God. This, of course, applies first of all to our salvation. We cannot be saved in companies. The children cannot be saved merely

because the parents are. Each must be saved individually, and so all through our Christian course, there is ever that hidden life which has to do with God alone and into which the nearest and dearest of the Lord's people cannot intrude. Nor will this be found at all to interfere with the social side of Christian life. It will fit us for ministering one to another that which we have received. As the apostle puts it in the second chapter of Colossians, it is by holding the Head that all the body has nourishment ministered to it by the joints and bands and is knit together with the increase of God. There must be thus Christ pre-eminent, Christ alone enthroned in the heart, the Object of faith. There must be secret prayer, secret meditation, secret communion with God and pondering over His word as though there were not another of our kind in all the world, before we can be truly fitted to enjoy fellowship or to minister help to our brethren.

Let us then, bearing in mind that these two characteristics are to mark us as messengers, look very simply at our message and the manner of our bringing it to others. That, of course, reminds us that if we are message bearers there must be a message. Ahimaaz was hindered because, as Joab said, he had no tidings ready. Surely if we had no tidings ready, it would be vain for us to run or to run alone. But have we not a message? As we said before, the very fact of our knowledge of the grace of God, as the apostle says, having Christ revealed in us, surely is the message. Might we not sum it all up in one word, that Christ Himself is the message?—the gospel of salvation, precious emancipating truths connected with Christ's death, His resurrec-

tion, His place in glory for us and His intercession there—who can limit all the fulness of divine truth that has its centre and its meaning in Him? Yes, Christ is our message, and as He was sent by the Father into the world, and His message, we might say, was the Father, so He tells us He has sent us into the world, and our message is Christ. How blessed it is to look at it in this way! Our message is not different from our Saviour, from Him who is our life, in whose communion and in the sunshine of whose presence we are to pass our time. And how blessed it is to know that that which will make us messengers is simply the enjoyment of the fullest fellowship with Him who is our message!

Need we wonder, need we go further to ask why it is that we are such feeble messengers, why it is that our course is so flagging and so uneven, and why we sometimes seek a companionship which is the reverse of that running alone which is the mark of the true messenger? If Christ be not enjoyed, if His love is not fresh in our own souls, it is utterly impossible for us to carry to others what we are not enjoying ourselves. That is the secret of being a messenger. Be filled with Christ. Let Him, as the apostle puts it, dwell in our hearts by faith; not merely be the Object of faith but the One who abides, who has His home in hearts filled and satisfied with Himself, and there will be small difficulty about either running or walking alone. We will not miss the company which now we crave. We will be intent upon our message and yet scarce conscious of being messengers, but rather conscious only of the Lord's presence and of His sufficiency for our souls. That sums it all up. If we grasp that truth that

Christ is our message, we have said all, and yet it may be well just in a very simple way to divide our message, to look at it in various ways.

There is, first of all the message of testimony. This closely connects with what we have been saying. Testimony is declaring the truth, bearing witness, and every believer is a witness bearer,—not an evangelist, or teacher with a special and marked gift; in fact, these may be comparatively few, but every one of us has a distinct message of testimony, and that testimony is the life, the fruit of the grace of God received in the heart and showing itself in the life. How beautiful it is when the world sees a man running alone! It can say, "There are tidings in his mouth." Such a man preaches as he walks, in his daily business, in his home, with his acquaintances. They are conscious there is a purpose of heart in him suggested by the running, as there is a separation in him suggested by his being alone. He is not a recluse. He is not indifferent to the beauty that is about him in this world. He is not careless or thoughtless as to the claims of friendship or neighbors, and yet there is a spiritual isolation of soul which makes itself felt, and the tidings that it brings are unequivocal. People know a heavenly man without his telling them that he is heavenly. They know a man who has something to tell, without his lips moving. They know it in his life, and surely we may pray one for another and crave one for another that we may be message bearers in our daily life in such a way that there shall be no uncertainty in our testimony. We need only let conscience do its work to remind us how far short and in how many ways we have failed in our testimony, some of us in one way

and some of us in many ways. We have all need to be patient with one another and to pray for and help one another, but we must not be indifferent to one another as if it were a matter of no importance. Are we witness bearers? Is Christ so real in our souls, is the word of God that upon which we live, that the world knows that we are different from itself? Solemn and searching question for many of us! Let it search our hearts indeed, and if we have lagged and if our isolation has been lost, let us go to Him who is just as ready to-day as He was when first He entrusted us with a message, to restore its brightness and its weight and to send us speeding on our way, witnesses for Christ.

And then we are ready for the gospel testimony in a more specific way. How is the world ever to hear the gospel? one sometimes wonders, as we look about us, the teeming millions ever increasing. The mass of humanity! How are they ever to hear the gospel? The pulpits can only at best reach a few. The press, alas, has other gospels than that of the grace of God. How is the world to hear the gospel?—not necessarily the heathen world, but the world about us, in our places of abode. Surely we all are to be messengers with the gospel, and here again these same two truths of "running" and "alone" are to be our guide. If we are to be messengers with the gospel, there must be that earnestness of purpose, that love of souls suggested in the running, and that separation from the world in heart suggested in the word "alone." What is needed to-day is not more gospel preachers in the ordinary sense of the word, first of all. There would be abundance of these, were all else right. But what is needed to-day is the gospel

spirit in every man and woman who has been saved, every one realizing that he has a message to people, he knows not how often and how soon. It may be to deliver to the man he meets on the street and who asks his way, or in the store or wherever business may call. Great crowds are not necessarily the sign of a wonderful gospel work. A true revival of the gospel amongst the people of God would be shown by carrying the gospel wherever they went, and how soon the world would hear of it! Men running! Oh, as we think of the value of souls do we not need to run? As we think of the shortness of time, of the nearness of eternity, of the speedy close of the day of grace, do we not need to run? Do we not need to press after men with this message of life and peace? *They* are running. Ah, in quite an opposite direction,—running after position, wealth, power, honor, pleasure; running they know not whither nor how soon their feet may lead them over the precipice into gloom and darkness forever. If they run, shall not we? And shall we not be so absorbed, shall we not put such a value upon our message that we shall be alone with God about it, alone in our own souls, seeking not to see how faithfully our brother delivers his message, nor to imitate him in his manner or method of service, but each of us for ourselves and for God, bearing witness?

And then again we are messengers to the people of God. How varied is that message! "A word spoken in due season, how good is it;" and how many seasonable words need to be spoken! Hearts hungry for that which the word of God alone can give! Poor, dear wanderers away from the Lord to whom we might be sent with a message of recovery!

Saints tempted to go astray to whom we might give a word of warning! How varied is the message to our brethren with which we are entrusted! What mutual help, what mutual edification there would be if we realized our privilege and our responsibility more in this regard! How many closed lips there are amongst the saints of God! We speak not of the meetings of saints, but how many closed lips as we meet together; free enough it may be, to speak of the things of this world or of matters of temporal interest, but how slow to speak of that which should be indeed a message in our heart, God's word of comfort, of help, of cheer, or warning if need be, to His own dear children. There is much to overcome, natural diffidence on both sides, the fear of man, the fear of being thought obtrusive, and surely we need discretion in all this; but that brings us back again to the fact that we must be runners if we are to have a message for our brethren, and that we must be running alone with God if we are to have that independence of soul which will enable us to speak to a brother, irrespective of how he may receive it. All this is so simple that we need only to mention it to suggest that which it is hoped will be a fruitful and profitable line of thought with many of us.

We have already answered our next question,—who are the messengers whom God would send? And yet it may be well here again just to classify, in a simple way and see how wide-reaching God's thought as to it is. First of all, there is the individual saint. As we have been saying, no man was ever saved without being entrusted with the message that saved him; and so every individual, no matter how feeble,—and the feebler the better if it but casts

him upon Christ,—is a messenger for the Lord. We must be careful to carry our message in the way He would have us. We must not run along another's course. We must not be imitators, and hence the importance of running alone, we are messengers individually, each of us.

Then again, and in apparent contradiction to what we have been saying, the assembly of the people of God as a whole is a messenger for Him. Corporate unity here individualizes all. We are one in a certain sense, one soul, one mind, one heart. As the apostle says, we are to mind the same things and to speak the same things, so that which marks the individual is also to mark the fellowship of individuals. The Spirit of God produces one testimony, and the people of God as united together form a unit, and as such, a messenger, we might say, with a distinct, specific message. Of course, that message includes in a certain sense all that of which we have been speaking, but which must necessarily refer more particularly to that which is distinctive and characteristic of a company of the people of God. To what then should a company of the people of God bear witness? If they are divinely gathered, according to His word, and in the energy of the Spirit of God, their witness must surely be a witness to the gathering power of the Spirit of God according to His word. It will include then all that we understand by corporate testimony. It will be an exhibition, feeble indeed, and with many a blemish, but still an exhibition of what is God's mind for His people as united together. There will be that which is distinctive in its message; the truth of the Church of God, to the blessed fact of the indwelling of the Spirit amongst the people of God, to the

responsibility of every Christian to maintain a testimony with his brethren to these truths.

And here again the two characteristics of the messenger will mark the assembly as they do the individual. There will be that which answers to the running, an intense earnestness, a divine purpose of heart, not a foolish zeal, but on the other hand, not a careless indifference to the responsibility of all God's people to hearken to this message. If its importance fills our own hearts, above all, if we see it linked as it should be, with Christ Himself, so that Christ Himself becomes our message corporately, as He should be our message individually, shall we not run? Shall we not as a company of the people of God press forward and not swerve from side to side, nor drift carelessly and aimlessly until the world sweeps us away from true scriptural moorings? How important all this is! Then, too, need we more than mention that this running must be alone? Whatever constitutes our message isolates us from those to whom the message is brought who have not yet received it. If we have a message to other Christians, for instance, which they have not yet heard, can they hear it, can they understand it, except as there is, not that Pharisaic "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou," but that true Nazarite separation unto Christ that bears its witness and cannot fail to be understood?

Passing back again to that which is more individual, and yet which is intensely important, there is the family message bearing. "He setteth the solitary in families," and in the government of God, He has never removed from the family a responsibility to bear a distinct witness for Himself. A Chris-

tian home! who can overestimate its influence? Who can overestimate the power of a family testimony to the truth of God? Here all, undoubtedly, are witness bearers if each is in his proper place,—the parents as head, bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, keeping them separate from an ungodly and pleasure seeking world, seeking to show that there is enough in Christ and in the things of God to give pleasure as well as salvation. What a testimony all this is in the world! And if there is to be this testimony, must we not have the earnest running and the measure of lonely separation from what is not according to this? Must there not be deep exercise, a strong, kind hand on the one side, and distinct refusal on the other to be mingled with that which is, alas, only too common among the professed people of God, until the line of separation between the Christian and the world is well nigh obliterated? Let us, then, be witness bearers, messengers as families of Christians, and in this threefold way, as individuals, as members of the assembly of God and as Christian households, let us both run and be separate from all that would hinder our bearing a clear and unequivocal message to the world that perishes without it.

We spoke at the beginning of Paul as a racer. Let us return to that thought, not now in connection with the witness bearing, which surely he ever faithfully did, but with the bright and happy goal in view. Is Christ before the heart, is Christ before the eye of faith as "the prize of the calling on high"? Are we looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven? Ah, that makes racers and that makes witness bearers, and how good it is to

think that our earthly course here of witness bearing will end in the bright and happy meeting with Him who has sent us on our errand and who waits now to receive us to Himself, and says to encourage us, if our steps should falter, "Surely, I come quickly."

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters."

S. R.

MY WEB OF LIFE.

NO chance has wrought this ill to me;
'Tis God's sweet will, so let it be;
He seeth what I cannot see.

There is a need be for each pain,
And He will make it one day plain,
That earthly loss is heavenly gain.

Like as a piece of tapestry,
Viewed from the back, appears to be
Nought but threads tangled hopelessly:

But in the front a picture fair
Rewards the worker for his care,
Proving his skill and patience rare.

Thou art the Workman, I the frame.
Lord, for the glory of Thy name,
Perfect Thine image on the same!

M. F.