

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

Household of Faith.

Vol. XX.

NEW YORK :
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT,
63 Fourth Avenue,
1902.

PRINTED AT
THE BIBLE TRUTH PRESS, 33 FOURTH AVENUE,
NEW YORK.

CONTENTS.

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| A Misapprehension..... | 292 |
| A Mystery Explained..... | 285 |
| Asher (the happy one)..... | 20 |
| A Solemn Record..... | 53 |
| "At Home with the Lord,"..... | 197 |
| Brought to God..... | 276 |
| "By the Merces of God"..... | 50 |
| Characters of God linked with the Path of Faith..... | 317 |
| Contentment..... | 257 |
| Faith in Christ has the Benefit of His Work.—Every Believer is blest with all Spiritual Blessings in Christ. | 120 |
| Faith, or Circumstances?..... | 326 |
| Favored Children..... | 94 |
| Fragments..... 19, 61, 135, 196, 214, 224, 311, 340 | 340 |
| "He knoweth them that trust in Him"..... | 141 |
| "I am but a Little Child"..... | 204 |
| Inquiring, and not Inquiring of the Lord..... | 313 |
| Insurance or Dependence, Which?..... | 205 |
| Justification by Faith as seen in its Fruits..... | 180 |
| King Saul: The man after the flesh.— | |
| Chap. III.—God's care for His own honor... 2, 29, 57, 87 | 87 |
| Chap. IV.—God's mercy to His humbled people... 89, 113 | 113 |
| Chap. V.—The People's desire for a king..... | 147 |
| Chap. VI.—The Call of the king..... | 169 |
| Lessons from the Divine Order in Creation..... | 106 |
| Lord of the Dead and Living..... | 103 |
| "Not a Dog shall move his Tongue,"..... | 69 |
| "One Another"..... | 126 |
| Our Standing and the Judgment-Seal..... | 266 |
| Perfection as to the State of the Conscience..... | 185 |
| Poetry:— | |
| "Behold, I Come Quickly"..... | 312 |
| Exercise..... | 265 |
| His Clouds..... | 315 |
| Mine..... | 39 |

Poetry:—(*continued.*)

| | |
|---|----------|
| The Deep Things of God | 1 |
| The History of the World..... | 184 |
| The Master, and the Lesson | 85 |
| "They that feared the Lord"..... | 159 |
| This is not Death | 226 |
| "Thou whom my soul loveth." | 296 |
| "We Look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.. | 125 |
| Portion for the Month, 26, 54, 81, 108, 136. 166, 191, 222, 254, 283, 381 | |
| "Quietness and Assurance Forever"..... | 261 |
| "Remember your Guides;" A memorial of the ministry of F. W. Grant | 227 |
| Scripture, and its Part in Education:— | |
| I. What Scripture is, and What Education Is. | 41 |
| II. The Qualifications for the School of God | 62, 100 |
| "Surely, I come quickly" | 290 |
| The Attractive Power of the Cross of Christ..... | 10 |
| The Citadel of Faith..... | 278 |
| The Danger of Slighting Baptism | 307 |
| The Earnest, the Anointing, the Sealing, the Establish- ing of and by the Spirit of God..... | 177 |
| The Flesh Cut Off | 297 |
| The Hand of God with His suffering People, as illustra- ted at the Time of the Reformation. I. & II..... | 160, 215 |
| The Lord of His People | 14 |
| The Magnifying Nerves..... | 199 |
| The Point of Contact between Christ, in His varied glo- ries, and the soul..... | 72 |
| The Spirit—the Power for Ministry, as for Worship.... | 187 |
| The Survival of the Fittest | 302 |
| The Unequal Yoke..... | 208 |
| Till he was Strong..... | 96 |
| "Too Hard for Me" | 34 |
| Two Great Lives and their End..... | 212 |
| What God Listens to | 25 |
| "What mean Ye by this Service? | 189 |

THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD.

DEEP, deep as the streams that flowed
 O'er the bended head of the Son of God;
 As the fathomless deep into which broke down
 The long descent, where at last alone—
 Alone in His love with our need, must be
 The goal of His agony.

Soul, hast thou heard in thine own distress
 The surge of that midnight sea?
 When first to the straining ear came back
 The voice of One who was there for thee?
 And thou heardest nought but the strife of the sea;—
 Nought but the strife of the swollen sea,
 And the Son of God in His agony!

The brooding Spirit is over the flood;
 In human weakness power of God:
 Laid, the eternal new foundation
 Of final, fore-ordained creation,
 Where the abundant streams arise
 That water God's own Paradise.

Deep in the heart of God the spring
 (Drink, O beloved, abundantly!)
 Whence, *all the fulness minist'ring*,
 Its glad evangel greeteth thee:
 Light out of darkness, ever to be!
 Deep to deep calleth, "No more sea!"

Drink, O beloved, abundantly!
 'Tis the voice of a deep that calleth thee!
 Bright with the brightness of His face,
 Thy Christ the glory of His grace,
 Filled with His fulness, thus to be
 Witness to Him eternally—
 This is the portion of the blest,
 Where the eyes of the Lord forever rest,
 In realms no mortal foot hath trod,
 Yet the Spirit searcheth the deeps of God

Scant not the grace that calleth thee!
 Nor limit the Hand that enricheth thee!
 Nor turn from the blessed Voice that still
 Calls from the Glory as from the Sea,
 "Come unto Me," and ever, "to Me!"—
 The soul that is yet unfilled to fill
 With the perennial joy that He
 Giveth, and only He.

O heart that the heart of God hath formed!
 Whose measure but He can fill,
 Deep unto deep is calling now;
 Know thou His voice and will.
 He for His love hath fashioned thee!
 Rise up, then, to thy destiny!
 No princely beggar at this world's gate
 For the dole of its penury,
 Throw aside the shame of thy low estate!
 "Arise; for He calleth thee!"

F. W. G.

KING SAUL :
 THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter iii.

GOD'S CARE FOR HIS OWN HONOR.

(1 Sam. v., vi.)

(Continued from February, 1901.)

GOD'S judgment is not confined to the overthrow of Dagon; He will touch not merely the idolatry of the people, but their prosperity and lives as well. As He had previously in Egypt not only poured out His plagues upon the people, but upon their sources of livelihood, so He does here. His hand was laid heavily upon them and He smote them with emerods, a plague similar, probably, to the boils of Egypt and to what is now known as the

Bubonic plague, repulsive and deadly in its effects. He had said: "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment" (Ex. xii. 12), making the infliction so sweeping that neither people nor gods could ever again be pointed to as having been immune. So He would do in the land of the Philistines, no less effectually, if on a smaller scale, stopping every possible opportunity for unbelief to lift its head again.

And do we not see mercy in all this? Had Dagon merely been overthrown, the unbelief of the people and their half pity for their god would have found some ready excuse which would have enabled them to patch up their pride and their wounded god at the same time and go on with the old idolatry; but if the judgment affects their property as well, and if the little mice, so contemptibly insignificant, can yet ravage their fields so as to rob them of the staff of life, they are forced to acknowledge here a hand whose weight they begin to feel and from under whose chastening they cannot escape. And when the blow comes still nearer and the stroke of God is felt upon their own bodies, with the dead all about them, surely they must be compelled to bow and own the rod.

So God's judgments are designed,—if there be the least vestige of submission to Him, the least desire to turn from wickedness to Himself,—to break down the pride and unbelief of the heart. This is the effect of all chastening upon those who are properly exercised thereby: "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" God's people from the beginning have been acquainted with the rod, and how many have had occasion to bless God infinitely for the

overthrow of idols which they had set up, the loss of property, of health, yea even of this life itself! May we not all say: "I know, Lord, that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted," and add: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word"?

So God was not merely vindicating His own honor, but had they only known it, was speaking in no uncertain way, in mercy, to the godless nation among whom He had permitted His glory to be brought. What an opportunity indeed for repentance; we might almost say what a necessity for it. And yet, alas, it was unavailed of; showing how hopelessly and permanently alienated from any desire toward Himself were the Philistines, who, like the other nations cast out by Joshua, had filled up the measure of that iniquity which, in the days of Abraham, God in His patience had declared not yet full, and whom indeed it would be a mercy to sweep from the land.

And as we look at the world about us, under both the goodness and the severity of God, receiving His blessings, and experiencing the weight of His hand in providential dealings, do we not see how all this is calculated both to lead man to think of God and to repentance? Will it not be a weighty item in that awful account which the world must one day face? Particularly is this true in Christendom, where the light of revelation and the gospel of God's grace alike serve to illumine all that is darkest in His providence. Men will be without excuse. The very plea that they sometimes make, that for one who has had so much suffering in this life there must surely be a relief in the life to come, will but give added

solemnity to the awful doom. If they had suffering in this life—trial, privation, bereavement, sickness, what effect did it have upon them? Did it bring them to see the vanity of earthly things, the uncertainty of life, the power of God, and above all their own sin before Him? Did it drive them to Christ, if they would not be wooed and drawn by the love of God? Oh, what an awful reckoning for the world! Woe to those indeed upon whom neither the love and mercy of God, nor the smiting of His hand have any effect!

At least, however, His own honor and His own goodness are vindicated. Men will not be able to say that God did not make His presence manifested. They will not be able to say that the sun of prosperity shone so uninterruptedly that they were never forced to think of eternal things. God's cup indeed is "full of mixture," and the mercy and the judgment alike vindicate His ways and show that deep desire of His heart, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Such lessons, surely, we are warranted in gathering from this judgment upon the Philistines, though undoubtedly the main lesson was for His redeemed people. To bring upon them a deeper sense of their own unfaithfulness, and to show the power and holiness of God unchanged, were the primary objects.

What Israelite, as he looked back at the defeat at Ebenezer (chap. iv. 1), with the ark carried off in triumph by the Philistines, and then at prostrate Dagon and the plagues upon the Philistines, could fail to learn the lesson so plainly taught? Must he not say, "'Our God is holy'—He will not leave His honor to the unclean hands of wicked priests or an

ungodly nation. But that which we could not care for, He still maintains”?

But how touching it is to think of the desires of our blessed God as manifested in all this judgment on the Philistines! He dwells amid the praises of His people. He cannot dwell in a strange land. His heart is toward them, though in faithfulness He may have had to turn from them; and all that went on in Philistia but showed that divine restlessness of love which could not be at peace until it reposed again in the bosom of His redeemed ones. What love we see here! Veiled it may be, but surely not to faith. He will go back to the land from whence He has been driven by the faithlessness of His people, and not by the power of their enemies. He will bestir Himself to return to them if indeed there is a heart to receive Him, but in that divine equipoise of all His attributes His love must not outrun His holiness. Hence the object lesson before the eyes of all.

The nature of these plagues, no doubt, is typical here, as in the similar circumstances in Egypt. The emerods or tumors suggest the outward manifestation of a corruption which had long existed within, and which needed but the opportunity to display itself in all its hideous vileness. How solemnly true it is that to “receive the things done in the body” will be in a very real sense the essence of retribution! “Let him alone” is the most awful sentence that can be pronounced against any, and to allow the hell that is shut up in the heart of every unsaved man to express itself is an awful foretaste of that eternal doom where the knowledge of one’s self means the knowledge of sin. True indeed it is that there will

be the infliction of wrath also, but will not this be felt in the reaping of what has been sown? "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Permanence of character—solemn and awful thought for those who are away from God! The world little realizes, or makes itself easily forget, that beneath the fair exterior of a life no worse than that of most, there is hidden the possibility for every form of sin. It is out of the heart that "proceed evil thoughts, murders, blasphemies," and all the rest. So God was merely letting the wickedness of the wicked be manifest.

So, too, with the mice, as we said, small and contemptible in themselves; who would have thought that those fields of golden grain, with their abundant store, could be devoured by these trifles? So, to-day, in the world, men despise the trifles as they call them, which one day will eat out all the gladness and peace of life. Socialism, anarchy, various forms of infidelity, disobedience to parents, restiveness under restraint, pride, self-sufficiency—these things are either looked at with toleration, or, if characterized aright, as being so exceptional that there is no danger from them. And yet the book of Revelation traces all these things to the heading up of iniquity. The lawless one is but the embodiment of that lawlessness which even now is working in the children of unbelief. The fearful plagues recorded in that last book of prophecy are but the full development of the little mice, as we might call them, which are even now gnawing out the vitals of society and present order. Once let the powers of evil be turned loose, let the restraining hand of Him who "letteth" be lifted, and He (the Spirit in the Church) be taken

away—as will soon come to pass at the coming of the Lord—and the ravages of evil fittingly described as famine and pestilence will show what the world may expect when left to itself. Would to God it had a voice for it now in this the day of His patience!

These inflictions appall the men of Ashdod where the ark had first been brought, and like men in similar case, they try to get rid of the cause, not by repentance, but by putting, as it were, God far off from them. If the load grows too heavy for one shoulder, it will be transferred to the other and then to the arms. It does not become so intolerable that they are prostrated before the God of Israel as yet; still less does it have the effect of bringing them to a sense of their true condition. They will get rid of the trouble by getting rid of the ark, and so it is sent on to Gath and from Gath to Ekron, and thus through all the cities of the Philistines.

The same story is repeated everywhere. Men cannot so easily get rid of their chastening, and to shift the burden of an uneasy conscience will not remove the certainty of judgment. This passage of the ark from one city to the other of the Philistines is again a witness of the mercy and of the holiness of God. He will, as it were, knock at the door of each place, even as He did in Sodom, ere judgment fell finally, to see if there would be any that feared Him. And as He passes from one place to the other, we may well believe that there was no response save that of terror, no turning to Himself.

But what a triumphant procession for this ark it was! Even as when Paul passed from one heathen city to another, where Jewish hatred and Gentile scorn vied with each other in heaping reproaches

upon him, he could say: "Thanks be to God who always leadeth us in triumph" (as the original has it) "in Christ." Whether it were the stones at Lystra, or the prison at Philippi, or the mockery at Corinth and Athens, faith could see the triumphant witness of the glory of God brought face to face with those people. Even as our Lord, when He sent His disciples through the various cities of Israel, foreseeing their rejection in many places and telling them that they were to shake off the very dust of their feet from those cities where they were not received, added: "Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." So here, the ark of God makes its majestic progress from city to city, and prostrate forms of men, and devastated garners bear witness to its progress. "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth."

At last, desperation drives the lords of the Philistines to a conference in which they decide that what they thought was a victory over Jehovah was but a defeat for themselves; a victory too dearly bought to be longer endured, and they take the world's way (alas, the only way the world will take) of finding relief. They will get rid of God, even as the men of Decapolis besought our Lord to depart out of their coasts, though before their very eyes was the witness of His love and power in setting free the poor demoniac. Yes, the world will try to get rid of God. It may apparently succeed for a season, until the final day.

They decide to return the ark to the land of Israel: "Send away the ark of the God of Israel and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not and our

people; for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there."

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

THE ATTRACTIVE POWER OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 22).

THESE words of our Lord were uttered after His last journey to Jerusalem, and at the close of His triumphant entry into that city which was so soon to echo with the cries of, "Away with Him; away with Him; crucify Him!" There is a great stir amongst the people. His own disciples, their fears for the time removed, boldly avowed their allegiance, and vied with one another in paying special honors to Him who made His meek yet triumphant entry into the city according to the prophet.

The Gentiles, too, seemed to respond. There were certain Greeks at the feast who approached the disciples with a view to being introduced into the presence of Him who apparently was so soon to take His great power and reign, to be recognized as Son of David and King of Israel. "Sir, we would see Jesus," they say, and the disciples, short-sighted as usual, were, no doubt, delighted at the thought of this special and marked honor to be paid to their blessed Master. But how different were our Lord's thoughts from even those of devotion to Himself! Well did He know that neither Jew nor Greek could be truly drawn to Him by any manifestation of external power. It was not enough to have the ac-

claim of the populace. There must be a deeper work if there would be true fruit for God, and so He gives His answer, unsatisfactory indeed to nature, and enigmatic even to faith, save where intelligent: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." There was only one way in which He could truly have fruit for His Father's and His own joy. He, the true Corn of wheat, must enter into death, and in resurrection alone could He have that clustering about Him of a company of redeemed people whose life was derived from Himself, who would be the fruitage of that sowing.

And so he goes on without hesitation to speak of the path of suffering and anguish which was before Him. His soul was troubled, the hour had come which had cast its dark shadow upon His whole previous life; and yet as He says, it was the hour for which He had come into the world. Should He ask now to be spared from it, that the cup might be removed? Nay, rather, He will ask, as He had ever said, that the Father's glory alone be maintained. God responds from heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

But how incapable of understanding is the heart of the natural man! Some thought that this voice from heaven was nothing more than thunder, and others that perhaps an angel had spoken to the Lord. None realized that this was a divine witness for their sakes, that they might be induced to give up their indifference to Christ and bow the heart to Him.

But all this indifference and failure to understand but emphasizes the absolute necessity of that cross to which He was so patiently going. It was there

alone that the prince of the world could be judged and cast out; and if, on the one hand, the world would there receive its judgment, on the other, too, there would be an attraction furnished which would draw weary and heavy laden souls from wherever they might be. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Blessed Jesus, how true it is that not even that glory, not even visible or audible manifestations of the presence and approval of God could effectually draw sinners to Thee! Thou must be lifted up, rejected by the earth, refused, as it were, by heaven, lifted up between earth and heaven, and there in the anguish of Thine atoning death, Thou didst furnish the point of attraction where the heart of God meets the guiltiest sinner and gives peace and blessing forevermore.

How we, dear fellow believer, have been drawn to our Lord by this wondrous Cross! We were not driven. No law could drive; no mere fear could impel truly and intelligently to rest upon Christ; but there, when we saw that love in all its immeasurable fulness, when we saw the provision made by a righteous God for the guiltiest and most defiled soul, we were drawn to the arms of One to whom we should give rest and delight, as He gave us rest and peace.

"I will draw all men unto Me!" What a company have been drawn of all classes, from the highest and most self-righteous of men, who could say that as touching the law they were blameless, to the most degraded and sinful! Here, Paul finds his place along side of her of Sychar, and the royal David, and Peter with his denial, and the woman who was a sinner—all find one powerful and effectual attraction to the same blessed bosom of love.

Nor has the Cross lost its power, nor can it ever lose it. In this day of man's complacency it still remains the same. It is that which we are to confess, concerning which we are to bear witness. In all our private testimony, in all our public preaching, it is to be the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. That will draw;—it will draw men from their counting-houses and sinners from their sins. It is the only thing that will draw. And how blessed it is to think that it is because of that Cross, our Lord Jesus—as He comes from glory to take His redeemed home to Himself—will attract them from earth! Could anything hold us here when we hear that glad shout from the sky? Are we not, indeed, as we think of it, in haste to be gone to Him whose heart longs to have us there? How true it is that He draws unto Himself!

Would that we might say a word to touch the heart of the young Christian entering upon the life down here, and, forgetting that there is nothing in earth that can truly satisfy, is often sorely tempted to turn aside into devious ways. Oh, let Christ so attract the soul by His cross, that that which is the badge of *His* rejection be the badge of *our* rejection. Let it be more than that. Let it be the attraction which allures us out of the world, away from its thoughts, its purposes, its desires—away from any unhallowed association which would stain our white garments. Let the cross of our Lord Jesus do its holy work, and we will indeed be a people for Himself.

"O, draw me, Saviour, after Thee,
That I may run and never tire."

THE LORD OF HIS PEOPLE.

Matt. viii. 18-27.

THE gospel narratives appeal very strongly to the heart and affections, telling us, as they do in such a simple way, of the life of Him whose love has won our poor love for Himself. His meekness, gentleness, love and grace all unite with His every act in a harmony of moral glories. Jonathan of old, his soul knit to the soul of David, and his love manifesting itself in the stripping off of his robe, even to his sword and bow and girdle, speaks in a typical way of how our own hearts have been won to the true David, and how, correspondingly, there should follow the complete stripping of ourselves of all for His sake,—the abasement of self that He may be exalted. It is this blessed lesson that is pressed upon us in the passage we are considering.

Three incidents are brought to our notice. First of all, we find a scribe declaring his purpose to follow Jesus wherever He may go. The Lord's answer to him is that "foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The thought the Lord seeks to press is that if he follow Him he must be prepared to accept the same place of rejection as the Master occupied. It is *consistency with relationship* that is insisted upon. And when we consider how glorious a relationship we have been brought into, consistency with it is the highest standard for our walk. "Walk worthy" says the apostle, "of the vocation wherewith ye are called." How much this means for us, when we think of the position in which we

stand as being linked with Christ! We are made the righteousness of God in Him; the judgment and the death penalty we deserved having been borne by Christ as our Substitute, so that now we stand in righteousness before God. We are quickened together with Him into newness of life. And not that merely: we are raised up with Him; we are introduced into the sphere to which this new life attaches, —new creation, in which old things have passed away and all things become new. We are seated together in Christ in heavenly places.

How all this separates us from what we were formerly linked with, so that now we have no other link! And what other would we have, but that which is ours in new creation with the risen and glorified Lord of His people? As it has been beautifully expressed: "If the cross has been realized in its effect as to sin, the flesh, the world, what else is there to know but Christ? what other knowledge can we call knowledge? You, yourself, the great hindrance after all,—is gone. Only Christ remains."

This is the blessed summit of Christian position; and now as those who have been raised up to this glory, we are sent back into the world as representatives of the Lord in whom we have been exalted, to bring back with us the atmosphere of heaven itself. We come back to a world which still rejects this glorious One, and in which it is still true, at least in principle, that the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

Consistency with this relationship, and constancy to Him with whom we have been called into fellowship, require us to occupy a position of rejection with Him in the scene of His rejection. Surely this

means much for us in one way; but what of it all in view of the blessed One with whom we are linked, and the glory of our calling in Him? "Yea doubtless, and I count *all things loss* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

And this brings in, of necessity, the thought of obedience to Him as the Master we are following. It is the very essence of consistency with our relationship to Him as the Head of new creation,—in very deed the Lord of His people. May God in His mercy minister the needed grace to enable us to stand in the separated place, to take the rejection the world will give us if we are faithful to Him. Shall the visions of earth draw our hearts away, or the desire for ease or rest in this scene lure us from the loyalty we owe to our Lord?

Gaze into yon opened heavens, and see the glorious face of the Man Christ Jesus. Think how that face was once marred more than any man's, as it depicted the awful depth of sorrow that filled His heart, infinitely tender in its compassion for man, and feeling beyond all expression the sadness of the place He was in! Yet, that blessed face struck with the hand of man's hatred, only brought out the manifestation of divine love in His heart for them; He was spat upon, and His brow pierced with thorns by those His heart yearned after—though mocking and vilifying Him! The hatred of hearts, steeled with the bitter enmity of the carnal mind was poured out against Him. Divine love and infinite power manifested in a wealth of moral glory and beauty in the Man Christ Jesus—REJECTED! Can we compromise with a world that has acted thus? Paul saw Him, and his heart was captivated; Christ in the glory be-

coming his object henceforth, so that as to this scene he could say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world." May it be in very deed so with us, although it means the stripping off of all that men count dear, the losing of this life only to gain in fulness the life to come.

But *devotedness* to Him, with whom we are thus associated, is needful, and so it is this that the Lord now presses in the case of the disciple who would go and bury his father. His answer is, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead." The character of devotedness must supplement the one which we have been looking at. It alone gives real worth to it in His sight. The disciple is seeking to manifest a devotedness for earthly things which would give the Lord second place, and the Lord calls upon him to render devotedness to Him in leaving *all* behind, and following in His path. Surely no other character but this should be ours when we realize what is implied in our relationship with Christ. It is that "following after," forgetting the things which are behind and pressing forward toward the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.

That is the true spirit of devotedness; and with it animating us, we will manifest devotion to Christ in leaving all, out of which we have been taken by the existing relationship. Surely we must mourn our lack in this. We may understand the consistency that becomes the relationship in which we are, but shall we not say that we come short in that devotedness that should characterize our association with Him as rejected of men? If we were for Him what we should be, would we not be more like He was

when on earth? "To me to live is Christ." No keynote for the life like that! Christ, nothing but Christ! Glorious Object—the goal which drew the apostle ever forward with increasing desire for the end to be reached in its unsullied glory and cloudless joy! What joy like that of seeing Him! How the heart will break forth in its eternal song of praise to Him. That face once so marked with the lines of pain and grief! For us, in the devotedness of His love, did He bear such suffering and death. Is it *much* for Him to seek devotedness in us in the midst of a scene which cast Him out? Surely, no other character than this should be ours.

Finally, we have the disciples in the tempest, and the power of the Lord manifest in being able to perfectly keep His own. Sweet assurance to receive from Him whom we are to follow in a path of rejection with its trial and tribulation! But if walking consistently, and with devotedness to the Lord, we will take it from His hand who loves us, as the means of refining by which our faith shall be found unto His praise and honor and glory. There will be the quiet resignation of a subject spirit, from which will flow praise to His name, instead of the unbelieving prayer of a wavering faith. Lack of that spirit which receives all as from His hand arises from the absence of those two characters we have been considering. Is it not indeed "little faith" that is the root of failure in this direction? But what matchless grace shines out over all! He arises, ever ready to answer the need of His people: and how blessedly, when He comes in, do the winds and the sea abate! There follows that "great calm,"—the peace of Christ ministered to us, as He draws us into the secret of His

own presence, where we learn how sweet the rest is that He gives ! Surely it is as abiding in His presence that we find the true incentive for a walk worthy of our high calling. May God in His mercy in these closing days,—the perilous times,—grant that we may walk in accord with His will, to the glory of the name of Christ our Lord.

J. B. Jr.

FRAGMENTS.

A Christian, who has heaven before him, and a Saviour in glory, as the object of his affection, will walk well upon earth; he who has only the earthly path for his rule, will fail in the intelligence and motives needed to walk in it; he will become a prey to worldliness, and his Christian walk in the world will be more or less on a level with the world in which he walks.

The journey through the world is to the child of God as a boat on a strong current: It cannot stand still; if it is not aggressive it loses ground.

Let the soul of the saint cease to be in exercise with God toward the flesh, the world, and the devil, and he will soon experience the sad results of their aggressiveness toward him.

It is easier to imbibe false notions than the truth, for the simple reason that truth always displaces or condemns something in us, whilst error on the contrary flatters some part of our evil nature. A man who in his heart imbibes error, is a man in whom some sinful disposition remains unjudged.

ASHER.

(THE HAPPY ONE.)

Notes of an Address by A. E. B.

(Gen. xxx. 13; Dent. xxxiii. 24, were read.)

WHEN Asher was born Leah said, "Everyone will call me blessed"—or 'happy.'

In the New Testament we learn of the gospel of "the blessed (or happy) God" (1 Tim. i. 11), expressive, this, of His great joy in the salvation of sinners. We see this in Luke xv.: the *shepherd* rejoices over the lost sheep which he found; the *woman* rejoices over the recovered piece of silver; and the *father* rejoices over the lost son now returned.

And who are the Asherites to-day? All those who can say with the psalmist, "*Blessed* [happy] is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." "*Blessed* is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." As we go through this world we ought to be Asherites, rejoicing in God's salvation, and in God our Saviour.

Asher represents for us a happy man, and of him it is first said, "Let him be blest with children." I desire to put this into New Testament language, and gather the spiritual lesson. Are we the earnest, whole-hearted, evangelistic people we ought to be? Wherever we find this spirit pervading the people of God, combined with prayerfulness, we believe souls will be born again—sinners will be converted to God; we will see fruit in the gospel, and, as Asher, shall be "blest with children." O beloved, may we never lose the evangelistic spirit; never cease, while there is yet grace, to yearn after the salvation of lost sinners!

When the early Christians were scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word of God (Acts viii. 4; xi. 19); and this word "preaching" should rather be "*speaking* the word;"—the Greek word *laleo*, used in the last quotation, meaning, to talk, to speak in a familiar way. One may have no particular gift, and never be able to preach upon the public platform, but each one of us can set before the lost God's great love for sinners, and the danger of trifling with, or neglecting, these things. Wherever this course is faithfully pursued we are persuaded there will be fruit, and sinners will be saved.

Next, it is also said of Asher, "Let him be *acceptable* to his brethren;" this was the Spirit's desire, through the lawgiver, that Asher should be "acceptable to his brethren." This is a sweet and precious thing in its place, if rightly understood, which will help us to preserve the even balance of truth.

We have observed how we ought to be an evangelistic people, who love to tell out God's good news, and to further every gospel work. But this does not embrace the whole testimony committed to us. God links His people together now in a wonderful way (see 1 Cor. 12). We are fellow-members of one body, and have our responsibilities in this place—responsibilities to the Head first, and then to one another. None, therefore, can say to the other, "I have no need of thee." In many things we are dependent one upon another, and there is a ministry we can furnish each other, as also a submission we ought to render each to another (see Eph. v. 21; 1 Pet. v. 5).

Now, when this relationship is understood, and our responsibilities realized, we have the other side of truth: we are to be kept from the independ-

ency and self-will so rampant everywhere to-day, even in pursuing the Lord's things. How unseemly to profess to be earnest in the gospel and not desire to fulfil these last-named responsibilities! but how precious to see the holy combination of both—earnest in gospel work and, as those indwelt by the Holy Spirit and joined one to another, each seeking “to be acceptable to his brethren”! Of course, to pursue this, we are never expected to sacrifice the truth, nor a good conscience. Neither do the words imply this; yet it does say, “Let him be acceptable to his brethren.”

See the example of the apostle—he who wrote 1 Cor. xii., and whom the Spirit used to unfold for us the truth of the one body. In writing to the saints at Rome (Rom. xv.), he requested their prayers that the service he was carrying to Jerusalem, entrusted to him by the assemblies of Macedonia and Achaia, “might be acceptable to the saints;”—he had the true Asherite spirit. Where this true love and godly subjection to one another in His fear is found, we can then sing the 133d psalm, “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” The Church has drifted far, we know; but, beloved, the truth as here given abides. May it search us in all our gatherings, and produce in us these godly characteristics, that there may yet be in our assemblies a testimony for Him in these things.

Further, of Asher it is said, “Let him dip his foot in oil.” Here we have a truth that touches our walk. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also *walk in the Spirit*,” says the Word (Gal. v. 25), or according to the Spirit; that is, a life or walk here on earth regulated and governed by the Spirit. David prayed,

"Order my steps according to Thy word" (Ps. cxix. 133); for when the Spirit guides, it is always according to the Word. Then, again, we are exhorted to "follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). Christ's perfect example is what both the Spirit and the Word present; and this, for the believer going through this life, will be a "foot dipped in oil." It will also give power and strength to endure through the varied difficulties of the way: "His shoes will be iron and brass"—in the power and strength which these metals express.

The next thing promised to Asher is, "As thy days, so shall thy rest be" (J. N. D.'s translation); this is what the Lord gives him—"rest"—as in Matt. xi., where the Lord Jesus assures those who bear His yoke that they will "find rest." There is no rest for the Christian here apart from this. "There is no rest to the wicked," we are persuaded; and when we Christians have sought to rove, and have wandered from God, there was no rest till we returned in godly subjection to Him; then what sweet rest followed!

But let us turn back a little before we close, and see what Jacob says further about Asher (Gen. xlix. 20). Let us sit down awhile in Asher's company, and hear what he has to say to us.

In his company there is no gossip; we hear no slander, no evil speaking. Asher has got away beyond this. Would that we were, one and all, steadfast partakers in what Asher now presents to us: "his bread is fat, and he yields royal dainties" (or dainties for the king). What blessed company for sinners saved by grace, to be privileged to sit with such! His foot "dipped in oil," now "his bread is

fat"—surely this is a feast where the King Himself will be present and enjoy it. Asher will entertain you with the precious things of Christ,—his bread is fat, his table yields the dainties of heaven; there the word of God and the unsearchable riches of God's grace are the themes that occupy the guests. And is not this what we need to-day? Is not this the kind of ministry we need to render to one another? We are persuaded more and more this is what we need as Christians to cultivate, and so "edify one another." May the Lord give us the joy of seeing a reviving in this respect, and we might find showers of blessing.

In closing let us notice a true daughter of Asher (Luke ii. 36-38). Her name was Anna; she sprang from this very tribe, and truly she bore out these characteristic marks of Asher. She was a happy one; her foot was "dipped in oil"—she departed not from the temple day and night. Her shoes were "iron and brass"—she "served God," and in her great age had strength to go to all them that looked for redemption in Israel; and was not "rest" her portion? was not her "bread" "fat" too, and did she not "yield royal dainties"? "She spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Israel." This was her constant theme—"Jesus"; and of Him she spake. She had longed to see His face, and God fulfilled her desires. He came, and she saw Him face to face! May His second coming (which we believe is very nigh) find us, one and all, as this daughter of Asher, "departing not" from His Presence, but full of these things, and fresh in soul, ministering them to others day by day for His name's sake.

WHAT GOD LISTENS TO.

“**T**HEY that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and thought upon His name.”

We know that God sees everything, and that for every idle word men must give account, but there is one kind of conversation in which we may be sure that He is an interested listener. It is the conversation of those who fear and love Him, about the things of God. Very often a foolish timidity will keep Christians from speaking of those things which are nearest their hearts, and too often, it is to be feared, the things of God are not sufficiently near their hearts to fill them. How refreshing and helpful is godly conversation! Notice here that this is not an occasional thing, but they often spoke one to another. How is it when we come together? Is it worldliness, or worse yet, gossip, or even dwelling in a helpless way upon the faults of others, or is the mind so filled with God's word, and the heart so occupied with Christ's things, that they form the staple and natural topics of conversation? If we were walking down the street and overheard some one mention the name of a dear friend of ours, we would involuntarily pause, and so with our blessed God, when He hears two of His children mentioning the name of His beloved Son, He listens to hear what they have to say of Him, and He remembers it too. Let us then not be afraid to speak to one another freely. There need be no formalism about this. If the heart is happy in Christ, it is natural and right that we should speak of Him.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

THOSE who have received the little "Almanac and Counselor" for the present year will have noticed the "portion for the month" at the head of each monthly calendar. It is our earnest desire and hope that very many of the Lord's people will unite with us in the daily reading of the books indicated, which will include something over half of the entire Scriptures to be read during the year; no great task surely, since it means the reading of but one chapter morning and evening. It is our purpose to devote a few pages monthly to a brief outline of the books to be read, in the hope that many will be stimulated to greater diligence and zest in the reading and study of God's precious Word, and get correspondingly more food for their souls.

The portion for January is Exodus in the Old, and the epistle to the Romans in the New Testament. Exodus, we may say, gives the *account of the beginning of Israel as a nation*. Genesis having been devoted to the unfolding of the lives of the individual patriarchs, it is striking and suggestive that when He would call His people together to form them into a compact whole, and deal with them, not merely as individuals, but as a corporate mass, God must have a solid basis upon which to rest; so Exodus is pre-eminently the book of redemption. This is the controlling thought all through. There is, of course, the account of the bondage, the plagues and the misery of Egypt, and, in the latter part, the tabernacle with all its rich and wondrous unfoldings as the abiding place of God amongst His people; but the great fact upon which all hinges—the being brought out of bondage and brought into relationship with God—is the passover, the blood of the lamb shed.

There are two main divisions to the book:

I. Chaps. i.—xviii. give us God's power as seen in the

judgments inflicted, and the deliverance wrought for His people.

II. (Chaps. xix.—xl.) Relationship with God on the basis of covenant, with full types of salvation in the tabernacle.

The prominent features in the first division are:

1. (Chaps. i.—iv. 17) The need for and call of the deliverer.—Moses.

2. (Chaps. iv. 18—xi.) Judgment upon Egypt, from which Israel is spared.

3. (Chaps. xii.—xv. 21) The great truths of redemption by blood and deliverance by power.

4. (Chaps. xv. 22—xviii.) Divine provision for the way in this wilderness world.

In the second division the prominent features are:

1. (Chaps. xix.—xxxii.) The giving of the law and the provision for the tabernacle. It is well to mark that the tabernacle could not be erected in connection with the giving of the law *as such*. The people made the golden calf, and the first tables of stone were broken. Man always fails when tested.

2. (Chaps. xxxii.—xxxiv.) The apostasy of the people and the second giving of the law.

3. (Chaps. xxxv.—xl.) The building of the tabernacle.

These are but the main divisions of a book which is intensely interesting and deeply profitable from end to end.

The New Testament book is the epistle to the Romans, which has been chosen as a companion to Exodus, as throwing the light of New Testament fulfilment upon Old Testament type. Here we have the great truths of justification and acceptance before God developed, brought out in a divinely perfect way.

The four divisions of the epistle are so well known as scarcely to need more than a word.

1. (Chaps. i.—v. 11) God's righteousness proving man's unrighteousness and yet justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Each chapter develops some feature of

this general theme, until we reach the climax in the closing word, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

2. (Chaps. v. 12-viii.) Deliverance from the bondage and power of sin. This is truly a miniature book of Exodus, and can be studied with great profit in connection with the account of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt from the bondage of Pharaoh, as the passover shelter is explained in the deliverance from the guilt of sin in the first division.

3. (Chaps. ix.-xi.) God's sovereign purpose and holiness vindicated in the account of His past, present and future dealings with Israel. As to the past, they are the chosen of God; as to the present, they are rejected because of their unbelief; as to the future, they will be restored as from the dead (chap. xi.), a wonderful and instructive portion, giving the key to all prophetic teaching.

4. (Chaps. xii.-xvi.) The last division is the practical portion of the book, giving guidance, encouragement and warning as to our path through this world, based upon the great facts of known redemption and enjoyed deliverance, unfolded in the first eight chapters.

What a feast is before us, dear reader, for this month! If heretofore you have been reading your Bible as a mere task, getting but little from it, turning too easily to this world's literature, let all that cease now. Let us seek God's grace that these two books may be read carefully, prayerfully, and intelligently, and how much we will have to bless God for as the result!

It is well to have a note-book in which to jot down thoughts gleaned from our daily reading, and this may be made as full or meagre as the time we can spare will allow. It is not expected, of course, that the average reader can devote sufficient time to the exhaustive study of two full chapters of Scripture each day, but surely every one of us can gather something from our morning and evening reading. The little note-book will serve as a record of our progress, and a pleasant reminder of help gained.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter III.

GOD'S CARE FOR HIS OWN HONOR.

(1 Sam. v., vi.)

(Continued from page 10.)

“AND the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months”—a complete cycle of time, witnessing perfectly to God's abhorrence of His people's course on the one hand; and, on the other, to the utter helplessness of idolatry to resist Him, or of the unsanctified to endure His presence.

Seven is too familiar a number to need much explanation. Its recurrence, however, in connection with the periods of God's separation from His people and of the infliction of judgments is significant and needs but to be mentioned. A glance at the pages of Daniel and the book of Revelation will make this plain. Is it not significant, too, that the day of atonement came in the seventh month, the time of national humiliation and turning to God marking the beginning of blessing,—a date, in fact, taken as the beginning of the year rather than redemption in the passover of the first month. Redemption is to be entered into, and the humbling truths of sin and helplessness and departure from God on the part of His own to be learned, before there can be the true beginning of that great year which we call the millennium.

Determined now, if possible, to get rid of their plagues and of Him who had inflicted them at the same time, the Philistines cast about for the best way

to return the ark to its place without further offending such a God as this. It is significantly characteristic of their utterly unrepentant condition, that they turned not to Him who had afflicted them for instruction, but to their own priests, those who ministered before Dagon, and to the diviners, corresponding to the magicians of Egypt, who bewitched them and led them astray. How true it is that the natural man never, under any circumstances, will of his own accord turn to the only source of light there is. It is only the child of God, the one divinely and savingly wrought upon by the Spirit of God, who can enter into the word, "Hear ye the rod and Him who hath appointed it." It is to His own people that God says: "If thou wilt return, return unto Me." What can priests or diviners know of the true way in which to deal with God, or to return to Him that which had been taken from Him, His own glory and His throne? Still the divine purpose has been effected and the time for the return of the ark has come. Therefore no fresh judgment marks this further insult, and they are allowed to take the way suggested by the priests, out of which indeed God gets fresh glory to Himself and gives an additional testimony to the fact that He is indeed the only true God.

There is some feeble groping toward divine truth suggested in the advice of the priests and diviners: "If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not away empty, but anyways return Him a trespass-offering. Then shall ye be healed, and it shall be known to you why His hand is not removed from you" (chap. vi. 3). In the darkest mind of the heathen there is a vague, indefinite sense of sin against God. It is, we may well believe, that wit-

ness which God leaves in the heart of every man, the most benighted, as well as the most highly cultured, that he has trespassed against his Creator and his Ruler. It is too universal to be ignored. The sense of sin is as wide as the human race, and the sense, too, of the need in some form or other, of a propitiatory offering to God. It takes various forms, the most unclean and repulsive of the savage, and, no less insulting to God, the self-satisfied presentation of gifts of good works or reformation on the part of the Christless professor.

This trespass-offering, then, which is to be returned with the ark must be at once a memorial of the judgment, and of a value which suggests the reverence due for the One against whom they had trespassed. We notice, however, that the offerings go no further than the memorial of their affliction. Images are made of the emerods and of the mice, but what about that sin which brought this judgment upon them? Is there any confession of that, is there any memorial of that? Ah, no. The natural man sees the affliction and so magnifies that as to forget or ignore the cause for which the affliction came. How different this from the true trespass-offering which alone can avail before a holy God! that which is not so much a memorial of the affliction or judgment deserved as an acknowledgment of the sin which made it necessary; and above all, a confession that the only propitiatory which can be acceptable to God is that unblemished sacrifice of a guiltless substitute, a constantly recurring witness throughout Israel's history and ritual, of Christ, who alone is the trespass-offering, the One who "bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

He has not merely satisfied every demand of God's justice, but in the beautiful teaching of the type, has restored to Him more than was taken away; for the fifth part had to be added to whatever had been stolen. What a joy it is to contemplate this trespass-offering and to know that our acceptance before God is measured not, as we might say, by mere even-handed justice, though divine, but that we are far more the objects of His delight and complacency than we could possibly have been had we never sinned. We are "accepted in the Beloved," thank God. No image, even though it were golden, of our plagues and the sins which made them necessary, but the Image of God Himself, the One in whom shines "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and we "complete in Him." How worthless, and in one sense insulting to divine honor, seems this presentation of the golden mice! It was all that poor heathenism could give, all that it could rise to in its conception of what God demanded; nor can this be in the least an excuse for their ignorance, as it was a witness of most absolute and hopeless estrangement from Himself.

And yet we need not travel very far in Christendom to find very much the same spirit at least, amongst those about whose feet shines the light of gospel truth. In the churches of Rome can be seen hundreds of little votive offerings hung upon the walls; crutches, and other evidences of affliction which have been offered to God by those in distress. Nor is it confined to such tawdry trifles as these. In the spiritual realm how much is brought to God of this character! It comes far short, indeed, of His

thought, because it comes so far short of Christ Himself.

The priests also appeal to the Philistines to take warning from the similar judgments which had been inflicted upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In his blind hatred, Pharaoh knew not what his servants recognized, that the land of Egypt was destroyed, his heart being hardened to his own destruction. The Philistines are warned lest they harden their hearts in the same way. So it is, nature can take warnings and guard its course so as to escape the extreme of judgment, without in the least being softened into true penitence. It is but another form of selfishness that will save itself and take sufficient interest in God's past ways to learn how it can with least danger to itself go on still ignoring and despising Him. An Ahab might walk softly for many years and put off the evil day of reckoning about his murder of Naboth. But Ahab with all his soft walking was Ahab still, unrepentant and hardened, the very goodness of God in sparing him not melting him to repentance, but encouraging him to go on in his course of apostasy. All this is the opposite of that godly sorrow which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

The lords of the Philistines are willing enough to listen to all this advice, and further, in obedience to their instructions, they prepare the trespass-offering, putting it in a coffer alongside the ark and laying both upon a new cart. Fitting indeed that it should be new, one that had never been used in Philistine service. Instinct often guides those who are most ignorant.

(To be continued.)

"TOO HARD FOR ME."

(2 Sam. III. 39.)

JOAB always had a strange influence over, or rather independence of king David. The expression we have quoted occurs in connection with David's lament over the murder of Abner by Joab. David had lately been anointed king at Hebron over Judah, and there were most hopeful signs of a complete reconciliation of the ten tribes with the two, and the turning over of the entire kingdom to David by Abner. Everything looked well for this, and after a most encouraging interview with David, Abner had departed to carry his promises into effect. Joab returning and finding what had been done, jealous no doubt, of the prestige which Abner would gain in this way, hating the man also for the death of his brother Asahel in battle, most treacherously killed him.

Joab was a man full of fleshly energy, with all the passions of a rough, unscrupulous soldier. He was apparently loyal to his master, and yet his heart was not right, as we see once and again through his history, and particularly in his failure to follow the mind of God in connection with Solomon as the successor of David. A study of his life will furnish many profitable lessons, but we wish to look a little at this confessed weakness on the part of David: "I am this day weak, though anointed king, and these sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me."

This is a most humiliating confession on the part of one of God's heroes, a man who had met and defeated Goliath; who had victoriously led the armies of Israel in their conflicts with the Philistines; who, with his little band of loyal followers, had held his

own against all the malice and power of King Saul. Surely it was not faith in David to say this, and one strong, firm act then, at the beginning of his reign, would have freed him from many an after sorrow through this same man Joab.

It will be remembered that Joab was the tool who carried out the king's awful purpose in the death of Uriah the Hittite, and that later it was through him Absalom was restored to his opportunity for rebellion. There is a very striking connection between king David's relations to Joab and his glaring failures. Joab was a relative according to the flesh, and it would seem to remind us that fleshly ties have to be watched most carefully or they will prove not a help but a hindrance.

But leaving the historical connection, we may gather some profitable lessons in meditating upon these humbling words: "Too hard for me." Let us put alongside of them at the very beginning, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" and ask ourselves which is the language of faith.

The young believer starts out on his course, full of joy and liberty. The freshness of his first love is in his heart; he has had a glimpse into the land of promise. The shackles of Egypt have so lately dropped off that he has not forgotten that galling bondage; the groans of servitude and the terrors of judgment are too vivid to prevent a most lively sense of gratitude, while his rest in the finished work of Christ and his joy in the Lord are like an up-springing well. He indeed feels girded as a strong man, and in his prosperity he says: "I shall never be moved."

Nor can we say one word against this. Would to God it were an abiding experience of His people!

He surely intends that it should be. Let us remember that whatever our experiences of discouragement may be, they were never intended by God. He permits them and makes use of them to teach us humbling lessons as to ourselves, and to deepen in our souls great truths which we thought we had learned. If we will learn them by faith, He will never have us pass through painful experiences to learn them.

But to go on. The remembrance of past mercies grows fainter. The first strength has spent itself. A slight reaction sets in. The regular routine of life, with much of monotony, with many discouragements and difficulties, begins to loom up, and in many cases to overshadow the brightness of that joy that marked the morning of our Christian life. Let us look at this a little in detail.

Perhaps the first thing that proves "too hard" for the young believer is to find that mockery or neglect—in fact, persecution in a small way, hurts and disheartens him. There is a quiet scorn in the treatment of old friends. Those at home who do not know Christ, test the reality of his new found joy, and before he is aware of it, in answer to some bitter jest, hot words of resentment have been given. How humbling it is to him! And how he feels that he has lost what he cannot regain, a prestige in his home! These relations of the flesh have proved "too hard" for him. He has not been able to go on quietly and simply and humbly with God; he has got down to their level, and of course has been overcome.

This leads, of course, to a searching of heart, being cast upon God, and to renewed effort to fresh faithfulness with, no doubt, fresh lessons of humbling failure. The sons of Zeruiah are still strong and

hard. Then various trials come in. The reading of the Scriptures becomes a task. Some old temptation is yielded to; some carnal amusement is taken up, or an old association, broken off for Christ's sake, is renewed, and the once happy and bright Christian becomes utterly discouraged, thinks of giving up the idea of special devotedness, wants to drop down into the ordinary life of the average professor, and when reasoned with about it all, lays the blame upon whatever has come in—friends, or circumstances, or whatever it may be.

Do not some of our readers know the meaning of all this? As their eyes follow these lines may it not be true of them? They have lost the brightness; the flesh has proved too strong for them, the world too attractive, and as a matter of fact, instead of leading a victorious life "more than conquerors through Him that loved us," they are making the humiliating confession of King David: "These sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me."

Emphasize that last word, dear reader, and you will have it correct; they are too hard for *you*, and that has been your mistake all along. Did you think that you could confess Christ in your own strength, in the home, in business, or among old associates? That you would be able to throw off good-naturedly the little jests and unkind words that might be said about you? That you could stand the scorn and go sturdily forward in your own strength? Ah, you had forgotten those words of our Lord Jesus, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Remember Peter's experience. Contrast his stout words: "I am ready to go with Thee both to prison and to death," his vain-glorious brandishing of the sword, effecting nothing

for his Lord, and finally the question of a servant girl overthrowing all his courage and leading him to absolute denial of his Lord and Master.

The lesson is obvious. It was "too hard" for Peter, because he was trusting in himself. He had to learn that there was nothing good in himself, and that even the will to be loyal to Christ could not be carried into effect without a power not his own. So let us look calmly at all our enemies and at our duties too, and as we take each one up in detail, let us acknowledge in all sincerity: This is "too hard for me." I must go to the Lord for help. Do you think you will fail if you do that? Impossible. The moment we are convinced that we have no strength of our own and are cast upon the Lord, His strength comes in.

Apply this truth to all the varied details of our daily life. Enlarge upon it; meditate upon it. Let us get something practical out of it as a result. We too are kings, "kings and priests unto God." Let us not have to make the continued and humiliating confession of King David: "These sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me," and yet allow them to go on in their self-will. Let us have done with them. Let us turn from them in all the consciousness of our weakness unto Him who has said: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace."

Let us take courage, then, not in ourselves, but for the very opposite reason. We have reached the end of our resources. We are perfectly conscious of our own weakness; we will not seek to do any duty or overcome any evil in our own strength. It is "too hard" for us. We will turn to One who has asked

the question which has never yet been answered save in one way: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" and we can with each detail say: "Lord, this is not too hard for Thee."

MINE.

PLENTIEOUS pastures, fresh and green,
Spread before me.

Watchers from the world unseen
Hov'ring o'er me.

God the Spirit for my Guest,
Sheltered in my Saviour's breast,
Saved by what He wrought for me,
On the Cross at Calvary.
Soon His blessed face to see,
And like Him forever be.

Mine the Father's endless love:
Naught can sever.

Mine the glorious home above,
Mine forever.

Mine the secrets of His heart—
He and I no more to part,
Evermore at Jesus' feet,
There, my heart, His heart to meet,
In communion full and sweet,
Then our joy will be complete.

Mine the strength that weakness needs;
Mighty power!

Mine the help dependence pleads,
Hour by hour.

Mine the everlasting arm,
E'er to shield me from all harm.
Mine the fields of wisdom wide;
Mine forever to abide
Close to His once pierced side,
There may I in safety hide.

He the Saviour, I the lost,
 Hopelessly.
I the debtor, His the cost,
 Paid for me.
His the sorrow and the shame,
Mine the joy through Jesus' Name.
He the stricken, I the blest;
I the franchised, He th'oppressed,
His the labor, mine the rest,
Mine the refuge on His breast.

His the burden of my sin,
 Mine no more;
Mine the peace He died to win.
 Rich the store
He hath treasured up for me,
We shall share eternally;
While the mem'ry of His grace
Every sorrow shall efface.
Oh, what joy 'twill be to trace
Jesus' love in Jesus' face !

Mine the blessed Saviour-God,
 Night and day.
Mine the Shepherd's staff and rod
 On the way.
Mine to follow, His to lead,
His to furnish all my need.
Mine to hearken, His to chide,
His my wayward feet to guide
By the quiet water's side,
There to rest me satisfied.

Mine to wait a little while
 Till He come.
Then the brightness of His smile,
 Welcome home.
Then the music of His voice
All my being shall rejoice,
There with loved ones to retrace
All the story of His grace;
There to tell His wondrous ways
Out of hearts o'erfilled with praise. H. McD.

SCRIPTURE, AND ITS PART IN EDUCATION.

I. WHAT SCRIPTURE IS, AND WHAT EDUCATION IS.

THERE is hardly need to insist to-day on the value of education. It is rather apt to be overestimated than underestimated. When a well-known man, who must be credited with the desire to speak soberly, or not too extravagantly, can tell us that it is a mistake to say that the millennium is at hand merely, but that it is *come*,—as proved by the money which the men of wealth are pouring into the cause of education, into colleges and schools and libraries,—the words and the deeds both show us how much its importance is insisted on.

On the other hand, a certain value will perhaps be nowhere denied to Scripture also as an educator. Those who insist, as commonly now is done, on the value of the knowledge of all religions, of the Veda and the Zenda-vesta, will hardly deny what is allowed in the case of Hindu and Persian scriptures, to the Christian Bible. It is quite true that no Christian will be or ought to be satisfied with this, which reduces to mere literature that which has quite another claim.

We are not going to dwell upon this now nor has it interest enough to dwell upon it; much more what is urged, that we must at any rate be satisfied with according to the Bible its *religious* value. It may be allowed even to be authoritative in its own sphere, but that does not at all embrace the whole compass of knowledge, as education does. There are large fields beyond, in which it has no authority. And of course we allow it will not teach

you how to till the ground or do the meanest sum in arithmetic: there is no desire to make any pretension of the kind on its behalf. But it is urged again that as it appeals to reason, so it must submit to reason everywhere; we may, therefore, listen to its persuasion while we must entirely refuse its dictatorship.

But to appeal to reason and to submit to reason in a limited and fallen creature, are quite different things. Scripture does appeal not merely to reason, but to the heart and conscience also—to the whole of man. But, nevertheless, it affirms—and there is plenty of ground outside of it to believe its affirmation—that man is as corrupt throughout, as he is plainly diseased in body and under a law of death which, however natural he may call it, he shrinks from in his innermost soul. But this is penalty, and supposes sin; and thus, whatever the way out, reason in man must be allowed to be continually perverted by what is in his heart; and He who stoops to reason with man as to the evil, in earnest desire to deliver him from it, is not thereby appearing at man's judgment-seat, but summoning him to His.

If we believe in God at all, we must surely believe that He is capable of speaking to His creatures; and that He can speak in such a manner as to make all that is in man bear witness to the Speaker. It is plain, however, that at the present day those who can in no wise agree with each other, believe themselves, nevertheless, quite competent to disagree with Him, and to justify the disagreement, each one after his own peculiar fashion. Thus come in the questions as to inspiration, where there is evidently a very great departure from what was, but recently even, a common teaching.

To leave this for the present,—What is the sphere of education? for what is it competent? and what is necessary to it? The body is, as we know, being more and more claimed, not merely as itself needing it, but as needed by the mind also. The effect of disease or lack of vigor in the body will have its corresponding effect upon the products of the mind. The body, therefore, must not be left out of account when we speak of education. Moreover, as the head, so to speak, is behind the hand, so the heart is behind the head, and as just now said, the perversion of the heart may make the mind to err to mere insanity. The whole man, therefore, needs the disciplinary training which is implied in education.

But there are other considerations which we must take into account if we would realize just what is before us when we speak of what it may be trusted to accomplish. Plainly, the present generation has not begun the world: some would say that that began hundreds of thousands of years ago. And then they are equally sure that heredity counts for something. It is plain indeed that we do inherit a good deal, and not merely in ourselves, but in our surroundings also. We cannot start afresh as if nothing began before we did; and if we would fain do this, our own nature would witness against it. For it is plain we came into the world not full grown, not with all these much-prized wits about us, but in a condition in which we were destined to a long process of discipline (in our circumstances, at least,) before we could attain the competence which we may suppose perhaps that we have now attained. Nature gave us into our mother's hands naked in body, bringing nothing with us, feeble and dependent. We

must submit, therefore, in the first place, absolutely to what is taught us. Reason itself will not start until we have got something to start it with, and in the meanwhile how much must we take on trust!

Here, too, is that which most manifestly speaks for the value, nay, for the necessity of education if we are to be anything at all in this life. We are too poor in our own resources to be able to start without something, and how much are we encompassed with, which we must, to begin with, accept, whatever question may be raised afterwards! We cannot even go back to simple barbarism, to that out of which we are told the race was so long emerging. Our lives are not long enough to make the thought of such an evolution comfortable, by any means.

But are we not handicapped at the best in this matter of education? Can we, if we would, eradicate the ideas instilled into us from our birth, and start afresh for ourselves? Even here, trust brains and senses it is plain we must. History, too, is furnished to us. Science is furnished to us; nay, it is in all this that we are to be educated. Can we, with all our will to do it, correct even our text books? Can we all verify the experiments, of which so many have been made, and which make the science of the day to have its justification, as a well-known scientist has told us, by verification? Can we set ourselves above all the wisdom of the past, affirm our own competence to review at least the main elements of knowledge? Nay, plainly that is impossible. We must accept at least what is ordinarily accepted, and trust, whatever errors there may, nay, *must* be in this, that they will not lead us very far astray from truth. Our whole civilization plainly depends upon this.

And now, in connection with all this, what about religion? We receive our religion, to begin with, as we receive other things. Are we handicapped, then, here as elsewhere? or can we receive from it such help as it is plain we need? In the very nature of it we must assign it, if we allow the mere possibility of God and eternity, the very highest place. What is its relation to all the other fields which education has to do with? If there is even a question as to whether we have a God who made us, there must follow the question, Has He not a will concerning us? Is He not competent to make that will known? But if we are left simply to traditional knowledge, and if we are to look around at the different religions of the world, what elements of doubt will naturally be bred in us! How are we to ascertain the truth here? If He has made us, we ourselves and the whole frame of nature around us, spite of a certain plain disorder which is in it, declare His interest in those that He has made. Has He spoken then? Has He spoken so that He can be heard without any question at all? Can we allow doubt here such as we may and must in other things?

Now here we must notice a great difference which at once impresses us. These other things have their verification in things that are seen. They have to do with what is visible and what is tangible—with what we can see and touch. There *are* certainly things unseen. What about them? What have we here if there be not, after all, some authority higher than our own reason to which we can submit? This does not, of necessity, make such submission credulity at all. It is true that we are so constituted that we cannot intelligently submit ourselves to that which

does not give its proofs to our intelligence, and these proofs also must be in that which is seen. Notice, then, how all important the question is whether Scripture can be proved false or not as to that which is seen, for here is what must show it to be absolutely trustworthy. If it be not that in things in which I can test it, how can it be possibly worthy of credit where no test can be applied ?

But thus it may be easily proved that Scripture knowledge, if it be what it claims, must really be the foundation of all other knowledge that is worth calling that. The earth, it is allowed, is but a mere speck, as it were, in the universe, and governed absolutely by the things that are around it. It is true that our knowledge of these things may have nothing to do with the good government of the earth itself. That goes on apart from us altogether. We have no hand in it; but at least here is a witness of how immense is the sphere of the unseen. If it is to be, in that which is most important, *unknown* because unseen, then how shall we decide as to all that is thus unknown ? Who can tell how largely it will affect all our conclusions as to the known ? Who can reason about that which is unknown ? How dependent we are upon some knowledge which must be communicated to us here !

Now here it is that the claim of that which professes to reveal all that is of the highest interest to me in the unknown must first be settled. Yet its credentials are to be certified in the sphere of the known. What then about the constant affirmation now, that Scripture is not designed to teach us science, and that it may be as false as you please about sensible things, and yet as true as we desire it about things out of

reach? It is plain that Scripture some way does pronounce, or how does it manage to come into conflict so often with what we are told is science itself? Something it does say, and more important even than what it does say as to such things is the fundamental matter of its *authority to say this*. Who, if his heart were right at all, would not cry out here for a lesson-book absolutely reliable?

And now if we turn to Scripture and look at it in this respect, in what a perfect way does it answer to the requirement! It is plain that if it be a lesson-book, it contemplates and provides for the education of the masses at least as what is in God's mind for us, whether man's mind be to refuse or bow to it. It is the first qualification of a lesson-book,—a primary one as this is, whatever else,—that it should speak in the simplest manner and at the same time with the most perfect decision. The text-book at least ought to know no doubt; it ought to deal with what is sure, for unless we have certainty as to the foundations, how are we to build upon them? This is indeed what men find fault with so much in Scripture. It is so exceedingly positive; it will not allow in itself a possibility of error. It is, as we have said, very much what people find fault with; but the heart must be leading wrong the head, if reason here is so unreasonable. How can it gain our confidence if it is not confident itself? All the more can it appeal to man to verify it as much as he will. The Lord Himself so appeals, and acknowledges man to be so constituted that, spite of all that may be amiss with him, he is, nevertheless, fully and rightly responsible to receive the truth just as truth. "If I say the truth," He asks, "why do ye not believe

Me?" Here there is no wavering as to its being truth He teaches. Here He ventures to appeal to the very nature of man itself as being witness for Him. Scripture then cannot use the language of doubt, because it is not teaching doubt, but giving assurance. Shall we be glad or sorry for that?

But its language, people say, is not scientifically true. It may be perfectly true without clothing itself at all in the technical language of science, as indeed it must not, if it is to be every one's text-book. Where is the last edition of all the books that clothe themselves with this proud name? How many variant editions have preceded them? If Scripture had been written, let us say, in the scientific language of a hundred years ago, would it be right for the present time? And, if it were written in the language of to-day, would it be as true and scientific language a century hence? How it appeals to us as the very voice of God Himself, that it comes right home in this respect to the comprehension of the poorest, with a sweet interest in him which is not the least of all the witness that it has of being God's voice to his soul! Where shall I find another book or another set of books like it? There are Hindu scriptures and what not; but who will compare them? The authority and the simplicity are both perfectly suited to Him whose word it is.

And then as to verification, how plain that it is not in the least priestly, in the evil sense that we have had, alas, to attach to this! It does not put me into the hand of an interpreter; it does not speak to me second-hand at all. It speaks to me as having to decide for myself, in the full sense of my responsibility, in the full sense of all that there is around me

that is doubtful, calculated to beget doubt, and it bids me verify for myself that which it says. In it all, characterizing it all, too, there is for me to-day the sweet sense of a human voice which speaks in this divine voice, the voice of One who spake as never man spake (let man bear witness if it is not true), but who above all was Himself, according to the picture that we have of Him, a Man such as never before man was, never since.

It is the voice of such an One I am called to accredit,—the voice of One who died, who has entered into all the shadow that is over man himself, but who abides, nevertheless, as the living One,—speaks to me and invites me to Himself. Here I may find, if I will, and surely know that I have found it, what He declares He will give me if I come to Him. No man and no multitude of men can touch this link between Himself and myself. If He is not worthy to be trusted, who else is? And still He says, “Which of you accuseth Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?” This is the Teacher from whose hand we are to receive our lesson-book; and here we may find not a justification by verification instead of faith, but a justification of our *faith* by *verification*; and with this, spite of the shadow that is over man at large, we pass out of the shadow; yea, spite of the contradiction of multitudinous voices, into the joy and blessedness of truth, and only truth.

Here is our first lesson out of our primary book; but let us go on and prove for ourselves, as prove we may if we will, how immensely beyond all other books is the range of its teaching. F. W. G.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

"BY THE MERCIES OF GOD."

THE practical portion of the epistle to the Romans from the twelfth chapter to the end, is filled with most necessary and peculiarly helpful instructions as to the conduct of those who have entered into the precious truths which form the theme of the first portion of the book. It should always be remembered that the power for all consistent Christian conduct and the ability to enter into the application of certain spiritual truths to our own habits of thought, depends in great measure upon our having fully received, in the simplicity of faith, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, that wondrous unfolding of truth which must underlie all practical conduct.

We might almost define legalism as being not merely the attempt to observe the ten commandments, still less the ceremonial ordinances as laid down in the Mosaic ritual, but any effort to carry out practical instructions as to conduct without having the full knowledge of the grace which alone can enable for it. This is what makes the right apprehension of the grace of God so absolutely essential, and this is also what explains two things; on the one hand that carnal struggle after holiness and seeking to fulfil the requirements of God's will apart from Christ, and on the other, that feeble and unsteady walk which so often mars the profession of the truth. The first is legalism. The second is antinomianism. And both are equally removed from the simple path of faith which grows out of the knowledge of the grace of God in truth.

It is most significant, therefore, and should always turn us back to the earlier chapters, that it is the

latter part of Romans which has to do with the practical life. We need ever to be refreshed by and more fully established in the true grace of God. It is not merely the point from which we take our departure, for, thank God, we never depart from it. It is rather our furnishing for the whole way in the energy of which our walk will be a delight. Trials and difficulties will but invigorate the faith that draws its strength from the perennial streams of God's love and grace. The admonitions and correctives furnished by this practical portion will meet with a prompt response from hearts which have learned that there can be no stronger appeal to their love, gratitude and obedience than the mercies of God.

It is not our purpose to dwell in detail upon this practical portion, but simply to point out some of its more manifest subjects, suggesting, as they do, not only God's path for us, but the way by which alone we can walk in that path.

Chapter twelve shows how our obedience, as those who have learned the mercies of God is to apply to the entire life, to every moment of our time, to all our relationships. We are "in the body," and as long as there, everything is to be a living sacrifice to God. This is the reasonable service of those who have been redeemed. It is manifested in the activities of love and in the beauties of that grace which delights to exhibit the same mercy to others that has been shown to itself.

Chapter thirteen passes from our individual to mutual relationships as Christians, to our position in the world; and here again obedience, sobriety, and regard to the needs of others are to mark us. We are,

as children of the light, to be walking here as pilgrims and strangers, waiting for the dawning of that Morning Star, putting off all the works of darkness.

Chapter fourteen dwells upon the gentleness and consideration which should ever be exercised toward those who are weaker in the faith. Rigidity and harshness have no place in the hearts of those who know truly how all that is opposite to that has been shown to them. There will, therefore, be a most careful guarding against putting a stumbling-block before the weak, and a desire to glorify God in their care.

And so the epistle goes on, reaching its close in the sixteenth chapter with salutations from a heart filled with love to all the people of God and with warnings also against any who would subvert the saints from the simplicity of their faith in Christ. The sixteenth chapter is a most beautiful refutation of the thought that the study of doctrine dries up the soul. On the contrary, it furnishes the channel and the motive for the fullest outflow of affection to all who are Christ's, and we are persuaded that were there a full revival amongst the saints of God of a living interest in the great truths of the first part of the epistle to the Romans, there would be a richer and more constant outflow of that love which is suggested in the obedience and care in the salutations of the latter part.

Let us live, dear brethren, in the enjoyment of the great truth of our acceptance before God on the ground of the work of Christ. Let us practically and daily enter into the humbling truth that the sentence of death had to be passed upon the old man and all connected with him; that in ourselves there was

neither good nor the possibility of it and that thus death with Christ was the only remedy. Now alive to God in Him, walking by faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the joy of the eighth chapter is ours and the power for the twelfth. We cannot emphasize this too strongly. May God, in His mercy, revive amongst us a real hunger for the great foundation truths of our most holy faith! Let us be delivered from even the semblance of indifference to that great truth which must underlie all right living.

A SOLEMN RECORD.

MURDERS AND SUICIDES DURING THE PAST YEAR.

A PROMINENT secular paper is in the habit of collecting the yearly statistics of death by violence, and presenting them to its readers with such comments as may occur to the editor. It is significant that even such an authority can get scant comfort from these dark features.

In general, murder is steadily on the increase; a slight diminution during last year being more than made up by the enormous increase of the previous one over its predecessor. There were 7852 murders during last year, 8275 during 1900, which was an increase of 2050 over the preceding year (1899).

Think of 8000 murders in a year! Cain's crime multiplied eight thousand fold! and that in a single country, at the head of the nations in civilization. Imagine a city of 8000 inhabitants massacred in a single night. All would be horror stricken; is it less terrible that the violence is wide-spread, persistent, and increasing?

But the record of death by suicide is even more

significant, as showing an effect which may be directly traceable to the civilization which is the boast of the age. In 1890 there were 2040 suicides; in 1891, 3531; and the increase each year has been steady and rapid. In 1900 there were 6755, and last year 7245 murdered themselves!

Of the causes assigned for suicide, the chief one is significant—despondency, 2980. Oh, how it tells of the emptiness of this poor world—three thousand who find nothing to live for, utterly disheartened! Beloved fellow-believer, do you forget upon your knees to thank our God for giving you an object to satisfy every craving of the heart for all eternity?

But who, as he ponders these dark and ever-growing figures, can think of the world as growing better? What has the prosperity, civilization—even education of the world done for it? Let these figures give their answer, and turning to that blessed Word of God, let us see the end of it all—more and more open apostasy, the working of the “mystery of iniquity”—until full-blown rebellion against God will meet its doom. Then having been swept clean by judgment, the blessed reign of the Prince of Peace will begin.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

THE portion for our daily reading during the present month is the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament, the gospel of Mark and the epistle to the Hebrews in the New. As Exodus gave us the great truth of redemption and relationship to God, so Leviticus shows us how that relationship is to be maintained. Its prominent features are the sacrifice and priesthood, with the sanctification in both people and priest without which

it would be impossible to enjoy intercourse with God. Its main divisions will bring this out more clearly:

1. (Chaps. i.—vii.) We have here the varied sacrifices—the burnt-offering, type of the death of Christ in His devotedness to God; the meat-offering, the Person of Christ as exhibited in His life. It will be noted that the meat-offering always accompanies the burnt-offering. We have then the peace-offering, Christ's death as the basis of communion between the soul and God. The sin-offering and trespass-offering show respectively how the sacrifice of Christ meets sin, which is the root, and trespass which is the fruit.

2. (Chaps. viii.—xv.) *Here we have the consecration of the priest, and the association with him of the priestly family, beautifully exemplifying the relationship between Christ and His saved people.*

3. (Chaps. xvi, xvii.) The great Day of Atonement, whose services beautifully show the way into the sanctuary.

4. Chaps. xviii.—xxii.) Daily walk of priests and people in consistency with the principles of God's holiness.

5. (Chaps. xxiii.—xxvii.) God's ways with His people as seen in the feasts of Jehovah, the restoration of the year of jubilee, and prophetic warning as to disobedience.

Passing first to the epistle to the Hebrews, which should be read in conjunction with the book of Leviticus, we have the inspired explanation of the meaning of that Old Testament book. Christ is the subject throughout, and, in the glory of His Person and the efficacy of His finished work, displaces, as He has exemplified, that law which could only be a "shadow of good things to come."

The epistle divides into five parts:

1. (Chaps. i.—ii. 4.) Christ in His peerless glory as Son of God become Man.

2. (Chap. ii. 5—iv. 13.) Christ in His humiliation, the Author of salvation for "His brethren."

3. (Chap. iv. 14—x.) Christ our great High Priest and

perfect Sacrifice, the Mediator of the new covenant, who has entered into heaven itself and opened the way for us to enter into the holiest.

4. (Chap. xi.) The walk of faith upon earth as exemplified in Old Testament history.

5. (Chaps. xii. and xiii.) Exhortations and warnings to the Jewish professors to hold fast to Christ and to "go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

It is well to remember in reading this wonderful epistle that its theme is not eternal life (for that we turn to John's writings), but the basis of relationship with God. It is written especially for Hebrew professors, whether true or false, and this accounts for the solemn warnings as to apostasy. It need hardly be said that no true child of God can ever perish, nor is there a shred of Scripture in this epistle or anywhere else to intimate such a possibility.

The last portion for the month is the gospel of Mark. Here we have to do with the person of our blessed Lord, seen as the Servant of man's need and the Prophet to declare the mind of God. There are three main divisions:

1. (Chaps. i.-v.) Our Lord's ministry in healing. This part is filled with acts of mercy upon the needy.

2. (Chaps. vi.-x. 45.) Opposition and rejection. Here we see how the enmity of Judaism will not allow His healing service to go on unchecked, and this occasions many a faithful testimony by the One who is already being rejected by Israel. It furnishes the occasion for brighter revelations of Himself and clearer teaching than even the former period of unchecked activity.

3. (Chaps. x. 46-xvi.) Man's heart of enmity fully brought out in the death of Christ, His resurrection fully manifesting God's acceptance of His work. Here all leads up to the cross and from the cross up to the throne. If man rejects, God glorifies Him.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter III.

GOD'S CARE FOR HIS OWN HONOR.

(1 Sam. v., vi.)

(Continued from page 33.)

THE latent unbelief in the heart of the Philistines is seen in the way they took to restore the ark to the land of Israel. Who would have thought of taking two heifers who had never known the yoke, and harnessing them to a cart without drivers? Would not this insure the destruction of the ark? And to accentuate the difficulty, the calves of these cattle were left behind, so that all nature was against the ark ever reaching the land of Israel. May we not well believe there was a latent hope in the hearts of the people that it would turn out differently from what they were constrained to believe? "If it goeth up by the way of its own coast to Beth-shemesh, then He hath done us this great evil; but if not, then we shall know it was not His hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us." Truly, if the living God Himself were not directly concerned in it all, if it were not absolutely His hand that had inflicted the blow on account of the presence of His ark, if it were not His will to restore His throne again to His people, no better means could have been taken to manifest the fact.

But God delights in such opportunities to manifest Himself and to make bare His arm,—surely we may well believe a closing witness to the hardened hearts of these people that He was indeed God, and a wondrous testimony as He returned to His people, of the

fact that His hand was not shortened that He could not save. It reminds us of that time in the history of Israel's apostasy when the prophet Elijah issued his challenge in behalf of God to the prophets of Baal, with all the people as witnesses. It was to be no ordinary test. They were to see whether it was God or whether it was Baal. So the priests of Baal are allowed to take their sacrifices and, without unusual care, to see if they can bring down fire from heaven. When they had consumed the day in their vain cries and cutting themselves, and there was no response, and abashed and silent they had to wait for the voice of God, then it was that the prophet took those special precautions to manifest that it was indeed God and He alone who was dealing with His people. Water is again and again poured over the sacrifice, over the altar, until it fills the ditch about the altar, and when every possibility of fire has been removed, all nature's heat quenched, then it is that in a few simple words the prophet asks the Lord to manifest Himself. Ah, yes, He can do so now. He cannot manifest Himself where there are still smoldering embers of nature's efforts; and it is well for the sinner to realize this. The fire to be kindled by divine love comes from God,—is not found in his heart. It would only be a denial of man's need of God. Nor must the saint forget the same truth.

And so the kine with their precious burden go on their way, unwilling enough as far as nature is concerned, lowing for their absent calves as they went, but not for a moment turning aside; and the lords of the Philistines who follow them are constrained at last to admit that God has vindicated His honor and manifested the reality of His own presence and His

own care for His throne. They follow and see the ark deposited upon a great rock,—may we not say, type of that unchanging Rock on which rests the throne of God, the basis of all sacrifice and of all relationship with Him, even Christ Himself? And here we leave the Philistines, who return to their home, glad, no doubt, to be well rid both of the plagues and of Him who had inflicted them.

The ark returns to Beth-shemesh, "the house of the sun," for it is ever light where God manifests Himself, and His return makes the night indeed bright about us. It comes into the field of Joshua, "Jehovah the Saviour," a reminder to the people whence their salvation alone could come. In vain would it be looked for from the hills, Jehovah alone must save. And here the spiritual instinct of the people, weak and ignorant as they are, is shown. They take the cattle and the wood of the cart and offer up a burnt-offering, far more acceptable to God than the golden images sent by the Philistines, of which we hear nothing again.

But the lesson of God's honor has not been fully learned, and, alas! His own people must now prove that His ways are ever equal. If He is holy in the temple of Dagon, so that the idol must fall prostrate before Him; if that same holiness will smite the godless Philistine nation, it is none the less intense when it comes to His own people. In fact, as we well know, judgment will begin at the house of God, and as the prophet reminds the people that they only as a nation had been known of God, so far from this entitling them to immunity from punishment, it was the pledge that they would get it if needed: "Therefore will I punish you for your iniquities."

The men of Beth-shemesh rejoiced to see the ark, but they little realized the cause of its removal into the enemy's country, and the need of fear and trembling as they approached God's holy presence. They lift up the cover and look within the ark, and God smites of the people, and there is a great slaughter. It seemed a very simple thing to do. We may hardly say that it was an idle curiosity to see what was therein. Possibly they may have thought that the Philistines had taken away the tables of the covenant, or at any rate they would see what was there. Was it not the covenant under which they had been brought into the land? Was it not the law which had been given on mount Sinai, written with the very finger of God, and were they not as the people of God entitled to look upon these tables of stone? Ah, they had forgotten two things, that when Moses brought the first tables of stone down from the mountain, and saw the idolatry of the people dancing about the golden calf, he cast the stones out of his hand and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He would not dare either to dishonor the law of God by bringing it into a godless camp, or insure the destruction of the people by allowing the majesty of the law to act unhindered in judgment upon them for their sin. They also forgot the divine covering over those tables of stone,—that golden mercy-seat, that propitiatory with its cherubim at either end, beaten out of pure gold, one piece, speaking of the righteousness and judgment which are the foundation of God's throne and which must ever be vindicated or He cannot abide amongst His people. So upon that golden mercy-seat the blood of atonement had yearly been sprinkled, the witness that right-

eousness and judgment had been fully vindicated in the sacrifice of a substitute, and that the witness of atonement was there before God as the ground upon which His throne could remain in the midst of a sinful people.

To lift off the mercy-seat was in fact to deny the atonement. To gaze upon the tables of the covenant was practically to deny their sin and desert of judgment, and to lay themselves open to the unhindered action of that law which says: "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." The law acted, as we may say, unhindered, as the covering was removed. God must judge if He acts merely according to law.

How we should bless our God that His throne rests on the golden mercy-seat; that the blood of the Sacrifice has met every claim of a broken law, and faith delights to look where the cherubim's gaze is also fixed, upon that which speaks of a Sacrifice better than that of Abel--calling not for vengeance, but calling for the outflow of God's love and grace toward the guilty. Ah, no; God forbid that we should ever in thought lift the mercy-seat from the ark.

(To be continued.)

"My heart longs that the Lord may be glorified in the walk of His own; that they may glorify Him, not only by avoiding evil, but by maintaining close communion with Him, and, separated from the world in all their ways, may be to Him for a testimony, and for a testimony that their hearts are elsewhere because their treasure is."

J. N. D.

SCRIPTURE AND ITS PART IN EDUCATION.

(Continued from page 40.)

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

WHEN we speak, as we are going to do, of qualifications, we have, first of all, to understand that lack of qualification can keep no one out of that which God designs for all. If there is only a sincerely willing heart, God undertakes with regard to all that is needed in the way of qualification; and what we have to do just now is to consider how fully in this way He has provided for us—how well, therefore, we may learn in God's school, whether young or old, quick or dull, whatever in ourselves may seem to hinder or indeed forbid education!

God's meaning for us all is, as we have seen, education. Apart from any choice of ours, He has ordained for us needs which peremptorily require to be attended to, or we cannot even live in this world at all. The human creature is dependent as no other creature is. We are placed at the very beginning of our history here, in our mothers' arms, to find there, assuredly, more than the mere physical nourishment that we need. We may find the latter as mere animals, but God has made us something more than this; and we may be sure that in whatever He has ordained for us, we shall do well to remember what we are as human; and not because, for instance, the beasts are fed in the same way that we are, to merge ourselves therefore in the beastly nature. We are not mere flesh; we have spirits from the Spirit, and it is thus that we have been formed in "the image of God," even naturally, for "God is a Spirit."

God can never forget this; and the first element here is that of a moral nature, which not only can see and understand things in themselves, but weigh them, balance them, understand their worth. Here, in our mothers' arms, we surely learn, and necessarily, some lesson of that dependence from which no one can escape; but we learn more than this: we learn, and are to be assured of, and drink in, a love which meets us in this need of ours, and which is to be our first lesson, and a moral one. The mother's love is proverbial as the deepest which nature knows. How little would the child be provided for in the mere provision of her breast, if there were not under it a mother's heart, which would willingly spend itself upon the child, and which is surely a wondrous lesson of altruism, as people say, for the child itself!

Sin, of course, has disordered everything; and we shall find not only that many children are deprived of that which they instinctively crave in the way of nourishment, but are deprived still more of that meeting of heart with heart, and awakening the heart by the heart, which God would have. Sin has disordered everything; but it takes little wisdom to realize that we must separate the disorder from the natural institution which is plain in spite of it, and the love that breathes in it on the part of the Creator. How much, in fact, men owe to a mother's love! How often have we heard of the criminal in his prison-cell hardened into perfect callousness as to every other feeling, but who yet has woke up to at least a flash of self-reflection and self-judgment at the remembrance of his mother!

Under this kindly influence then, the child begins its development. In God's design the mother is the

first teacher of the babe; and if all is right, will be the first best teacher in a spiritual way also. But we have not exactly to do with this now. That which we gather from it is clearly this, that God's design for us all is education; and that for Him the moral part is all-essential to the rest. If we think of God's school, however, as we are now to contemplate it, the Book which is put into our hands, and which is in itself so unique and so sufficient that we rightly call it "the Book," "the Bible," is plainly that which is to give us all our lessons. In the authority with which it speaks, it takes only the place which the mother, for instance, *must* take with her child, and which is so necessary for the child. It speaks with authority because it is the language of One who knows; and as the Book of God, who does not suggest possibilities, but teaches truth. What sort of a teacher could any of us be who has no positive truth to teach? If the Book be God's Book, then certainly it is competent, and must be so, and in this way the uniqueness which we recognize in it speaks very plainly. But while it speaks thus with authority, the simplicity of its language shows us God's earnest desire for all His creatures, and is the only thing that is worthy of the God of all. He is not the Creator of the rich or the intellectual or the man of science, or of any other special class, but the Creator of all. And thus it is that the apostle argues with regard to the gospel and the simple ability to enter into all the gladness which it gives by faith, wherever faith may be. "Is He the God of the Jews only?" he asks. "Is He not also of the Gentiles? Seeing it is one God that will justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith."

(Rom. iii. 29-30). But thus the Book of books is in a sense all of it a primer, however much else it is, and its first and last lesson is of God.

How blessed the way in which the only Teacher possible with regard to the creation of things speaks in the very beginning of the Book! What majesty in the simplicity of it! How it naturally awakes the response of the heart to Him who speaks in it! Nevertheless we want something more in order to have aright even this first lesson, and as Scripture is put into our hands to-day, in all the fulness of a perfected revelation, one Personality reveals itself in it throughout; and that He may be perfectly understood and be realized as near us, in such a way as no mother even can be to her child, in human guise God puts Himself before us in it.

In the Old Testament, for the Messiah everything waits. In the New Testament, we wait in that sense no longer: He has come, and with all blessing in His hand. There was a needed preparation of man for this which the long previous history declares, but we are not to speak of this now. God is fully revealed, He is in the light; and then He is Himself the Light by which all other things are read. How plain that here alone it is that we are in the true place for learning anything whatever! and in His presence we learn first of all, ourselves. We learn what hinders learning. How great a necessity this, and how from this we realize the good of a human Teacher as well as of the Manual in our hand! We need to know *how* to learn, as well as what to learn. We need, too, (how often,) to be free from other thoughts that have come in from elsewhere, and which prevent our recognition even of the simplest truths! With us,

according to what has been already said, we shall not wonder to find that the hindrances are largely moral. Thus if we are truly in the presence of God, we shall be occupied with ourselves first of all in order to learn in ourselves, in the way of true self-judgment, all that is contrary to Him with whom all our knowledge is to be communion. We learn thus in ourselves that which is to help us all the way through, and we learn self-mastery from Him who is absolute Master, and whose help is found in learning every lesson.

It is a fundamental necessity for learning, in the whole range of learning, that our eye must be single, in order that our whole body may be full of light. Now here God's singular care for us is once more revealed. The Spirit of God is He who brooded at first on the face of the deep, and He is the Agent in creation everywhere. Most capable, surely, He; and He it is who now takes upon Him to be our effectual inward Monitor; Himself, as Scripture assures us, (if we are Christians indeed,) dwelling in us. How perfect, then, is such a provision! We have Christ on the one hand, as our Teacher, Himself the revelation of God in His own Person, and thus of all things else,—the Light in which we see light. But then we have the Spirit of God in us to remove that which would, nevertheless, prevent the light having its proper effect. What love breathes in all this, to subdue in us all that is contrary and to mold us to its teaching!

The Spirit must form the house before He can dwell in it. Thus necessarily, according to Scripture, and because of what we are as fallen, new birth must precede indwelling. Here we are at once faced with a mystery which yet, like all other mysteries, has

within it, in fact, a revelation. We are not, of course, developing Scripture doctrines now, and therefore we cannot enter, as might be desired, into the doctrine here; but Scripture assures us that we have thus communicated to us by the Spirit a new nature which is so really a divine nature, that we become by it, in a way which the original creation itself could not make us, children of God. God's way is to meet all that sin has caused by *abounding over it*. It is not enough for Him simply to replace what has become no longer able to answer its original purpose. His way is to show His perfect mastery over it by bringing in that which is higher and better, controlling thus for good the very evil which has come in. Christ's work has not replaced us where we were; it has done far more than this. We are not back in Eden and are not to be back there. We have lost earth, but to gain heaven. We have lost the innocence in which man naturally was, not to regain this, nor to find a fresh life sustained by the old tree of life in the midst of the garden. All these things become but types and shadows of what Christ has made our own. In Christ we have a new life which is eternal life; and in Him we find also in a higher way, not simply unforbidden but made fully our own, that tree of the knowledge of good and evil which gives us now a competency to enter into the whole problem of good and evil, and to find holiness when it would be impossible for us to go back to innocence. We know what evil is in ourselves, and here is the mystery of which we were just now speaking, that while in new birth we have a new nature, yet as every Christian's experience will tell him if he consult it in the light of Scripture, *the old nature is not*

yet removed. This is a perplexity which, no doubt, we have all found ; and which yet not only experience affirms to be the fact, but we may be able also without much difficulty to realize how effectually by its means the whole problem of good and evil is thus put before us. We find *in ourselves* the evil and the good. We find the evil in the presence of the good, revealed by it effectually. In all the manifestation of the sin that still remains within us, we learn by reason of use to have our senses exercised to discern between these.

But let us carefully remember that this does not imply that God would have us in any sense *in subjection* to the evil. If the Spirit indwells us, then ample power there must surely be over whatever inveteracy of evil can be imagined. We need only to be subject to the Spirit. The power is not in *us* but with us. We are still with this divine Teacher, learning dependence as we learned it first at our mothers' breasts. Yet ever also our responsibility, the proper responsibility of a moral being is enforced. The very presence of the Spirit of God does not make us of necessity the victors in the conflict which is implied in these two natures. We must be *subject* to the Spirit, not finding strength in ourselves, but weakness; and not needing to be dismayed because of the weakness, when the very condition of triumph is that when we are weak then we are strong. How thoroughly is it God's purpose to hide pride from man! and thus if the Spirit indwells us it is, in the strong language of Scripture, to join His help to the very infirmities revealed (Rom. viii. 26, *Gk.*). Thus if we pray, because we know not what to pray for as we ought, "the Spirit Himself maketh intercession

for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Here then is infirmity which is expressed even in the very groanings of the Spirit. But these groanings are perfectly intelligible to Him who "knoweth the mind of the Spirit"; and the Spirit still "maketh intercession for the saints according to God." Thus the groan declares our infirmity. We cannot utter the wants which, nevertheless, are most real ones. This groaning which is unintelligent to us is intelligent with God, and here how truly the Spirit intercedes for us, therefore, is manifest. It is Another who, in fact, is groaning in these groans which we cannot utter; and, according to this wisdom which is beyond us, God answers the Spirit-guided prayer. How blessed to know, then, that weakness is nothing which is to daunt us, but only that which is to make us lean the more simply and more fully upon the power of God!

(To be continued.)

"NOT A DOG SHALL MOVE HIS TONGUE."

THIS seems to be a strange expression, used by Moses to show that in the time of Egypt's darkest judgment and most hopeless sorrow, the very reverse would be true of the redeemed people of God. When His enemies are feeling the weight of His hand, the strength of His arm will be manifested for His beloved people. They will be brought out of the place of judgment, and this will be not in any partial way, or with the protest and opposition of the enemy ringing in their ears. Not even a dog will move his tongue as the people pass over and out of the land of their bondage.

The triumph is to be of the most complete character, so that the enemies themselves will bear witness to it. We see it beautifully illustrated when Balak, the king of Moab, sought to bring Balaam against them. He thought he would get the prophet to curse them in the name of God and, as it were, to bark at them. But instead of curses, only blessings come, and the abashed king is forced to recognize that the people whom God has redeemed are beyond the power of his puny rage and malice.

If this is true for Israel, shall we forget how perfectly it applies to ourselves as redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, brought out of the bondage of sin? This has been no partial liberation. God never contemplates His people as being half delivered or partly under law and partly under grace. Witness the exultant language of the apostle as he challenges all things: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" What dog can move his tongue in accusation against the humblest believer in the Lord Jesus? Such an one has been justified by the only One who could accuse,—God, the Judge of all, God who knows the secrets of men's hearts and the full record of their lives. In entire knowledge of all, with nothing concealed and no future discoveries possible, He has justified absolutely and permanently.

Who can condemn? Shall we think of some possible accuser? What shall Satan say, the accuser of the brethren, that accuses them day and night before God? After all, his controversy is not with man, but God. It is not merely the sin that men have committed, but the charge is of injustice against the

holy One. But how perfectly has the cross of Christ who died, vindicated God's righteousness in dealing in grace with the guilty sinner! Christ has borne the judgment and penalty, and therefore God is never more just than in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Satan's mouth is therefore stopped; he can bring no charge before God. Nor can he bring a sense of guilt to the enlightened conscience.

Any conscience that accuses the believer of guilt needs simply to be enlightened as to what the true grace of God has done, and all such accusation will cease. Conscience is ever on the side of God when enlightened, and therefore will never lay anything to the charge of God's elect.

Nor can a wretched world, with all its envy, truly move its tongue against those who have been redeemed. What encouragement this is to the timid soul to pass out from the bondage, away from the misery of sin; none to say nay, none to hold back! Well may we join in that happy song:

"Rise, my soul, Thy God directs thee,
Stranger hands no more impede;
Pass thou on, His hand protects thee,—
Strength that has the captive freed."

But it is well to remember One of whom the opposite of all this was true, and through whom we enjoy our liberty. In that solemn picture of His sufferings at the hand of God (Ps. xxii.) we hear Him saying: "Dogs have compassed Me. The assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet." We remember the crowd in Pilate's judgment hall heaping accusations upon Him. Indeed, the dogs compassed Him about with accusations, ready to rend Him asunder,

even when Pilate himself was willing to let Him go, yelping out their enmity: "Away with Him; away with Him!" Ah, truly, if no dog moves his tongue against us, it was because of the blessed One who submitted Himself to all the indignity and scorn, yea, more, to the wrath and judgment of God Himself, that we might know what quietness of soul is. And so, as we exult with the apostle in asking the question again: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" we remember, too, Him who said: "They laid to My charge things that I knew not." Blessed Master and Lord! Our every blessing, our peace for time and eternity, we owe all to the sorrow of that cross to which Thou didst so willingly go for us.

THE POINT OF CONTACT

BETWEEN CHRIST, IN HIS VARIED GLORIES, AND THE SOUL.

THERE is a fulness in Christ which the ripest saint has never exhausted and never will. It is indeed "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" which dwells in Him, and our ever increasing delight throughout eternity will be to search the heights and depths of God's purposes in Him, and to know more and more of that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

There are many aspects in which we can look at our Lord, in each of which He is seen in a special beauty connected with that character, an Object of special delight for our hearts. Thus we know Him as Saviour and Sacrifice, as Priest and Advocate, as Head of the Church, as the coming Lord.

Let us for a little dwell upon Him in each of these

characters, familiar as they are to us, all the dearer because familiar, never in danger of their becoming too familiar.

We may well believe that every Christian has at some time in his experience thought: What is the exact point of contact between myself and Christ? Of course the sinner must learn this first of all, and yet the saint needs ever to remember it too. Even where there may not be—because of the truth which God has so graciously unfolded to us—the distressing doubts which would lead the child of God to ask such dishonoring questions as—

“ ‘Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His or am I not ? ”

yet there is often a vagueness, a faint suspicion that something is required, some qualification needed for the enjoyment of Christ in His various characters. The exact point of contact between the soul and Himself is not always clearly seen and thus much of the blessing, much of the joy of communion is lost.

Let us then look at Him first as Saviour. Blessed Lord, His very name means this. “Thou shalt call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins;” a twofold Saviour, from the guilt and the thralldom of sin. How much this means ! To be saved, to be delivered from the wrath to come, from the judgment of a holy God against sin and the companionship of Satan and the lost for evermore. To have no accusing conscience, to be able to look forward with confidence to the judgment, knowing that we who have believed shall not come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life ! It is as Saviour

that He is first known, the One who saves. But whom does He save? The babe in Christ knows well the answer; and shall the "young men" and "fathers" ever forget it? Paul gloried in it, revelled in it; and in his oversight of the churches giving charge to Timothy, making provision for the orderly government of that which was so dear to the heart of the Lord, he gives a prominent place to this truth which was ever fresh in his own heart: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and adds "of whom I am chief."

The point of contact, then, between the Saviour and the soul is the fact that we are sinners. It is sinners who need a Saviour; and should the enemy ever tempt the new-born soul to doubt his acceptance, should he ever succeed in getting him to look within for proofs of salvation, let him remember that the point where he met with Christ as Saviour was not his worthiness, his attainments, his experience; he could bring nothing but sin to Him. It was his sinnership that entitled him to the Saviour, and for the saved as well, his title to the Saviour abides the same. He was a sinner, lost in himself, now nothing more than that; all that has been wrought in him has been purely grace. Since then, so far as his title to Christ as Saviour is concerned, it abides forever the fact that he was a sinner. If he were in himself alone, still that.

So, too, when we look at our Lord as the Sacrifice, the same simple truth is seen. What peace it gives to the conscience to look at the sin-offering, to see the sins confessed and laid upon the head of the victim, which is then slain, its blood shed and sprin-

kled upon the altar and it consumed without the camp. How faith delights to rest upon that sacrifice and in face of all those sins, more in number than the hairs of our head, what peace and rest we have as we behold the Sacrifice, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

It is to this that we are recalled whenever we gather about the table of our Lord. His blood was shed for the remission of sins. So, too, with all the other aspects of His sacrificial work as seen in the peace, trespass and burnt-offerings. What a value there is to this sacrifice! How it outweighs infinitely all the guilt of all the world in value! How the blood of Christ speaks before God of that in which He finds rest, of that which satisfies His justice, so that He can be "just and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus," so that His righteousness and His love blend together in declaring our acceptance eternal.

And where is the point of contact between the soul and this precious sacrifice of Christ? For whom was His blood shed? For whom was the sacrifice offered? For ripe saints? for faithful servants? for those who can show some fruits of grace in their hearts? Ah, no, here again we come back to that simple fundamental truth, "Christ died for the ungodly." How do I know His blood was shed for me? Because I am ungodly. And so the point of contact between my soul and this sacrifice is my sinnership again.

Let us pass in with Him now into the holiest of all, where we behold Him in those spotless robes, appearing as our priest before God and there ever living to make intercession for us. Let us think of

Him too, in the garments of glory and beauty, every fibre of which, every jewel that sparkles upon it, speaks of some precious character that He bears before God for us. We think of His sympathy, of His succor in times of temptation, of the strength of His mighty arms, of the tenderness of His loving heart, of the savor of that anointing which is upon him, a fragrance in which we too are accepted before God. All our feeble prayers, all our reaching out after God, is linked with His mighty intercession, is presented in His Name by Himself: "By Him, therefore, let us offer continually unto God the sacrifice of praise." What joy it is to dwell upon our Priest. If the sacrifice has given us boldness to enter into the holiest, the presence of the Priest there gives us liberty and joy to worship.

And where is the point of contact between this great High Priest and our souls? What fitness, what attainment is required to enable us to say, He is my High Priest? Ah, here again we come back to that simple, most blessed fact that it is nothing in ourselves now any more than at the beginning. It was as sinners that our Priest laid down His life for us, offered the Sacrifice. We cannot think of Him as Priest apart from the sacrifice, and we cannot think of the Sacrifice apart from the fact that we were sinners. How sweet for the child of God in all simplicity then to remember that his sinnership is again the point of contact between himself and all the infinite and effectual ministry of that High Priest!

The thought of the Advocate is similar, though distinct. It shows us the Lord as our Representative before God, the One who has full charge of all that concerns our standing and welfare before God,

who has entered into the Father's presence to be before Him forever as the witness of our own acceptance there too. More particularly, His advocacy is seen in connection with the failures of His people. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 Jno. ii. 1.) Here is an Advocate who never loses a case, who is able to present all the details before His God and Father. The accuser of the brethren is there to present their shortcomings and unworthiness in all their awful character before God, but what can an accuser do in the presence of such an Advocate, who stands there and as the answer to every accusation, can show the marks of that sacrifice which has anticipated all, even the sins, forgetfulness and self-righteousness of the believer?

And how effectual, too, is this advocacy seen in the restoration of the child of God, the washing of the feet down here in the power of the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, which is the result of that work on high! Oh, who that has grown cold or sinned (and, alas, brethren, who of us has not had more or less humbling experience of these declensions) but rejoices in the fact of that advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous?

It is hardly necessary to ask where the point of contact between the soul and Him as advocate is. His advocacy is in view of our sin, but He is the propitiation for our sins. So here sinnership is again the simple title, may we not say, to the services of our Advocate?

Who has not felt the heart within him leap with exultation at the burning words of the apostle in the epistle to the Ephesians, "Head over all things to

the Church"? We see Him quickened out of the dead, brought forth by the power of God, raised up, far above all principality and power and might, dominion, thrones and kingdoms and all else are made subject to Him, He is over all; and the heart has rejoiced to sing:

"O, Jesus, Lord, 'tis joy to know
Thy path is o'er of shame and woe."

We have seen Him there as Head, Head over all things, and, wondrous to say, Head to the Church which is His body. Linked by the Holy Spirit to a glorified Christ, He our Head and life there on high, we His members, sustained, knit together, channels for blessing one to another—the body of Christ upon earth soon to be displayed too in glory throughout eternity! Who can overestimate the sanctifying effect of this truth of our union with our Head in heaven? Rightly grasped, it not merely corrects the walk, securing a constant and proper testimony here, but it transfigures us and makes us a heavenly people.

Since our Head is in heaven, we also belong there; how this breaks a score of ties and settles a thousand questions which might harass the soul and fail of a clear answer were this not seen! Look at the corporate truth of the headship of Christ, one body upon earth, indwelt by one Spirit, to be actuated and controlled by one Mind, the same life, the same love, the same care in all the members. Oh, how the head hangs with shame and the heart is saddened as we think how the neglect of this great fact has marred the whole testimony of the Church of God upon earth!

But we are only touching upon these truths. Our

thought is to find the point of contact between the soul and our Lord here as in the other characters. If the first chapter of Ephesians shows us Christ raised from the dead and exalted on high in the heavenly places as Head of the Church, we have only to read on a few verses in the second to see that He is not alone. We are seen as those who were "dead in trespasses and sins." It was in our death, that quickening life was imparted, "quickened together with Christ" with that resurrection life of His beyond the power of death forever, a life therefore which can never be lost or forfeited; raised up together with Him, out of the place of death, out of the dominion of death, out of our graves and away from our grave-clothes; more yet, seated in Him in the heavenly places in Christ on high, our Head, our Representative before God, and soon to be with Him there, that in the ages to come God may exhibit in us "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

Dear fellow-believer, does not your heart rejoice as you think that the point of contact between your soul and Christ as Head over all things was when you lay dead in your sins? Here again, not merely your sinnership but your absolutely helpless condition—but for God's sovereign grace—is emphasized; and if unbelief should dare to ask the question, How can I know that I am united to Christ as Head? we again do not look back at an unblemished record of faithful service or aught else, but answer, He found me when I was in my blood and said to me, Live!

Lastly we think of Him as the coming One, who shall fulfil the yearning of His heart and take His blood-bought people to be with Himself at home for-

ever. We shall be like Him, then, for we shall see Him as He is. Even our vile bodies He will change and make "like unto His glorious body,"—no weakness nor sickness then; no circumstances of distress through which we now pass, no wilderness in which our feeble footsteps often falter, all that gone; and it may be at any moment that we shall hear His cry of joy which awakens responsive joy in our hearts: "Arise My love, My dove, My fair one, and come away!" Oh, it is a blessed hope, to sustain and cheer the heart in the darkest hour, no matter how sharp the trial, how bitter the cup, it is only for a little while and will soon be over, happily over, forever. The Lord is coming; His word is, "Behold, I come quickly."

What gives us confidence as we think of that coming? What will enable us to respond with all our hearts and souls, "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus?" One verse of Scripture seems to link together two things which throughout eternity will never be sundered: "the Lord's death, till He come." His death and His coming again are linked together. As we see in Phil. iii. we look for a Saviour, and so as we think of His coming, it is One who died to save us. Our title to have confidence in view of that coming is the fact that He is our Saviour, the Saviour of sinners, and so we are brought back again to that great basic fact, my sinnership is what entitled me to all that Christ is.

"Title I have none beside ;

'Tis for sinners that He died."

Dear fellow-believer, does your heart take in the simplicity of this? Do you not see how it will en-

able you, at all leisure from unbelieving doubts, all the whispers of Satan, all the sense of your own unworthiness, to enjoy Christ in all His perfection? You bring nothing as your share; you remember nothing as your share, save the fact that it was your need that brought Him out of heaven as it is your need that occupies Him there now. Blessed, precious Lord, throughout eternity we will praise Thee for this, and can sing now, as we will then—

"I stand upon His merit,
I know no safer stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

OUR reading during the present month will embrace the wilderness books of Numbers in the Old Testament, with the two epistles of Peter and that to the Colossians in the New. It is important to note that both the literal and spiritual order of the books is the very opposite of what we would expect according to human thoughts. Man places the sanctuary and the presence of God at the end of the journey. He hopes "to get to heaven at last," and meanwhile is fairly comfortable to go on without the sense of God's presence and the holiness which becomes that presence during his life in this world.

Grace here, as everywhere, inverts human order. We are first introduced into the presence of God, and made at home there; our future for all eternity is assured; the gladness of the final day is put into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us, and then we are started off on our journey through this world. How like the grace of God this is! Grace never sets us to earn, but always to

enjoy and to develop. So Numbers follows Leviticus. The wilderness experience follows the sanctuary.

It is an extremely interesting and profitable book, giving an account of God's provision for the way, and, alas, of the failure of the people to make use of these provisions as they should, with the unbelief which brought upon them the chastenings of God. But the end of the book brings them at the end of the wilderness with song and joy, and the beginning of conquest.

Space will only allow us to point out the divisions:

1. (Chap. i.-x. 10.) The numbering of the people, and their arrangement in the camp according to divine order. So we see the tabernacle in the centre. About it are grouped the Levites and priests after their families, and each with their appointed service. Then come the tribes, where the same divine order prevails. "Marching orders" are given; for, whether at rest or in motion, God would have His people subject entirely to His control. Here all is perfect, and at last the trumpet sounds for the onward march toward the land of their inheritance. Note the Nazarite and his vow, of the sixth chapter, a most important portion.

2. (Chap. x. 11-xvi. 35.) Unbelief, weakness, and departure from God; murmuring, jealousy and the culminating sin of refusal to go into the land are the prominent features here. Caleb and Joshua are the only two who will ever enter, of all that generation. This portion culminates with the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. What dreadful fruits spring from what seems to be the small root of unbelief, and failure to wholly follow the Lord!

3. (Chap. xvi. 36-xxiv.). The priest in resurrection God's remedy for all this weakness. Amongst many other things are the budding of Aaron's rod, the portion of the priests in the sacrifices, and the cleansing from defilement by the ashes of the red heifer. Here, too, Aaron

passes away, and gives place to his son Eleazar. Resurrection is thus seen throughout the entire portion. How good it is to remember that we have a High Priest who has been brought again from the dead, and who "ever liveth to make intercession for" us!

4. (Chap. xxv.-xxvii.) Fresh failure, through mingling with Moabites and a new numbering of the people. Moses reaches his end here.

5. (Chap. xxviii.-xxxvi.) Sacrifices, beginning victories, with provision of the cities of refuge. One prominent feature of this portion is the failure of the two tribes and a half, in their desire to settle on the East side of Jordan.

Altogether, the book gives two prominent thoughts: man's weakness and failure in the wilderness; God's mercy and succor.

Colossians gives us a beautiful New Testament book of Numbers, and shows how we may pass through this wilderness without failure and with an ever-growing joy in the heart, fulfilling all the responsibilities of the way. In brief, it is Christ the Object before us, and Christ in us "the hope of glory." Christ is the theme, and where He fills the heart the ways will answer to God.

The four divisions of the epistle are:

1. (Chap. i. 1-18.) Christ's headship over all, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

2. (Chap. i. 19-29.) The gospel of salvation, and the Church—the body of Christ. Paul's twofold ministry in relation to these.

3. (Chap. ii.) Christ in death and resurrection our sufficiency, and we "complete in Him."

4. (Chaps. iii., iv.) Resurrection life and the cross, the power for a faithful walk in all relationships of life.

The two epistles of Peter are a beautiful and most helpful provision for our wilderness journey. Peter, of course, does not occupy us with the heavenly things as the

apostle Paul. His epistles are pre-eminently for the pilgrim life here, but the heavens are always bright above, even though the pathway be full of trial. One of the key-words of the first epistle is "suffering." Various phases of suffering will be found in each chapter. The divisions of the epistle are :

1. (Chap. i. 1-21.) A living hope linked with the resurrection of Christ and the power of God, pledging us to our inheritance.

2. (Chap. i. 22-ii. 10.) A holy and royal priesthood of a spiritual kind, replacing the old fleshly relationship of Israel.

3. (Chap. ii. 10-iii. 9.) True sanctification in a life to the glory of God.

4. (Chap. iii. 10-iv. 6.) Suffering in a world where they are subject to trial, and walking in the path of Christ.

5. (Chap. iv. 7-v.) The end of all things at hand, and varied responsibilities in view of that.

The second epistle has in view declension, with warning and admonition. There are three divisions :

1. (Chap. i.) All things provided for us by divine power, and our responsibilities growing out of it.

2. (Chap. ii.) Apostasy traced from its beginning, and the final end that brings in judgment.

3. (Chap. iii.) The destruction of the earth, and the promise of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

THE MASTER, AND THE LESSON.

ALL things
Life brings ?

O Lord, Thou surely canst not mean
That I should bear
The taunts that tear
And cut me to the heart !
Wilt Thou not take my part
Against my foes, and stand between ?

Not now, my child,
The tempest wild,
The cruel taunts of men I bore for thee,
Now thou must bear for Me.

' Oh, why
Must I
Be tossed and driven to and fro,
And ill at ease
O'er things that tease,
And fret, my heart and mind,
With sometimes thoughts unkind ?
Lord, speak the word, and bid them go.

Hast thou forgot
" Love envieth not,
Endureth all, and seeketh not her own " ?
No wonder thou dost groan !

How long ?
This strong
And adverse wind is wearying me,
My heart is sore.
How can I more
Endure, from those who care
Not what I have to bear ?
Why cannot I, as they, be free ?

Not yet; 'tis thine
Not to repine;
But, for *My sake*, to be both kind and strong
Of heart, to suffer long.

O Lord,
Some word
Of comfort I but crave from Thee.
Why should I have
Such care and love
For those who love me not,
And have no evil thought
Of those who wrong both Thee and me?
Wouldst follow Me?
Then thou must be
All patiently, with sweet obedience yoked,
Nor easily provoked.

It is
For this
I've left thee here, midst storm and tide.
My child, I mean
Thy heart to wean
From earthly things to Me;
For I would have thee be
As gold, by furnace purified.
A beacon light,
Mid earth's dark night
Of sorrow, My loved witness, to proclaim
Salvation, through My name.

I bore
Far more
Than I could ask of thee. Ah, no,
Thou couldst not go
To depths of woe,
Nor in that anguish share
It was My lot to bear.
I only ask thee in thy life below,
My path to choose,
Nor e'er refuse
To follow where I lead. The reason why
I'll tell thee by and by.

H. McD.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter iii.

GOD'S CARE FOR HIS OWN HONOR.

(1 Sam. v., vi.)

(Continued from page 61.)

AND so at last the lesson of divine holiness is in some measure learned. The people are forced, by the smiting of God, even though but just returned amongst them, to acknowledge that He must be approached with reverence and godly fear. "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" Here unbelief struggles with reverence, and for the time triumphs; and instead of turning in simplicity to the One who had smitten them, to learn why, and how they could approach Him and enjoy His favor without danger, they are more concerned, as the Philistines had been, that the ark should go up from them, not of course to be taken out of their land, but still to be removed from their immediate presence—so that they could have the benefit of God's favor without the dread sense of His too near presence, a thing, alas, too common amongst God's professed people. And may we not detect in our own hearts a kindred feeling which would shrink from the constant sense of the presence of God in every thought and word and act of our lives, and would rather have Him, as it were, at a little distance, where we can resort in time of need or as desire may move us, but where we are not always under His eye? Thank God, it is vain to wish this, it cannot be; and yet as to our experience, how often are we losers in our souls because the desire of the psalmist is not more completely our

own: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, and inquire in His temple."

And so the ark cannot yet find a resting-place in the midst of the nation, but is sent off to Kirjath-jearim, "the city of the woods," strange contradiction, and suggestive of the place of practical banishment into which God was being put, a city in name and yet a forest. Here David finds it (Ps cxxxii. 6). "We found it in the fields of the wood;" no place, surely, for the throne of God; yet here it abides for twenty years (chap. vii. 2) until the needed work of repentance is fulfilled. We can well believe them to have been years of faithful ministry on the part of Samuel, and of gradual, perhaps unwilling submission and longing, on the part of the people. We are told all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Meanwhile, the ark rests in the house of Abinadab in the hill, and his son Eleazar, with the priestly name, "my God is help," remains in charge.

The ark never again returns to Shiloh: "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). "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph and chose not the tribe of Ephraim (Ps. lxxviii. 67). "Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name in the first and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer. vii. 12).

There was fitness in this in two ways. God never restores in exactly the same way a failed testimony. Shiloh had, as it were, become defiled and its name connected with the apostasy of the people under Eli.

It had the dishonor of having allowed the throne of God to be removed into the enemy's hands. It had, so to speak, as the representative of the nation, proven its incompetency to guard God's honor, and it could not again be entrusted with it.

Then, too, it was in the tribe of Ephraim—that tribe which spoke of the fruits of the life in contrast to Judah, from which tribe our Lord came, and whose name, "praise," suggests that in which alone God can dwell: "Thou inhabitest the praises of Israel." Praise for Christ is the only atmosphere in which God can abide. How everything emphasizes the refusal of the flesh! Even as Joseph himself displaced Reuben the first-born, and as Ephraim, the younger brother, was chosen before Manasseh, so now again the tribe which had had the headship and out of which the nation's great leader, Joshua, had come, must be set aside. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" is the only One who can prevail, and all these changes emphasize this fact which God has written all over His word—there is no strength in man, no reliance in nature, the flesh is unprofitable, Christ is all.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S MERCY TO HIS HUMBLING PEOPLE.

(1 Sam. vii.)

At last the faithful ministry of Samuel was about to produce manifest fruit. The twenty years of humbling had gradually, no doubt, led the people to an increasing sense of their own helplessness, of their absolute dependence upon God and a glimmer, at least, of that holiness without which He could never manifest Himself on their behalf. So Samuel

now can say to them: "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve Him only and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." This searching of heart had prepared them to receive this word now. Their return to the Lord, gradual though it may have been, was now sincere and had that measure of whole-heartedness which His grace is ever ready to recognize. He cannot endure a feigned obedience, and yet with the best of our repenting there is ever mingled something of the flesh. How good it is to remember that if there be a real turning, He recognizes that, and not the imperfection that accompanies it!

But a true turning to Him is of an intensely practical character and is shown in the life. If He has His place in the heart or in the land, all strange gods must be put away. All the loathsome idolatry, copied from their neighbors, must be judged, and God alone have His place. He cannot endure a heart divided between Himself and a false god. While all this is perfectly simple, yet there must be preparation and purpose of heart if it is to be carried out effectually and permanently. To serve Him alone means how much for ourselves; how much more indeed than for Israel, whose service was to a great extent of an outward character, at least so far as the nation was concerned! If they are ready for this, then there is the distinct promise: "He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." He Himself had removed His ark from the Philistines' land, and yet until the people were in a true state before God,

He could not in His holiness rescue them from the power of the same enemy.

Through God's mercy, Israel acts and the land is cleansed under the power of the ministry of Samuel whose life we have traced from its beginning. No longer now a child, in the full maturity of his powers he is in a position to be used, not now in a limited circle, but for all Israel. As his word had brought them to repentance, he now turns in intercession to God: "Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray for you unto the Lord." The man who speaks for God to the people is the one who is able to speak to God for the people. The man in whom the word of God abides and who is faithful in using it will know much, too, of the priestly privilege of intercession, while those who may have as clear a view of the evil, but dwell upon that merely without divine power, are never brought into God's presence about it, and so are themselves overwhelmed by it rather, and rendered helpless instead of being prevailing intercessors.

We may well remark, in passing, upon the importance of being occupied with evil only to deal with it according to the word of God, and thus to be able to work a deliverance through His word, and intercession with Him. There is always hope even in a day of decline and ruin when there are intercessors amongst the people of God; those who, if they know nothing else to do, at least know where to turn for help. Private intercession often opens the way to more public ministry, and this in turn to fresh prayer for God's recovering grace.

And so the people are gathered together to Mizpah. Common needs, common danger, and above

all, a common turning to God will bring His people together. All other gatherings are worthless and worse. Here they pour out water before the Lord and fast and acknowledge their sin afresh. The pouring out of water and fasting seem to be but two sides of the same act, expressed probably in the words which follow: "We have sinned against the Lord." The pouring out of water seems to be an acknowledgment of their utter helplessness and worthlessness. "We are as water spilled upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again." They had spent their strength for naught and were indeed as weak as water. This weakness had come from their sinning against God. So it is proper that fasting should accompany this solemn act,—no mere religious form or unwilling abstinence from food, as though there were some merit in that, but that intense earnestness of spirit which is so absorbed in its purpose that necessary food is for the time forgotten, or refused as an intrusion upon the more important business before the soul. Fasting, as a means to produce certain desired effects, savors too much of ritualism and fosters self-righteousness in its devotees; but as a result,—as an indication of the state of soul—it is always the mark of a truly earnest seeker after God.

A people thus self-judged, and in humiliation before Him, are now in position to receive with profit the ministry of God's truth; so Samuel can now judge them, take up in detail their walk, ways and association and deepen that work which God had already begun in their souls. It is not enough to say in a general way: "We have sinned against the Lord." This, if real, includes all else, but for that

very reason, details can then be gone into. A mere general judgment of self is too often but vague, and beneath its broad generalities may be hidden many a specific evil which has not been dragged out into the light, and judged according to God's holy word. Yet the two must come in this way:—there must first be the judgment of ourselves, that state of true humility which is ready to bow before God, before there can be a helpful taking up of specific acts and testing them by the Word.

It is to be feared that we often fail in this individually, and in our efforts to help the saints of God. Unless one is truly humbled before God, truly broken, it is vain to reach a real judgment of specific wrong. Thus a trespass committed against a brother will be condoned, or that brother's own share in wrong doing will be brought up—an effectual check in true judgment of the act in question. What is needed is to get before God, to pour out before Him the water of a true and real judgment of ourselves according to His word—owning that we are capable of anything, yea, of everything, unless hindered by His grace, owning too our sin. This will enable us to judge calmly and dispassionately as to the details of the actual trespass. Would to God that this were realized more amongst us! There would be more true recovery of those who have gone wrong, and a consequent greater victory over our spiritual foes.

Then, too, the judging of the people suggests not merely looking at their past conduct, but ordering their present walk. Any associations, practices, worship, that were not according to His mind and which had up to this time been ignored by the people, or which they were in no true state to form a

proper judgment upon, all these things would now come into review. Practices and principles will be tested by God's truth, and so the walk be ordered aright. To be low in His presence, as we said before, is the only place where we can be truly judged. It is a place of humbling, but after all, how blessed to be there! It is the place of power as well, for God is there. Israel at Bochim may not have been an inspiring sight to nature. The flesh always despises that which humbles it, but Bochim is where the messenger of God can meet His repentant people and hold out to them hopes of deliverance. Israel, we may say, at Mizpah were again at Bochim.

FAVORED CHILDREN.

SCRIPTURE presents perhaps no more attractive characters than are seen in Daniel and his three companions. Israel as a nation is cast off; they are all broken up and carried away into captivity. There would seem now but little object to live for—but little incentive to be faithful in the service of God. The natural result would be to sink down into sullenness and live for self, as doubtless large numbers of these captives did in the land of Babylon; or else fall into line with the Babylonians themselves and enjoy life with them.

It was not so with these four children. They did neither the one nor the other, and the painful circumstances they were in became the means of their glorifying God as they could not have done in their own land in brighter days. They have faith in God: they know that if He has cast off their beloved nation, and driven them away from their beloved Jerusalem, it is because they richly deserve it. This makes

them humble, but trustful too. A God who is so busy with them must love them, and love can be trusted. They set themselves therefore *first of all* to pleasing God. They are away from home, and they must needs take an active part in the scene where they are, but God must and will have the first place at whatever cost to themselves.

They refuse defiling food. They think not, like alas! many a child of God now going through this scene, that they can eat without danger the food of this world—that they can take in the mind, and spirit and ways of the world around without being unfitted for communion with God and for being His instruments of service. *They deny self*, and they prosper. They become the very men who can be best trusted with the highest responsibilities.

Thus they become so acquainted with God that Daniel can tell His whole mind to the king when no one else could, and by this many are saved from death. His three friends also, when all bowed the knee to the great image of gold, refused to bow theirs. They would not thus displease God, and so God made them victorious over all the mighty ones of earth, and honored them with the company of His beloved Son in the fiery furnace.

My young friends, the company and smile of Jesus in whatever we may pass through for His name's sake, will, in the day that is drawing near, be seen to be greater honor and glory than are at present all the companionships, and smiles, and favors of all the great ones of earth. He who seeks the Lord's approval will surely have his name enrolled with that of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

P. J. L.

TILL HE WAS STRONG.

(2.Chron. xxvi. 15.)

KING Uzziah lived in times of the declension of the kings of Judah, but was himself, at the beginning of his reign, a faithful and diligent king. "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper," and so in every direction he was successful against the enemies of the nation, and "he strengthened himself exceedingly." Not only was he successful with outward foes, but in building up the material interests and defences of the kingdom. Jerusalem and other cities were fortified; a large army was gathered, and, what was better far than all this, the resources of the kingdom were developed. Wells were digged, and much attention was given to increasing the resources of the nation. He was a lover of husbandry—a good thing to remember often by those who may be called upon to engage much in spiritual warfare. We must seek to cultivate those fields which God's grace has given to us, and to gather in the rich fruits for our sustenance, if we are really to make successful warfare against our enemies.

"He was marvelously helped until he was strong." The growth and establishment of the kingdom in a day of such weakness was nothing short of marvelous. It is painful to have to see how all this ended by puffing up the king and leading him to that presumptuous blasphemy which brought down the stroke of God upon him. He would intrude himself into the priest's office and offer incense, a function reserved for the sons of Aaron alone. It was in a figure, we may say, that practical denial of the need

of the priest,—of the need of Christ as our Priest before God.

But leaving Uzziah and his history, we have in these words a needful and suggestive lesson for ourselves. Of how many of us can it be said that we have been marvelously helped, and may there not be need to remember that if strength has been given us we need to be doubly on our guard lest we, too, presume to pass beyond that which God has placed us in.

Salvation is in one sense the breaking down of all creature strength in order that the sinner may realize his utter helplessness. The natural man is strong; strong, if not in the sense of his own goodness—a thing too common to most—yet in the sense of his ability to do that which is right. One of the most humbling truths to learn is that it was "when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." Weakness is a crime in the eyes of the natural man, and many who might be willing to admit that they were ungodly would be humiliated at the thought of confessing that they had no strength, no power to be anything else but ungodly; and yet that is just where man must be brought before he will accept Christ as his only Saviour. Thus his strength is taken from him, and he begins his Christian course on the distinct understanding that in him is no strength at all. We do not speak of the rest and the joy and the peace which come from recognizing this—how all struggling ceases, and the poor, puny efforts, which had only added to our distress, give place to that profound rest in the finished work of Christ and in His perfect love.

Now so long as the saint continues in the recognition of his absolute weakness, his Christian life is one happy song; he knows too well his own feebleness to attempt anything in his own strength. The memory of the bondage in Egypt from which he has but lately come prevents his reliance upon an arm of flesh. He is weak and he knows it, and rejoices in the fact; for, does it not shut him up to a divine power which is all-sufficient and his delight? And yet in the wisdom of God he has got to learn afresh that it is true of him as a saint, in a way perhaps of which he has little dreamed, that there is no strength in him. This accounts for the whole experience that is recorded in the seventh chapter of Romans. It is the saint there, the child of God, not the sinner seeking peace. He desires holiness and to do the will of God, but he turns to the law, and in his own strength is seeking for something good in himself. We do not repeat the humbling story. How many of us can remember how we beat our wings against our cage until, falling down wounded and breathless, we could only cry: "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" Here is perfect weakness; and what marvelous help came in the moment we realized afresh that weakness! Christ was found to be sufficient as our Deliverer, as He was as our Saviour.

Now, in brief, the whole Christian life is but the elaboration of this simple truth, as Paul puts it in the third of Philipians, we "rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh." One who has confidence in the flesh, so far is occupied with himself. He is so far strong, and therefore in imminent danger of falling: but if he has learnt the lesson as to

himself, he is now at liberty to enjoy the fulness of Christ without any distraction. And yet there is for the delivered saint the danger of forgetting that his bonds have been broken, of thinking that again there is something in himself of strength. Paul had to learn this lesson, which we find in the twelfth chapter of 2 Corinthians. A man who had visited heaven and beheld the unspeakable things there, so far as his walk upon earth is concerned, is in danger of self-exaltation. So the messenger of Satan to buffet him, which was such a sore trial to this beloved servant of Christ, was God's mercy to teach him that he must keep in the place of weakness—there was no strength in him. Learning this, the apostle gladly can say: "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Contrast all this with Simon Peter, whose boast as to his faithfulness to the Lord Jesus, whether it be to prison or to death, was but the prelude to his shameful denial with blasphemy that he knew the Lord. Peter fully meant all that he said when he protested, and he dearly loved the Lord. Let us not doubt it for a moment. But Peter was strong, and his own strength was but weakness. He had to learn this before he could go on as a servant of Christ. King David, King Hezekiah, and many others, emphasize the same lesson for us. Past successes, past service, the memory of strength given for times of trial—all these things need to be carefully guarded or they will lead to present forgetfulness that we are just as weak as ever and need the strength of Another.

We can all say that we have been marvelously helped in many ways. How wonderfully the Lord has helped us, borne with us, cared for us; through

what trials He has brought us, what temptations He has enabled us to resist, what service, it may be, He has permitted us to perform! We thankfully acknowledge it all, but oh, let us not get strong in the wrong sense. Let us not presume upon all this, and lose our reverence and our sense of dependence upon Him who alone is our sufficiency. Humility, to be truly that, is an abiding thing. The moment we forget that we are nothing, we may well fear some leprous sign to remind us that we have left our true position. May the Lord keep us truly humble and we will ever be marvelously helped, for that is His delight; but He cannot use those who are strong in their own strength.

SCRIPTURE AND ITS PART IN EDUCATION.

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

(Continued from page 69.)

HERE, then, is our provision. If we turn once more to consider our lesson-book, we find in it the perfect guidance on the part of God in men led of the Spirit, as the apostle says, to "speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13); and thus the prophets of old, as again we are taught (1 Pet. i. 10, 11), had to "inquire and search diligently" as to what was in their own prophecies, the Spirit of God leading them to express what was entirely beyond even their own understanding of it. This is the pattern of the Book which is in our hands now, the Book of books, as we may surely say, the Word of God, as in this sense we rightly call it, not because it is not instrumentally the word of man also, not because

there is not in it a very clear and decided human element, but because God has, nevertheless, been over all and in it all to guide in such a way as He alone can guide, so that we might have perfectly what He means to convey,—that this might not be taken from us by any defect in the way of communication.

And so competent is this Word, that in those days to which we look back, when men spoke consciously by the Spirit in a way that has now passed from us, yet everything was to be judged by those around according to that Word which was in all their hands. As to this, the principle was always maintained that nothing was to be added to it, as nothing was to be taken from it. Let us notice, therefore, that the indwelling of the Spirit in us is in no wise to set aside the word of God as that by which alone all truth is communicated to us. As the Spirit gave the Word, so it is by the Spirit that the Word is effectually given to our souls also, truly certified and made good there. Here then is our provision; here is how we are equipped for the school of God; and all this is simply and absolutely for all that will seek it from God, for all that will seek it in God's only way, which is through Christ Himself. Of the whole Book, Christ is the centre; and more, if it be more, of all creation Christ is the centre too. "All things were created," says the apostle, "by Him and for Him" (Col. i. 16). Thus it is plain that creation itself (the natural sciences, therefore,) cannot really be understood apart from Him who is the living Centre of the whole. The mind that is in all is the mind of Christ, and creation without Christ is thus mindless, powerless to be realized by the mind of man. Take what is

thought to be the great perplexity in it, what people call now, the "struggle for life," and the preying of one thing upon another. It is this very thing which makes the book of creation so suited for us to-day. That which we find in our own souls and in the world of men around us, is thus found everywhere throughout nature, and only if read in this way does it become everywhere for us the object-lesson which it ought to be. Scripture must interpret this also for us, for no picture interprets itself, and thus how necessary that the Spirit of God should be in us, in order that we should understand aright what creation teaches! Here is necessarily, therefore, the foundation of all science so far as science has to include the reason of things and not the mere method. Science is seeking to content itself simply with the method, and for many, the reason is to be ruled out. But thus science itself can yield nothing but despair to him who cannot find the satisfaction of his soul in a godless and therefore mindless nature. Science has here no longer any reason for its own existence, and the lesson most surely learned by its best student must be a lesson of despair.

F. W. G.

(To be Continued.)

WHEN the will of God is not manifested, our wisdom often consists in waiting until it should be. It is the will of God that, zealous of good works, we should do good always; but we cannot go before the time; and the work of God is done perfectly when it is He who does it.—J. N. D.

LORD OF THE DEAD AND LIVING.

THE apostle had been speaking in the fourteenth chapter of Romans of the privilege and responsibility of receiving those weak saints whose consciences did not allow them that latitude in which others felt more free to indulge. He says that neither eating nor abstinence from it commends us to God, and that it is utterly unbecoming to the Christian either to despise a weak brother or to judge a strong one. We are all the servants of Christ. To our own Master we stand or fall, and He alone is able to make us stand. If one is enjoying the sense of the Lord's presence and His authority, whether he eat or not, it is to the Lord; whether he regard the day or not, it is to the Lord. Thanksgiving and worship form the happy background of his life.

The apostle, passing from the special application of this principle to what is more general, then says: "For none of us liveth unto himself and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord, so that living or dying, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). Here the great simplicity of the truth is emphasized that we are no longer our own. Life and death sum up, as we might say, the whole of human existence—life upon this earth, and death which removes us to another scene. All, then, that is included in the present life comes beneath the loving sway of our blessed Lord, and well may we thank God that the portals into that world, which is to unbelief so dark and hopeless, will usher us into a scene

where still the sway of our blessed Lord is undisputed and unhindered.

The apostle goes on to say that Christ has entered into all the circumstances of life and death in order that He might be Lord of all. Christ both died and rose, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. How much indeed that means for us,—the death and resurrection of Christ, applying not only to the knowledge of all circumstances in which it is possible for us to be brought, but, as well, to a most perfect redemption effected through that death. He has taken away the sting of death which sin was; He has borne the curse of death, the judgment of God; He has made it so completely subservient to His own blessed will that the dread word is scarcely appropriate for the Christian now. It is rather "sleep." And truly we can say in a way that the disciples did not mean it: "Lord if he sleep, he shall do well." "Whether we die, we die unto the Lord." How sweet it is to think of this! Death is but the servant that will open the door that introduces us into the immediate presence of Him whom we have learned to love, though we have not seen Him. Will there be aught of shrinking? Can there be any terror? Will there not be full and perfect joy as we find ourselves present with the Lord, which is far better?

But our blessed Lord is risen as well. He is Lord of the dead and, as risen, of the living as well. The life which we now live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. We have already in faith entered upon resurrection-ground and are alive to Him forevermore. How this simplifies the whole matter of our conduct in this world! We live, but it is no longer the earthly

life which we should live, but that risen life in association with Him who has gone on high, as the apostle so beautifully puts it in the third of Colossians: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Our members which are upon the earth are to be mortified. All the relationships of our earthly life are to be transfigured by the fact that as a heavenly people we are associated with One who is the Lord of the living—a risen Lord. Will this not give us a power in our daily walk that cannot be described? The Lordship of Christ will not be a yoke "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear," but rather a power to make us strong for Him.

Let us seek to apply this in the simplest kind of way. Is Christ, Lord of the dead and of the living, the same Lord? What is the occupation, what are the thoughts of those who are resting with Him, their Lord, in glory? Oh, how completely He absorbs; how there is nothing but that which is of Christ in all! And is He not the same Lord of the living? Will not this control and actuate us in all our lives? There are no details which are left to self-will, nothing that we cannot look into His face and ask His mind about. What a Master He is, how gentle, how considerate of His people's needs, how thoughtful of their welfare! What a delight it is to be under His sweet and happy sway! But, ah, should temptation come, should selfishness assert itself, how His Lordship over the whole life checks at once and leads the honest soul to judge and confess the least departure from the place of entire subjection to His holy and blessed will!

May it be ours, dear brethren, to learn more and

more of this absolute Lordship of our blessed Saviour! He is Lord of all indeed. One day every knee shall bow to Him. It is our honor that we are privileged to do so now when He is still rejected by earth.

LESSONS FROM THE DIVINE ORDER IN CREATION.

THERE is a parallel between the order of things in the first chapter of Genesis and other portions of Scripture of which 2 Timothy, for instance, furnishes an example. Dividing the six days into two parts of three days in each—a recognized division—the first three are marked by *separation*, and the second three by *furnishing*.

In the first three: day is separated from night; the waters above from the waters below; and the sea from the land. In the second three: the heavens are furnished with the sun, moon and stars; the sea and the land with fishes and with fowls; the earth with cattle and creeping things, and finally with man.

This of course is divine order in general; and so therefore in 2 Timothy chap. ii, we have "depart from iniquity," that the servant may be sanctified and ready, "to every good work;" and in chap. iii. by the knowledge of the "Holy Scriptures" the man of God is furnished "unto every good work," as the phrase is really in each case.

Thus the mind is impressed afresh with the perfections of God's word and ways in every detail.

One may notice also, though not in immediate connection with our subject, that each alternate

day's work reaches to things above. On the second day the waters "above" get their place; on the fourth day, the sun, moon and stars; and on the sixth day, the man and the woman are assigned the place of rule over all the earth.

The very fact that we have to take the man and woman as typical of Christ and the Church ruling over the millennial earth to complete the suggestion, is also a lesson. That is, we know by Scripture elsewhere that Adam and Eve are a type of Christ and the Church, and then in the present consideration we are forced to view them typically to get the harmony suggested in the alternate days; for otherwise the second and fourth days would lead the mind to things "above" and the sixth day would not, just at a point where we would expect that it should. But the type explains the difficulty, and gives a harmonious lesson.

That is, the second and fourth day's work say to us, Look for something heavenly on the sixth day; and as we have seen it is found in the type.

If on the second day, the waters above suggest the second dispensation (that after the flood), when in the covenant with Noah government was committed to man, we have before us what will utterly fail at last.

So the fourth day presents, in the moon, the defective witness in the Church. But in the sixth day we have at last that which is perfect in the millennial reign of Christ and the Church.

May the perfection of God's work and ways stir our hearts to diligently seek Him.

E. S. L.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

OUR readings during this month are the book of Joshua in the Old Testament with the epistle to the Ephesians, and John's three epistles with his Gospel, in the New. There may not seem to be very much in common between these portions, but there are certain thoughts which underlie them all, to say nothing of the fact that, forming part of that one word of God, they are all in divine harmony.

We will first look at Joshua. The general subject is the inheritance of the people in the land of Canaan. The wilderness has been traversed, and they are brought into the place which God had promised to give them. But they have to fight to get possession of what is theirs, as the land is occupied by the nations "more and mightier than themselves." But God goes before them, and in His power the heathen are cast out and a resting place for His ransomed people is found. All this is most rich in typical teaching. In fact, every portion of it yields most beautiful illustrations of our spiritual inheritance and the warfare of faith which is needed to enter practically upon it.

The main divisions of the book are very simple:

1. (Chaps. i.-xii.) The entrance into the land and the overthrow of the enemy.
2. (Chaps. xiii.-xxiv.) The division of the inheritance to the various tribes—the boundaries and cities falling to each.

Let us look at some of the smaller divisions of this first portion.

In chap. i. we see Joshua taking the place of Moses, and commanded to lead the people across Jordan into the land. The prominent features are God's command and promise and the people's courage and obedience.

Chap. ii. is the testimony of the spies and the beautiful gospel picture of Rahab saved in the doomed city of Jericho.

Chaps. iii.—v. give us the great typical teachings of our death and resurrection with Christ as seen in the passage of the Jordan dry-shod. Jordan is the river of death and judgment flowing down into eternal doom. As those waters were arrested when touched by the feet of the priests who bore the ark, so Christ, our Priest, entering into death and judgment for us, arrested its course and opened a way whereby every one who believes in Him can pass over into that spiritual inheritance which has been given to us.

The epistle to the Ephesians, which is our study in the New Testament, unfolds this in a most blessed way, and therefore is a most suited accompaniment to the book we are studying.

The twelve stones in the bottom of the river show that we are dead with Christ; those set up on the banks of the Jordan, at Gilgal, tell us that we are risen with Him, and, as we might say, seated in Him in the heavenly places. The passover and circumcision at Gilgal speak of the practical application of the sentence of death to what we are, thereby teaching us the lesson of "no confidence in the flesh," which is the only power in which we can be victorious in the conflict which we are now called to face.

In chap. vi. and onward we have the account of the various conflicts and victories over the enemies which met them; and we, too, after we have entered upon our spiritual inheritance, find, as the epistle to the Ephesians shows us, that it is not a path of ease, but one of conflict, which meets us. We are not in heaven itself, but in heavenly places; that is, where we can enjoy heavenly blessings; but Satan and his host will do all in their power to keep us from the enjoyment of these, just as the Ca-

naanites sought to resist the children of Israel. Here Jericho speaks of the world and its allurements, most fruitful source of danger, especially to young Christians. Faith, however, following Christ in His victorious path, overcomes the world, and the walls of Jericho fall after they are compassed seven days (chap. vi.).

Chaps. vii. and viii. Ai and Achan show how the smallest things will disclose an unjudged state, which must be met before further victory can be assured. The wives of the Gibeonites (chap. xi.) remind us of those wives of the devil of which Ephesians speaks. Alas, how many an alliance is formed by the people of God because they asked not counsel at His mouth!

In chaps. x.—xii. we have an unbroken series of victories. The country is swept by the victorious nation under the leadership of Joshua, and the enemy is either annihilated or so completely cowed as to offer no further resistance; and so it will be for faith when it remembers to go forth to battle from Gilgal, and to return there after every victory.

Time will not permit us to enter upon the second half of the book, save to say that it is the portion most neglected, and yet full of the richest spiritual lessons. Unquestionably the portion of the tribes corresponds to the spiritual meaning of each, and each single city suggests some special spiritual blessing which is appropriate to the spiritual state suggested by the tribe. We can only urge our readers to the prayerful study of this portion, and they will find most rich results.*

Passing to the New Testament, we will take up Ephesians first, as being most closely linked with Joshua. Its six divisions unfold the spiritual teachings of the Old Testament book in a very beautiful way.

* The notes in the Numerical Bible upon Joshua are most rich and helpful here.

1. (Chap. i. 1-14.) God's counsels of blessing in Christ, who is Head over all things to His Church.

2. (Chaps. i. 15-ii. 10.) Faith's link with Christ in death and resurrection. (The passage of the Jordan.)

3. (Chaps. ii. 11-iv. 16.) The mystery of the Church, now for the first time made known. It is the house of God, indwelt by the Spirit, and the body of Christ, of which He is Head and all His people members.

4. (Chaps. iv. 17-v. 21.) The walk and testimony answering to the heavenly position.

5. (Chaps. v. 22-vi. 9.) Responsibilities of earth met by a heavenly people. It is most important to note this portion. It is sometimes charged that "heavenly truth" unfits for practical life. Here we see the reverse. Instructions are given to children, parents, masters and servants, which are in perfect accord with the heavenly nature of the wondrous truths previously unfolded.

6. (Chap. vi. 10-24.) Conflict with Satan in the heavenly places.

There must be ever the victory of faith if we are to enjoy that which is our own. How many live as paupers who should walk this earth as princes and victors!

Passing, next, to John's Gospel and his Epistles, we will only remark that, as the epistle to the Ephesians gives us the heavenly *places*, so John's writings give us the heavenly *Person*, the Son of God Himself.

There are three main divisions to this Gospel:

1. (Chaps. i.-ii. 22.) The Person of the Son of God made flesh. The Only Begotten of the Father. Here Christ is mainly seen alone.

2. (Chaps. ii. 23-xvii.) Christ is here seen as the Communicator of eternal life to those who believe upon Him. This portion is made up chiefly of some incident which forms the basis, and the resulting conversation, usually with those who oppose the truth. Thus, we have Nicodemus and new birth (chap. iii.) ; the water of life given

to the needy sinner, as seen in the woman of Samaria (chap. iv.); deliverance from judgment, and resurrection for those who believe upon Him (chap. v.); Christ the Bread of life (chap. vi.); Christ the source of joy (chap. vii.); Christ the only Light, and yet in perfect grace (chap. viii.). Chaps. ix. and x. show Him as the Shepherd who leads His own out of the Jewish fold, for blessing, to Himself. In chap. xi. we see Him as the Giver of resurrection life, and in chap. xii. coming again in glory; while chaps. xiii.—xvii. give us the wondrous provision for the way in this world for His beloved people. Here, at last, opposition is excluded, and the Lord unhinderedly pours out the treasures of His love in the ears of His disciples, closing with pouring out the desires of His heart in the ears of His Father.

3. (Chaps. xviii.—xxii.) The last portion shows us how all this is made good for us through the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord.

The Epistles of John fittingly connect with the Gospel. Without attempting to point out the divisions here, it will be enough to say that the first epistle gives us the practical exhibition of what eternal life is in the believer. There is a wondrous mingling here of the great truths as to God, His love and light on the one hand, and the believer, on the other, being now a partaker of the divine nature, exhibits the same characteristics in the world, where all is against him. Light and love may thus be said to be the themes.

The second epistle emphasizes the truth of light, requiring faithful discernment and refusal of all that is not Christ, even where it professes to be; while the third epistle emphasizes love, and shows its practical fruits in the care for those who are hearing the message of a precious Christ to a Gentile world that knows Him not.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

Chapter iv.

GOD'S MERCY TO HIS HUMBLER PEOPLE.

(1 Sam. vii.)

(Continued from page 91.)

BUT we may be sure that the enemy will never permit any recovery to God without making some special effort to hinder it. So, when the Philistines hear of this gathering of Israel, they go up against them. Are they not their slaves? Can they allow that which, while a manifestation of weakness, may lead to something else? And so with our spiritual foes. Satan will not object to the people of God dwelling upon evil and being so filled with it that they lose all power to judge it, but there is one thing that he always resists with all his energy and cunning, and that is a gathering together before God for humiliation and prayer. He abhors this. Formalism abhors it. Philistinism in all its forms dreads seeing the people of God humbled in His presence. This will explain why the hour of prayer and searching of heart before God is so often interrupted by the intrusion of things which distract and hinder the soul. How often have we found individually, and unitedly too, that there were special difficulties in the way of getting low before God! This is the Philistine hindrance to God's work amongst us. Various reasons will often be given. It will be said that there is no hope, on the one hand, or no need on the other, of such an exhibition; that we had better be getting to work rather than humbling ourselves and doing nothing. This is ever a Philistine

device to hinder a return to God and deliverance from formalism. Let us be on our guard; and as the apostle could say, "We are not ignorant of his devices," let us not be so easily duped by the wiles of the adversary.

The children of Israel are terrified at this array of the enemy. Their old masters are still that to them, and with consciences that remind them of their own unworthiness and failures, they do not seem to have the faith to lay hold upon God in face of the enemy; and yet there is a holding to Him, feeble though it be. They realize the need and the value of prayer. So they say to Samuel: "Cease not to cry to the Lord our God for us that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." They had indeed turned to Him, and though it is but a child's feeble cry of weakness, what child ever cried to a mother without moving her heart? what child, failing and weak and unworthy though he may be, ever cried to God without getting an answer? There had been a time when they would save themselves out of the hand of the Philistines. That has passed. The humbling lesson had been learnt. They have turned now to Him from whom alone their help can come, and not even the ark, (that badge of His throne) but divine power itself in the midst of a self-judged people is their only hope.

There is more yet; for Samuel, nearest to God and therefore knowing His mind, not merely intercedes, but "took a sucking lamb and offered it as a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord." Well he knew that the one way of approach, the only ground of merit, was sacrifice; and though himself not the priest, yet here in the place of the priest, he offers the burnt-

offering to God, on the ground of which he can add his prayers. This lamb, of course, speaks to us of that "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," though here not as the sin-offering, but as the burnt-offering,—Christ in His devotedness to God unto death, the Lamb without blemish or spot, whose life had proved Him personally well-pleasing and acceptable to God, and therefore whose death could be a Substitute for the disobedience and sin of His people.

Thus they have had, we might say, a threefold ministry. The Word has searched their hearts and brought them to repentance. The priestly intercession and sacrifice of Samuel have opened the way for God's power to be manifested, and, as judge, Samuel has taken the place of leader amongst the people. In all this, he no doubt foreshadows what Christ is in perfection for His people, the One who has brought home to our hearts the word of God by His Spirit, whose one sacrifice and all-availing intercession as our High Priest ever speak for us to God, and who as Leader carries us on to victory—the Prophet, Priest, and King.

Now let the Philistines draw near if they dare. They are meeting no more a boastful people, whether strong or weak. Their controversy is now not with Israel, but with Israel's God, and therefore the mighty thunder of the Lord is the answer to their proud assault. They are discomfited and smitten before Israel, and now the victory becomes a rout; the Philistines are pursued from Mizpah and all the way to Ebenezer. How significant that place becomes to them,—not of previous defeat (chap. vi. 1), but giving its own meaning now, "hitherto hath the

Lord helped us." Have *we* not known something of this? And what a joy it is to be able to triumph in our God in the very face of those enemies which once have been our masters and to whom, hopeless, we had rendered, even though unwilling, yet a servile obedience!

The victory is complete and permanent, and all during the days of Samuel's faithful ministry the enemy came no more into the land. What was there to hinder this from becoming an abiding permanence? Was not the deliverance under Samuel as complete, humanly speaking, as could be desired? Surely there is but one answer to this, and if we enquire why then there was ever subsequent bondage to these very enemies, the simple answer must be, No leader like Samuel and no bowing to his judgment like that at Mizpah. It is very important to notice that this deliverance under Samuel was not temporary in its nature. It was no make-shift. Other lessons, other sins and weaknesses amongst the people brought out the need of fresh deliverers. The great, all-prevailing truth had to be learnt in fresh ways, and, above all, that which was external and partial in Israel according to the flesh had to be fully manifested,—else Samuel was indeed another Moses, under whose rule, as type of Christ, the people might have gone on happily, recognizing none but God as their Ruler, and their guide him who spoke for God.

It is comforting, too, to see the recovery that takes place. Cities which had long been under Philistine sway, now that their power is broken over the nation, are restored. Peace follows as a result. So for us. If we in any way repeat the experience of Israel

at Mizpah, there will be not merely a deliverance from present foes, but a restoration of many of those blessings, much of that spiritual truth which we have felt and enjoyed practically. "Cities to dwell in" will be restored to us and our coasts will be enlarged.

We now see the government of Samuel after the enemy has been thrust out of the land. He judges Israel all the days of his life. What a beautiful life it is; begun, we may say, in the heart of his mother before his birth—a man dedicated to God and His service; who in childhood heard His voice and obeyed it; who, as he grew, became more and more the suited instrument as the messenger for God; the first of the prophets—of that long line of spiritual and faithful witnesses who, during all the years of Israel's darkness and apostasy, yea, even of captivity, witnessed for Him, sought to bring back an alienated people, or failing in this, turned their gaze to Him who should come, the true Prophet, as the true King, and restore peace and blessing to the nation. But what a privilege to be a Samuel in dark days like these! May we not covet it for ourselves in our measure and station?

We have seen the special scene of judgment at Mizpah, but this was to continue, a thing that we often lose sight of. There must not merely be one act of self-judgment, but our whole lives are to come under the light of God's truth. The practical Word is to be applied to our ways. Samuel had four places in his circuit where he went from year to year to judge Israel; Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and Ramah where his home was. There surely must be instruction in these names and the associations connected with them. They are well known in Israel's history.

Bethel is "the house of God;" all judgment must begin there. There is no power for judgment until we are in His holy presence. Judgment must begin, too, at the house of God, for holiness becometh that house forever. Here it was where God revealed Himself to Jacob at the first and here when he had forgotten, for his family, that holy separation which should ever mark the home of the saint, he was bidden to return: "Arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there."

The next place was Gilgal, the place of the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt. Here Israel had encamped on passing Jordan and coming into the land. As soon as they put their foot upon their heritage, they had to make themselves sharp knives for circumcision, and thus to roll away the reproach of Egypt, the badge of the world which was upon them. So for us, Gilgal follows Bethel. This world is judged and its reproach rolled away. Circumcision is practically applied with the sharp knife of divine truth. The sentence of death is remembered afresh and what the cross means for self. Here is the place of power indeed. Here we lay aside the livery of the world and shake off its yoke. We are now God's freemen, ready to do battle for all that He has given us in our goodly inheritance.

Next comes Mizpah, "the watch-tower." There has been that sense of God's presence suggested by Bethel, that judging of self at Gilgal where we have learnt, as the true circumcision, to have no confidence in the flesh; but how prone we are to forget, how easily do we glide back into the world, and need to be afresh reminded of what we thought we should never forget! The watch-tower, then, is needed to

watch against the wiles of the enemy, to guard against that declension to which we are so prone. The very fact of our having been at Gilgal implies a danger of our getting away from it, or losing its holy lesson. We need to be on our guard. Many a saint has fallen because he forgot this obvious lesson and failed to meet the divine Judge at Mizpah. Let us watch and be sober.

Lastly he returns to Ramah, "the height," which suggests that exalted place on high of our true Judge, the Lord Jesus, where His home is. He has gone on high. He would lead His people there. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is," and so, as His abiding place is there, we are to learn to abide in our hearts there also. We are to let the light of that heavenly position where Christ is, and where we are, in Him, judge our "members which are upon the earth," and which we can thus mortify (Col. iii.). The circuit of judgment is not complete until this heavenly character has been stamped upon it. It is, of course, very similar to Bethel, but there the thought is simply the presence of God. Ramah would suggest, in its height, the elevation, that heavenly character which should mark His people: "Our citizenship is in heaven."

Beloved, shall we not crave for one another the the benefit of this fourfold judgment?—this sense of the presence of God in His own holiness; this judging and refusing of self; this sober, careful, humble watching, and the separate, heavenly character which comes from entering fully into the fact that Christ is not in the world nor of it, and so neither are *we* of the world. Here is the place of worship. Here Samuel

dwelt, and here it is our privilege to dwell and share, with an exalted Christ, in the sweet savor of that sacrificial altar upon which He offered Himself a sacrifice for a sweet smelling savor unto God. In the value of that sacrifice, Israel was safe, shielded from her enemies. So are we.

FAITH IN CHRIST HAS THE BENEFIT OF
HIS WORK—EVERY BELIEVER IS BLEST
WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS
IN CHRIST.

IN Rom. iii. 25 the words "through faith in His blood" may seem to some to convey the thought that besides faith in Christ, or with it, one must appropriate for oneself the value of His blood in order to be justified; and therefore that one who believes on Christ, but has not yet realized for his own soul the value of the blood of Christ, though born again is not yet justified; whatever other Christian blessings he may lack besides—in the minds of those who so reason.

Is this the doctrine of Scripture? We are happy to think that it is not, but rather that we have the precious assurance, from Scripture, that every believer on Christ is justified and possessed of all Christian blessings: he needs only, by teaching, to be introduced into the enjoyment of the things that are his. That is a very different thing, and full of the joy of grace.

"Through faith in His blood" is translated in the Revised Version "through faith, by His blood;" "with," or "in His blood," in a foot-note, giving

thus the preference to "by His blood;" and the same phrase is so translated in Heb. x. 19: "boldness . . . by the blood of Jesus"—"in" it, literally—in the effect and value of it—that is, by it.

Thus we may say "through faith" is, as it were, a thought by itself, giving the principle on which we are justified; and then "by His blood" gives the ground. Afterwards follows the application—"that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," but the application is briefly stated. Is not the prominent teaching in Rom. iii. about the ground of acceptance, while in Rom. iv. is more prominently the application? so that "by His blood" in Rom. iii., in the portion where it is found, would be in harmony with the subject—the ground on which God can justify the sinner. Rom. iii. thus reminds of the Lord's lot in Lev. xvi., the goat that was slain and its blood put upon the mercy-seat. For the people's lot, the sins of the people were confessed upon the head of the scape-goat, suggesting to us the application of Rom. iv., "He was delivered for our offences;" and we know He was "raised again for our justification." Therefore Rom. iii. does not raise the question or suggest the thought of the believer's realization of the value of the blood of Christ, but rather of the value of that blood before God, who, because of it, is just in justifying "him that believeth in Jesus." And this concluding statement confirms what has been said. The believer "in Jesus" is justified. His apprehensions and appropriations may or may not be clear and bright, but if a believer "in Jesus" he is justified. Is not that the teaching of Scripture, and of this scripture before us?

It may be said, How do we know that any one is

justified if they are not assured as to it themselves? But the point is, What does Scripture teach? Happily for us, we can be assured ourselves, and we can assure others that, if believers in Jesus, we are justified. Scripture does not teach that one who believes on Jesus will at once know all he possesses, nor that he must appropriate those blessings that he may have them, which would, of course, be confusion and an impossibility, for I must be assured that a thing is mine to enjoy it, but it leads us by teaching into the enjoyment of what is ours, of what are our common possessions in Christ. Therefore the assurance of justification and of the present possession of eternal life, and of a new-creation existence in Christ, is taught the believer by the Word. That he needs to be taught it is plain, because he *is* taught it. And this corresponds with experience plainly, for every believer has to be led on from doubts and fears and bondage into peace and liberty by the truth; but that truth simply assures him of what is already his in Christ.

Scripture does not teach, therefore, that one may be a believer on Christ and yet lack justification, or lack being "in Christ," or lack the indwelling of the Spirit, until he grasps the truth as to these things; but it assures all believers on Christ that all these things are theirs, and ministers them to us all for our soul's enjoyment and establishing.

Thus we may turn away from ourselves to God, from earth to heaven, from poor human experience for a foundation, to Christ in the glory of God. We have all in Him, and we can rejoice that these blessings are common to all who are "in Christ;" and "in Christ" all *are* who have life, who are born

again; for such are "alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

And "all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 2) are told "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 19). The believer, the first moment of his conversion, the first moment of life, is one who calls on the name of the Lord.

It is true that it is one who is already born again who receives the Spirit to dwell in his body; but no delay in that reception is supposed, and therefore all believers—according to the doctrine of Scripture—are spoken of as not only born again, but as indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Let us rejoice afresh and unhinderedly in the grace of our God and in the fulness of blessings we have in Christ, and that we can freely minister these things to all believers as their common and inalienable possessions in Christ. Thus, doubts and legal shadows are scattered by the light. But we need to use "the sword of the Spirit" and to "fight the good fight of faith," and to walk in the truth, if we would hold it fast.

Justification, life in Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (by which we share in the baptism of the Spirit—for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"), risen with Christ, seated in Him in heavenly places—none of these blessings are things to be attained to by the believer, to be possessed. They are his from the first, and therefore to be enjoyed. Satan would have us make a merit of *attain-
ing* these things, and so get us to rob God of glory and our own souls of blessing; but the Word assures us of our possessions, that by it—by the We

we may enjoy our goodly portion, and be built up in the knowledge of the Lord.

Why is it so hard for us to receive the fulness of God's grace in Christ?—why do we allow Satan to hinder us thus? "All things are yours." Let us freely join in the word of praise, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 3).

Has He, then, so blest us, or has He not? How can we repeat this verse if He has not? If He has, let us repeat it with the heart, and never again doubt it? Then we will be free to enjoy the land that flows with milk and honey, and to feed upon the old corn of the land, which is Christ, who came from heaven and has gone back to heaven, and who is coming to take us to be where He is, and to behold the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 24, 25).

That we have all things in Christ, and that nothing is left us but to rejoice, seems too much—too good to be true; but let us note that, far from being an easy path for self-indulgence and self-complacency, it is just when we submit to grace, and rejoice in the Lord, that we begin our proper experience in the school of God. He must deal with us, and chasten and rebuke, but through all He will lead the soul into unthought-of joy in Himself, and new delights in His word and ways. Thus there is the brightening prospect of Phil. iii., and the song of praise from the hilltops of the truth of the Ephesian and Colossian epistles, and of all Scripture.

E. S. L.

"WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST."

(Phil. iii. 20.)

"**W**E look for the Saviour," the Christ, blessed Lord,
Who will come for His saints, we are told in His
word,

From the right hand of God, where He sits on the throne,
And waits for the day when He'll come for His own.

"We look for the Saviour," who left His bright home,
Was obedient to death, that vile sinners might come
Unto God through His Son,—the dear Son of His love,
At whose name all must bow, in earth or above.

"We look for the Saviour," He who bore on the tree
All our sins in His body, that we might go free
From death and the judgment due us for our sin;
Whose blood makes the vilest all spotless within.

"We look for the Saviour," our perfect High Priest,
Who on high intercedes for us—even the least;
Who is fitting a mansion, preparing a crown;
Who in God's perfect time will come for His own.

"We look for the Saviour!" Lord Jesus, bestow
Upon each one Thy grace, that we ever may show
To the world, such reflection of Thee and Thy love,
That sinners shall turn to the Saviour above!

"We look for the Saviour;" the sound shall soon come
Of the voice of the archangel calling us home;
At the noise of His shout what a deep joyous thrill
Of love and contentment each bosom will fill!

Forever with Jesus! no more to depart
From His presence, but know all the love of His heart;
And forever we'll gaze on His own blessed face,
Forever we'll sing of His mercy and grace.

Forever, forever! oh, how our hearts grieve
At the long separation: we would this world leave,
And caught up in the clouds meet the Lord in the air.

"Oh, hasten, Lord Jesus, we long to be there!" F.

"ONE ANOTHER."

IN the matter of salvation it cannot be too clearly and strongly put that no one can come between the soul and Christ. Saving faith and repentance are individual things, as new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of each one singly. It is to be feared that in the effort to secure converts this may be overlooked. Great crowds flocking to hear popular and attractive preachers, even where a certain measure of the truth is preached, are not always a sign of the most effectual work. Moving narratives which touch the emotions, sweet melodies of gospel hymns, even earnest and importunate appeals, while perfectly right in themselves, may, if not properly safeguarded, sweep large numbers on the crest of emotional waves into a profession which is not justified by the after experience.

Far be it from us to say a single word derogatory to earnest effort, but we do feel increasingly the absolute importance of remembering that the stupendous work of salvation cannot be effected by twentieth century energy. God reserves, and ever will, for Himself alone, the prerogative of introducing sinners into His own holy presence by the power of His word and the Holy Spirit. Let it be ours to be so obliterated that we shall simply be the channels to convey God's blessed message to perishing souls. There would be less cause to mourn over backsliders and false professors? were greater care given not to intrude human energy into the domain of the Spirit of God. Does some one say that this blocks the wheels of gospel effort and causes the hands to hang down in indifference? We are sure that none who

know what the presence of God is will dare make such a remark. It is unintentionally a slur upon the power and willingness of the Holy Spirit.

The same is also true to a great extent in connection with the life of individual communion with God of the soul. If private prayer and reading of God's word, and the daily exercise of faith, are neglected, it will be found that all the social side of our Christian life is incapable of making up the deficiency. There must be the walk with God as though there were no one else in the world but ourselves.

This being recognized as true, we can now take up the other side, which is of the greatest importance, and speak of our mutual relationships as Christians. It is striking and strange that where one side of truth is neglected, even though the other side may be in a sense exaggerated, yet its true bearing is lost. Thus to-day, where the inner life is so largely ignored, the mutual life is equally disregarded; for, after all, great concourses of Christians, conventions, and the good-fellowship of hearty greetings and pleasant intercourse, savor rather of this world's gatherings than of that sweet and quiet growth which the word of God indicates. Let us take up some of the passages of His precious word which bring out mutual relationships.

It is important, first of all, to see that there is nothing of a voluntary character, as we might say, in the relationship of God's people. There is no thought of "joining the Church" in Scripture. Thanks be to God, He has not left that to our volition. No wonder that where "the church of our choice" is made the basis of our fellowship there should be the multiplicity of denominations which are the sorrow of

every Christian heart. No, God has made Church-membership an expression of His own sovereign will, and an organic, vital connection which cannot be broken. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. iv. 4). The blessed truth is here seen that the same life, the same activity, permeates the entire body; every believer is united by the Holy Spirit to Christ in glory, and that same vital connection is established with all His brethren. How precious, and yet how searching a truth! Who dare dispute the connection with Christ? Now, how unspeakably precious is the thought that our bond of union with Him in glory is a divine one, the presence of the Holy Spirit of God! While this is an added truth to the fact that we are also individually partakers of the divine nature by the new birth, yet it is closely allied with it. The two cannot be separated in the present dispensation. But how many of us realize that the link with Christ is no stronger than with one another? We are persuaded that if this truth be grasped, or, rather, grasps us, it will work a revolution in our thoughts and ways.

Growing out of this is the simple fact that we are members of one another, because members of the same body (Eph. iv. 25). "We being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another" (Rom. xii. 5). A most comprehensive and beautiful expression of what this means is found in another familiar verse in Ephesians: "The Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly

joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." How varied and complete are the provisions here!

But, tempting as it is, we must not allow ourselves to be drawn from the object of our present little paper, which is not so much to enlarge upon these precious principles as to glean some practical words with which Scripture supplies us, and which will appeal to heart and conscience, we trust, in a practical way.

Perhaps the first and most obvious thought in connection with our mutual relationship is that love pervades the whole body. The epistles of John are full of this, so that we need do no more than refer to them. "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" is what Peter says. What a blessed contrast to the condition of the natural heart described in Titus iii. 3: "Hateful, and hating one another." This love is the best guide, for it is divine and not human affection, and therefore supremely subject to God in all things: "This is love, that we walk after His commandments." This explains such a passage as "Love covereth the multitude of sins," which does not mean that it seeks to "hush them up," but rather to bring them into the presence of God in intercession, and then, in faithful, gracious ministry, to touch the heart of the wrong-doer.

The spirit of love is the spirit of service. Love must find an expression for itself, and therefore is ever active. "By love serve one another" is indeed not merely the command of grace, but the instinct of the new heart. In what holy contrast is this to that

fleshly activity so faithfully depicted in the same chapter of Galatians: "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," and "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. v. 13, 15, 26).

But let us look a little in detail as to the activities of this love. We have said that love desires to serve. It is equally true that it desires companionship. We long to be with those we love, and this is most graciously provided for: "We have fellowship one with another" (1 John i. 7). This is true of those who are "in the light," where "the blood of Jesus Christ," God's Son, "cleanseth from all sin." Sin is judged in the light of God's holy presence, and His provision of grace in the blood of Christ effectually gives rest and peace there. The soul can say with the apostle, who writes, not as placing himself above other children of God, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ," and we can say the same. But the fellowship with the Father demands, may we not say, fellowship with one another as well? "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him?"

"Wherefore, receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God." This we might call the first act of acknowledgment of the link that binds us together. Reception does not merely mean to this or that. Nor are we referring to full fellowship at the Lord's table. In a day of difficulty like the present there may be details which require patient and careful dealing. Surely we are not to be indifferent to the claims of the holiness of God, nor to our responsibility to maintain precious truths which

He has entrusted to us, but there should ever be the gracious reception and recognition of every blood-bought child of God whom we can truly recognize as such. There should be, so far as possible, the acknowledgment of that common life and love upon which we have been dwelling.

Such reception as this, even where of a general character, involves added responsibilities. Do I recognize one as a child of God? Then I owe it to him, as well as to God, to seek to lead him on further in that which is our common treasure. This will at once be the delight and desire of our hearts. But how much care this involves! "Be of the same mind one toward another." Our brother may need to have many wrong thoughts corrected, and to get a view of many truths of which he has hitherto been ignorant. To be of the same mind does not mean that we are to adopt his opinions, or to allow them to go on unchecked, but to give place rather to that one mind of Christ which shall control us all. See, also, Rom. xiv. 5. It is not an easy thing to be of the same mind one toward another. It means the subjection on the part of us all to the word of God, and a readiness to bow to its authority. This is the only basis of a true spiritual unity of thought. To be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" when neither the mind nor judgment are those of God, would be, for faith, to leave the divine path for one of man. It is, alas, only too easy to reach accord in a carnal way; but to be of one mind in a divine way means the obliteration of self and the true exercise of divine love.

But reception and unity are not all. "That the members should have the same care, one for another."

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2). "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. xv. 1). Here again is the simple activity of love which seeketh not her own, but is occupied in ministering to the need of others: and oh, how much care, how much burden-bearing there can be among the saints of God! Beloved reader, we would ask, How much do you know of this in a practical way? Could we have but one petition granted in connection with these things, it would not be that God would raise up more gifted public preachers, but rather that He would lay upon us all in love the grace of burden-bearing and a loving care one for another.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things is suggested in our next quotation: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. v. 21). See, also, the similar passage in 1 Pet. v. 5, where the thought is not so much that of being subject one to another, but "be girded with humility toward one another," so to be ready to receive whatever of admonition may be offered. Connected with this, also, is the exhortation in James v. 16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." This does not mean merely going to the brother whom I may have wronged and acknowledging the fault,—this should surely be done,—but rather that confidence of love in the helpfulness of our brethren, and realizing our oneness to such a degree that we are free to open our hearts and unburden ourselves to those to whom our confidence will be as sacred as though whispered in the ear of God alone. The confessional of Rome has

so shocked the moral sense that there is an utter revulsion from the very name of confession, and yet we are persuaded that much of God's chastening would be lightened, as is suggested in the passage we have quoted, were there more of that true, hearty simplicity which would enable us to be more open with one another. It is fully recognized that this cannot be a one-sided matter. Alas, the spirit of speaking evil of one another has been all too common, and this is a most effectual check upon that exercise of true, hearty loyalty which could receive the secrets of our brethren into the silence of our own bosom to be spoken out to God alone!

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." See, also, Col. iii. 13. There are many forms of bearing a grudge, from the open and avowed enmity, with its accompanying malicious evil speaking, to that secret alienation and chill upon the heart that forms such a sad contrast to the previous "sweet counsel" which the saints took together as they went to the house of God. There is nothing sadder than to see coolness coming in where once existed the most implicit confidence and fullest love. We cry out against all this, and often in our helplessness ask, Must it be ever thus? Is there no remedy? Yes, surely, a remedy here, as for every ill to which the saints of God are subject, though an humbling one. (But who ever was humbled before God without blessing Him in their souls? Humility is, after all, the true exaltation of the soul.) The remedy is simple and clear— forbearance and forgiveness; and lest it should be thought that this forgiveness is a merely negative thing, in which we can go on in

chilling coolness toward those we have forgiven, we are reminded that the measure of it, as well as its character, is seen in the way we have been forgiven by God in Christ. As the Father's arms of love are about us, with the kiss of forgiveness, and all the joy flowing into our hearts from the sense of that, we do not dare to confound that pride which calls itself forgiveness with that exercise of divine love which meets the erring one and loves out of him the last remnants of envy or jealousy or bitterness; and so confidence is restored.

But it may be said, we must be faithful with our brother, and lead him to a true sense of his wrong. Yes indeed so, but there is nothing like love to melt the hard heart, and forgiveness of a divine character will do this. Unquestionably, if there is pride and persistence in a course of wrong-doing, faithfulness to God will forbid the exercise of that which may be struggling for expression in the heart; but this must not be confounded with that hard and unrelenting spirit which waits in all the stiffness of self-righteousness for the first signs of breaking in the other!

Where there is this forgiving, and the other exercise of which we have been speaking, how much more will there also be! We will "tarry for one another" (1 Cor. xi. 33). The strong will not rush along, feeding on high truths beyond the reach of the lambs of the flock, nor will there be the overdriving of the tender. We will "salute one another," as seen at the close of so many of the epistles. It may seem a trifle, but in the things of God nothing is that, and the intentional avoidance or willing omission of this act of brotherly love too often speaks of a coldness in the heart which is not a trifle. How fervent were

the salutations of the apostle! What love, what confidence, what winsomeness there was in it! Let us not be too superior to hearken to the admonition suggested here.

The same applies to the "hospitality which is to be used one toward another without grudging" (1 Pet. iv. 9), and to that edification and admonition which will ever find a place. (See Rom. xv. 14, xiv. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 18, v. 11.) In short, dear brethren, let us examine these precious scriptures prayerfully and carefully as to all our varied relations one to another. We need to be stirred up as to these things, lest we drift into the helpless formalism by which we are surrounded.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. x. 24).

"The distinction between the terms 'Kingdom of Heaven' and 'of God,' I apprehend is in this, that 'earth' is the natural antithesis to 'heaven,' as man is to 'God.' Hence the Kingdom of Heaven always relates to the whole scene, and is more strictly dispensational; whereas the Kingdom of God over man may be individual, and gives more the moral character. Thus you find the Kingdom of *God* is not 'meat and drink,' etc. Kingdom of Heaven could not be used here.—*Helps*, 1874.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

OUR readings during the present month are to be the book of Judges, with its companion Ruth, in the Old Testament, and Paul's epistles—1 Corinthians, Galatians, and 1 and 2 Timothy—in the New. There is a common thought in all these of responsibility as to corporate relationships, as well as departure, which we find in Judges and 2 Timothy, together with doctrinal failure, which is brought out in Galatians.

The book of Judges gives us in the main the course of declension after the death of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him. The energy of faith declines, the failure to completely drive out and annihilate the enemy is all too manifest in the alliances made with them, and the idolatry resulting therefrom. Along with this are most touching and instructive reminders of God's patient love for His poor, silly people, again and again raising up judges for their deliverance when they had involved themselves in such disaster as brought them on their faces in confession to Him.

I. (Chaps. i.-iii. 4.) This first division deals with the more general independence and rebellion of the people in failing completely to carry out the purposes of God as to their enemies. There will be seen throughout this portion how the nations were allowed to remain, under one plea or another; either because they were too strong, or because they were put under tribute and became bondsmen; but whatever the pretext, the effect is always the same. An enemy not thoroughly conquered will conquer us in the end—a principle as true for us who are in the enjoyment of our heavenly blessings in Christ as for Israel of old.

II. (Chaps. iii. 5-xvi.) In this portion we have the varied different bondages and deliverances of the people. Here the enemy in each case represents some special

form of spiritual evil, and the deliverer the divine remedy to enable us to overcome the evil. It will be well briefly to mark these various stages:

1. The rule of the king of Mesopotamia (Aram) (chap. iii. 5-11). Here it is pride, and independence of God. The deliverer is Othniel, "the lion of God," the nephew of Caleb, the whole-hearted one. This is the opposite of human independence, for where the strength is of God there is nothing in us but weakness.

2. (Chap. iii. 12-31.) The Moabites and Philistines. Here we have the incubus of profession in its various forms, and the deliverer is Ehud, "*Confession*." Reality, with its keen knife of the word of God, will put an end to mere formalism.

3. (Chaps. iv. v.) The rule of Jabin, "understanding," carnal reasoning, the worship of the intellect as contrasted with faith. The victor here is Barak, "Lightning," but led on and controlled by Deborah, "the word," suggesting together that word of God, which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Faith sings its song of triumph in chap. v.

4. (Chaps. vi.-x. 5.) The rule of Midian, "strife," the invasion of the world, with its accompanying inward and outward strifes. Worldliness eats up all the fruit of the land as the grasshoppers would. The deliverer here is Gideon, "the cutter-down," the man who learned in the secret of God's presence his own nothingness, and then went forth with all the conscious weakness, but with the power of God resting upon him, to cut down the high things, beginning with the altar and grove of Baal, in his own father's house.

5. (Chaps. x. 6-xii.) The Ammonites. These were similar to the Moabites, as being naturally related to Israel. They seem, however, to represent that spirit of rationalism which intrudes into the things of God, and may well answer in part at least to the higher criticism

of the day. The deliverer here is Jephthah, "the one who opens"—that is, the enlightener who uses the word of God aright. God's word is the great remedy for all forms of rationalistic unbelief. Jephthah's harshness is the extreme into which Satan will sometimes lead faithful men. They make no distinction between their brethren and the enemy, and slaughter all alike.

6. (Chaps. xiii.-xvi.) The Philistines, representing ecclesiastical corruption, the form of godliness without its power. Samson, "Sunlike"—"as the sun when he goeth forth in his might"—here, the nazirite, represents that separation of spirit which alone can overcome mere formality and ecclesiastical pretension. Alas, in himself Samson exemplified the reverse of all this, becoming a captive in the hands of those over whom he had so often won signal victories—a word for us.

III. (Chaps. xvii.-xxi.) The hopelessly corrupt state of the people manifest in various ways. Chaps. xvii, xviii. show the beginning of idolatry. Chaps. xix.-xxi. give the humbling results of departure from God seen in the disregard of every human tie, no matter how sacred.

The entire book will thus be seen to be the history of a downward course, with gleams of comfort wherever faith humbles itself in acknowledgment of the true condition of the people and lays hold upon the gracious provision of God.

The lovely history of the book of Ruth shows us that there was much that went on individually even during the time when as a nation Israel was taking swift downward steps. The typical lessons are here very clear and beautiful. Israel is seen as having forfeited her rights to be considered the people of God, and coming back at last, under stress of need, to the place which they had left. This is typical of the latter-day restoration of the people—Naomi, the widowed mother-in-law, representing the broken and hopeless condition of the people, and the

ing Moabitess, Ruth, the beginnings of that faith which holds upon God while acknowledging that they have claim upon Him.

The three divisions of the book are simple:

1. (Chap. i.) The loneliness of departure from God.
 2. (Chap. ii.) Help for the needy; gleanings in the fields of grace. Boaz is here a type of the risen Christ, in Him is strength."

3. (Chaps. iii. and iv.) Full redemption by the kinsman-redeemer, and every barrier to blessing set aside.

There is also a most lovely line of gospel truth running through the entire book, and many individual applications to our own souls' experience which the attentive reader will find.

1 Corinthians shows us the Church as the earthly vessel of testimony, as Ephesians presents it in its heavenly character. There are four main divisions to its sixteen chapters.

1. (Chaps. i.-x.) The exclusion of all that is not of the Church—the world, with all its wisdom (chaps. i.-ii.); the flesh, with all its corruptions (chaps. v.-vii.); and the devil, with all his wiles (chaps. viii.-x.).

2. (Chaps. xi.-xiv.) Evil having now been excluded, the fellowship of the assembly can be enjoyed—chap. xi., the Lord's Supper; xii., the activities of the body; xiii., the bond of perfectness; and xiv., the sufficiency of the Spirit in the gatherings of the saints.

3. (Chap. xv.) Resurrection and the manifestation in glory.

4. (Chap. xvi.) Exhortations and greetings of love.

The epistle to the Galatians is God's remedy for the bondage of legalism into which the saints were being altered. Its divisions are:

1. (Chaps. i. and ii.) Paul's gospel derived from and maintained in dependence upon Christ alone. Men are not to be excluded.

2. (Chap. iii.) The mutual exclusiveness of law and

faith. If we are under one, we are not under the other.

3. Chaps. iv.—v. 6.) The liberty of the Spirit and the adoption of sons. Here we have the two seeds of the bond-woman and the free—types of law and grace.

4. (Chaps. v. 7—vi. 18.) The walk in the liberty and power of the Spirit.

The epistles to Timothy are the practical provisions for one who had the care in establishing the early assemblies.

The first epistle is devoted to positive directions for the assembly; while the second, written at a time when the inevitable failure and declension had come in, gives the path for faith in separation from the abounding evil.

The divisions of 1 Timothy are:

1. (Chap. i.) The sovereignty of God and the divine basis of grace.

2. (Chap. ii.) Man's feebleness and need fully met by prayer and dependence.

3. (Chap. iii.) The holiness of God's house, and all things judged according to that.

4. (Chap. iv.) Creature apostasy creeping into the Church.

5. (Chaps. v., vi.) Admonitions and warnings and provision for the way.

The second epistle, as we have said, provides a plain path for faith when ruin has come in.

1. (Chap. i.) The unchanging character of God and the sufficiency of Christ the basis upon which all rests.

2. (Chap. ii. 1—13.) The good fight of faith. The saint is seen both as warrior and husbandman—an important thing to notice.

3. (Chap. ii. 14—26.) The great house of profession and separation from vessels to dishonor, to be "meet for the Master's use."

4. (Chap. iii.) Testing for the "perilous times."

5. (Chap. iv.) Final warnings in view of the coming day. The melancholy apostasy of individuals and salutations to faithful men.

"HE KNOWETH THEM THAT TRUST IN HIM."

(Nahum I. 7.)

THESE precious words stand out like a glittering gem from the surrounding darkness of threatened judgment upon the enemies of God. "Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies."

The prophets are largely occupied with the denunciation of sin and warning as to approaching judgment. The general impression that one would gain from a mere casual perusal would be that they are unutterably sad and depressing; but this is far from being the case, except that we are constrained to recognize the necessity for so much witnessing against evil in a world where sin has full sway, and where even the professed people of God have turned away from Him to idols. The very existence of prophecy is a recognition of the presence of evil. The prophetic office only came into use after Israel's declension and failure. But let one bow his heart to the holy action of the prophetic word, let him acknowledge the sin pointed out by the finger of divine holiness and turn to the One who smites, and he will find healing close at hand.

Thus, scattered thickly throughout the pages of the Prophets, are many precious gems of promise

and comfort for those who own the righteousness of God's judgment. It is only upon His enemies that He will pour out wrath, and He ever delights in mercy. It seems, too, that the value of these precious promises and words of comfort is enhanced by the dark background of their setting, just as the delicate snow-drop is all the more appreciated that is gathered close to the edge of some fearful precipice, near by a roaring cataract.

Let us, then, take all the comfort that we need from this precious verse. "The Lord is good." Oh, how well we know it! How He has shown His goodness, not merely in His acts of kindness and mercy to us, in common with all His creatures, nor even in His special mercies shown to us since we have known in His name all that is included under that blessed thought of a Father's care; but oh, how His goodness shines out in the *gift* of His goodness, the Son of His bosom, and all the work of redemption accomplished by Him! And this links directly with the next clause. "He is a stronghold in the day of trouble," a safe retreat from wrath, nay, even from His own judgment against sin; He has provided the shelter from that—a stronghold where naught can enter to disturb the feeblest of His people, who, like the conies dwelling in the rock, are safe hidden in this stronghold, Christ Himself. But this is a stronghold not merely for us in view of our final salvation, but in the day of trouble, whenever trouble comes, and of whatever character. We are too prone to confine our blessings to the spiritual sphere, and to exclude God from His own world. While it is true that so long as we live we are exposed to the trials which are the common lot of man,

yet it is equally true that in the time of trouble we have what the world has not, a stronghold, a place of shelter.

This brings us to the clause which is more particularly before us, "He knoweth them that trust in Him." In the Old Testament especially, the word "knoweth" means far more than mere recognition or acquaintance. It is a great comfort indeed to realize even this, that God recognizes us, that He is acquainted with those who trust in Him. But "the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." It is not merely He recognizes or is acquainted with it, but He knows it with approval. He takes delight in it, and so here he approves and marks as His own beloved people those who trust in Him. He finds delight and satisfaction in them. Is the reader of these lines one who trusts in the Lord, who knows Him first of all as a Saviour-God and place of refuge, and who, then, in the daily difficulties of life has learned to confide in Him? Then let such an one be assured that the eye of the Lord is upon him and His delight is in him.

We may think with comfort of this as we realize how small and insignificant we are in the vast world of which we form an infinitesimal part. Think of all the millions of human beings upon this earth, each one going his own way, each one engaged in his own business; most, alas, perfectly satisfied to get on without God. His providential care and general goodness are over all His works. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge; but in an especial way, amidst all the teeming crowds of earth, His eye is upon those who trust in Him.

They may be feeble and despised in the eye of

man; they may be of but little value or importance, and were they to drop out of the world would not even be missed, and yet the Lord knoweth those that trust in Him. As He sees man going on in his pride and self-sufficiency, piling up the dust of this world's wealth and seeking to get greater and greater power over his fellows, building himself, perhaps, some Babel tower of a great name here, the Lord passes all that by, to the humble home, it may be the sick bed; the tired, weary mother's care; the feeble, trembling hand of old age. Is there a heart that trusts in Him? He knows it. "He knoweth them that trust in Him," His eye rests upon them with approval and delight, and they shall never be confounded. "As unknown and yet well known." How good it is to remember this! The poor woman who came in the crowd that clustered about the Lord Jesus thought she was alone with her misery, into which no eye had looked. She reaches out the trembling hand of faith and touches the border of His garment. At once the Lord asks: "Who is it that hath touched Me?" There can be no faith that He does not recognize at once, and she not only has the blessing of healing which her faith craved, but the sweeter blessing of His own word and approval: "Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." What a blessed recompense for walking on the shadow side of life—the Lord knoweth us!

And so, when we think even of the company of His people,—thank God, a goodly number, through His grace, who have been brought out of the world, out of nature's darkness into His marvelous light,—here, too, the life of faith is as distinct before the eye of God as though each one of us were alone. The

Lord does not look upon His people as a mass, but singles out each one, marking the peculiarities, the special difficulties and needs of each, and the faith of each individual. And so, if our fellow-Christians look upon us with suspicion, if the lowly path of separation which we have been constrained by the love of Christ to take, is one despised by many who have not listened to His voice and are content to go on with much that is grieving to Him, what a comfort it is to remember that "the Lord knoweth them that trust in Him"!

A Peter, leaving the ship with its comfortable support, walking upon the disastrous waves, yea, beginning to sink, may be the object of scorn and derision to those in the ship, but not to His Lord, whose strong arm sustains him, and who recognizes the reality of the feeble faith that would come out to Him, a faith which, while He rebukes, He strengthens and rewards. And so, are we called to tread a lonely path?—do we find but little comfort of fellowship in the place where God has put us?—do many, even of His own, hold aloof from us or treat us with cold neglect?—let this sweet and precious word come home to us, with all its consolation, "He knoweth them that trust in Him."

Blessed Lord, if Thine eye be upon us, if Thine eye find delight in the feeble faith that tremblingly walks in Thy path, blessed be the trial and the difficulty, yea, and the reproach, that shut us up more and more to Thine own sufficiency and to Thy love!

Sometimes, too, the clouds gather thick about one; the way seems so dark that he knows not more than one step ahead of him. He is so overwhelmed that he loses the sense of peace and joy that should ever

fill the heart. But in the midst of all the trial he can say, with Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." He can say, with that father who brought not merely his demoniac child, but the unbelief of his own heart to the Almighty Lord, and said, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Sometimes our faith may be so sorely tried that we lose sight of it ourselves. We are conscious only of the intensity of the trial. Prayer has ceased to be articulate, and is only "groanings which cannot be uttered;" but "He that searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the Spirit." He recognizes the reality of the faith which, feeble though it be, rests upon Christ alone. That faith can never fail. "He knoweth them that trust in Him."

Sometimes God's eye alone can detect faith. We look in vain in the Old Testament for evidences of faith on the part of Sarah. We see the laughter of unbelief and the falsehood of weakness that would shrink into itself; and yet, when the Spirit of God records it all, we find there was this precious jewel of faith hidden in her heart. (See Heb. xi.)

Poor Lot seemed to have sacrificed everything in Sodom, and even when dragged out by angelic power seemed utterly bereft of any confidence in God—a shameful contrast to Abraham, the typical man of faith, living in spiritual independence, above all the trials and temptations of the way,—and yet in Lot God recognized that spark of faith, and, according to His own sure word, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench," so He has recorded for us this faith in Lot. "He knoweth them that trust in Him."

We would not for a moment give encouragement

to persons to continue in that which dishonors God, nor would we set a premium upon the weakness of faith. Surely we know that our God longs to write of each of us, as He did of the Thessalonians, "Your faith groweth exceedingly." Faith is nourished by that upon which it feeds, but there are times in the life of the tried when it will give comfort to remember that even when we have lost sight of our own faith, if we still cling to God He recognizes it. And so, returning for a moment, our faith is not recognized by the world,——"Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not;" it may not be recognized even by our fellow-Christians, and the stress may be so great that we ourselves lose the consciousness of it; but God's eye is upon us: "He knoweth them that trust in Him."

KING SAUL:

THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II.

THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter v.

THE PEOPLE'S DESIRE FOR A KING.

(1 Sam. viii.)

(Continued from page 120.)

IN a world where death reigns, all things, even the good, must come to an end. Samuel grows old. His well-spent life is reaching its close. It is then that he makes the first mistake which is recorded of him; a natural mistake indeed, and yet evidently he had not the mind of God in what he did. He makes his sons judges at Beersheba. Here we have in essence the whole principle of natural succession recognized. Because the father was a judge.

the sons must be judges. It reminds us of that plea of Abimelech, the son of Gideon: "My father [was] king," which suggests the succession from father to son, of office. The name Abimelech was a Philistine one given to their kings, as the title Pharaoh to those of Egypt, and it is really nature's substitute for dependence upon God. It is sad and strange to think of the victor over the Philistines falling into one of the snares peculiar to that people. A carnal and formal religion is based upon the principle of succession. "No bishop, no church" conveys a certain truth if it is man's church that is in question. It is through the bishops that succession comes,—remove that, and the whole fabric of Rome and sacerdotalism generally would fall to the ground.

Gideon had refused absolutely this principle, even for himself or his descendants. He had left the power with Him who had given it, God Himself: "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you" (Judges viii. 23). So, too, Moses, when told that he could not lead Israel any further than the border of the land, and that he must lay down his leadership, did not presume to name his successor, much less to think of his own son as taking up that which he had laid down. How beautiful it is to see this meekness in the great leader, who, we may well suppose, as he felt so keenly the deprivation, would have loved to temper it by the privilege of naming his successor. But self is obliterated, and nowhere does his character show more beautifully than: "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out,

and who may bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit . . . And Moses did as the Lord commanded him " (Num. xxvii. 16-22).

In this way Joshua is as directly called of Jehovah as Moses himself had been. Unquestionably he was fitted by his own association with Israel's leader to carry on the work which he laid down, and it is equally probable that Moses himself might have chosen Joshua as his successor, but the point is that he did not do so; he left it entirely to God, realizing that wisdom and power for such responsibility could not be conferred by the hands of man, but must come from Him alone in whom all power is.

Without unduly criticising the honored and faithful prophet of whom we are speaking, Samuel seems to have failed to see the immense importance of this. There is no mention of any turning to God and asking that He would select a successor. He seemed to forget the history of the judges, when, for each emergency, God Himself had raised up the judge of His own choice to deliver His people. He would do it himself. His decision is accepted by the people. No question is raised, no opposition apparently is made, but God was not in it, and so the sons show what they are. They take bribes and pervert judgment, and, instead of perpetuating the honor of God as their father had done, they indirectly bring reproach upon him, subjecting him to the humiliation of a public rebuke by the people, and weaken in their minds that faith in God's sufficiency which it had been Samuel's great effort to establish.

Nor is it necessary to suppose that these sons of Samuel were specially evil men. While reminded of them, we cannot class them with the apostates, Hophni and Phinehas, whose wickedness was of such a gross and glaring character as to bring down the immediate judgment of God. It is to be noted that they failed as *judges*, their wrong-doing confined to the exercise of that office into which they had been intruded. They took bribes and perverted judgment. Lord Bacon, whose wisdom and greatness, and, we would fain hope, his Christianity, are beyond dispute, failed in the same way. He was officially disgraced, and yet even in his own time his personal character and abilities were recognized to a certain extent. It was felt that the man was better than the officer, and that his position was responsible for bringing out that inherent weakness of moral character which might have remained in abeyance had he not been unduly tempted. At any rate, we may well conceive that Samuel's sons in other respects were fairly blameless men, and had they been allowed to continue in private life or in the path to which God Himself would have called them, might never have fallen into the sin which is the only record that we have of their lives.

All this emphasizes the importance of what we have been dwelling upon. God will never delegate to the hands of man responsibility for transmitting that which comes alone from Himself. The failure to see this has been one of the fruitful causes of all the apostasy of the professing Church from the earliest times. Man desires to have things in his own hands, and, having them there, only proves how utterly incompetent he is to administer these great and

solemn responsibilities. So the ordination of men to office but fixes the man in a position which may not be of God at all. If a man has been divinely called, he needs no human authorization; and, if not called, all such authorization is but confirming a human mistake, and paving the way for such failure as we see in Samuel's sons. This touches upon a most profound and far-reaching subject. The leaven of Samuel's mistake has permeated all Christendom until it seems heresy to dispute the principle of succession, and yet is it not a distinct denial of the presence and sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the Church to guide, control and actuate all ministry?

Returning to Samuel's mistake in thus making his sons his successors, we are led to ask how far it showed his failure to bring up his children aright. Had he unconsciously imitated the weakness of Eli, with whom he was associated in early life, and whose family failure was of such a glaring character as to be the cause of God's sorest judgments? It would hardly seem likely, for he had warning before his eyes and from the lips of God Himself. He himself in his childhood had been the messenger to unfaithful Eli as to this very matter, and he witnessed the captivity of the ark, the death of Eli's sons, and of the high priest himself, all because of this indifference. His own personal faithfulness with the people at large, his prayerfulness, forbid the thought that he was careless or indifferent as to his responsibility in his own home. On the other hand, are we not reminded in Abraham, that he would "command his household after him," and in Joshua's strong words, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord,"

that they link the family together with the father? Are we not told in the New Testament that one indispensable requisite for a leader of the people of God is that he should "rule well his own house"? Carelessness in the home would mean carelessness everywhere else, or a foolish and undue severity in just the place where it was not called for, as Eli could rebuke poor Hannah at her prayer, while his sons reveled in godlessness unrestrained.

May the truth not lie between these two extremes? That Samuel was not entirely without blame we have already seen. He failed to grasp the mind of God. We may well believe that his frequent absences from home, the absorbing interest in a nation at large, unconsciously to himself closed his eyes to responsibilities at home which no weight of public care could relieve him of. "My own vineyard have I not kept" has only too often had to be the sorrowful confession of those who have labored in others' vineyards. It is not a thing to excuse nor explain away, but solemnly to face and to remember the danger for us all, if such a man as Samuel, with such an example as that of Eli before him, could in any measure commit a similar wrong. May God's mercy be upon the heads of families, giving grace and dependence and prayerfulness that the households may be an example of submission to His order!

These sons were, after all, but a reflection of the state of the entire people, and even of the flesh in Samuel himself, and so in man generally. Wherever mere nature acts, we may be sure it does not act for God. Hence even natural affection, the strong ties that bind the household together, if not controlled by the word of God and the Holy Spirit, may do the

very opposite of His will. How different from Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant" (Deut. xxxiii. 9). Therefore they would be qualified for wider service: "They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments and Israel Thy law" (ver. 10). How perfect in this, as in all else, was our blessed Lord Jesus, who rendered all due obedience in its place, and whose words from the cross itself bespoke a tender love and care for His mother; and yet, whenever nature intruded between Himself and His Father's will, how He could rebuke her, or show that obedience to God was to Him a clearer proof of relationship than any mere natural tie! "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

Was it not, also, a certain measure of unbelief in Samuel in the sufficiency of God and care for His own beloved people that led him to appoint successors? We cannot therefore be surprised when the contagion of this unbelief spreads to the people at large; and so they come to Samuel as seeing the very thing which he himself had seen, and desiring to provide against it in much the same way in which he had attempted to do: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us, like all the nations." Was it not, after all, simply seeking to remedy a manifest evil, which was all too plain, by recourse to a human expedient rather than to God Himself?

In passing, we may notice the humiliation to which Samuel was subjected in thus having to hear from

the lips of those whom he himself had judged, sad words in relation to the failure in his own family: "Thy sons walk not in thy ways." Alas, too true, and we can well conceive the shame that would mount to the aged prophet's cheeks as there, before the people, the sad state of his own house was declared to him! There is no mention of any resentment, and, from all we know of this dear and honored servant's faithfulness to God, we may well believe that he bowed under what would seem most clearly to have been a chastening from God's hand. We never gain by refusing such chastenings, painful and humbling though they may be. Let us be more concerned to avoid the cause of them, the need for them, than the shame of being subjected to them. May God write this lesson deeply in our hearts!

"Like all the nations." How human this is! It is as though they were like all the nations. It is putting themselves on the same plane with those very Philistines whom but lately they had overthrown in the power of God alone. Alas, so easily do we forget and so quickly turn away from our blessed God, who would have us different from all the nations! Had He not singled them out as a peculiar people in His electing choice, by the wondrous signs in the land of Egypt, by the sheltering blood, and bringing them forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm? Had He not guarded them as the apple of His eye all through "that great and terrible wilderness"? Had He not cast out the nations from the land of Canaan and given them an inheritance—houses which they had not builded and vineyards which they had not planted? What nation had ever been so treated? This wretched word

"like all the nations" is a denial in one breath of their whole history. If they were to be like all the nations, they would be still among the flesh-pots of Egypt, groaning in bitter and hopeless bondage.

And for ourselves, does not the desire for human remedies for recognized evils, for some resemblance to the ways of men about us, deny all that divine grace has done for us in making us a peculiar people for God Himself? Has not our salvation marked us out as distinct from the world in which we live? Has not the blood of the everlasting covenant forever separated between us and the judgment-doomed multitude who go on in their own way? Does not the presence of the Holy Spirit as a seal upon each of us mark us in God's eye, as it also should in the eye of the world, as "not of the world" even as Christ is not of the world? Do we desire to be "like all the nations"? No; in the name of all the grace and love of our God, of the all-sufficiency of His blessed Son, let us repudiate the faintest whisper of such a thought, and go on with acknowledged weakness, so feeble though it be as to be a subject of mockery to the world; let us as Jacob halt upon our thigh that the power of Christ may rest upon us, rather than seek for any human expedient like the world around us.

It is beautiful to see how Samuel turns in all this to God. His heart is grieved at what the people have asked, nor is there the slightest suggestion of the repetition of his previous failure, which stands out alone, and that by implication only, as we have seen, in a character otherwise unmarred by any manifest blemish. Samuel prayed unto the Lord. Well would it be for us, when we hear of weakness in oth-

ers, to bring it before God and pour it out there, rather than seek weakly to reprove or correct it by our own efforts. He gets, in a certain sense, comfort from God and yet no relief in the ordinary sense of the word. He must hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say, and then the sad fact comes out that this had been the treatment to which the blessed God Himself had been subjected by this same nation from the beginning: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, so do they also unto thee." Samuel must expect the same treatment from the nation as God Himself had received. The one who stands with God must feel what the psalmist felt: "The reproaches of those that reproached Thee are fallen upon me." Man's hatred of God was never more fully manifested than in the cross of our blessed Lord Jesus, and all that He was subjected to at the hands of man but manifested the treatment that they had in heart accorded God. Sad and sorrowfully true it is; and yet what an honor in any measure to be permitted to stand for God, even to suffer the reproaches, to meet with the treatment, which our blessed Lord met with: "If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also."

But the people are not allowed to have their own way without having a divine and perfectly clear warning as to where that way will lead, and so Samuel is instructed to tell them what it means to have a king, like the nations. In brief, they will be slaves to their king: "He will take your sons and ap-

point them for himself for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots." They will no longer be servants of God in that sense, and no longer free to labor for their own profit. They will be liable at any time to be called upon by their king to engage in war, needless or otherwise, as his fancy may dictate, to be menials about his house, to be servants of his servants.

Then, too, their property will not be safe from his aggression. Their lands can be taken away. The tenth part of their increase, the very same that Jehovah claimed as His own, must be given to their king. In other words, they would bitterly rue their choice, and find that from the perfect freedom of service to God they had passed into the bondage of human tyranny. How fully this was verified in after years, a glance at their history will show. Even David, in his awful sin, exemplified the arbitrary character of kingly power—a royal murderer, against whom no hand could be lifted in vengeance! Solomon's oppression; that of Asa; the glaring robbery and murder of Ahab; are but illustrations of what was, doubtless, but too common amongst the kings of Israel, who in turn were, no doubt, held in from going to the extremes of other nations by the restraining witness of the prophets constantly sent from God. From that time onward, royalty, if that in reality, has been but another name for self-will, oppression and tyranny, save where, in the mercy of God, His grace overruled. It is not that a king necessarily must be a tyrant, but human nature being what it is, it is what is to be expected. God's thought, after all, is for a king, but it must be the true King, who shall reign in righteousness, of whom

there is but One in all the universe of God. When He comes whose right it is to rule, and the government is upon His shoulders, oppression will cease, the meek shall be judged, and the oppressed shall be rescued, as is beautifully set before us in the seventy-second psalm.

Nor let it be thought for a moment that there is no necessity for human government at the present time. Kings and all that are in authority are, after all, but "the powers that be;" and the fault is not in the power, but in the men who misuse that power. But for a people who had God as their Ruler, for whom He had interposed in an especial way, it was nothing short of apostasy to desire a king like the nations. However, after the solemn witness is borne and the people repeat their desire, they are left—solemn thought—left to their choice. They shall have their request, even though it bring leanness to their own souls. Our blessed God often permits us to have our own way, that He may show us the folly of it. Alas, would that we might learn His way in His own presence, and be spared the sorrow for ourselves and the dishonor to His name which come from the bitter experience of a path of disobedience.

Again Samuel rehearses all the words of the people to the Lord, and again he is told to hearken to the voice of the people, who are for the time dismissed with the tacit promise that, as they have desired, so it shall be. Sad journey homeward, as every man goes to his own city after having deliberately refused longer to be under the mild and loving sway of the only One who could be truly their ruler!

(To be continued.)

"THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD."

IN a day of closing darkness,
 When the outlook is so black;
 When the hearts of men are failing,
 And the feet of saints turn back:
 When corruption spreads her mantle,
 O'er the minds and ways of all;
 When the violent doth prosper,
 And men's passions rise and fall—

- Then amid the gloom and darkness,
 Shines one feeble ray of light;
 Some who feel and own the ruin,
 Seek by faith to walk aright:
 Some who fear the Lord of glory,
 And who think upon His name;
 Some who often speak together,
 Of His glory and His shame.

Some who often round Him gather,
 To exhort and sing and pray;
 Some who prove amid the darkness,
 They are children of the day:
 Some who wait a coming Saviour,
 And who long His face to see;
 Some who wait their hope's fruition,
 When conformed to Him they be.

God, who dwells in heavenly glory,
 He beholds this feeble few;
 He records in His remembrance,
 All the sorrows they pass through:
 He discerns each true affection,
 And declares, "They shall be mine;
 When I gather up my jewels,
 These shall in My presence shine."

E. P. B.

THE HAND OF GOD WITH HIS SUFFERING PEOPLE, AS ILLUSTRATED AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION.

(Translated from the French.)

IT was at Geneva that the Bible and other books which brought the light into the southern half of France were printed. There, too, it was that persecuted Christians found a sure refuge, and that many zealous preachers were more perfectly instructed in the word of God by Calvin, and then filled France from the Jura to the Pyrenees with their earnest testimony.

The seed abundantly scattered fell upon well prepared ground. Already before this, the Waldenses and the Albigenses, who occupied a part of the south of France, had, by the light of Scripture, made energetic protests against the errors of the Church of Rome. They had been crushed by the bloody crusades made against them by the pope's legates; but their descendants had kept in their hearts a deep love for the gospel, and an invincible disgust for Romish traditions and superstitions. When, therefore, the light penetrated from Germany into the north of France, and as far as Paris, it met with a most cordial reception, especially among the upper classes. The first to receive it were from the higher ranks and the cultivated people.

In 1512, five years before Luther posted his theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg, Lefèvre d'Etaples, professor at the Sorbonne, had, in his commentary on the epistle to the Romans, voiced the doctrines taught later on by the German reformer. Some pious bishops, men of state in the highest

posts, and powerful noble families, had declared themselves friends of the word of God. It had penetrated even into the court of Francis I. His own sister, the remarkable Marguerite de Valois, had received it in her heart. Noted for her beauty, and surrounded by luxury and the temptations of a corrupt society, she found the way to keep herself pure, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." She adopted the *sunflower* as her emblem, because it ever turns to the sun, and had linked with it the words, *I seek not the things here*. The following lines from her have been preserved:

Is there of woe an abyss so deep,
That, for the tenth of my sins, could be found
Enough to punish?
Then, my Father—O what a Father!—God
Invisible, immutable, eternal,
In grace forgiving all transgression,
At Thy feet I fall as does a criminal.
O lovely Saviour, Immanuel,
The Lord, the Word, the King, through death
Of death the conqueror,
In Thy mercy I trust.
Made by faith children of God,
By faith righteous, fruitful, holy,
By faith brought nigh who once were far,
O Christ, in Thee all is mine and I abound;
I once so poor, so blind and helpless,
In Thee now so rich and great and wise.

Quite different were the sentiments of her brother, *Francis I.*, toward the "new doctrine." Full of ambitious plans, he allowed his despicable mother, *Louise of Savoy*, to prejudice him against it, and so in him began a long series of kings of France who sought to drown in blood the flock of Christ and the

Word of Truth, and by it brought upon themselves the judgments of God as well as ruin upon their country.

The first martyr of those dark days was a simple workman, a wool carder of the town of Meaux, called *Jean Leclerc*. Urged by the Spirit of God, he went from house to house preaching the gospel to the people, and testifying with energy against the misleadings of popery. For three days he was taken through the city and so beaten on his bare back that the blood flowed down from his torn flesh, and then he was branded on the forehead with a hot iron as one of the worst malefactors. At the sight of all this his mother was overcome with sorrow; but soon realizing the prospects of faith, she was lifted above all, and shouted, "*Vive Jesus-Christ et ses enseignes!*" (Long live Jesus-Christ and His teachings.*) Spite of this mark of infamy, the martyr continued to bear testimony. He was seized again at Metz, and condemned to be burned alive. To satisfy the furious crowds, he was first torn with red-hot nippers, but in the midst of his sufferings he repeated aloud the words of the 115th psalm.

A few years later the Protestant community of Meaux had so grown that sixty-two of its members, men and women, were arrested at one time. At their trial fourteen of them were condemned to the gallows. They began by applying the question to them; and while the executioners were wearying themselves in dismembering the bodies of their un-

* It is difficult to render this expression in English. It is like the poor, ignorant man whose heart was full of Christ, but who could not express it in words; so he shouted, "*Three cheers for Jesus Christ!*"

complaining victims, one of these, full of holy joy, cried out, "Courage, friends; let us not pity this poor body, in which we have so often resisted the Spirit, and sinned against God!" Then the sacrifice began, and ended while the priests chanted with all their might, "O salutary victim; I salute thee, O queen!"

Persecutions went on: a poor crippled shoemaker, called *Milon*, who taught the word of God to such as visited him, was dragged out of his bed of suffering, thrown into a dungeon, then taken to the scaffold. Five young students who had been at Lausanne to prepare for the ministry were returning to France to give themselves to this holy, but dangerous work. Taken by deception, they were imprisoned at Lyons, and burned alive on the *place des Terreaux*. Not allowed to live to serve God, they served Him in their death, and praised Him to the end by the singing of psalms.

A simple peasant called *Etienne* answered the judge who had condemned him, "*No, you have no power to send me into death; it is rather to life you are sending me.*" Many priests and monks received the love of the truth, and turned away from the superstitions of Rome. This brought upon them treatment only so much the more cruel.

Admirable was the unflinching firmness of these victims when subjected to those frightful tortures. They bore them without complaint, and without ever betraying their brethren in the faith. Many had their tongues cut off before being burned alive or beheaded. It was thus made impossible for them to be witnesses of their faith from the top of the pile or of the scaffold. This was done to two workmen,

Filleule and *L'Eveille*, of Nevers, who were arrested while on their way to Geneva, where they were seeking a refuge; nevertheless, the purpose of their persecutors was not attained, for, according to an eye-witness, "God wrought for His servants with such power that, after their tongues were cut off, and while being bound to the stake, they were clearly heard saying, "Farewell then, sin, flesh, world and Satan; ye will distress us no more." A Catholic historian, speaking of those troublous times, says: "Fires were lighted all over the kingdom. But when weak women marched to their execution singing psalms and confessing that Christ alone is Saviour; when young girls faced death more joyously than if they had gone to the matrimonial altar; when men bore the evidence of true happiness at the sight of the dreadful instruments of torture, and, with bodies half charred, gazed with invincible courage on their surroundings, then died with beaming countenances and a smile on their lips—these mournful sights, incessantly renewed, awoke painful feelings, not only among the common people, but also in the higher classes. When they saw in the public places the charred bodies still suspended to the hideous chains, sad remnants of the executions, they could not withhold tears—they wept from the heart."

All these pains and torments had faith in the Scriptures for their sole cause. Here is an extract from the examination of a young widow, *Philippine de Luns*. Taken at a meeting in the rue St. Jacques, she showed during her whole trial a courage and presence of mind which were admirable. Asked if she believed in the Mass, she replied, "I believe only what is written in the Old and New Testament."

"Would you not partake of the sacrament of the Host?"

"I would do only what my Lord Jesus Christ commands."

"How long is it since you have confessed to a priest?"

"I do not remember; but I confess my sins daily to God, and I do not believe the Lord Jesus Christ has ever commanded us to confess to a priest, for He alone has the power to forgive sins."

"What do you think of prayers addressed to the Virgin, or the saints?"

"As to prayers, I only know what God has taught me; that is, that I am to address them to God alone, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and to none other."

"What do you think of images?"

"I think we owe them neither honor nor worship."

"Of whom have you learned these things?"

"I have learned them in the New Testament. As to the powers which the pope takes to himself, I have not found one word in the New Testament."

After this interrogatory, the young woman was condemned to the question and to the stake. The sight of her tormentors frightened her so little that she said, with a gentle smile, "I have left off my mourning, and am decked for the meeting with my heavenly Spouse." After the cutting off of her tongue, her feet and face were scorched, then she was strangled and burned, with her two companions in suffering, *Nicolas Chivot*, seventy-one years of age, and a young man called *Gravelle*. They bore these torturings with such firmness that a historian, in re-

lating them, exclaims, "It was a marvelous triumph, for God has shown in a visible manner how able He is to uphold youth, to strengthen old age, and to give to a feeble and delicate woman the needed courage for faithful testimony, when it pleases Him to put His elect to such a test."

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE have now reached a most important transition period in the history of Israel. Judges has given us the failure, we may say, of the nation as a whole, and their deliverance only by special judges called up for special emergencies. At the death of the judge all quickly lapsed back again to its former state of apostasy and bondage. In 1 Samuel, which is our historical portion, we have the account of the failure of the priesthood as well as of the nation. Shiloh, instead of being the centre of light and strength for the nation, became the greatest stumbling-block because of the unchecked sin of Eli's sons. All culminates in the captivity of the ark, as though God's holy presence could no longer tolerate the sin of profession, and allowed His glory to be delivered into the hands of the enemy. It is at this juncture that God raises up the prophetic gift, and from now on to the end there was rarely a time when the voice of divine love could not be heard warning, admonishing, encouraging, and directing, as need might be. Samuel also gives us the account of the establishment of the kingdom; first, the king after the flesh, man's natural desire as expressed in King Saul, and then David, the man after God's own heart, type of Christ the King for whom yet Israel unconsciously waits.

There are six divisions in the two books of Samuel, which go together:

1. (Chaps. i.-viii.) The call of the prophet, God's representative in the midst of an apostate people.
2. (Chaps. ix.-xv.) King Saul, the people's choice—all that is excellent in the natural man.
3. (Chaps. xvi.-2 Samuel ix.) David, God's choice, type of Christ in His rejection and exaltation.
4. (Chaps. x. xii.) The testing and failure of King David.
5. (Chaps. xiii. xxi. 14.) God's ways of judgment in dealing with the failed king and his recovery.
6. (Chaps. xxi. 15-xxiv.) The triumph at the end.

Along with 1 Samuel, we also read the first book of the Psalms, or psalms i. xli., as giving to a good degree the experiences of David during the time of his rejection.

The Psalms are most rich, not only in individual soul history, but in a typical foreshadowing of the experiences of Israel, or, rather, of the believing remnant in Israel in anticipation of the coming of Christ in the latter days. Everything looks forward to that.

Another most attractive feature of this first book of Psalms is the frequent reference to Christ Himself, entire psalms being devoted to this. Thus, we have Him as Son of God and King in Zion (Psa. ii.); as Son of man, Head over all things in exaltation in Psa. viii. We see Him in His perfect humanity as the Man of faith in Psa. xvi.; while in Psa. xxii. we hear His cry of anguish as the Sin-bearer upon the cross. Psa. xxiv. shows Him again coming in glory; and whether it be the earthly city or the heavenly, its gates are flung wide for the King of glory to come in. Psa. xl., the last but one in our series, presents Him as the burnt-offering who fully accomplished God's will by the sacrifice of Himself.

We cannot too earnestly press upon our readers the importance of the attentive study of this section of inspired lyrics.

Our New Testament portion must be unusually brief.

It embodies only the epistle to the Philippians, whose four chapters mark its four divisions in an unmistakable way. Here we see, not a failing type of Christ, as David was, but Christ Himself to be enjoyed by faith, and a knowledge of whom goes to make up a genuine Christian experience.

1. In the first chapter we see Him as supreme, the Source of life and the theme of the gospel.

2. Chap. ii. presents Him in His humiliation unto death as the Pattern for His beloved people, while the latter part of the chapter gives certain human illustrations of that humiliation in a practical way.

3. Chap. iii. is most vivid and full of motion. Here Christ is seen on high in glory, the Object for whose sake all human righteousness and Judaism are left behind, willingly thrown aside as the eager soul presses on to reach Christ in resurrection glory. He is the Prize of our calling on high; and as we run, we look for Him who at His coming will transform even our bodies and fashion them like His own.

4. The last chapter comes down to the practical, daily life where, whatever the need, Christ is found all-sufficient. Thus we have Him as the basis of Christian stability, the Source of Christian strength, the relief for Christian anxiety, the supply of Christian need. Truly Christ is all. May it be ours to translate into our daily experience the wonderful unfoldings of this precious little epistle!

I must live upon God! Yes, that you must if you would be either holy, happy, or fruitful: and yet it is the very last thing that we are willing to do; for we want to live on friends—comforts—prospects—any thing rather than God.

He that receives most from Christ, will be most like Christ, and will do most for Christ; we can only serve the Lord acceptably, or effectually, as we serve Him with His own.

KING SAUL : THE MAN AFTER THE FLESH.

PART II. THE KING OF MAN'S CHOICE.

Chapter VI.

THE CALL OF THE KING.

(1 Sam. ix.,-x. 16.)

(Continued from page 158.)

THE people having definitely decided to have a king, in face of all the warnings given by the prophet, nothing remains but to give them their desire according the fullest thought of it. Had the choice of the ruler been left to a few, he would not have been really the expression of the people's wish. This difficulty is constantly encountered in the effort to secure a ruler who shall represent the desires of the people. The nearest that can be done is to let the majority decide. This at best but gives the preference of that majority, in which the rest of the nation has to acquiesce, and so man can never get the ideal ruler of his choice.

For Israel, God mercifully intervenes and, as we might say, puts at the disposal of the people His omniscience in selecting the ruler, not after His heart, but who He knows will meet their desires. This is an interesting and important point, one too that has a New Testament illustration, which, if understood, will throw light upon that which has been a difficulty for many.

The people had already turned against God and rejected Him from being their Ruler. Most certainly, then, their mind was not in accord with His.

The king of their ideal would be a far different man from any whom God would Himself select. They had in their minds a ruler like those of the nations, whose first thought was the welfare of the people and the overthrow of their enemies. God's thought would be a man who first of all sought His glory, and was in subjection to Himself. We must remember that He is not choosing a king for Himself, but for the people. He does for them that which it would have been impossible for them to do for themselves, so that the result is exactly what they would have done had they been able.

The New Testament illustration of this is the selection of Judas Iscariot as an apostle. It has been said, did not the Lord know at the beginning that Judas was a traitor? We are distinctly told so in the sixth chapter of John, and may be certain that our blessed Lord was neither deceived nor disappointed—save in divine and holy sorrow over a lost soul—in the result. But this does not mean that our Lord put Judas in a position against his will or for which he was not in the judgment of men specially fitted. Judas himself had taken the place of a disciple. It was, therefore, simply selecting one who had already taken this place, and not imposing upon him a profession which he had not assumed for himself. Nay, more, the position of apostle was calculated to foster, if it existed at all, the faith of the disciple. The twelve were in the place of special privilege and nearness to the Lord, constantly under His influence, with His example before them; as we know with much individual instruction according to the need of each. Who could associate with such a Master and witness His deeds of love, the flashing out of His

holy soul, His tender heart of compassion, His sympathy, and not be made a better man if there were anything of grace in his soul at all? If Judas apostatized and the wickedness of his heart came out in face of all this, we may be sure it is only a special proof of the hopeless corruption of a heart that has not been visited by God's grace. At the same time our Lord would not be violating in the least the free agency of the man or compelling him into anything counter to his nature.

Returning now to the king of Israel's choice, we will see in what is before us how divine care and foresight gave the fullest expression to the desire of the people, so that the result was one upon whom all the desire of the nation was fixed. But while man's self-will was thus at work and his rejection of God's mild and loving authority showed the determined alienation of his heart from Him, on the other hand, God was working out His own counsels, and His purposes were being unfolded too. The thought of a king was in His heart as well as that of the people, but how different a king! Hannah had given expression to this divine desire for a Ruler for His people at the close of her song, which is fittingly so like that of Mary, the mother of the true King.

The main theme of that song (chap. ii. 1-10) is that God raises up the poor and the lowly, and overcomes all pride. Thus His enemies and those of His believing people are overthrown, and the needy and the afflicted are raised up. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust and lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill, to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory." Our blessed Lord laid aside all heaven's glory, and, so far as earthly

greatness was concerned, associated Himself with the poor rather than those who occupied the throne. The throne, so far as it could any longer be called that, was occupied by a Herod, while back of him was the power of imperial Rome, the sceptre having passed over to the Gentiles. The One "born King of the Jews" was to be found in a stable, and faith alone could recognize Him as the Man of God's choice. But faith does recognize Him, and Hannah looks forward not merely to him who was to be the type of Christ, but to the Lord's Anointed Himself. She closes her song with the triumphant strain: "He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed."

Well did God know that there must be a ruler for His people. Everything had been temporary, even the giving of the law itself at Sinai. There could be no permanent relationship between a nation and God, save through a Mediator. The only ruler could be, not some human deliverer, type of Him to come, but One who truly delivered them from bondage worse than that of Pharaoh and from a captivity greater than any inflicted by the Canaanites. Thus Joshua, and Moses himself, were but types of Christ. The deliverer, too, must be priest as well as ruler, and from Aaron on, the high priests and their sacrifices were but shadows of that perfect Priest who offered up Himself to God. The King was to be also a Priest, and in one blessed Person was to embody all that the righteousness and glory of God, on the one hand, and the need of sinful man, on the other, required.

"All things that God or man could wish
In Thee most richly meet."

So the very unbelief of the people, expressing a desire for a ruler, was but the occasion for God to approach one step nearer the accomplishment of His own purposes; but He was not to be hurried into taking more than one step at a time. He does not,—reverently we would say, He *cannot* give His own King yet. He must let them work out and manifest all the results of their own desires, and so far from impelling them into that which would show the worst side of self-will, He guards them in every way from this. Thus He uses divine wisdom to select the best man according to their judgment, offering every facility, the machinery of divine Providence, we might say, to secure such a man, and when he is chosen, not withholding all aid, encouragement and warning. If the king of their choice does not succeed, the blame can never be laid upon God. This will be fully manifest. And may we not say the same as to the natural man in every way? If he manifests his corruption, his enmity of God, his hopeless alienation from Him, it is not because of the circumstances in which he is placed, but in spite of them. The very world which has been given over to Satan is still full of witness of God's power, wisdom and goodness. Every man's life, with its history of mercies and of trials, is a witness that One is seeking to hide pride from him and to deliver him from his worst enemy,—himself. The whole providential government of the world and its long continuance in its present state is a witness of the same. God gives man a free hand to work out all that is in his own heart, while at the same time surrounding him with every inducement to turn to Himself.

This is particularly true of the last phase of His

patience and longsuffering,—the present dispensation, where, in Christendom at least, the full blaze of revelation would guide and attract man into paths of pleasantness and peace. When all is over (and it seems now to be nearly the end) it will be seen that if there were anything good in man there had been just the atmosphere in which it would properly develop, and so far from God being an indifferent spectator, or a hostile one to human progress and development, it will be clear that He has done all that He could to make the trial a successful one on man's part. It will be true of Israel as a nation, and her kings and the world at large as well, that but one answer could be given the question: "What could I have done more unto My vineyard that I have not done?" All has been done.

Our chapter opens with the genealogy of king Saul. It is traced back through five ancestors, whose names are given, and the significance of which cannot fail to be suggestive. We must bear in mind that it is a genealogy of the flesh, as we may say, where that which is emphasized will be nature rather than grace. Saul himself means "asked" or "demanded." He represents the people's demand for a king, and in that way, nature's ideal. His father was Kish, which means "ensnaring," very suggestive of all that is of nature, which in its most attractive form cannot be trusted.

The next in line was Abiel, "father of might," which seems to emphasize the thought of strength in which man does indeed glory, but which too often proves to be utter weakness. Zeror, the next, "compressed" or "contracted," suggests the reverse; we can readily understand how one, himself hedged in and oppressed,

would seek a reaction and give expression to his desire in his son. Bechorath, his father, "primogeniture," is that which nature makes much of and which Scripture has frequently set aside. Nature says the elder shall rule. How often has Scripture declared that the elder shall serve the younger! Aphiah, "I will utter," would suggest that pride of heart which tells out its imagined greatness. The last person in the list is not named, but described as a Benjamite, a member of that tribe whose history had been one of such glorying self-will and rebellion.

Thus the genealogy of the man of the people's desire would suggest the pride, the self-will, the excellence of nature, together with its feebleness, too, and its deceit. These things are not looked upon as man would regard them, where many of the traits are considered valuable and important, but they are looked upon from God's point of view, and all that is great and excellent in nature is seen to be stained with decay. Thus Saul is described as "a choice young man and a goodly, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he. From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people," surely a *beau idéal* of a king, in man's eyes; alas too soon to show the vanity of man's nature!

The man of the people's desire being now marked out, we are next shown the steps which lead up to his being presented. What trivial events apparently decide our whole after-course of life! It was comparatively an unimportant matter that the asses of Kish should have strayed away and Saul with a servant be sent in search of them, and yet God used this to bring to pass all that was hinging upon it. No

doubt everything here has its lessons for us if we are able to read them aright. We are told that man is like a wild ass's colt, naturally unrestrained and self-willed. *These asses would then naturally suggest* that nature of man which has gone astray from God, and in its wildness and absence of restraint needs ever the strong hand to hold it down. Israel, too, had many a time shown its waywardness in like manner, and one who goes in search of that rebellious nation must indeed have help from God to lay hold of it.

As a matter of fact, Saul did not find the asses; they were restored to his father by divine Providence; and no mere man has ever brought back the wayward wanderer to God. If brought back at all, it is through a divine work. When the time comes for the true King to enter His city, He rides upon an ass's colt upon which man had never sat, controlling all things. Saul searched diligently enough in various places for these lost asses, but fails to find them. First he goes through Mount Ephraim, "fruitfulness," and the land of Shalisha, "the third part," which may have stood for a very large territory; but neither in the place of fruitfulness nor in any wide extent of region has a wanderer ever been found. Man surely has not been fruitful for God. He next seeks through the land of Shaalim, "the place of hollows or valleys" and the land of Jemini, "my right hand," which would suggest exaltation. But neither in humiliation nor exaltation is the natural man found. The poor and degraded are as far from God as those who are exalted. Lastly he comes to Zuph, "a honey-comb," and there he gives up the search. It would seem to stand for the sweetness

and attractiveness of nature, but perhaps more hopeless than any is this. One may be naturally attractive without one thought of God, and if the best have no heart for Him, the search must be abandoned. It would need a Seeker after another kind to find the wanderers, and He found them in a different place from those in which Saul ever sought. Going down in death and taking his place under judgment, there He found the wanderer.

(To be continued.)

THE EARNEST, THE ANOINTING, THE SEALING, THE ESTABLISHING OF, AND BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

(See 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.)

THE Epistles to the Corinthians are largely devoted to the instruction of the saints as to God's order for the Church. They had been but recently turned from heathenism to God, and though assembled, or gathered, for the worship of God and remembering the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, they were but imperfectly taught in the things of God; were apparently ignorant of God's order for His Church, and but imperfectly apprehended what amazing blessings He had provided for them "in Christ." Under such an environment, Paul's first work for them and "for all who call upon the name of *our Lord Jesus Christ* in every place both theirs and ours," was to instruct them, and us, in the things of God. This gives us the key to both epistles.

In the preceding context to the passage we are ex-

amining, Paul has just been asserting the absoluteness of the promises of God. They are not yea and nay, but "*in Him is yea,*" *absolutely yea*, and no nay or question at all of any kind about them. "Wherefore also through Him is the AMEN unto the glory of God through us." This is the immediate context.

Now "the earnest of the Spirit" is the first-fruits of faith in Christ. "In whom believing, or having believed, *ye were sealed* with that *Holy Spirit of promise*, which is the earnest (first-fruits) of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. i. 13, 14). Believing then, or having believed, on realization of what we are promised in Christ, *absolutely assured of*, we are immediately sealed.

The earnest then is the seal. It is by the Spirit. It is the first-fruits of the Spirit, the anointing, the unction from the Holy One. But not the establishing, which is a progressive work. It is then all, except as to the establishing, at the new birth, though distinct from it. Born of God is by the Spirit, the proof of which is faith in Christ, and upon this is the sealing—the first-fruits, or earnest of the Spirit; and if the earnest, then the anointing. Sealed unto the day of the redemption of our bodies. It is all ours for enjoyment as we come into the apprehension of it, and fully taught as to what we have in a full gospel; and is all real to faith from the beginning of faith.

In our text it will be seen that all this work of the Spirit is spoken of in the past tense. There is no will seal or will anoint, but *have* done it all absolutely in Christ. Are we not in Christ when we are born from above?—born of God? made new creatures

in Christ Jesus? made members of God's new creation?

If the Corinthian saints in their state of spiritual intelligence were anointed and sealed by the Spirit, surely all believers, and not only those who have been instructed in a full gospel as to what they have in Christ, must be anointed and sealed by God when He enters into them to dwell there by His Holy Spirit.

“Now He who stablisheth us with you in Christ and *hath* anointed us is God, who *hath* also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit” in our hearts.

Some who assume that the sealing is always a subsequent work to simple faith in Christ—implying a fuller knowledge—because the word *after* is erroneously inserted into the passage in Ephesians in king James version, we suspect are led into this error by the aid of the thought that conversion is synonymous with new birth. These two words should not be so used. Conversion is simply “turned about” and may be, as used by many people, wholly of man himself, like turning over a new leaf; but new birth is God's work and stands forever. According to this use of the word, a man may be converted to-day and turn away to-morrow; but when born of God all the power of the adversary cannot snatch him out of *His* hand. Of course, if his turning is by the Spirit, and in reality to God, he has eternal life, he shall never perish, because he is then sealed unto the day of redemption, which is not so when the man is only turned about. Such teachers see two or three stages of the entering into Christ.

J. S. P.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AS SEEN IN ITS FRUITS.

(From the Numerical Bible; Notes on James II. 14-20.)

WE come now to that part of the epistle which has been more commented on, perhaps, certainly more misinterpreted, than any other part. Faith, as we have seen, is indeed, in a certain sense, the apostle's subject all the way through. The works upon which he dwells are the works of faith. If that is not found in them, they are no good works for him. On the other hand, faith that hath not works is not faith. It is not to the dishonor of faith to say so: no, his argument is, that faith is such a fruitful principle that if the tree be there, its fruit will be surely found. The apostle's subject here is the manifestation of faith by works. He is not in the least speaking of justification before God, as we have already said. That is not his subject; nor has the apostle Paul, whose subject it is, left such an important modification of his doctrine (as by many this is thought to be) to come in this disjointed manner from the mouth of another long afterwards. If it were indeed so, it would be a hopeless matter to follow the reasoning of any one writer by itself. He might have left out some important thing which should have been considered, and the absence of which would vitiate the whole argument. As has already been said, the apostle Paul distinctly leaves room for what James says here, when he says of Abraham that if he were justified by works he would have whereof to glory, and adds, "but not before God." No one can find, throughout what is said here, any hint that a man is justified by works *before God*. The whole question is one of the reality of profession. Christians are professedly believers, but what doth it profit if any one *say* he hath faith but hath not works? It is simply a question of saying it—*professed* faith. But can faith that is in profession merely, as here, save him? It was but a fair word. Who would think that it could profit if any were naked or lacking daily food, and one should say

to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," and yet do nothing to furnish them with that which was needful? What would they think of it? The profession of faith merely would be nothing better than such a profession of works, which would falsify itself at once to any one. Faith, then, that has not works is dead in itself. There is no principle of fruit in it, and this, for us, is the test of its reality. We see at once that he is not thinking of God who knows the heart, but of man who does not know it, and who can only judge of it by the outward conduct. "Some one will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works. Show me thy faith apart from works, and I will show thee my faith *by* my works." It is plain that that is the only possible way, and it is equally plain that it is simply a question of manifestation before man. He does, indeed, assert that the faith that saves is that which is fruitful; but who questions that? and who could possibly desire to have it otherwise? It is a blessed thing to know that that which in itself is the humblest thing possible, and which turns one away from self to Another, is yet that which, by bringing into the presence of the great unseen realities, must of necessity have its corresponding fruit in life and walk. He takes in the mere Jew here, orthodox in his monotheism; but what had it wrought in him? It was, surely, well to believe that God is One, and the demons believe that too, but their faith is thus far fruitful that at least it makes them shudder; but the faith that is merely of lip, and cannot demonstrate itself, is really of no value.

And now he brings forward the case of Abraham, our father, to whose faith God Himself had borne witness. It is not, of course, in his purpose here to cite the Scripture which speaks thus simply as sufficient, however sufficient it was to show that there *was* faith in Abraham. He does not say, as Paul does, that Abraham was justified by faith when "he believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Was that not true, then? It must certainly have been true, for the Scripture itself asserts it. But his point is that this faith, as to which God had pronounced, issued in

works which justified Abraham as a believer—justified what was said by God, that “he believed God.” Thus, he does not refer to what the fifteenth of Genesis brings before us, but takes us on to what came long years after in that magnificent display of faith on Abraham’s part, when he offered Isaac his son, his only son, upon the altar, at the command of God. Plainly, that was a work that needed itself to be justified by the faith that was in it. It was a faith which this rendered indisputable. It was plain to see how faith wrought with his works in this case, and by works the faith was made perfect; that is, it came thoroughly to fruition. Paul’s argument is as to the justification of the ungodly; James’ is as to the justification of one already accepted as a believer. It is a justification which *we* have to pronounce. The Scripture was here fulfilled which saith, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” It was not merely now that Scripture spoke, but that *Abraham’s conduct* spoke as to the truth of the Scripture. God had said that Abraham believed Him. His own conduct made it plain he did so. Thus he came into the blessed place of one whom God could call His friend; and thus “*we see* that a man is justified by works, and not by his faith only;” for if he had only his faith to speak of, no one could take account of it at all.

In Rahab the harlot we find even more conspicuously, in one way, the truth of this. She was but “Rahab the harlot.” There were no good works, in the way men speak, that she could produce, surely, for *her* justification; but the works which justified her now were simply works that evidenced her faith, and which had all their value in it. She realized that the messengers were, as it were, the messengers of God. She saw and owned God in them. In that way she received them, although they had come to spy out the city in which she dwelt, that they might destroy it. Plainly, if it were not before God that she bowed in this, her works were not merely unprofitable, but only evil. The seeing God made the whole difference. It was God Himself who was

pronouncing the judgment: how could she resist Him? Thus she had a faith which did not ennoble her: it was, as we know, accompanied, in fact, by deception, although such deception, no doubt, as men think all right in similar cases. But if the apostle were seeking moral works by which faith was to be enriched, works which had in themselves that natural excellence which men see in works of charity and such like, certainly he would not have taken up the poor harlot Rahab as an example of them. No, it is simply the evidence of faith that he is seeking, and that in order to show us that profession merely is nothing; there must be reality; and "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." It is mere barren orthodoxy, as we are accustomed to say; and yet, with a Jew, how much his faith counted for! There was, and there is continually, the need of the warning; and the warning is simple enough if, instead of taking merely fragmentary expressions, we look at what is put before us here in its proper connection. He will not dishonor faith, as men so often dishonor it, by putting it as if it were something merely to stand side by side with works, so that one is to be estimated by the two together. No, says the apostle, the faith is that which produces the works, the life of them, and that which makes a man's works to be acceptable to God in order to be acceptable at all. Such is the character of the faith that saves, and that does not make it, then, the works that save, or that help to save. The works simply distinguish it from the mere barren profession, which, barren as it is, men will at all times seek to make something of.

For man, or any other created being, to glorify himself means that he must make use of things which are but gifts bestowed—a beggar in another's clothes.

When God glorifies Himself He but manifests what is essentially His own—what He is from eternity to eternity.

P. J. L.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

I SEE a lost creation!
 I hear its supplication—
 In groaning degradation
 Through man, its fallen head!

I see man's sinful madness!
 I hear his shift at gladness—
 Till scourged in gloom and sadness—
 To doom among the dead!

* * * * *

I see a Saviour seeking!
 I hear Him sweetly speaking
 In love to sinners—reeking
 With man's depravity!

I see man, God disowning!
 I hear my Saviour groaning—
 In cursèd death atoning
 For man, upon the tree!

I see God's love down-reaching!
 I hear in many a preaching
 His tender tones beseeching—
 Man's enmity to span!

I see One here sojourning!
 I hear Love's accents, mourning
 As—brooding, grieving, yearning—
 God's Spirit strives with man!

I see the few believing!
 I hear them—praises weaving
 With all their tears of grieving:
 Heart-sick for home above!

I see the many doubting!
 I hear them, scoffing, scolding—

Embracing sin, and flouting
The gentle call of Love!

* * * * *

I see the new creation!
I hear saints' adoration—
Creation's celebration
Of God, and Christ its Head!

I see a scene of sadness!
I hear no note of gladness—
Where conscience stings to madness
The ever-dying dead!

F. A.

PERFECTION AS TO THE STATE OF THE CONSCIENCE.

“WHICH was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service *perfect* (τελειῶσαι) as pertaining to the conscience.” The apostle, in this passage, is drawing a contrast between the sacrifices under the Mosaic economy, and the sacrifice of Christ. The former could never give a perfect conscience, simply because they were imperfect in themselves. It was impossible that the blood of a bullock or of a goat could ever give a perfect conscience. Hence, therefore, the conscience of a Jewish worshiper was never perfect. He had not, if we may use the expression, reached his moral end as to the condition of his conscience. He could never say that his conscience was perfectly purged, because he had not yet reached a perfect sacrifice.

With the Christian worshiper, however, it is differ-

ent. He has, blessed be God, reached his moral end. He has arrived at a point, so far as the state of his conscience is concerned, beyond which it is utterly impossible for him to go. He cannot get beyond the blood of Jesus Christ. He is perfect as to his conscience. As is the sacrifice, so is the conscience that rests thereon. If the sacrifice is imperfect, so is the conscience. They stand or fall together. Nothing can be simpler, nothing more solid, nothing more consolatory, for any awakened conscience. It is not at all a question of what I am; *that* has been fully and forever settled. I have been found out, judged, and condemned in myself. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good." I have got to the end of myself, and there I have reached the blood of Christ. I want no more. What could be added to that most precious blood? Nothing. I am perfect, as to the state of my conscience. I do not want an ordinance, a sacrament, or a ceremony, to perfect the condition of my conscience. To say so, to think so, would be to cast dishonor upon the sacrifice of the Son of God.

The reader will do well to get a clear and firm hold of this foundation-point. If there be any darkness or uncertainty as to this, he will be wholly unable to understand or appreciate the various aspects of "Christian Perfection" which are yet to pass in review before us. It is quite possible that many pious people fail to enjoy the unspeakable blessing of a perfect conscience by reason of self-occupation. They look in at self, and not finding aught there to rest upon—who ever did?—they deem it presumption to think of being perfect in any respect whatever. This is a mistake. It may be a pious mistake, but

it is a mistake. Were we to speak of perfection in the flesh (what many, alas, are vainly aiming at), then, verily, true piety might recoil with just horror from the presumptuous and silly chimera. But, thank God, our theme is not perfection in the flesh, through any process of improvement, moral, social, or religious. This would be poor, dreary, depressing work indeed. It would be setting us to look for perfection in the old creation, where sin and death reign. To look for perfection amid the dust of the old creation were a hopeless task. And yet how many are thus engaged! They are seeking to *improve man and mend the world*; and yet, with all this, they have never reached, never understood—yea, they actually deny—the very first and simplest aspect of Christian perfection, namely, perfection as to the state of the conscience in the presence of God.

From C. H. M. in "Christian Perfection."

THE SPIRIT—THE POWER FOR MINISTRY, AS FOR WORSHIP.

THERE may be, and, alas, is much of mere systematic teaching and preaching of things which the mere intellect may have received, and which, by a natural fluency of language, we may be able to give out; but all such teaching is vain, and had much better be avoided in the sight of God. True, it might often give to our public assemblies an appearance of barrenness and poverty which our poor, proud hearts could ill brook; but would it not be far better to keep silence than to substitute mere

carnal effort for the blessed energy of the Holy Spirit?

True ministry, however, the ministry of the Spirit, will always commend itself to the heart and conscience. We can always know the source from which a man is drawing who speaks in "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and with the ability which God giveth; and while we should ever pray to be delivered from the mere effort of man's intellect to handle the truth of God amongst us, we should diligently cultivate that power to teach which stands connected, as in Levi's case, with the denial of the claims of flesh and blood, and with entire devotedness to the Lord's service.

In the second consequence above referred to we have a very elevated point: "They shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar." This is worship. We put incense before God when we are enabled, in the power of communion, to present in His presence the sweet odor of Christ in His person and work. This is our proper occupation as members of the chosen and separated tribe.

But it is particularly instructive to look at both the above mentioned consequences in connection; i. e., the Levites in ministry to their brethren, and the Levites in worship before God: it was as acceptable in the sight of God, and as divine an exercise of his functions, for a Levite to instruct his brethren as it was for him to burn incense before God. This is very important. We should never separate these two things. If we do not see that it is the same Spirit who must qualify us to speak *for* God as to speak *to* Him, there is a manifest want of

moral order in our souls. If we could keep this principle clearly before our minds, it would be a most effectual means of maintaining amongst us the true dignity and solemnity of ministry in the Word: having lost sight of it has been productive of very sad consequences. If we imagine for a moment that we can teach Jacob by any other power or ability than that by which we put incense before God, or if we imagine that one is not as acceptable before God as the other, we are not soundly instructed upon one of the most important points of truth; for, as some one has observed, "Let us look at this point illustrated in the personal ministry of Christ, and we shall no longer say that teaching by the Holy Ghost is inferior to praise by the same, for surely the apostleship of Christ when He came *from God* was as sweet in its savor to God as His priesthood when *He went to God* to minister to Him in that office. The candlestick in the holy place which diffused the light of life—God's blessed name—was as valuable, at least in His view, as the altar in the same place, which presented the perfume of praise."

From C. H. M. in the "Tribe of Levi Considered."

"WHAT MEAN YE BY THIS SERVICE?"

Read Ex. xii. 26, 27; Josh. iv. 1-7; Dent. xviii. 18, 19.

THESE three portions of Scripture give us what might be called the past, present, and future of Israel.

That in Ex. xii. tells of the first; it would remind them of hard bondage, the brick kilns of Egypt, and shelter by the blood of the slain lamb when Jehovah visited that country with judgment upon the first-

born, in every house with unsprinkled lentil and door-posts. As such it must have filled their hearts with joy whenever kept.

That in Josh. iv. would be a reminder to them of the faithfulness of Jehovah to their fathers and them, and that they stood in the land, the very inheritance promised to their fathers. These stones were witnesses they had crossed Jordan and were now in possession of the land "flowing with milk and honey," and all they had to do was to enter every place that the sole of their feet should tread upon and enjoy it as a present possession.

That in Deut. xviii. gives us the hope, or expectation of Israel, centred in a person, the Messiah to come.

Such was Israel's position at that time. Forever separated from Egypt, in present happy enjoyment of the land, although conflicts with its inhabitants occurred, and looking for the Prophet of whom Moses prophesied as the great centre of all their future hopes. "Now all these things happened unto them for types" (1 Cor. x. 11), and may we who have been by grace led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ see in these a picture—though faint it may be—of what we have in the "breaking of bread" as a memorial.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

Thus looking back, we remember the bitter bondage, the sheltering blood of the Lamb of God at Calvary's cross, as bearing our sins, guilt, and judgment. He cries in the intensity of the agony, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Matt. xxvii. 46).

Thus we may look back with mingled sorrow and joy, and see perfect shelter in that blood which "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). And now "the world crucified unto" us and we "unto the world" by the cross of Christ (Gal. vi. 14), we may rejoice with adoring worship and praise.

But our joy does not end here, for the work of our salvation "is finished" and our Lord risen from the grave, as the stones in Joshua would typify. We are raised with Him, and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, and all now in our possession, with the conflict as given in Eph. vi. 12.

But as Israel's hope was in the Messiah then to come, so we, whose citizenship is in heaven "look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 20, 21). And thus it is with hearts full of gratitude, praise, and adoration we obey His loving desire, as expressed in His words, "This do in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. xi. 25).

B. W. J.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE continue our reading during this month with the life of David. In the first book of Samuel we followed him during his rejection, where we have found him to be frequently the type of a rejected Christ. We are now to see him enthroned where he still typifies his Lord, especially as the enthroned king and head of the line. Our Lord frequently referred to Himself as the "Son of David." We have already, in our last number, looked at the main divisions of the book. It will suffice to point out some of the striking chapters.

The first four chapters give us the history of the tran-

sition of the kingdom from the house of Saul to David. Hebron is here the centre, and David is there enthroned king of Judah. This in itself is rather a suggestion of that which culminated in later days under David's sons when the kingdom was again divided in two, and Judah with Benjamin — significant exception — only remained faithful to the house of David. During the period of his stay at Hebron the power of David increases, while that of the house of Saul constantly diminishes. There is much here that we cannot approve and which David himself reprobated but was powerless to control. Joab, his kinsman, had strange influence over him. He was a man of violence and without scruple, and the death of Abner unquestionably was a blot even upon the beginning of David's reign.

Finally the opposition of the house of Saul is entirely overcome and from the sixth to the ninth chapters of the book we have David in all his power, king over the whole people. Here he is a type of Christ in His Kingdom of glory when He shall reign, not merely over Israel, but over all the nations. We find in this part that David overthrows his enemies and brings them into subjection just as Christ our Lord will do when He takes His power. Scripture clearly indicates that even after the appearing of our Lord there will be a season of conflict; of victory indeed, but that the peace to the ends of the earth will not be secured until all enemies are beneath His feet. It is the reign of David which answers to this first part of our Lord's Kingdom, as that of Solomon does to the second. We find also in this part, chap. vi., that the ark is brought to its true centre, Jerusalem, and while the temple is not yet built, God is enthroned in the midst of His people. In connection with this, we have the promise of God to establish David a sure house forever. This promise is fulfilled, not in Solomon, but in David's Son and Lord, Christ.

There are many precious gems in this portion. The familiar one of the king's grace to Mephibosheth, the grandson of his old enemy Saul, must not pass unnoticed. Here we have a lovely picture of the kindness of God being shown to an undeserving enemy. But this bright picture closes all too soon, and in the next portion—chaps. x.—xii.—we have again the personal history of the king rather than the typical. The dreadful sin of the king in connection with Bathsheba is too painfully familiar to require more than a mere mention. It is well, however, to note that it was idleness on his part which paved the way to this dreadful chain of sins which left its scar and stain upon his whole after life. We see the lovely blending of God in His government and in grace in His dealing with the king, and in the midst of all the wreck we see the heart of the poor sinful monarch turning in faith to the God whom he had dishonored. The fifty-first psalm is the outpouring of a broken and contrite heart which God did not despise.

The next portion of the book (chaps. xiii.—xxi.) is a solemn illustration of that truth which is woven throughout the word of God that, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." God's forgiveness could not set aside the result of David's sin, and the lust, the violence, the deceit, were all reproduced in the bosom of his own family. Solemn and awful thought! A picture which God in His mercy has given us in connection with one of the loveliest characters of Old Testament history and one of the fullest types of Christ Himself, showing us three things:

1st. That it is utterly impossible for any mere man to be aught than a type of Christ. The best men that have lived have had their blemishes, yea, some of those who have been most highly honored have sinned most deeply.

2nd. Christ alone can be before the soul as the Object of its delight. "Let no man glory in men."

3rd. We see the faithfulness of God who would not cover the sin of one so dear to Him but would give the lesson for all His people. May it be written in all our hearts!

The history of Absalom is another illustration of the painful weakness there was in the character of David, and the rebellion of that wayward son is but an illustration of what we have already had in the history of Eli. If government is disregarded, there will be unquestioned shipwreck and disastrous results.

David's faith again shines out brightly in his rejection, and here again we get a glimpse of him as type of One who was rejected. Weakness is again seen in the lack of cohesion between the two tribes and the ten, sad premonition of the division which was later to occur.

In the last portion of the book (chaps. xxi.—xxiv.) there seems to be a return to the early and brighter days of the king, and his song of triumph and last words beautifully illustrate the spirit of dependence upon God and boasting in Him. This is particularly seen in the "last words" (chap. xxiii.) which together with the list of his mighty men, form a most instructive portion. The theme, we might say, of his last words, is, "Christ is all," and it is in connection with this precious fact that his mighty men and their deeds are recounted. It is only as Christ is glorified that there can be any reward for faithfulness to Him. In the day of His glory all His servants will have their place in association with Him.

The book closes with the account of the judgment of God upon the people because of David's pride in numbering them. This is made the occasion of bringing out the faith of the king in God: "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord" and not of man; and we have here also in the sacrifice upon the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, the foundation, as it were, chosen for that abiding temple which was to be God's dwelling place, temporarily

indeed during the history of Israel prior to Christ, but one day yet to be His temple; and the glory of that latter house shall be greater than the glory even of Solomon's.

Passing to the New Testament, it will be easily seen how Matthew, as the gospel of the Kingdom, fits in with the history of David as a type of Christ. Everything in Matthew is connected with the Kingdom. That is the key to the entire Gospel. Its seven divisions will indicate this. We have:

1. (Chaps. i. and ii.) The genealogy and birth of the King.

2. (Chaps. iii-vii.) The announcement given by John the forerunner, and the principles, as we might say, the constitution of that Kingdom as unfolded in that wondrously spiritual enforcement of the law called, "The Sermon on the Mount."

3. (Chaps. viii.-xii.) This portion is devoted to the works of power which authenticate the King, together with the foreshadowing of that rejection by the people which was to culminate in His crucifixion. In this portion we have the disciples sent out by our Lord as His messengers, and His warning that they would receive the same treatment as Himself. The twelfth chapter closes this part with the twofold rejection; that by the leaders of Christ, and our Lord's rejection of them. Here we have the solemn warning as to the fearful sin against the Holy Ghost. We might say, in passing, that this sin was the deliberate accusation that our Lord did His miracles by the power of Satan instead of by the power of the Holy Ghost.

4. (Chaps. xiii.-xx.) This division is devoted largely to the development of the Kingdom in the hands of men. The thirteenth chapter with its seven parables gives us a sevenfold picture of this development which covers the whole time until the second coming of our Lord. It is the mystery form, with the King rejected and absent in

heaven. It is also in this portion that we have our Lord's transfiguration and glory, and the government of God's house—binding and loosing in the Assembly.

5. (Chaps. xx. 29–xxiii.) This is devoted largely to those parables of the time of the end which speak of the responsibilities of the leaders, their rejection of Christ, the marriage of the King's Son and our Lord's conflicts with the unbelieving leaders of the people. Chap. xxiii. is a solemn arraignment by our Lord of these leaders.

6. (Chaps. xxiv. and xxv.) This is our Lord's great prophetic discourse in which He unfolds the future in connection with the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God.

7. The last portion of the book is the consummation of all, where we see the Lord offering Himself up as a trespass offering in death, and as raised again from the dead declares Himself the recognized Leader of His people. It is the King throughout.

The short epistle of Titus is also to be read, of which we will say but little. It is devoted to the great and important truths of church-order and that godly walk which is ever the accompaniment of all true order, and from which it should not be separated. It is well for us to remember that no amount of ecclesiastical correctness will avail without that practical godliness; nor, on the other hand, should the latter be used as an excuse for indifference as to God's order in His house. Several lovely gospel passages occur in this epistle.

LIGHTHEARTEDNESS and true Christian happiness are very different things. A thoughtless man may be lighthearted because he has little sense of responsibility; but a thoughtful believer who meditates upon the revelation which we have of God in His word cannot fail to be penetrated with the sense of His love, of His grace, of His holiness, of His glory, all of which are in his favor through the cross of Christ. And what depths of genuine, unalloyed happiness will thus fill his soul!

P. J. L.

"AT HOME WITH THE LORD."

AT last, after months of suffering and weary waiting, our beloved brother Mr. F. W. Grant has departed "to be with Christ, which is far better." He quietly fell asleep on Friday morning, July 25th, and was laid to rest Lord's day afternoon, on his sixty-eighth birthday.

In the midst of our grief, we cannot but thank God for this blessed release. Although hoping to the end that God would raise him up in answer to prayer, as He did so wondrously two years ago, it became increasingly evident that unless He interposed by a special act, our brother must go. He had spent every particle of strength, and all his reserve vitality was gone. He felt this, and his most acute suffering was the sense of inability to go on further in the things of God.

And yet at times he believed that God was giving him fuller capacity to understand His Word, and that it might please Him to continue the work so dear to him. But He has taken him home instead, and as we looked into his peaceful face, from which the signs of weariness and suffering had been taken away, we could but thank God for the blessed change for him.

On Lord's day afternoon, a large number of

saints from the neighboring assemblies, with many others of the Lord's people, gathered for the burial. The sense of loss, of sympathy with his beloved wife and household, was mingled with gratitude for the precious ministry of this beloved brother, and a deep sense of the responsibility upon us, to stand where he stood, and to follow him as he followed Christ.

He was laid to rest, surrounded by his brethren, who felt the cheer and comfort of "that blessed hope" as they sang

"Forever with the Lord
Amen so let it be."

It is hoped in our next issue to present some outline of the work and the character of the ministry of our brother which shortness of time prevents now. S. R.

NO NIGHT THERE.

No need of feeble candle-flame, nor flare
Of fitful sunlight, oft by clouds obscure;
But light that shall eternally endure.
God giveth light, our hearts could not conceive,
These eyes could not behold, yet we believe
 'Tis all light there.

NO TEARS THERE.

No weary watchings, with no heart to share
Our anguish. Yet the burdened soul finds rest
In sweet communings on the Saviour's breast;
Sweet foretaste of that never ending day,
When God Himself shall wipe all tears away.
 All joy there. H. Mc. D.

THE MAGNIFYING NERVES.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”—Matt. vii. 3-5.

WE have all noticed that our nerves are of varying degrees of sensitiveness; certain parts of the body being much more susceptible to sensation than others. Nor is this an accident or an indication of an unhealthy state, but quite the reverse. The eye, for instance, is far more sensitive to a foreign object than the hand, and for a very simple reason—that it would be more easily injured. So, also, with the nerves of the lips and tongue. They are so exceedingly sensitive that the presence of the smallest foreign object that would be likely to be injurious is detected. So exceedingly sensitive are the nerves of the eye and the mouth that foreign objects seem to be much larger than they really are when coming in contact with these. Thus, a cinder in the eye, so minute as to be scarcely detected by another person, seems a large thing to the sufferer. A slight cavity in a tooth, which would be almost passed over by the eye, feels to the tongue as though it were very large. A bone or foreign substance is detected in the same way. From this apparent enlargement of the objects that come in connection with them, these nerves have sometimes been called “magnifying nerves;” not as giving undue importance to the objects, but as necessarily giving warning of the presence of any foreign matter that would do us injury; and in this,

as in all His works of wisdom, we can see the goodness of our God in protecting us from what otherwise might be a very real danger.

Transferring all this to the realm of spiritual truth, and remembering that all truth is one, the application is very simple, and yet most important. In fact, our blessed Lord, in the passage which we have quoted above, applies this to us. That which is in our brother's eye, so far as we are concerned, is but a mote. To him, if he is conscious of its presence, it is indeed a beam, a large and distressing substance. Therefore, as our Lord says, that which is personal to ourselves is of far greater importance than that which concerns another. As we see, it is not that we would ignore that which concerns our brother, but we are really in no condition either to measure the trouble or help our brother if we ourselves have a beam in our own eye. Instinct leads one first to cast the object out of his own eye. Then his vision will be unhindered in helping his brother. This is one application made so plain in the words of our Lord that we need but point to them for the evident meaning.

If two persons commit the same fault under the same circumstances, all things being equal, God looks upon the fault as the same in each, of course; but each of those persons will look upon his own fault as of a far greater character, so far as he is concerned, than the fault of his brother. This is as it ought to be; but, alas, while our eye or tongue may be exquisitely sensitive to the presence of any foreign object, and thus lead to the removal of it at once, our spiritual senses are too often dull, and not sensitive to that which should affect them. We need not say that this

is due to no imperfection in the spiritual nature, that which is born of God, and whose every faculty has been adjusted by Himself; but we become hardened by living in a world where everything is hostile, and if we do not keep in communion with the Source of blessing we lose that sensitiveness to what surrounds us which is our main safeguard against it.

Look for a moment at our blessed Lord as He passed through this world. For one like Him there must have been constant suffering. Well did He merit the name, "Man of sorrows." One whose spiritual sensation was perfect, whose nerves, as we might say, were all in perfect accord and adjusted to the mind and thought of God, felt everything that was contrary to His Father. And what, we might ask, was there that was not contrary to the blessed God in a world which had turned from Him? Was He thrown with the great, the wise, the religious so-called, our blessed Lord found only, in various ways, that which would jar upon the spiritual senses. So, too, when He was dealing with the masses,—carnal selfishness, gross unbelief, to say nothing of the dark sins which blotted the lives of many, must have ever given Him constant pain. And yet nothing was ever allowed to intrude into those spiritual organs of vision and taste which would have marred or injured the perfection of His manhood. Our Lord shrank from the very presence of sin so perfectly that He passed through life unscathed, without a blemish, or without a spot. When we compare ourselves with this perfect One, how we must realize the dullness of those spiritual nerves which, on the contrary, should be particularly sensitive!

How little do we, beloved, as we are thrown in

contact with self-will, pride, self-righteousness, worldliness, envy, and the various forms of fleshly evil, shrink from contact with it and realize the need of separation from it all! Motes—alas, none too small—fly into our eyes and mar our spiritual vision, and we are not conscious of them, while the very presence of such seems to distort our view and oftentimes magnify that which may be in another's eye to something far worse than it really is.

But there is a very simple and evident remedy for this condition of things. As we said before, we are not so constituted spiritually. "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." All his spiritual faculties are present. There is therefore nothing lacking in the believer. There must be, then, some hindrance to the activities of that new nature which was perfectly and solely in activity in our blessed Lord. The remedy, then, for this spiritual dulness is, first of all, judging that which interferes with our vision. "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye." No matter how great the evil in others, and how real our responsibility in connection with it, we can have no real power to deal with it save as we ourselves are in proper adjustment with the Lord. The beam *must*, dear brethren, be removed, if we are to use the surgeon's instrument in helping our brother with the mote. Let us, then, learn to judge ourselves; learn increasingly to be in the presence of our Lord with the Spirit ungrieved—above all, filled, controlled, saturated, we may say, with His Word, so that we shall think the thoughts of God as given to us in His Word. This will make us quick to detect the presence of anything in us that is contrary to His Word. The blessed Spirit of God delights to be act-

ive in us if He is unhindered. We may be sure that He will point out all in our ways that is not according to God, that He will check everything of a worldly or selfish character in us, and keep us constantly sensitive, if we will allow Him to do so. Our spiritual sensibilities will thus be practically magnifying, if we may use that expression, although it is not really magnifying, but simply properly sensitive to the presence of that which would be a great injury to us. Oh, what a help we could be to others, if, instead of weakly and painfully being occupied with their shortcomings, we were with purpose of heart seeking to clear our own spiritual vision! The very fact of our doing so would set a silent example which others would unconsciously imitate, for we can thank God that spiritual activities are imitated by the saints just as really as the energy of the flesh is also contagious.

We have been speaking of our relations to one another in illustration of the passage quoted at the beginning. We might apply the same principle of spiritual sensitiveness to the organs of our spiritual taste. The mind and heart need food just as the body does. We take it in through ear and eye largely in this day by reading, and, of course, by association with others. How important, then, it is that the conscience, the spiritual nerves of taste, should be fully active, that nothing which we read, nothing which is to form the food of our souls, will be received that has foreign or injurious matters in it. Here is the precious word of God, pure food; and the most tender conscience can never detect the slightest particle of that which would injure in it. But, supposing we are reading that which professes

to be a ministry of that Word, that which professes to be the truth of God come down to us through human channels,—to preserve our illustration, some dish prepared by human hands from the materials which God's word supplies. Here at once there is a danger of foreign admixture, and the spiritual senses of taste must be unhindered, to detect this. A teaching may be never so sweet, never so attractive, and yet within it there may lurk that which would bring poison and death. It is to be feared—nay, alas, we know it is only too true—that much of the teaching from modern pulpits has this admixture of error in it. Men who claim to be presenting the truth of God will tell us that His precious Word is not all to be believed, that it was written by fallible men, and that modern thought and research must be allowed to *sift out the myths or stories which our fathers used to feed upon*. Even Christ may be presented in a most attractive way, as is frequently done by those who would hold Him up as an example of lovely humanity for our imitation. And yet there may be the subtle poison lurking within this attractive food which makes it deadly to the soul. The proper deity of our holy Lord may be denied, the perfect sufficiency of His atoning work, and other fundamental truths of similar character. If the heart is in communion with God, no such teaching will be allowed to pass further than the guardians to the heart. It will be rejected as that which is foreign, and the whole class of such teaching will be refused as dangerous. It would be useless to say to a spiritual person, "There is much that is good in such teaching." The reply would be at once, "I must reject it all because of the evil that is in it. I can

find all the good in the word of God, and in that which magnifies it."

Passing on a little further, let us see to it that nothing hinders the sensitiveness of the conscience in our conversation, in our ways, in all that is connected with us. Let us indeed be "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," and we will find in the joy of an ungrieved Spirit, in the elevation and liberty of soul given by Him, ample recompense for what the world might call over-sensitiveness and needless particularity. Let us learn, beloved, to magnify the evil that is in ourselves, if present, in order that we may reject it absolutely. This will not make us harsh with our brethren, but will give us, indeed, that true grace which never loves at the expense of holiness, but would seek to deliver others, even as we are ourselves delivered.

INSURANCE OR DEPENDENCE, WHICH?

LIFE insurance is a modern invention, though its principle is as old as Adam's transgression in the beginning, the primary motive of which was that he would be "wise," knowing good and evil, and, as a result, able to care for himself, and so take himself out of God's hands who had made him a dependent creature and who had pledged Himself, in all His wisdom and power, for him in that condition.

So man has been ever since striving to make himself independent of God, and happy without God. Cain's posterity is witness to this. They were the men of skill and invention, the inventors of all kinds of musical instruments and instructors of every arti-

ficer in brass and iron. Men who could build cities, fill them with art and music, name them after themselves—and leave God out.

To the Christian all is changed. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into his heart, to give forth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So he longs to be, if true to Christ, a dependent soul. His ambition is to know Christ and to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law (the principle of works), but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. His joy is in the Lord,—in submission to His will and not his own. His hope is translation at the coming of Christ, which may occur at any time. He does not, therefore, expect death to come to him, and is privileged to make no provision for it. His life is bound up with the risen Lord and he lives in constant expectation of His return. For him, then, to insure his life would be to deny the truth of the Lord's coming. It would be for him to make provision for death which may never come.

To the man of the world death must surely come, and insurance for him is consistent. He expects to die and takes out a life insurance policy to provide by it for his family or relatives who may be dependent upon him. His life is lived in independence of God, and it is only natural that he should die in the same manner. But dependence upon God characterizes the Christian's life; to him death is an uncertainty, and life insurance is wholly inconsistent. His hope is the Lord's coming and if he be true to that precious truth he cannot insure his life.

For the Christian, then, so long as he is here waiting for the Lord, his prayer can be like that of Agur in the Proverbs, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Or better yet, satisfied with the preciousness of Christ, and a Father's loving care, he can say with Paul "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." He should want neither independence on the one hand, which might cause him to deny God's goodness and care, nor poverty on the other, which might subject him to impious failure in his own life. His prayer should ever be for contentment and dependence, even as the Lord taught His disciples to pray "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The mercy he needs is asked for on account of his showing it to others. Truth and love are the girdle of his loins. Righteousness and peace the comfort of his heart. He has turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. So he lives to declare God's grace and to bear Christ's cross, and regularly lays aside for the Lord's service a part of that in which he has been prospered, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Magnificent accomplishment of the cross of Christ! He who once lived to do his own lawless will lives now by grace to do the holy will of God. All praise to His name for such a transformation.

R. H. C.

THE UNEQUAL YOKE.

DEAR Brother : You write me about the "unequal yoke" of 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, and how to treat those who may be entangled in the same.

The passage itself "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" no doubt covers the whole ground of a believer's life and association. God's standard for His people is always His own, not ours. The unequal yoke has different phases, but wherever you get the yoke itself, that is always wrong. It embraces the marriage yoke, the commercial yoke, the social or benevolent yoke, and the religious yoke: this covers a good deal of ground.

First. It is wrong for a believer to contract marriage with an unbeliever (See 1 Cor vii. 39.), and if they know the truth, and seek to be governed by its teaching, there will be a jealous guard put on every tendency that would lead to such a yoke.

Second. It is also wrong for believers to enter partnership in business with unbelievers. This is the commercial yoke, and is as unscriptural as the other. Deut. xxii. 10 illustrates this for us: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." The two are different in every way. The ox, the clean animal according to the law; and the ass unclean. The temperaments of each also differ, making it such an unhappy yoke, that God intervenes and forbids it. A man of the world will seek to be governed in business by the principles of this age. The man of God will seek to carry divine principles into his business, and hence the two will clash. Either the man of the world is made to feel the burden; or if the believer

gives way to the world he is made unhappy, and the Lord dishonored; hence the yoke is wrong.

Third. It is also wrong for believers to join organizations, such as we have to-day, for social or benevolent purposes, or to band themselves together to resist the great monopolies. This is also an unequal yoke, and betrays lack of faith in God; is a lowering of the Christian's elevated life to the level of the world, and the believer thus entangled becomes a loser now, and that means loss, in a sense, forever.

Fourth. We will go a step further, and state that the religious yoke also is wrong, and is comprehended in the instruction of 2 Cor. vi. It is clearly wrong to join any denomination, any religious organization, when we know and believe unconverted people are received and partake of the Lord's supper; and this, because of the profession connected with it, is the most serious yoke of all.

We believe 2 Cor. vi. is a serious word for every child of God in these lax days, as we draw near the end of the age. I trust this will make plain to you this first point as to the yoke itself.

But as to the next point, how such cases are to be treated, we will need to look further. Some may not be far enough on in their Christian life to have grasped all we have just said as to this yoke, and others who may have the light as to it may yet not have faith to walk accordingly. Now where such is the case we need great care, and we believe instead of forcing souls to walk according to our attainment and our faith, we should rather "lead on softly according . . . as the children are able to endure" (Gen. xxxiii. 14).

First. As to marriage: suppose a believer has gone

so far as to enter into the marriage relation with an unconverted person, whether with or without light on 2 Cor. vi., they are morally and legally bound to fulfil their responsibilities, yet they are entangled in an *unequal yoke*. Supposing otherwise the life is orderly and faithful, how is the assembly to treat such a case? We are all agreed the yoke itself is wrong. Phil. i. 10 (margin) and iii. 15, 16, comes in here, we are to "try things that differ" and "whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule." But have we Scripture to "put them away" as 1 Cor. v.? or to "withdraw" from them as 2 Thess. iii. 6? These questions are raised and we need to look them fairly in the face and ventilate the subject. Phil. i. and iii. are worthy of our serious consideration, and are as divinely inspired as 2 Cor. vi. The passage in 2 Cor. vi. shows clearly the yoke is wrong, and the others in Phil. i. and iii. show discrimination and consideration is to be made for those who do not walk according to the rule of God's full truth.

All God's people have not reached the same attainment, and there is great need of grace and forbearance. In the case of marriage this has been the spirit which as a rule we have all followed. We might give counsel and even warn; yet if that failed we leave the person before the Lord to reap here as they sow. Further we have not gone. A few places we have heard of setting aside persons for marrying the unconverted, but such was because they were not rightly taught, or were extreme in their judgment, but in either case the action always met with the disapproval of brethren taught aright in the Word.

Second. As to a man in business. We have known of several who have yoked themselves with the unconverted to their own sorrow. But we have not sought to put such away, nor withdraw from them as 2 Thess. iii. ; nor yet silence them as to any ministry they might be pleased to render in the assembly. These things give a margin for God and the individual soul, where we even as an assembly must not intrude, and usurp a place that belongs only to the Lord. See how careful the apostle was in this (2 Cor. i. 24). It is all taken for granted that the life and teaching is otherwise right and faithful. Of course there should be private counsel and warnings; and individual faithfulness may withdraw its intimacy for the time, and so seek to press upon the conscience.

Third. We will now touch the subject of organizations and Unions. Most of those Unions are from a spiritual standpoint a great evil, and we would not pass that fact lightly by. Yet through force of circumstances and pressure, some of our brethren may have yielded and had their names associated with such Unions, but only through the pressure brought to bear upon them. Their *heart* is not in the evil. They detest the evil itself, and do not attend their meetings, and take no part. If all had faith in God, they would not give way to such pressure, and we could try and strengthen their faith, and to give godly counsel, when there is weakness and lack of faith in such a case.

Now what are we to do, if we have more light etc.? Shall we resort to 1 Cor. v.? or 2 Thess. iii. and count such as *unruly*? surely, surely not; rather we should leave them before the Lord, and earnestly

pray for them. Prayer becomes those more spiritual, and we are persuaded where this spirit is pursued more blessed and happy results follow. 1 Cor. v., 2 Thess. iii. are not the passages to be thought of in such cases, but rather Phil. i., iii. Many times such a brother or sister entangled with those three yokes, marriage, business and Unions, needs not the hard severe voice that reproves or warns as 1 Thess. v. 14, but rather the word "support the weak." "Warn the unruly, *support the weak*, and be patient toward all." *Grace and forbearance* is what in many of these things we greatly need to cultivate. Yet we should even seek to *deliver* those held in bondage by the fear of man, and not act with indifference as to their weak state. These few lines will give what light I have as to the principle we, as gathered to His name, have always acted on. I may later on give you a line as to the religious yoke also, which space here forbids.

Yours truly in Him,

A. E. B.

TWO GREAT LIVES AND THEIR END.

NO two lives perhaps stand in greater contrast to each other than those of Solomon and of Paul.

In Solomon a life of magnificence. Wisdom which penetrated man and overawed the evil while delighting the good. Wealth unbounded which enabled him to gratify every desire, every capacity for enjoyment. Talents of every sort: as a writer on many subjects, as an engineer, as an architect, as an organizer, as a ruler of men, until his capital became a palatial beauty, and the service about him

beautiful to behold. All this made him a central figure among the greatest of the earth, and they showered praises and presents upon him—all of it enough to excite the envy of such as might pretend to be rivals, whether of his time or of any time.

In Paul's, a path of lowly service, in poverty, and reproach and much hardship. He had discovered who Jesus was and why He had left His glory in heaven to become a despised, reproached, suffering man on earth. It had enrapt his soul and, at whatever cost, through whatever labor and self-denial, he would only live now to make Him known to men, and to be a faithful witness of His before all, whether men or angels.

If Christ and His doctrine were foolishness to men, he would then be a fool in their eyes, for he had determined to know nothing but that among the earthly-wise.

Where Christ was loved he would be loved, and where Christ was hated he would be hated, for henceforth his life was bound up with Christ for time and for eternity.

But now the end has come. Both have had a good, long, fair trial, with little or no change in their respective circumstances. They are both looking back and telling their experience: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" moans Solomon; and he goes on in that strain throughout Ecclesiastes. Meanwhile Paul shouts: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto

all them also that love His appearing;" and quietly and peacefully he goes and puts his head on Cæsar's block.

Reader with which man is *your heart?* with which one do you keep company? Were each of these two men in your city, and each at the same time inviting you to his presence—one to his magnificent feast, the other to his unknown corner to speak of his loved Saviour and Lord, which would get you? Think soberly, think before God; and if your heart is divided, if you dare not honestly say what you know well every child of God ought to be able to say without hesitation, then remember there is something wrong. Go into the sanctuary of God's presence, unbosom yourself, and He will do the rest.

P. J. L.

Lord Thou dost bid us
 Lean upon Thy strength;
 For in our own we're weak,
 We dare not trust it Lord.

Strength for the desert path we daily need,
 To bear the heat of burning sands;
 To stand against the "accuser,"

Lord, Thou know'st, for Thou didst tread the way,
 So we may lean on Thine almighty strength,
 For thus we're strong.

I wonder oft if other hearts
 Are weary as my own,
 I wonder if they long to flee
 Away and be alone

With Thee my God, my Saviour?
 I wonder too if there are times
 When all seems waste and drear,
 And heart and soul dissatisfied
 With every thing that's here—
 Save Thee, my God, my Saviour?

H. McD.

THE HAND OF GOD WITH HIS SUFFERING PEOPLE, AS ILLUSTRATED AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION.

II.

IN 1715, a little before his death, Louis XIV published an edict in which he declared that the Protestant religion had disappeared from the soil of France. His efforts and dark deeds for forty years to blot the reformation out of his kingdom seemed crowned with success. The churches were demolished, the preachers executed or banished, and the congregations scattered.

But the proud assumption of that proud king was but a vain illusion if not an immense lie. God had reserved not only His "seven thousand" but over seventy thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and who had survived the persecutions.

At this their darkest hour, God raised up among them an instrument fitted to serve them in their trying circumstances—*Antoine Court* by name. His parents were simple peasants, but faithful readers of the Bible. By the premature death of the father, the mother was left a widow with three children, and poor; but that pious woman so taught her children that they grew up to love the word of God, while they abhorred the superstitions of the Church of Rome. Often was *Antoine's* youthful soul set on fire as he heard his mother's friends, when secretly assembled together, relate the sufferings of the martyrs, and the courage of the *Camisards*.

One night, while lying awake he heard his mother preparing to go out. He begged to go with her.

She finally consented and silently they walked on and on, till, far in a desert place, they found others who, like themselves, had come from all directions to hear the word of God preached. From that time he began to follow, in their long and perilous journeys, one or the other of the few remaining servants of the Lord who took their lives into their hands to minister to their brethren. Then, alone, yet but a youth, across the forests, over the mountains, down the plains he traveled, comforting a lone believer here, addressing a few in the thick of the woods there, everywhere preaching and teaching what he knew of the Lord Jesus.

To his mother it was as Abraham when he offered up Isaac, and he himself knew his life was in incessant peril. Once he reached Marseille, went on board a galley, where 150 of his brethren were suffering for their faith, and with a strange audacity held a meeting with them in a retired part of the vessel. Everywhere his living faith and happy confidence in God encouraged and revived his brethren. Through his ministry they realized God had not forgotten them, and that He was able, spite of all opposition, to maintain the preaching of His word. They grew bold again, and while bolting their doors, they reopened their Bibles for family worship and for mutual edification.

The police soon noticed this revival, and a rich reward was offered for the arrest of young *Court*. Many a narrow escape did he have. Once, in the house where he was, he heard the click of arms, revealing the approach of soldiers. He had but time to slip away, and climb into the top of a tree, dense with foliage. From there he saw the soldiers break-

ing up the house with axes that they might discover his hiding-place.

He deprecated the taking up of arms as the *Camisards* had done, and he also rebuked the lukewarmness of many who, for fear of suffering, were hiding their faith and acting as hypocrites. He saw the necessity of order and discipline for the welfare of God's people, and the holiness of His house. This especially pressed upon him during a serious illness he passed through consequent upon his hardships and fatigues. Barely recovered, therefore, he opened his heart to a few devoted men, and on the 21st of August, 1715, a few days after the death of Louis XIV, their cruel persecutor, nine of them met together in an abandoned quarry in the neighborhood of Nîmes, to confer for the welfare of their scattered and persecuted brethren. From that time onward the *Huguenots* began afresh to form congregations wherever a few could come together, and they grew rapidly. The older and most experienced among them watched over their brethren, looked after the sick, the poor, and those who fell by the way; they looked after meeting-places in the desert parts around them, then informed their brethren; they also informed the preachers, looked after their lodging-place, and sought to protect them from the incessant pursuit of their enemies. They also constantly exposed their lives in all this service. If discovered in it they were condemned to the galleys or to death.

There was also great danger from within in the exercise of discipline, for any one desiring to avenge himself had fearful power in his hands: he had but

to denounce those who came together in their desert assemblies.

The dungeons of the land were filling fast with gentle and patient women; the galleys of Marseille, Dunkerke, and other seaports were spattered with the blood which the cruel lash drew from men whose only crime was to love and obey the word of God. Spite of all, the work grew. In 1729 there were in the south of France 110 assemblies of Huguenots, and these were constantly appealed to from other parts of the country for some of them to come and teach them the Scriptures, until an awakening was manifest to the extremities of the kingdom.

Many a devoted servant did the Lord, the Head and Lover of His Church, raise up at that time for His suffering but faithful people in that persecuting land. Prominent among them was *Paul Rabaut*. Eminently gifted, devoted and courageous, he labored for over fifty years with incessant zeal, amid manifold dangers from which nothing short of the almighty hand of God could have given him escape.

But many fell. *Jacques Roger*, seventy years of age, was finally arrested after a laborious ministry of forty years' duration. When asked by his judge who he was, he replied: "I am the one you have been pursuing these thirty-nine years. It is time you caught me." He was condemned to death. Calmly he heard his sentence and said God had shown him great grace in raising him up lately from a sick-bed to make him thus a witness to the faith of Christ. As the executioner drew nigh he exclaimed: "Here comes the happy day so often desired. Let us rejoice, my soul, since the blessed hour has come to enter into the joy of the Lord." They left his body

twenty-four hours hanging on the gallows, then threw it into the river.

Matthieu Mezal was an ardent preacher of the gospel. His preaching so captivated the hearts of his hearers that he was intensely loved by them all. When his arrest took place it was even difficult to prevent the *Huguenots* of those parts from rescuing him by force. From his prison in *Vernoux* he begged his friends not to take such a matter in their hands. Vengeance belonged to God alone in the concerns of His people. He was taken to *Montpellier* for trial, and when, after examination, the judges realized not only the innocence, but the excellence of the man and his associates, the chief wept as he said to him, "Sir, it is with sorrow that I am compelled to condemn you, but it is the king's order." With his upper garments removed; his head and feet bare, he was taken to the public place where his funeral pile had been built. A vast multitude had assembled, and even his enemies were moved at the sight of that noble man, so calm, so serene on his way to death, yet so firm in resisting the importunities of the Jesuits to the very foot of the pile. Ascended to the top he desired to speak to the people, but the beating of fourteen drums drowned his voice. His peaceful, happy countenance to the end, however, preached more than words could have done to the multitude of lookers-on. His friends thanked God for adding such another witness to His truth from their ranks. It was great honor put upon them.

But violence increased. Neither sex nor age were regarded, and it became difficult to prevent the opposition of violence to such violence. It is here *Rabaut* became so prominently the servant of the

Lord Jesus to his brethren. Indefatigable, he went from place to place, comforting, reproving, praying, teaching. He exhorted to obedience to the authorities, even if unjust; to patience and firmness; opposed violence being done to the priests, even the most cruel. To *Antoine Court*, his bosom friend, he wrote, "Spies are incessantly on my tracks. They are disguised soldiers armed with pistols and ropes. I have also much increased in value, for the price of my head has risen from six to twenty thousand francs, and instead of the gallows, I am threatened with the wheel." The extraordinary escapes he experienced strengthened his faith, but never made him reckless. Repeatedly he sent petitions to the authorities and members of the royal family, stating well-proved facts concerning the faithful allegiance to the king of all the reformed; and the false accusation, malice and inhumanity of their accusers. Gradually the government withdrew its help from the priests, and their chief strength became the influence they could exercise on their people against the "heretics." In this way cruel excesses could still be and were perpetuated in different localities, and many suffered yet in patience.

The last was *Jean Calas*, a highly respected merchant of Toulouse, sixty years of age. His second son, through disappointment, became sullen and committed suicide by hanging himself. All their neighbors and friends deeply sympathized with the grief-stricken parents; when suddenly a rumor went round that *Calas* had assassinated his son because he refused to allow him to become a Catholic.

Calas was at once arrested, and the body of his son taken in great pomp to the Cathedral. Priests,

monks, and brotherhoods of the different orders vied with each other to celebrate the virtues of this pretended martyr to the Catholic faith. The chapel was hung in white, and at the head of the body lying there in state was a skeleton, with a palm in one hand, and in the other, an inscription with these words: "Abjuration from heresy." The people became delirious with rage against *Calas*, and there was no torture too cruel to inflict upon him. As nothing could be proved against him, all was done to make him confess his crime, while he, through all, affirmed his innocence. After all was tried in vain, he was condemned to the wheel; every bone of his body was broken, and for two hours he lay there in suffering, praying incessantly to the end.

Voltaire, confounding Romanism with Christianity, was then beginning to make himself heard against religion. He abhorred the hypocrisy of the ecclesiastics, and the case of *Calas* incensed him. He took up his defense, exposed with burning words the infamy and cruelty of a legislation which permitted such things. In result the good name of the family and their confiscated property were restored to them by a judgment of the court; the persecutions ceased for very shame, but the awful blot of it all was fastened upon Christianity itself, instead of upon the caricature of it which Romanism presents, and the mass of the French people became infidel. The cause of Christ—man's eternal blessing—suffered more by it than by all the persecutions.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE have now come, in our Old Testament readings, to the highest point of Israel's greatness as a nation (1 Kings), and to that display of kingly power and glory which—outwardly at least—are a fitting type of the kingdom and glory of our Lord's millennial reign. We say outwardly, for a glance beneath the surface will disclose to us a moral state the exact opposite of that which will obtain during the reign of the "Prince of Peace."

The first book of Kings may be roughly divided into two parts. (1) The kingdom in its solidarity under Solomon, chapters i.—xi. (2) The division and separation of the ten tribes from the two, chapters xii.—xxii.

We see at the beginning David in the feebleness of old age, as the last act of kingly authority placing Solomon on the throne, chap. i.

In chap. ii. we have divine judgment inflicted upon those who had long deserved it.

Chap. iii. shows us the granting of Solomon's prayer for wisdom; and

Chap. iv. the greatness and extent of his kingdom.

Chaps. v.—viii. give the account of the building and dedication of the temple—in all which Solomon is a type of Christ in the glory of that time when the house of the Lord shall be inhabited by divine glory.

Chaps. ix. and x. give the sequel to the former narrative, God's promises and warnings, and the visit of "the Queen of the South." May we ever remember the "greater than Solomon" to whom we have come. In sad and solemn contrast with all this splendor we have in the eleventh chapter the record of the shameful apostasy of this wise man, and the premonition of the result in the rent kingdom.

The second part of the book narrates the account of the

division, Jeroboam taking ten tribes and leaving to David's house but the two—Benjamin and Judah. It is especially during this period that prophetic ministry comes prominently into view, and chiefly in the independent kingdom of Israel. God's mercy lingered over that nation, and to it He devoted special attention through His "servants the prophets." But begun in self-will and apostasy, it never as a kingdom returned to God. There might be individually 7,000 who had not "bowed the knee to Baal," but corporately kings and people were increasingly alienated from the God of Israel. It is striking that not one of the kings of Israel was a godly man, while a number of the kings of Judah truly feared the Lord.

In chaps. xvii.—xxii. we have as the prominent character that remarkable man, Elijah, who bore such fearless testimony in Israel. The narrative of his life never loses its charm, and yields fresh lessons to the careful reader.

Passing to the New Testament, we have that most delightful and interesting of histories, the book of Acts. We might say that the general theme of the book is the transition of God's testimony from Judaism to Christianity. The first part of the book is entirely Jewish, while the close leaves us ready for the epistles of Paul. Fittingly in the record of progress and emancipation the scene changes from Jerusalem to Samaria, thence to Gentile Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth and finally to Rome, entirely away from the influence of Judaism.

Chaps. i—vii. give us the Jerusalem history, we might say, of the Church.

Chaps. viii—xii. extend wider, taking in that wondrous epoch, the conversion of Paul.

From Chaps. xiii—xix. we have the period of great apostolic activity among the Gentiles, and

Chaps. xx—xxviii. gives the outward bondage but true widening of the truth even to Rome.

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are the first (probably) written by the apostle. They breathe a fresh and beautiful spirit, in which everything is controlled by the hope of the Lord's coming. Their relationship to the Father is also prominent. In the first Epistle we have the Lord's coming as the hope of the Church; in the second His appearing in judgment, and warnings.

WHEN *nature* is left free to work, it will ever go as far away from *God* as it can. This is true since the day when man said, "I heard *Thy voice*, and I was *afraid* and I hid myself" (Gen. iii. 10). But when *grace* is left free and sovereign to work, it will ever bring the soul "nigh." Thus it was with Levi. He was by nature "*black as the tents of Kedar*;" by grace, "comely as the curtains of Solomon;" by *nature* he was "*joined*" in a covenant of murder; by *grace* "*joined*" in a covenant of "life and peace." The former, because he was "*fierce and cruel*;" the latter, because he feared and was afraid of the Lord's name. (Comp. Gen. xlix. 6, 7; Mal. ii. 5). Furthermore, Levi was by *nature* conversant with the "instruments of cruelty;" by *grace*, with "*the instruments of God's tabernacle*:" by *nature* God could not come into *Levi's assembly*; by *grace*, Levi is brought into *God's assembly*: by nature, "his feet were swift to *shed blood*;" by grace, *swift* to follow the movements of the cloud through the desert, in real, patient service to God. In a word, Levi had become a "*new creature*," and "old things had passed away," and therefore he was no longer to "live unto himself," but unto Him who had done such marvelous things for him in grace.

C. H. M.

HELP AND FOOD

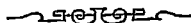
FOR THE

Household of Faith.

SPECIAL NUMBER.

CONTENTS.

| | <i>Page</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| This is not Death (Poetry)..... | 226 |
| "Remember your Guides" | 227 |
| Portion for the Month | 254 |



NEW YORK:
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS, BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT,
63 Fourth Avenue.

THIS IS NOT DEATH.

TO lay life's burden down for aye,
 And gently fall asleep; to rest
 From every sorrow, every care,
 Forever on the SAVIOUR'S breast—
This is not death.

To leave a little while before
 The rest, and wait with Him above,
 Away from sin, and toil, and strife,
 And only feast upon His love,
This is not death.

To wait the resurrection morn,
 Beyond the wasting wilderness,
 Where faith and hope forever cease,
 And only love remains to bless,
This is not death.

To lay a life of service down
 At Jesus feet—whose one desire
 Was but to serve the Christ he loved,
 And us—to mount up higher.
This is not death.

Then cease we hence to mourn for him
 Whose spirit is forever free,
 Whose life of labor now is crowned
 With glorious immortality
 Through *Jesus'* death.

H. McD.

"REMEMBER YOUR GUIDES."

A MEMORIAL OF THE MINISTRY OF F. W. GRANT.

"Remember your leaders who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come. Be not carried away with various and strange doctrines, for it is good that the heart be confirmed with grace, not meats; those who have walked in which have not been profited by them" (Heb. xiii. 7-9).—*J. N. D.'s Version.*

THE theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the pre-eminence of Christ in all things. Written to those who were by birth and inheritance disposed to set a value upon the external, apart from the saving grace of God, it came in direct opposition to all fleshly pride and carnal religion. In fact, it did not so much set aside abuses of the law, as our Lord in dealing with the self-righteous, hypocritical Pharisees, as it showed that all ceremonial religion, though given by God Himself, was but temporary. The law had but "a shadow of good things to come." Beautiful shadows indeed, and most helpful in illustrating divine truth, and yet never for a moment to be confounded with the substance—Christ Himself.

Thus Christ is seen pre-eminent over and displacing all things which the Hebrews were tempted to hold to and to substitute for Him. We see Him as Son of God, pre-eminent over the angels, and setting them aside; as the faithful Son over God's house, displacing Moses, the faithful servant in his own day; as the true High Priest, who abides forever, displacing Aaron and his sons, whom death was con-

stantly removing; as the Mediator of the new covenant, sealed with His own blood, therefore an "everlasting" covenant; as the one perfect Sacrifice by which we are sanctified—"perfected forever"—and have boldness to enter into the holiest "by the blood of Jesus," displacing forever "the blood of bulls and goats." We see Him as "the leader and perfecter of faith," who, having victoriously run His course, has sat down upon the throne of God, the object of exultant faith and love and hope, as we speed on our way, laying aside every weight, and turning from all that would distract.

Jesus only, and always, is then the theme, and again and again is He put before the Hebrew Christians, with every warning and entreaty to hold fast the confession of their faith without wavering. No ordinance, no matter how holy; no man, no matter how venerated, could for one moment dispute the place which He alone could occupy.

And surely if the Hebrews needed such an admonition, we living in these last days need also to be ever recalled to "the Son." If we are not tempted to turn to Judaism in name, there is the pronounced tendency to take up a ritual which ministers to the flesh in the same way. Rome has multitudes of votaries not called by her name; while other multitudes are turning to "divers and strange doctrines" which exalt man and degrade the Christ of God. We need, perhaps as never before, to hear the Shepherd's voice, to be turned back to Christ alone.

We all recognize, too, the tendency to make much of man, and unknowingly to fall into idolatry by giving glory to some instrument whom in His grace

God has seen fit to use, rather than to Himself. We lean unduly upon the hand which would point us to Christ, and too often make priests of those who are reminding us that we are all priests. We close our lips in presence of the ministry of those who are telling us, "Ye may all prophesy." Thus we abuse the very gifts given by our glorified Head, and one lesson at least which we may learn from the removal of beloved and honored servants of Christ is not to make too much of these—to "cease from man"—to cleave more simply to Christ alone. Thus will we honor the servant by turning to the Master, and be kept from the shame of idolatry.

And yet—returning to the Epistle to the Hebrews—we find a whole chapter devoted to human examples of faith. A great cloud of witnesses look down upon us in the eleventh chapter, and in the closing one of the book thrice does the writer (who, though doubtless Paul, veils himself that Christ alone may claim the eye,) speak of their "guides," or "leaders." They were to remember those who had passed away, and imitate their faith; they were to obey those who remained, realizing that they were charged with weighty responsibilities, and were to salute them in all honor and affection.

Scripture, then, not only warrants but commands the remembrance of those whom God has given as leaders of His people. To forget them means, too often, to forget the truth they brought, and paves the way for that "building the sepulchres of the prophets" by a godless posterity who are indifferent to every warning spoken by those prophets. There is a sober, discriminating way of dwelling

upon the ministry of faithful servants which encourages our own faith, quickens conscience, and stirs afresh to follow them as they followed Christ.

Most biographies are written from a human standpoint; the man is before us rather than his message. Such biographies are not helpful; but who has not been stimulated by the narratives of devotion, self-denial, unresting toil of faithful men at home or abroad? We realize on either hand that they were men "of like passions with ourselves," and that a Power wrought in and with them which is for us too.

The passage we have quoted at the beginning shows us how we can properly "remember our guides." First of all, what makes their remembrance profitable is that they spoke to us the word of God. It was not for special personal excellence of character, either natural or gracious; nor for great activities and results in the Lord's work—considered in themselves. What gives value to the remembrance of the leader is the word of God with which he was identified, the message he brought.

We read of one of David's mighty men, Eleazar the son of Dodo, that he stood alone against a great host of Philistines when "the men of Israel had gone away." He smote them "till his hand was weary and his hand clave unto the sword; and *the Lord* wrought a great victory" (2 Sam. xxiii. 9, 10). His very name, "God is help," turns from the man to God. What could he do single-handed against the host of the enemy? His arm grows weary, but the weary hand cleaves to the good sword, and we see no longer the feeble arm of man, but the power of

God behind that weary arm, hewing out victory with that sword. The man has become identified with the sword, and God can use such an one.

So are all God's mighty men; feeble, and with weary arms, they cling to that "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Their very weariness and feebleness makes them cling (like Jacob who, his thigh out of joint, can no more wrestle, but cling). Such men God can use, for they are identified with their sword,—with the word of God. To remember such is to remember the sword—the Word which they brought. There can be no higher honor to a servant of Christ than to merge him, as it were, in the truth he ministered; in thinking of him, to think of the sword he held in his feebleness. The world may honor its soldiers, its men of wealth, its benefactors and build them monuments. They are its departed great men. Believers recall the memory of those who have left their greatness in our hands—the Word of God. To do this is simply to have mind refreshed and heart stirred by that which abides forever.

We are also to consider the issue, or outcome, of their walk. What has their life ended in? It has now ceased. A rich man's life ends, so far as what he leaves behind is concerned, in wealth; a statesman's, in power and influence. In what shall we say the life of Christ's servant has ended? What has he left as the sum of that life? Is it not suggestive that the very next clause gives what is really the answer, while closely connected, as we shall see, with the following clause? "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The issue of their life is the abiding Christ. *They* have passed

off the scene, but Christ, the object of their ministry, abides. With Paul they could say, "To me, to live is Christ." Christ is the end, the goal of their life. To depart and be with Him is far better. Happy indeed are those who are called to lay down their burden and enter into His rest. They loved and served Him here; they enjoy unclouded peace and rest as they wait with Him there. The outcome, the end, of all their life-work, toil, testimony, is *Christ*. They enjoy Him to the full now; they have, as it were, left Him as a priceless legacy to us here.

And their life was a life of faith—the refusal at once both of creature righteousness and creature strength. They had learned to "rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh." We are not called to do, in detail, their work. God calls and fits each of His servants for some special work, peculiarly suited to the special gift with which he is endowed. We are not to be imitators of one another, but ever to be imitators of the *faith* that casts the feeble upon the Mighty.

Lastly, we note the warning not to be "carried about with divers and strange doctrines." The servant of Christ ever stands for His truth against all opposition of error. His ministry, in so far as it was under the guidance and in the power of the Holy Spirit, brought home to heart and conscience the truth of God and the Person of the Lord.

Do we not need, as has already been said, to be specially on our guard in these days against the subtle inroads of error? The Person of the Son of God, His atoning work, His Church, the destiny of man—are all objects of the enemy's attacks. Let us hold

fast the truth, and Him who is the truth, and His Word of truth.

We have, then, four characteristics of a proper memorial of departed leaders—(1) The word of God ministered by them; (2) The outcome or issue of their life, Christ for them and for us ever the same; (3) The faith which occupied them with this blessed Person; and (4) The warning against error. If we ever have these features before us, there will be only profit in remembering those who have gone on before us.

Perhaps there is less temptation to do anything else in the case of the beloved brother whose memory we are seeking to recall. His claim for a permanent place in the hearts of the saints rests—as it really does with any, but more ostensibly than with most—in his identification with the word of God. Unknown to many in the flesh, who have profited by his ministry, with little of what may be called popularity, or the magnetism supposed to be so essential in a leader, he is lost sight of in the precious truth which it was his joy to unfold. Those who knew him personally loved him for the worth and Christian nobility of his character, the fruit of God's grace; for that wondrous mind received from Him, and for the simplicity and dignity of a true Christian man. But it is not of these things that we speak, while we would ever seek to walk in the steps of piety and faith wherever seen. We turn rather to that Word to which he held fast, and, in conscious feebleness and dependence, used so constantly. What views of the Word did he give us! What thoughts of Christ! What truths under the guidance of the Holy Spirit! These abide.

If a heathen poet, who has left behind some beautiful specimens of human wisdom and human art, could say, "I have builded a monument more enduring than brass," can we not with greater propriety apply these words to one whose one aim it was to build only the pure Word in all his ministry? That Word endures, "when all that seems shall suffer shock." What higher honor can there be for any of us than to be associated, to be identified with that Word?

In taking up, then, his ministry, and seeking to analyze it, to understand its prominent features, it is with the prayer that Christ may be glorified, not His servant; that the truths of God's word may be brought afresh to mind and conscience, and thus we may be stirred to take fresh hold of Christ and His truth. This, we are sure, would be the only way in which our beloved brother would have us speak of him at all. For him, as for every one who loves the Lord, it can only be, "Not I, but Christ."

The truth of God is one and self-consistent, and yet it is many-sided. There are special beauties connected with every view of it, and much to be learned from the manner of presenting it by each servant who is guided by the Spirit.

We will speak first of his ministry of the gospel. Every one who loves Christ, loves the gospel. It is a sure sign of spiritual coldness when one loses taste for the simplest truths of salvation. Our brother was no evangelist, deeply as he sympathized with every winner of souls, and longed for a wider, fuller and more constant work in evangelization. In his gospel addresses we do not find much of that

ardent insistence which is often seen in the gospel preacher. One word characterized his preaching—thought. Appeals to the will, touching narratives, denunciations,—all proper when one is led of the Spirit,—were not there.

But there was a rich and tender unfolding of divine grace and love. Man's sin was brought into the presence of infinite holiness, a divine compassion and a perfect redemption. Sin was seen to be sin, not so much in its effects, or in its just recompense, as in the light of the Man who sat at the well of Sychar, or who dealt with the poor child of sin and shame in the Pharisee's house. In his book of gospel addresses many examples of this can be found. Read again the "Gospel in the Genealogy," and see how grace is magnified in Christ's association with the sin of His people—blessed be God, Himself all pure and undefiled by the contact of all human wretchedness. The same can be seen in "A Brand from the Burning," and other addresses in the same book.

How sweet it is, dear brethren, to have these precious truths recalled to our minds! Our brother was not alone in these precious truths. He had received them from others who, like himself, had found rest and peace at the feet of Jesus. He longed for a revival of gospel work among us. Shall we not be stirred afresh by the love of Christ to tell to the perishing the news of that grace which reaches the lowest,—which has reached us?

But it was as a teacher, an unfolders of the word of God for His people, that our brother will be best remembered. We may say at the outset here that he

had received and assimilated the ministry of our beloved J. N. D., whom he recognized as specially called of God, raised up to give to the Church in freshness and clearness the priceless heritage of truth so long hidden from God's people. None prized more highly or more constantly made use of the "Synopsis" and collected writings of Mr. D. than our brother. Their gifts were distinct. The elder had, perhaps more clearly than any since the days of the apostles, a clearly defined outline of revealed truth. Whether in the exposition of a single verse, a chapter, a book, or a section of Scripture, he grasped the salient features, and set them before his hearers in a few pregnant sentences. His eye swept the heavens at a glance; he caught the current of divine thought, and followed obediently its leadings. We shall follow the characteristics of our brother's ministry as we go on. We cannot refrain from saying that it will be a sad day for the Assembly when the writings of J. N. D. are neglected or ignored.

As has been said, our brother had assimilated the teachings of Mr. D. Hence he had a clearly defined outline of Scripture truth, into which he could bring the "things new and old" which he gathered from his own study of the Word. Those who have read his "Lessons of the Ages," and his "Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven," will see how clearly he grasped and presented the great outline features of dispensational truth. While holding in the main with those who had gone before him the great salient features of prophetic and dispensational truth, our brother has presented them in a way both fresh and helpful, quite peculiar to himself. His book on Rev-

elation illustrates this on many a page of most profitable prophetic study.

Similarly he took up great doctrines of the word of God and exhibited them in their beauty and power. His work on "The Atonement" is a Scriptural examination into that blessed doctrine. He traces from the beginning the great truth of salvation as seen typically in the earlier books; prophetically, in the Psalms and Prophets; as actually accomplished, in the Gospels, and doctrinally unfolded in the epistles of Paul and the other apostles and Revelation. One rises from the study of this book with a deeper conviction than ever of the cardinal place in God's plan of the truth of Atonement, and a clearer realization of the divine wisdom, love and skill unfolded throughout the pages of the word of God. The "scarlet line" is traced throughout, and we see how Christ and His work were ever present in the mind of God.

We may link with this book the other one, on the Person of our Lord, "The Crowned Christ." No one who is sound upon the work of Christ is likely to hold wrong views as to His Person. So in this work we will find a reverent, but thorough, inquiry as to what the word of God teaches regarding the Son of His love. Our brother did not believe in passing over truth with a few vague and glittering generalities. By habit and by faith he was a painstaking inquirer into minute points which would escape the attention of the casual observer. He therefore deals with the Deity and the Humanity of our Lord—Son of God in a twofold way, Son of Man as well; Divine Creator on the one hand; obedient, sinless, deathless

Man, on the other. The analogies between the first man, first Adam, and the Second Man, the *last* Adam, are carefully noted. Distinction is made between *first* begotten—suggesting other children—and *only* begotten—excluding all others. In short, our brother seeks to point out the "many crowns" upon the head of Him whom faith loves to follow in every character He wears—and worships Him in each—the Word, God over all, the Man of sorrows, the Son, the King—Blessed be He forevermore, and let all His saints say Amen!

Passing next to a book more widely known, perhaps, than any other of his separate works, we will glance at his "Facts and Theories as to a Future State." Of the need for such a work there was, and is, sad evidence, not only among the open deniers of the word of God, but with those who claim to bow to Scripture, and who quote it in proof of their position. Time was, when to be a "Universalist" was, like a "Unitarian," to be one who would not be held within the limits of Scripture statement. But during the time of the revival of the truth of the Lord's coming, and the accurate study of Scripture, there have arisen various schools of thought, all professedly bowing to Scripture, in which the solemn reality of eternal punishment, conscious and unchanging, was denied. It seems as though Satan were, as he no doubt is, seeking to lay parallel teachings to those being brought before the Church of God. In this way he would discredit the real truth, and create a revulsion in the minds of many against all Scripture, and at the same time instil into the minds of others the deadly poison of his own lie.

There are many kinds of mind among men, and for each class Satan will have that special form of error which he knows will be most likely to attract. Thus there is "the larger hope" of those whose sensibilities will not allow them to entertain the thought of what the Son of God so plainly calls "everlasting fire." This hope of ultimate salvation for all has various forms in which it clothes itself—all included under the general head of Restorationalism.

Directly opposite to this—alas, not opposed, for error is many-sided, but united in its hatred of truth—is the grossly materialistic teaching of Annihilation, in its varied forms; while between the two are many individual forms of error, partaking of the character of one or both of these main systems.

Nor let it be supposed that these errors obtained only among some peculiar or obscure sect, as "Christadelphianism." Begin where they might, they worked their way with satanic persistence into the fibre of the professing church, until at present they are to be found, more or less openly advocated, in many of the evangelical denominations.

The enemy had come in like a flood, and the Spirit of God, as ever, in faithfulness lifted up a standard against it. The task before our brother was an arduous and difficult one. It would not do to writ in generalities; mere denunciation, no matter how much deserved, would be out of place. To fall into a passion, if we may use such language, with the enemy would be but to play into his hands by an exhibition of the weakness which he would say was inherent in the orthodox view.

What was needed was a temperate, thorough anal

ysis of every false view, the examination of every passage of Scripture used in support of error, and a thorough exhibition of the untruth being taught. But mere destruction was not enough. Every scripture must be put in its true light—the doctrine of the word of God fully brought out, so that the reader would be left, not merely with errors refuted, but with a solid foundation of divine truth beneath his feet. Incidentally, many crudities and misconceptions among the orthodox had to be set right.

It is the united judgment of many leaders of Christian thought, not merely those who might be thought to be favorably disposed, that in "Facts and Theories" the Spirit of God has provided a wealth of truth with which to meet error. We would earnestly exhort the saints, particularly those who may be in any way thrown with various forms of this error, to arm themselves with the weapons found here.

In this book there will be found considerable of what may be called psychological study of Scripture. Our brother did not hesitate to enter into every field of knowledge. He believed that all truth is one, and that if faith does not cultivate a field, Satan will. He was a profound student of what is called nature, reading from both the friends and enemies of revealed truth. Thus he not only studied the works of God in plant and animal life, but examined the teachings of such leaders in error as Darwin and his disciples. For him "Evolution" had neither attractions nor terrors, as, with keen mind and childlike faith, with Bible in hand, he tested all by the light of divine truth. Unlike a brilliant but misguided leader, of whom we would fain hope the best, spite of the er-

rors taught by him, our brother was unmoved from the solid rock of divine truth. He made the infidel investigators of natural phenomena "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God." He plucked their own weapons out of their hands, and used them against them.

Here, again, he was no mere destructive critic, but a builder of truth. It was a favorite remark of his that nature taught not merely of God, but of Christ, and that we would find the atonement and other great truths in the book of God spread abroad in field and forest and starry heavens as well as in the pages of Scripture. He delighted in all books which soberly presented the typical truths of nature, and in his "Spiritual Law in the Natural World" has presented a most attractive line of truth, to kindle further desire for divine knowledge.

It was his great wish to write another work upon the book of Genesis, in which these truths should have their full treatment. Alas, he has been taken, and the work is not done. Who is there who will take it up with the same faith, and deliver these fields of truth from the enemy's hand, and put them at the disposition of the saints? The time is ripe for it; is anyone doing the work? The Lord stir the hearts of those to whom He has given the key of knowledge, that they may use it to open the door to His treasures!

It is right, also, to make another remark in this connection. Men have come to nature first, as though they could get to God in that way. But we must ever remember that man is a sinner, "alienated from the life of God." There is but one Way—Christ

Himself, and "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." If we are to know God in any true sense, we must know Him through Christ, and through His Word. We must not expect nature to interpret the Bible, but the reverse. We must use the word of God as a lamp to correct our natural thoughts. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Our brother ever stood for the primacy of Scripture. He denied the common statement that the Bible was not meant to teach science. He declared the Bible was meant to teach whatever came before it—history, facts of nature, or any other matter. It did not use the language of modern science—it used the everyday speech of those to whom it was given, but none the less is it divinely accurate.

We do well to remember this, and not to yield to the wiles of the enemy, who, under specious pleas, would rob us of the absolute infallibility of the word of God.

And this brings us to consider that which may be truly called our brother's life-work. He had for years been impressed with the absolute perfection of the Scriptures to its least "jot and tittle"—a truth we all accept. But with him it became the one absorbing thought of his life, and he put it to the test to the full extent of his powers. If the Bible is absolutely inerrant, then not only are its doctrines perfectly true, its narratives perfectly accurate, but its very words are divinely chosen.

He found, as others before him had done, that Scripture itself drops many a hint, gives many an example of the way in which the Spirit of God would have us use it. Simple quotations of law or proph-

ets, allusions to sacrifices or customs, allegorization of Old Testament facts, stress upon the significance of names, the juxtaposition of words—all these he found in Scripture itself. Space here forbids our going into anything beyond the barest mention. It will be sufficient to refer to the narrative of Hagar and Sarah, in Gal. iv., for an example of how Scripture uses Old Testament narrative; to the priesthood of Melchisedec, in Heb. vii., as showing the use of the interpretation of names and their relation one to another; to the whole Epistle to the Hebrews as a divine commentary upon Old Testament ritual.

He also found that our Lord's use of the parable to teach was not a mere casual method, but one of the usual methods of the Spirit of God throughout Scripture. Not every parable was interpreted. A few were explained, not as though to limit further investigation, but to give the key to it. "Know ye not this parable? How, then, will ye know all parables?"

The word of God is not merely a revelation; it is a book to exercise every faculty of the renewed man. To know it in any full measure is to have in the highest sense a liberal education. It offers but little to idleness; but to the prayerful seeker it is, like its divine Author, "a rewarder of them that diligently seek" it.

Let this great truth lay hold of our hearts as through grace it laid hold of him, and a boundless field will be found at our very door in which to find food and sustenance to the delight of our soul. How his heart well-nigh broke at the indifference, the unbelief, the lethargy that hung like a pall upon most

of the beloved people of God! How he yearned over them! Were his removal to stimulate others to shake themselves from the dust, we could indeed bless God.

But we must trace out a little further the way in which the Spirit of God led this humble student of the Word. If Scripture not only gave examples of interpretation, but encouragement and commands to continue on in what it opened up, then he would go on. If Scripture gave the significance of the names of persons and places—here and there—he would everywhere seek that significance. If it "spiritualized" a narrative, he would catch at the key, and use it throughout the Word. Every portion of Genesis should be as the account of Hagar and Sarah, and Melchisedec. Exodus and Numbers should be as Leviticus. Samuel and the Kings would be found to be no exception to the word that "all Scripture is profitable."

He had for years been a diligent student of the book of Psalms. Not only did their contents attract, but the form in which they were written—their divisions into a pentateuch, the acrostic form of a number of them, their evident relation one to another in various groups—all these things impressed him with the fact that God had written them upon a distinct plan in which the numerical significance of psalm and group and book had a clearly marked and important place. But if the Psalms were written thus, why not all Scripture? So he went on, till he found the same divine harmony throughout the inspired Word.

He has given us the account of all this, with its

results, in a most engaging little book, "The Numerical Structure of Scripture," a work which will be a revelation to those who have not yet read it.

But to the thoughtful mind such a handling of Scripture will seem, to say the least, hazardous. And so it is. So it seemed to our brother. He shrank from the fancies and imaginations of the mind of man. Various books illustrated only too sadly the dangers of this method, when undertaken apart from the Spirit of God. He feared, he was cautious, he was prayerful, but he did not draw back. The Spirit of God thus, doubtless, put him on his guard against the use of the imagination; so he went on carefully, slowly—testing each step. The result was a most rich and beautiful exhibition of the treasures of the Word of God.

Time will not permit us to enter into details here. The "Numerical Bible" is in our hands, and will speak for itself to the thoughtful student. It must suffice here to point out the application of those principles to which we have already alluded.

All Scripture is written according to a well defined plan, in which each book has its definite place, which corresponds, in spiritual meaning, with the number of that place. Thus the *first* book of a group (as the first group also) will have a meaning suggested by number *one*; and so with the second, third, etc. The scriptural significance of these numbers was found in the Word itself, and justified by many a text. The Pentateuch of Moses was found to be the basis, the plan, upon which the entire Scripture was written. Thus there is a historical Pentateuch, a Prophetic, and a Poetic one—as well as one for the New Testament.

Each of these pentateuchs he found to correspond, book by book, with the Mosaic one. Thus a *third* book had a Levitical significance, or at least a significance corresponding with the number 3. Incidentally, what a proof we have here of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch—5 books, no more and no less, forming a complete, symmetrical whole!

The same structure was found to exist in each separate book. Each division and minor section was found to correspond in meaning with its numerical place. Thus a *fourth* division of a book would have the characteristics of number 4, a second section in that would give some thought connected with number 2, and so on. These divisions are noted down to portions as small as the chapters in our ordinary Version, and in some cases to portions the length of only a verse or two. In the Psalms each verse has its numerical place.

Thus, instead of the arbitrary divisions into chapters and verses, of no help save for purposes of reference, we have a structure exhibited, every part of which has divine meaning. Far be it from us to suggest that perfect accuracy has been reached in noting these divisions. Others may, here and there, find more simple and well defined marks; but in the main they are seen by the thoughtful mind to be the true divisions.

And what a witness to the perfection of the Word of God they are! An answer to the wretched infidel work of "Higher Criticism," and most helpful, too, in getting and holding the contents of any book of the Bible.

We have been speaking only of the text of Scripture

and its divisions. When we come to the "Notes," which form quite a full commentary upon the text, we find not only the use of the divisions, but a most lucid and profound exposition of the Word of God. The scope of each book, its theme and main divisions, are stated in a few paragraphs. Then each portion is gone into with careful detail, and the results spread before the reader, opening up the entire passage. All is treated, as we have been saying, from a spiritual point of view. Every word has meaning, every allusion had a purpose in the mind of the Spirit. Thus the types of Exodus and Leviticus are handled with reverent particularity, and the whole book becomes luminous with divine meaning.

There is little or none of the spirit of dogmatism in these notes. We are simply able to accompany the writer, and see upon what scriptural grounds he has reached his conclusions. Thus we are unhampered, and, instead of listening to man's word, have been pointed to the Word of God.

We must also refer to the treatment of the last half of the book of Joshua. Here, most commentators had been able simply to grope among the names and point out here and there a place identified by its modern Arabic name, or by some more or less obscure historic allusion. Our brother, on the contrary—looking upon this as the description of God's inheritance for His earthly people, and spiritually for ourselves—found in each tribe, with its boundaries, some features of divine truth; in the name of each spring and hill and valley and town some spiritual blessing in Christ. A map of our spiritual inheritance could almost have been constructed. Thus in an appar-

ently barren and meaningless desert of names, the Spirit made to blossom beautiful and precious fruits for the saints.

The labor in all this was arduous, and necessarily progress was slow. But the Lord enabled His servant, in weak and failing health, to go from Genesis to 2 Samuel in a thorough and orderly way; to devote a volume to the whole book of Psalms, and to complete the entire New Testament. This last was scarcely more than half accomplished when his life was despaired of, but, in answer to fervent prayer, he was raised up and enabled to complete that portion. Then, turning back to the Old Testament, he had well-nigh finished the prophet Ezekiel when the weary servant was called into the rest of God.

As we think of what has been accomplished, we bless God. As we think of what remains, we mourn. But we have learned in vain from our brother if we think that his work is unfinished, or that the word of God is bound. When apparently near to death he uttered a significant sentence in prayer: "We fail and are set aside, all human strength passes, but Thou abidest, Thy Spirit abides, Thy Word abides." Yes, beloved, we have the abiding Word, the abiding Spirit; and when all else fails, they remain—the Author and His Word. The work of our brother may never be carried on as he began it—but the Spirit of God will still lead faith on into the unsearchable riches of Christ. There are other features of his ministry we may profitably dwell upon for a moment, to recall the precious truths made more clearly known to many of us through his instrumentality.

A small but most helpful pamphlet upon "Deliv-

erance" has been used for the emancipation of how many! The subject of sanctification has been more misunderstood, perhaps, than any other doctrine in the word of God. On the one hand it has been taught that the believer can experience such a change that his sinful nature is eliminated, and he can live in "perfect love;" on the other, it is claimed that we must go through life groaning under the bondage of indwelling sin. Both views are clearly unscriptural and injurious. The one fosters spiritual pride, and the other makes provision for the flesh. In the pamphlet referred to the subject is treated most lucidly. The seventh chapter of Romans is expounded—the bondage of the saved man seeking fruitfulness by the law, the increasing load and hopeless entanglement until, in utter self-despair, the soul cries out, "O wretched man that I am!" The author then passes on to show the true deliverance through Jesus Christ.

Unlike many, he does not close his theme with the seventh chapter, but passes on to the first few verses of the eighth. Thus the believer is not seen at the close with a twofold service of the law of God and the law of sin—but a very different law, a law of emancipation from the bondage of sin—"The Spirit's law, of life in Christ Jesus."

Who that has groped his way through the awful experiences of that seventh chapter, and beat his wings against the iron bars of his cage, till, bruised and helpless, and well-nigh hopeless, he reached the end of self—who, we say, can forget the relief, the peace and joy that came when this commanding truth entered the soul? We were free—not only

from guilt, and the external bondage of sin, but, best of all, free from *self*.

But this truth is only the doorway into the opened heavens where Christ can be seen in all His peerless beauty as the object of the soul. Sanctification comes through occupation with Himself. Just as self-occupation, whether it be good or bad self, is defiling, so occupation with a glorified Christ transforms into His image. These truths are brought out in the pamphlet referred to above, and in "Christian Holiness: its Roots and Fruits"; "Some Thoughts on Job's Ditch," etc. Others have written helpfully upon these themes, but we mention these features as distinctively characteristic of our brother's ministry. He ministered Christ to the soul. He fed the lambs and sheep with the tender grass of divine grace and love.

No earnest soul can pass through this world without being called upon to contend earnestly for the faith. Some are more distinctively warriors than others, but all who would be loyal to our Lord must expect to endure hardness for Him. We are not ashamed, therefore, to speak of our brother as a controversialist. This occupied but a small part of his life, but was a season of intense exercise while it lasted. He did not seek controversy, but when he felt the truth of God was involved he did not shrink from declaring what he believed to be the Scripture doctrine, and holding to it at all cost.

Sad as have been the trials of these times, many can bless God for a clearer apprehension of His truth through them. The truths of eternal life, the portion of every believer; of sealing with the Spirit not being

dependent upon the amount of knowledge possessed, but upon faith in the person of Christ—have come with relief to those who were in danger of bondage and self-occupation. His “Facts and Theories” is a controversial work most needful and helpful, as we have seen.

Any notice of our brother's ministry would be incomplete without reference to his ecclesiastical views and position. Of these he made no secret, not flaunting them defiantly, but stedfastly maintaining them. He believed in the sufficiency of the name of Christ and the person of the Lord as a centre of gathering for His saints, instead of the manifold divisions and sects of Christendom, over which he mourned. He believed in the presence and competence of the Holy Spirit to order and control the Assembly of God without the intervention of human officialism or unscriptural ordination. Above all, he believed that a right attitude of heart toward the Lord was indispensable, without which all else was as “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.”

His “Present Things” is a searching presentation of the epistles to the seven churches, in which he falls into the current of the Spirit's teaching upon the Church as a vessel of testimony for Christ.

On the other hand he was not indifferent to the dangers of a place of separation. He has traced with a hand of sorrow in “A Divine Movement” the dangers that menace those who have come, outwardly at least, “outside the camp.” He did not shrink from the path, but warned against either an unscriptural narrowness or an equally unscriptural indifference to what he believed concerned the Lord's honor.

He was persuaded that a true basis of fellowship could only be had in accepting and acting upon all the doctrines of the word of God. He did not believe that a true fellowship could be secured by ignoring questions of doctrine or discipline upon which saints had formed different judgments.

With a largeness of heart to go out, as he did, in love to saints of God of whatever name, he felt and expressed the need of the greatest care in maintaining scriptural order, according to the truths of the unity of the Spirit.

One matter weighed greatly upon him. He felt and deplored the tendency to leave all ministry in the hands of the few. His address upon "Prophecy" is but one of many testimonies regarding this. He maintained from Scripture that "ye may all prophesy" is not to be a dead letter; that every brother, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, was responsible to use that gift. It was not that he held any different view upon this than what is common to the saints, but he felt most deeply about it. He feared the danger of things crystalizing into form, and warned again and again as to it. May *every* one harken to his admonition.

But we must close. What, it may be asked, is the object of this memorial of our brother's ministry? Is it to glorify the man? God forbid. We with him would ascribe the glory to Christ alone. "Not I, but Christ." As John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

No, beloved brethren, our object has been to make Christ more precious, to make His Word more loved, more read, more studied. This was the passion of

our brother's life, the desire that consumed him. He made a significant utterance shortly before his departure. Sitting propped in his chair, with the word of God open before him, as was his custom through the days of weary, helpless waiting, he turned to the writer of these lines, and with a depth of pathos, glancing at his Bible, said, "Oh, the Book, the *Book*, the Book!" It seemed as though he said, "What a fulness there; how little I have grasped it; how feebly expressed its thoughts." May these words from the dying servant of Christ lay hold of many a heart. Is it the Book with us? the one Book, always that? Oh, beloved, he speaks to us all still, and says, Make everything of the Book!

S. R.



PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

THE Second Book of Kings continues the narrative of the First, of which it is really a part. Naturally, in the history of a decline which it records, things grow darker with the deepening apostasy. But morally the end was seen in Solomon's fearful backsliding, as governmentally its consequences appeared in the disruption of the kingdom. All this we have seen in the First Book.

There, too, we saw the mercy of God in sending prophets to witness for Himself and against the people. Elijah stands forth prominently, exhibiting in himself, as John the Baptist in a later and similar time, the character of one who would walk in separation from all that against which he testified.

For purposes of convenience the book may be divided into two parts: (1) Chaps. i.-xvii.---The downward progress of the nation, ending in the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians; (2) Chaps. xviii.-xxv.---Further subsequent decay in Judah, and the Babylonian captivity. The narrative is a continuous one, passing from Israel to Judah. In the first division the northern kingdom is prominent, while, of course, in the second part we have only Judah.

Elisha is the chief prophet here, as Elijah was in the first book. Chap. i. shows us the prophet of judgment in a characteristic attitude, calling down fire from heaven. In chap. ii. we see him passing into heaven, translated as was Enoch. His mantle of service falls upon Elisha, who takes up his ministry from God.

Elisha emphasizes mercy rather than judgment. His miracles show this, and are calculated to quicken into flame any smoldering embers of repentance or faith lingering in the hearts of the people. Alas, though they doubtless witnessed to the faith of individuals here and

there, nationally the people follow their kings, who without a single exception walk in the ways and sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

There are some beautiful gospel pictures here, and lessons for the people of God: the victory over the king of Edom (chap. iii.); the widow's oil, and the Shunamite woman (chap. iv.); Naaman (chap. v.); the siege of Samaria relieved (chaps. vi., vii.). But in spite of all these witnesses of God's willingness to bless and help, both Israel and Judah go on in their own course (chap. viii.).

Hope temporarily revives with the new dynasty of Jehu, but his zeal is of a fleshly character and is not mixed with faith; so, though his family remain on the throne during four generations, the disintegration of the nation proceeds (chaps. ix., x.).

Turning to Judah, chap. xi. gives the account of God's preservation of the seed of David when, through the wicked Athaliah, a deliberate attempt is made to exterminate it. Joash the young king, thus spared, shows good energy in restoring the service of the temple, but his faith weakens in the presence of the enemy, and he sacrifices his treasures in fear of Hazael, king of Syria. Solemnly enough he meets the end which he had escaped at the beginning. God protects the helpless child, and permits the strong man to be assassinated (chaps. xi., xii.). The remainder of this portion (chaps. xiii.-xvii.) continues the narrative of both kingdoms until the ten tribes are carried away captive. Chap. xvii. shows the origin of the Samaritans of the New Testament. They were heathen brought into the land in place of the departed Israelites. They assumed the name of Israel ("our father Jacob," John iv.), but were never anything but aliens. Hence our Lord would not recognize the claim of the woman of Samaria to kinship with Israel—"Ye worship ye know not what . . . salvation is of the Jews."

The second division of the book offers some relief to the prevailing darkness, in the bright faith of Hezekiah, whose reign is narrated at some length (chaps. xviii.—xx.). But he is succeeded by a monster in wickedness, Manasseh—"forgetting," and how appropriate his name—he forgot his father's example and his father's God (chap. xxi.).

Josiah comes in next, and personally his faith is bright. The temple is cleansed, and the book of the law found in it, read and obeyed. How truly all recovery to God is marked by a turning to His Word in obedience. But although the king is faithful, the evil day cannot be postponed, and after his death—a sad one, with a touch of pride, the only blot recorded in this good man's life—the feeble and unbelieving successors quickly follow one another till the people and the land are under the iron heel of the king of Babylon (chaps. xxii.—xxv.).

We will but briefly mention the prophet Jeremiah (chaps. i.—xxxi.). This will be found a fitting companion to the Book of Kings, and gives glimpses of the heart of God speaking through His servant, pleading with a disobedient and gainsaying people. The importance of the prophets cannot be overestimated. They not only give the moral and spiritual condition of the people, of which their external history was the setting, but they lay down principles—of government, judgment, pleading, and mercy—that obtain for all time. This is particularly true of the present day, when indeed there might appropriately be many weeping with Jeremiah and declaring his testimony to a Church that has well-nigh apostatized from God.

CONTENTMENT.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. vi. 6).

WITH all its progress and wealth, this is a restless world. Discontent is everywhere present. There is a desire for gain, for change, which begets restlessness on every side. The poor man is not contented to be poor, but enviously looks at the wealth of his neighbor and determines to be like him. Others are craving for greater power, wider influence, or a more desirable social position. If the hearts of men could be read, there is scarcely one in which would not be found a long list of desires for something not possessed, together with a discontent at what is theirs. This renders the whole social fabric uncertain. There is no stability, no leisure for the establishing of the existing order. Everything is moving, and the progress of last year becomes out of date in this. Whither the whole rush is tending is easy to see; and in government, business, social relations, the stamp of discontent is a pledge of dark times to come. And what losers are men by this discontent! Life becomes a restless turmoil instead of a quiet growth. The same tendency is transmitted to the children, and all sense of repose and steadiness of character is lost in the busy whirl which discontent compels.

Passing to the saints of God and remembering how we partake naturally of the same characteristics, a word of exhortation from the Scripture on this important subject will not be out of place, to "be content with such things as ye have for He hath said, I will

never leave thee nor forsake thee." There are few of God's people who could not recall instances of the blessing of following this simple word and the danger of its neglect. Here is a child of God going on happily in his appointed place. He has food and clothing for his family, and opportunity for the reading of the word of God and for fellowship with his brethren, but he hears of a chance to better his prospects by moving to a distant city; steadier work, better wages are promised. To be sure there is no gathering of saints at the place, but then other things will be better. Discontent begins to fasten its hold upon him, and now instead of the quiet leisure for God's word, there is the restless dwelling upon the possibility of advantage. He begins to despise the mercies for which he previously thanked God, and instead of quiet growth, he becomes a restless and unhappy man. The Spirit of God is grieved, taste for the word of God is lost, fellowship of saints is ignored, and all for what? For the bauble of a little greater prosperity in worldly things. How many failures, both individual and in the family, can be traced to this spirit of discontent. It seems to be in the very air, and therefore we need to be particularly on our guard as to it.

The gain that we should be seeking is the gain of godliness. We can be as covetous as we please for more of the word of God. We can be desirous of that. Night and day we can have a holy restlessness of soul to know more of Christ and of God's ways and of His Word. This will never interfere with rest of soul. It is its fitting companion. It offers a field for all the activities and powers of life.

The great opportunity for discontent is to find a

heart that is empty. Where the mind is filled with the word of God, where we are "satisfied with favor and full of the blessing of the Lord," there will be no restless desire to go here and there. The things of time and of this world will assume their proper proportion. They will never be allowed to dictate to us. Nor does this mean in the least a spirit of indolence or a lack of care for the welfare of those who are dear to us. "He that provideth not for his own is worse than an unbeliever." But that is not the great danger. The tendency is to sacrifice spiritual advantages for temporal, to allow these latter to outweigh every consideration of spiritual benefit and advantage.

Looking at it simply, have we not the word of God in our hands, and the Holy Spirit in our hearts? What priceless treasures we have which will abide forevermore, compared with which all the wealth and ease and greatness of this world are refuse, not worth a thought. If any of the readers of these lines are in danger of being ensnared by discontent as to circumstances or position in life, we would affectionately and urgently entreat them to turn afresh to that inexhaustible supply which the word of God affords. Here they will find wealth which cannot become tarnished, and garments which wax not old. They will find occupation for every leisure moment and a happiness in God's ways, compared with which all the wealth, power and pleasure of this world is nothing.

It may seem trifling to speak of such a subject as this, and yet perhaps there is nothing more needed amongst God's people than true contentment. Has He not said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake

thee?" And if we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper," what more do we need? Will not our Father care for our earthly wants? He who clothes the lily with beauty and feeds the ravens has given His own Son for us. Are we not satisfied with that gift? Let worldly acquaintances gather wealth if they please. Let those whom we knew in humbler circumstances become among the great or noted of this world. What is it all worth compared with those enduring riches and that position of highest dignity which is the portion of the child of God? Take a glance at Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, and see a picture of contentment which is unmoved even by the restless strife of her sister Martha,—truly a good part, which we have our Lord's pledge shall never be taken away. The place at His feet is always open, His Word is ever fresh and free. Whatever the straitness in our circumstances may be, we are not straitened in Him. What is needed for His people is not greater worldly ease or prosperity, but contentment with Himself. Let us then judge everything inconsistent with this heavenly peace of soul. We have brought nothing into the world. We are going to leave it soon and must go empty handed out of it. Those riches of the soul that we gather are enduring. These we can carry with us, or rather they are laid up for us in heaven. We can be rich in good works, rich in prayer, rich in faith, though poor in this world's goods. Our blessed Lord was poor when here upon earth, in the judgment of this world. Shall we not be satisfied with the riches which He has secured for us and be content with whatever portion of this world's goods He

may give us? Let us indeed be so satisfied with Him that we can truly say,

"Jesus, Thou art enough,
The heart and mind to fill."

"QUIETNESS AND ASSURANCE FOREVER."

"**M**Y people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places; when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place" (Isa. xxxii. 18, 19). In this chapter we have the blessed results of Christ's reign depicted. "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness . . . and a *Man* shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." How blessedly has "the Man Christ Jesus" opened, through His own pierced side, a hiding place from the storm of divine judgment, a covert from the tempest of that wrath and indignation which shall overtake the despisers and rejectors of His mercy; and how blessedly true it is that for those who are sheltered thus by Him, rivers of refreshing flow forth into the dry places of this life, making the desert to blossom as the rose, and the cool shadow of that great Rock gives rest in this weary land where still we wait for final rest! This is a spiritual application of that which directly refers to millennial blessing for the remnant and the restored nation of Israel. We would not, nor can we, rob them of that which shall be theirs in the coming day of blessing for God's earthly people. It is ours already in anticipation to enter into the enjoyment spiritually of that which shall be also visibly theirs.

These words have a direct and most blessed application to Israel, but this does not in the least mar their application in a spiritual way to ourselves. Everything rests upon the work of righteousness, that work of righteousness of which the Cross forms the basis and is the highest exhibition. Peace was made by the blood of His Cross, and He shall reign over His redeemed people and a ransomed earth on the ground of the work of righteousness accomplished upon Calvary. This work is peace, "peace to him that is afar off and to them that are nigh," a peace which can never be marred. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And the effect of this act of righteousness is quietness of soul. No more trembling, no more doubting, fears banished forever. Oh, the quietness that has come in after the storm, for those who have believed in this finished work of righteousness! And assurance forever—an assurance that is grounded upon the word of God who cannot lie; therefore which, not depending upon our changing feelings or anything in ourselves, abides forevermore. What a comfort it is when His people turn from all else to this blessed effect of righteousness, finding in it indeed an all-sufficient ground of peace and blessing!

And now we are told of the blessed results of this: "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places." Notice, first of all, the abiding character of all blessing here. It is not a tarrying place, but a habitation, a dwelling, a resting-place. Hail may come down upon the forest, the city may lie desolate, man's city with all its boasted greatness and splendor

be overthrown, but the dwelling place of the people of God rests upon an eternal foundation. It is a peaceable habitation. Looking very simply at these three expressions for a moment, we can gather from them that which should characterize the believer in his present life here.

First of all, there is peace. This we have already glanced at as the work of righteousness and its effect. Who can over-estimate the blessedness of this peaceable habitation. The dwelling in Egypt, sprinkled with the blood of the passover-lamb was a peaceable habitation. Judgment raged without. It would never enter there. The blood spoke of judgment already visited upon a substitute, the lamb without blemish, so that now that habitation which otherwise would have been a house of mourning has become a house of feasting. The palace of Pharaoh was not a peaceable habitation, nor the hovel of the beggar. There was no difference between high and low on that awful night in Egypt. There was not a house where there was not one dead, save in those habitations sprinkled with the blood of the lamb. And oh, what rest of soul it is to remember, as we tarry in this world, that we are safe sheltered by the precious blood of Christ, our habitation is a peaceable one! It may not be, and probably is not, a home of wealth and luxury. That which the world calls pleasure may be and should be largely excluded from it. It may be but a humble cottage, and yet it is a peaceable habitation, for are not those who dwell beneath its roof sheltered safe from all wrath and judgment? "My people." This can be said of no other people. Do we not thank God that we are amongst His people?

And then these are sure dwellings. They are not only dwellings where wrath cannot enter, but where those who abide there have the assurance of their safety. It would have been a reproach upon God, it would have been a tacit denial of the truth of His Word, had an Israelite trembled as he waited in the land of Egypt during that fateful night. It would not have been humility, but presumption for him to have said: "I *hope* all is well." If the blood of the passover-lamb had been sprinkled upon the door-posts, he could say: "I have a sure dwelling place, secured to me by the unfailing word of God, on the ground of His sacrifice." And so now the believer who trembles, who fears lest after all God may not be as good as His word, is really, in the solemn language of the apostle, making Him a liar. Has He not spoken and is not that sufficient? Shall we dishonor Him by doubting His word? Oh, let us, each one who has rested upon this blood-bought peace which Christ has made by the blood of His cross, let us take in the full comfort of those words: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life."

But again there is not merely peace from judgment and the assurance of safety, but that comfort which is suggested in the third expression here, "quiet resting places," where the heart is at leisure not only from all questions as to its safety, but from everything which would disturb and mar the communion of the soul. Returning to the figure of the passover, God not only provided the blood as the shelter, but the lamb as food, and those within these resting places could feed in quietness and with con-

tentment of soul upon that lamb whose blood had sheltered them from judgment. So Christ Himself is the food of His people, and may we not say that those who find their satisfaction in Him, who feed, with the bitter herbs of repentance and abhorrence of sin, upon His blessed person, find 'a satisfaction of soul that the world knows nothing of? They are quiet and at rest.

Thus we have a three-fold cord which is not quickly broken: peace made for us by the blood of His cross; the assurance of perfect acceptance by the word of God, and the quietness which comes from the heart satisfied with Christ. May we know more of these blessed habitations! Even as Israel in the coming day will delight to dwell every man under his own fig-tree, let us delight in the fulness of blessing that is ours, and show our satisfaction with it by walking here in holy separation from everything which has the sentence of judgment upon it.

EXERCISE.

FRANKINCENSE gives forth its sweetness
 Most when tested by the flame;
 So each trial moulds to meetness,
 Every child who bears My Name,
 Through the heart's deep exercise,
 Tho' with many tears and sighs.

So, whate'er of earthly sorrow
 May be woven with thy bliss,
 Patient wait, the bright to-morrow
 Surely will reveal thee this:
 That in love I chastened thee,
 That thou might'st be more like Me.'

H. McD.

OUR STANDING AND THE JUDGMENT-SEAT.

THERE are three forms of expression used by the inspired apostle in Rom. iii. and iv. which should be carefully pondered. In chap. iii. 26, he speaks of "believing in Jesus." In chap. iv. 5, he speaks of "believing in Him that justifieth the ungodly." And, ver. 24, he speaks of "believing in Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Now, there is no distinction in Scripture without a difference; and when we see a distinction it is our business to inquire as to the difference. What, then, is the difference between believing in Jesus, and believing in Him that raised up Jesus? We believe it to be this. We may often find souls who are really looking to Jesus and believing in Him, and yet they have, deep down in their hearts a sort of dread of meeting God. It is not that they doubt their salvation, or that they are not really saved. By no means. They are saved, inasmuch as they are looking to Christ, by faith, and all who so look are saved in Him with an everlasting salvation. All this is most blessedly true: but still there is this latent fear or dread of God, and a shrinking from death. They know that Jesus is friendly to them, inasmuch as He died for them; but they do not see so clearly the friendship of God.

Hence it is that we find so many of God's people in uncertainty and spiritual distress. Their faith has not yet laid hold of God as the One who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. They

are not quite sure of how it may go with them. At times they are happy, because by virtue of the new nature, of which they are assuredly the partakers, they get occupied with Christ: but at times they are miserable, because they begin to look at themselves, and they do not see God as their Justifier, and as the One who has condemned sin in the flesh. They are thinking of God as a Judge with whom some question still remains to be settled. They feel as if God's eye were resting on their indwelling sin, and as if they had, in some way or other, to dispose of that question with God.

Thus it is, we feel persuaded, with hundreds of the true saints of God. They do not see God as the Condemner of sin in Christ on the cross, and the Justifier of the believing sinner in Christ rising from the dead. They are looking to Christ on the cross to screen them from God as a Judge, instead of looking to God as a Justifier, in raising up Christ from the dead. Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Our sins are forgiven; our indwelling sin, or evil nature, is condemned and set aside. It has no existence *before God*. It is in us, but He sees us only in a risen Christ.

What a sweet relief to a heart bowed down under a sense of indwelling sin, and not knowing what to do with it! What solid peace and comfort flow into the soul when I see God condemning my sin in the cross, and justifying me in a risen Christ! Where are my *sins*? Blotted out. Where is my *sin*? Condemned and set aside. Where am I? Justified and accepted in a risen Christ. I am brought to God without a single cloud or misgiving.

I am not afraid of my Justifier. I confide in Him, love Him, and adore Him. I joy in God, and rejoice in hope of His glory.

Thus, then, we have, in some measure, cleared the way for the believer to approach the subject of the judgment-seat of Christ, as set forth in ver. 10 of our chapter, which we shall here quote at length, in order that the reader may have the subject fully before him in the veritable language of inspiration. "For we must all appear (or rather, be manifested) before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Now there is, in reality, no difficulty or ground of perplexity here. All we need is to look at the matter from a divine standpoint, and with a simple mind, in order to see it clearly. This is true in reference to every subject treated of in the word of God, and specially so as to the point now before us. We have no doubt whatever that the real secret of the difficulty felt by so many in respect to the question of the judgment-seat of Christ is self-occupation. Hence it is we so often hear such questions as the following, "Can it be possible that all our sins, all our failures, all our infirmities, all our naughty and foolish ways, shall be published, in the presence of assembled myriads, before the judgment-seat of Christ?"

Well, then, in the first place, we have to remark that Scripture says nothing of the kind. The passage before us, which contains the great, broad statement of the truth on this weighty subject, simply declares that "we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ." But how

shall we be manifested? Assuredly, *as we are*. But how is that? As God's workmanship—as perfectly righteous, and perfectly holy, and perfectly accepted in the Person of that very One who shall sit on the judgment-seat, and who Himself bore in His own body on the tree all the judgment due to us, and made a full end of the entire system in which we stood. All that which, as sinners, we had to meet, Christ met in our stead. Our *sins* He bore; our *sin* He was condemned for. He stood in our stead and answered all responsibilities which rested upon us as men alive in the flesh, as members of the first man, as standing on the old creation-ground. The Judge Himself is our righteousness. We are in Him. All that we are and all that we have, we owe it to Him and to His perfect work. If we, as sinners, had to meet Christ as a Judge, escape were utterly impossible; but, inasmuch as He is our righteousness, condemnation is utterly impossible. In short, the matter is reversed. The atoning death and triumphant resurrection of our Divine Substitute have completely changed everything, so that the effect of the judgment-seat of Christ will be to make manifest that there is not, and cannot be, a single stain or spot on that workmanship of God which the saint is declared to be.

But, then, let us ask, Whence this dread of having all our naughtiness exposed at the judgment-seat of Christ? Does not He know all about us? Are we more afraid of being manifested to the gaze of men and angels than to the gaze of our blessed and adorable Lord? If we are manifested to Him, what matters it to whom beside we are known?

How far are Peter and David and many others affected by the fact that untold millions have read the record of their sins, and that the record thereof has been stereotyped on the page of inspiration? Will it prevent their sweeping the strings of the golden harp, or casting their crowns before the feet of Him whose precious blood has obliterated for ever all their sins, and brought them, without spot, into the full blaze of the throne of God? Assuredly not. Why then need any be troubled by the thought of their being thoroughly manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ? Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? May we not safely leave all in the hands of Him who has loved us and washed us in His own blood? Cannot we trust ourselves implicitly to the One who loved us with such a love? Will He expose us? Will He—can He, do aught inconsistent with the love that led Him to give His precious life for us? Will the Head expose the body, or any member thereof? Will the Bridegroom expose the bride? Yes, He will, in one sense. But how? He will publicly set forth; in view of all created intelligences, that there is not a speck or a flaw, a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, to be seen upon that Church which He loved with a love that many waters could not quench.

Ah! Christian reader, dost thou not see how that nearness to the heart of Christ, as well as the knowledge of His perfect work, would completely roll away the mists which enwrap the subject of the judgment-seat? If thou art washed from thy sins in the blood of Jesus, and loved by God as Jesus is loved, what reason hast thou to fear that

judgment-seat, or to shrink from the thought of being manifested before it? None whatever. Nothing can possibly come up there to alter thy standing, to touch thy relationship, to blot thy title, or cloud thy prospect. Indeed we are fully persuaded that the light of *the judgment-seat* will chase away many of the clouds that have obscured *the mercy-seat*. Many, when they come to stand before that judgment-seat, will wonder why they ever feared it for themselves. They will see their mistake and adore the grace that has been so much better than all their legal fears. Many who have hardly ever been able to read their title here, will read it there, and rejoice and wonder—they will love and worship. They will then see, in broad daylight, what poor, feeble, shallow, unworthy thoughts they had once entertained of the love of Christ, and of the true character of His work. They will perceive how sadly prone they ever were to measure Him by themselves, and to think and feel as if His thoughts and ways were like their own. All this will be seen in the light of that day, and then the burst of praise—the rapturous hallelujah—will come forth from many a heart that, when down here, had been robbed of its peace and joy by legal and unworthy thoughts of God and His Christ.

But, while it is divinely true that nothing can come out before the judgment-seat of Christ to disturb, in any way, the standing or relationship of the very feeblest member of the body of Christ, or of any member of the family of God, yet is the thought of that judgment most solemn and weighty. Yes, truly, and none will more feel its weight an

solemnity than those who can look forward to it with perfect calmness. And be it well remembered, that there are two things indispensably needful in order to enjoy this calmness of spirit. First, we must have a title without a blot; and, secondly, our moral and practical state must be sound. No amount of mere evangelical clearness as to our title will avail unless we are walking in moral integrity before God. It will not do for a man to *say* that he is not afraid of the judgment-seat of Christ because Christ died for him, while, at the same time, he is walking in a loose, careless, self-indulgent way. This is a most dreadful delusion. It is alarming in the extreme to find persons drawing a plea from evangelical clearness to shrink the holy responsibility resting upon them as the servants of Christ. Are we to speak idle words because we know we shall never come into judgment? The bare thought is horrible; and yet we may shrink from such a thing when clothed in plain language before us, while, at the same time, we allow ourselves to be drawn, through a false application of the doctrines of grace, into most culpable laxity and carelessness as to the claims of holiness.

All this must be sedulously avoided. The grace that has delivered us from judgment should exert a more powerful influence upon our ways than the fear of that judgment. And not only so, but we must remember that while we, *as sinners*, are delivered from judgment and wrath, yet, *as servants*, we must give account of ourselves and our ways. It is not a question of our being exposed here or there to men, angels, or devils. No; "we must give account to God" (Rom. xiv. 11, 12).

This is far more serious, far more weighty, far more influential, than our being exposed in the view of any creature. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as *to the Lord*, and not unto men; knowing that of *the Lord* ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve *the Lord* Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. iii. 23-25).

This is most serious and salutary. It may be asked, "When shall we have to give account to God? When shall we receive for the wrong?" We are not told, because that is not the question. The grand object of the Holy Ghost in the passages just quoted is to lead the conscience into holy exercise in the presence of God and of the Lord Christ. This is good and most needful in a day of easy profession, like the present, when there is much said about grace, free salvation, justification without works, our standing in Christ. Is it that we want to weaken the sense of these things? Far be the thought. Yea, we would, in every possible way, seek to lead souls into the divine knowledge and enjoyment of those most precious privileges. But then we must remember the adjusting power of *truth*. There are always two sides to a question, and we find in the pages of the New Testament the clearest and fullest statements of grace, lying side by side with the most solemn and searching statements as to our responsibility. Do the latter obscure the former? Assuredly not. Neither should the former weaken the latter. Both should have their due place, and be allowed to exert their moulding influence upon our character and ways.

Some professors seem to have a great dislike to the words "duty" and "responsibility;" but we invariably find that those who have the deepest sense of grace have also, and as a necessary consequence, the truest sense of duty and responsibility. We know of no exception. A heart that is duly influenced by divine grace is sure to welcome every reference to the claims of holiness. It is only empty talkers about grace and standing that raise an outcry about duty and responsibility. God deals in moral realities. He is real with us, and He wants us to be real with Him. He is real in His love, and real in His faithfulness; and He would have us real in our dealings with Him, and in our response to His holy claims. It is of little use to say "Lord, Lord" if we live in the neglect of His commandments. It is the merest sham to say "I go sir" if we do not go. God looks for obedience in His children. "He is a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him."

May we bear these things in mind, and remember that all must come out before the judgment-seat of Christ. "We must all be manifested" there. This is unmingled joy to a really upright mind. If we do not unfeignedly rejoice at the thought of the judgment-seat of Christ, there must be something wrong somewhere. Either we are not established in grace, or we are walking in some false way. If we know that we are justified and accepted before God in Christ, and if we are walking in moral integrity, as in His presence, the thought of the judgment-seat of Christ will not disturb our hearts. The apostle could say, "We are made manifest to God; and I trust also are made manifest in

your consciences." Was Paul afraid of the judgment-seat? Not he. But why? Because he knew that he was accepted, as to his person, in a risen Christ; and, *as to his ways*, he "labored that whether present or absent he might be acceptable to Him." Thus it was with this holy man of God and devoted servant of Christ. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men" (Acts xxiv. 16). Paul knew that he was accepted *in* Christ, and therefore he labored to be acceptable to Him in all his ways.

These two things should never be separated, and they never will be in any divinely taught mind or divinely regulated conscience. They will be perfectly joined together, and, in holy harmony, exert their formative power over the soul. It should be our aim to walk, even now, in the light of the judgment-seat. This would prove a wholesome regulator in many ways. It will not, in any wise, lead to legality of spirit. Impossible. Shall we have any legality when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? Assuredly not. Well, then, why should the thought of that judgment-seat exert a legal influence now? In point of fact, we feel assured there is, and can be, no greater joy to an honest heart than to know that everything shall come clearly and fully out, in the perfect light of that solemn day that is approaching. We shall see all then as Christ sees it—judge of it as He judges. We shall look back from amid the blaze of divine light shining from the judgment-seat and see our whole course in this world. We shall see what blunders we have made—how badly we

did this, that, and the other work—mixed motives here—an under current there—a false object in something else. All will be seen then in divine truth and light. Is it a question of our being exposed to the whole universe? By no means. Should we be concerned, whether or no? Certainly not. Will it, can it, touch our acceptance? Nay, we shall shine there in all the perfectness of our risen and glorified Head. The Judge Himself is our righteousness. We stand in Him. He is our all. What can touch us? We shall appear there as the fruit of His perfect work. We shall even be associated with Him in the judgment which He executes over the world.

C. H. M.

BROUGHT TO GOD.

CHRISTIANITY brings us directly, *immediately* to God. Each individual is directly, immediately in relationship to God,—his conscience before God, his heart confidingly in His presence. Judasim had a priesthood, the people could not go into God's presence. They might receive blessings, offer offerings, celebrate God's goodness, have a law to command them; but the way into the holiest was closed by a veil: "the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest." When the Lord Jesus died, this veil was rent from top to bottom, and "we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated through the veil, that is to say, His flesh,"—"having made peace

by the blood of His cross." "He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God;" "His blood cleanseth from all sin." Hence the essence of Christianity, as applied to man, is, that the Christian goes himself, directly, personally to God—in Christ's name, and through Christ—but *himself* into the holiest, and with boldness. He has by Christ access through the one Spirit to the Father, the Spirit of adoption. This being brought nigh by the blood of Jesus characterizes Christianity in its nature. The holiness of God's own presence is brought to bear on the soul: "If we walk," it is said, "in the light, as He is in the light,"—yet not as fear, which repels, for we know perfect love through the gift of Jesus. We have boldness to enter into the holiest, that place where the presence of God Himself assures that the confidence of love will be the adoration of reverence while we go forth to the world; that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal body, the epistle (as it is said) of Christ. I am not discussing how far each Christian realizes it, but this is what Christianity practically is. He has made us kings and priests to God and His Father. This elevates truly.

Man is not elevated by intellectual pretensions; for he never gets, nor can get, beyond himself. What elevates him is heart-intercourse with what is above him; what truly elevates him is heart-intercourse with God, fellowship (wondrous word!) with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. But, even where the heart has not found its blessed home there through grace, this principle morally elevates; for it at least puts the natural conscience directly before God, and refers the soul, in its estimate of

good and evil, personally and immediately to Him. There may be self-will and failure, but the standard of responsibility is preserved for the soul.

J. N. D.

THE CITADEL OF FAITH.

Gen. xii. 8.

THE seven lives of Genesis present to us in a very beautiful way the development of the Christ-image in the child of God. We find in Abram the foundation principle, of the spiritual life, that of faith. We see how at the very commencement it gives the pilgrim character, and how also trials accompany the way, that the faith possessed may be found to praise and glory and honor.

The exercise of faith is easily recognized in Abram's obedience to the call of God, and we see it in further exercise in the dwelling-place that he takes. It is this which we have before us in this passage. He removes from Haran "unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east." This is the dwelling-place faith takes up when entering in upon the possession of the promised inheritance.

It should be full of meaning for us, since we are called with the same purpose, that of possessing ourselves of the spiritual inheritance of which Canaan is the type. We have a wide field to cover with our operations, in order that the full blessedness of what we have been called to may be possessed by us. Therefore it is of great importance that we should take up the proper position from which to direct our activities in taking possession.

First of all, we notice that it is to a mountain Abram goes to find his dwelling-place. Faith, when in activity, always rises to the source from whence it flows. As the gift of God, it finds its rise and flow in Him. It ever takes the highest altitude. But it is more particularly what is mentioned as to the location of this mountain, where faith as typified in Abram takes up its abode, that I had before me. We are carefully called to note that the mountain on which Abram pitches his tent is located between Bethel and Ai; and, furthermore, the specific directions of their relative positions to his abode is particularly stated. We can, thank God, seek fullest meaning in every uttered word of His, for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The first point that we have is, "Bethel to the west." We find that the four winds, and the four directions from which they come as characterized by them, speak of the conflict and unrest of this fallen creation. The west is literally "toward the sea." And the sea always in Scripture speaks to us of the ceaseless trouble and restlessness of this evil scene. Away from the one Source of rest and blessing—God Himself—only the opposite can, of necessity, ensue—a scene characterized by the conflicts of man's evil will! Nevertheless, from the west come the winds laden with the moisture that revives and refreshes the earth, clearly speaking of those influences of delight and pleasure that men find, coming even though they do from a fallen and ruined creation. Men still seek the temporary refreshment they give—a season of passing enjoyment. And it is these influence which play with the greatest power and best succe

upon the child of God. How easily (can we not all give our assent to it?) are we lured from the narrow path by present advantages and opportunities which will yield some passing joy and pleasure, or make the path easier and less rough for our feet to tread! Those things that gladden the heart of the natural man—can we not say they often appeal to us in our wilderness pathway? Ah yes! how often can we witness to it, can we not, beloved? And how often, too, have we been drawn away, if not in deed, dare we say not in thought?

What is it, then, that we have over against the west and its alluring influences? It is Bethel. How sweet that is, "the house of God"! And what does that speak to us of? It tells of His presence, and of our abiding in the sanctuary. Is it not just this that we need if we are to overcome those subtle devices of the enemy which he presents to us in the way of which the west speaks. It is the abiding in His presence, making the sanctuary our dwelling-place, that enables us to see the utter emptiness of all this world at its very best. We can, as it were, look down from our place in fellowship with the Father and the Son, the mountain height where faith abides, and in this way gain the victory over it. What is all that the world can give, with its glory and power, compared with what is ours, blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings? Shall we not count all else but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord? Surely, when the infinite treasures of the wealth of God are open to us, we have all, and abound. We glory only in the cross of Christ, through which our every blessing comes, and it has annulled the world, so that the victory which now

overcomes it is our faith—the faith we have in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second place, we have “Ai to the east.” The east would seem to bring before us the thought of opposition, of the enemy’s work in the way of enmity and hatred. The original form of the word really means, “what is toward you,” in a hostile manner. So that it would signify the opposition of the world, and of Satan through it. It speaks to us of what so often brings the cry of discouragement to the lips, and makes the heart sick—the bitter and hostile assault of the enemy by the many agencies at his command in this world. His darts are ever ready to bring us down, if we do not continually seek the grace that is alone sufficient for the path we tread.

But what is the reckoning of faith, and the position it takes, which gains the victory over this side of things? Is it not what Ai speaks of, “ruins”? The counting of this world as condemned and judged—yea, in the very ruins of its judgment! Surely this is what gives us power to stand against all the influences of hostility and hatred which the world has for those who will follow their rejected Master. The reckoning by faith of God’s estimate of this scene gives power over it. The east wind is the dry and arid desert wind which withers and parches the earth; and how apt an illustration of the effect and result upon the spiritual life of these contrary influences of which the east speaks, unless they are met in the spirit of which Ai reminds us—the world seen in the ruins of its condemnation and judgment under His hand who is leading us to our home in His glory!

How blessed a position is presented to us in the dwelling Abram takes up, and how sweet to see that after his failure in going down to Egypt he comes back "unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai"! Faith must ever revert to its stronghold. Notice, too, that it is when dwelling here that Abram is the worshiper. At the very first he builds his altar and calls on the name of Jehovah, but during his wanderings in the south country we do not hear of him doing this; not until he comes back to his former position do we read of him worshiping at the altar again. Surely, as we take in the complete emptiness of this world, and the ruin it is in, and then turn from it to the "house of God," with all its infinite fulness of joy and blessing, our hearts well up with gratitude to our God. The sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving rise up to Him in the fragrance of the name of Christ.

Finally, what a view Abram is called to take in from this position of his. After Lot's separation from him, he is bidden to "look from the place in which thou art (this very mountain), northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land on which thou art looking, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed (Christ was linked with His people) forever—typical of the sight which faith gets of those blessings Christ has made our own in the spiritual Canaan. The whole realm of the unsearchable riches of Christ is spread out before us, for faith to enter into.

May God in His grace lead us to fully take up our abode in this position between Bethel and Ai, and from it, like Abram, to take in a full view of the inheritance we have been given, that, realizing it thus

by faith, we may be able to arise and walk through it, in its length and breadth; for, says He, "I will give it unto thee."
J. B., JR.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

WE continue during the present month our reading of the prophet Jeremiah—the last half of the book, from chap. xxxii. to the end. Here we have the promise of future recovery, spoken of in the thirtieth chapter, reiterated. Under the striking figure of buying a field, the right to redeem which belonged to him, the prophet foretells how all the land would one day be restored to God's people. Chap. xxxiii. renews these promises of recovery, and introduces (which is not very prominent in Jeremiah) the rule of the house of David, and blessedness through the Messiah. In chap. xxiii. 6 we find the title "The Lord our Righteousness" given to Christ; here the same title is given to the people of God.

A striking feature of this part of the book is the mingling of the prophet's experience with his predictions. It is the last days of the nation's existence before the captivity. In fact, the prophet is one of those in the city when it is taken. There is an utter heartlessness in rulers and people up to the last, any outward signs of yielding on the part of the king being quickly checked by the princes. The prophet's position was entirely a painful and distressing one, and tested him greatly. There is no gleam of hope in people or king, but faith in the midst of absolute ruin can stay itself upon the sure word of God.

We are permitted to follow the fortunes of a little handful left in the land, and with, we might say, still an opportunity to cleave to God and own Him. Alas, these are scattered, and we find a handful—apostate and defiant in Egypt, against the direct command of God. There is

much searching truth here for a remnant in any time of ruin, like the present, in these chapters.

Prediction of judgment upon the nations is also given.

The prophet Daniel comes next in order, both morally and in point of time. The scene is changed to the Gentiles here, Israel being in captivity. But God meets faith wherever He finds it, and in Daniel and his friends we find that individual faithfulness which should have been present in the nation as a whole.

Significantly, in this book of Gentile glory, we have again and again, both in vision and direct prediction, the downfall of the proud Gentile power, represented by Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, and the setting up of God's kingdom with His earthly people on a basis of permanent peace and blessing, through Christ.

This book gives more definite and complete outlines of prophetic truth. It supplies the framework into which all other prophecy finds its place.

Continuing in what we may call historical order, we have the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These recount the return of a remnant to Jerusalem at the end of the seventy years of captivity predicted by Jeremiah (see, also, Daniel ix.). Under Ezra the temple is rebuilt and divine worship resumed. But things were in a very disordered state until Nehemiah comes, and through his agency the wall is rebuilt around the city and separation and government maintained.

But we must remember, even this partial and feeble recovery was by sufferance of their Gentile masters. The Jews never regained their status as a nation. That and all other blessing for them waits until He comes whose right it is to rule.

As in Daniel, these two books have much that is most helpful and suggestive to any company of people living in remnant days.

A MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

THE psalmist says, "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (Ps. lxxxix. 48). That every man must die was the common belief in that day as in this. That such is not the case is, however, an absolute certainty on the authority of the word of God. There had been no revelation to the contrary in the psalmist's day; therefore we can easily understand his queries as quoted above. There has now been a revelation on the subject vouchsafed to us in the written Word, so that what was a mystery has been explained and made clear to us; yet, alas, most Christians are in utter ignorance of it still, though possessors of Bibles which make it known. Let us see if we can gather up a few thoughts as to this most important subject.

The apostle says: "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," etc. (1 Cor. xv. 51-58). We shall note seven things connected with this explained mystery. May they carry blessing to both writer and reader of these lines.

(1) We have the *certainty* of it set forth in the words "shall" and "must." We *shall* all be changed. The trumpet *shall* sound. The dead *shall* be raised incorruptible, and we *shall* be changed. This corruptible *must* put on incorruption. This mortal *must* put on immortality. How very wonderful! "We shall not all sleep." Sleep here is used for death. The Lord said to His disciples, "Lazarus *sleepeth*;" and they thought He meant taking of rest

in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead" (John xi. 14). Now, Scripture says "we shall not all sleep," or die; so that the common thought is an erroneous one. Current teaching says "we must all die;" Scripture says No; "we shall *not* all die." There was one man in the past who did not die—Enoch. And it is very remarkable that he lived before the flood, and walked with God in the midst of that state of things which called for the flood, yet God took him away without seeing death, before the flood came.

Well, then, if one man could go to heaven without dying, other men can do the same; and that is exactly what Scripture says will be the case. Instead of dying, those who are Christ's will be changed at His coming, and, with the dead in Christ who are raised at the same time, they will all be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with the Lord. (See 1 Thess. iv. 16, 18). It is an absolute certainty; the Lord has said it. He told it to Paul in order that he should tell it to us. The mystery has been explained and communicated, and that settles it. Men may cavil, or sneer, or refuse to accept it; but it matters not; the thing is a certainty, and any moment the Lord's people may be "caught up." Well may the apostle, in writing to Titus, call it "that blessed hope" (Titus ii. 13).

(2) The extent of it. Whom does it embrace? It embraces those that are Christ's—all of them—the living and the dead—all the saints from Abel, down the stream of time, till the event takes place—all of them; not one left; not one missing; not one refused. "They that are Christ's, at His coming" (ver. 23). The firstfruits—Christ—has been gath-

ered; afterward the whole crop in the field, and not a grain left or lost, "at His coming."

Beware of the unscriptural idea that only those who are looking for Him will be taken, and the rest left to go through the tribulation—a most Christ-dishonoring doctrine! The dead in Christ are to rise first. Now multitudes of them never knew anything about the Lord's coming; yet they had Bibles and privileges as we have. Are they, then, to be left in their graves till after the tribulation? Or, by what process of reasoning is a difference to be made between them and saints living now, yet in the same condition as they before they died? Are *all* the dead in Christ to rise first? Most assuredly. Then all the living must just as assuredly be changed when the Lord comes for His own. As I have noted, the firstfruits have been gathered. Then the *whole crop* in the field is gathered at His coming, and not a grain left or lost.

(3) The suddenness of it. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." How marvelous! The world will be going on; not *jogging* on, but rushing on at lightning speed, faster than ever, with less time than ever to devote to their souls' interests, business and pleasure demanding every moment, when they will be startled for the moment, in their insensate rush to eternity, by the announcement in large capitals in the newspapers: "*Remarkable Disappearance of a number of religious people!*" or some such heading, and the admission that it has not yet been accounted for. There will be, alas, many homes where there will not be found one saint to be reckoned as missing, and so the newspapers will be the medium to give *them* the information.

On the other hand, there will be many homes where one or more will be taken and others left. Awful word—*left!* No hope for them afterward, the door of salvation closed forever for them, and only a question of time when their Christless indifference will give place to awful and hopeless remorse.

"In a moment." No warning note sounded; no bugle-call to prepare—"in a moment." The saints are already prepared. They are washed in the blood of Christ. They are meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. They are all ready, and waiting for the shout. Then, suddenly, what they have waited for so long will take place—the last trump will sound, and "in the twinkling of an eye" they will be gone.

(4) The time of it. At the last trump. This is not to be understood as the last trump that will ever sound, or at the last day, as it is termed. It is supposed to be a Roman figure. Paul often uses them in his writings. Saints in those days were familiar with them. It is said there were three trumpet-calls in the Roman army. First, was to strike tents; and the men took down their tents. Second, was to fall in; and they fell into their ranks, ready to march. The third was called "the last trump," and was—March!

It is really a very beautiful figure. The Lord's people are supposed to be all ready, and just waiting for the last trump; and the moment it sounds, they march. March, did I say? Ah no! No marching—no flying, even—but "caught up!" The same mighty power that saved and kept us will "change these bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like unto His body of glory" (Phil. iii. 21), and catch us

up and away from this scene to be forever with the Lord.

(5) The result of it. Death is swallowed up in victory. What a result! Death has claimed its millions since sin began its reign, and only two that we know of ever escaped it—Enoch and Elijah. But, blessed be God, the Son of His love came into the scene, and robbed death of its sting. He lay in the arms of death, but He is risen. His victory is so complete that when the time comes He will swallow up mortality in life. Death will be robbed of its prey and swallowed up in victory. Millions will be changed and not die. Blessed be God for such a victory, and certain to be accomplished.

(6) The triumph because of it. Well may the saints sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" It is the shout of triumph. Listen, and let death and the grave make answer. Death says, I have no sting; I buried it in the heart of the Son of God when He died upon the cross. The grave says, I have no victory. I thought I had, but the Son of God broke my fetters and snapped all my bonds, and rose again from among the dead and robbed me of my victory. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is law," which forbids it, but only aggravates it by acting on a corrupt nature which is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be (Rom. viii. 7); but the question both of sin and law has been forever settled at the cross of Christ, and the believer forever freed from their dominion.

(7) The present and final victory on account of it. "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"—a present victory

over sin and law through association with Christ in His death and resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; and by and by the final victory over death itself at the coming of the Lord, when death is swallowed up in victory. What a blessed hope! What wonderful blessings! What grace to make them all known to us! "Hallelujah, what a Saviour!" May He Himself so command the affections of our hearts that we shall be ever on the alert, and breathing out continually,

"Come, Lord, come. We wait for Thee.
We listen still for Thy returning.
Thy loveliness we long to see;
For Thee the lamp of hope is burning.
Come, Lord, come."

New Zealand.

W. E.

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ"—the last message communicated to "His servants" (chap. i. 1)—after the usual salutation, begins with the announcement, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so; Amen." We should expect, then, that this last message of the Lord Jesus Christ would have to do with the great fact of His coming, and the events closely preceding His advent as Judge. Ephesus, Pergamos and Sardis are warned of it (chap. ii. 5, 16; iii. 3); a remnant in Thyatira comforted (chap. ii. 25); Philadelphia both warned and comforted (chap. iii. 11); while Laodicea will be spued out of His mouth at His coming—publicly disowned and rejected! (vers. 15, 16).

To Philadelphia He says, "*Behold, I come quickly.*"

Then, in the last part of the book, He again exclaims, with a blessing, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (chap. xxii. 7); and again, with a warning, "*And, behold, I come quickly*" (ver. 12).

Finally,—and the very *last words* of the Lord Jesus from heaven, which closes the sum of all His communications to men by revelation and prophecy,—canonically completing the Holy Scriptures,—He says: "*Surely I come quickly.*" To which the apostle John adds, "Amen. *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*" (chap. xxii. 20).

Did it ever strike you, reader, that this event must therefore be that which the Church is to look and pray for? What were His last words? "*Surely, I come quickly.*" Would you not think that "His servants" would treasure the memory of His last utterance? Would you not think that as He closes the last book, reminding His people of His coming, that *that* is the thing, and the principal thing, He would have them thinking and talking about?—this, of course, as concerning themselves and His desire for them. Would you not think that this would be constantly borne witness to?

He says: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches" (chap. xxii. 16). How would the Holy Spirit teach the Bride to pray?—what would He teach her to say? (the Bride is the Church, of course)—"The Spirit and the Bride say, *Come*" (ver. 17). To whom is this prayer voiced? To "the bright and Morning Star" (ver. 16), the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Himself.

Do you hear Christians pray that way? Do *you* pray so? You will, if taught of the Holy Spirit.

"And let him that heareth say, *Come.*" This is the personal desire of the Bride when her affections are stirred. But will she become selfish, and think only of her own rapture? Will she not turn about, in the warmth of her first love, and press His invitation to others—"Let him that is athirst come"? Surely she will. And should any hang back, fearing lest there is little hope for them, she will continue His precious invitation and promise: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (xxi. 6). She, the Bride, now takes it up, and repeats: "*And whosoever will, let him take the water of life FREELY.*"

Reader, the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, *personally*; first, to translate His people, and take them to Himself (1 Thess. iv. 13-18); second, to judge the world. Would you be among those who go happily to meet Him? "Come," then, while the invitation stands. Let no subtle influence dissuade you. Your eternal happiness or eternal woe hangs, perhaps, but on a moment of decision; for He says, "Surely I come *quickly.*" May you be among those who can happily and intelligently pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." S. A. W.

A MISAPPREHENSION.

OUR attention has been called to a sentence quoted from our beloved F. W. G. in an article in this magazine entitled "Covet earnestly the best Gifts" (November, 1901, page 298)—"The eternal life that is in us seems to be susceptible of weakness

and decay like any other life." Some have seemed to think that our brother was not clear as to the nature of eternal life, and others have sought to make capital out of this by printing the sentence as a proof that he taught that the believer could lose his eternal life. It is hardly necessary to remind saints that no one taught more constantly and consistently the exact opposite of this. Whatever the sentence may mean, it does not mean, and was not intended to mean, that the life of the believer was not eternally secure.

But what did he mean? A glance at the connection will show. He is quoting the thoughts of a discouraged one. "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?" Does any one believe that our brother was teaching that the body of Christ had ceased to exist because of the ruin of the professing Church? This is the connection in which the sentence occurs quoted above. In immediate connection with it he says, "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." That which is seen is an *apparently* dismembered body of Christ, *apparently* enfeebled and decaying eternal life. He says, "*secms.*" But, thank God, the reality abides, and the way our brother puts it ought to emphasize this.

We trust that this will be sufficient for those in any way troubled by a misapprehension of our brother's teaching, and "cut off occasion from them who desire occasion" to suggest that he had given up one of the most important truths of the word of God.

"I AM BUT A LITTLE CHILD."

THE world has but little use for a man who says this. The spirit of the world is the opposite of that of a little child. The truly childlike spirit which Christ commends and with which God is pleased is conscious of its own weakness, and has confidence in the strength of others—in the mother's love and care. Conscious weakness and confidence in God are two precious possessions which are linked up with the character of the little child. The great need of the child of God is summed up in these two expressions. To be conscious of our own weakness does away with a host of evils which assail the believer. When are we really strong? Paul will tell you: "When I am weak, then am I strong."

This, then, is the true secret of strength. It is to be in our own eyes what we are in God's eyes, to see ourselves, in some measure, as He sees us; taking the creature place,—the place of a sinful creature saved by grace. Sin has taken man out of his true place, has made him independent of God, has deceived him into imagining he is strong. This we see on every hand; men are fast getting ready to measure their strength against that of Christ.

Coupled with pride is distrust of God. Men do not really believe that God is good. They trust in themselves, and distrust Him. They justify themselves, and condemn Him. In the light of God's holiness and man's sinfulness how awful this appears—a sinful creature judging and condemning a holy God! A rebellious creature pitting its strength against the Creator! These two sins, pride and unbelief, specially characterize fallen man.

When we are brought to God, when He saves us from our sins, we are to be just the opposite of this. Conscious weakness—humility—confidence in God—faith—these characterize the believer in Christ. But the flesh is still there, pride and unbelief are not destroyed, and every child of God has to grow and increase in these two especially, thus becoming more and more like the little child.

As our lives pass here, we should be losing confidence in ourselves and gaining confidence in God. We can never get to the end of this. We learn more of ourselves, more of God. To know ourselves is to distrust ourselves. To know God is to trust Him. When we see one with great confidence in himself, we may be sure he does not know himself. When one has great confidence in God, it is proof that he knows God.

These two things, then, should be before the Christian—to learn his own weakness, and to learn to know God. We can desire and pray for nothing better. It is so good to be able to say in our hearts before God, "I am but a little child." We are back in our true place when we can say this. It is the place of rest. The wicked have no rest, because they have no confidence in God, they have not submitted to Him, they are His enemies. What an immense difference between regarding God as an enemy and regarding Him as a little child does its mother. The enmity gone; love takes its place. The doubt and distrust displaced by confidence and faith.

With the consciousness of weakness and the confidence in God comes submission to Him. We cannot yield to Him as we should until we have come to know that our way is seldom or never the best way,

and that His way for us is certain to be the best. And this is another thing to pray for: "Lord, have Thy way with me." Then we come to desire that He should have His way with us in all things. Then we are obedient children, and God can use us. He can bless us according to His own purposes of love. How good it is to learn to say, "I am but a little child"! J. W. N.

"THOU WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH".

Song i. 7.)

LORD JESUS, draw our hearts to Thee,
And keep them centred there;
That we may see Thy beauty more,
Thou fairest of the fair!

That we may, like the saints of old,
Sing praises, Lord, to Thee;
For Thou hast saved us from the pit
By dying on the tree.

The song begun on earth, O Lord,
Will through eternal years
Burst forth from Thy redeemed ones
To greet Thy holy ears.

Redeemed by Christ—oh, what a thought!—
From hell's dark burning flame,—
Not that alone, but on our brow
He'll write His holy name.

Oh deep, unfathomable grace,
We shall be pure as He!
And with Him share His glorious throne
Through all eternity!

C. W.

THE FLESH CUT OFF.

"**G**OD looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me" (Gen. vi. 12, 13). Thus early in the world's history did God reveal the failure of the man of flesh, the Adam race, as to His purposes for the earth.

Next, "Noah found grace, favor, 'in the eyes of the Lord,'" and the ark and the judgment of the flood followed. This over, God in mercy began again a further trial of the race under Noah, to whom was given authority to govern his descendants in the earth; but, instead, he failed to govern himself and his own family; with the result that upon one of his own sons he pronounced a curse.

From the failure of Adam in the garden of Paradise to Noah, man had his own way in the earth without law or restraint from God, except in a providential way, and by His Spirit in a special manner toward His called ones, like Enoch. Man unrestrained in the earth for 1556 years fitted himself for destruction, as foreseen and revealed to Noah in grace.

Again, after Noah and the flood, came another period, of 527 years, during which God, in the mercy that has ever characterized His dealings with the human race, left man free from law or restraint as to his behavior, except as to the covenant which He established with Noah and his sons in which they were instructed that all creatures should be subject to man, they should not kill each other, and His bow in the clouds should assure them of their safety on

the earth from any future destruction by a flood. At the end of this period the whole race had forsaken God their maker, and turned to the worship of idols! thus demonstrating again that "every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually" (Gen. vi. 5).

Again, for the fourth time, God shows his favor to man in the call of Abram, out from a world far away from God and sunken into an idolatry of unrestrained *fleshly* evil that was monstrous (Rom. i. 20 to end of chapter). This time it is in taking up the best of the ruined race, out of which, in special favor—in most marvelous grace—it is to raise up a people that shall be faithful to Him in the earth—a family to be instructed, cultivated, blessed in all favors, and, if possible, to be made worthy of all His love. For 1921 years God dealt with Abraham and his offspring in the most marvelous mercy, grace, and love, as is fully set forth in the history of Israel and Judah; but in spite of all His marvelous works in their behalf, when He Himself came to them in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ,—for "He was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,"—man was bad enough to reject and crucify even the Lord of glory! This ended the race again before God, as had been foretold to Noah before the flood, and now all men out of Christ *are dead to God*. The race is ended, all flesh is under the judgment of God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." This has been demonstrated in over four thousand years of human history. Further trial is useless. "The mind of the flesh is *enmity against God*. It is not *subject* to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*; so, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

This is the result foretold to us in the rite of cir-

cumcision—the flesh cut off. No uncircumcised person could eat the passover. “There shall no stranger eat thereof. . . . A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof” (Ex. xii.). “Christ our passover is slain for us” (1 Cor. v. 7)—the flesh ended for all Christians. He died in the flesh for us, our Passover, our Substitute, and we in Him, as men in the flesh, to faith, *passed out of existence*, and “are not now in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His; and if Christ be in you, *the body is dead* because of sin, but *the Spirit is life* because of righteousness” (Rom. viii. 9, 10). Now “God forbid that I should glory, save *in the cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. vi. 14).

Christians, to faith, are not in the *first* Adam, but in the *last* Adam, which is Christ. They realize that the flesh has been cut off in the cross of Christ, and have come to the end of themselves as men in the flesh, and have entered into a new life in the last Adam. They have been, through grace, born of the Spirit of God, and thus been made “*new creatures in Christ Jesus*.” They realize that “in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” They are alive in Christ, and have the Spirit of God, which in them is the power of their new life, and to this by faith they live. They “are the true circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. iii. 3).

In commemoration of this, under the command of God, Joshua takes up twelve stones out of the bed of

the river of death, and of them builds a monument in the land. And without orders he voluntarily takes up the same number of stones, each stone representing a tribe, and buries them in the bottom of the river!—a symbol, teaching us the lesson that the flesh is already cut off, judged and condemned in the cross of Christ. It is buried in the depths of the river of death. It is because of this ending of the natural man that "*ye must be born again.*" The former is ended before God, and now there must be a supernatural creation suitable to Him. To enter this a man must be born from above, born from heaven; and this life is by the Holy Ghost. It is a new life, a divine life, an eternal life. The man once in this life "is kept by the power of God, through faith, "unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5). "My sheep . . . shall never perish" (John x. 27, 28). "The *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). "He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath *eternal life*, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed *out of death*,"—in Adam,—"*into life*,"—in Christ (John v. 24). "Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life" (John v. 40)—that is, the new, supernatural, eternal life in Christ. "*Now is the judgment of this world*," said our blessed Saviour, as He was on His way to the cross. All in Adam—the flesh—condemned and set aside! God's testing of the race was finished. Now, out of Christ, all are under the judgment of God. "He that is dead is free from sin" (Rom. vi. 2-11). "Now we have been cleared from the law, *having died* to that in which we were held (in the flesh)

that we should serve in newness of life, and not in the old letter" of the law (Rom. vii. 6).

It is a new life that is needed, not simply sins forgiven. "If a law could have been given that would give life, then righteousness would have been by the law." But there could be no righteousness by the law, because of the flesh, "in which no good thing can dwell." "It is enmity against God," and had to be cut off. It is so completely set aside before God that Christians "know no man after the flesh," but only after the Spirit; or, in other words, our spiritual relationships are so far above our natural ones that in a contest we wholly ignore the latter and cleave to the former. See Luke xiv. 25 to the end of the chapter. The old man is ended.

Not only does circumcision teach us this truth, but baptism itself is a figure of the same. We are dead, and buried with Christ in baptism, and we, Christians, have been raised up by the power of God into the new life of Christ. Now, to faith, we are in Him, and out of the Adam life. Christ is the head of the new creation, as Adam was of the old.

This is the basic truth of true Christianity, which the world's church has lost. It stands on "justification by faith," or the forgiveness of sins, but puts man in the flesh back under law for righteousness; a position in which man has been tested before God for four thousand years, and proved to be utterly incapable of maintaining, because of the bad nature inherited from Adam. If the sins are forgiven to-day, the evil nature constantly produces more and more, so there is no end to them. But with that nature judged, condemned and set aside in the cross of Christ, we have deliverance from this body of sin in

that cross. We are dead with and risen in Him, and thereby know our deliverance. "They that are dead are freed from sin." So, therefore, we reckon ourselves dead indeed to the sin nature and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus . . . for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us *free* from the law of sin and of death." The law of sin is in our members (Rom. vii. 23), and the law of death is in the decalogue; because, in the failure to keep it (an impossible thing for fallen human nature) it slays, or condemns, every man. So, "if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

May the Holy Spirit of God sanctify or set us apart from the sin-cursed and already judged and condemned world to Himself by the truth. "His Word is truth."

J. S. P.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

A WORLD which is morally away from God, so that it cannot be subject to His law, nor even care to know His will, nor own His authority, must of necessity harbor within its bosom all of the elements of ruin and self-destruction consequent upon such a state.

This proposition, to which Scripture constantly bears witness, has been demonstrated over and over again in a thousand ways since the very beginning of man's history. It is demonstrated in the rise and fall of peoples, nations and empires, as

well as in the personal experience of individuals, and has furnished a field of thought for the endless speculations in which men, in their boasted superiority of intellect,—missing the mark because refusing the light of Scripture,—have indulged, and in which they continue to indulge their wildest fancy, devising all kinds of vain philosophies which, for the most part, leave God entirely out of consideration.

Some, indeed, have condescended to allow the evidence of a God somewhere, but at so remote a distance from their sphere of speculation,—their little patch of highly cultured weeds of noxious philosophy,—as clearly to betray their kinship with those who “did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (Rom. i. 28).

Thus, because of his unwillingness to submit his mind to the humbling revelation of God concerning the origin of sin and death in the world, and their remedy, proud man foolishly attempts to account for these facts in every other way, possible and impossible, which, instead of teaching him the lesson of humility he so sadly needs, invariably tends to minister to his inveterate self-conceit and vain-glory. Such is *his* theory of the survival of the fittest; and upon the same authority of unbelief, of human wisdom and erudition is based his notion of the so-called “struggle for existence,” which is said to be now determining the survival of the fittest. This is as if the Almighty, unable to superintend and care for the creatures He has made, were now, in this plight, depending on their ability to destroy each other as the condition of their existence!

That wilful ignorance of God should bring with it the dismal conception of a blind struggle for exist-

ence among His creatures, is not to be wondered at. Indeed, it is consistent and logical. For who can doubt that if God, the Source and Preserver of life, and Ruler of the universe, be dethroned, universal anarchy must inevitably follow?

This condition is deplorable. For if repudiation of rule, authority and government amongst men be truly called anarchy, is it any the less so when these are denied to God? But if not, anarchy, it will be seen, is a far more terrible monster, with far greater possibilities for evil, than it has been thought hitherto. It is no longer to be considered a blind monster having only feet "swift to shed blood" of distinguished victims on rare opportunities, but a subtle monster having many heads—heads of keenest intellect, lifted high in glittering seducement on the great tree of modern Christendom (Matt. xiii. 32). These are the modern oracles of science and learning, to whom is being entrusted the education of coming generations! And if such be the case, who can question what will be the result? Surely not he who understands the Scriptures, for in them the outcome is plainly foretold. For if such lawlessness, and license, and overweening self-conceit as the skepticism in high places of these latter days constitute the hope and boast of the so-called advanced civilization of the twentieth century, then the time is near at hand, even at the door, when the ever-rising tide must overflow its banks, and in the widening rush of its downward course plunge all classes alike into the great universal whirlpool of the "strong delusion" predicted by the apostle Paul in 2 Thess. ii. 8-12, bringing upon them God's swift and just retribution.

Now, as for the survival of the fittest: thank God, apart from the term, which is unscriptural, there is such a thing held out in the Scripture of truth. But so vastly different from the notion of the evolutionist is it, that the very fittest, according to the one, would constitute the unfittest according to the other. For instance, it is written, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and again, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." The world, on the contrary, is very prone to praise the mighty, the presumptuous and self-willed, without regard to moral character, provided only he be successful, but utterly despises the humble and the righteous, and would fain crush the godly out of existence. In other words, it is that first principle of enmity against God, pride, which commands to-day as much as ever the admiration of the world, as it remains its principal delusion under Satan's leadership; and for this reason, notwithstanding the boasted progress, man's pride contains within itself, instead of a hope for future and higher development, nothing but the fatal certainty of God's pronounced judgment upon it in the sentence that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

So far, then, from the survival of the fittest of which the Scripture speaks being based upon natural development, or creature attainment of any kind, it rests entirely on the moral character, attributes and glory of God, as revealed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It rests upon His atonement for sin, He having suffered the death of the cross that He might lay the foundation for the redemption of man, and having been raised up from the dead, the exalted Head and beginning of a new creation,

beyond the reach of sin and death. God thus reveals before the whole universe, while throwing open the portals of divine glory to man, the One who is pre-eminently the Fittest.

Thus redemption stands out in glorious contrast with evolution, as God's procedure for raising our fallen race from its hopeless condition, while faith in the Redeemer (open to all through the universal gospel-call that "whosoever will may come") is His appointed way for individual salvation, and therefore constitutes the only reliable and trustworthy survival to which either nature or revelation gives any countenance. It therefore remains with the responsibility of man, as at the beginning, to choose between life and death, between God's word and Satan's lie, between the gospel of the grace of God to sinners and the doctrines of seducing spirits—the fashionable unbelief of our day, and winds of theories of those who are deceiving others, being themselves deceived.

Finally, the importance of the subject cannot be over-estimated when we think of the issues at stake. The contest between Christ and Satan, in the representative principles of truth and error, of light and darkness, of faith and unbelief, is going on, and every man, according to the nature of the principles by which he allows himself to be swayed, consciously or unconsciously, is being wheeled into line and made to identify himself with one side or the other. The veil of time must shortly be drawn aside to reveal each man in the light of eternity, and to manifest the wisdom or the folly of each, the use made of his opportunities, and the choice which, made in time, determines his future destiny.

A. T. E.

THE DANGER OF SLIGHTING BAPTISM.

ERROR advances by degrees until at last it is fully established and souls are blinded to the truth. There are serious indications among us, in the way of indifference as to the ordinance of baptism that should alarm us, lest the heretical doctrine should become accepted and be spread among us that as an ordinance it has no application to us now.

And of this as a probability may we not be well assured, especially in the light of recent departures from the truth, that we would not in that case stop in the down grade with the denial of baptism, but would travel rapidly to further error, once we had despised the Word and yielded to a wile of Satan. Such is the history of God's people, often repeated. We need at this present time to pay earnest heed to the word in 2 Peter iii. 17: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Error has in it the seeds of alienation from God, of dishonor to Christ and to His word; but with steadfastness and growth in grace there will be humility and the knowledge of the Lord, and the desire to give Him glory that will repel what would dishonor Him.

One reply that is made, showing what is at work among us, is (as to baptism), "I don't understand it." Of course, if there is desire to learn, God will teach; but if the reply means, "I feel excused from

taking a stand about it, or from submitting to it," then surely, though the soul may not be conscious of it, a doctrine of Scripture is being slighted, and the spirit of this loosens the hold of God's word in general upon the soul; and how dangerous a ground this is, let all consider. From this we should shrink with great fear!

On the other hand, if we submit to the Word, God will give us increasing understanding about it. To use an old illustration—if a man stands with a lantern looking out into the darkness, he gets no further light; but if he steps on, the light advances on his path.

What has rendered the soul incapable of judging is known to the Lord—sloth, a "puffed up" condition, the loss of a "good conscience." Whatever it may be, Satan has gained an advantage by his wiles. The loins are not "girt about with truth," (the first part of the whole armor of God) without which we cannot stand in the conflict to enjoy our heavenly possession. And we shall all be tested.

Another thing advanced (by some who do not deny baptism to be obligatory in general) is this: that baptism is not required in the case, for example, of one who has been for some time breaking bread; he is already, "inside," and therefore does not need to "come in." This may be classed as similar to the suggestion that baptism was right at the beginning, when Jews and Gentiles were being joined on new ground in the profession of Christianity, but is not called for now in Christendom at least; while it would be right (probably it would be allowed) still for a Jew or a heathen.

To this it may be fairly replied, that the error is in

concluding that such *are* inside. Is it not assuming to be true what is not true? The unbaptized are not "inside" in this sense—not being baptized. They are inside surely in one sense, but not so as to the very matter that is in question; they have not submitted to that form which is expressly the putting on Christ. And where is the line to be drawn? If baptism has been neglected or overlooked for a few weeks, are such absolved from responsibility to be baptized? or does it take a longer period? and who is to draw the line, and assign a period? Does it not appear manifest that such a plea must lead to the confirming of souls in the entire neglect and contempt for the doctrine of baptism, as is already the case with some?

But, surely, Scripture gives no authority for this suggestion. How could Scripture authorize the neglect of Scripture? If a person is not baptized, he has not in that respect submitted to the word of the Lord. He has not "put on Christ" in this outward form of confession of His name that the Lord Himself has ordained: a public taking of one's place among Christians in Christ's kingdom in a way He has marked out.

Already the benumbing effect of error has so affected some, that it is to be feared that exhortation on the subject, however scriptural, will be received with indifference—a dulled sense of obligation of long standing nullifying the power of God's own Word. Let us cry to God about this, that we may experience God's mercy, and be delivered from this snare of the devil.

As to the claim of some, that Paul's ministry puts us on higher ground than baptism, we have

only to consider that Paul is the one who makes baptism very prominent in his epistles, as we all know.

Very precious is the teaching of baptism. It is subjection to that "Name which is above every name" openly before men. Surely the Lord richly blesses that open confession. It tells of our death with Christ—death to sin (death to the life we lived before)—that as He was raised from the dead, so we also should walk in "newness of life" in Him who is risen. But this is not written to present the doctrine of baptism, but as an alarm and an appeal, if the Lord may use it to that end, that we may be aroused to confession and prayer, and to seek deliverance from the Lord.

Occasionally one is found among us (breaking bread) who has not been baptized—one of the indications of the slackness that exists among us, and of the danger that threatens us: taken by itself, not so serious as when taken or viewed in connection with other tendencies already mentioned.

Whatever differences we may have to deplore among us as to the ordinance of baptism, let us at least seek grace to hold fast the ordinance: to let that go would be a serious departure from the truth; an error so grave, that difference of judgment as to the application of baptism cannot at all be compared to it, surely.

Let us remember the solemn injunction to Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 20), "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust;" and again, (2 Tim. i. 14,) "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us;" as Paul himself could say, "I have kept the faith:" it was surely *that* that Timothy was to "keep;" as

Ezra, also, exhorted the twelve priests and their ten brethren, when he had weighed to them "the silver and the gold," and the holy vessels offered to the Lord: "Ye are holy unto the Lord; the vessels are holy also. . . . Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites . . . at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord" (Ezra viii. 28).

E. S. LYMAN.

FRAGMENTS.

THE foundation is Christ and His finished work, and every one who believes upon Him is eternally saved, secure on that foundation, and yet there is such a thing as being saved "as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). It is when a man's life, instead of being devoted to Christ, is spent for himself. He may gather riches, honor, dignities. He may have abundance of pleasure, as it is called, but when the judgment-seat of Christ tests all this, when the fire of God's holiness passes upon it, will it stand or will it all be consumed? Oh, as we think of this, does it not stir us to be careful in all we do and say? May we not well ask ourselves the question, Is what I am doing going to abide, or will I suffer loss?

Want of dependence on God, pride, may cause us to fall into many failures; the soul is not restored before that which has given occasion to these failures is judged in the heart.

J. N. D.

Christ's perfection was not to act, but to suffer; in suffering there was a more entire surrender of Himself.

J. N. D.

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY."

(G) Lord, our hearts are list'ning,
 That joyous shout to hear,
 Which wakes the saints now sleeping,
 (That shout so very near)—
 When we with them ascending,
 Shall meet Thee in the air,
 To gaze upon Thy glory,
 And all Thy likeness bear.

O hour for which, in patience,
 Thou'st longed through all the night,
 Whilst we Thy saints, being gathered,
 Were brought into the light;
 And now, the Church completed,
 Thou canst no more delay—
 O Lord, with shouts of triumph,
 We pass into the day.

O hour of richest blessing—
 We brought to Thee so nigh,
 To be Thy joy forever,
 And share Thy throne on high.
 To rest, in all that brightness,
 And ever there abide;
 To find Thy heart delighting,
 In us Thy chosen bride.

O blessed, coming Saviour,
 Then speak the joyous word
 To which our hearts responding,
 "Forever with the Lord"
 Forever with Thee, Saviour—
 For evermore to be,
 In deepest, fullest, blessing—
 Forever one with Thee.

G. W. F.

INQUIRING, AND NOT INQUIRING OF THE LORD.

2 Sam. ii. 1, 4.

AFTER Saul's death, David "inquired of the Lord" if he should go up "into any of the cities of Judah." He was told to go up. Again he inquires. "Whither shall I go up?" and the Lord said, "Unto Hebron."

Note these repeated inquiries and answers, as if to strike our attention. At a time when serious consequences hung upon David's every step, we are taught the deep necessity of waiting upon God always. Twice he had inquired of the Lord, twice he was answered; and the way it is presented prepares the mind to expect a fresh inquiry of the Lord as to the next important step—his coronation as king. But, at this point, there is suddenly an absence of further inquiry: "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." Not a word about the other tribes—no message sent them that they might share in the event; and the king is anointed "over the house of Judah."

David was never marked out to be king merely over Judah. How clear and solemn the connection here between not inquiring of the Lord and this great error! The ties of nature—the men of Judah, led to action from natural impulse, not spiritual wisdom; like the failure of Paul at Jerusalem, kind friends and congenial associations were too much for the heart. The natural result was a union of the other tribes in an independent kingdom under

a son of Saul. Bloodshed follows, "long war," treachery, jealous hate, murder, and vengeance—an awful record. Not until seven and a half years afterwards is David anointed king over all Israel at last, as recorded in chap. v.

But David's after-history shows the evil continued to work. When again taking the kingdom after the overthrow of Absalom (chap. xix.) David appeals not to all Israel, but to *Judah*, to bring him back. This was greater failure than before; for in the former case the men of Judah came, and crowned him. In this case, though Israel was saying to one another, "Why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back," David pays them no attention, but appeals to the elders of Judah, saying: "Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house, seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house?" David was in a perverse spirit. He knew all Israel was ready to receive him, and yet still turns to Judah. And not only this, he says nothing about the kingdom at large,—only about the king and "his house."

But this is too flagrant an error to be passed over. "And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him over Jordan?" (2 Sam. xix. 41). And the men of Judah claim him as "near of kin" to them; and the men of Israel say "we have ten parts in the king . . . why then did ye despise us?" and this is followed by fiercer words from Judah.

The result is recorded in the next chapter—rebellion and bloodshed. We hear of no word or influ-

ence of David to pacify. Events take their course to the bitter end; while God, in mercy to His people, brings the tribes again in subjection to David as before.

Thus we see that the division into two kingdoms later on, had its roots in the condition of David's heart from the beginning—whatever the condition of all the tribes. This is a very solemn lesson as to the evil consequences among God's people of unjudged sin. And a special lesson in this history, is the first suggested—the deep importance of waiting upon God. "My soul wait thou only upon God."

In this same history of David we see the grave danger, at special times, of being suddenly swayed from simplicity, and grossly blinded to spiritual discernment by strong natural feeling, as by pride and selfish interests of family, of friends, or of party. Never does the Lord fail to answer, to guide, and to bless those who wait upon Him; nor can He fail to make us feel the evil results of doing our own will and forsaking Him.

May we be doers of the Word and thus prove that "good and perfect and acceptable will of God," learning to wait upon Him at all times.

E. S. L.

HIS CLOUDS.

THE clouds hang heavy o'er me,
And dark, and chill the night;
Yet clouds, nor chill, nor darkness
Can shut Thee from my sight,
Nor hush the song my heart still sings,
Nor stay my soul's uplifted wings.

Thy clouds are fraught with mercies—
Tho' oft of darkest hue;
Yet faith's keen vision fears not
To pierce the darkness through,
And find the side that's toward Thy face
Alight with glory of Thy grace.

When sorrow, like the rain drops,
Falls heavily and cold,
I turn me to God's sun-light,
And there mine eyes behold—
All broken into rainbow hues—
What I had thought were sorrow's dews.

Life's storms and clouds are many,
But God is in them all;
Apart from Him, nor sorrow,
Nor rain can ever fall;
No cloud that e'er o'er-shadowed me,
But drew me closer, Lord, to Thee.

The storm that broke on Calv'ry,
And hid the noon-day sun—
That made the stout heart tremble—
Was borne for me, by One
Who wrought sweet peace from deepest woe;
—God's clouds have *never* hung so low.

They wrapped Him in their darkness,
They hid from Him God's face;
Called forth that cry so bitter,
That He might show me grace;
That storm, now passed and gone for aye,
Hath bought me everlasting day.

And now His clouds, which shadow
My sun a little while,
Remind me of *His* sorrow
Which won for me His smile:—
The remnants of that tempest wild
Which brought me to Him, reconciled.

So, bright, or dark—whatever,
 They can not slip His hand;
 Their gilded edges tell me
 My Father hath command;
 What tempest e'er can do me harm,
 Beneath His strong, and loving arm?

H. McD.

CHARACTERS OF GOD LINKED WITH THE PATH OF FAITH.

(Heb. xi. 17-22.)

WE have presented to us in this chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the gathering up of the scriptural testimony as to the principle of faith, and its operation in the lives of God's people from the very commencement of time. In the Jewish system all was material, and appealed to the natural faculties of men, while faith, he shows, goes out to the unseen, which characterizes true Christianity. It is for the possessor of it, "the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen." It makes real to the soul in which it operates the very things that are hoped for and not therefore possessed, while it is also that which alone gives to that soul the conviction, the certainty, of the existence of these very things that are unseen, and yet for which we hope. God then is the whole sum and substance for faith, so much so that without it it is impossible to please Him. He requires that one who comes to Him must believe that He *is*, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. It is faith, and only faith, that can fulfil this requirement.

Moreover, faith, we know, is the gift of God, so

that in its activity it must partake of His character, and always rises to its source and only sufficiency; that is, God Himself. We may therefore rightly expect to find some phase of God's own character in its activity, and of course especially so where it is acting in some distinct realization of God's all-sufficiency. It is this which we have presented in the passage before us.

The great men of Genesis are mentioned in connection with one distinct incident in their lives founded upon faith. First of all Abraham—typical above all others of the man of faith. In his case we have the offering up of Isaac. We cannot think of this and not have our thoughts turned to consider the pain and anguish of heart it must have meant for Abraham. It was for him the yielding up of the one in whom all his hope was centered, and yet how readily he gives up this object of his heart's deep affection. How beautiful a witness to the way faith counts on the all-sufficiency of God! Abraham might have chided with God for laying such a burden upon him, and for taking away the one in whom his hope was centered. He might have questioned how the promises would be fulfilled, and what hope was left if now Isaac be removed. We say such reasoning would be the working of unbelief.

But do we not often reason this way in our hearts? It is far different with Abraham: not a word of murmuring, he promptly obeys the trying command. He "rose up early" the next morning, and goes the way he is bidden. Ah, was not He who had given Isaac when all hope was shattered, and there existed no longer any possible way of fulfilling the promise naturally, was He not able to raise up? to kill and to

make alive? Would He fail in such a way to fulfil the word of His promise? Impossible. Let Isaac be taken; His arm is not shortened, and His word cannot fail; He will provide.

Such is the language broad writ over the actions of faithful Abraham. Would that our own hearts spoke more on this wise, this whole-hearted yielding up to God's blessed will. Has He given us much blessing and given us the very thing our hearts longed for? If then it be His will to take them from us shall unbelief raise its dragon head to chide with Him, the pledge of whose love is the gift of His *only begotten Son*? Rather shall our faith not speak in Abraham's language and say, "Thy will, not mine, blessed God." The object in such a trial is surely to turn our hearts to more simply and more completely trust in Him.

Perhaps Abraham had begun to rest a little in Isaac and the fulfilment of the promises in him, instead of continuing to look to God in the realization that even with the one given in whom all was to be fulfilled, still it must and could only be through God's own hand and power carrying all into effect. Whether he had reasoned so or not, we know not, but have we not often reasoned in this way? God has given us the desire of our hearts and provided much in blessing us, and the heart grows lax, and coldness comes in, the eye is turned a little from our God, and we begin to find some sufficiency in what He has given—resting in *that* and the possession of it, instead of still continuing, after possessing the desires of the heart, to trust *only* in His all-sufficiency; enjoying the gift in the sense of this, and not in the least in any independence of Him who gave it. Very

necessary, then, is the refining of our faith by the trial occasioned in the taking away of that in which we are finding any measure of sufficiency, even though given by God to us and of His will.

May God in His grace grant that we learn this lesson in His presence, for experience *is not* the best teacher in spiritual things, though we must mourn how often we choose this way of it.

But now in this activity of Abraham's faith we have a beautiful expression of one character of our God, as the Father in His love. We have not a more striking illustration in God's word than this is of the unspeakable gift of His love to us. It is pressed upon Abraham, "take thy son, thy only son Isaac," and so He, too, gave His only begotten Son, wrenching His heart of love and all its affections in giving up the well-beloved of His bosom to suffer for our sakes. The sorrow of the Father's heart in yielding Him up a willing sacrifice, who can tell it? And if this be so, who can measure the depth of His infinite love for us, that He should give such a wonderful gift? How sweet to know this One as our Father, and to be able to approach Him as such, to be known as His children, having been given the Spirit of adoption.

And then how beautifully expressive is Isaac's obedience to his father a type of the perfect obedience of the Son of God. No voice of protest to mar the scene, but perfect self-surrender. The "Lo! I am come to do Thy will, O God," is heard here. And this is His declaration knowing full well what the accomplishment of it meant, even the awful forsaking of God upon the cross. The heart of the Father and of the Son are one in the divine, eternal

expression of love to the creature, and it is this side of God's character that is expressed for us in this incident of Abraham's faith.

We pass on to Isaac, who blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. Here we have a far different thought as to God's character. Faith is clearly on Isaac's part in connection with the blessing given, and not with the way that it is given. Isaac would have given Jacob's blessing to Esau. Nevertheless, Isaac's faith is seen in recognizing Jacob truly blessed. He, no doubt, saw how God had accomplished His fore-announced purpose, spite of his fleshly desires to the contrary. Thus we read of him trembling exceedingly, no doubt with the thought before him of God's word spoken at the time of the birth—"the elder shall serve the younger," and how he had sought to do contrary to it. He therefore confirms the blessing to Jacob.

But what we see in all this is clearly the fact that God is the God of election, and that, be the desires of the saint what they may, and seek to fulfil them in whatever way he may, His purpose cannot be changed and He will accomplish it. "The children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger." (Rom. ix. 11, 12.) So that in the case of Isaac, we see the God of election controlling events for the accomplishment of His fore-announced purpose.

How blessed a character of God this is for us! If it had not been that He had purposed, we could not be blessed; and if it had not been that He had marked us out before the foundation of the world,

according to His fore-knowledge, we should not be the "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And so "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate . . . them He also called;" for if He had not called, and by His power (which always accompanies His voice when He calls) made us obedient to His will, we would have willingly gone on in the way of destruction. What sweet and blessed assurance then we have in this that He is the God of election, having all power to carry out His every purpose of blessing concerning us. We have the lesson of His matchless love for us in Abraham, and the assurance that love so wondrously manifested will provide for everything, giving every possible blessing; and now we learn that this same blessed One is He who has elected us in His unbounded grace to eternal blessing, to just all that blessing that the wonderful exhibition of His love has really pledged Him to give; for, having given His Son, "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Rom. viii. 32).

In the third place we have Jacob and the blessing of the two sons of Joseph, accompanied with his worship, leaning upon the top of his staff. Here the contrast with Isaac is very marked. He shows how he has learnt his lesson, that that which is natural must be replaced by what is spiritual, the elder must give way to the younger. He crosses his hands in blessing Manasseh and Ephraim who receives the greater place. It must be so, Manasseh is typical for us of the forgetting of those things which are behind; this truly is absolutely necessary for Ephraimite fruitfulness to come in. All here, be what it may, must be turned from, and counted as dung, if the

blessed fruit-bearing which pleases our God is to be developed in us.

But this is really a resurrection lesson. Why are we to turn from all earthly things to those which are above? Is it not because we are dead with Christ, and are raised up with Him on resurrection ground? in new creation having no longer any link with the old order? And this is God's way for us, and the accounting of His glorious counsels concerning us, so that in very deed He is the God of resurrection. All His ways exhibit Him in this character, that of bringing life out of death. The earth, as we know it, is a resurrected earth from the ruin it had fallen into; and now He is bringing a new creation out of the ruined old one, by the power of resurrection. The practical working out of which in the subjects of this resurrection work, is the lesson we learn from Jacob's faith in blessing the sons of Joseph. Here, then, we have Him as the God of resurrection, and it is a principle which characterizes His dealings as revealed all through Scripture.

To know Him in this character is the pledge to our faith of the fulfilment of His every promise and our every hope in connection therewith. He "hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." That resurrection power that raised up Christ will also raise us up; yea, is the pledge of it, for we are now linked with Christ for eternity. It is in the raising up of Christ that God is supremely manifested as the God of resurrection, and in which we know Him as such. It is the security of everything for us since we are before God in Christ as our Representative; and He has been raised up from that place into which He has de-

sended for us, bearing our judgment as our Substitute.

When the lesson of all this has been learnt in the soul, the consequence of it is worship from a heart filled with the riches of God's grace, and to which things present are but dung, and their loss counted gain.

Finally, in Joseph making mention of the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt and giving commandment concerning his bones, we have the comforting promise of God's sure visitation given to his brethren, from the midst of whom God is about to remove him. His faith here certifies to the fulfilment of the promise to bring them into the land which they were to be given. We cannot help but consider the fiery furnace of affliction through which Israel was to pass during their sojourn in Egypt, after which we know Jehovah visited them. How to those poor slaves, oppressed under the tyrannical sway of Pharaoh's power, all hope or prospect of the fulfilling of God's promise to their fathers must have seemed to be gone. And how, too, perhaps they counted Him unfaithful to His promise. Nevertheless, how sweet in view of these circumstances God's message for faith to lay hold of in the word spoken by Joseph! What a comfort from God Himself to any among Israel who trusted in Him. And so we know how after all the sorrow, degradation and trial which they passed through, God answered the faith of Joseph and proved Himself faithful to His promise to the fathers, accomplishing deliverance.

Here, unmistakably, we have Him presented to us as the *unchanging God*. Let there intervene a time, no matter how long, no matter how much filled with

trial and sorrow, with an outlet only dark, through which light would seem never to break, we may be sure He will never change, and that which He has spoken He will carry out and nothing can swerve Him. How blessed to know Him as such in a path like this through a hostile world, that is, of course, if it really is a hostile world to us, and that depends much on our communion and testimony. We know this glorious One also as our Father, who has called us to communion and fellowship with Himself; to abide under the covert of His wings where harm cannot come nigh.

“We change, He changes not.”

These are sweet lessons He has given us of His own character in the lives of these examples of faith. And may He in His rich grace grant us to learn them in simple faith, that we may indeed find our whole portion in Himself, in whom is a wealth of all-sufficiency for us which is infinite and divine. Let us never forget that it is the fruit of the suffering and death of our blessed Lord; and while the glorious blessing we have been brought into is the necessary result of that awful Cross, (for God will honor and magnify in this way the name of Christ who has glorified Him in connection with sin, by the bestowal of all His infinite wealth upon poor creatures whose place He took in love and atoned for their sin) yet let us remember the pit from whence we have been dug, the awful depth to which the Son of God had to descend that He might lift us up into God's glory, and to apprehend even now, in some measure. His blessed character.

J. B. Jr.

FAITH, OR CIRCUMSTANCES?

THE South Sea Islanders have a beautiful word for "hope." It is, rendered literally, "the swimming thought," the thought that keeps one's head, amid the tempests, above the water threatening to engulf him. How much more truly does this same thought characterize our "faith." Hope is tinged with doubt while faith, true faith, has no doubts. It is full of triumph, and thus it is that the apostle can exclaim, "What is that which overcometh the world? even your faith." Truth then is a triumpher. By it our feet are winged to bear us across the rough places of our wilderness journey, to carry us in victory at last into the very presence of God, our Creator, for is it not written "by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death"?

If we look at that long hero-roll in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, while perfectly natural, is it not yet a little striking that it is for triumph over earthly difficulties that we find their names emblazoned thereon? There is, no doubt, in this a salutary lesson for us, which is duly enforced by the principle of our Lord's utterance, "If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" Reader, are not you and I apt often to be more sure of the heavenly than the earthly? Are we not more afraid about things down here than of righteousness and eternal judgment? Why is this? Is Christ less reliable in His promises as to earth than He is as to those concerning heaven? Can we be certain as to

the future, if the present be clouded with doubt? Let us face the question.

The story of Zacharias in the temple affords us a remarkable instance of the inconsistency of real faith, or rather of the one who possessed it. He is in the presence of God. He is offering incense, without which in days gone by none could enter the presence of God and live. He is, doubtless, firmly convinced that it is Jehovah with whom he has to do, and yet when suddenly on the right hand of the altar there appears an angelic messenger from God, he is afraid. Not trembling in the presence of God, but trembling in the presence of His messenger! There are two things which we may notice about him. First of all, it says he was doing what was the *custom* for priests to do. Very possibly when he had first offered that incense to the holy God, he had done it in fear and trembling, but as day after day passed he had grown familiar with the truth that God would have him thus do, and his fear had taken wings and fled, or dissolved like the mist in the sunlight. An angel he was not accustomed to seeing, and he trembles.

But he *saw* the angel also, God, he did not see. Oh how the faint vision of our fleshly eyes will at times fill us to the blotting out for a time of all the eternal verities which are summed up in Him who is the great Verity, the living "Truth!"

There are two things also, which tend to lead to God's people being sure as to eternity, but to doubting as to time, and they are just those two things with which we have become familiar by hearing. First of all we have become well grounded in the

eternal security of the believer. We have grown familiar with the thought,

"Death and judgment are behind us
Grace and glory are before."

We have reasoned much about God's word being pledged that heaven is inviting us to enter into its "love and light and song" through the merits of Jesus' blood, but we have not exercised ourselves in the same way about the present. We have not considered that God's word is just as surely pledged as to our security amid earthly troubles as it is as to safety from the storm of judgment, and consequently we doubt. How inconsistent it would be if it were not so terribly sad, that we should cringe before circumstances and be valiant before the consequences of our sin and all the marshalled hosts of hell! Somebody has very pithily remarked, "If a letter were written to that weighty gentleman 'Circumstance' with how great truth might many of us subscribe ourselves, 'your very obedient and humble servant.'" But oh the shame of it!

But then again, circumstances we see, hell we do not see, nor yet do our eyes behold the Christ. The power of the senses is a potent factor in our life, and its importance is fully recognized in Scripture. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen?" And our Lord Jesus says, what should indeed be an encouragement to us: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

The next moment after his fear we find Zacharias has so forgotten it that he asks the angel how he shall know that his promise is true. Again we have a marvelous inconsistency, but what is the reason?

What has made him forget his fear of God's messenger and question his word? Why he looks at circumstance. He says, "I am an old man" and consequently it seems impossible that a child should be born. We remember here also that thus, too, had Abraham, the pattern man of faith, been overcome. How solemn and sad that God as it were has to bring in other circumstance to convince Zacharias, and that for his lack of faith he is struck dumb!

O my reader, has not this dumbness fallen oft also upon you and me because of our unbelief. Have not our mouths been closed and our voice of testimony hushed because we could not trust God as to the things of daily life?

There are many degrees of faith! This fact has so impressed Cardinal Newman that he has written a book entitled the "Grammar of Assent" which is largely devoted to looking at these degrees of faith. His purpose in writing thus seems to have been a poor one indeed, but we can nevertheless gain much profit in meditating thereon. There are degrees of faith. What is your degree? Is it such as those had, to whom the Lord could not commit Himself, because it was only intellectual; or is it like Peter's who verily had faith enough to walk for a way on the waters, but whose faith in the power of the waves presently grew greater than his trust in Christ, and he began to sink? Do a thousand dollars in your pockets give you more rest of mind than a cheque on your heavenly Father's bank for full supply of all your need, yea of everything that is good for you? Does the assurance "My God shall supply *all* your need" leave you still in doubt whether it was ever intended that you should trust Him for to-morrow's

supply of bread? Do you take anxious thought for the morrow when your Lord has enjoined upon you so not to do, solemnly asseverating that your Father in heaven knows all about it and will care for it? If it be so, is it not better also for you to trust that a thousand charitable deeds will do more to save you from hell than all the pledged word of God? Most decidedly it is. O dear reader, let us have more faith in Christ than we do in circumstance!

Let me close this paper with a beautiful example of how to argue from circumstance and triumph over it. There was a violent earthquake once which greatly alarmed the inhabitants of a certain village. They rushed out of their houses, their faces full of consternation, fearing sudden destruction. There was one old woman, however, whose face was a marked contrast to those of the rest. It seemed to beam with joy. One of the villagers was so struck with it that he could not help asking her: "Mother, how is it you look so happy, aren't you afraid?" "Oh no indeed," came the bright answer, "I rejoice that I have a God who can shake the earth!" She saw the God who was in it all and well she might rejoice. Oh shall we not cry much to God to give us more a simple, child-like trust. It is a prize well worth striving for and will richly reward its diligent seeker.

F. C. G.

PORTION FOR THE MONTH.

Unavoidably omitted from last number, but inserted here to
complete the series.

OUR portion for the present month is the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament and the Revelation in the New. There is a close similarity between the two books, and the points could be traced out profitably. For instance, the cherubim in each, the sealing of the remnant and the description of the city and the river. It must always be remembered that in Ezekiel the standpoint is earthly, while in the New Testament book all is viewed from heaven.

In passing, a word as to the study of prophecy may not be out of place. To say the least, most of God's people neglect prophetic scripture. The historical portions of Old and New Testaments may be fairly well known (in their letter) by those who rarely turn the pages of the Prophets. Then too, where this is not the case, there is danger in going to the Prophets for predictive instruction rather than spiritual. It need hardly be said that the first is of great value, and should be neglected by none. But an ordinary reading of the Prophets will show that prediction forms a small part of their contents. They do not—as no scripture does—gratify mere curiosity. Their address is ever to the conscience and heart, bringing faithful witness of sin, denouncing defiant disobedience, and declaring the sure judgment of God because of this. Then, when the full measure of judgment has been visited, the prophet turns to the blessed recovery of those who bow and confess their sin. Principles of government remain ever the same, and it will be found that while Israel as a nation is in the foreground, the word of divine truth will have a sanctifying effect upon those of this dispensation who have “ears to hear.” It may be

well to add that this is especially true in a day of decline and failure, like the present.

Ezekiel deals chiefly with the holiness of God and the sin of His people. Part of the nation is already in captivity, and the prophet is with these, while he is the messenger of the final overthrow of the remainder who are still at Jerusalem. The throne of God upon the cherubim, with all the attendant glory, is described. That glory is seen gradually to remove from the sanctuary to the threshold of the temple, and finally to depart entirely from the sinful city.

We may say, roughly speaking, there are four main parts to the book.

1. In the first twenty chapters, the witness is to Israel of their sin and the certainty of judgment. The book of "lamentation and woe" is eaten by the prophet, who, thus identified with his message, is to go to the "rebellious house" of Israel and bear his testimony, "whether they hear or forbear." Indeed their rejection is foretold. With divine pathos is it declared that had the message been to other than His own people, they would have heard. "Surely had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee; but the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto Me" (chap. iii. 6, 7). Chap. iv. gives minute details of the famine and the siege of Jerusalem. Chaps. v. and vi. dwell upon the sin of Israel, greater than that of the nations about, and her corresponding judgment. This doom is described in chap. vii. The abominable idolatries of even the leaders is shown in chap. viii., and a striking separation of the godly—known by their sorrow and mourning, let us mark it well, *not* by their greatness and power—who have the mark of God put upon them. These subjects are continued, with many illustrations in the succeeding chapters. Chap. xvi. is noteworthy, as giving a picture of Israel as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah; and chap. xx.

is a most faithful recital of the apostasies of the people even while in Egypt, then in the wilderness, and in the land. God shows how He had intervened for His own name's sake, and had not cut them off as they deserved. Touchingly, at the close, He foretells their recovery, in self-abhorrence at last, to worship Him in truth.

2. From chaps. xxi. to xxxii., we have largely the judgment of the nations about Israel, with whom they had been closely connected. Moab, Ammon, Egypt, and notably Tyre, with others come in here for judgment because of their sins and because of their joy at Israel's destruction. The king of Tyrus is manifestly a type of Satan, the prince and god of this world.

3. Chaps. xxxiii-xxxix. bring in the recovery of Israel. The nation is to be raised from its death, and with a new heart will at last delight to serve God.

4. The closing eight chapters have to do with the rebuilt sanctuary, the city and the land, reapportioned among the twelve tribes. It is most beautiful and instructive. The glory of God, which at the beginning had departed, is seen to return to His abode and the name of the city is, "The Lord is there."

Revelation, as has been said, gives the heavenly side of things, and a view of the heavenly city at the close—passing beyond the Millennial period dwelt upon by Ezekiel. Its divisions are familiar:

1. "Things that are" chaps. i.-iii., giving in type the entire history of the Church in the seven churches of Asia. Here Ephesus would stand for the Church at the close of the apostolic era; Smyrna answers to the time of persecution, and the tendency to Judaize; Pergamos shows the Church and state united, under Constantine; Thyatira leads on to Rome, which continues to the end, as do the others which follow; Sardis is the Protestant establishment set up in the state churches at the Reformation; Philadelphia is a spiritual revival and a

maintenance, in much weakness, of the honor of Christ's word and name, with a fellowship based upon that. Laodicea closes the Church period with a state of satisfied ease which leaves nothing but divine rejection possible.

2. "Things that shall be" chaps. iv.—xxii. Here we see the throne of God and the Lamb, to whom all judgment is committed. This will be visited upon the earth after the removal of the true Church. The time will be short—the "great tribulation" lasting but three and half years. We have the judgment of the seals, trumpets and vials, giving in increasing intensity the final woes upon the earth. The sealing of the remnant of Israel, and the salvation of the great multitude out of the nations is announced. The doom of Babylon, the professing Church is recorded. We have also the account of the "beast," the head of civil government in the Roman empire, and the Antichrist, the leader of apostate Judaism. Finally, after all judgments have been inflicted, heaven is opened and the Son of God, with His attendant army of angels and ransomed saints, issues forth. Antichrist and the beast are cast into the lake of fire, Satan is bound, and the Millennial reign begins with its glories and blessings. We see the heavenly city which will, both during the Millennium and throughout eternity, be the abode of God and the Lamb, and the heavenly redeemed. The solemn final judgment of the wicked dead is recorded, at the close of the Millennium, and all evil finally under restraint, and Christ having fully glorified God, nothing is left but the desire for His speedy coming to bring all this to pass.

What themes are here to occupy mind and heart! May they have a sanctifying effect upon us all.

Our concluding portion for the present year is the reading of the latter part of the prophet Isaiah in the

Old Testament, and the Gospel of Luke and the second Epistle to the Corinthians in the New.

This second portion of the great prophet gives us the last of the three divisions of that wonderful book.

In chaps. xl.-xlviii., the main theme is God's controversy with His people foreseen as captive in Babylon, regarding the idolatry which had really been the cause of that captivity. But while He brings to mind in absolute faithfulness their sin, there is mingled with it, throughout the entire portion, a lovely unfolding of the eternal purpose of God which will not be thwarted; for He will yet restore, according to that changeless purpose, those upon whom He has set His heart.

Thus, in the fortieth chapter we have God's comfort for His afflicted people, their restoration, and His all-sufficiency as contrasted with the worthlessness of idols and every human work.

In chap. xli, Israel is declared to be God's servant, the seed of Abraham, His friend whom He has chosen. Therefore, in spite of every form of opposition, He shall restore them.

In chap. xlii, we have *not* Israel, the failing servant, but that blessed One who humbled Himself and took the form of a servant, the only One who ever truly could or did serve without failing. He shall never be discouraged until He shall have fully accomplished God's will.

In chap. xliii., the restoration of Israel, on the basis of the service of this blessed One, is predicted.

Chap. xliv. enlarges upon this comforting theme. Most beautifully through these chapters we find again and again that word of divine comfort, "Fear not."

Chap. xlv. definitely gives the promise of their restoration through Cyrus, which, partial as it was, was doubtless a type of that more abiding recovery which yet awaits a Greater than Cyrus.

In chaps. xlvi. and xlvii., we have the destruction of

Babylon and her false gods, while the closing part of this division, chap. xlviii., reiterates the promise of God's deliverance out of Babylon.

The next or sixth division, chaps. xlix.-lix., is occupied pre-eminently with Christ in His sufferings and rejection and the blessed results flowing from it.

We see Him in chap. xlix. as the perfect Servant who is not discouraged in face of apparently fruitless ministry, and who waits until God shall manifest all the blessed results, not merely in the redemption of Israel, but blessing to the world at large.

In chap. l., we see Him humbling Himself under the hands of His persecutors, giving His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,—God raising Him up and justifying Him; a passage, which according to the beautiful manner of God's grace, is applied to the believer in Rom. viii.

Chap. li. is God's call to His people to harken, to remember they are His chosen ones, to realize that He is bringing near His righteousness, to encourage them not to fear in face of those who reproach them. There is also a responsive call by the people to the Arm of the Lord to awake to deliver them, even as He did Israel out of Egypt, with God's response, calling upon the beloved city Jerusalem to awake, and taking out of her hand that cup of trembling which she rightly has deserved to drink.

Chap. lii. continues this call to awake, and Zion is seen shaking herself from the dust and arising from all that degraded her, while the close of the chapter is an outburst of melody resulting from all this blessing. But before it can be fully entered into, the sorrows and rejections of Messiah have to be described, and this we have in the close of the fifty-second and the entire fifty-third chapters. It is needless to touch upon this most familiar, most precious portion.

Chap. liv. gives the joy of her espousals anew for

Israel who has now seen Him whom she pierced, while chap. iv. holds out the invitation to every one that thirsts, so that the nations themselves come under the blessing of the Lord.

Chap. lvi. dwells upon this return of the strangers, of Gentiles, to Him.

Chaps. lvii.-lix. seem to be a dealing with the moral state of the people, seeking to work in them that repentance which must ever precede a genuine turning to God.

The last divison of the book, chaps. lx.-lxvi., gives the culmination of all. Jerusalem is seen a light for the whole earth in chap. lx.

Chap. lxi., quoted in the Gospel of Luke, shows us the blessed Lord through whom it is to be accomplished.

Chap. lxii. gives the exercise of faith until these promises are fulfilled.

Chap. lxiii. shows us Christ trampling the nations under His feet, a Conqueror over His enemies, yet mighty to save all who will bow to Him.

In chap. lxiv. we have the longing of the remnant, still pleading that God would come down, yea, rend the heavens and manifest Himself for His people.

Chap. lxv., as the apostle in Romans quotes, foretells the turning of the Gentiles to Christ, that which is being in good measure fulfilled during the period of Israel's unbelief, while in the latter part of the chapter we see Jerusalem established a joy through the millennial earth, with strong intimation that even as the new heavens and new earth abide, so Israel shall continue as a nation before God forever.

Chap. lxvi. closes the book with the solemn picture of the judgment upon those who still reject and despise the goodness of God.

The Gospel of Luke is most attractive as presenting to us Christ in His humanity. We have seen Him as King

of the Jews in the Gospel of Matthew, as Son of God in John, and as the lowly Servant for man's need in the Gospel of Mark; but there is a distinctively human element in Luke which has a charm of its own, presenting our blessed Saviour, we might say, as a Kinsman Redeemer. As is well known, His death in this Gospel, in keeping with the entire narrative, suggests the peace-offering, where both God and the offerer and the priest feast together on their appointed portions.

The preparatory period (chaps. i.-iv. 13) presents our Lord to us alone, as we might say. Here we have much that is not given to us in any other Gospel,—the prediction and birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner, connected with which is a most beautiful picture of the piety of the remnant in Israel at that day,—those who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. How fitting it is that in connection with the birth of the perfect One, praise and joy should flow forth! Thus we have the song of Mary and of Elizabeth, of Zachariah, of Simeon, of Anna, blending with the praise of the angels above and the worship of shepherds around Bethlehem. We also get a glimpse of the boyhood of this peerless One.

Chap. iii. gives us John's ministry preparing the way for Christ, and the opening part of chap. iv. the temptation and proving of our blessed Lord after His baptism.

In the main part of the book, (chaps. iv. 14-xviii. 34,) we have in varied ways the ministry of our blessed Lord in salvation. It is the ministry of grace all through. We can bless God for many touching narratives found alone in this Gospel: His testimony at Nazareth, (chap. iv.); works of power for the helpless (chap. v.); a Saviour and not a Pharisee (chap. vi.); grace for the most unworthy (chap. vii.); the ministry of the Word and the healing power of grace, yea, resurrection (chap. viii.); the transfiguration, and victory over Satan's power with prophecy of the Cross (chap. ix.); association with

Christ in service, the true gospel, sitting at the feet of Jesus (chap. x.); true prayer, and testimony against wilful rejection of Himself (chap. xi.); provision for every trial, and dependence upon the living God (chap. xii.); solemn witness to enemies (chap. xiii.); the great supper (chap. xiv.); the Trinity in salvation (chap. xv.); the future unveiled for saint and sinner (chap. xvi.); the coming of the Son of Man (chap. xvii.); true lowliness, the only way of blessing (chap. xviii.)

The closing division of the book (chaps. xviii. 35—xxiv.) shows us our Lord on His way to Jerusalem where He accomplished full restoration of man to God. Here again we see salvation all along the way.

In chap. xix. it is salvation and responsibility; chap. xx. is the Lord's faithful witness to the leaders of the people for the last time; chap. xxi. predicts the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, with a wider outlook, reaching on to the last days and the coming of the Son of Man.

Chap. xxii brings us into the upper room where He breaks bread with His disciples, establishing that memorial supper which we love to eat, and leading us on to Gethsemane, where we see the perfect Man in perfect sorrow.

Chap. xxiii. shows Him spotless before Pilate and Herod, agreed in this, whatever else they may disagree about, that Christ is to be rejected. We see Him nailed to the cross, while chap. xxiv. gives us the resurrection, the wondrous journey to Emmaus, the manifestation of Himself in the midst of His gathered disciples, and His rapture to heaven. What a wondrous Gospel is this!

Space will not allow more than a few words as to second Corinthians. It is pre-eminently an epistle of personal experience, and yet, it need not be said, not a selfish one. We see in it the exercises and experiences of the apostle Paul in connection with Christian ministry.

In chaps. i. and ii. we see the stability of the ministry expressed in the faithful loyalty of him who was its instrument.

Chap. iii. contrasts the new ministry of the Spirit with the old covenant. Here we see the unveiled glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In chaps. iv. and v. this glory is seen in the earthen vessel broken and helpless, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

Chaps. vi. and vii. speak of the various trials and tests of the servant of Christ. Chaps. viii. and ix. dwell upon responsibility as to the ministry of temporal things to those who have need.

Chaps. x. and xi. narrate the apostle's exercises and experiences as an overcomer in the midst of manifold circumstances, while chaps. xii. and xiii. give a view of a perfect man in Christ and the ministry that partakes of that character as associated with Him.

RITUALISM

In whatever form it may exist, is a distinct denial of the finished work of Christ, the priesthood of all believers, and the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Church. Whoever substitutes a carnal ritual for a living faith in the Son of God, has left the foundation of the Church. It is pleasing to the natural man to be religious if it does not cost him too much; and ritualism, with all its show, its appeal to man's self-righteousness, has allured, it is to be feared, many souls into perdition. Let our readers beware of any thing which would turn them from the simplicity of Christ.
